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Clarence Donnely

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ORAL HISTORY

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CSD: They didn't stop. They were building the C&O Railway down the New River, and people had made their gardens. It had been a balmy spring. Already made their garden. That snow started falling on Easter Sunday, the 14th of April, 1872, and fell to a mean average depth of three and one-half feet. That's 42 inches to a graduate student (laughter), and, ah, on Big Soil, which was the highest point in the Midland Trail [MWL: Uh huh.], the snow fell five to six feet deep. Now, it was 1872, and the only way to negotiate that James River Kanawha Turnpike then was by stagecoach. [MWL: Uh huh.] And, I knew the man, one of the men who drove one of the stages. His name was Joe Smailes, (spells) S-m-a-i-l-e-s. He lived at Jody on Gauley. Way back there about 1929, after I came here to this country, I went to see him [MWL: Uh huh.], and I would visit these old timers and get their recollections. He told me about it. Now, over there just this at the foot of Big Soil is the Old Stone House we called it. It was just an old stone house on the James River Kanawha Turnpike. Still standing. [MWL: Uh huh.] I bought that in 18, 1963 just to preserve it for the state. Gov. McCorkle had gotten the Babcocks, who owned it in that Babcock country over there, Babcock Park [MWL: Uh huh.], to refurbish the thing. The thing was going to ruins almost. It was built 1824. Well, after the coal company got it, oh, see, coal companies don't care anything about West Virginia except to exploit it [MWL: Yeah.]; well, they let it get, go down. So, I bought it, and I spent thousands of dollars on it just putting it back in shape to make it in good shape anyhow. Well, Joe Smailes told me that he was caught in that snow storm on Big Soil driving a four-horse stagecoach. He carried the mail, the United States Mail, and he had but one passenger, and it was a judge from Kentucky. And, the snow was so deep despite those high wheels like that on the stage that he couldn't negotiate the highway, couldn't find it. [MWL: Goodness.] So, he told me he unhitched all of those four horses and took the mail sack he was carrying and threw it across one of those horses and told the judge to get on it, and he got on another one, and to use the colloquial expression that the old mountaineer used, he said, "We just wallered, wallered through that snow to, to the Stone House," which was a distance of about roughly four or five miles. And, there they holed up. See, it was a tavern. Old Col. Tyree, there, William Tyree, had the tavern and kept it as a place

of accomodation. [MWL: Uh huh.] And, so, they holed up there until the snow could, ah, till the storm dissipated. And, he told me, Joe Smailes did, that there he spent his 21st birthday in that Old Stone House. Therefore, his memory was very lucid, clear. [MWL: Yeah.] And, then, of course, I did some other research on it when I wrote the history of Fayette County in 18, 1958 and published it. [MWL: Uh huh.] I had the story of that big snowfall. Now, that was the banner snowstorm, snowfall of recorded history of Fayette County.

MWL: It was 18.

CSD: It was 1872 just a matter of 101 years ago this month. And, West Virginia.

MWL: Was it in April?

CSD: Huh?

MWL: It was in April?

CSD: April, yes sir.

MWL: Goodness.

CSD: Started snowing the 14th day of April just, ah, 1872, just seven years to the day after Lincoln, after Lincoln was shot. And, anyhow, that is the story. And, furthermore, weather in West Virginia repeats itself. And, my authentication for that statement is this. The first newspaper we had, ever had in this state was published in 1852 over here what they call the Mountain Coal District around between Anstead and Big Soil. [MWL: Uh huh.] It was called the Mountain Coal Journal and Millenial Harbinger. It was published by a settlement of people who came here from New England, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, and upper New York. They were spiritualists who believed you could communicate with the dead. And, New England, you know, has always been a country that persecuted people for religious beliefs, and at any rate, those people were very intelligent people; and they settled over there mostly all Yankees, everyone of them were rebels, ah, were Yankees, and when the Civil War broke out, they went on the Union side. But, I knew a lot of them, and I came here

as a young man 27 years old, somewhat trained in history; I'd go to interview them. They were old then, old. I wrote their recollection. Now, then, before it, though, after that meandering is to tell you in that paper they published, they gave a daily account of the weather from, they would come out every, paper come out about every month [MWL: Uh huh.], and they'd give you the weather. And, the weather that we have now is identical to the weather they had then. And, so reading that year as they go led me to observe weather. I'm not a meteorologist or anything. I just tell when it is raining and when it isn't [MWL: Uh huh.], and I've noticed this weather repeats itself in this state. So, this storm is no exception.

MWL: Were you born in this country, Rev. Donnely?

CSD: Yes, I was born down in Jackson County. I was born in the vicinity of Rock Castle. Born up a hollow about a mile and a half off of a dirt road. [MWL: Uh huh.] My father was the son of a Irish immigrant, and his father come from Ireland. By the way, we're going back in June.

MWL: You are?

CSD: Going back in June. Think I'm going to buy me a home over there just to spend the summer. [MWL: Yeah.] So, at any rate, we were born near Rock Castle. My mother married, was a mountain girl from Portsmouth Valley near Given. And, by the time they were 30 years old, they had seven of us. We lived in a Jenny Lynn Shanty, and we were poorest of the Appalachian poor. And, ah, we four of us children, three of us born in that Jenny Lynn Shanty. And, then, two years later after we left there, we moved out on a hill near Given. [MWL: Uh huh.] And, I bought that home back, 93½ acres in 1969 and restored it. Fellow fixed it up and sold it. We were planning to go out there tomorrow for a weekend. Have a nice home, four, three bedroom home, have all four utilities, have our own gas well, get rod help with it, have electric lights, telephone, and indoor plumbing, hot and cold water, have a big library. People did not have any natural resources, and we were the poorest of all the poor. There were times we didn't have bread. Father was a good man, young. And, then t'earn living would get just what you'd arrest out of the land, twisted out. Also, to cut down trees and hew

railroad ties. He'd take 13 of those into Ripley in a wagon, sell them for a dollar a piece. And, it would take him all week, you know, to get out 13 ties. And, take him all day to go there and back seven miles. And, that way seven of us lived. And, I, I bought that place back just out of sentiment. And, since I bought it and began, I write a daily newspaper column, I began to write about it to people out through there have gone out and bought up land. Land has doubled in price in the last four years. You can't buy anything. And, about 15 or 20 new houses and trailers have been bought since I did that. And, I'm arranging a religious service in the little Baptist Church out there which was organized 1895, the year I was born, for next week. That's these hymnbooks I bought for them. Goes out there. Brand new hymnbooks. And, these, ah, this church membership all died off. All the original members died, and, ah, the building still stands, and, ah, I had a Thanksgiving service out there. Just, we had about 60 people come all around to show you what can be done with a little leadership. And, since I fixed up my place out there, people have been flocking in there to buy things, you know. That's an example of how it's done. And, back when my folks, there were seven of us in the family, in, in 1901 some enterprising citizens, if you call them that, organized the first telephone line in that area. And, it ran from Arbuckle in Mason County to Ripley. It was called the Ripley-Arbuckle Line. And, that was the first incorporated telephone company in West Virginia. My father, poor man, young man, he was, he born, he then 28, 7 when they put it through there, and he subscribed to the phone, and we had, our ring was four shorts. I can remember that from all the flood of years. But, Dad was a man, he had would be the equivalent of fifth-grade education, and my mother, perhaps, had the equivalent of second or third grade. But, they always dinned education into our ears, get an education. And, we had to work our way through school. I did, and the result is we all got a fair education. My younger brother worked his way through school, high school, Charleston High School. He moved into Charleston 1908. Moved in there on the ninth day, eighth day of April, 1908. Dad got a job as a streetcar conductor. Made \$60 a month. Paid rent and fed nine of us. And, that summer I wasn't able to get out of the house, because I didn't have clothes. My younger brother, though, he's just ten years younger than I, he worked his way through school shining shoes and after

graduated Charleston High School 1923, he got a scholarship and went to Marshall, and, ah, he, ah, went through Marshall College on a two-year scholarship. The rest slinging hash paid his board. He graduated Magna Cum Laude, and he came out under the influence of one of the professors named Dr. White who went to New York and lived in the Rockefeller International House up there and New York University. And, he there worked and got a Master's Degree, and he stayed another two years and got his PhD. He got his PhD when he was 23. Then, he went west with Dr. White, and he taught in the different college like in New Mexico, and finally he became president and just retired from the presidency of Highlands University which university, they have two out there. It's about, Highlands would compare with Marshall, and he was president of it 18 years. He had been dean down at the New York, at the New Mexico University at Albuquerque for a number of years. And, he wrote the textbooks like for history and government, you know, of New Mexico. That's an example of what happened.

MWL: What was Charleston like in those days, 1908?

CSD: Tough. It was, they was, we didn't have out through there skunk hides was good legal tender. We'd trap them, and catch them, and trade them.

MWL: How many people lived there at the time?

CSD: At that time?

MWL: Yes.

