

5-30-1979

(SNP132) Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Wood
interviewed by Dorothy Noble Smith, transcribed
by Peggy C. Bradley

Gordon A. Wood

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Recommended Citation

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK

NARRATORS: Mr. & Mrs. Gordon Wood
INTERVIEWER: Mrs. Dorothy Smith
PLACE: Rockingham County
Beldore
DATE: May 30, 1979

TRANSCRIBED BY:
Peggy C. Bradley
COMPLETED DATE:
November 8, 1984

D.S.: *Mr Gordon Wood and his wife* Mrs. Wood from Beldore. Now, Mrs. Wood,
Now, Mrs. Wood, what was your maiden name?
L.W.: Hansbough.
D.S.: Hansbrough?
L.W.: Uhhuh.
D.S.: H-A-N-S-B...?
L.W.: B-R-O-U-G-H.
D.S.: B-R-O. Where did you live in the mountain?
G.W.: On up the head of the holler.
L.W.: Right up here at the foot of the mountain. Foot of
Simmons Gap.
D.S.: Oh? Uhhuh. Great. Now, you said your family, ... you
lived with your uncle, right?
L.W.: Well now, he lived up on his uncle's place.
G.W.: On his property.
D.S.: On your uncle's place? How big a property was that?
G.W.: Oh, he had. ... I don't know myself. I'd have to ...
I don't ... He had, I expect, three hundred acres of
ground.
D.S.: Three hundred acres?
G.W.: Maybe more. ... I mean, mountain land and *all*
D.S.: Yea.
G.W.: He lived on another place *there was the mountain* ~~that he owned.~~
D.S.: Uh, ... so, he had two places then?
G.W.: No, he made him one place.
L.W.: He made the place that he lived on.
G.W.: he let his sister stay on this place. See,
they give him a good chance on this other place and
he just stayed there. and they was

good to him and he never moved. He had a good chance there. Seen about the cattle up there.

D.S.: Oh, he then helped take care of some of the cattle that came up from the valley?

G.W.: That's right. That's right.

D.S.: How did those cattle come up? In which way, ... which route?

G.W.: Up **Little Gap, up here, up the road** a little further. Drove them up.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: The Park has it now, the old road use to come up through there.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: From down where Island Ford comes through, they'd drive the cattle up.

D.S.: O.K.. Were some of those Allen Patterson's father's?

G.W.: No, that up further. Now, when they drove Patterson's on ~~up~~ here *further*, see.

D.S.: Then there were good bluegrass up there?

G.W.: Oh, man everywhere.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: Yea, and almost everybody in the valley owned a place up here.....

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: ...on the mountain, where to farm.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Yea.

G.W.: owned a grazing farm up there. Had some cattle and all, had to put a man on the place to see after the cattle. They give him a chance.

D.S.: How far was that grazing land? It would go, it started around Swift Run Gap or ...

G.W.: No, it was all the way through. You take over at Big Meadows.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: Oh, it was a thunder lot of land.

D.S.: Yea. Big Meadows...

G.W.: The whole top of the mountain was cleared, you know, through families. I don't know how many families lived in the Park altogether. They've moved out quite a few.

D.S.: O.K..

G.W.: Quite a few.

D.S.: Now, were there orchards up there?

G.W.: Oh yes, all of them had fruit.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: In fact they had, ... they didn't run to the store.

... They didn't got to the store like they do today. *They*
grewed
~~all~~ this stuff.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: They had plenty to eat.

D.S.: Uh, ... such as? ... What did they have, ... chickens?

G.W.: Chickens.

D.S.: Hogs?

G.W.: Hogs.

D.S.: Uh, ... did they ... have horses?

G.W.: Oh, yes.

D.S.: How many?

G.W.: Had six, ... some had as many as three or four, some two. Some didn't have but one.

D.S.: Uhhuh. These horses were used foruh ...?

G.W.: Farming.

D.S.: ...plowing?

G.W.: Yea, for hauling tan bark to town, you know, they extract wood bark and stuff like that.

D.S.: O.K., so they did do some lumbering?

G.W.: Oh, yea. Oh, yea. See, they done that too, with crops. When they wasn't busy with their crop, they worked in timber and stuff.

D.S.: Alright. Where would they take it?

G.W.: Take it to Elkton. Use to be a tannery here in Elkton.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: They extract wood bark and sometimes they'd load stuff at the railroad side down here below Merck's plant, there was a place and up there at Island Ford.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Alright now, the lumber was used for railroad ties?

G.W.: That's right.

D.S.: Right. O.K..

