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Oral History Interview: James A. Harmon

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EAS: Okay, today is February 21, 1975, and my name is Elizabeth Ann Smarr, and this interview is with Mr. James Harmon of 317 Elaine Court, Huntington, West Virginia. All right, now, Mr. Harmon, ah, you were born, you say, in 1890.

JAH: Eighteen and ninety on a farm, my grandfather's farm.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: And, ah, but it was about two miles about above Red House, West Virginia, and I, we lived there with Grand, Grandfather after Grandmother died and, ah.

EAS: What were your grandparents' names?

JAH: Albert, John Albert Harmon [EAS: Uh huh.] and, ah, Sarah Harmon.

EAS: Right, and, ah, and your parents were Hannah Elizabeth Miller Harmon.

JAH: And, John W. Harmon was my father, and Elizabeth was my mother.

EAS: Right, and you said you had five brothers and two sisters.

JAH: That's right.

EAS: And, ah, are any of them living now? Are any of them living now?

JAH: Oh, yeah. I've got, ah, there's, ah, three, three brothers living and one sister.

EAS: And, ah, the brothers you have living would be Albert, Benton, and Paul.

JAH: Uh huh.

EAS: And, your sister, ah, Sarah [JAH: Ruth, Ruth.], Sarah Ruth, yes.

JAH: Ruth Honaker.

EAS: Uh huh, and, ah, you said your, ah, great-grandfather, George Harmon, settled.

JAH: We settled in 1806 down in right there in Red House, above Red House, in the town of Red House. There's no use for me to be recording there now is they?

EAS: No.

JAH: You're not now are you? (Break in tape)

EAS: All right, so, ah, your great-grandfather, George, settled in Putnam County which is part.

JAH: Now, as it is now.

EAS: As it is now.

JAH: It was before, you know, in just before Cabell [EAS: And, Kanawha.] created what, Kanawha County, it was all in Kanawha County, but they took a piece off of Cabell and, ah, Kanawha and made Putnam.

EAS: Oh, all right, now, and, ah, he had seven sons and two daughters.

JAH: (Laughs)

EAS: Right?

JAH: Well, now, I had five sons and five daughters.

EAS: Well, your great-grandfather.

JAH: Oh, seven, seven, yeah, Great-grandfather [EAS: Right.] had seven sons and, and two daughters. Now, you can look. He must have had seven sons (laughs). He built that, he built this old log house.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: See that logs, see them logs there?

EAS: Yes.

JAH: You see that, ah, license tag there?

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: I put that up there, and we'd just moved over there in Grandfather's house, and, ah, Mother and Dad was cleaning up around the yard (laughs) [EAS: Oh.] when that picture was taken.

EAS: They just up and took the picture.

JAH: I remember sticking that tag up there. Now, can you see the date, the numbers on?

EAS: Ah, something three dash three two o, I think.

JAH: Now, that's, that's how many, how many cars was in there in that time in the State of West Virginia.

EAS: What, 320?

JAH: (Laughs)

EAS: In the whole West Virginia?

JAH: Well, that was the license, you know.

EAS: Right.

JAH: That's when they went to issuing license.

EAS: Oh, yes, now, now you yourself had five sons and two daughters. You yourself had five sons and two daughters.

JAH: Five, no, I had five daughters and five sons.

EAS: Oh, oh, you had five of each.

JAH: Yeah, I didn't, I wasn't partial.

EAS: (Laughs) Oh, you wanted to.

JAH: See, I got one, one ear and have to use a hearing aid on it. And, ah, sometimes it don't, ah, pick up stuff like it ought to.

EASL Oh, okay, now. Now, you told me your earliest recollection was when you were three or four, and you and a girl from a neighboring farm were cracking walnuts.

JAH: Yeah, that's, that's right. Ara Mitchell, Ara Mitchell, poor thing; she's in a bad shape now, too.

EAS: Umm, and, ah, then you said you remembered this, because there was a big red.

JAH: Big red rooster (laughs) come up and grabbed a big kernel she'd laid out there, and, boy, she had a fit (laughter). She threwed a rock at him.

EAS: Oh.

JAH: That was, I can remember that, oh, I was just, oh, well, wasn't over three years old, I don't know.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: Just a little tot.

EAS: (Laughs) And, this is on the farm that your father had.

JAH: No, no, we was living over. There was two, they built, ah, George built two logs houses. One was, now, this is on the, where the two creeks ravines one. Little Warner Creek, you know, and it had another branch coming off from the other way. That's the reason he settled there on account of that water business, you know. And, he, he had a good settlement there, you know. We had water coming both ways, and that, ah, was at the foot of a hill he built small log house. Well, I guess that's when the boy got married or something.

EAS: (Laughs) Oh, yeah.

JAH: They will get married, you know.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: Course, he, ah, built that log house that log house over there that we lived in before we moved in with Grandpa.

EAS: Right, and so you grew up on this farm.

JAH: Oh, yeah, this, he had a 350-acre farm there, and that's what we had to contend with when after Grandmother died, you know. Well, Dad, Dad stayed all the rest of his, ah, Dad's, Grandpa's children had gone off, you know. Some of them who lived out Paradise and Red House. Had one son that never did get married.

EAS: (Laughs) Oh, well.

JAH: That was Frank.

EAS: Well, now, you told me one day you were riding a harrow, and you got off of it to get a drink of water and when you got back on, you rammed [JAH: Yeah, oh, yeah.] a tooth through your foot.

JAH: Yeah, Dad, I was around 12 years old then, I think, and, ah, I got to step up on the harrow and had a seat there. It had a tooth harrow, you know, a drag harrow they called them. And, ah, I stepped up and picked up the lines, you know, and the horses got in a hurry, started before I said, said, "Get up (laughter)," and my foot slipped off and went down under the harrow. Oh, I got a right down through here that tooth run right down through that right there [EAS: Oh.] and, ah, I had, ah, I got them stopped right quick; and I had to dig my foot out, you know, and scoot that down off that old harrow tooth.

EAS: Oh, dear.

JAH: And, well, I went over the house and tied up the team up there, and I think Dad and Benton come back over and see I was gone, why, they knew there was something wrong, so they come on over the house. Mother had me up, setting with my foot up in a chair, you know, and bleeding pretty good using turpentine (laughs). That's a time back there, you know. You had, ah, something that would killed poison.

EAS: All right [JAH: So.] you didn't have any doctors in the area.

JAH: Oh, no, we never went to the doctor.

EAS: Not, and what, did your mother do all the doctoring, your grandmother?

JAH: Oh, yeah, yeah, just, and that, and they used turpentine on. That kill the germs (laughs).

EAS: Oh, that would kill just about anything.

JAH: (Laughs) Oh, yeah and almost me.

EAS: Now, and you told me, now, you had a, ah, sixth-grade education.

JAH: Yes, that was as far as I got in, ah, school.

EAS: And, it was in a little two-room schoolhouse.

JAH: Uh huh, yeah.

EAS: And, then, you first began working on the river at age 14.

JAH: That's right on the Steamer Calvert.

EAS: And, ah, your brother was a purser.

JAH: He was, my brother, one of them was on the Evergreen and another one was on the Greenwood.

EAS: Which ones were they?

JAH: Why, the oldest one was on the, the Green, the well, first he was on the Neva.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: He was on the Neva first.

EAS: Was that the Steven.

JAH: That was Steven. He was the oldest, and he was on the Neva first, and then he, when he got off of her, why, went on the Greenwood as purser.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: And, ah, I'd been there working on, I'd worked on the Calvert, and the J. Q. Dickison, the Winifred, and the Calderwood as flunky (laughter). I had that thing in mind. I had other things in mind. I liked engines, you know, and I, all the spare time I had I was down in the engine room checking up on stuff. And, then, then I went on the, well, went on the Calvert, then the cook got sick on the J. Q. Dickison, and they took me over on the J. Q. Dickison as cook. Happened the day they took me over there, why, oh, the captain's wife and daughter was making a trip. Well (laughs), and I made a dinner for them, and I made a rice pudding. Oh, I, I, I was a authorized cook then, you know. I made that, and captain's wife came back and asked me how I made that (laughter).