CSD: We roughly had in an area of where we lived where my farm now is I would say there were but about not over 25 families. And, all, there were no natural resources. And, if you were to tether a cow to a stake there on my place on the hill between Given and Rock Castle, and tie her up with a five-mile rope, let her graze over that area there with a radius of five miles in either direction, all direction. Fourteen young men went out from there to study medicine and did study medicine and allied fields. One of two became dentists, one or two became pharmacists, druggists, and the others became MD's, and about a half dozen studied law. And, we all said that the brilliant ones studied law, and smart ones

studied medicine, the rest of us either taught school or went into ministry. All of us taught school. Well, sir, one of the young men that we went to a school called Center Point. It was a country school taught by young men who got enough money to go ahead and study medicine. It operated as a university, Indiana Luthern School. Well, sir, that's the story of that place. One of these young men went to school there that I got a letter on my desk there from him now. He's a state supreme court judge, Judge Oliver Castle, and his daughter married one of these Capron boys. She's building, they're building a \$300,000 home up there right back of Sunrise, up in the vicinity where Rockerfeller's home is. And, these, now, that's an example of them. They became judges, and people like Floyd Sams went to Beckley here and became the leading lawyer of Raliegh County. They all went out and became rich people. Now, in our family, I was counting up the other day, we've got four, eight, ten, I think there was about ten or 12 degrees in our family. Three or four doctorates. That's an example. Now, we were just poor people and proud people, too. But, we didn't sit down on our fanny like they do now. We scratched gravel. Had to.

MWL: What was a typical day like when you were living at, ah.

CSD: What, what, what, what?

MWL: What was a typical day like in Given?

CSD: Daylight?

MWL: No, a typical day. What did you do when you had ...

CSD: We were like the chickens. We went to bed at night and got up at daylight. From sunrise to sunset. And, there was no such thing as union hours. Everybody worked hard. We just did the best we could. We didn't have anything to work with much. But, one day there came there to my home my step grandfather, my father's father as I told you came from Ireland. They started out there during the potato famine. My father's mother was a mountain girl whose father was an old Yankee. Labin Hill. He came down from New York State, and he came down to Jackson County. How they come to settle in Jackson County, the Irish people are great people. They can take

left-hand turns. See, these Irish people worked on the B&O, and then they completed the B&O over the Ohio River, they took a left-hand turn down the Ohio River and got to Point Pleasant, and took another left-hand turn up Kanawha River, come up Kanawha River to Thirteen Mile Creek. They took a left-hand turn up that creek and settled in Mason County, Jackson. My Granddad Donnely was one of them. Well, back to Labin Hill. He had a big family. One of the girls was Roxy Ann Hill. She married a man name Barnett and bore two children. Then, Mr. Barnett died. Left her with two boys. Dave was the name of one; Filmore was the other. Then, after she was widowed, she married again. She married Hugh M. Donnely, my grandfather, and they had three sons and three daughters. And, the daughters all died within a month of each other. Diptheria. We didn't have any medical facilities then. My father was one of the three boys. And, after my Grandfather Donnely died, she married again. The Civil War had ended on the 9th of April, 1865, and all that country through there in the main was of Yankee sentiment, joined the Union Army. And, one of the men that had joined the Union Army from Mason County was a man by the name of Lemuel Harpold. He took part in this secession movement when they pulled, when they separated West Virginia from Virginia. He was a member of the Wheeling Convention. Well, he was a widower. My Grandmother Donnely, and he married. They never had any children. And, he was a man of some ability. He was a tanner. Tanned hides. That was his trade. And, he had a farm. And, a man of no little intelligence. And, when we lived out where my farm now is, I was a child ten years old about the size I am now, though. He came to my house, came to our house and brought me a book called True Stories of Great Americans. The only book we had. I bet I read that book 20 times. Life of Lee and Stonewall Jackson, and Grant, and George W. Peabody, Thomas A. Edison, Cyrus W. Fields to mention a few. And, that book fired in me a determination to be a captain in the army. Started reading the Civil War and threw all my sympathies to the South. That's why I'm a Rebel. Well, I kept that book, and read it, and read it. And, when I got it, I was ten years old, and there never was a day that I recall for the next 25 years that what I just had in my heart a burning desire to be a captain in the Army. I was just inspired with Lee and Jackson, Stonewall. Well, in 1931 I got a commission in the Officer's Reserve Corp and as a First Lieutenant as a Chaplain. I had

graduated from school a minister, and then after holding that commission for two years and seven months, I was promoted me to captain. That was all I wanted. And, I held that rank for eight and a half years, and I studied everything I could on the military tactics and, ah, military history. And, I'd go to every contact camp, camp that I could get in. Finally, and I got the West Virginia National Guard reorganized, I was asked to accept the captaincy in the Chaplain's Corp in it, Assistant Division Chaplain. I took it. I held that commission eight and a half years. Only rank I had. And, World War II broke out. I was right in line. I was under the tree when the lightning struck. I went on duty in January, 1941 as Assistant Division Chaplain, and in July of that year, 1941, I was promoted and made the Division Chaplain. By that time, the tables of organization had changed, and I ranked as a major, because I was a Division Chaplain. I had made a major. Well, since I'd studied everything in the army when the war broke out, wasn't but 125 chaplains in all the army, and the army expanded to 11 million promotion was very rapid, and, ah, 16 months later I was made the Assistant Corp Chaplain of many divisions, and a month later I was made the Corp Chaplain, and that carried the rank of lieutenant colonel. I was a major for 15 months, then I was made a lieutenant colonel, I was made a bird colonel, chicken, had eagles on the shoulders. And, I went to Africa in the Army. They transferred me there as the Chaplain of the Fourth Corps, and there, since I had studied and prepared, I made Chaplain of the whole army, Seventh Army. I came up through Africa into Italy, invasion of France, and I was over there till Germany quit, and then I was nearly a year in the Army of Occupation. And, out of 11,200 and some chaplains in the army, navy, and air force, I got more promotions than any of them. I got three promotions in rank, and four promotions in position, seven promotions. That was more than any of 11,200 some chaplains we had in all the armed forces, army, navy, and air force. I want to mention that to show you that the part of being prepared, and it all started with that one book. Well, in the army, I was chaplain. I got a good salary. There's just three things you could spend money for in the army. That was gambling, whiskey, and women. Why, I was the chaplain, and I couldn't do any of those things (laughter). The result was I saved some money. I got home I had \$23,000 from my active duty, and I invested that, and today I get \$175,000 from that

investment. And, that was the beginning of my fortune. And, ah, I'm Chaplain now of the Veterans Hospital, a pretty good job. And, as a result of my getting that book when I was ten years old, the income I've had from my service, the army, and the increase off my investments has brought my estate up till I expect it's very little short of \$400,000 today. Now, that's from a fellow that couldn't get out in public cause I didn't have clothes. I mean that. When I was 13 years old. Now, that came, there's your Appalachian culture, because my father had a good mind, but he was poor, and he saw to it we got an education. We had to work our way through school, and I'm still working. I was 78 years old on the 2nd of February. I'm still working, and my income now runs me \$40,000 a year cash from my writings, my speaking, my investments, and this Mercer and Miner Bank over here, I'm the largest stockholder in it, and director and member of the executive committee, and chairmans of leading committees. I've just been showing what can happen to a poor boy. My younger brother got his Doctor of Philosophy Degree early now when he was 23. I have a sister in Arizona. She got her master's degree at the University of Arizona. My younger brother, who became president of the school out there, had a son, and he's about your age, and, ah, he studied law after he came back from Korea, and he became a mem--he was invited to become a member of the firm of Capron and Capron, Santa Fe, New Mexico. That is the leading law firm in New Mexico. Old man Capron is dead and gone. He was the attorney for Billy the Kidd. You've heard of him.

MWL: Yeah.

CSD: Well, my nephew is in that firm, and here this last year pressure brought onto him to become a candidate for the judges superior courts through there. He was nominated, and elected, and now he is a judge of the superior court through there and just a young fellow. Making \$28,000 a year. Just to show you now the ramifications. I don't mean to brag about it.

MW: Yes. I talk about it in all humility. But, it takes a lot of drive, a lot of drive, a lot of drive.

MWL: Can you reflect some on the early days?

CSD: What you say?

MWL: Could you reflect some on the early days in Given when you were 10, 13 years of age, what it was like, what you did.

CSD: Well, we were very poor. We, ah, lived in a little 'ble Jenny Lynn Shanty. See, Jenny Lynn Shanty named after Jenny Lynn, a famous Swedish singer. She came to this country in the 1870's and sang, you know. She became very popular like you name kids after presidents. ∟MWL: Yes.∟ So, when anybody built it, a house, they called it a Jenny Lynn. The boards nail up and down this way. Now, we lived, now, that's the way we lived. Had no facilities, burn wood, and spring water.

MWL: How did you store your food?

CSD: Huh?

MWL: How did you store your food?

