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(SNP051) Joseph Fray interviewed by Dorothy Noble Smith, transcribed by Peggy C. Bradley

Joseph Fray

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK

NARRATOR: Mr. Joseph Fray
INTERVIEWER: Mrs. Dorothy Smith
PLACE: Madison County
DATE:

TRANSCRIBED BY:

Peggy C. Bradley

COMPLETED DATE:

August 12, 1984

D.S.:

Mrs. Fray says she is not going to say anything, but I hope that she will remind us all of some various things. Mr. Fray you were, ... uh, .. from what I understand ... uh, ... on the ... uh, ... Chamber of Commerce here in Madison.

J.F.: Yes.

D.S.: What years were those?

J.F.: Uh, ... nineteen hundred ... twenty-four and until after that until Dr. / uh, ... was the Chamber of Commerce when they had a Rapidan Fishing Club here. And, that is one reason Mr. Hoover came to the county, because the fishing club had stocked the streams.

D.S.: Aaaah!

J.F.: One reason, of course.

D.S.: Were you in on any of the negotiations in helping to get Camp Hoover established?

J.S.: Yes. ... Uh, ... I was Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: In those days.

D.S.: Yea.

J.F.: And, of course we had meetings there and Mr. Carson, uh, ... was ... uh, ... the Chairman of Conservation and Development Commission, and he, of course, made contact with a lot of people in Madison County.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: In fact, he and the Federal Officials promised Madison County an entrance into the Park. But, that was under the Republican administration.

D.S.: Yea.

D.S.: Yea.

J.F.: And, when the Democrates took over, they locked us out.

D.S.: That's right. Which was very wrong, because right now you could go up to Skyline or anywhere much easier than having to go to Sperryville or to Swift Run Gap.

J.F.: We are seventeen miles from here to Big Meadows.

D.S.: Yea.

J.F.: If we could have ... If Mr. Hoover had been re-elected, we could had an extrace into the Park up through Dark Hollow, if you know, ... if that means anything to you.

D.S.: That's right, that was the old Gordonsville Turnpike, right?

J.F.: Well, ... part of it, yes.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: You are more familiar with Skyline than I am.

D.S.: (Laughed) Uh, ... what was the reaction of the people when it was descided that President Hoover was going to have his camp here? Were they ... pleased or?

J.F.: They were delighted.

D.S.: They were delighted.

J.F.: And, stayed delighted.

D.S.: Yes.

J.F.: But, unfortuantly on Election Day, it didn't look like we were delighted. You know, as I told you while ago, ... uh, ... that people; they were not starving, but they were having an awful hard time meeting their obligations, and they ... thought that they had a different President or Mr. Roosevelt as our President, times would be better.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Yea. Uh, ... now, I understand that a special road had to be built for Mr. Hoover to get into his camp.

Now, Now, what about that road? They did have to build a road up there for President Hoover?

J.F.: That's right. They used the old road bed partly. ...

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: ... and, then had to build around Chapman's mountain ...

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: ... uh, ... to get over the mountain there.

D.S.: Yea.

J.F.: And, then they improved the road from Chapman's mountain up the river. ... Up to the furthest end.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Was it a dirt road or ...?

J.F.: Yes.

D.S.: It was a dirt road?

J.F.: A very poor dirt road.

D.S.: (Laughed) A very poor dirt road. Wonder how long it took him to get from Washington here?

J.F.: Where, from here into the cabin?

D.S.: Yea.

J.F.: Aaaah, I would say, ... uh, ... and hour and a half, two hours.

D.S.: Two hours?

J.F.: Uhhuh.

D.S.: Well, it was a nice, pretty ride through lovely country to get here. ... Uh, ... the Marines then came, didn't they, to Camp Hoover?

J.F.: Yea. Mr. Hoover came several times before the Marines came.

D.S.: Oh, he did?

J.F.: Yes, he came, but ... He came as far as Criglersville in cars and then they got on horseback and rode over the mountain, you see?

D.S.: Oh, yea.

J.F.: He was not pleased with the first site, he wanted to be higher. He wanted to be up twenty-five hundred feet.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: And, he came back a second time, if I'm not mistaken, and was pleased with that second location.

D.S.: Milpron.

J.F.: And, they had to build the road, improve the road.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: Uh, ... from Criglersville, you might say, to the President's Camp.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Uh, ... Did the people of Madison help build those homes, ... those cabins that were there?

J.F.: Oh, no! The people of Madison didn't help to build ... the cabins.

D.S.: Yes.

J.F.: No, ... they, ... they, ... the President's cabin there .. was not the ... Marines.

D.S.: Yea.

J.F.: I mean the ... what was that other, ... the Cabinet's cabin?....

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: ... they were built after Mr. Hoover's camp was built. I mean with the next year or so.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: But, the State Highway of Virginia with the help of

Federal Funds, they built the road up there before, ...
uh, .. about the time the Marines came.

D.S.: Oh, uhhuh.

J.F.: I mean, they started it ... probably before the Marines
came, but the Marines ... uh, ... didn't help build the
road, ... as far as I know.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Did they use mountain people, do you know?