G.W.: And, other things. Some of it hauled away, some of it shipped way up in thar, logs. I know logs shipped away.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: Logs on boxcars. _____ these great big Popular logs.

D.S.: Alright now, with their vegetables, what kind of vegetables were grown?

G.W.: Most all kinds, just like they do now; taters, and cabbages, and onions, and most ...

L.W.: Turnips.

G.W.: Yea, most anything you grow now.

D.S.: How about tomatoes?

G.W.: Oh, they growed them too, most anything growed.

D.S.: Rhubarb?

G.W.: Oh yea, that was one of the old, one of the old dishes. They always, most every family had a row fixed up in the garden, most of the time.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Uh, ... how would they keep the vegetables over the winter?

G.W.: Well, they'd, ... if they didn't have a basement or something

L.W.: Buried the cabbage in the ground.

G.W.: They pulled the cabbage up and turned it down, turn the head down, you know, ...

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: ... and put dirt all around over it and let the stalk stick up. Didn't cut the stalk off. And, them cabbage come out of there sweeter than you can get out the store.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: See, the ...

D.S.: You didn't dig a trench?

G.W.: Well, you'd dig a little trench and you'd kind of buried them, you know, put one there, and put another row close over here, close beside, kind of have a bed of them, you know?

D.S.: Uhhuh. I get it, yea.

G.W.: And, taters and apples they *the same*, they buried them. You can bury anything like in the ground. It's the same ~~ask~~ keep . It's not as handy, but it'll keep them the same as a cellar or a place like that. Take them out....

D.S.: Uhhuh. Was the ground very rocky?

G.W.: In some places, yes. Someplaces was. ... Some was worst than the other, that's the way it was.

D.S.: Yea. Right. O.K.. Now, with the rocks, did they plant an ear of corn, or a kernal of corn next to a rock, or did they remove the rock?

G.W.: Well now, ... someplace were big rocks, they worked around that rock and leave it go. If it was any way to move it, they did a lot of hauling rocks off of fields and stuff, the people did.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: Of course, they say they were lazy. I can take you and show you a lot of rocks been hauled, hauled off, you know, and ge them off of there.

D.S.: Did they make stone fences out of them?

G.W.: Uh, .. yes, ma'am, made stone fences.

D.S.: Were there many stone masons in this area?

G.W.: Uh, ... not too many. Sullivan, over there, he use to lay rocks. Uh, ... at thattime ... it wasn't too many masons ^{lived} right around here. Now, I've got a nephew, a nephew is a mason.

D.S.: I was wondering, were the families large? Like, did they have many children?

G.W.: Well, yes there was some big families. Some had more kids than others, but it was big families of them. Some maybe had as many as eight or ten children, and some of them lower. Wasn't that many big families.

D.S.: Did they use a doctor when a boby was born or midwives?

G.W.: Well, that ... way back a little bit ahead of my time, they probably used midwives more than they did doctors, you know.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: Back, say in my time, mostly doctors.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: Say, when ... I'll be sixty-seven sisty-six years old.

D.S.: O.K..

G.W.: Mostly doctors then.

D.S.: Yea. The doctors cmae from Elkton?

G.W.: That's right.

D.S.: Were there any childhood diseases that you know of, in particular?

G.W.: No, unless it would be whooping cough or something like that.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: Whooping cough or something like that.

D.S.: Do you know of any herbs that the people used?

G.W.: Herbs?

D.S.: Do you, Mrs. Wood, do you recall any of the herbs that the people used?

L.W.: What do you mean?

D.S.: In case of illness?

L.W.: No, I don't unless it would be just; ... I heard ^{talk of} Papa .. button weed for kidneys or something like that.

D.S.: Button weed?

L.W.: I've heard talk about that. We kept an old man here with us one time, and he used that for his kidneys, but ...

D.S.: What did he do, make a tea out of it?

L.W.: Boil it. But, I was partly afraid to fool with it.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: I tell you, as a kid, sometimes your eye would get sore or somethig or other, they would make a tea out of

sassafras. Sassafras root or something other to wash your eye in.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: Then clean it *out with* something like that.

D.S.: Uh, ... when you had a cold, what did your mother do? What did she give you?

G.W.: Most of the time she'd make a poultice and put ^{it} on your chest, or something like that.

D.S.: A poultice of what?

G.W.: Well, they used lard and, and

L.W.: Take lard, turpentine, and coal oil and make up and rubbed with it. That's what I used for my first children.

D.S.: O.K.. Did you ever take turpentine and sugar for a cough?'