CSD: Dried it. And, ah, we also would can up something. Now, at Parkersburg there was an old Irishman by the name of A. P. Donnaghho (spells), D-o-n-n-a-g-h-h-o. He was an old bachelor and he courted an old maid school teacher for 40 years and never married. But, A made pottery, stoneware, jugs, and jars. And, he had his name thrown down at an angle, like the angle of a $23\frac{1}{2}$ degree, painted it, and baked it blue glaze. And, his jars now are collectors items and jars and jugs. Very much sought after. But, now, we've got those jars and jugs. We'd put molasses sorghum in the jars, in the jugs, and my mother, God rest her soul, would can up peaches. We had some peach trees, and berries, and pickles, and that way we'd eat in the wintertime. And, just out of sentiment for some of those things, I began to collect those Donnaghho jars, and I've got the largest collection of them in the world. I've got about 150 specimens. I'll show you directly. And, I had a student from the University of Georgia here the other day wanted to buy that entire collection. Well. (Break in tape.) Peach butter and things of that kind, and I've seen my mother, dear soul, in the fall when we run short of bread stuff go out and get a couple of pine bushes, pine poles, big around as your leg, you know, take two, two of them about that far apart. And, she'd take a gallon syrup can, corn syrup. We had what you slop buy you got in the wintertime in a country store. I've seen her put that gallon

bucket on a stove and melt the solder, you know, melt it together and straighten that tin out. And, she'd take a hammer and a nail and get a nail and drive that full of holes. Maybe a thousand holes, and nail it on those two logs like this, you see, and the rough side would, she'd put the rough side of those nails where she driven them up, you know, the jagged edge, go out in the cornfield. We raised corn, little patch of corn, and get the white corn in the fall when it dried somewhat, and she'd grate that on top of that. Had to grate for three hours, and she'd maybe get a gallon and a half of grated corn. We'd take that, and mix it, put in a little salt, country butter, put it in the oven, I'll show you when we're over there directly, set it on the hearth, and put the lid on top of the coal fire, and bake that. Corn pone be about that thick, you know, that big around. Each of us would get a bowl. She'd fill that up, you know, that corn bread, get the milk. We had, we had an old cow. Dish of kraut on the side. That be supper. Course that made us pretty strong. I'm, I'm the runt of the family. I'm the, I guess, they're, they're four men in the family, my father and the three boys. I'm the runt. That's the way we ate. And, sometimes we'd run short of bread stuff, and I know sometime we didn't have bread. Now, it was pretty rough going, but we were all together. Had an open fireplace. I've still got the open fireplace. We had togetherness.

MWL: What type of meat did you have?

CSD: Well, we'd kill a hog, but beef was an unheard of quantity then. Just once in a great while since there was no refrigeration would you have beef. We'd catch rabbits and things like that. Mother raised a flock of turkeys. We, we never ate them because that was, that was the money profit. She'd sell that and buy our winter clothes, you know. We raised maybe 30 turkeys. We had a few chickens, you know, eat that, you know, that was about the way we ate. But, I'd dig ginseng, May Apple Root, and Yellow Root, and sell that to buy shoes and clothes. Catch a few skunks, you know, sell their hides. That was good legal tender out there, you know. 'Possum hides, and 'coon, 'coon hides, and fox hides. My wife and I sat at the table this morning talking about that. We have a caretaker out there, and I told this fellow how I wanted him to trap those foxes. We trapped them last winter and sold the pelts. You can get about eight or \$10 for a good fox pelt

now. And, ah, I'm going to have her a fur coat made out of them. And, I'll show you the boards, the skin boards we used, you know, to pull the hides over, you know. Ever see one of those?

MWL: No, I haven't.

CSD: Well, I'm living as primitively now as my grandparents did. Well, my mother was a mountain girl, and her father was Henry Parsons, and her mother was Elizabeth Simmons. Elizabeth Simmons came to that country out there when she was three months old. Her father was Samuel Simmons from Mt. Airy, North Carolina, United States Senator same as some of our people. Samuel Simmons went surety for a sheriff who defaulted, and Samuel Simmons had to pay the bond, so he packed up and came to Jackson County then a new county formed in 1831. He was a member of the first grand jury there in Jackson County. He's buried at Pleasant Hill. Well, ah, Elizabeth Simmons was a part Indian, part Cherokee. Prominent cheekbone, very proud, hair was straight and coarse, very proud individual, and she bore 11 children; and in that family there was not a death for 58 years. All 11 lived, and mother and father lived. And, they were strong people, physically strong. Well, my mother was a woman of singular intelligence, native intelligence. She knew the call of every bird, animal, and the meaning of every one of them, and she taught us children all of that, you know. She married when she was 14. Grandad Parsons was a lay preacher in the United Brethern Church, good man, but in those days all anybody thought about was making a living. But, Grandmother Simmons was a woman of intelligence, and her brothers all became doctors of medicine. They came up from North Carolina, went up to Ohio State University which is a land-grant school, the oldest institution in Ohio Territory, Ohio State rather. And, when they went up there, they didn't call it studying to be a doctor, they called it reading medicine. They went up and read medicine. They called it reading medicine and read medicine for two years, and then they went back and became practitioners. And, they were good for their time. Then, my Grandfather Parsons was a man of fine mind but no formal education. And, since they had that big family, big graph, now follow me, I was always going up to my grandmother's family all became doctors it plunged, went down, down almost to zero in the matter of education. And, after

all those children, Grandmother Donnely, ah, Parsons family married except one got married; they had children. Not a one of them was any more educated than you'd get in the very common schools, maybe fifth grade. And, I was the first one in all the generations to start the graph back up. We came to Charleston High, went to high school, Charleston High School. He was the talk of the family. Shirley Donnely, that's me, was going to high school. Oh, high, they thought that was high. Well, sir, I graduated Charleston High School, and that was the talk. And, the result was that the rest of the grandchildren began to go out and up, and now practically all of them became college graduates, big schools. They've all been very prominent in the education field. Graduated schools like Colgate, all big universities. And, I had to work my way through school while I was in high school. I had a full-time job jerking soda working in a bakery store, confectionary store in Charleston. And, I became made editor of the Charleston High School Paper, The Bookstrap. I was editor of it for two years. We had a big publication area. Had about 60 pages a month. Well, I learned to carry, do many things at once. Get my education, had a full-time job, published a paper. That accounts for the fact now that I always held at least four major jobs. Now, up until two, two years ago next June, I was pastor of the Cry Worship Baptist Church, which is, I think, the finest Baptist Church in West Virginia. I held that church 25 years, big church, parish of 1,000 people. I held that church, and had this job as the Chaplain of the Veterans Hospital, had my newspaper job as a daily columnist, and had the bank over here, and operate a couple of farms. Well, it's kept me busy. Course I had to forego social life, but my social life was mixing with all the people in these five occupations. Result is that I've kept an active mind. Well, my brothers and sisters all took the same cue. Had one sister became, ran a business college in Charleston, and she married. Another sister became an educator. Another sister married; she's a wealthy woman in Charleston. Her son is a graduate of Ohio, of New Mexico University, West Virginia University; so is his wife. And, then had another brother. He didn't take much to education, but he was elected constable of the City of Charleston for 16 years. One sister died comparably young. But, that's about the way we came up, you know. We had it rough, but all of a sudden we began to work and, ah, that's how got into money.

MWL: How many students were in Charleston High School when you went?

CSD: There were 62 in my graduating class, and I graduated in 1915. I would say that, ah, there was not over four, wasn't as many as 400, and now this is a guess, but there was just 62 graduated in the class I graduated.

MWL: Was Charleston the largest city at the time?

CSD: Charleston about 25,000. We lived on the west side. That was the side of the poor people, you know. At least we thought so.

MWL: Uh huh. They have streetcars for transportation?

CSD: Is what?

MWL: Did they have streetcars?

CSD: Streetcars. I was never late for school but one time, and the streetcar broke down. I think maybe a bridge collapsed, and we couldn't get away. And, I'll never forget that how guilty I felt going into school. I thought I'd be flogged with cat-o'-nine-tails for being late. That was the only time I was ever late for school in my life. And, I've always read voluminously, voraciously, I should say, and I got together a few books. This is part of it there. This is my library here on theology in here. In here is, excuse the way things look.

MWL: That's quite all right.

CSD: Here's ... decorations I got in the war. There's the fourth highest decoration the United States gives.

MWL: Legion of Merit, Bronze Star.

CSD: Bronze Star.

MWL: Bronze Star, Purple Heart. How, how did you come by this?

CSD: I got wounded.

MWL: Well, I realize that (laughs).

CSD: That's the only one I'd rather not talk about that.

MWL: Okay.

CSD: I was in the division. Well, my army cot is near my foot locker. This, my main office in Beckley, this is where the work is done. There's that newspaper column I write. I cut out a whole page you see [MWL: Uh huh.], and excuse me, this is my article today, and I cut out the whole page, and I put it up here just this way. And, at the end, end of this month finishes 18 years writing. Now, when that's done, they get that here, I'll send it down to George over in Cincinnati and have it bound. This is the one for last year.

MWL: Last year.

CSD: Main (inaudible), you see. There is is. (Inaudible) God's Acre. Napoleon, not, not Napoleon, Longfellow's called, ah, graveyard God's Acre. When I was at Harvard, I used to ... These are all human interest stories. Write about anything. Write (inaudible) reminiscing. [MWL: Uh huh.] They described to me the Red Fox. That's the John Fox, Jr., story. The man that told me this, of course, knew the Red Fox down there. I saw him yesterday, and, ah, name was Baskin Slimp. He was named for, he was a relative of that famous congressman, Baskin Slimp, and the man who told me this story, Slimp has a nephew who played Patton in the play thing in that new movie, Patton.

MWL: Ah, George C. Scott.

CSD: Yeah, yeah. Let's go back through here. See, it's history. [MWL: Uh huh.] Story of Bethlehem, James and (inaudible). West Virginia. Hayes trying out, Rutherford B. Hayes. You know the election was stolen for Hayes. See, Hayes was defeated by Tildon for the presidency, but there was some, raised some question about the election in Florida, and, ah, the election had to be stolen for Hayes, and the man that did the stealing was rewarded for it by being appointed governor of the territory of New Mexico. His name was Lou Wallace, and he went out there. All he did while he was out there was write a book called Ben Hur. That was his reward for stealing

that, and it was a deal, you know. He said if he could steal that, Hayes said he'd pull the Army of Occupation out of the South. That was after the Civil War. They had the Army of Occupation down there. But, that's for doing that. Give you some idea of what you're writing about.