EAS: Oh.

JAH: Then, I, she said that was the best rice pudding she ever tasted.

EAS: You remember which captain this was?

JAH: That was Captain Calvert.

EAS: Captain Calvert ...

JAH: Yeah, he was the one of the owners the boat, you know.

EAS: Oh.

JAH: Mills Calvert, Calvert was on the Calvert, and then, and, ah, I think they was Jim Calvert was the name of the captain on the J. Q. Dickison.

EAS: Oh, ah, well, you said you were a cook, but didn't you start out as a cook's helper?

JAH: That's right.

EAS: And, then, you had some and you told me you had an incident where some guy kept waking you up at night, and you punched him, and you had to leave the ship the next day.

JAH: Well, that was, that was, no, he, I, I woke him up.

EAS: Oh! You woke him up.

JAH: Yeah, I just, that was after I become, went on the Greenwood as cabinwatchman.

EAS: Oh.

JAH: I was cabinwatchman, then my brother was purser, you know. I was cabinwatchman. You know, that's when the, now, have you got it that way or.

EAS: Yeah, yes, ah, I have it in my notes over here where you said, ah, that you got in a fight one of the people who
[JAH: Well.] was sleeping on the pool table, I think you said.

JAH: He was sleeping on the, on the, ah, dining table.

EAS: Oh, the dining table.

JAH: Table, big dining table, big dining table there in the cabin there that the passengers eat on [EAS: Uh huh.] and the crew eat on, you know.

EAS: Oh, yes, I have it here. And, he, ah.

JAH: I come through the cabin, you know, and this fellow, he was second clerk, he was asleep, and Bill Dennis, the pilot, was asleep. Had laid up in the fog [EAS: Uh huh.], and, ah, Bill Dennis was laying on the cots, and he was laying on this table, you know, big dining room-table. They had a big covers on about that thick, you know, from where they wasn't using them. They just left, covered them up with that. So, and he, I come through there was a newspaper laying right by, and I just picked the corner of it up and just drug it up off of him like, you know. I didn't think anything of it. I started on into the washroom right there making my rounds, and all at once I, he hit me right in the back and knocked me clear in the washroom (laughs). I didn't, he didn't knock me down, but he hit me, and I was on the move, and I went on in there in a hurry and bounced off of the wall, and I just shoved him back out in the cabin, come back on the bound and shoved him back out in the cabin, and I hit him, I hit him right square in the mouth.

EAS: Mmm.

JAH: I loosened all them teeth, and he, he fell right on that big table, dining room table there and laid there a long time. And, Bill Dennis was sitting, was a sleeping on that cot, and he heard the lick, you know. He said, he woke up, "What the hell is going on (laughter)?" He was a laying on that table, so, I, I told him what was going on. Said, "Come on, let's go up in the pilot house." And, we went up to the pilot house. He said, "You know, that tickled me to death. Somebody had to tame him. I'm glad you done it (laughter)." I said, I said, "Well, I didn't, I didn't mean to hurt him much." I, I come back down in about a half hour to go around in the cabin. I had to make my rounds, and I come there. He was still laying there just like, like he fell, and I went back up in the pilot house and said, "Bill, you better go down and see about him. He's still laying right there on that table." And, he, we come back down there, and Bill went over, and shook him, and rolled him over, and he was roused up, you know, and there was a pool of blood there just about as big as a plate [EAS: Yeah.] where he was a laying there; and I, I was uneasy about it, so, but, ah, he got him up there and washed up. He straightened him up a little bit. And, ah, I went on to bed at five o'clock before all the, as soon as I woke up the crew, the kitchen crew, why, I went to bed. I got up about noon. We was going to Pittsburgh. My brother said, "Captain Jesse Hughes wants to see you." I said, "I don't want to see him (laughter)." And, I said, "You give me my money; as soon as he gets docked, I'm getting off of her."

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: And, I went on in Pittsburgh, and I got off there and walked from one wharf boat over to the other one, and I went in on the I, the J, I. C. Woodward, a side-wheel boat. I, I went over there and asked if they needed a striker. "We sure do."

EAS: What.

JAH: I said, now (laughs).

EAS: What is a striker?

JAH: A striker, he, he assists the engineer, and he, ah, handles one side of the boat, one wheel. He handles that, he operates it just like the engineer.

EAS: Oh.

JAH: And, ah, so, I went on her and stayed on there till, ah, about a year, and they put her on the way. But, during that time I was on there, this, I don't know whether I mentioned this to you or not, but I was coming down Smithfield Street just about halfway down the block to the levy, and something bumped up agin me, my leg. And, I didn't, I didn't know what it was till I looked down there. Here was a bulldog weighed about 80 pounds, and he come up there and rubbed up agin me on purpose.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: I looked down. I said, "Where you going?" He just shook all over, you know, and just told me, "I'm going with you (laughter)." So, he went right down that boat, followed me all the way down there. He wouldn't go back. I couldn't get him to go back. I said, "Well, there's something about me you like. I guess I'm going to let you come on." I just went on down there. I was only 16 years old. I went down there, and he followed me right on the boat. And, I went back into the engine room and deck room. And, I introduced him to the crew back there (laughter), and I, I told him, I said, "Now, I'm going upstairs, you stay here with these fellows."

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: That old dog seemed to know just what I said. I went upstairs. When I come back down there, he was right out there though (laughs).

EAS: He was waiting for you.

JAH: And, he stayed on that boat till we laid up, went, went to the ways, put her on the ways to do work on her. And, I was, I come home. I told the watchman, I said, "You take care of him till I get back." When I went back, him, him and the dog both was gone (laughter). Never did see him

anymore.

EAS: Oh.

JAH: Now, that was, he just, he was my pal. Oh, boy, anybody lay a hand on me, he took them over.

EAS: Mmm, yeah.

JAH: You couldn't raise your hand at me unless he, he'd raise bristles.

EAS: Oh, wow, and this was, you were 16 at this time and.

JAH: About 16, uh huh.

EAS: And, ah, you got your engineer's license when you were 21.

JAH: Uh huh [EAS: Ah, from.] well, here on this boat. This was, I got my engineer's license, and I went right down there and went on that boat to relieve a man.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: He wanted off on vacation. That's my first log time, and I was, I was, and that was some of the crew there were nice guys, and I.

EAS: Uh huh, Steamer Courier [JAH: Uh huh.] in 1911.

JAH: Uh huh, uh huh. And, then I, I piloted that boat and engineered her both at the same time.

EAS: Hmm.

JAH: The pilot wanted, Wilber Chapman called me asked me if I could come up to the pilot house a while. I said, "Yes." He had to go downstairs (laughs), and I went into the pilot house and piloted her a while. Nobody in the engineer, in the engine room. Well, I went up there, and he was gone about, oh, about 20 minutes. I had everything set, everything, you know, before. I knew it, it would be all right. And, I was the only man to ring a bell (laughter), so I wasn't going to stop. I'd keep her going. Oh, a lot of things

that way that happened. We'd have to relieve a man or something. Why, he didn't want to wake up somebody, you know, and so, I, I went right up on the roof in the pilot house (laughter).

EAS: Well, ah, you, you told me your pilot's license from a George W. Dameron.

JAH: Yeah, George W. Dameron's Engineer's License.

EAS: Right, and it was a six-hour test, and you only got three questions at a time.

JAH: Yeah (laughs). I kept, I kept, I, I kept going back in there to have him doing, doing. He said, "You better fill them out what I tell them questions." I said, "I, I answered whatever you ask, ask me to (laughter)." And, I was six hours, and most of them took them, oh, two days in there, but I had, I had studied all of that stuff. And, I didn't have to. Now, they were figuring out the safety valve, four and a quarter, four and a eighth-inch diameter and weight, certain weight on that, and I had a mind then. So, I went up there. I didn't, I didn't work it out. I worked it out in, in just signs. I put it in signs, just wrote it out in signs there. I knew just what the answer was.

EAS: Right.

JAH: I got out and figured it in the pumps, and the stables, and all that stuff. I, I figured, I figured them all, so three or four of them, and there was only three, I believe, he could have give me. And, I, I got them off by heart (laughs).

