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(SNP042) Estelle Nicholson Dodson interviewed  
by Dorothy Noble Smith, transcribed by Sharon G.  
Marston

Estelle Dodson

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK

NARRATOR: Estelle Nicholson Dodson  
(Mrs. Dodson)

INTERVIEWER: Dorothy Smith

Date: November 23, 1977

Place: Corbin Hollow

TRANSCRIBED BY:  
Sharon Marston

COMPLETED DATE:  
June 22, 1980

D.S.: What were your most vivid recollection of your life while you were living there.

E.D.: In the hollow.

D.S.: Uhhum.

E.D.: It was hard times as far as I was concerned.

D.S.: They were hard times weren't they?

E.D.: Well yea, I guess they was....what I know. I guess they did.

D.S.: Uh, now..uh..what kind of a home did you have?

E.D.: Well the house wasn't much..it was just an old shack. You know what I mean...we girls slept upstairs and the snowflakes would come in on us and everything.

D.S.: Wow. That's cold.

E.D.: Well I reckon it was cold.

D.S.: It was a log ?

E.D.: Uhhum. Old log .

D.S.: Uhhum. How many were in your family?

E.D.: It was seven children.

D.S.: You know everybody had a lot of children, didn't they?

E.D.: They don't no more though do they?

D.S.: Nope. I wish they did.

E.D.: I know. I was talking about they today. After awhile you'll see no babies.

D.S.: Did they have a lot of children do you suppose because they needed help... in the work.

E.D.: I don't know. Seemed like that was the idea of the mountain people. Bout all we knew how to do was have families...and large families. My granddaddy...before he died, I counted about 85 or 86..I know it was about that many...before he died...of his grandchildren.

D.S.: And your granddaddy was whom?

E.D.: My dad's dad..That was David Nicholson.

D.S.: David Nicholson was your granddad? Uhhum. And then they would give each of their children some land,.that was the idea.

E.D.: Granddaddy never did have no land to give nobody. Evidently neither did my grandad

D.S.: Uhuh. Yea. Well I was wondering then where did you get the land to put your house.

E.D.: Well, we just moved in there just like her people did. Just all moved in there and taken that land over...just lived there and wasn't bothered. I..but we did move one time before we left for Madison. We moved down to Old Rag. That was in the park. Was that still in the park? Why of course...near Springs. Yea Old Rag was.

D.S.: Yes..Old Rag is in the park.

E.D.: No. All of them had large families.

D.S.: Yea. What did you raise?

E.D.: We didn't raise too much of nothing, because it was so rocky and all. You had to dig, dig, dig, to try to get the dirt to do anything with. You know. My dad was a basket weaver. In fact I have two brothers that does it yet, on down the road.

D.S.: Oh he was? You do? This is quite an art isn't it?

E.D.: Yes it is. And he raised seven children doing that.

D.S.: My gosh!. And where would he sell them?

E.D.: Anywhere he could. Well at that time we were living in the park, he would sell them to old man Wesley Jenkins. Take them on the Skyline Drive and we kids tried to sell'em.

D.S.: Yea. Well, now Skyland was there then with Pollock?

E.D.: That's right.

D.S.: So didn't people buy from him...that stayed at Skyland.

E.D.: Bought from Dad you mean? We'd take baskets up there sometimes.. we girls and we'd have good luck selling them to the guests.

D.S.: Sure, right. I would think so.

E.D.: And we sold flowers up there. Different people. My dear darling grandmother's taken berries up there and sold them.

D.S.: It was really a break that Skyland was there wasn't it? It helped..

E.D.: It helped a lot of people.

D.S.: It did. Because once the chestnuts were gone, that was terrible wasn't it..that chestnut blight came in...

E.D.: It was. Make a living off that somehow.

D.S.: Sure. Did your family do any of the peeling of the bark.