MWL: What's that about the baked potato?

CSD: Is there anything better than a baked potato? I was talking about, we grew last few weeks around 75,000 acre harvested 900,000 best potatoes I ever ate. Better than Idaho. Hand me that other book. Get a lot of correspondence about this stuff.

MWL: Do, do you have a favorite recipe, an old recipe that you could pass on?

CSD: Well, nothing more than out there, now, we'd, springtime we'd dig this sassafras root [MWL: Uh huh.], make sassafras tea, and we'd gather spice wood. We had just out there last week and gather, made a spice wood tea. Very palatable. Taste like this Constant Comment tea. And, ah, we like baked potatoes, you know. That's just about it. We ate very common fare. But, anyway, I want to show you how newspaper had them all bound. These are the Fayette Tribunes. I wrote for Fayette, for that, you know, for long time. Here's that book I was telling you about.

MWL: Is that the one?

CSD: There's the story of it. That book made me \$400,000.

MWL: Eighteen ninety eight.

CSD: Uh huh. That's very prosaic to you, I know, but then more university professors than you can imagine, more college students here in the last month. I had them come here from Harvard, Yale, Duke, to say nothing about Marshall, and Concord, and Morris Harvey, and these smaller schools [MWL: Uh huh.] doing research work. And, since I was a West Virginian, I went into the West Virginia stuff. Here's a picture of the Hatfields. This is an actual photograph.

MWL: Is that Amos?

CSD: Devil Anse.

MWL: Devil Anse.

CSD: Here's his wife. There's only one's that's living, Willis. He went to penitentiary from killing Dr. Thornhill. This one and this one both killed same day, murdered. Here was the mean one, Cap Hatfield. Here was the dog. He was a coon dog. Look at that kid there. [MWL: Huh.] That's an actual photograph. One of the rarest.

MWL: How did you come by that photograph?

CSD: I found an old fellow that had it and got it from him. I wrote the history of this feud, you know. I got them to put this play on out here.

MWL: Hatfields and McCoys.

CSD: Hatfields and McCoys. [MWL: Uh huh.] One day Ewell Cornett, who wrote the music for it, and I were sitting together down here at a place called Wonderland. [MWL: Uh huh.] That's the 2,000 acre recreation tract. (Inaudible) had that built up chalet down there and gave it to me. Beautiful chalet all equipped with modern device, just, just gave it to me. We had a bunch of musicians down there one night he and I were talking like you and I talking, and I said, "Ewell, the greatest story that ever originated in West Virginia, the Hatfields and McCoys Feud." He never heard on act like he heard me. I said, "That could be dramatized and be a great drawing card." Next thing I knew, here came Ewell Cornett and Billy Ed Wheeler, this here, came calling on me. Want to talk to me about that, and I let them have my material. Billy Ed Wheeler wrote the drama. So, I, I could have had a book of 400 on them because of my material, but I boiled it down to about 60 pages, so I could have it, could sell it for a pittance just enough to have it printed. And, it's been printed about five times, and since the first year, over 200 copies of that's been sold this year. And, it's about gone, the printed edition. And, I had last week, I mailed out, somebody wrote, orders came and mailed out to Virginia, one to Pennsylvania, and one to Texas, and one to Oregon just last week.

MWL: Have you seen the play Hatfields and McCoys?

CSD: Oh, yes, yes, I.

MWL: How, how authentic is it according to your material?

CSD: Well, you know, I'd say about 70 percent. You know, you've got to do that to keep from being sued, you know.

MWL: Yes.

CSD: Well, now, you see, all of this is on the Civil War over here. Civil War. This is on Fayette County. This is on West Virginia. That's the largest collection of West Virginia any outside of State Capitol at Charleston, and the University. University's asked me for my private papers. They get them in there and classify them. Those are county histories. There's some of my commissions. This way you keep a lot of stuff, you know, and make your own books. There's the Editor of the Charleston Gazette, you know, F. D. Anderson and John. Kind of a facetious thing. [MWL: Uh huh.] Sam Shelton, Confederacy collection of plates, you know. Confederate soldier's monument. You want to look at it? Of course, 85 percent, 87 percent of that what I had, you know, about all the state dogs, you know.

MWL: Is that where John Henry did his work?

CSD: Yes, John Henry right there he is, you know. [MWL: Uh huh.] A woman from New York called me, wanted my material on John Henry. I sent it to her. Harold Gitmar (spells), G-i-t-m-a-r, her husband was taking a PhD at Yale, and I let her have it, and she published that book. Wanting to get the story about John Henry. She gave me quite a write in it. There's the chapel out here where I was, where my people are buried. These are inscriptions on the stones. See what it says. And, you have to keep stuff in some system. See, it comes under the heading of cemetery, you know. [MWL: Uh huh.] Communicating with the dead. That's.

MWL: Oh, is that that.

CSD: That's about those people, Civil War Country, you know. [MWL: Uh huh.] Chambersburg, General MacCausland, Putnam

County burned it, you know. Floyd Collins' Cave. Well, I'll just give you some idea how a poor preacher has to keep stuff. Now, you smart boys can do it better.

MWL: When did you first come to Oak Hill, Fayette County?

CSD: I was called to the church up here in August, 1922. I've only had three churches. Here's some kudos I've collected in time. Some other things. There's the key to Oak Hill. After I'd been here about 40 years, Oak Hill had a celebration here and honored me by giving me the key to the city. There it is.

MWL: I see you, ah, clipping from the Gazette about the, ah, vote tabulation.

CSD: Yes.

MWL: What do you, ah, do you have an opinion about Mr. Rockefeller?

CSD: Well, this, yes. His coming here was very carefully researched. And, it ties in with my theory about the Kennedys. There's a bunch of those intellectuals studied at Harvard. I think they thought they'd take over the country. Robert, Jack, Teddy, and young Rockefeller, and some of the kinsmen of the Kennedy's. And, since Winthrop had already been governor of Arkansas, ah, and Robert thought he would swing New York and just held a sort of a dynasty. And, they thought young Hatfield come down to us ignorant West Virginians, you know, become governor. He'd be sort of a border state, and he could become a wheel down there. I think it was all political, ah, idea. And, the result was he didn't get elected. And, he, he goes back. Jack Kennedy swung the state by promising everything, and since he was a Catholic, and West Virginia voted for him, well, that did away with the idea that the Catholic wouldn't get anywhere. I'm in no opposition to the Catholic religion. I'm not a bigot. But, ah, I think they just, West Virginia resented Rockefeller playing on think maybe get by. I, I think he's washed up now. I don't think you'll hear from him again. This came in just the other day. A feller gave me. Now, this was, just took a minute. That's all it took. The man who delivered me doctored like this for pain, you know.

MWL: It just says pain on there, too. [CSD: Yeah.] Doesn't say anything but pain pill.

CSD: There's one here for calomel I noticed. Here, calomel. Take one, take yellow at night and pink one in the morning.

MWL: What's that for?

CSD: That was a physic.

MWL: Oh, I, I see.

CSD: That stuff go through you like a dose of salts go through hard rock (laughter). Now, all he had his own drug store.

MWL: Uh huh. Park Davis from Michigan.

CSD: That's, that's an old firm, you know. [MWL: Uh huh.] When I, when this was given to me, it was covered over with the dust of the ages. I put some neat's-foot on and cleaned it up a little bit. Now, that's what he had. Now, that was the any, any.

MWL: What did he carry on this side, instruments?

CSD: Instruments, yes. Pull teeth with, you know. [MWL: Uh huh.] Had it all. Now, that thing dates back to pre-Civil War time. I just had to clean it up. But, every, there's hardly, there's never a day goes by but what there's something brought in here. You'll see a thing here, you see things here. I was a guest at a place, and they were pretty good Italians for sculpturing, and this rock and this brick is out of the old original white. I found it, you know, that some fellow had carved on it. [MWL: Uh huh.] See, there's the mosque.

MWL: Yes, palm tree.

CSD: Palm tree. Here are the pyramids, you see. Here are the camels, you see [MWL: Uh huh.], and, ah, I don't know what that is.

MWL: What did they use these for to crush, ah.

CSD: No, they used them as an ashtray.

MWL: Oh.

CSD: They found, they found it up there, and the manager knew my interest in the. My wife and I went up there to just have lunch, you know, dinner. Had my sister from Arizona with me, and we went up there. Fred Higginbotham, head waiter, he's from Munich, and he knows me, and I go up there. And, the word no sooner had got around, Rev. Donnely's here, oh, up here, what all, Rev. Donnely's here today, Rev. Donnely's here today, and when we went up to the big dining room seats about 1,200 people, you know, we were given the choice table. Higginbotham had us personally over to it. We ordered a big dinner, you know, and everything, and ah, about the time we were ready to finish, Higginbotham, head waiter, came over said, "The manager just phoned up and said to tell Dr. Donnely that the dinner's complementary." I picked that thing up. That goes back to the glacial period of the Northwest. And, I was stationed at Fort George Washington. One day Major Warner, who was the general aide-de-campe, took me and two or three others in a, his plane and flew over Mt. Rainer.