EAS: Uh huh, and, and you said you kept going back to see if you passed [JAH: Uh huh.], and finally you got, Mr. Dameron tested you, but you got your license from Mr. Peyton.

JAH: It was Peyton was there. They called, he had made them out, you know.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: He said, "Come back in next trip in." I was on the Greenland then, and I went back up there, and Dameron was there. Peyton

was there. He said, "What's your name?" I said, "Harmon."
He just reached in the desk and [EAS: Handed you your license.]
handed me my license (laughs). He was a nice guy, too.

EAS: Where was this?

JAH: Ah, Peyton was, ah, he was a hull inspector.

EAS: Well, right, but where was it?

JAH: In Cincinnati.

EAS: In Cincinnati where you took your test and everything.

JAH: Uh huh, in the Cincinnati Post Office.

EAS: And, ah, you didn't work on the river continually, you know.

JAH: Oh, no, oh, no. I, in 19 and, ah, ah, 17, I left the river,
and I was off of it for about seven years [EAS: Ah.]; I
went to work for the Kelly's Creek Colliery Company. Then,
I went to Rauncefourt to the power plant. And, I stayed in
the power plant up there six years [EAS: Mmm.], and I came
back that, and then, of course, I, I, I went down on the, the
Lee Line. I was with the Lee Line that was, ah, I'm getting
ahead of the story, with the Lee Line, Memphis for I just
little over a year. I took malaria fever and come home
(laughter). I was on there, and then that, did you have
that [EAS: Yeah.] the head, the head of this other.

EAS: Well, ah, I have, ah, well, in from 1917 to 1919 that you
worked for the Kelly's Creek Colliery Company.

JAH: Uh huh, and I went to the, ah, went to the, ah, Rauncefourt
and the power plant.

EAS: Uh huh, well, and you said 1919 also would have been ...

JAH: Nineteen and thirteen, what have I got in 1913 back there?

EAS: I don't see any 1913. You say you worked for Black Betsey
for a while.

JAH: Yeah, I worked there. Went on the front boat for a while,

and that was back in 1916.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: And, I worked for a while on there, and couse I worked on the Otto Marmet and the Sally, and I left them, and I was supposed to work with, on them everytime they went out, but they'd come in, lay up, you know, and then have a trip down and then a trip down. I made quite a few trips on them then. Then, I'd go back on some other jobs somewhere; work it a few times. Seems, seems like everytime when I come, come along, why, I find something else to do.

EAS: Right.

JAH: And, but back in there, now, a while ago, I, I gave you, ah EAS: Well, you gave me., where I left, ah, in 1911, I went down to Evansville.

EAS: Ah, I don't think you did. I have, you know, a list of some of the boats you said you worked on.

JAH: Well, the, the, ah, Bowling Green and the, that's Evansville Indiana. That's, that's where I left from 1911, that's where I went next to the Bowling Green off of the Courier. If you, if you don't have that, ah.

EAS: Well, I have, ah, here's some of the ones I have. You worked on the Calvert, and the J. Q. Dickison, and the Winifred, which was the F. M. Stanton JAH: Yeah., and the W. B. Calderwood.

JAH: That was when I was on, I worked both of them. I worked in the galley on both of them. Then, I went and engineered both of them, both of them later on.

EAS: Right (laughs). And, ah, the Greenwood.

JAH: Greenwood, yes, and then went from the Greenwood to the I. C. Woodward.

EAS: Uh huh, and the Merry-Go-Round.

JAH: Yeah, that Merry-Go-Round, though, that, that should have

been up there, that should have been up there ahead of the Greenwood.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: And, it was up in there. Now, that, that's where I left that Merry-Go-Round and went with, went on the Greenwood.

EAS: Uh huh, and, ah, the Kanawha.

JAH: Uh huh, the I. C. Woodward. I went on the Kanawha, ah, the Greenwood, the Kanawha should come after the I. C. Woodward.

EAS: Uh huh. And, ah, then there's, ah, Tacoma.

JAH: Yeah, that, ah, that, ah, that came after I was, ah, was on the I. C. Woodward in 1907 [EAS: Uh huh.] and, ah, after that I come over the Tacoma as striker.

EAS: And, then, ah, the Greenland.

JAH: And, that's the last one I run striker on, and I got my license there.

EAS: And, all right. Now, I have the Courier and, ah, the Bowl, and then I have.

JAH: Bowling Green.

EAS: Bowling Green, and then there's several I have several from the Lee Line [JAH: Yeah.] that you worked on.

JAH: Well, that's, that's, that's it. That's Tac, rotation. Now, I can, I can show you the boats in rotation if you would like to see them.

EAS: All right.

JAH: I can show you the boats in rotation that I worked on.

EAS: Oh, now, that's Captain, yeah, that's Captain Jesse Hughes.

JAH: Captain Jesse Hughes.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: (Laughs) We were on good terms and later on. I just figured up last night how many. Now, that started in here.

EAS: Okay.

JAH: And, now, this, this is that picture of that.

EAS: Right.

JAH: Now, here I was just starting in the Calvert and the J. Q. Dickison. Now, this was the Calderwood. That was the next one. She changed her name to the Eugene Dana Smith.

EAS: Right.

JAH: And, this was the Staunton, Staunton, and she was the Winifred. Changed that.

EAS: Uh huh. Let me move this down.

JAH: And, this is the, ah, the Evergreen that I was on when, ah, when, ah, and this is, this is the Greenwood, the one that I was one when I got the boy, hit the boy in the mouth (laughter), and this is the boat over here.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: This is my buddy, the striker in there.

EAS: Ah, Tom Jeffries.

JAH: Uh huh. Only he weighed about 225 pounds. He was my (break in tape). Now, this, now this is the Greenland.

EAS: Uh huh. Now, that's when you got your first engineer's license.

JAH: That's right. This was the Courier, the first boat I engineered.

EAS: Hmm.

JAH: And, here's the second.

EAS: Bowling Green.

JAH: And, here's the third one.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: That's, ah, the Lee Line, starting into the Lee Line.

EAS: Right.

JAH: This is the boat that they took me off of, and the next evening a tornado hit her and tore her all to pieces.

EAS: That's the Peter Lee.

JAH: Drowned one of the engineers. Then, this is the Stacker Lee. I'd taken these pictures at St. Louis. This was my girlfriend there that my pilot was hugging.

EAS: Oh (laughs).

JAH: And, this is the Stacker Lee, the boat that I was on that I had some trouble with the captain, and the next one that I went on was the Georgia Lee.

EAS: Right, uh huh.

JAH: Yeah, Georgia, Georgia Lee, and, ah, then, ah, the James Lee was, ah, I was on her for, oh, just one trip.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: But, this was the last boat I was a regular on [EAS: Right.], and I come back home. This is the boat I run on when after I got over the malaria fever, Plymouth.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: Than, ah, went back to the Otto Marmet and the Sally Marmet.

EAS: That was the Catherine Marmet.

JAH: Catherine, I mean Catherine. That was, see, I was on her in 1915, and then [EAS: Otto Marmet.] I worked on these boats,

was running these two.

EAS: Uh huh, the Sally Marmet.

JAH: These two. Then, after I left there, that was 19 and, ah, 17, I think it was. I went Kelly's Creek and operated a substation up there and then went in the mines and worked with a fellow on the machines.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: Then, ah, I left there and went to Rauncefort, West Virginia, and I stayed up there until 1923, and then I come back down and went on the Tom Green.

EAS: Oh.

JAH: Worked on the Tom Green.

EAS: Right.

JAH: Then, I stayed on the Tom Green until 1927, and then I got off of her, and I went to work for the Appalachian Power Company here in the power house and substation.

EAS: Uh huh. You didn't tell me about that.

JAH: Well, I thought of a lot of things in the substation. There, then I went from there, let me see, oh, yeah, they wanted to send me to Logan. They cut down on the force, took some turbines out, wanted to send me to Logan. I went up there and looked at the plant and turned down the job. Then, I went back to, see, that was in 28, I started a plumbing and electric shop up at Nitro, and I worked till the Depression got so bad I couldn't collect, and I sold it out. Then, I went to work for the, ah, the, ah, I think rubber. Well, anyhow, I went to work for the Monsanta people over there for a while.