J.F.: Yes, ... some.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: But, most of it was done by machines, bulldozers and
so forth.

D.S.: Oh, yea. By the way, over the phone you mentioned that
you use to keep cattle up in the mountain. Where?

J.F.: Well, we ... uh, ... my Father, ... with other members
of his family, ... owned three different mountain tracts.
And, one of them was in the Franklin, ... uh, ... the
Franklin, not Franklin Rock,..... uh, ... the Franklin
Cliff.

D.S.: Franklin Cliff?

J.F.: Are you familiar with that?

D.S.: Yes.

J.F.: Well, ... our best place to graze cattle was just
driven from Franklin Cliff to our mountain land
in our automobile, on top of the mountain there. And,
then we had another place over near Mr. Hoover's camp,
and that was mostly timber land. That was very close to
the Hoover's camp. And, then they had another place down
Dark Hollow, that was a thousand and some acres there.
And, that was where the road, ... uh, ... Mr. Hoover wanted

a road built up Dark Hollow, you see?

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: And, the survey had been made and a ... we had given these fellows who owned land, in that, for that area ... uh, ... at that time, ... gave ... donated the right of way, of course, up Dark Hollow. And, the Engineers said that was the most beautiful mountain scenery that we had, was that survey, and Mr. Hoover knew that. And, that's when he got the Federal Government to allocate two hundred fifty thousand dollars to start that road. And, that road would have started down at the foot of the mountain on the Syria side and would have gone on up the hollow, with the old Blue Ridge Turnpike, which you spoke of. And, until it got up Dark Hollow, there to the falls, and then that survey started going up to Red Gate. You heard of Red Gate?

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: Instead of going up there, it bounced off to the road Mr. Hoover had built from Big Meadows, down to his cabin. Log cabin.

D.S.: Aaaah! Uhhuh. Yea. Great!

J.F.: That would have been our entrance into the road. ... We would have been as, not as close, we wouldn't have anything to do with the Front Royal entrance, though, with the South Entrance.

D.S.: Right.

J.F.: But, it would been the entrance for this mid-area, you might say.

D.S.: That's right.

J.F.:

D.S.: Yea. ... Did you get to Camp Hoover, at anytime; while he was there?

J.F.: No, not when he was there.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: I ... Oh, how meeting to do with it or not, directly. But, the Izzak Walton League, .. gave him a rod and reel, a fishing rod and reel.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: And-a ... our Congressman, ... uh, ... in ... up Northern Virginia, ... made the appointment for us to present this to Mr. Hoover .. at the .. on the lawn of the White House.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: I was not introduced to him then. I was never introduced to him personally. But, then when they had Hoover Days, uh, ... that was those present President came up. Master of ceremony and Mrs. Showalter, from Woodbury Park, a private school in the county, uh, ... was hostess. And, then after Mr. Hoover decided to stay for lunch, ... uh, .. stayed an hour ... uh, somebody ... some writer said all day. Well, he stayed a couple of hours ...

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: ... then. ... Then after lunch, had a program and had lunch then. And, Mrs. Walter asked me if I didn't want to be introduced to President Hoover, and I said no. I said, I felt like it would have meant nothing to him and it would mean a lot to me, and since then I regretted that I said, no to Mrs. Walter. Well, I just thought ... while he was eating a picnic lunch ... he did not want to be disturbed by a little two by four.

D.S.: Aaaaah now, come on! What was in the lunch? What did they have, did you recall?

J.F.: For lunch?

D.S.: Yea, what did they prepare?

J.F.: (Laughed) That's a joke, in a way. Uh, ... they had six large pots of Brunswick Stew.

D.S.: Ooooh!

J.F.: And-a, ... that ... Oh, it was a lot of it left. ...The ... it must had held twenty gallons to each pot. We ordered five thousand cups to serve that Brunswick Stew in and those cups were gone before you could say, SCAT. Some of the Secret Service people thought it was as many as fifteen thousand people at this party, and others said less, and we don't know how many were there. And, the whole thing was handle so nicely by the Federal and State Officials. Everything went so smooth, as smooth as could be. And, it was a lovely day, it wasn't hot and it wasn't cold.

D.S.: Mmmmmum.

J.F.: Just a beautiful day. It looks like the Lord was with us in every way.

D.S.: Oh, isn't that wonderful!

J.F.: And, what a day.

D.S.: Yes. What a tribute to him.

J.F.: Oh, he was ... uh, ... made, as you know, made a real beautiful ... uh, ... made beautiful remarks about, complemented the people of the county. And, they had.... uh, ... prepared a picnic lunch ... in baskets, you know, and brought them in and up to the place and got statements from Federal Officials and so on. And, they had roped out

the people, the invited people. And, ... uh, they served a basket of their pies, and cakes, and everything, and barbeque beef, and so forth.

D.S.: Mmmmmum!