L.W.: No, I never did give it to mine.

D.S.: Did you hear of it being used?

L.W.: I heard of it, but I never did.

G.W.: I've taken a little of it.

D.S.: Did it help?

G.W.: It seems like to me it did, as well as I can remember. When I was a kid I've taken a little bit. My Mother taken a little bit and put in sugar.

D.S.: Yea. Surprising, apparently it did work, didn't it? Yea. Uh, ... how about friends when you were a child, were the homes fairly close or about were they about as they are now?

G.W.: Now, you take here where I live, at this section here. Where I lived, it's about like it was, are now. I mean, where I live, when we were kids, on down below here. Then

it was a house up the other place, but it is gone now. They were a little bit thicker then they are now, because a few of them, ... one of them burnt down and another one got field cut out of it, you know what I mean?

D.S.: Uhhuh. Yea.

G.W.: And, people visited one another more then than they do now.

D.S.: Yes!

G.W.: Talked, and visited one another.

D.S.: Yea. If you visited someone and they were busy doing things, like stringing beans or something like that, what did you do?

G.W.: Get in there and help them.

D.S.: You did?

G.W.: They use to have bean (Coughed) Excuse me. Have bean stringings at nights. They'd get a whole lot of beans off and have bean stringings at night time.

D.S.: Sure. Yea. Uhhuh.

G.W.: The ladies all come in and help one another.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: And, have a big time of it. That's the same way with shucking corn and stuff.

D.S.: Sure.

G.W.: Get together and corn... and shuck corn. The men folks.

D.S.: If people came to visit and you were out working in the garden, did you stop?

G.W.: Oh, yea. ↗

D.S.: Shucks! (Laughing) O.K.. Now, how about apple butter boilings, did you make any apple butter?

G.W.: Oh yea, made more apple butter then than we do now.

I mean ...

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: ... had plenty apples to make it out of. Now, you got to go to the orchard to get them.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: It cost you quite a bit more to make apple butter than it did then.

D.S.: Did you make a party of it?

G.W.: Oh, most of the time. ... Most of the time, ... they would boil butter and then after it was at night time they would go help peel apples and like that.

D.S.: Did they play any music?

G.W.: Sometimes.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Did they do any dancing?

G.W.: I ... maybe once in awhile. Maybe at a dance, they'd go to dances and they have a guy would dance.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: Somebody played the banjo and some would dance.

D.S.: Yea. How about it, did anyone bring any moonshine along?

G.W.: No, not as I know of.

D.S.: No?

G.W.: Not when I was around.

D.S.: The reason I'm asking, in the Central section, they made a real rocking party out of it.

G.W.: Oh, yea. Well, we never had a party when making apple-butter, or like that. My Mother use to make it and her mother made applebutter, and we never had no party. ... Well, uh, ... they youngsters, you know, youngsters would gather there too, the whole family would.

D.S.: Sure.

G.W.: The old folks, helped stir the apple butter.

D.S.: Sure. Did you get a kiss if you touched the side of the kettle?

G.W.: No, I didn't. (Laughing)

D.S.: No? (Laughed) No.

G.W.: I never stirred that much.

D.S.: Did you know if they did do that?

G.W.: I heard them laugh and say about it, but I never seen one do it.

D.S.: Aaaaah! How about it, when you were shucking corn, if somebody got a red ear?

G.W.: I never ... I heard my Father say something about, ... they use to have corn shuckings and if someone got a red ear of corn they got a drink of whiskey. But, ... uh, .. we never had nothing like that when I growed up.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: The old folks on ahead of me might.

D.S.: Yea. Where was the school that you went to?

G.W.: Up here, Roadside School The building's up there yet.

D.S.: Was it far away?

G.W.: No! About half a mile, I reckon, from where I lived.

D.S.: Oh, that wasn't bad. Was that for seven months a year or...?

G.W.: Nine months, we had school then.

D.S.: Nine months?

G.W.: Wasn't that right, Lilly?

L.W.: Nine months.

G.W.: I don't want to get it wrong.

D.S.: Nine months. It went through the eighth grade or...?

G.W.: Seventh.

D.S.: Seventh. ... That's, ... you were very fortunate. Very fortunate, and ... You went to the same school?

L.W.: Uhhuh.

D.S.: How did you get there?

L.W.: Walked.

D.S.: How far was it for you to walk?

G.W.: Half a mile.

L.W.: About half a mile.

D.S.: Oh! That wasn't bad then. Even in the winter you could make that then, couldn't you?

L.W.: Yea. ... Oh, yea!