EAS: Right.

JAH: And, then going from there, '30, oh, yes, I went back to work in 1930 working on the J. H. Hillman up in the, back 1929, '29, I believe that was '29. I went to work on the Hillman,

on the J. H. Hillman Towboat /EAS: Uh huh.7, and I went, they laid, laid up, and I went on the Julia Billus Wayne up there, and I was the last engineer that worked on her, but she burned up that winter when she was an excursion boat. She burnt up that winter that I laid her up.

EAS: Right. Didn't you have a fight? You told me a story about somewhere you had a fight with one of your captains who wanted to take a boat out, and you said it wasn't ready and something about you were fixing the boiler.

JAH: Oh, oh, that was, that was the last boat I worked on. That was the Omar. I didn't have any fight with him. I just wouldn't take the boat out. I told him it would burn the boilers.

EAS: And, it did.

JAH: Well, I was on the Ed Kenna, Kenna, Kenna, Kenna. I can't pronounce. Too many boats. Let's see, this is the Omar.

EAS: Hmm.

JAH: Isn't that the Omar?

EAS: Ah, I think it says A. C. something.

JAH: A. C. Akron, Akron.

EAS: It might be.

JAH: I can't see, you know. Here's the old, the Kenna.

EAS: This is the, ah, Harry Brown.

JAH: All right. That's the Harry Brown. I've got the wrong book, I guess. Now, that's the, that's the plant I retired from. This is the plant I retired from.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: The supervisor there at that plant. I've got that book somewhere. I ought to have them numbered.

EAS: Uh huh. Now, these we've gone through, I think. The Otto Marmet. You have worked on an awfully large number of boats.

JAH: Yeah, I was on a lot of them. Here's the J. H. Hillman. Here's that boat I, I went on. I was on this one. That's the Hillman.

EAS: Here's the Hillman, yeah.

JAH: This is the, that's the F. M., and I was on this boat in '38, and I was on this boat /EAS: Right. Now, that's the, that's the Ed Kenna./ coming up the river. I was coming up; this was the boat I was on. And, Wilber Chapman, he was captain, pilot on that boat Courier when. ~~we~~We both got our license about the same time.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: And, this, I was on this boat coming up the river down at Lock 30, and he sent engineer off on over on the Kenna and wanted me to come over there.

EAS: Uh huh, on the Omar.

JAH: Yeah.

EAS: That's the Sam Suit.

JAH: The Sam. Let's see, I was on her, too, but this was when he, he sent me, we come over there. This was the last boat I was on. And, we was coming at Lock 30, and he sent the other engineer over. Told to send me over there, which he didn't have any authority to do that. If I would have knew what it was, I wouldn't have come. So, I went over there, and the boat was a foaming, the boilers was a foaming, and the cylinders were all a squeaking, and a hollering, and a carrying on. They, they couldn't settle her down, her solids in the boilers, you know. She was dirty. I went over there, you know, and I fought her all the way to North Bend. And, I got the solids down to about 12 parts per million and, ah, in pretty good shape. He told me to clean the boilers when we got to North Bend. Then he said, "You think you can make it back to Huntington?" Well, I said, "Oh, if you don't want to drive her too much, why, I'll take

her back, but I can't drive her." And, I said, "You don't take a too big a tow." So, we picked up the two and come back over here and pulled her into the landing boat. I knocked the fires out of her and getting ready to clean the boilers. He was up in the office, and he come back down and said, "Put the fires back in. Why, I wanna take, have to take this two out." I said, "Wilber, I can get you out of here in about six hours." I said, "That's about the least think I can get." He said, "Oh, we've got to go right now." I said, "Take her!"

EAS: Uh huh, this is.

JAH: I said, "I wouldn't, I wouldn't put fire back in there, you couldn't hire me." I said, "I've been on these boats for a long time," and I said, "I've never burnt any boilers, and I'm not going to be responsible for them." Oh, he said, "I'll get another engineer." I said, "Get him!" I got him, and he come down there, and I told him, I him, him, he was a good friend. I told him, "These boilers going to burn if you take that boat out." So, they informed me a little later that she burnt seven sheets in the boiler. I, I, that, that, well, I didn't go on any, I said, "This is the end," and I never went back on the river anymore until after I retired, and then they called me, the captain on the, this excursion boat, the Queen.

EAS: Delta Queen.

JAH: Delta Queen. They called me. He was on, he was on the, ah, ah, the Belle of Louisville then. She's the Belle of Louisville. And, ah, they called me from Cincinnati and wanted me to go up there and bring her down. I turned them down. I didn't want to, and, so they kept calling me back and calling me back. He said, "Mr. Harmon, if you don't come up here and help me, I can't get out of here." I said, "I wouldn't let a friend down completely (laughs)." So, I went up there and got the old Avalon and brought her down to Middleport. There was an old engineer up there, Kanawaha River was on the boat there said, "You reckon a fellow could get a job on here?" I said, "Do you want a job on here?" He said, "Yeah." I said, "You stay right there and watch the engines till I go up to the top (laughs)." And, I went up and got, got the captain, said, "Captain, I've got you

an engineer." Well, I said, "I, when we get to Point Pleasant, I'm getting off and going home on the bus (laughter)!" I thought (laughs). I don't know how, how you had that, had that, but that's the way ...

EAS: Well, oh, ah, when we had our interview, you know, we didn't have, you know, we didn't have your boats in any order JAH: Uh huh. at all. I just had a few written down, ah, like the Tom Green, the Chris Green, and the, ah.

JAH: Then, I was on them, most of them.

EAS: Yeah.

JAH: The Tom Green, I was the regular engineer approximately four years on there.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: I was second engineer that ever engineered her, too.

EAS: Right, and then, then the Marmet Line that you were on.

JAH: Yeah, I, I was off and on, you know, the boats laid up, you know in the winter, ice, and laid up. The reason I was on 27 boats in my time (laughs).

EAS: That's a lot of boats.

JAH: Twenty-seven of them.

EAS: Right. And, then, you had a lot of other jobs besides them.

JAH: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, I, I just tell you them. Here's my oldest brother. That's him there sitting up there with his foot on the banister.

EAS: Uh huh, right.

JAH: That's my oldest brother. That's the Neva the boat I was on.

EAS: Captain Stolter.

JAH: Captain Stolter, uh huh. They're both dead now.

EAS: Right.

JAH: There's the old War Horse.

EAS: Hmm.

JAH: They're two of the largest boats, ah, was on the river, tow-boats.

EAS: Uh huh. This says Sprague.

JAH: Finley.

EAS: Finley, yes.

JAH: I've seen them many a time. I walked over on the Sprague and looked her over, and I said, "Oh, I don't want that thing (laughter)."

EAS: Too big for you or (laughs).

JAH: No, they wanted me to take, wanted me to take the Island Queen out. They called me to Cincinnati and wanted me to come down there.

EAS: Right, but, ah.

JAH: You've got that in there.

EAS: Yes.

JAH: Freddie Dikko, a good friend of mine, ah, belonged to the same lodge and everything, and I, I just turned it down.

EAS: Just.

JAH: I wouldn't take it after I talked to him. I'd go to Captain Charlie Hall. We were good friends and all belonged to the same organization. I brought them out together and got them together. I might have saved his life by take it, but I, I can't imagine. He was smart. I can't imagine him doing a thing like that. Welding over a tank, a fuel tank around the rivet. Electric welding now. Now, think of that.

EAS: Right, and it blew up.

JAH: Yeah, you know, that, that thing full of gas down there. That oil in boats running and shaking that oil, you know. That just stirred up gas. It was dynamite.

EAS: Oh.

JAH: Blowed that boat all to pieces. Blowed him almost across the river. Why, just blowed him clear across the river there.

EAS: Well, ah.

JAH: I can't imagine that a man would do a thing like that. I wouldn't have even peened it with a hammer without water running around.

EAS: Well, you had long life on the river, and you, then you said you worked for a chemical factory in South Point at one time.