J.F.: Besides the Brunswick Stew. I don't know weather they gave Mr. Hoover any Brunswick Stew or not, but he told them he wanted a piece of the barbeque beef, and they brought him some of that. And, when they wrote the history of the ... Hoover Camp, they said that ... uh, ... that Mr. Hoover said, ... some of the people, ... Maybe I'm mixed up ... but sometime Mr. Hoover said the place, himself with the time, but that must had been some other time. I'm all mixed up with this program.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: I'm telling you, it's so many programs that we had along at that time.

D.S.: Yea. Well, it was the first time that Madison County had ever had anything of this kind.

J.F.: And, ever will.

D.S.: No.

J.F.: No, not like that.

D.S.: Do you have feelings, like I do, maybe I'm ... I don't want to put words in your mouth. I think it helped Madison County grow, ... having these roads built.

J.F.: Oh, yes ... it did. It helped them, it helped the road situation, it helped the school situation, and everything.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Yea. There at Camp Hoover, you, of course, have been there, haven't you?

J.F.: I never been ... If I ever been in it, I don't remember.

D.S.: Really? You would remember if you had.

J.F.: I ... I ... did we go in the camp in

Mrs.F.: I think, he means, he means .. he's been in the building,
he's been to the cabin itself ...

J.F.: Oh, several time.

Mrs.F.: ... several times.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: And, ...uh, ... Major Long invited us two different times
to come up there.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: Not when the President was there.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: But, they were looking for a landing field ...

D.S.: Oh?

J.F.: ... now, to bring the mail in. Because, they had ... a
cleared spot right above ... the Marine camp...

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: ... which is not far from the Hoover Camp. And, they
dropped the mail on this landing on top,... they called
it the Ballfield. And, this bag of mail went down in the ...
when the plane swooped down to drop this mail, one bag of
mail went through a Marine tent.

D.S.: (Laughed)

J.F.: And, that stopped it. It happened no one was hurt ...

D.S.: Yea.

J.F.: ... fortunately. And, they were looking for another landing
field. And, ...uh, ... Mr. Carson, ..oh no, Mr. Long,
heard that we had a field, a place very close to the camp
that they thought would be a landing field. And, Major
Long asked me to come up there and go with him out to this

field. We were on horseback, and I have gone over this trail hundreds of times from the Hoover Camp area. The cattle .. uh, .. they were on range, you know?

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: Uh, .. we taken them up to the field, not fenced. And, our cattle would go down on the Wayland land and the Wayland cattle would go up on our land.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: And, we ... I took Major ...uh, .. horseback out from the Wayland property out to ours. And, it had grown up so, it took us so long, the Major was just , he was behind me, and I'd gone around fallen trees and all of that.

D.S.: Oh, yea.

J.F.: Major got mad and didn't like it a lot. And, he was just giving me thunder.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: But, then when we walked out onto this field ... and as many years as I been in the mountains, ... that was the prettiest scene of Piedmont, Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley, I ever seen. Wasn't much, we didn't have a very good view of the Shenandoah Valley from the landing field, it was all Piedmont, Virginia.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: But, we could pick out houses down here in Madison, we could tell where our home was and ...

D.S.: Aaaah!

J.F.: ...it was just beautiful. And, Major felt different after he got out of the bushes.

D.S.: Mmmmmum. Yea.

J.F.: Well, he says, ... he told me then, we came back to camp and had lunch there, and-a ... uh, ... he said then, he was so pleased with the view that he was going to have the trail cleared by the Marines. Of course, I suppose he did, 'cause he wanted Mrs. Hoover to see, ... he knew Mrs. Hoover enjoyed the view from that spring field.

D.S.: Yes!

J.F.: But, I've never been on that field from that day to this.

D.S.: Aaah! But, the memory is there, the beauty of it.

J.F.: Well, I don't know if it grew up or not, it's been a long time now.

D.S.: It probably has.

J.F.: In 1929 ...

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: ... that I was there.

D.S.: Uh, ... Did you ... I understand that you had something to do w...uh, .. with the Skyline Drive.

J.F.: Huh! Yes ... yes, quite a bit. At the time, ... yes and no. It goes ... I don't know what it had to do with it, but, ... I was present of the day that they broke the soil, ... officially, ... uh, ... there at Skyland.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: And, that was eighteenth, of July, 1931. They had already started the construction of the ... over at Panarama,.....

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: ...I think.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: I, ... I don't know.

D.S.: You're right.

J.F.: On that particular day, four of us went up there from Madison, in a car. ... And, Doctor uh, was there when we got there. Now, weather he went with someone else, I don't know. But, we went up there that day, ... uh, ... uh, ... don't know ... Well, we were at Skyland for the program, had lunch there, and after the lunch we had the official opening, ... uh, ... of Skyline Drive. Not, the official opening of the Skyline Drive, ...

D.S.: No.

J.F.: ... but, the official ... uh ...

D.S.: Digging?

J.F.: ... digging of the ...

D.S.: Yea.

J.F.: .. used the shovel.

D.S.: Yea. Uhhuh.

J.F.: And put a shovel, one shovel of dirt in this wagon with two mules, and when they got ready to drive off, the mules wouldn't move. (Laughed) And, I can't tell you ...

D.S.: (Laughed) Difficult mules.

J.F.: ... what Parks told the driver.

D.S.: (Laughing) Where is that shovel now? Have you any ideal?