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: They tried to have the schools where people didn't have to go too fer.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: They didn't have transportation like they do now. But, ... see, had another school over here at, a small school over here, between here and Swift Run. Then you had a school at Swift Run, over there. So, they had it so it wouldn't be too fer apart, fer the people.

D.S.: Great. Now, did you wear those little, sort of like metal things around your heels? Sort-of like a little pony ^{horse} shoe?

G.W.: Uh, heel line, they called them?

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: I seen them wear them, I never did wear any, I don't think. But, Dick Herring use to wear them.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: They would put them on to, mostly fer keep from running your shoe over.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Yea. Right. And, also they help climbing mountains, didn't they?

G.W.: I don't ^{know} weather ... it would get pretty slick back in there. Like horse shoes ...

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: ... that you wear on your shoe heel, it wouldn't run over as much.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: But, I didn't wear no heel line.

D.S.: Did you wear shoes all year round?

G.W.: Yes, ma'am.

D.S.: You did?

G.W.: Oh, until. ... Now when I was a small boy, I didn't.

D.S.: No.

G.W.: When you got up big enough to do some work, you mostly had to wear some shoes, you know?

D.S.: Sure, but when you were a little boy, you wore shoes only in the winter?

G.W.: That's right, ... in the winter time.

D.S.: Sure. Yea. Uh, ... and ...

G.W.: Unless I was goin' to church or something or other.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: Not playing around home. I always liked going barefooted when I was a small kid.

D.S.: Yea. You didn't worry about snakes?

G.W.: I never did care, too ... it seemed to me I'm more afraid of snakes now than I was back there in my childhood days.

D.S.: (Laughing) Where was your nearest store?

G.W.: Down here at ... out here at Beldore.

D.S.: Oh, there was a store in Beldore?

G.W.: Two stores. Two stores there at one time.

D.S.: Oh, ho ... would you take produce there and sell it?

G.W.: Take eggs and stuff, yes ma'am. And, had ... let's see..
Some of them stores bought chickens and taken them on to
the produce place. Didn't they Lilly? I don't want to
get anything wrong.

L.W.: Huh?

G.W.: Some of them stores bought chickens there and then taken
them from there to the produce place in Elkton, you know.
That's the way you could take chickens, and to buy your
eggs, and stuff like that.

D.S.: Did he give you money for it or credit.

G.W.: Most of the time you'd get groceries and ... any money,
if it was any left over. I mean or eggs , they'd
always send it back home.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: Us kids, most of the time taken eggs in a basket or so...

D.S.: Yea. Uhhuh. Did you ever sell any hams there? Hams?

G.W.: Hams? No, ... these stores down here... was at Belfore.

L.W.: We eat our you mean Hams?

D.S.: Yea.

L.W.: No, we eat our hams. ... Most of the time.

G.W.: No, ma'am, very seldom sold any hams.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: But, ... Mr. Meadows use to buy hams. At Swift Run,
over there.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: But, these stores down here. ... Take, ... my Father and them....

D.S.: Yes.

G.W.: ... delt with them, but after we got big enough the store, you know, got away.

D.S.: How about, ... did you raise any buck wheat or rye?

G.W.: Oh, yea and wheat.

D.S.: And, wheat. Uh, ... where would you take that to be ground?

G.W.: Elkton's Mill.

D.S.: That was quite a distance.

G.W.: Yea.

D.S.: You would have a horse and wagon?

G.W.: Have a wagon. Sometimes we'd ... use to be a too~~l~~ mobil to go up the river there, we use to go out and cross the ferry and go to the river out here at old Island Ford there, a ferry boat would come *by* they done away with it.

D.S.: Alright, now, did you pay the miller or did he take ...?

G.W.: He taken it out of it, see?

D.S.: About ten percent, was it?

G.W.: I ... it wasn't too much. I done really forgot how much it was then.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Uhhuh. Now, ... did you ever ... pick huckleberries?

G.W.: Yes, ma'am.

D.S.: O.K.! How much would you get for those?

G.W.: I really forgot, but not too much.

D.S.: (Laughing) Yea. Around fifteen cents a gallon?

G.W.: I imagine so, somewhere around there.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: About twenty, maybe.

D.S.: Yea. It was a lot of work, wasn't it?

G.W.: It was plenty of them at one time.

D.S.: Yea. Did you ever know of any people that deliberately set fires to make sure they had huckleberries?

G.W.: No, ma'am.

D.S.: There were definitely people that did, I don't know if they did it down here or not.

G.W.: No.