- E.D.: I don't know as my dad ever did. I think Mr. Dodson's folks did, they said something about peeling bark. I think so.
- D.S.: Uhhum.
- E.D.: I never did hear dad say anything about any of his folks doing that.
- D.S.: Well where would he get the...
- E.D.: Timber to build the basketswith?
- D.S.: Yea,
- E.D.: Go out and get it anywhere he could.
- D.S.: Well did he have a special sort of slicing thing to.....
- E.D.: He'd go out Ms. Smith with an ax and cut the timber down and then put it on their backs and bring it home. And when he'd het the timber home, he'd have to go to the woodpile and take that and another block of timber and bust it open..bust it open in pieces small enough so he could get it small enough pieces so he could in small enough pieces to work with it by hand. (What he'd do..he'd take a strip any size you want..maybe.....)  
When a basketbuilding..you always get your splits out first because you have to let those splits season before you can start building the basket with them you know. While the splits are seasoning, Dad is getting out ribs..you have to have ribs too. Sixteen ribs...  
Well I have a brother that builds a lot of those baskets yet and sells a lot..not going for nothing anymore. Stanley gets about \$8.50 or \$9.00 for a half a bushel basket now. (That ain't much for that now)
- D.S.: No indeed. It really isn't.  
(It's hard work.....)
- E.D.: It is hard work. It's hard work on yiur hands. I thought about it when I looked my dear dad in the face last February laying there in the funeral home in the casket...first time I ever saw Dad in a suit of clothes in all my life...we children had to pay for their funeral too...Mom and Dad..when I looked at him and seen those dear swollen hands..I said Dad bless your heart..he worked many many a years to feed us something to eat. Another thing Ms. Smith we never did know what a real Christmas was. Sometimes we wouldn't get an orange or a bag of candy for Christmas. Well I tell you finally a city family in Tacoma Park Maryland saw ou names of the mountain people in a newspaper and got it packed up and taken up a lot of money and brought back lots of clothes to we children and lots fo food and finally wound up taking us to their place for Christmas.
- D.S.: No!
- E.D.: Deed they did. And some of the city people taken children down there to have tonsils out too while they lived in the Shenandoah National Park.
- D.S.: Ah, wasn't that nice. That was real nice.
- E.D.: Yea, Had hard times back there. Thank the good Lord good days when all the family was together.

D.S.: That's it..you all were such a close group. How close were the homes really? Along in there.  
(They wasn't very close).

D.S.: They weren't ?  
(Oh, no.)

E.D.: You had to walk a little ways to get to them.

D.S.: Well that's good, that's nice.

E.D.: Had to go no telling how far sometimes to get your firewood too before you could build a fire to get warm. Think today that's why so many children get thousands of dollars put into them for Christmas and they don't even know what hard times were. Compared to way we was raised.

D.S.: Yea. Right. Bout how far down the hollow were you?

E.D.: From the Skyline Drive. I thought we was about four or five miles wasn't we Mrs. Dodson from the Skyline Drive. Corbin Hollow. (I don't really know. It was a good long walk I know that.) I'd say about four or five miles. We got our mail there for years and years. And we'd walk it every other day and.....

D.S.: Where would you get your mail?

E.D.: Up at Skyland. For years and years.

D.S.: Up at Skyland. Did you go down to Neathers at any time?

E.D.: Oh, that's where Dad sold alot a his baskets was down there. Old Man Wesley Jenkins bought hundreds and hundreds and hundreds and thousands I reckon of baskets from Dad.

D.S.: Uhhum, and then would he give him credit or would he give him money for the baskets.

E.D.: He would just figure out a certain amount he had and figure what each basket would be and then Poppa would just come down and get groceries.

D.S.: Uhhum. Did he have to buy much? Yes you said you couldn't grow.... much in your garden.

E.D.: No, we never did grow...~~nothing~~ to can. Never remember having to can nothing when I was growing up. Not of can foods like people cans today.

D.S.: Uhhuh. How about apples. Did you grow any apples..at all..have any apple trees. (Probably had plenty apple trees down where you were didn't they?)

E.D.: Yea, but they didn't try to can any of them.

D.S.: They dried them didn't they?

E.D.: I don't know if mama ever dried any apples or not. If she did, I don't remember.

D.S.: Made applebutter with them didn't you?

E.D.: No they didn't make no applebutter.

D.S.: No applebutter?

E.D.: Not ..my folks didn't.

D.S.: You mean you didn't have any applebutter boiling parties.

E.D.: We didn't...Not...

D.S.: You did those...

Mrs.D.: Yes indeed we did.

D.S.: How far did you live..where did you live?

Mrs.D.: We lived on up close to Skyland, we did. At first ..we lived about two miles from or half something..closer..cause that's where I worked all the time.

D.S.: Uhhum. Oh you worked at Skyland?

Mrs.D.: Oh, law I worked for years and years and years.

D.S.: Oh, what did you do.

Mrs.D.: I was housekeeper.

D.S.: Oh that was a job.

Mrs.D.: (I was one of them. I walked five to eight miles a day. If I had to he ain't a me much.)