J.F.: Aaaah, yes. I think it is at Big Meadows.

D.S.: Oh, then it was saved?

Mrs.F.: At Byrd Center.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Very good.

J.F.: After the ... After the official opening of the, ... I mean , of breaking of the soil ...

D.S.: Yea.

J.F.: ... everybody hurried back down to the cabin, Mr. Pollock's

cabin, ... and it was moonshine liquor in those days, it was very potent.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: So, they forgot about the shovel and left it lay on the ground and everybody left, and Hubert Cave, who was Clerk of the court here, and I had gone up there in his car. So, he saw the shovel then, most of the people had left then. He told me, "Joe Fray, you go pick up that shovel and put it in my car." Which I did. A few days later Mr. Pollock offered an award for the shovel, and one of his employees, a man named Dod, said, "Joe Fray took that shovel." So, Mr. Cave, Clerk of the court, knew Mr. Pollock had to come down here for a trial, uh, ... one of his employees, or some of that kind, had got involved. And, then Mr. Pollock was looking for that shovel. Mr. Cave had it put in a case, a glass case. A glass front and he wrote on there, uh, ... This shovel was donated to Madison County by the Honorable George Freeman Pollock; on a certain date. And, when Mr. Pollock arrived for this court case, uh, ... Mr. Cave met him at the car and said, "Mr. Pollock, I've got something in here I want to show you.: So, he took him back in the back room of the Clerk's office and, in the vault part of the Clerk's office, and there Mr. Pollock read that and he said, "Hubert, this is just where I wanted the shovel."

D.S.: (Laughed)

J.F.: "I wanted Madison County to have it because it broke the soil in Madison County."

D.S.: Very good.

J.F.: That stayed in that case until about 1940, probably 40 some....

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: ... there in the office. Then, uh, ... Charles Ross was elected Clerk and he wanted the Clerk Office done over. And, he took the shovel out, along with a lot of old records, and took them out and just dumped them in the Jury Room, up in the / loft, ... galary, you know...up there. And, I was up there one day in this spare room, and saw the shovel. ... And, I told them, ... I met with the Supervisors shortly after that, and I said, ... "You ought to saved that shovel because it is real historic ... thing." So, the Supervisors told me, said, "Here, you take it up to the Park people." And, that's ... that's ... I thought that's where it belonged, with the Park.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: With the Park people. And, so, they asked us, ... they asked me to delivery it to them, which I did.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: Now, it's ... I think that you are familiar with that Hoover ... uh, ... I can't.

Mrs.F.: It's in the Byrd Center.

D.S.: Yea.

J.F.: No, they didn't have that. I didn't take it there.

Mrs.F.: Took it to the Headquarters.

D.S.: Headquarters, yea.

J.F.: Took it to Dickey Ridge.

D.S.: Dickey Ridge.

J.F.: Dickey Ridge, and left it there until the Byrd Center was built.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: Then I took it to the Byrd Center, but I have never seen it since then. I don't think I've ever seen it since then.

D.S.: Shame on you for not going up there on the Drive more often.

J.F.: Because, we were locked out!

D.S.: (Laughed)

J.F.: Just like I wouldn't have the Hoover Days. We had three Supervisors and two of them were Republicans and one, a Democate. Our Clerk of the Court was a starched Democate, who worked with Major Long and ... and so on. But, they had the seating and ... I didn't like it and I got mad, and I . I wouldn't accept my seat on the platform. Uh, ... the wives of the Supervisors were not invited, you know, to sit in the stand
you don't like it, but the others made me mad.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: And, I wouldn't sit up there.

D.S.: Alright! O.K.! Uh, ... as long as your're a Republican, (Laughing) why should you be with all those Democrates, right?

J.F.: What?

D.S.: As long as you are a Republican, why be with the Democrates?

J.F.: Well, it wasn't that. It was just the attitude.

D.S.: Uhhuh. You know what you must do though, you know
On the Birthday ... uh, ...the weekend nearest Hoover's birthday they have buses that goes down from Big Meadows to the camp. And, you really should go. It's in August, and make a plan on doing that. You can take the bus down,

stay there as long as you want and another bus will take you back up. Take a picnic lunch along and enjoy yourselves. Really, it is delightful.

J.F.: I understand.

D.S.: I wish you would.

J.F.: Oh!

D.S.: You had so much to do with all of this.

Mrs.F.: We been several times, from this direction when they, after they put the chain up. When we had a key available.

D.S.: Oh, yea.

Mrs.F. And, I have been in the main building of the camp, and I'm sure he has also, because I've would not have been in there by myself.

D.S.: No. .. Right.

Mrs.F.: We have been up there at different times, but now, that has been a few years ago.

D.S.: Uhhuh. ... It does give you such a relaxed feeling being there, ... it is so peaceful. I can see why Hoover went there as frequently as he did.

J.F.: Well, I think Madison County will never get over that Era.

D.S.: Right. Mrs. Hoover, ... what are your recollection of Mrs. Hoover? What do you recollect about Mrs. Hoover?

J.F.: Oh, ... I ...