SIDE TWO

CSD: I came here and grew up with the town. There wasn't anything for anybody to see here. That's why I started a museum. I'll show you over here directly. Sit down, now, you can't hurt anything here. [MWL: Okay.] Just for people when they had visitors they could bring their friends over to see these things. Being a West Virginian I hit on the idea of building my library. I built this library in 1938. I had a colony of stone masons come here, Italian stonemasons. They were here about three weeks building this, and, ah, I took a rock from each county in the state and had the name sandblasted in them as you've seen. [MWL: Yes.] Well, the idea caught fire. I wrote in the newspaper column, and these rocks would be sent here or brought here, and, ah, I've always had rock on the brain, because my Grandfather Donnely was a stonemason. And, they tie, they have a service on the rocks; they put a smooth, and the Italians have the rock face like you see these. Well, how I got rock on the brain was this. My Grandfather Donnely married Roxy Ann Hill. Roxy Ann Hill's father was Labin Hill, a very eccentric fellow. Lived on Thirteen Mile Creek, and Thirteen Mile Creek is a meandering

stream. It flows into the Kanawha. And, Labin Hill, down there on his place, had a rock cliff juttet out over the waters of Thirteen Mile Creek, a white sandstone rock. Oh, bigger than my house out here. And, he hit on the plan of chiseling out for him in that rock a castle. And, the only tools with which they had to work with picks, and he worked, they worked until they broke their instruments, picks, you know. I've seen the implements. They cut out, oh, as big as that, you know. Saw one not too long ago. He was going to build him a castle in that rock. Well, a good many people moved in that community maybe 25 or 30 these settler, you know, came in there, and they needed a post office. My Grandfather Donnelly, a poor Irishman, was, was the man that led in the establishment of the post office. And, ah, in 1869, they got established the post office established there. Question arose as to what to call it. And, since his father-in-law had started to build a castle in a rock, Grandfather Donnelly suggested to the postal authorities that they call it Rock Castle, and that's what it is to this day. Well, I had rock on the brain just throuh my showing how that you inherit something from your ancestors. So, Grandad Donnelly went in for being was a stonemason. The thing, a streak showed up in me, so I built my library out of rock. That's how come. Well, after word got around I was going to do that, they opened up this big cemetery out here, Highlawn Memorial Park. I buried the first person in it. That was long ago as 1928. Now, there's 5, 500 buried there.

MWL: How was the first person buried there? Did they have ...

CSD: Is what?

MWL: How did they transport the first person to that cemetery? Did they have a, did still use a horse or did they?

CSD: They had a hearse.

MWL: They had a hearse at the time.

CSD: The Thomas Funeral Home buried the first one. They had a coach then. ^MWL: Uh huh.^ Name was Rogers, Mrs. Commodore Perry Rogers.

MWL: Commodore Perry.

CSD: Named after Commodore. Her husband's named after Commodore Perry that opened the ports of Japan. Well, anyhow, it was a new cemetery, and people began to buy tombstones, and they bought the tombstone from Sears Monument Company at Charleston. And, when Roy Sears, who had owned that place, heard I was, read about my going to have a library made, he came by here one day, and I know him. He said, "If you'll, when we bring these monuments up here to sit out on, we'll pick up these rocks that you have here and take them back down to Charleston in our truck, and we'll sandblast the name of the county in the face of the rock." Said, "If you'll, we'll do that for you on condition that you'll let me take a little plaque about eight inches square and put it, bronze plaque and put it on that building there stating that the lettering of these stones was done by the Sears Monument Company." I told him I'd consider it. I considered it one tenth of a second and told him it was a deal. And, so that's how these stones come to be lettered. Well, other things began to develop. People would bring things here. And, I was showered under with rocks. Some scientist from one of the western states sent me a meteorite, and the Standard Oil people sent me a rock. It's out there under the window, I think, now. It came from 14,000 feet under the ground where they had drilled for oil, you know. It is a igneous rock, too.

MD: I'll come in.

CSD: Mr. Learmonth, that's my wife, Missy.

MWL: Hello, Missy.

MD: Hello, how are you?

MWL: I'm just fine.

CSD: Where are you going?

MD: I'm going to the post office and to the store. I thought I would just check in.

CSD: All right.

MD: I see you've got a tape recorder.

MWL: Yes, I do.

CSD: Take my car.

MD: Ah, we have one, and I was checking mine yesterday, and I've let the battery [MWL: Oh.], you know, corrode, and it won't ruin it, will it? I, I removed the batteries, but, ah.

MWL: No, no, it won't.

MD: I noticed it yesterday.

MWL: Should I move my car then?

MD: No, no, you're fine, you're fine. I'll go in your car.

CSD: She'll use my car.

MD: Nice meeting you.

MWL: Nice meeting you.

MD: Uh huh.

MWL: Bye, bye.

MD: Bye.

CSD: So, I told everybody I had their, that meteorite had a rock and hit them in the head this from Standard Oil had a rock and hit them on the (inaudible) (laughter). People curious to see those things. Well, they burned the state capitol was burned at Charleston, 1921. The old frame where the Diamond is, you know [MWL: Uh huh.], the Kanwha Valley Bank. I used to be in that building when I was a boy. Well, when you get a building like that, the only way you can do it is to burn it. They've got it well insured, you see. The theory of the politician is this. The State has no soul, and therefore, is not responsible to God Almighty for what it does, morally, or any otherwise. So, since the States made up of politicians, that's why a politician can lie with impunity and not feel he's morally responsible for the thing.

MWL: You say they burned the Capitol?

CSD: Oh, why, of course, you know that. You're a university man. So, the 3rd of January, 1921, she was burned. Well insured. They had to have the Capitol, had to have a new one. How, how, how else would you get rid of it? Well, there were four columns that upheld, had the portico on front, you know, facing on Capitol Street, four columns stone mason that building was built 1888. Little stone columns from, gotten out by Scotch stonemasons from up Elk River, Elk River Sand. Well, there were four of those columns. When the building was destroyed by fire, two of those cylinders were destroyed, too, some, you know. And, the capstone saved, and Gov. McCorkle got one of those columns. He was a lover of history. He got the base, a cylinder capsule and took it to Sunrise. It's up there yet. The two were destroyed, and the other column is standing right there by your car. Right there. You, you walked right by it when you went out to get that tape, came in by it. [MWL: Uh huh.] That's a very historic thing. They used to have a driveway around it. A feller, he was in the state senate, and he had that, he got that column and brought it here to Oak Hill. I saw it and tried to buy it from him. He wouldn't see it, so finally one day, he came over here. He and I were good friends. Said, "I want to give you something. I want to give you that column." I had the Sears Monument Company bring their derricks and everything and set it for me. That's how come me to have that. Another thing, talking about the culture in this area here, we're a downset. We, the only way you could be more ignorant than a West Virginian is just (inaudible). Now, I'm not speaking facetiously. [MWL: Yes.] I'm. Virginia, for example, makes \$100,000,000 a year off of her history. We don't make anything. Just waking up to it. And, we've got almost as much as Virginia has. That's fire. Somebody's house will burn down this cold weather. Well, anyhow, we're waking up to this now, and I'm going to do something about it. And, I hit on a plan, and as I say, I was here native of West Virginia. I collected everything I could about West Virginia. Now, for instance, I don't suppose you go to church.

MWL: Yes.

CSD: When did you go last?

MWL: Ah, two weeks ago Sunday.

CSD: Whose funeral was it?

MWL: It wasn't a funeral. It was a regular Sunday service.

CSD: What demonination are you?

MWL: Catholic.

CSD: Catholic.

MWL: Uh huh.

CSD: I have a sister who is a Catholic. I, I don't know of any. I'm no bigot. My nephew, Jake, nephew, when his son was just recently confirmed in the Catholic Church. Well, this time do your Easter duty (laughter). I know (inaudible) better than I know your dad. (Inaudible). For a long time I had 133 Catholic priests under my supervision. And, I was openly asked to become a Catholic. They said I would have been made a bishop. But, anyhow, back on this. The reason I asked you about your church the theme song in that outdoor drama, The Hunter of the Hill, Unto These Hills, you know.

MWL: Yes.

CSD: The theme song of that is a hymn, "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms." I don't know whether you've ever heard it or not. It's a beloved hymn. The man who wrote that music was an Oak Hill man, Sam Duncan. His father was A. B. Duncan who was a Confederate soldier. I conducted, helped in his funeral. Sam Duncan died here a few years ago. And, before he died, I had him to write out in manuscript form the music as he wrote it. He went to Bridgewater College, a wealthy Brethern Church, that's the Duncan Brethern. And, one day the teacher of music handed out a bunch of poems that he himself had written, asked his students to set them to music. And, the one that Sam Duncan got was "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms," and Sam Duncan wrote the music to it. And, it's universally used now. And, when the poem was, when the song was printed, the music wasn't credited to Sam Duncan but to the man who wrote the poem. But, I had Sam write it

out for me. And, I've collected a great deal of manuscripts like that. Words of the great. I have a wealth of that stuff. We let a lot of that stuff get away.

MWL: Yes, we do.

CSD: Another thing is, now, early ruins around here was log cabins, and this cabin across the drive here where your car is sitting [MWL: Uh huh.] was built in 1878 by a young man named Carlie W. Perry. He got married, and he and his wife went out and cut down those logs and built that cabin between the two ruins of his open space. I closed it up. [MWL: Uh huh.] They raised 11 children in those two rooms, and the creek in front of the house was the bathtub. And, they had these old high headboards on the beds, you know. The only privacy a girl had when she was dressing. Those beds stood up in the corner; the bed was high. She would get behind that, and that was her privacy. That's some of your mountain culture. Well, this was a good example of mountain architecture, so I secured it, and brought it here, and had her restored. When I got it, there was a chimney at the either end, but I just put up one chimney. [MWL: Uh huh.] And, people come here to see just that. And, this is a good example of a preserved mountain architecture.

