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Roscoe C. Thornbury

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ORAL HISTORY

GIFT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

Roscoe Shoubray
 I, Dorothy T. White, the undersigned, of
Wilkinson, County of Logan, State
 of West Virginia, grant, convey, and transfer to the James E.
 Morrow Library Associates, a division of The Marshall University Foundation,
 Inc., an educational and eleemosynary institution, all my right, title,
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Date 7/5/74

Roscoe Shoubray

Dorothy T. White

(Signature) - Interviewee

Wilkinson, W. Va.
Address

Date 7/5/74

Sally Rae Barker
(Signature - Witness)



ORAL HISTORY

GIFT AND RELEASE AGREEMENT

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R.T.
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- Closed for my lifetime unless special permission is gained from me or my assigns.

Date 7/5/74

Rose Thornbury
Bertha Thornbury

(Signature - Interviewee)

Wilkinson, W. Va.
Address

Date 7/5/74

Sally Rae Barker
(Signature - Witness)



As part of the requirement for Appalachian Culture 555 I did a tape interview with Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe Thornbury Sr. of Wilkinson(Logan County)West Virginia. The following information is a brief background of Mr. and Mrs. Thornbury and an overview of what is contained in the interview.

There are two other voices on the tape besides Mr. and Mrs. Thornbury's and mine --- the other woman's voice is that of their daughter, Mrs. Dorothy White (I have a release agreement signed by her) and the young man who walked in while we were taping and said, hello Grandpa, is their grandson, Roscoe Thornbury III (I also have a release agreement signed by him).

There are actually 45^{minutes} of taping instead of 60 minutes --- the first five minutes of the tape were used for testing our voices and we could not get ~~the~~ those minutes erased so I left the testing on there. Mr. Thornbury did do some talking then too -- he was ready and I was not!! During the last ten minutes of the tape the couple were tiring out and did not feel like completing the full hour. But what they did contribute is priceless and they were most cooperative and, I believe, enjoyed doing the interview as much as I did.

Sally Barker

Appalachian Culture 555

Side I -- Mr. Thornbury -- Telling about Logan in 1906, Coal Mining, especially early mining methods. Mrs. Thornbury -- Old Christmas, growing up in Kentucky, telling fortunes.

Side II -- Mr. Thornbury -- Growing up in Kentucky, the importance of the coal industry today, and telling me about growing up with my grandfather in Elliott County, Kentucky.

Mr. and Mrs. Thornbury -- early married days and beginning housekeeping.

Roscoe C. Thornbury Sr. (In 1974 is 89 years of age) -----
born February 7, 1885 at Sandyhook, Elliott County, Kentucky. Son
of a primitive Baptist Minister (John E. Thornbury). Spent first
13 years in Elliott County working on father's farm. At that age I
began working for other farmers when not needed at home. At that
time wages were fifty cents per day plus meals. At the age of 15
(in 1900) my father moved to Globe, Carter County, Kentucky. I
started working at the brick yard located at Olive Hill, Kentucky
on Burnt Gang -- hourly wage of ten cents. After the death of my
mother I went to West Liberty, Morgan County, and worked as a
farm laborer for \$15.00 per month and stayed for one year. After
that I returned to my father's farm until 1905 when I began working
in timber at Mayban on Paint Creek, West Virginia. Returning to
Carter County Kentucky in 1906 I married Bertha Thomas, whom I had
met soon after my father had moved to Carter County. This marriage
took place on Reeves Branch near Willard, Kentucky at the home of
my wife's parents. In August of that year I came to Logan, West
Virginia to work out enough money to set up housekeeping. I found
a job at the Monitor Coal and Coke Company at Wilkinson, W.Va.
setting timber, with wages at 17½ cents per hour and a working day
consisting of ten hours. After one month I took the job as a coal
cutting machine helper for 20¢ per hour. My first pay envelope
contained \$42.00 before deductions, these deductions were \$1.00 for
the doctor and board \$15.00, leaving me \$26.00 ---- the most cash
I had ever had at one time in my life!!!

Instead of going back to the farm I sent for my wife. After two
months as a machine helper I was given my own machine and a raise to
twenty-five cents per hour -- that was as high as I could go in the
mines at that time.

When we went to housekeeping we rented a three room company
house and bought furniture left by the former renters. The stove
was so old that it could not be moved. There were three chairs and
a table that had to be propped against the wall -- we had no shades
or curtains -- hung bed clothing to the windows to dress and undress.
A short time later we traded houses with a neighbor who lived in a
newer house and gave him fifty cents and a fifteen cent clothesline
to make the swap. By that time we had started buying furniture and
the first \$20.00 we had clear my wife bought a sewing machine and

started sewing for people.