D.S.: She was there on Hoover Day.

J.F.: Oh, ... down at Madison?

D.S.: Yea.

J.F.: Yea ... She has been to other places in the county.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: She was very gracious, the people loved both of them, Mr. and Mrs. Hoover. And, the Madison people forgot about politics ... there wasn't politics ...

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: ...in there ... at all.

D.S.: Yea.

J.F.: They were graceful for the President, what he did. But, then, uh, ... when he was defeated, ... uh, ... that's when everything dropped.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: The bottom fell out of ... the bucket.

D.S.: Yea. You have a book over there, was there something in there you was going to talk about?

J.F.: I think we discussed it. Uh, ... I just have these records here, ... that we already mentioned. ... Uh, ... the shovel and ... just a couple letters from Mr. Schaffner. ... You call him ... Schaffner.

D.S.: Schaffner. ... Yea, Ray Schaffner.

J.F.: Uhhuh. ... He borrowed the shovel, borrowed the pictures, I mean to put in the Hoover Hideaway.

D.S.: Yea.

J.F.: And, ... he kept them quite awhile and I was afraid he would leave the area and ... that's the reason I wrote him, for them, you know?

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: And, he and Mr. Lambert.

D.S.: Yea.

J.F.: Lambert brought the pictures back and they bought me the Hoover's Hideaway, they autographed it.

D.S.: Here it is.

J.F.: Uhhuh.

D.S.: Hubert Hoover's Hideaway.

J.F.: They autographed that and ... uh, ... gave to me when they returned the pictures.

D.S.: ~~That's~~ Darwin's handwriting alright.

J.F.: I might have met him, but I'm not sure.

D.S.: Yea.

J.F.: And, when they bought the book in and the pictures ...
uh, ... they ...

I don't think he heard you!

Oh, you always been a starch democrat?

J.F.: Oh, yes and no.

D.S.: (Laughed) Uh huh! O.K. Uh, ... even though you did like Hoover, right?

J.F.: Very much. ... And, ... I wanted to ... when the election ... I could see, like the Republican party and President Hoover knew he was going to be defeated. And, ... uh, ... Major Long invited some of us to come up and have a picnic lunch with them So, he had horses for us, it was three of us, I think. ... Cave, Tom Early, and I went, I don't know why he invited me, but never the less, he worked with Tom Early. Tom Early fished for Mr. Hoover and he knew him personally ...

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: ... and, ... went for ... This was just before the election in 1932, and we rode on horseback up to the top of Fork Mountain. And, it was a platform up there, a wooden

Tape
stopped
here
when J.S.
on to 1

platform, and a ladder. And, they had to climb up this ladder about twenty feet to get on there. And, there a little Marine Corporal served the lunch, there and ... we ... I wanted to take my lunch and serve from the platform. So, that little Corporal was so nice, I wanted to take my plate down there and eat with him and the horses, but I knew I couldn't do it.

D.S.: (Laughed)

J.F.: And, Major Long , I never did like that.

D.S.: Yea.

J.F.: But, ... that was the last time, I think, I was with Major Long.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: But, before that it was with the President.

D.S.: Yea. I was just thinking as you were talking, imagine if he had settled in West Virginia, ... I am ... I have a feeling we would have never had the Shenandoah National Park, ... because he was the prime pusher of the drive, wasn't he?

J.F.: Absolutely! And, George Freeman Pollock was the Father of the Shenandoah National Park.

D.S.: Right.

J.F.: And, Mr. Hoover was the Father of Skyline Drive.

D.S.: Right.

J.F.: And, when I read this book, ... When they gave me this book, I skipped over from place to place, and just recently I read the whole thing. And, I enjoyed it just as much as if I, ... it was just like yesterday.

D.S.: Right.

J.F.: So, I was so familiar with everything in that book.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Well, Darwin says you gave him most of the information that was in there.

J.F.: Oh, no! I have to disagree with him there because Christine Vest, I think, helped him more than any individual.

D.S.: Oh! Uhhuh. Yea. She was a very ... uh, ... cleaver woman, wasn't she?

J.F.: That's right. She was ... She had a .. a down to earth person.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: She was just a wonderful person, I thought.

D.S.: Yea. Right ... Oh, this has ... this takes you back, doesn't it, to beautiful days? Riding horseback from here up to that area, how long would it take?

J.F.: Well

D.S.: You had to go into Criglersville ...

J.F.: Up through there and then on up to Syria.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: But, to go up to the Golf Spring tract that, our land, Mr. Hoover's Camp was very closely then. We would go off to the left there at Criglers... and cross over Chapman's Mountain.

J.F.: And, we would go to that field, we had cattle in that field, in that day rather. And, we had cattle up in Franklin's Cliff area, up there at Haywood Mountain, we called it.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: Which was right close, I mentioned before, to Skyline Drive.

D.S.: Did you ever have much contact with any of the mountain people?

J.F.: Oh, yea. ... We, ... I knew most of them.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: Well, that is Madison County ... in the mountain area.

D.S.: Yea.