MWL: Was the cabin here in Oak Hill or?

CSD: No, way down here in the mountains below Fayetteville. I had it moved here. It had a clapboard roof, but we couldn't get the clapboards put back on. And, I'll show you. We've kept, ah, just a lot of stuff of West Virginia that way. Then, I set about collecting the things. We have utensils, and implements, artifacts that the mountain people used. That cabinet's full of them over there.

MWL: Could we take a look at that?

CSD: Well look at it, yes. What I'm going to show you. Sit still. I hope I'm not boring you.

MWL: No! Course not. Heavens, no.

CSD: I'll give you those ...

MWL: Boy, you're shoveling snow.

CSD: Here's few of these things. Now here where you used to buy these niggers, slave, here you'd get a Bill of Sale for them just like you'd get a title to your car. [MWL: Uh huh.] Ever see a Slave Bill?

MWL: No, I haven't.

CSD: Well, I collected, there's some of them there. I'll let you look through them before you leave here.

MWL: "Received of R. W. Watson, \$600 in full payments for a Negro girl named Carolina, about 15 years of age. A. W. Porter. Februrary 20, 1850." "Received of R. W. Watson," again, "\$600 in full payment for one Negro boy named Henry, about 13 years old, which [CSD: "Boy."] which boy I [CSD: "Warrant."] warrant sound in body, mind, and," and what is that? [CSD: "And title."] "And, title, August 20, 1850."

CSD: What a Negro sell for?

MWL: Six hundred dollars.

CSD: Well, most I ever seen a Negro sold for. He lived down here at Beckley below Fayetteville by the name of Jordan, Matt Jordan. I know some of his family. [MWL: Uh huh.] He sold for \$2,500. He was a pretty good as a veterinarian and mechanic. That's the most I ever know a nigger to sell for. "Know all men by these present that I, Elizabeth Daniel of the County of Lawrence and Territory of," territory, now, not state, [MWL: Uh huh.] "of Alabama, for and in the consideration of the sum \$750 to me in hand paid the receipt of which I hereby acknowledge have bargained, sold, and delivered, and do by these present bargained, sell, and delivered unto, Issac Somebody of the County of Somthing, State of Mississippi, a Negro boy named Araba about 15 years of age, which Negro boy I warrant as slave for life and to be sound in mind and body and also warrant and defend him against any claims for myself, my heirs, or assigns. Said James Somebody" that bought him. [MWL: Uh huh.] "August 19, 1818."

MWL: Eighteen eighteen.

CSD: Does this stuff like this interest you?

MWL: Yes, it does. What happened, what was going on in this area after the Civil War as far as the Negroes were concerned?

CSD: Raised tobacco. Tobacco was king where coal was king [MWL: Uh huh.], and over here where the grade school stands today, tobacco yeilded \$750 an acre. That opens up a story. They had an old Confederate soldier named Morris Harvey. He and Captain W. D. Thurman, Thurman commanded a company of guerrilla warfares. There were people went to war on their own, and they were, Morris Harvey had soldiered under Philip Thurman, and, ah, they were raising tobacco, and Morris Harvey was pretty long headed. They had already found some coal down here at Coalburg. These William Seymore Edwards people lived here at Coalburg. [MWL: Uh huh.] They were descendants of Jonathan Edwards, you know, an early preacher, you know.

MWL: Yes, I've heard the name.

CSD: And, they had a mine there at Coalburg that closed down during the Civil War, and after the war they called it a coal bank. They opened up another mine after the war just east of Coalburg, and they called it East Bank where Jerry West came from. That's how it got it's name. Well, Morris Harvey would go to these old ignorant farmers like Shirley Donnelly and the Learmonth and say, now, all you folks want to do is raise tobacco. Sell me these old bluffs, the river-front, and mountains. [MWL: Uh huh.] He'd buy it 50 cents an acre. And, he bought up thousands of acres of land just for a pittance off of these farmers, these ignorant ones like me and raise tobacco on the good land. [MWL: Uh huh.] Well, he knew there was coal under it, and he got Capt. Thurman to survey it, and he payed Thurman in land; and Thurman took 200 acres down here at a place now called Thurman which is point of entry into New River Coal Fields. [MWL: Yes.] And, that Morris Harvey made a fourtune. He's the one for which Morris Harvey College is named after. That's the story of it. Now, in the 1880's, though, they began to mine coal commercially. And, the first coal mine 1872 up here at Quinwood old Joseph Barry, an old Yankee [MWL: Uh huh.], had been a captain in the Con-Union Army and the Quarter-master Corp, and John Nuttleburg opened up one down here, ah, John Nutall opened one 1873 in Nuttleburg. Well, coal

began to be king then. People quit raising tobacco. ⁷ MWL: Uh huh. And, people, and John E. Kenna was United States Senator at that time from where Kenna, West Virginia named. Kenna was Catholic, by the way. I know some of his people. He'd send these old farmers seed, particular tobacco seed. And, he sent a little package one time in 1878, 77 to an old farmer out here who just kept everything in the way of papers and everything. He had studied over what they call Concord College now, and he just throw this stuff back in old barrel-back trunk. And, one day his grandchildren called me. Said, "We're going to burn up grandpa's old barrel-back trunk and papers, and Dr. Donnely would you like to see some of these things?" I said, "Don't burn anything until I get there." And, I was there in 15 minutes. In it I found a little package of tobacco seed. Seed, that seed is weighed, you know. It's so fine. It's the smallest of all seed. Now, the Lord said the mustard seed was, but He'd never seen tobacco seed. Well, I saved that tobacco seed and brought it up here and got an expert gardener to sow it. And, he raised that tobacco, and he was a postmaster here at Fayetteville raised that, and he saved me a hand of it. A hand, a hand, you know, is a bunch. Tell you what it is. And, I've got it out here yet. Well, as it relates to you now. I, ah, wrote that story about that tobacco seed germinating after 76 years, I think it was, and the United States Agriculture Department in Maryland read about that, and they wrote me a letter, two-page letter, typewritten, said that constituted a world record for the germination of tobacco seed. Now, then, the man that got that seed had a son. I assisted in his burial, and that son whose burial I conducted, had two daughters, and one of the daughters married a fellow named Learmonth. John.

MWL: (Inaudible)

CSD: She was Opal DeQuasey.

MWL: Yes.

CSD: So, that's how it relates to you. Fascinating thing to me although it may not be to you.

MWL: It definitely is.

CSD: But, I've got that tobacco out here yet. And, Opal married twice. First time she married, I married her to Clyde Somebody then they separated. Well, anyhow, that's how I come by the Learmont's, and John and I are good friends. But, you know, we can show you all day about these. Here's where they sold a bunch of niggers. "The following Negroes to wit: Eliza, Issac, and Alfred for the price sum of \$3,400, \$15
[MWL: Uh huh.] in Confederate money."

MWL: What, what were the Negroes doing here after the end, after the end of the Civil War?

CSD: Well, that's an interesting thing, too. They worked on farms.

MWL: As free, ah, were they paid?

CSD: No, no, they were slaves. They came here as slaves, and after the war, they stayed, they worked in the coal mines, and worked around here as slave hands. Now, for example, sitting right close less than a hundred feet of where you are sitting you came through these brick posts out here
[MWL: Yeah.] as you drove in. The brick in these posts were made by Negro slaves in 1847 and 8. Lou Allen Jones came here from Amhearst County, Virginia, and settled over here at (Inaudible), and his Negroes made these brick out here in the field. Lou Allen Jones built that house and raised a big family. I knew them all but one or two. Lou Allen Jones was drowned in the Mississippi River. He went West. Horace Greely was firing them all up to go West, you know. [MWL: Uh huh.] Well, he went West, and he was drowned off the Steamer No. 3 about 60 miles above Memphis. Well, that's Lou Allen Jones. But, I knew Lou Allen Jones' children. They were old people when I came here. They were leading people here, rich people. And, that old house had been built over two stories, log house, ah, brick house. The coal company go that, and they have no desire for preservation or anything. And, they said, "Well, Doctor, would you like to have that?" I went, I sent trucks over there and got the brick, and all the entrances to these grounds here built out of, ah, brick made by Negro slaves.
[MWL: Uh huh.] Well, a grandson of Lou Allen Jones lives right across from the Baptist Church up here in that mansion right across the creek up there [MWL: Uh huh.] you passed. Herbert Jones. The third richest man in West Virginia.

Now, these Negroes worked there in a coal mine. Now, Lou Allen, for example, Lou Allen Jones had a slave named Napoleon. Napoleon Morris. And, he was so black that a piece of coal would like a snowball compared to him. He was a man of remarkable fecundity. He married, his first wife died, and he married her sister. And, by those two wives of his, sisters, his fecundity was equaled by their fertility, and he sired 42 children, and they were good people. And, in World War I, Napoleon Morris had 17 sons in the infantry. Seventeen sons now. I'm giving you the background of the culture of Appalachia here. He's buried out here at Hilltop. And, they were good citizens. Now, that's, I always try to relate the present history, the past history to the present here. Well, anyhow, I didn't mean to bore you with that stuff.

MWL: Napoleon, did he.

CSD: Napoleon Morris.

MWL: Did he end up as a slave? Did he die a slave?