JAH: That, I've worked down here in the plant down here. I was in the plant down here. That's when I went the last place I worked, retired when I was down here. And, this boy that took my, took the Omar, he wanted a job, you know, and I got him in down there EAS: Right. at that plant, and he stayed there until he retired. And, I left that plant and went on up to that plant there at Dilley's Bottom. That's the one I showed you there that picture of.

EAS: Uh huh, that you retired from.

JAH: I was up there here not long ago, and boy, I never had such a reception (laughter). I've got some picture of it. I don't know whether you are in any hurry or not.

EAS: No.

JAH: Well, I'm not. I'm never going to get in a hurry anymore. Now, this is some of the family (laughter). All of these is my family.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: And, I've got some of them pictures in here. Here's some of

them over here [EAS: Uh huh.] when I was up at the plant. This is my sister, my oldest sister.

EAS: Right. Going back to members of your, the family.

JAH: Uh huh. This is all family that, course I put his picture in there. There's one my wife likes taken. This is my brother when he was ordained a preacher.

EAS: Uh huh, which brother was that?

JAH: That's up at Baptist Church, he's, Baptist Church up at Riverside.

EAS: Now, which brother was that?

JAH: That's my older brother Albert.

EAS: Albert.

JAH: Oh, you know, that my eyes is so bat that I can't, I have to have a glass to look through. There's a handsome couple there, ain't it?

EAS: Uh huh. Looks like it is in this room.

JAH: There's where we was last summer. Was out, out picnicking. Can't find them pictures. Now, I don't know whether they're in this book or not. I've got too many.

EAS: Pictures of you and you and your, right. And, there's you with your, ah, photograph album there.

JAH: And, this, that's my brother-in-law [EAS: Brother-in-law.] and here's, here's some pictures of the plant.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: I've got more that that in here. There's the display we had in the legislature.

EAS: You were in the legislature for two years, weren't you?

JAH: Thirty-three, '33, and '34. I can't find them pictures I

want to show you. I don't know if I've got them in this book or the other.

EAS: These look mostly like family, your family.

JAH: This is all family.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: I'll have to look in another book. You know, when you get old, lady, you get dumb (laughs).

EAS: No, you don't.

JAH: You get dull.

EAS: You just slow up a little bit.

JAH: This is my great-grandmother, and look here, and this is my great-uncle. This is, oh, is one of my cousins. You can read this to tell who it is.

EAS: Right, Cartmill.

JAH: And, this is my cousin. I didn't know he existed.

EAS: Uh huh, Bernice Moore.

JAH: His, his mother was my grandmother's sister.

EAS: Hmm.

JAH: He lived up in Michigan. He'd been down here several times, and this fellow was some of the family, and all of these is some of the family.

EAS: Right. Here's that picture of your license plate on the.

JAH: Here's a picture of the boy that was shot down over Italy in World War II, and that's Albert and me. This is the boy that died. He was over in the Phillipines, down in there for about four years, and he come back home. He didn't live long. He died.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: And, that was, that was the Black Betsey Coal Company Office. I've got some pictures somewhere. Somebody didn't. This little boy was shot down over Italy here.

EAS: Right.

JAH: Here is the funeral there.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: Some of the information that he's in there, and the other boy both.

EAS: Right.

JAH: Now, I've, I've got these pictures in one of these books somewhere.

EAS: Now, you did say you were in the legislature, ah, from Putnam County in '33 and '34, ah, you and introduced the unemployment act which was House Bill No. 443 [JAH: Uh huh.], and you were up there under Governor Crump and Connelly, both governors.

JAH: Well, we sent the first act to the legislature, sent Governor Connelly to New York to borrow three million dollars. That was one of the first acts of our legislature.

EAS: To save the state's credit.

JAH: Yeah, to save the state's credit. And, that was the first act, and, ah, course, ah, you see what I had on my card there.

EAS: Yes.

JAH: Every, everyone of them's in operation.

EAS: I favor old-age pen, old-age pensions, unemployment insurance, free schoolbooks, and a square deal for labor and farmer.

JAH: (Laughs) Now, that was all I was interested in and trying to pull the state together. Of course, we, we weren't, we went in there about, oh, we was there about a year, close

to a year in session, and, ah, we reorganized the whole state, you know, school system and everything. And, that's what's the matter with my eyes, I think. I read the bills. I didn't let one get by me. I turned them down. I raked some (laughs). My dad's friend one time come to me; had a bill there that would allow these automobile people, ah, used cars to charge 42 percent interest (laughs). You know how far that got.

EAS: Yes.

JAH: Well, I, I, I just blowed up, and one time a bunch of them got out, went out there to the committee, you know, investigating irregularities in the place. A lot of them, a lot of them report in there said we seen plenty of evidence, but I don't think should ought to do anything about it. We had no load anyhow. It was one of the delegates, you know, whether to seat him or not during. And, then I, there was a fellow by the name of Thomas was a chairman of the committee, lawyer, and later he was, later on the supreme court, I think. I just jumped up. This was in caucus, though.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: I just jumped up on the floor and, boy, if I didn't lay him out.

EAS: Oh.

JAH: I said, "You send that back there and make that work. That if you found, if you found evidence enough, why, you ought to follow it." And, that was just, oh, boy, I just tore him up. I said, "I don't believe we found irregularities and not do anything about it." So, I said, "I won't accept that wording of that." I said, "You, you get back there and put it in some different form, and I'll be for it (laughter)." The caucus turned it down. Made them get back there and straighten it out.

EAS: Good. We need more like that. Get things straightened out. Ah, now, ah, when did you first come, you told me you came to Huntington in what 19, oh.

JAH: I think at about the first time I came to Huntington here, I was about, oh, I don't know, 13 years old.

EAS: About 1903.

JAH: Uh huh. Maybe somewhere along back there. And, I, we come in, come in all up around, we come down over this bridge over here, and the, the, this place here was a briar patch (laughter), cowpasture.

EAS: From Guyandotte on downtown.

JAH: Just a very few houses, you know, here and there, you know. There was several of those older people want to get out, you know. They had houses along up there, and I stayed down here right below the tracks down here a while down here in Looney House.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: Then, we, I don't know, now to look at it now, I can hardly believe.

EAS: It's, you can't find a briar patch in Huntington (laughs) at all.

JAH: Find a lot of trash in Huntington. I just swept up out front there this morning.

EAS: Uh huh, but, ah, and it's really been grown beyond.

JAH: Oh, you've got that in there.

EAS: Right. Ah, it's just completely grown up [JAH: Uh huh.] and out, and it's still growing, right. Now, you told me yesterday on the phone this, I don't have in my notes, but you told me about a, oops, here's your company (break in tape).

JAH: You've been recording all of that?

EAS: No, I, I turned it off when they came in.

JAH: I told her we would stop a little bit.

EAS: Right.

JAH: Now, now, she's going to record and, ah (break in tape).

Do you, your notes, now you've got.

EAS: Now, in my notes, I have everything, but yesterday you mentioned you were belonged to a group that's going to be meeting, that's going to be meeting up in Marietta and, ah.

JAH: Ah, no, up to St. Albans.

EAS: Or up in St. Albans [JAH: Uh huh.], and, ah, I, my boss would like, you know, to know, you know, a little more about this group.

JAH: Well, it's, it's a chapter of the Pioneer Rivermen [EAS: Uh huh.] and the chapter of the Pioneer Rivermen, and we have chapter belonged, you know, and this chapter if you belonged to that it only cost you a dollar a year. It's for mailing, you know. And this chapter (break in tape).

EAS: Now, you meet once a year.

JAH: We meet once a year at Marietta, the general organization, meet once a year in September, and, ah, this is just a branch of the Pioneer Rivermen.

EAS: Right.

JAH: And, ah, it's a nice organization to be in. That's all of these boat men will meet and exchange pictures and one thing and another, you know. And, ah, if I've got a picture he wants, why, we'll exchange, you know [EAS: Right.], and that's the reason I got all of these pictures (laughs). We exchange, and some of them, they send, send me pictures from all over the country [EAS: Right.] where they've had boats. But, they, you take there's so many of these boats here that, ah, long, long time ago, and that boat there if I'd been on here, I'd probably been in 40 feet of water.

EAS: Oh, but, ah, now, who, who else in this area belong to this chapter. I think (break in tape). I, I had just asked you, you know, if there was any other, ah, who the other people were that belonged to your chapter.