J.F.: And, when my Father bought this ... uh, ... My Father was quite astute, he didn't like to work, I have to say that. And, when he bought it, he had all these squatters on the mountain tract, ... and he took a Notary Public, uh, ... with him and went up there and had these mountain people sign these contracts, that they had the right to live there. ... They had built, ... they had rail fences in those days, they were something to see, and now they built these rail fences around maybe, thirty-five acres or twenty-five acres, and sometimes and a ... My Father told them if you not claimed this land, now, you prefectally ... we're prefectally willing to let you live here. So, he had those contracts Notarized and recorded at Madison Court in the Clerk's Office. And, then twenty years after that, or a little bit more, the Park came along and these people claimed that land. They claimed that, the cabins, and so on ..

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: My Father died in the mean time, so I knew I heard him talk to my Mother about taking this Mr. Graves up here, who was a Notary Public, and had him to take acknowledgment of it. So, when these people claimed ... uh, ... they didn't necessary claim it, but the appraisers for the

Park, ... went around and appraised this piece of land and that piece of land, and then when they would go to these mountain cabins, and they'd say, "Is this your land?" And, they'd say, "Yes." And, ... then they claimed it, in a way.

D.S.: Yea. Uhhuh. (Laughed)

J.F.: And, they claimed it. Had to give Mr. , Mr. Broyles, and so on. Uh, ... claimed to that land, and cabin, and so on. And, they ... those mountain people lived on chestnuts, and / , and cabbage, and hogs. ... They had hogs, and the hogs lived on acorns. ... And, had so many acorns one year my Father, who had a private , drove the hogs, from our home here in Madison, up there to the mountain and left them up there for the acorn season, for one year.

D.S.: Mmmmmum.

J.F.: And, that was only one time we did that.

D.S.: Yea.

J.F.: But, the mountain people raised quite a few hogs and it didn't cost them much to raise them.

D.S.: Yea. ... Uhhuh.

J.F.: And, I went into those cabins. On one occasion went into one of these cabins (Coughed), excuse me, went into one of these cabins and the girl was sick. The girl seemed to be in pain, or maybe . She wanted an aspirin, ... uh, ... she asked me if I had an aspirin, I said, "No." I came back to Madison and got a bottle of five hundred aspirin and sent them up to her.

D.S.: Mmmmmum.

J.F.: And, uh ... we contacted the people ... not all through taxes, ; some of them paid taxes and some didn't.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: They didn't have to pay tax on that land, but they were accessed just the same.

D.S.: Did you ever know Dr. Ross? Charles Ross' father?

J.F.: Quite well.

D.S.: I have heard that he was a very deligent doctor, ... went all through the mountains.

J.F.: That's right, on horseback.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: Yes, regardless of the weather ...

D.S.: Yea.

J.F.: ... if freezing weather, rainy weather, he never ... he couldn't turn them people down. He knew them personally, and he ... he loved them, and he ... How he lived as long as he did, .. something that he did ..

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: ... with this ... uh, ... weather.

D.S.: He sounds like the kind of doctors they use to have back in the seventeenthundreds, doesn't he?

J.F.: Yes. In seventeen hundreds?

D.S.: Yes. (Laughed)

J.F.: (Laughed) I don't know, that's way too far back for me.

D.S.: (Laughing) But, he sound like that kind of doctor, you know, would go out in all kind of weather to all people.

J.F.: Yea.

D.S.: Pretty wonderful. Uh, .. with your knowledge of the mountain people, ... would you say .. they were lazy, ...

uh, ... hard working, or what?

J.F.: Well, they're very intelligent, ... and I can't say they were lazy, ... and .. uh, .. not ambitious. I was told, and how true this is, I do not know, that when Lafayette came over here, he brought some French soldiers with him, and these French soldiers stayed over here and they went around Nethers Mill and over in the mountain and settled, up in the mountain there. Why, they did that, I do not know. That was when the Revolutionary War, ...uh, ...

D.S.: Yea. ... Uhhuh.

J.F.: ... uh, that was in ...

D.S.: 1775.

J.F.: 17 ... 80s?

D.S.: Yea.

J.F.: 17 uh, ... 1776?

D.S.: Yea.

J.F.: Well, it was in that time. But, those mountain people just ... uh, ... they didn't have any education. But, I've known some of them that, ... I'd tell them that ... I sold a cow that weighted so much and I got so much for it, and they could figure it up in their head before I could figure it with a pencil.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: It's ... that's just amazing.

D.S.: That's right. Yea. Well, ... uh, ... were they honest?

J.F.: Yes, ... most of them, ... I would say so.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Do you think they were healthy? Healthy?

J.F.: Healthy? ... Well, ... now, ... no not healthy. ... Uh, ... no, I don't think that span of life is as long then

as it would be today, ... if they were living.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Uhhuh.

J.F.: They had a lot of the children died of diptheria in the mountain, I heard my Mother say.

D.S.: Oh, yea.

J.F.: And, she was born in 1860, ... and in her time, they lost so many children from diptheria.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: In the mountain area especially.

D.S.: Yea. Right.