D.S.: You walked from your home to Skyland?

Mrs.D.: (I did all the time.)

D.S.: Wow. what time would you get up in the morning?

Mrs.D.: (I'd get up 6:00 and I'd be there by 8:00...day's work started.)

D.S.: You walked fast.

Mrs.D.: (Yea, I did then. Couldn't...can do nothing now.)

D.S.: Boy that was a long fast walk.

Mrs.D.: (And then we moved when the Shenandoah National Park taken over and folks were moving out you know. And we moved...uh the Superintendent of the Shenandoah National Park..I think they oughta move into another house, if they move out you know..and I moved one time that way, and when I moved I moved about four miles futher..and yet I walked to it...oh yea.)

D.S.: How did you like Pollack?

Mrs.D.: (In a way alright. In a way.)

D.S.: Um..huh..That's alright.

Mrs.D.: (In a way...I didn't have a thing against nobody..)

D.S.: He was a very flamboyant man wasn't he?

E.D.: Yes. He was plentyflamboyant.

D.S.: I a way it was a help having him there. Because if it hadn't been for that...

E.D.: You know what his wife did? Her name was Bonnie and she sprinkled his ashes up there...

D.S.: That's right. Yea. So you didn't make any applebutter..didn't make any pumpkinbutter either then did you. No.

Mrs.D.: (Sure, but you're talking to her not me...)

D.S.: I'm talking to everybody.

Mrs.D.: (No, too much talking..)

D.S.: No there isn't.

E.D.: No, we didn't make pumpkinbutter. Didn't raise no pumpkin..we didn't.

D.S.: Um..well, you missed a lot of fun.

E.D.: It was awful hard work..it was fun doing it..those things Ms. Smith but it would have been double hard work, cause we girls had to get out and help to get wood in and all..mom had to wash and iron.. do all that..we children was raised the hard way. It was hard. Really.

D.S.: Yea. It was. It was hard living.

E.D.: Mother s today. If they got a couple kids..I don't know how I'm gonna do..I don't know how I'm gonna get things done. We wonder how our dear parents got it done too. Yea. And everything done thes hard way.

D.S.: Yea. How about of an evening..what would you all do of an evening.

E.D.: Sit around and talk after we got our work done. Go to bed early every night.

D.S.: When you sat around and talked, did you ever tell any ghost stories? or anything like that.

E.D.: Huhuh. We didn't believe in that Mrs. S.

D.S.: You didn't.

E.D.: We was always talking.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Cause there were some I know, and I'd love to hear one,..of them..that's it.



- E.D.: We never did talk about none of those things.
- D.S.: How about school?
- E.D.: Well, I finished the sixth grade. We didn't finish...up in the mountains..I was going about a year or two after I moved out of there. Wasn't nobody here up in the mountains..nobody in the sixth grade.
- D.S.: Uhhum. Where was the nearest school to you?
- E.D.: Well when we lived in the mountains we had a teacher for many a year. Mrs.Cliser was our teacher part of the time. We had Mrs. Mars and Miss Nita Dwyer and uh the Walton girls..Walton ladies somewhere Green County and Boontown..somewhere  
(The little school you all went to was the Nicholson School)
- D.S.: Uhhuh. And that was down the bottom of the hollow.  
  
(No, no it was up...see you had to walk up to get to the school.)
- E.D.: We had to walk miles to get to the school.
- D.S.: Oh, that was nice in the winter, wasn't it? Lots of fun..slippin and sliding, your way,..
- E.D.: What got me scared..afraid you was gonna fall, was afraid to walk on ice and snow.
- D.S.: Uhhum. Because the rocks were slippery and everything was slippery. Did they have school for nine months like they do now, or was it just for a few months of the year.
- E.D.: I don't remember.
- Mrs.D.: (It might have been, if I'm thinking right..maybe at times..it a couple times it might have been for nine months and then maybe it wouldn't be but maybe four months or three or....sometimes....  
).
- D.S.: Uhhum. Yes. Well, I know that they always had to bring the youngsters had to help with the harvest and all raise chickens and pigs or anything like that?
- E.D.: We didn't..I mean Dad had one pig was all I can remember in my life, but we didn't have chickens. Mrs. D. is laughing at me.
- D.S.: Why?
- E.D.: Wants to be sure I tell the truth...Chickens....we didn't have no chickens when we lived in the hollow. No we didn't. But after we moved out, she loved her chickens. In fact she had lots of chickens.
- D.S.: Well that made it really hard. You had to buy almost everything you ate, didn't you?
- E.D.: Uhhuh.
- D.S.: How long would it take your father to make a basket?