CSD: Oh, he was a slave. He was, they, he was brought direct from Africa [MWL: Uh huh.], and Lou Allen Jones bought him somewhere in Virginia. And, he lived over here at Red Star at Hilltop, and his job in his latter years when he was old was to pick the bone out of coal which the mine cars would bring out. See, the Jones opened a Red Star Mine 1890, and he would pick out that slate, you know, bone they called it.

MWL: Yes.

CSD: And, that's the way he lived. I didn't mean to bore you with all of this.

MWL: No, that's not.

CSD: Well, this is just, ah, there's a man that signed the Declaration of Independence, Samuel Huntington.

MWL: Samuel Huntington.

CSD: Here's George Claver. Herbie Jones up here is a descendant of his. [MWL: Uh huh.] Over here, I don't know if you're converse with Robert Browning or not. There's a letter he wrote.

MWL: Robert Browning wrote?

CSD: Yes sir.

MWL: Of course. When I was in London here recently I went over to the Westminster Abbey to just, ah, get around. He's buried there, you know. Now, these are actual photographs, I mean autograph that he wrote. There's the last king that we had, George III, George Rex. ∕MWL: Uh huh.∕ That's his, that's a holograph. That's a valuable thing. That's the last king this country. Jefferson Davis, you've heard of him ∕MWL: Yes.∕ President of the Confederacy?

MWL: Is this the National Letter?

CSD: Oh, yeah. This, these are, these are autographs. ∕MWL: Uh huh.∕ There was the man (inaudible) first church letter in this country. He was the man that made the (inaudible) up there on top of Nathaniel Hall there in Boston. There's an old slave. There's the one that wrote the "Battle Hymn of the Republic," Howe. You've heard of it haven't you?

MWL: Uh huh.

CSD: Just, Fannie Crosby, the great Hymn writer. Here's the man that discovered Livingston, you know, in ∕MWL: Stanley.∕, Stanley. ∕MWL: Uh huh.∕ Anyway, here's his autograph. Here's Moody the great evangelist. Now, these are actual. Moody. These are, William Carey, the first modern mission in Charleston. Supposedly a good preacher, and.

MWL: Who is, who is that?

CSD: Oh, just some dark-haired lady. ∕MWL: Oh.∕ D. D. Drysdust (laughter). I've got some of these degrees, too. Let's see, I'll show you (inaudible). William Jennings Bryan. There's Florence Nightingale, the great first great nurse. Now, these are autographs, now, they're not, they're not facsimilies. And, a slave deed or two. More slave deeds. Here's you some hymns (inaudible) sang. Now, Opal DeQuasey married John Learmont. ∕MWL: Uh huh.∕ See if we can show you. I'll show you the index ... (Break in tape.) What I'm trying to find is. I have a, I have the, ah, discharge, I thought I had it in this book, Charles DeQuasey from the Confederate

Army. The actual, I've got the actual discharge. I'll show you that in a minute.

MWL: Was the main reason Oak Hill was settled because of the coal industry?

CSD: Oh, yes. These, these, ah, foreigners in came here for that.

MWL: Uh huh. From what countries did they come?

CSD: Poland, Lithuania, Spain, Italy, Germany. I buried those old fellows. They were all Catholic, but they drifted away from the church, you know.

MWL: Is, is there any Spanish influence in this area because of the Spaniards?

CSD: Oh, yes, yes, yes. Rock Creek down here. Let's see if we can find something. Was really a Spanish colony. They were mean as a scrub-tailed monkey.

MWL: But, Rock Creek was settled by in that area by the Spanish?

CSD: They weren't settled.

MWL: I mean they wasn't settled, but they had more of a Spanish community there.

CSD: This is, ah, is, ah, that's that, that's an army discharge somebody gave me one time I'm trying to find. People will send me these things. Now, here's, here's Opal DeQuaseys grandfather's Confederate Discharge. You'll never see another one.

MWL: I'll be.

CSD: That's a priceless thing.

MWL: 'Private Charles E. DeQuasey, Private of Captain Samuel S. Davis, Company C of the 60th Regiment of the Virginia Volunteers.' He's discharged on the Surgeon's Certificate of Disability, general disability.

CSD: Yeah, now, they were going to burn that up.

MWL: "Thirtieth day of May, 1862."

CSD: Now, that's, ah, who's that? Is that the DeQuasey one?

MWL: Uh huh.

CSD: Right beneath it, I think, is an old Yankee one.

MWL: "Furlough extended seven days."

CSD: Now, Samuel H. (Inaudible), his commander, his great grandson is Postmaster at Oak Hill.

MWL: Well, I'll be.

CSD: Now, that's the actual one.

MWL: Uh huh. These are all witnesses or.

CSD: Yeah, there it is.

MWL: Uh huh. Captain.

CSD: That's what he handled.

MWL: What do you know.

CSD: And, John's your uncle, isn't he?

MWL: Yes, he is.

CSD: Well, that's a Learmont Memento. Now, you'll never see another Confederate Army Discharge. Those things are just invaluable.

MWL: Goodness. It's a 100 and 110 years old, 113 years old.

CSD: Yeah, now, the West Virginia gave the federal soldiers medals. Here's one of them. That's called the Medal of Honor.

MWL: "Honorably discharged, 1861, 1865."

CSD: They have their name right around the corner, round, I mean
[MWL: The edge.] , the margin.

MWL: Uh huh. "Wise."

CSD: Now, that fellow's name was, was Walters, but he enlisted under another name. [MWL: Uh huh.] His step father was mean to him, and he ran off when he was a boy. And, one of his, and his son had that when he died, and that was left to me. See, somebody's got to save stuff like this for people. They don't, now, when I came back from the war, the Civil War Soldier was scarce. Everytime I'd read anything about one, I'd, ah, put it in this book until I got, this is the wind up of it all. I went to see, 200 miles to see that, 600 miles to see that old fellow. But, anyhow, I don't want to bore you with that stuff.

MWL: No, that's not boring at all. It really isn't.

CSD: Well, just somebody, you know, can preserve this stuff for people who don't know what to do with stuff. And, I've got thousands of pieces like that. We'll go over here and see this museum.

MWL: Okay, you say you had your first church in 1922?

CSD: Yes, sir. I had it four years. Well, from 1919 to 1922. Then, I came here, and I stayed at this church 21 years until I went to war.

MWL: Oh, I see.

CSD: If you'd like to have those?

MWL: Oh, yes, uh huh.

CSD: You saw that advertised. [MWL: Uh huh.] I've got some of those dollars. I've got a big coin collection. I must have 20,000 coins. You've got a fortune in them. Now, here's the way I keep my records. Here's a funeral I had. When did I have it? Had that funeral this week, you know. [MWL: Uh huh.] April the 6th. That was 91,982 funerals I've had. Now, I've got a funeral tomorrow. Now, these you cut them out of the paper, you see. Now, these here folks are buried, let's see. I think I married Opal then. She wanted to find out about her brother who was married. And, Social Security, but you've got to establish his age,

and he's been ill, and he couldn't look. And, he said that Rev. Donnely married him. Well, they came here to see. They'd go on to Fayetteville to get the license [MWL: Uh huh.], date, you know, of the license. And, they came up and thought maybe I hadn't returned the license. Well, I'm under bond to do that. My wife said, "Well, my husband's very careful about records." She went, so she looked up the records found out they got the license in Kanawha County. Now, that was day before yesterday. [MWL: Uh huh.] Now, that fellow will get Social Security, because I kept records. Here's these skin boards.

MWL: Just dried the skin on that?

CSD: Yeah, just pull the skin back over this. [MWL: Uh huh.] These are some of the things that the mountain people used. (Inaudible). See these all have a background here. Here's shoe pegs you put soles on shoes, you know. Soap the leather, you take up all, go along and bore holes through that piece of leather, and put these, these pegs always made on wet days, made of maple, and they bore that hole through the leather, put that square peg in there, and they let it dry right in the hole. Here's where you get the square peg in the round hole.

MWL: What is this here?

CSD: That's a gate hinge.

MWL: Oh, yes.

CSD: See, in those days, you had to necessity was the mother of invention. A little laziness (inaudible). Now, they take a model like that. That a bur, a (spells) b-u-r off a tree. About the toughest stuff known and sawed off, you know. See how tough and hard that is? That's an expression call a man an old knothed. See ... there's a piece of iron ore from Monroe County. Very heavy. Heaviest concentrate of iron ore. The Confederacy got iron ore up here around Monroe and Allegheny County. That's a papier-mache there. Carried powder in the mines. That tunneled the mines after. What?

MWL: Because it wouldn't spark is that why they made it out of papier mache?

CSD: Here's a sap (inaudible). Had ropes hanging from either end, so they could carry full buckets at once, you know. [MWL: Uh huh.] Carrying sap. (Inaudible). That column, see that stone far right. That's the one right there where your finger is.

MWL: Uh huh. This is a fine-looking building.

CSD: Steel traps you used to catch skunks in, you know. Here's a thing. (Inaudible).

MWL: Yes sir.

CSD: Now, there's nothing slow about that. That's one piece. Look how he fixed it. [MWL: Uh huh.] An old mountaineer over here on Coal, Coal River made that. I read about it up here at, ah, Monroe County. That's a piece of cedar, you see. Look here, chain and everything.

MWL: Different ones.

CSD: (Inaudible).

MWL: Goodness.