D.S.: It made sense to set the fires because then you were sure of huckleberries.

G.W.: I know. I know the mountains use to burn over real often, but I don't know if weather anybody set it, some *lightning* ever was.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: But, they would burn over often. I mean, they would start way back and come through sometimes, burn over.

D.S.: Were you ever afraid of fire?

G.W.: Yea.

D.S.: Getting your house on fire?

G.W.: Oh, I'm You mean, ... fire burning?

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: Na, ... not from here. Over in the woods I would be afraid of it.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: Yea. ... But, the way they done then, most of the see, the Park didn't have no land then, and people owned

private land. Owned the land the fire would come up, ..
this land back up in here, use to call Dixon.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: And, they would come, ... the land, where the land come
through at, ... they would park back in the park.

D.S.: I get it.

G.W.: Of course,

D.S.: Yea. ... Uhhuh. What were your particular chores, when
you were a boy?

G.W.: Oh, no one such thing to me. I, ... you know, had
different jobs. Some days would be doing one thing and
the next day doing something else. See?

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: Maybe, plowing and sometimes burning brush, and

D.S.: Chopping wood?

G.W.: Yea.

D.S.: Did you let your cattle just sort-of roam around with
a bell on, ... or did you keep them fenced in?

G.W.: Kept them fenced in. Most everybody kept their cattle
fenced in then. They'd ^{may} take and put a bell or two on one
or two of them, you know, if they did get out they knew
where they were at.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: They kept fences. Kept better fences than they do now.

D.S.: Yes.

G.W.: Rail fences. Rail fences a good fence.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Yea, it is. How about fun, what did you do for
fun? You didn't work all the time.

G.W.: Aaah, we played some kind of games. Played ball and

something like they do now. Didn't play no baseball.

D.S.: Marbles?

G.W.: Yea, I never was too good on marbles.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: But, I played them quite a bit.

D.S.: Yea. Pitched horse shoes?

G.W.: That's right.

D.S.: Did you ever pitch rocks?

G.W.: No, ma'am.

D.S.: Flat rocks?

G.W.: No.

D.S.: You always had horse shoes available? (Laughing) You were lucky, you had things made ... easy. How about practical jokes, did anybody play any practical jokes on anyone?

G.W.: Oh, ... I guess. ... I guess, was ... sometimes at night time, they'd get along a road and scare you, or something at night.

D.S.: (Laughing) Was planning for that. Right?

G.W.: If they could.

D.S.: Did you ever see the reaction when strangers came in here, ... not just in here, but anywhere in the mountain. ... If they went up into the mountain, what were the reaction of the people to these strangers?

G.W.: Well, I've been to places ^{by} myself, that I'd be a stranger, but they was always nice to me. You know what I mean?

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: When I went there, ... I'd tell them who I was.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: Some of these people back on the mountain, I wouldn't know. I'd go back in there to them and tell them who I was and they was mighty nice to me.

D.S.: You were accepted alright?

G.W.: Oh, yea.

D.S.: Alright, thank-you. You misplaced another myth. Uh, ... if you were at someone's home visiting and it was meal time, what happened?

G.W.: They always wanted you to come eat with them.

D.S.: O.K.. So, there were always ample food?

G.W.: Aaah, yes ma'am. They had plenty to eat. I've eat back there on the mountain.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: They had plenty to eat when I was there. You know, it was like I told you, what they fed me, mostly would be what ^{you} ~~they~~ growed.

D.S.: Sure. Right.

G.W.: And, that's actually better than what comes out of the stores today, ... some of it.

D.S.: Sure.

G.W.: Out of cans.

D.S.: Werethe cabbages big?

G.W.: Aaah, yea. They ... right good size. It suited cabbages up on that top ... mountain top better than it does down here even.

D.S.: Sure. Yea.

G.W.: It's a little cool and they grow better.

D.S.: Yea, they seem too. Right. Uh, ... did anybody eat beef?

G.W.: Uh, ... cattle? Beef cattle? Oh, yea, ... they killed cattle.

D.S.: How would they keep it over the winter?

G.W.: Back then the winter was right rough, just like the last couple winters has been to us.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: Stayed cold, you know?

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: Hang it up in the smoke house or something other. They'd keep.

D.S.: Mmmum. Uhhuh. Great. Yea. Did the women ~~ever~~ sell any of their butter? Did they make enough butter to sell it?

G.W.: Well, I ... My Mother didn't. I'll have to ask my wife that. 'Did they take butter to the store and sell it?' We didn't.

L.W.: Some people did. ... Some people did.