- E.D.: Well, I reckon it'd a week or two to get up a whole big jag-a-baskets to take to Mr. Wesley Jenkins' store.
- D.S.: Well how much is a big jag a basket?
- E.D.: Just as many as you can carry tied together in a big bunch hanging here..or we used to take a big bunch on our back.
- D.S.: That's a lot of baskets. So he must have made atleast two a day .
- E.D.: He probably did.
- Mrs.D.: (And her mother would build baskets too, she do all the bottoms.)
- D.S.: Sure, right. Oh my heavens yes. Well, now how about laundry. How would you do the laundry?
- E.D.: Um..go out and carry your water, .. no telling how far to <sup>the</sup> house. and heat it on a wood stove and put it in a big old washing tub and get over the scrub board and get at it. Just how it was done.
- D.S.: Yea, uhhuh.
- Mrs.D.: (That's the way everybody done it..they didn't have machines like they got now. I guess you understand that.)
- D.S.: No. Of course I do. I was just....
- E.D.: They didn't have a bit of electricity nowhere.
- D.S.: No. I know that. Was the stream very far away?
- E.D.: I don't remember, Ms. Smith.
- Mrs.D.: (NO, it wasn't very far).
- E.D.: I don't believe it was too far. Cause I was very small when I lived in the hollow.
- D.S.: UH..what was your reaction when you heard the park was coming in?
- E.D.: It was great joy to me. I was glad to hear it. I t was a rough life back there. In fact Mr. Pollock told me after I grew up and worked...I worked as a maid up there too on the mountain too for a many a year and worked in the kitchen at the salad bar..no telling how many seasons..and then finally we taken old Mr. Pollock himself and cooked for him in the morning and he told me if I moved out of the park I never would grow up. I was sick in the spring and every winter...
- Mrs.D.: (We <sup>were</sup> glad when the park taken over it. Cause they made such a promise to us. We thought it was the finest thing ever happened. What they didn't hold out.)
- D.S.: Oh no what happened?

Mrs.D.: (Well, taken homes away from you after they moved you outa here. Make ya..when they first come around they said that uh..well when they first started it up, they come around and tell you sweetest mouth you ever heard in your life to get your home. What they first wanted uh..take the park over and they want everybody that was able to to donate as much as \$10 to help out on it. Or then to give them an acre of land. Course we didn't have no land. And I don't know anybody that did, but that was what they wanted you know. But then they said you won't never be bothered again. We thought it was the finest thing in the world. But that wasn't true.)

D.S.: So, where did they settle you?

Mrs.D.: (Right here.)

D.S.: They settled you here.

Mrs.D.: (This was the house. They taken our **real** home away from us . And we.....whose it was. You get the truth of **it** after while.

D.S.: Sure. Well where did they first settle you?

Mrs.D.: (Right here.) (Up the road here.)

D.S.: Oh, up the road.

Mrs.D.: (Yea, up the road here further...this is the resettlement what you're in now. All these was government homes.

D.S.: How many was on the property when you all moved out? How many Homes?

Mrs.D.: (She didn't ask me that.)

D.S.: Alright, how many homes are on there?

Mrs.D.: (In here?)

D.S.: No, up in the park.

Mrs.D.: (Oh I could never tell you that.)

E.D.: No, in this settlement here .

D.S.: Oh, alright..how many.....

Mrs.D.: (Sixteen. Sixteen in this area.)

D.S.: Really?

(Sixteen)

And they all came from your hollow?

(No, no. I don't think they did..did they.

E.D.: Different places..Old Rag and everywhere..different places from down ..

D.S.: Well, why didn't they put people that knew each other, near each other? Wouldn't that have made it a lot easier.

Mrs.D. (They didn't put too many near that we didn't know but they wasn't right where we where.)

D.S.: Yea. Then there was visiting back and forth in the hollow? You got to know most of the people around fairly close?

Mrs.D.: (After we moved here, yea. I did know them all the ..)

D.S.: No, I mean while you were living up there in the park?

Mrs.D.: (I didn't know them all. No. On no indeed.)

E.D.: I tell you Ms. Smith they didn't do much visiting in the hollow because about all they had to do..I mean the most important thing to do was to work to try to make a living. And most folks..would..I mean in the mountains is when we went on the Skyline Drive and up to Skyland.