JAH: Oh, oh, oh, yeah. I've got a lot of them belonging to this

chapter. Let me see. I stuck it in something else.

EAS: Right, ah, here it is. Members and guests who have attended previous meetings.

JAH: Uh huh [EAS: So, ah.] , that's, ah, that's, ah (laughs).

EAS: Well, you mind if I read these off into the.

JAH: Well, if, if, if [EAS: Well.] you want to read them, read them off that's all right.

EAS: Well, well, because, ah, we might be interested in maybe contacting some of them [JAH: Uh huh.] or, ah, like, see, there's, ah, now, let's see, now, Mrs. D. L. Ambler.

JAH: That, that was used to be our sheriff's wife. He died in Putnam County.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: He was a sheriff and a schoolteacher.

EAS: She lives in Red House, and William R. Barr [JAH: That's Charleston.] in Charleston, and J. P. Bupp (spells) B-u-p-p, Bupp. He's in Charleston, also and.

JAH: Uh huh. Now, that gives their address, doesn't it?

EAS: Uh huh, right. Ah, and Jack C. Burnett, and Mrs. Jack C. Burnett of Point Pleasant, and, ah, Herschell W. Burford, St. Albans.

JAH: Yeah, he's our secretary.

EAS: Ah, John Butler, and Alice Byvey, and R. J. Chenowith.

JAH: That's our, our minister up here [EAS: Uh huh.] at Highlawn Methodist Church.

EAS: Right, Huntington, and James R. Christie in Winfield, R. Jerome Collins, and Virginia Collins of Nitro.

JAH: He's the, Collins is our Captain in the organization.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: He's the head of it.

EAS: Ah, Clifford Dean in South Charleston, G. A. Dudding in St. Albans, Bob Irwin, Gallipolis, and Norman E. Fuller, Point Pleasant.

JAH: He lives across the river over here.

EAS: Uh huh. Ah, Ben Gilbert, and Ben Gilbert, Jr., Huntington, and C. J. Hall, and James A. Harmon of Huntington.

JAH: Well, he does live here, don't he?

EAS: Yeah, he does live in Huntington. Ah, Richard N. Hopkins in Ironton, Bob Kennedy in Kenova, John P. and Nancy B. Killoran (spells) K-i-l-l-o-r-a-n of Hurricane. Ah, and Gene and Del Laroy of Scotts Depot, West Virginia. Ah, L. K. Marmet of Charleston, and Charles H. Martin of Belle. Ah, Ben and Barbara McKindley of Henderson, Jack R. Meeks of Nitro, J. Francis Mullin of Gallipolis, Ralph Rake, and Mrs. Rake of Point Pleasant, Mrs. Troy Reese of Huntington, Windall and Mary Reynolds of Huntington, Charles Stone of Point Pleasant, Gerald and Lenora Supten, S-u-p.

JAH: Supten, Supten. He's in the engineer's office.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: He's a nice guy.

EAS: Ah, Kenneth L. is that Tschop? (Spells) T-a-t, T-s-c-h-o-p.

JAH: You pronounce it.

EAS: Tschop or (laughter) in Proctorville.

JAH: Yeah, yeah.

EAS: Tschop as, you know. Ah, and Forest P. Wallace in Winfield, James A. Wallen in Huntington, and Doug Wetherholt in Gallipolis. And, these are the members in your chapter.

JAH: That's the chapter ∠EAS: And.∠, that's just the chapter.

EAS: And, then, this is a national.

JAH: Yeah, this is a national thing. Come to Red River, or I want to say McKenzie River up there they have some members from up there, ah, and Red River ∠EAS: Uh huh.∠ and Red River Valley. I got, I got the, you know, one of these War of 1917 war songs.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: You ever hear them?

EAS: Ah, no, I can't say.

JAH: I got, I got them taped.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: And, ah, on the end of it Red River Valley, please come back to the Red River Valley.

EAS: Right.

JAH: That was, they was a woman I think, ah, made up that song when the soldiers was leaving and going to France ∠EAS: Oh.∠ in 1917, you know ∠EAS: Right.∠ '16.

EAS: And, ah, that was another question, ah, how did the wars, you know, World War I and World War II, how did they affect, you know, the work on the river or did they?

JAH: Oh, they made business better.

EAS: You know, you had to transport more and.

JAH: Oh, yeah, yeah, that was good. They was just going, everything was full blast then.

EAS: Right, but then during World War I, you were working at the coal company.

JAH: World War I, when it first come out, I was working for the

ah, K and M Railroad, K and M Railroad Shops at Hobson $\overline{\text{EAS}}$:
Uh huh. $\overline{\text{J}}$, and I took care of all of the lamps, lights, and
things, you know. That's when they first coming into head-
lights.

EAS: Right.

JAH: I, I was supposed to put them in, put them on engines and
everything, and I was considered extra-engineer there.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: And, and I $\overline{\text{EAS}}$: And, then, ah. $\overline{\text{J}}$, I was, ah, my name come
out in the paper, the Middleport Paper there that my number
was the first one pulled.

EAS: Oh.

JAH: And, ah, come out for the go overseas in the draft, you know.
And, the next day (laughs) they retracted it. Wasn't mine
at all.

EAS: Was somebody else's.

JAH: Somebody else. Now, I wish I would have kept that paper.
Yeah, they come out there my number. Paper had run it, you
know. They retracted that thing and recognized me. I wasn't
no account.

EAS: So, you didn't serve in the army then?

JAH: No, I never served in it at all. That, I had five sons serve.

EAS: In the second war, yes.

JAH: And, there was four of them in the air force.

EAS: Uh huh.

JAH: One of them's in the engineers.

EAS: Right, and then, ah, let's see, during the Depression, you
held different jobs. How did the Depression affect you, did?

JAH: Well, I had a pretty good business until the Depression come up, and I, I lasted about, ah, oh, about half of it. Then, I had so much money out I couldn't collect it. I had to sell out to another man.

EAS: Oh.

JAH: I run that plumbing and electric place.

EAS: Right.

JAH: I was, ah, about all the money I was getting then was contracting for the Appalachian putting in what they was trying to get all everything, kitchen lights in. They \$20, they for a kitchen light. So, they, they, I had to put those lights in, you know. So, you get a kitchen light in, you know. Then, they'd want some oil lamps. (laughs) [EAS: Right.], cause that was the object of it. I had, I had pretty good work there for a while [EAS: Right.] till that just blowed up, you know.

EAS: Right.

JAH: That was when I was running electric shop and plumbing [EAS: Right.], and I had a fellow that done the plumbing and all. But, you can't do it, and then not get any money.

EAS: And, so, this sorta.

JAH: The people up there, I think, some, some of them had money. I turned, I put in a 400 and some job, and that was a lot. A bathroom and everything, you know, completed, even settlement tank, and, ah, I got, ah, ah, he went bankrupt.

EAS: Oh.

JAH: And, I, I course he, I told the bank for a long time after that if he ever made settlement, why, call me if he had enough money to cover that check.

EAS: Right.

JAH: I just left the check there, and they called me one morning said there's enough money in here to take care of it now.

I said, "Grab it (laughter)!"

EAS: Right.

JAH: Oh, the times was awful then. You know, we're worse off right now, twice as bad off as we was during the Depression.

EAS: Really?

JAH: Why, certainly. The energy problem we're having now, you can't, inflation and depression both. Do you know that we, ah, have close to eight million people that's without work?

EAS: Hmm. Well, how, ah, in the Depression, how was it back in the '30's?

JAH: Well, well, I don't, I don't think we had over seven, seven million, I think it was.

EAS: Uh huh, and it really didn't, ah, affect you and your family as much as.

JAH: Only, of course, we made it pretty good. I, I had to scrape around and come through it [EAS: Right.], but I broke (laughs).

EAS: But, you made it through.

JAH: Uh huh.

EAS: Well, Mr. Harmon, I really want to thank you very much.

JAH: Huh?

EAS: Is there anything else you would like to talk about, ah?

JAH: Well, ah, do you now want to get this up in shape to take it, that is, to tape it?