J.F.: They were ingenious in ways. ... Now, there's a little basket, ... uh, ... "Mary, get that little basket, please." I want to show Mrs. Smith that, how tedious it was. ... And, wait a minute. ...

D.S.: Oh yes, we need a description of these. Uh, ... now these baskets, they used what? Did you say, White Oak?

J.F.: White Oak.

D.S.: How would they get these small little strips, ... do you know?

J.F.: Oh, ... they did it by hand, but ... now, ... how they did it with a knife.

D.S.: With a knife?

J.F.: And, they had nothing ... you would call those splinters, more or less?

D.S.: Yea. It's ...

J.F.: I don't see how ...

D.S.: ...how small it is, and the work.

J.F.: That's right.

D.S.: And, for seventy-five cents! It's terrible! All this work for that amount.

J.F.: Seventy-five cents.

D.S.: And, I bet Nicholson didn't get seventy-five cents for it, the store made something.

J.F.: I ... probably, he sold it to them for fifty cents.

D.S.: Yea.

J.F.: He might have got fifty cents at the most for it.

D.S.: Aaah! What year was this, do you recall?

J.F.: 1920 ... 3 or 4, 1923 or 1924.

D.S.: Alright! They were selling large baskets for thirty-five cents.

J.F.: Yes. ... I would think this would be more expensive than a large basket.

D.S.: There are no nails, no glue, ... just held together by good weaving.

J.F.: That's right.

D.S.: Aaaaah! Unbelievable, isn't it? Really is!

J.F.: I just wish people could see it, it sets in on my dresser. I think we ought to put it in the Living Room, more people could see it.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: But, I ... I don't know weather they would appreciate it or not.

D.S.: Maybe not, unless you explain to them that this is put together..... These are called Century Baskets, did you know that?

J.F.: Huh-un.

D.S.: Because they are the same ... Well, once they are made properly, they last for centuries. And, Williamsburg calls them Century Baskets.

J.F.: We ... Now, you're seeing more large baskets, like that wood basket over there. Now, that was probably made by the Nicholsons, I don't know where I got that or when. Mrs. Fray got it.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: But, they're not ... they are on the rough side, ... see? ... Of course, ... it takes little time to make those baskets.

D.S.: Uhhuh. And, they hold up.

J.F.: I don't know if these people making baskets now are using ... uh, ... uh, ... what they call . They say ... You got that cut off?

D.S.: No, it is on.

J.F.: Huh?

D.S.: It's on.

J.F.: I don't know weather I used the right word or not, they get these staves by hand.

D.S.: Yea. Uhhuh.

J.F.: And, it's easier to get those large staves out, like the large baskets, than it is to get these little splinters they used in the others.

D.S.: Sure. Yea.

J.F.: They have to ... after they get those out, they.... something like this, they have to sandpaper them to make them smooth and ...

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: But, they don't do on the large baskets.

D.S.: Did you see any they colored with poke berries?

J.F.: Colored with poke berries?

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: Not to my knowledge.

D.S.: I've heard they did that too. Yea. ... Well, can you think of anything else about Hoover, to tell us?

Mrs.F.: On Hoover Day ... On Hoover Day, the plaque that Admiral Strauss put on the Court House, might be of interest.

D.S.: Oh, yea!

J.F.: Yes. Now, Admiral Strauss, I don't know weather you knew him or not?

D.S.: No.

J.F.: Uh, ... he was a New Yorker, and he was a special friend of Mr. Hoover. And, ... uh, .. in 1960 or 1961, he wrote to the Board of Supervisors in Madison County and asked that he might ... uh ... bought a plaque or something in appreciation of Mr. Hoover, because Mr. Hoover was living then.

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D.S.: Yes.

J.F.: And, the Supervisors didn't apply to it. And, I happened to be at a party with Marshall, ... uh, ... with Admiral Strauss, ... uh, ... at that time. And, he told me just what I told you. And, the next meeting of the Supervisors I took it up with them and he wanted to present Madison County with some type of plaque recognizing President Hoover's Day in Madison County. And, they asked me to take it up with Admiral Strauss, which I did. And, to have ... He presented a plaque, and Eldon Graves, you spoke with Graves?

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: Make the presentation, and I asked Historian, Claude Yowell to make a few announcements, but Admiral said he didn't want any ceremony, he just wanted a simple recognition of the

presentation of this plaque. And, ... so Mr. , uh, ... Admiral Strauss and I were present there.

D.S.: Where is the plaque?

J.F.: Down at the Court House, on the outside

Mrs.F.: It might be an interest to know also it is a bronze plaque, a small bronze plaque on the front of the Court House. And, since that time, since the Court House has been entered into the Historic Preservation Program, uh, ... and that ... they passed a ruling nothing else can be attached to the Court House because of the brick work.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

Mrs.F.: That one plaque is permanently placed on the front of the Court House.

D.S.: Oh, that's beautiful! That is wonderful!

J.F.: The remark, this book here, I don't know weather it shows it. ... I tried to read this book while Mrs. Fray was driving. *end!*

D.S.: Aaah! (Laughed) That's a good way to do.

Tape stopped here
You mean the Buracker boy with the opossum? Yea.