Mrs.D.: (No, about the park..making..finest thing in the world but they didn't hold out to it.)

D.S.: Yea.

Mrs.D.: (After they moved us down in here, they said these homes..before they moved us here..they said these homes would be our homes for life.. by paying \$20 a month and then for twenty years they would give us the deed to it, but they wouldn't let us stay no twenty years. They'd come up and save it. That's why we had to move..our home was taken away from you. Sold to somebody else.)

D.S.: That's a government for you isn't it.

Mrs.D.: (I was told that by a doctor before I moved here. Don't you do it Mrs. Dodson, the government won't hold up. And that is true. We was suppose to pay \$5 a month for twenty years and then after that they was gonna give us a deed to our home..And I thought it was the finest thing in the world..but you see they never gave us no paper on these things..They kept them all.)

Uhhum. Yea.

E.D.: I want to be on that tape too. Ms. Smith. Mr. Harmon had been down to dad's quite a bit visiting and every time he was down there when I was there and we were little girls... ..we were little..we just didn't have the money to spend..Dad..they didn't have money to give us like people do today for their children and we'd go on Skyline Drive with our little notes a telling the guest how poor we were..write what I call our 'little begging notes' write our little notes and go up there and give them to the guests. But the Rangers wouldn't let us..if they catch us at it they'd drive us off the mountainside. So one time dear Mr. Harmon was down at dad's I said Mr. when I was a little biddy girl I said you would order us off that drive I said but we was up there trying to get us a few pennies to get us something good with. Bless his heart he just dropped his head when I reminded him of that. Yes, he did. Yes sir, he did.

D.S.: Ah..Yea. Right. Oh yes and that reminds me...they had gates finally when they were building on the drive.

E.D.: Oh yes, they finally had gates..and locked them you know...

D.S.: Yea. So how would you get through?  
(No. No. You didn't

E.D.: They didn't have gates then...we just had our little trails we went up to the Skyline Drive. It wasn't no road like it is now you know.

D.S.: I see. Oh, I know that. I know that, yea. That road had to be built. With all these children that everybody had I know that there were a lot of very excellent herbs that were used.

E.D.: Oh yes.

D.S.: And I'm wondering if you can recall any of those herbs.

E.D.: Ginseng was one, wasn't it Mrs. Dodson. Ginseng....

Mrs.D.: (I don't know what it was used for. I don't know anything... They'd sell it if they could find it..get a little money for it. It's got a root to it you see. That's what they'd sell. Could right today.)

D.S.: Yea. I..I..you know so many of those herbs are now..people are finding that they were good and that modern medicines are finally catching up with what was known.

E.D.: Uhhuh...That's right.

D.S.: ...known at those time. Now and I was just wondering what you made poltices out of..if you can recall...like if somebody had a bad cold in their chest..did you make any poltices?

E.D.: She can tell you from her own lips how the good Lord's will.... worked on her own son for pneumonia.

D.S.: Alright. How did you do it?

Mrs.D.: (I put poltices on his chest til I broke the cold in his chest.

D.S.: How did you make the poltices?

E.D.: She wants to know what was on it, Mrs. Dodson.

Mrs.D.: (Oh, it would be some kind..some salve or something like that, you know..)

E.D.: On a flannel piece.

Mrs.D.: (..on aflannel piece. But I..course I had the doctor for him too, but when he got there he said the pneumonia is broke. I told him what I did. He said good. Thing to do.)

F.S.: Uhhum. What doctor did you use?

Mrs.D.: (Dr. Ross from Criglersville.)

D.S.: He was a good doctor!

E.D.: He is the same one my mother had when I was born. I was the only one dear darling mother had a doctor for. All the others were midwives.

Mrs.D.: (That's the way I would work on my children..I'd try to take care of it myself and if I couldn't I'd get a doctor call you know. Sometimes it would work, and again it won't work. I did for him when he was six years old.....)

D.S.: She did a good job on you didn't she?

Mrs.D.: (

If things don't change.....

I wasn't gonna keep him much longer. Cause his breath was short. But the doctor was such a long way out and you had to walk such a long way to get to us. But he would come.)

D.S.: How would you get in touch with him?

Mrs.D.: (By the telephone we had down the mountain.)

D.S.: Oh, at Ne thers?

Mrs.D.: (No way down..what was it..Syria..from above Syria. Somewhere. We knowed a woman down there had a telephone. We'd go down to their house and call.)

D.S.: That was a long way down there.