G.W.: Some did, ... she said.

L.W.: Some didn't. Some people sold cream.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

L.W.: Had a way to get the cream out, you know. Use to be a cream truck come up in here. And, some people just sell a pound of butter or two.

G.W.: To a neighbor or something like that, or give you. ... They'd give you a pound of butter.

D.S.: Yea.

L.W.: My Mother use to make butter, but she just give it out to people.

D.S.: Yea. Uhhuh.

L.W.: Anybody that didn't have any.

G.W.: That's the way they worked it. A lot of time, you know,

the cows be, different times they'd be fresh.

D.S.: Oh, yea.

G.W.: This neighbor may be getting more milk, their cows would be, ... They'd swap around.

D.S.: Sure. Right. How did you two meet?

L.W.: (Laughed) Well, we lived right in sight of one other.

D.S.: You did? (Laughed)

G.W.: Uhhuh. Went to school together.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Yea. That was great, wasn't it. Yea. So, you didn't really have to hunt around. (All laughed)

G.W.: Well, ...

D.S.: Was it a very ^{quiet} ~~quite~~ wedding or ...?

L.W.: No, we just ...

G.W.: It was ~~quite~~.

L.W.: We just went to Harrisonburg and got married.

G.W.: I've just went to a wedding Saturday evening. My Granddaughter got married, a big wedding.

D.S.: Yea. Uhhuh.

G.W.: That was up at Harrisonburg.

D.S.: Uhhuh. They did it quite a bit different then, didn't they?

G.W.: Yes, ma'am.

D.S.: You know, I'm going to get on a very gloomy subject, ... but It's one I should know about. When someone died, I'm talking about back when you were a little boy, ... When someone died, did they do any embalming?

L.W.: No!

D.S.: No?

G.W.: Not, ... you know, on back fer ... too many years ago, no they didn't. I would say, fifty or fifty or fifty or sixty years ago. Why they wouldn't be any embalmed.

D.S.: Yea. So, ... then when it came time for the funeral, would everybody stay right there at the grave site until the person was buried?

G.W.: They stayed there more than they do now.

D.S.: Yea. ... It showed respect.

G.W.: That's right. They, ... when ... anybody died back then ..

L.W.: What I can remember, ... people use to go to your house and sit up all night long.

G.W.: That's what I was fixing to tell her.

L.W.: Couple of nights, you know, they layed the body out at your home. They didn't take them to the funeral home.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: Go in and help the family, ... take food and stuff in.

D.S.: Yea. Uhhuh.

G.W.: People was closer ^{then} than they are now.

L.W.: Uhhuh, they were. Did they use home made coffins or did they buy the coffins.

G.W.: Bought them. But, I have known a few to be made.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

L.W.: Grain coffee, most of the time.

D.S.: What?

L.W.: This grain coffee.

G.W.: No, she is talking ...

L.W.: Grind it on the ...

G.W.: Mama! She is talking about coffins.

L.W.: Huh?

G.W.: She is talking about coffins.

L.W.: Oh, I thought she said coffee.

G.W.: (Laughed) She thought you said coffee.

D.S.: (Laughed) Did they use monuments or rocks?

G.W.: Rocks.

D.S.: Rocks? Would they inscribe on the rocks?

G.W.: Yes, ma'am.

D.S.: They did?

G.W.: Then they ...

D.S.: Good.

G.W.: Then they'd take it off that and ... most of the time take it off and get a tombstone. ... Been tombstones up in the cementary ... years since. Uh, ... people when they died.. When soldiers died, ... the government furnished them a stone there in the cementary.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: And, ... clear back in the Civil War.

D.S.: Aaah! Did many of the people go into the Civil War, do you know?

G.W.: I wouldn't know. I wouldn't know, I guess quite a few did.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: But, my Grandfather ... My Grandfather died from the smallpoxs in the Civil War. My Father told me.

D.S.: Mmmmmum.

G.W.: Got the small pox and killed him.

D.S.: Oh, boy! Since they didn't get newspapers, it makes you wonder how they knew about the Civil War.

G.W.:

D.S.: I guess going down to the stores, they would hear. Did people stand around and gossip at the stores?

G.W.: Oh, yea. That would be a kind-of hang out place on bad days, something nother.

D.S.: Sure. Yea. Right. Uh, ... oh, Christmas! How did you celebrate Christmas?

G.W.: Oh, ... we ... didn't get as much as you do now, but I think people appreciated it more back then than they do now.

D.S.: Right.

G.W.: I think they get too much all along now.