EAS: No, this, this is fine right the way it is.

JAH: Well, that.

EAS: Well, ah, so if there's anything else you'd like to talk about.

JAH: Well, ah, anything that you, you want to talk about.

EAS: Well, ah, well, we went over your grandparents, and we looked over your pictures here, and like, ah, now who are, can you identify these different people in this picture?

JAH: Well, this, this is my father [EAS: Uh huh.], and this is Benton, and this is me, and this is Albert, and Steve, and this is two sisters.

EAS: Right, this would be what, Sarah was the older one, right?

JAH: Uh huh, uh huh. This is the Ruth, the one that is living now. You, would you like to have one of those pictures?

EAS: Oh, yes sir.

JAH: Oh, that, that, you can have that if you want it and, ah.

EAS: Yes, sir, we appreciate, you know, pictures, cause we like to, we are trying really to build up (break in tape). The next part of this interview was taped by Mr. Harmon, ah, on the night of February 25th. He did it, ah, at his home and traces his life and his working career up to the present. He told me another story which did not get on either of the tapes and asked me to add to the tape. He said that the young man whom he had the fight with on the Greenwood as recollected on both tapes was, ah, he later met up with him and became good friends with him and neither side had any animosity after their little incident.

JAH: Life on the river is not a bad job. Had many privileges. an engineer's life, Hewas responsible for all the machinery and sanitation. Sometimes, we'd have hard days and hard times. There never was a time that you couldn't smile, though. I was on, the first boat was the Calvert running from Charleston to Montgomery. And, the next boat I was on was the J. Q. Dickison. That run from Charleston to Montgomery. And, the third boat I was on was the Steamer Winifred. The fourth boat I was on was the W. B. Calderwood. The fifth boat I was on was the Evergreen. On all those boats I was on in the galley helping the cook. And, the fifth boat I was on was the Greenwood. My brother was purser on there. When I, I was cabinwatchman, and one thing, one night I was

coming up through the cabin, was laid up in the fog just below Pittsburgh, the, the news, the second clerk was laying on the table, dining table. I picked up a piece of paper laying there and just drew it over him not thinking what he'd do, and I started in the washroom. He jumped up and hit me in the back, and I went into the washroom pretty quick. I came back out, though; I was kind of shook up, and he was still wanting to have, to have a little tussle. So, I pushed him back out in the cabin, and I just hit one lick at him. I hit him right in the mouth and knocked him down on that table. The pilot was a friend of mine, and he, he was laying on some couch, cots that we had for overflow of passengers. He jumped up and and said, "What in the hell's going on here?" And, I, I, I told him what happend. He said, "Let's go up inthe pilot's house." We went up in the pilot house, and we set there a while and talked about it. He said, "Somebody had to take that boy down. He, he was too smart." So, I, I didn't think anything about it that I just give that one thought. So, I woke up the crew. At five o'clock I went to bed. I got up about at noon. My brother told me Captain Jesse wanted to see me. I said, "I don't think I want to see him." I said, "I'm going, getting off." I got my money, got off there at Pittsburgh, walked over to Monongahela and Ohio Packing Company wharf boat and went on the I. C. Woodward and asked them if they wanted, needed a striker. They said, "Sure we do." Well, that was the first job that I'd taken as striker, but I'd studied much on the other boats that I'd been on. I loafed in the engine room a lot. I'd learned what it was all about, so I went on that boat at the age of 15 and was striker on her. A striker is one that handles one side of the engines just the same as the engineer does. So, I stayed on that boat till she laid up and went on the ways. One time, I was coming down Smithfield Street to the boat, and, ah, something bumped me on the leg, and I looked down. There was a big white bulldog. Must have weighed about 80 pounds. And, I spoke to him. I said, "Where you going?" Well, he shook all over and wagged his tail just as good as ~~say~~ing, "I'm going home with you." And, that's what he did. He followed me right on down to the boat. I went right on back to the engine room with him, and he, he was one of the pets on that boat the rest of the time before she laid up. Went on the ways for repairs. I came home, and, ah, I was home about a month or so, and the Kanawha came over across from the field where I was plowing end of March, and I heard every word the

captain said, Captain Maddy. He was a good friend of mine. He hollered to my aunt and asked, said, "Jim Harmon over there?" She said, "Yeah, he's over here." Said, "Tell him to have his grip packed to meet the Kanawha at Black Betsey." That's where they'd taken on coal at midnight. He, so, I went up there waiting on her to come in. I went up the steps; he was standing at the head of the stairs. And, he said, "We've got the man on here that designed this machinery; now our engineer is sick. We want you to go down and stand watch with him, and you do the work while he's looking over the engines." So, I went on her and stayed on, on her till the I. C. Woodward came out again, and I went back on her. See, that was in 19 and, ah, 7, 1907. And, when, probably why I stayed on her six or seven months and came back down on the Kanawha and came, came home, and my brother was on the Tacoma. And, he asked me if I would come over on the Tacoma then. So, I went on the Tacoma, and I stayed on her until, oh, I suppose for about a year, and, ah, we were coming down up here at Huntington. We landed at Guyandotte and backing out from Guyandotte, they hit a rock out across around the wall. There used to be a, a wall along that lower across on the north side of the river, and we was coming down the river, and the boat kind of went over on one side. Captain Pete Holloway was in the pilot house. He rounded her to and pushed her up on that sand bar just below Guyandotte River. When she settled down on the sand there, the water just come up to the edge of the lower deck. So, we waited a while there, and Captain Jesse Hughes was on there. Same man that was on the Greenwood with me. And, he, after the boat settled down and got the siphons all ready to work. Him and I only took a blanket a piece. We went down in there, and we had to hold our heads up between the timbers to keep our head above water. We stood on those blankets down in the hull there till it piped it, run the water out, siphoned it out. So, a carpenter got us some battans, brought it down, and we, we installed that down, and we would put the battans down under our feet, and we would stand on them. And, we was there about six hours after we sand, and we went on down the river then. And, after I got off of her, why, they took her to the ways, and they put new, new timber in and new, new and repaired her. Then, they wanted me on the Greenland. I went over on the Greenland. That was 1910, and I stayed on the Greenwood, Greenland until I went up and took, took the examination and passed for my engineer's license, 1911. I

came back down up there and made couple more trips on her till they could get a striker. They, they wanted me to go over on the Courier to relieve a man. He wanted to go on vacation. Then, I relieved him. And, then, when he came back, the other engineer got sick, and I, I was had stayed up about 18 hours on, on the Courier. Then, they wanted me to go over on the Greendale. I went on the Greendale, and I didn't sleep any coming from Cincinnati up to Ironton. We, I didn't have any sleep from about, oh, I was about 24 hours. So, I, I sat down on a camp chair right by the throttle. When I sit down there just cross, cross it, and I leaned over on the back of it, my legs went to sleep. And, they rang a bell to stop coming into Ironton. I jumped up, and both of my legs were asleep. So, I just fell right there in the floor. And, the pilot, Ollie Williamson, pulled her out away from the wharf boat and went on up the river and had to go up and come around. And, they come a running back to see what was wrong, and I told him what had happened. Then, we brought her back around. Let, took off the freight there, and I went on up, and I was sick as I could be, and I went up there and went, got off there and went into hospital at Gallipolis Marine Hospital. And, they gave me some medicine. She came back down, and I got on her, went on back on the. I, I made a few trips on there, and then went back on the Courier again. Then, about, oh, month or so the boy come and wanted me to go to Evansville, go on the Bowling Green, a boat run from Evansville to Bowling Green. I went down there, and I stayed on there till, ah, 19, well, 1913, ah, when I left there, and I went down on down on the Lee Line. But, before going on the Lee Line, I, I started home for Christmas in 1912, and I got to Cincinnati. My old little friend of mine they called Casey Jones, an engineer, couldn't get anybody to take his place, and he wanted to get married. So, I took his place, called off my vacation about going home. And, I had bought all the Christmas presents and things, so I sent them up on the Tacoma, and they, they put them off up there at our landing. And, I went back down to the boat, though, that was flood, the 1913 flood, I, when I got out the water was all around Evansville. I had to wade through a little water to get, get down through there. And, I went down to the levy and seen the boat about had a lot of it's pilot house tore off and the stacks tore down. I didn't know whether to go down there or not. But, I went on down, and we had right smart of work, but you could see all Henderson, Kentucky,