J.F.: Now, they had the Winchester festival, Apple Blossom Festival over , they asked Madison County to have something in the parade pertainning to President Hoover's Camp, so we had a cabinet maker here, to make a replica of the President's Camp and put it on a truck, a flat bed truck, and enter that in the parade and have Ray Buracker. Now, I don't know weather he had a opossum in his hand or not, on the truck. I wasn't at the program in Winchester.

D.S.: I wouldn't put it pass him. (Laughing)

J.F.: He was riding on the truck with this replica and they had it decorated with... uh, ... uh, ... mountain ... uh, ... laural, not laural, but ferns, and ...

D.S.: Aaah! Yea.

J.F.: ... and the Pines, Hemlocks.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: And, the people just tore off that and when the truck got through the parade it didn't have anything on it except the President's camp and Ray Buracker.

D.S.: (Laughed)

J.F.: They tore all the decorations off as souvenirs.

D.S.: (Laughed) Oh, my goodness.

Take out D.S.: Alright, you tell about going up to Black Rock.

J.F.: Alright. After the advents at Honeymoon Hut the following night, ... uh, ... we, the next day ... drove in my car and traveled over this mountain road, just a ... just a wagon trail, out to Big Meadows and we parked our car at the Big Meadows, what is now Big Meadows Hotel.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: And, we walked up to Black Rock. When we got up to Black Rock, she said, "I just got back last week from the, uh, ... Mid-West and the West and seen St. Marie and Canada," and so on. She said, "This is the Most beautiful sight that I've ever seen."

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: Including all the Western, and the Rockies, and California, and ... uh, ... uh, ... Canada, and so on. And, I thought that ... It was a beautiful afternoon.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: The Shenandoah Valley was just like a picture. And, we ... just the two of us, walking up to Big Rock, ... uh, .. Black Rock.

D.S.: One question, I was just wondering, ... uh, ... did you .. do you feel that more trees are there now than there were before the Park took over?

J.F.: Oh, millions.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: Oh, now that's one thing that I am disappointed in ... uh ...

D.S.: The views.

J.F.: The views. Now, when ... when Mr. Hoover One Sunday morning he, and Admiral Boone, and Col. Strauss wouldn't go with us, ... because it's too early in the morning. And, I think Mrs. Hoover was in the party. I think it is in the book here. And, they rode on horseback from down President's Camp, early camp life up there.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: And, when he saw the views of the Shenandoah Valley, he, from the Piedmont, Virginia, he said, "This is too beautiful not to be seen by millions of people." He told his advisors then that, "We are going to build a road, we got to have a Skyline Drive." But, he didn't call it that then.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: This is the beginning of the Skyline Drive.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: And, how they built that Skyline Drive in the time that they did, ... it is just unbelievable.

D.S.: Huh! ... And, those rock walls are still standing.

J.F.: That rock wall, yes. And, ... uh, ... too, that was ... in the drought era, you see, that was in 1930 and Mr. Hoover request was to employ as many local people as possible in building the Skyline Drive and everything.

D.S.: Uhhuh. But, at that time the views were more spectacular.

J.F.: Spectacular views. You could see ... uh, ... the Piedmont or the Shenandoah Valley from each ... most all along the Drive.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: Now, it's just the look-out places.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Yea.

Mrs.F.: There was no smog in those days either.

D.S.: No.

Mrs.F.: It was a lot clearer than it is now.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Uh, ... the mountain people, of course, did keep chopping trees down and using the bark for, ... uh, ... they peeled bark and all the rest of it. I'm wondering, if there would have been trees if they continued living there?

J.F.: Oh yes, they just chopped down the large trees and, you know, the hugh Oak trees and take the bark off and sell it to the tannery at Luray.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.F.: And, a lot of it was hauled out by mule teams. But, they had a big reel up there, ... a hugh reel up on top of the mountain. ... Now, weather that was in more than one place I don't know. And, they had a trolley car to let the bark go down the mountain, just going and theis engine with this long cable would pull those trolley cars back up on top of the mountain.

D.S.: Where was this located?

J.F.: I saw one of those reels at one time when looking up cattle, I was just a kid. ... That was a hugh thing, and where it was I can't say to save my soul. I don't know weather it was on top of the mountain at Big Meadows or weather it was near Skyline or ... I think it was near Big Meadows area because I saw it when we were looking for cattle. And, ... this ...

D.S.: I think I heard of that.

J.F.: ... was back in 1910....., or 8, or 9, or 10, and whatever happened to that system. There was a man killed, I heard my Mother and Father speaking of this man killed riding on the trolley cars and the cable broke. He was killed as a result of that run away car.

D.S.: Sssssh! I wonder if any of that would show on the map that I have here? We must remember to look for that when we are through. I don't want to tire you, ... uh, ... but I am just wondering if there's anything further you can tell us, so it'll be there historically forever.

J.F.: I'll think of it tomorrow.

D.S.: (Laughing) Always the way, isn't it?

J.F.: That's right.

D.S.: But, you don't know how I Thank-You, both of you, very ... very much. And, the Park Thanks-You and the historians Thanks-You. This has been wonderful.