Mrs.D.: (Yea. it was. But we'd do anything to save a life.)

D.S.: Of course. How about..you said you were sickly every spring and fall.

E.D.: I always got real bad virus go around get a cold and keep it nearly the whole winter long.

D.S.: You know most people were pretty healthy.

Mrs.D.: (Deed they were)

D.S.: Yea. They were. They were a very strong people.

Mrs.D.: (I tell you they ain't that strong now.)e

D.S.: No. I wish we were.

E.D.: In fact I was past 15 before I come into womanhood. We're all married in here..so..you don't mind me telling about..

D.S.: Uhhuh. No.

E.D.: And usually girls today are woman at eleven and twelve years old.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Yes. Oh boy. Well did you ever have any dances or anything of that kind?

- Mrs.D.: (No, indeed. Not around me. Things never went on. I never was to none.)
- D.S.: Well dances can be sorta fun.
- Mrs.D.: (Yea, it can be that kind of fun. Can be serious too.)
- E.D.: To me talking about worldliness. In my Bible I read that when you are born again and know that the Lord Jesus Christ died on the Cross of Calvary for your sins and know the bounty of love you don't have a desire for those things.
- D.S.: No, I'm <sup>not</sup> talking about a desire for it..but a chance for people to get together. And that's always good.
- E.D.: Well, they can get together..they can get together for a good= Bible Study which will do them a lot..millions and millions more of times good than ~~that~~ will ever do them.
- D.S.: That's right.
- E.D.: I think these dance halls and these drinking parties has cause a many and a many a decent family to separate.  
<sup>many</sup>
- D.S.: Sure. Sure have. Um...Where was your nearest church?
- E.D.: Well, my great uncle was a minister. Uncle David. That was my grandmother's brother. My mom and dad-in-law here..Mrs. Dodson has heard him preach a many a time.
- D.S.: Ah..was he.. Oh, that's wonderful. And he would have the services at home or would you go to church?
- Mrs.D.: (Held at a little place we called a church up there.)
- D.S.: About where was that church located do you know?
- Mrs.D.: This little church was over the top of Old Rag Mountain.) It was?
- Mrs.D.: (.....at the foot of Old Rag Mountain. The foot.....)
- D.S.: The foot, of Old Rag.
- Mrs.D.: (Old Raga was up and he was down here. It was two churches there. Two little stores.
- D.S.: That still is a good distance to go to church.
- Mrs.D.: (Oh yes. We'd get the children ready on Sunday morning and we'd go...It was a good long way to walk...)
- D.S.: Yea. Did you have a problem..did you make your own clothes?
- Mrs.D.: (Oh yes. I made the most for all my children.
- D.S.: Cloth wasn't as expensive then.
- Mrs.D.: (Oh no. Get material and if you know how to cut and sew you could do a lot with it.)
- E.D.: Make a whole dress for a child less than a dollar in those days..

Oh yes indeed.

Mother made all our clothes until we got in touch with the Maryland people. They brought us lots of nice things.

D.S.: That is simply wonderful...those people knew about you.

E.D.: They was Seventh Day Adventist and I lived in Maryland for nineteen years and I worked in the hospital down there...that big Seventh Day Adventist Hospital over there.

D.S.: Did you?

E.D.: Uhhum. They don't pay no money there Ms. Smith. When I quit there it was only \$1.05 and hour...I started there at 85¢ an hour. There in the cafeteria. Worked hard to. Took care of about 200 people at the noon meal. It was hard work.

D.S.: Uhhum. Um..one question I have wondered. What was courting like?

E.D.: Courting..she can tell you more about that because I...

Mrs.D.: (I don't want to go back to <sup>my</sup> courting.....)  
Ms. Smith Mrs. Dodson and my dear dad and my dear mother have told me that they wouldn't let them go out on dates in the day and age. What they did..they had to stay right in the house with the parents to do the courting.

D.S.: That's the way it should be.

Mrs.D.: (Wasn't nothing secret..that young man that young boy had to talk in the presence of the whole family.)

D.S.: That's the way it should be.

E.D.: And when company would come in poor ole blessed pop said when company would come in..that's when he was a little boy..he said he never did talk back to his daddy til he was about 21 years of age. But when company would come around grandpa would say..now that's my dad's dad he would now you all get back in the corner and don't say nothing til you are spoken to.

D.S.; Uhhum. Good. Good.

Mrs.D.: (I know people was raised right up there. Don't tell me they wasn't.)

D.S.: I know. They were.