CSD: That came out of the DeQuasey home where they had the knives and forks kept. That thing a hundred years old. Oh, here's these jars and jugs, jars and jugs. See that picture? That was made on the 14th, 13th day of April, 1865, four days after Lee surrendered. He had the uniform on he surrendered except he doesn't have his sash on. Lee and I were the same size, except he has a seven and one-half foot, and I wear 11. And, there were four plates taken. Two were no good, one was only fair, this was the only good one. That was not found until just recently, and somebody in congress knew my interest in history. They took that plate, had that photograph made, and framed, and sent to me as a gift. That's a remarkable photograph.

MWL: It certainly is.

CSD: These are things here that the mountain people used.

MWL: Suckle pig.

CSD: Shucking pig.

MWL: Oh, shucking pig. That's what that is.

CSD: These are things the mountain people used. Here's the old license plates.

MWL: Is that ... is that, what is that?

CSD: No, 1914.

MWL: Well, when was the first year West Virginia had license plates?

CSD: Ninteen and eleven, I think it was.

MWL: Did you have to pay for them?

CSD: Oh, yes, yes, sir. Those things are collectors items now. There's the one I came when I came to Oak Hill, 1922.

MWL: How many roads did they have in this area in 1922?

CSD: Through here had one.

MWL: Leading from where? Beckley to Oak Hill?

CSD: No, this one run right through the middle of town. [△]MWL: Uh huh. ₇ Ran from Harrisburg, Virginia, to Maulden. The man who surveyed that road was Claudius Crose. He was a Captain in, in Napoleon's Army, and was captain on the march from Moscow, and he escaped and came to this country. After he came back, missed the Battle of Waterloo, was hired by Virginia to survey roads. That's a very historic road. It runs right by DeQuasey house. Here's a chair that made out of (inaudible). Sit down in it, and see you put your feet up here and clear back against it. It's a comfortable thing.

MWL: Oh, it is.

CSD: There's a mountain cradle. Run a pole through it, and let the baby sit up on the (inaudible).

MWL: Uh huh. What, what type of wood is this that they could fashion it?

CSD: It's just willow poles.

MWL: Oh, would they wet it, and then.

CSD: Yeah, they'd wet them and bend. That's quite an example. Horseshoes are collectors' items now. Here's all of these jars.

MWL: You say he put his name on the bottom?

CSD: They'd buy a bunch of them. They'd put their advertisement on them. [MWL: Uh huh.] Those things sell for 40 and \$50 a piece now.

MWL: Where was the potter's name on here that you, that you.

CSD: I'll show you here.

MWL: Okay. Oh, yes.

CSD: The name of his Indian culture. These are found around here, these arrowheads.

MWL: Uh huh. What tribes of Indian's did they have here?

CSD: The Shawnees were up the mountain valley here and various other tribes were found around here up in the mountains. The Indians had kind of a poetic axe shaped like trees. See that there?

MWL: Uh huh.

CSD: They'd take the axe here and shaped like the profile of a squaw. That's where you get the idiom they call a woman a battleaxe.

MWL: Well, I'll be.

CSD: There's the paper they signed to make West Virginia a state. Campaign badges.

MWL: Is this an original or copy of.

CSD: They about four copies of that made [MWL: Uh huh.], and the State gave me one of them. They was just about four of them

made. Here are these jars and jugs.

MWL: (Inaudible).

CSD: This is a collection worth \$7,000. Somebody from Chicago wrote me; they wanted to buy this whole thing.

MWL: Did all of these come from this area?

CSD: Right around here. (Inaudible). Makes an effective display. We found these. Here's Jesse James' saddle. The one he had when he was shot. That's the actual saddle. When I got it, it was, ah, cracked. It took several bottles of neat's-foot oil to bring it back to life again.

MWL: It looks uncomfortable.

CSD: He rode that one. It only had one stirrup. This was the stirrup here. I had a fellow, he put that name on it. (Inaudible). That's the original stirrup.

MWL: Well, why did they make them from metal at the time? What was the.

CSD: Well, it was during the Civil War. It was the saddle, you know. Here's a thing that was used (inaudible).

MWL: Look at that.

CSD: There's a powder horn [^]MWL: Uh huh.⁷, and a fellow got it about 50 years ago. Turned it into a dog horn, so he could call dogs. I buried his wife, and he gave me that. They just load me up with these things. These things I just consider they belong to the public. (Inaudible), and way back in the mountains I had a funeral for an old lady. Wanted to know if anyone would like to have that. Does this stuff interest you?

MWL: Yes, it definitely does. What was this here?

CSD: That's a rock I picked up in (inaudible).

MWL: Oh, yeah. I didn't notice that. Uh huh.

CSD: Side saddle.

MWL: That's a fine-looking saddle.

CSD: Here's a chair that belonged to the man (inaudible), and that chair I found in an old ruined, his home had just collapsed, and the chair was dirty and filthy, and I got it and had it cleaned up. A fellow painted it for me. That's part of the elm tree old Chief Logan made his famous speech.

MWL: Seventeen seventy four.

CSD: Stone picked up from (inaudible) in Palestine. Taken out of there the Jordan River. All kinds of stuff. North Africa. There's a half a dozen people there.

MWL: Are you serious?

CSD: Uh huh. Half a dozen there. There's the ashes of six people cremated. Undertaker put it in my car said six people. Here's a cannonball. This one was found out there next to where the DeQuasey's live.

MWL: What was the purpose of the.

CSD: A chain through there sometimes shoot two or three of them (inaudible). A pair of boots an old Yankee wore. A doctor brought that to me from Massachusetts (inaudible).

MWL: Extremely interesting. I just love ...

CSD: The man that built that joined the Confederate Army. Yankee burned his house down. Henry Clay for President and Grant. Just about every one of these.

MWL: That home, ah, their home such as that in Minden yet where at least one home with that, that basic design.

CSD: Old Doctor (inaudible). [MWL: Uh huh.] (Inaudible). They call this the den of antiquity.

MWL: Uh huh. What date is that? Eighteen seventy nine on Laurel Creek.

CSD: Let's go back where it's warm. (Inaudible). Fellow by the name of Richards organized a gold and silver mining company. A great divide out in the blue sky in the West [MWL: Uh huh.] and he sold shares, you know, to Morris Harvey. I think that's a thousand shares, and he took old Morris for, oh, 500,000's of dollars, and the mine was in the blue sky. The way he did it. His name was John Richards. He got him an iron safe about the size of that round file 13 there [MWL: Uh huh.], and when he'd sell maybe \$10,000 worth of stock to Morris Harvey, he'd go to a bank and get about \$10,000 in paper money, and he'd open the door. The safe was just so big, and he'd leave the door wide open. He'd just wad it in there until it would fall out in the floor. The people would, ah, come in his office. They heard about him. "What's all that?" "Oh, that's the money out of my gold mine. He'd sell them stock, and he was a crook. And, ah, oh, he, the way he took Morris Harvey was pathetic. And, I got those certificates just recently. Fellow by the name of Genuttle died over here, and he had some of those, and I thought it was just an interesting side. And, Morris Harvey made a fortune in coal. His wife's name was Rosa, and they were childless, and the Methodist had a school down at Barboursville called Barboursville Seminary, and it went on the rocks, about to go on the rocks, and the trustees of the school were Methodist leaders told Harvey and his wife who were Methodists, lived at Fayetteville then, if he'd rescue that school, they'd name it after him. Well, they didn't have any children, getting old, and so they named Morris Harvey College. That's the one that moved to Charleston. That's just little old local story. His home, where he died, stands right across from where the Memorial Building is at Fayetteville now and got a bearty parlor in it now. Well, that's just some of the story around here. He hung in his office. Sam Fryer had that in his office. He headed the Pan American Airways of the World. He had hung that hung in his office in New York, and he sent it to me. He came to visit me and brought with him the Secretary of the Navy, and because I'd written something that he liked, he came in and invited me to take a trip around the world with him in his plane at the company's expense. No expense at all. But, I was so tied up, I couldn't go. Somebody sent it to me.

MWL: "Third of January, 1921."

CSD: I was minister of entire State of West Virginia here in '71.
(Inaudible).

MWL: What's this?

CSD: That's a hanging at Fayetteville. (Inaudible). There's
Sheriff Henry there.

MWL: Do you know what the offense was?

CSD: Yes, sir, he killed a fellow down here at Issac Radford at
Deepwater.

MWL: That was a big social affair then, wasn't it?

CSD: Oh, yes, listen, they would miss a dog fight so they could
see this. That's the actual photograph at Fayetteville.
That, that was part of the public entertainment.

MWL: I see a Negro on the gallows right there. What did, ah.

CSD: I think he was a preacher. They were preparing this fellow.

MWL: Oh, I see.

CSD: That can you notice hanging there by that old telephone they
put on his grave, and they brought him back into mountain,
and they wanted to know where to bury him, and I got some-
body to hunt him up, hunt the place down to the grave
[MWL: Uh huh.] cleaned it off. That's kind of a (inaudible)
thing. [MWL: Yes.] Here's some of the old calling cards.
Talking about the culture. (Inaudible). Up yonder picture
Johnson sent. There's a brick there came out of the Negro
College at Hilltop. It burned. It was the first Negro College.

MWL: They had Negro college at Hilltop?

CSD: Oh, yes, it burned.

MWL: Do you know what the circumstances promoted that burning or
what, what happened?

CSD: Well, it just gold old and dilapidated. And, they had 50
acres of land out there. [MWL: Uh huh.] Maybe like the

Capitol. I don't know. But, we have out there the Hilltop,
now, they had a Negro complex. (Inaudible).