the water was all over Henderson, Kentucky, just below us there. And, we waited, had to wait there until the water, streams dropped down to where we could get back up the river. We got her fixed up and went back on the train. Then, the next trip or two, I, we come down the Peters Lee was laying there. And, I was talking to the engineer on her, and he said, "Why don't you go on over and go down the Lee Line and work a while?" And, they offered, offered me \$10 more on the, on the month to go down there, and I said, "I'll just do that." So, I told them to get them another man. They go them another engineer, and I went down to work on the Lee Line boats. The first job I had down there was, was, ah, installing machinery on the boat they used to be at Wheeling, the City of Wheeling. Put new engines on her. She, she burnt up. The Lee Line bought her, but she burned, and Sam MacKnight and I installed new machinery on her. Then, they wanted me to go over on the John Lee. Well, I went over on the John Lee, and there's a captain on there that I knew a lot about. Used to be in Cincinnati. He was a mighty mean captain they said. But, I can say this for him, he, he was a mighty nice guy to me. I never had a bit of trouble with him, cause I stayed on that boat until they laid her up. They laid her up there and put our crew over on the Peters Lee always running from, ah, Memphis to Vicksburg. And, ah, I went over and got the Peters Lee all ready, clean boilers, and got it all ready to go out, you know. And, Captain Pete Lee come down, brought another engineer with him. He said, "Jim, I want you to get your clothes and come over here. We're going to dismantle the John Lee. I want you to take the machinery off of her." Well, I gathered up my junk. That was about five, five minutes before she left the wharf boat, and I got off. Course I had a room up at the hotel. He had a hotel there, and I had kept a room up there me and my partner. And, so, I got off and was five o'clock in the evening; I went to the hotel and dressed up and went out around a while. Then, next day, I come down there on the boat. I had a fellow to help me, and we took a lot of the machinery off, tore it off, and was taking it out on the levy. So, that day worked, we worked all day and went back up to the hotel, and the next day, next morning, ah, Captain Pete said as I come down the stairs, he was there in the office, he said, "Jim, I want to put the machinery back on the John Lee." I seen there was some gloom in his face, but I wondered why, what was wrong. He said, "The Peters Lee was landing at Lake Provence, Louisiana, and

she, a hurricane hit her, tore her all to pieces, and she sank in 40 feet of water, and drowned one of the engineers. Well, I, when I thought, when I thought about it, I could have been there, but he, but I think the Lord was with me. And, after I went back and went to put the machinery back on her, he said, "We're going to take her up to Mound City and put new cylinder timbers on her." Well, then, I got her back, hooked back up like she was, so she could go up there on her own power, and he said, "I want you to go over on the Stacker Lee." The Stacker Lee was running from Memphis to St. Louis. She was one the largest boats they had at that time, and, ah, fellow by the name of McGee was on there. He was a nice guy. Oh, we, we got along fine. When we, up there to St. Louis, we had a lots of passengers, and we done a lot of work on the boat to get her in shape. She was supposed to been back before the war there, you know. They could just do you anyway before the Civil War. But, they there had signs up on there off watch in bed, but we didn't like that at all. We took them down (laughs). They didn't, didn't suit the old captain on there. Now, I happened to be standing on the, on the guard up there, just come up out of the engine room there was, ah, three girls and two men standing there. I stopped there and was talking to them. I'd, I'd seen them on the whole trip. The old captain's name was Ledger. He, ah, intended to give me a bawling out, you know, and I, I stopped him right on the reel. I said, "This is a free country now," and I turned around, started to walk away from him. He hit me just, ah, on the back of the head. He weighed about 250. He knocked me down on the deck there, and I bounced right back up, so it, it didn't knock me out. I bounced right back up, and, ah, the other fellows told me he was going for a gun. And, I didn't find out till afterwards one of the girls, you know, I'd been talking to, I just, and, ah, she said that he was trying to make her (laughs). That, so, that was the whole thing you know. I guess, what he was trying to show off. So, I went on back down the engine room, crazy like, and I went down there and had a 32 Savage Revolver in the engine, in the locker down there. I put that thing in my pocket and took the safety off of it and come back up front way, and him and the mate was sitting there, and the mate could see, see me come up, and he had his back to me. The mate said something right easy to him, and he never looked, turned around. And, I went on up and went to bed. And, I, then, he, my partner and I brought our suitcases down with me for breakfast, and we set them down there at the

clerk's office. And, I sat on one side of him, and he, he sat on the other side of it, and he, ah, never made a cheep. Of course, we was, we was, we was a little put out. We, we got off of the boat. So, I went out on the wharf boat, and Pete Lee collared me, and he went down sat down on the timber heads of the wharf boat and had a talk, and we talked all about it. He wanted me to go back on the Stacker Lee to Mound City. I said, "No, I don't think I ought to go." Well, he said, "I tell you, we haven't got a lot of anybody here with a license big enough to take the Stacker up there. We've got a man up there on the John Lee, and you go up to Cairo on her, and you go over and work on the John Lee up there." So, I, I thought, well, Pete Lee was one of the nicest guys that I ever had met, him and Captain Green, Captain Jesse Hughes. They, they were wonderful people. So, I told him, I said, "You tell him to not to darken that engine room while I'm in there. And, I'll, I'll, I'll take her up there." So, took her up there, and I got up there, and he was nice guy up there, the superintendent of it, he used Captain, and, ah, and he met the boat and, he said, "We ain't got nothing for you to do up there." I said, "Okay. I see a boat laying right down there wanted me on her last trip. I'll go down and ask Stanley Raines that's on her. I'll go down there and go out with him." "Oh," he said, "Come on. We'll find something for you to do." So, we went on up to the John Lee, and put the putting the cylinder timbers on her. I had, ah, ll colored boys working for me. They was all good workers. We riveted them cylinder timbers in, put steel timbers on it, and before I got done, though, they brought the Georgia Lee in there. And, my old buddy McGee was on her. And, they told me to go over on the Georgia. Well, I went over, and we worked on the Georgia Lee what work for us to do. Put in new bearings in the engines. Then, we went in the Vicksburg trade, and I, why, I was in that trade down there Vicksburg on the Georgia. I took sick. I had the malaria fever, and we come in. I didn't, I didn't know it, but the captain called a doctor down from at Greenville, Mississippi, and he come down the engine room. I was on watch. And, said, took my temperature. It was 104. He said, "This boy hasn't got any business standing watch on this boat. He don't know what he's doing." I said, "You give me that medicine. I'll take it like you say, but I'm going on into Memphis on the Georgia Lee." I went on into Memphis. I went up to the hotel. I took the medicine he'd given me, and I didn't get any better

Company. He called me and wanted me to come up and bring down from Pittsburgh. He couldn't get away. He didn't have an engineer. I turned them down. They called me from Cincinnati and everything. I finally told him, I said, "Why, I'll come up and help you out." I went up and brought her down to Middleport, and there was an engineer from the Kanawha River come on there on the excursion there, and he said, "Is there a chance of getting a job on this boat?" I said, "You want to work?" He said, "Yes, I do." I said, "You just wait until I get up here and get Captain Wagner, and you've got a job." I said, and I went up and got him and brought him down and introduced them. When we landed at Point Pleasant, I got off, come down home on the bus, and that was the last of my steamboating. In fact, about the last 12 years, well, the last, ah, 14 years, I'd say, I was in the power house. I went down to South Point in that power house and broke in crews for that. Then, I went up Dilley's Bottom in the Ohio Edison and broke in crews for the plant up there, a large plant that they was building. I stayed there until I got too old to work. And, now, I wasn't too old to work, but I, my eyes wasn't no good, and I told them I wasn't doing them any good or myself either. I, I said, just, I'll take my retirement, and I worked a month. They wanted me to stay another year, but I worked a month, and I told them I couldn't go no farther (break in tape). The trouble with steamboating, it's a home away from home, but, ah, you don't have very good family relations. You're away, away all the time. You come in and go out, and that's what steamboating is.