E.D.: Most of them had more sense than people today. You go to schools today and you are taught all kinds of unnecessary things..I mean

D.S.: Well the thing is everybody up there were not only very independent and hard working, but they were very honest.

E.D.: That's right.

D.S.: There was no stealing. Nothing that kind....ever.

(no)



Um. You all had to live together so...

E.D.: In, fact, the whole big community was like one big family..I mean

Mrs.D.: (We didn't get too close to anybody.....like that.....we didn't live like we do in here. Way way off somewhere else. So much..I know it about myself and they knowed it about me. No indeed. Huhhuh)

D.S.: Right. Yea. How..what was your wedding like?

Mrs.D.: (just married. Just plainly married wedding.)

D.S.: Uh..in your home or did you go to the church?

Mrs.D.: (No, I was married at home in Page County.)

D.S.: Oh. Where?

Mrs.D.: (At the foot of a little mountain over there we met together.) Well there are a lot of little mountains, that have a foot over there.

Mrs.D.: (Yea, but the one we met on was right down below Skyland. Way on down going toward Luray.)

D.S.: Allittle church there?

Mrs.D.: (A little school house.)

D.S.: I know where that is. Yes. Uhhuh.

E.D.: I wasn't married in a church either..36 years ago 22nd of this coming August. I just went in minister's a home...a Lutheran minister up at Madison.

Mrs.D.(You can be united together...doesn't have to be in a church.)

D.S.: I know you don't but I was just wondering you know.

Mrs.D.: (Don't have to be in a church to united together.)

E.D.: But you know lots of people wants a big church wedding and that costs an awful lot of money, Ms. Smith.

D.S.: That's silly to spend that amount of money.

E.D.: Well I'm glad you feel about these things I mean, you know the same way we do.

D.S.: Well, of course...

E.D.: Those kids can put that money towards some property..rather than have a big wedding like that.

D.S.: Of course they could. Yea, Uhhuh, Yea. I don't know why they do it, but they didn't.

E.D.: Do you have a family Ms. Smith?

D.S.: Yes I do. Yea. I have two boys.

Mrs.D.: (Are they with you now?)

D.S.: They live out in Seattle, Washington.

Mrs.D.: (Oh yea, I believe you did say that.)

Yea..which is mighty far away.

(I know.)

We keep in close touch all the time.

E.D.: It only takes hours to fly out there in a plane...

D.S.: Money

E.D.: Yea..I guess.....

D.S.: Oh, I get..oh at least one letter a day..week from them..so that's close. Uhhum. Yea. How about school when you went to school? Did you go for six years or how long, Mrs. Dodson?

Mrs.D.: (I didn't go to school hardly any.)

Hardly any. Well it was too far away.

Mrs.D.: (No, it wasn't too far away, we just didn't have any. Not when I was a little girl. That's been years ago.)

D.S.: Yea. Right. Did you two live fairly close to each other?

Mrs.D.: (Well it wasn't too far.)

E.D.: It wasn't too far away. Maybe three or four miles apart..wasn't that far.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Yea. Well, that was great. Can you think of anything else?

Mrs.D.: (No, I can't go way back yonder..too much.) (Nothing much..I do want to be sure about things I speak about.)

D.S.: Well you have been. You have been very sure, of them. Yea. And you can't recall any of the things..oh by the way..one thing I want to ask. Music..Was there ever any music?

E.D.: No. Not at our home, I mean..only when they would hear hillbilly music if that's what you're talking about. For the mountain.. Mr. Pollack had music most any time. When he run the place.. didn't he?

Mrs.D.: (He had regular musicians up there.)

D.S.: Yea, but I mean nobody in your family played the fiddle?

Oh, no, huhhuh.)

Huhuh. Because there were some very good fiddlers, that lived in the mountains ans some nice banjos that were made up there too.

Mrs.D.: (My husband has got a banjo..fiddle too ain't you.)

(Oh no).

Ah, I would love to have heard it. It would have been great to have heard you play it. What tunes did you play?

Mrs.D.: (Well different things.)

(Just starting wasn't any special tune but he had them.)

D.S.: Yea, Uhum. Well can ya'll think of anything else. It's hard for me to know what to ask you. You're the ones that know.

Mrs.D.: (I don't know much of nothing.)

Oh, yes you do. You've told us an awful lot. We'd like to know anything more that you can tell us...think of.

E.D.: This is one reason Ms. Smith will this go on the screen and be taught in schools too?