D.S.: Sure.

G.W.: When Christmas time comes, ... they don't appreciate it as well.

D.S.: No, they don't. But, you did get something?

G.W.: Oh, yea.

D.S.: You did? Did you, ... were you able to exchange gifts too, at Christmas?

L.M.: Well, ... not fer,... like giving everybody a gift.

D.S.: No.

L.M.: When I started having kids, now like Mama and Papa, when I got married I always give them a little something nother. Something like that, but not my brothers and all that.

D.S.: No. Uhhuh.

L.W.: People back thar then, didn't go fer that stuff like they do now.

D.S.: No, I know.

G.W.: Told her, they appreciated it more.

L.W.: The children didn't get stuff like they do now, either.

D.S.: No.

L.W.: They'd get a little something nother and that's all.
One little toy or something ...

D.S.: Sure.

L.W.: ... and that's all. But now.

D.S.: Did you do the Kris Kringlers here?

G.W.: Yes.

L.W.: Yes, they did that ^{more} then than they do now.

D.S.: Yes. They don't do that at all.

L.W.: No.

D.S.: That was fun.

G.W.: Fix up and try to fool somebody.

D.S.: Sure. Did you shoot off firecrackers?

G.W.: Oh, yea. Oh, yea.

L.W.: Yea.

D.S.: Yea. Did the adults have moonshine?

G.W.: Some of them may had some.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.:

L.W.: My Daddy never did drink, approve of nothing like that.

G.W.: My Daddy didn't do nothing like that.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Well, a quite a number of people did in this area.

G.W.: Yes, some would and some wouldn't.

L.W.: Yea, I guess they did. My Father never had none around.

G.W.: Just like they are now, ... some will fool with it and
some don't.

D.S.: That's right. Yea. But, you had some very good hollows
that made, ... I mean, some hollows that made some very
good moonshine. Very pure moonshine, didn't you?

Smoke Hollow and Bacon Hollow?

G.W.: That's over there on the other side of the mountain,
over there.

D.S.: That's right.

G.W.: To tell the truth, I always heard they did over there, but
our side here, it wasn't too much... liquor made in our
holler here since I've been big enough to remember. Not
too much.

D.S.: No.

G.W.: Not, ... not like someplaces.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: Of course, somebody may make enought to ... you know, take
and make a couple of barrels. Make them something to
drink on. Maybe.

D.S.: Sure. Did you make any wines?

G.W.: Never made a bit of wine in my life.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: No, I'm wrong, I tried to make a little bit one time and
they told me, but it wasn't no good.

D.S.: Oh, gee! You used it for vinegar then. (Laughing)

G.W.: It wasn't no account. I don't want to tell a story.

D.S.: How would you get in touch with a doctor if you really needed
him?

G.W.: Ride horses, that was before telephones come in here.
That's years ago, you had to ride horses.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: That's back in the older days.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: We had telephones in here when I was a young boy, growing up ...

D.S.: You did?

G.W.: ... to call a doctor.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Alright. And, he would come right away then; morning, noon, or night? O.K., great.

G.W.: A lot more quicker than they do now, it's hard to get them out now, without

D.S.: Get, them out. They wouldn't come!

G.W.: They got a good way to go now, but you can't get them out.

D.S.: Were there many tourist when, ... before the Park took over?

G.W.: Well, no not like there are now. I mean ...

D.S.: No, but there were some, weren't there?

G.W.: Some. Some yea.

D.S.: What were the reaction to them, did you like them at all?

G.W.: Well, I ... What I seen of them, they seemed to be alright. Some people come through. We had a bunch called Gypsies, one time, to go through.

D.S.: You did! Really?

G.W.: Yea. Years ago Gypsies, had horses and all.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Oh, boy! When ... would you give me an ideaX ... What it looked like up at the top? ... I know you said there was blue grass all along the top of the mountain. Uh, ... where there many trees up there?

G.W.: Not where grazing fields was.

D.S.: No, they were kept clear by the tenantsfarmers, that's right?

G.W.: The cattle kept eating the bushes down.

D.S.: Yea. And, the people that did the logging and the stripping of the bark, did they take that from anywhere in the mountains.

G.W.: They'd take it out from in the forest, ... when the forest ... See, they had a certain amount of cleared land and then they had forest, ...

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: ...to work from.

D.S.: I'm just trying to visualize what it looked like, say forty years ago up there, could you?

G.W.: It was ...

L.W.: What do you mean, up on the Skyline Drive?

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: You can't see nothing but bushes and trees now. You could see cattle ...