D.S.: Huhhuh.

(Screen..see pictures..)

Huhhuh.

Mrs.D.: (But anyone coming along can hear the tape?

D.S.: Exactly. Which is good because...grandchildren may want to know the true story..and it gives them the chance to go and hear or read the transcript of it. And that's why anything that you can recall will be there as a permanent history for the park. And for any of your relatives to come and hear.

Mrs.D.: (They don't want to hear this side though do they?

D.S.: They don't want to hear what?

Mrs.D.: (The park don't want to hear about how they done it..the people)

D.S.: Yes they do. Yes they do.

(Well if they know about it..the people)

D.S.: Well, actually I believe it was the government that ended up doing that wasn't it?

Mrs.D.: (Well, it could have been..I don't know. We was told that.)

E.D.: See the park and the government is not all yoked up together  
is it Ms. Smith?

D.S.: No.

(Oh, I see, uhhuh.)

No.....they are not. And I believe the Interior..Department  
of Interior is the one that pulled this, on you. I'm positive  
it was not the park.

E.D.: It was the head government.

D.S.: Uhhum. Department of Interior

Mrs.D.: (I think one of these women is a living yet, that come around and  
told us about these things.....)

D.S.: Uhhuh.

Mrs.D.: (I think she's at Stanardsville. Did you ever know Mrs. Keyser?  
Well she was one going around and telling the people in the mountain  
how it would be.)

D.S.: Was your father able to continue making baskets when he came down  
here?

E.D.: Oh yes.....

D.S.: How would he get the wood?

E.D.: He'd have to go out and buy the wood then. They'd have to get a  
dollar a stick for the wood. And back when darling dad died he'd  
gotten in a whole lot of sticks for a lot of little Easter Baskets  
half gallon and quart baskets. And uh..splits and reeds And  
brother Stanley finished me one of them off.  
And that was his last work he ever did cause he went to the  
hospital on Thursday and then died on Sunday morning. He was  
diabetic. Had a severe heart attack. So was mother. Mother  
would have been 80..83 if she lived to this past January.

D.S.: Ah.

E.D.: She would be three years..not two years..no three years the 12th  
of September.

D.S.: Yea. Uhhuh. And your mother was a Nicholson? What was her name?

E.D.: Two years for mother Ms. Smith. Excuse me..two years for mother  
in September because my dear husband died before my mother did and  
it'll be three years for him in July.

D.S.: What was your mother's maiden name?

E.D.: Corbin.

D.S.: Corbin. Okey. Now it makes sense. Yea. Did you know George  
Corbin?

E.D.: Sure. He married one of my daddy's sister s for his first wife.  
George did. He's been real sick.

D.S.: He did. Yea. He's got cancer. Yea..he..I'm glad they...

E.D.: He's my first cousin.

D.S.: Oh he is. Uhhuh yea.

Mrs.D.: (Does he live over at Stanley.)

What.

Mrs.D.: (Does he live in Stanley)

D.S.: In Luray

E.D.: With one of his sons.

D.S.: Yes. Virgil. He lives with Virgil.

E.D.: Yea. Yea.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Yea. So he's in the hospital now.

(Really, is he very ill?)

D.S.: He has cancer of the stomach. Yea. Well. All of the family  
is sort of scattered then, didn't they?

E.D.: Yea. They all scattered.....In fact our home....when death  
comes along..it really breaks up a home. I haven't been in my  
brother's home since the first week in March. A funeral makes  
a difference in a home, ever bit. It shouldn't but it always  
does.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Yea. Well it's a shame to be all scattered away.

E.D.: I imagine Uncle Baily wanted to go as a minister.....Now he  
was my grandmother that was my mother's mother...Eliza Nicholson  
..he was her brother..my grandmother's brother that was a preacher.

D.S.: Okey. Well you have really given us a very very wonderful story..  
that..I'm going to ask a question again. Alright was there any  
story in your family handed down as to where your family came from? ?

E.D.: I was told that on Mom's side and Dad's side...they always told  
me they came from New England. That their parents and my mother's  
parents..great-grandparents..... 's

D.S.: Don't you wonder what made them come there to these mountains.

E.D.: Yes, I do.

D.S.: Could it have been drawn to the beauty of those mountains...  
that made them first go there.

E.D.: It might have been, Ms. Smith. That's been a many and a many and a many a year ago.

D.S.: Right. You don't know what year they came?

E.D.: No, I sure don't.

D.S.: Okey. Alright.