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: ...blue grass, the ~~pre~~ssi^{est} bluegrass...

L.W.: Yea, bluegrass.

G.W.: ... all over and white-head cattle grazing up in the fields. It looked a lot better than it does now.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: But, ...

D.S.: You could see further, right?

G.W.: Oh, yea.

D.S.: Did anybody have sheep?

G.W.: Yea, her uncle did.

L.W.: My uncle had sheep.

D.S.: He did! Did you do any weaving?

G.W.: No.

D.S.: Using the roll

L.W.: My Grandmother use to do some of it, but I was real small. I can remember a little bit of it, but not much.

D.S.: How about clothes, did your mother make your clothes?

L.W.: No, she didn't do much sewing. She made quilts and that's about all.

D.S.: Uhhuh. So, you bought your clothes?

L.W.: Uhhuh.

D.S.: Where did the money come from?

L.W.: Oh, sell ... They raised chickens, and calves, and stuff like that.

G.W.: Her dad could paint. He painted.

D.S.: O.K., great. So, he would leave the mountains and go down and paint people's houses.

L.W.: Yea, he'd paint. Yea, paint houses.

G.W.: Go to Elkton and paint when he got time. You know, like I told you, when his crops was gone, there would be slack time and they'd do something else. Like I said awhile ago, working the timber.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: They worked timber in slack times and when they had to work crops they'd do that. And, after they got the corn and all was cultivated, they'd by and, you know.

D.S.: Yea.

L.W.: Well, people didn't wear, have as many clothes as they have today.

D.S.: No. ... No, they didn't.

L.W.: No, you didn't, if you had just three or four dresses, .. had a dress to wear to church and everyday dresses.

G.W.: I don't know if this is going to be any interest to you or not ... If you got anything any more important to ask, you better sign off here, what you say?

D.S.: I have one more question to ask, what time did you get up in the mornings?

G.W.: Now?

D.S.: No, then.

G.W.: Whenever my Father told me, sometimes it was early.

D.S.: Yea.

L.W.: (Laughing)

G.W.: Sometimes, the biggest majority of time it would be before daylight.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: We had to start to work.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: And, ... you said while ago, certain people were lazy. I said they wasn't.

D.S.: O.K., but you didn't put that on the tape, my friend.

G.W.: I didn't?

D.S.: No. (Laughing)

G.W.: It's on it now, ain't it?

D.S.: Yes, it is! You worked hard, right?

G.W.: That's right, all my life.

D.S.: Uh, ... you worked ... It was dark when you got up, you said?

G.W.: Before daylight, most of the time, now if we had something to do. People worked long hours then.

D.S.: Yea. O.K. ... Then at nights?

L.W.: Well, people would go to bed early at nights.

G.W.: At nights you felt like going to bed, when I was a boy. I felt like hitting, ... I mean, going to bed. I mean, after I eat my supper, it wasn't long before I went to bed.

D.S.: Yea.

G.W.: Not now, now they stay up half the night.

D.S.: Sure. O.K..

G.W.: Then I could get up early in the morning. I felt like getting up.

D.S.: Sure. I know you are in a hurry to get out. I just wanted to say Thank-You very, very much. What was it you were saying, Mr. Wood?

G.W.: I said, you could go away from your home then, you didn't have to ... uh, ~~ll~~ lockup, and lock like you do now and with your home to keep people from coming in. Burglars.

D.S.: Right.

G.W.: Stealing and all.

D.S.: Right.

G.W.: We didn't have half of it then we got now.

D.S.: No. Did you have a lock on your door?

G.W.: We generally ~~never~~ put a lock on our door. My Mother and them never put a lock.

D.S.: O.K..

G.W.: Most every home didn't lock up. You could go there at the home and if nobody wasn't home, you could knock on the door. If you wanted to or open the door if you wanted to and went in, but nobody didn't do it.

D.S.: That's right.

G.W.: But, now you got in.

D.S.: I don't want to put words in your mouth, So would you describe in a few words, what kind of people they were?
(Paused) Would you mind saying a few words what kind of people they were?

G.W.: Back then? ... They were honest people, hard working people.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

G.W.: And, they was honest.

D.S.: Would they have ever accepted welfare? If there were welfare?

G.W.: I would ^{doubt} ~~dought~~ it.

D.S.: L.K..

G.W.: I ^{doubt} ~~dought~~ it.

D.S.: They were independent then?

G.W.: That's right. Hard Workers.

D.S.: They knew how to take care of themselves. I thank-you very, very much.

G.W.: You're welcome.