Too bad my foresight was not as good as my hindsight -- about 1910 or 1911 I could have bought lots from DeadMan's Curve to Middleburg Addition for \$600.00 each ---- but we kept thinking that we would go back to the farm.

In October of 1913 I was promoted to Mine Foreman at \$75.00 per month. In 1915 I was transferred to Monitor # 1 Mine at the rate of \$92.00 per month. In 1919 I was transferred to Monitor # 3 Mine at \$120.00 per month. In 1920 I was promoted to Superintendent at \$225.00 per month plus house rent, coal, and water.

In the fall of 1921 Was the Blair Mountain War and organizers came to Logan. The war lasted two weeks and I was on the mountain one day only and Mrs. Thornbury would not let me go back. The general manager would not let his men go.

Mrs. Roscoe C. (Bertha Thomas) Thornbury Sr. (In 1974 is 87 years of age) ----- born December 28, 1887 in Willard, Carter County, Kentucky -- one of seven children. My father was John Heron Thomas, Minister of the Camblelite Faith. For many years he was pastor of the Sand Hill Church located at Glenwood, Kentucky. He was a graduate of the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, Illinois.

Most of my childhood was spent on Jim Wood Branch of Cats Fork, Lawrence County. We went to school five months out of the year. However, on busy days on the farms I had to stay home and take care of the younger children. At the age of 15 we moved to Reeves Branch. I was named after my great-great grandfather, Bartlett Reeves, who homesteaded the land -- the house he built is still standing and is said to be the oldest house in Carter County, Kentucky. At one time he was considered to be the richest man in Carter County, having accumulated wealth of \$250.00 and that included his land, live stock, and other possessions.

As children we created our own fun and games such as: tag, skip the rope, marbles, we rode calves and horses, walked to church. Church and Sunday School were a must.

AN INTERVIEW WITH:

Mr. & Mrs. Roscoe Thornbury, Sr.

CONDUCTED BY:

Sallie Barker

PLACE:

Logan, West Virginia

DATE:

July 5, 1974

TRANSCRIBED BY:

Brenda Perego

SB: Uh, today I'm interviewing Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe Thornbury Sr., of Uma Addition of Wilkinson in Logan County. And, uh, Mr. Thornbury was born February 7th, 1885 in Sandy Hook, Kentucky which is in Elliot County. And Mrs. Thornbury was born December 28th, 1887 at Willard, Kentucky in Carter County. Now Mr. Thornbury, you came to Logan in 1906 won't you tell me about how things were, uh, when you came.

RT: Well when I came to Logan they was only five mines in Logan County when I came to Logan. They was, uh, Monitor Coal and Coke Company, and Gay Coal and Coke Company, and Draper, [SB: Um, mmm.] and two mines at the Holden, number one and number two at Holden. That was the only mines they was in Logan County at that time and Logan was a very small town and they didn't have no paved streets they, the, the streets were, were dirty, was dirt and when the wintertime come we had a time a traveling in Logan town because I've seen four horses haul log wagons through Logan and they's mud up to the axles (laughs). But they did, we never be--, begin to develop anything in Logan much until about 19 and 12 and then t--, the railroads went up the, the, went up towards Mann and up Highland Creek there towards Omar and the mines begin to open up and develop and wasn't long then till Logan was a wonderful coal field. And I started working here for the Monitor Coal and Coke Company in 19 and 6 [SB: Uh, huh.] in August and I got, uh, the wages that I got then was a dollar and seventy five cents a day for ten hours.

SB: It's quite a change from today, idn't it?

RT: Yeah, and I worked at that for, for a li--, for a short time and then I got put on a coke machine then and that paid me then twenty cents an hour and I worked at that then about two months and I learned to run a cutting machine and I got that machine then and that paid me twenty five cents an hour, that was as high as I could go at that time in the mines because that was top wages.

BT: Bout the hotel.

SB: Won't you tell me about the hotels, you said [RT: Oh yeah.] there was two.

RT: When I came to Logan there was only two hotels in Logan. They's the Peck Hotel it was up bout where, uh, Robinson's Insurance Company is and the Buskirk Hotel is along there bout where, uh, where, uh, [DW: Claudell.] oh, [BT: McCormicks?] [DW: Claudells isn't it?] hum, [BT: McCormicks?] that furniture store.

SB: McCormicks, I think.

RT: Uh, I'll think of it d'rectly.

BT: McCormicks Furniture Store?

RT: Huh?

BT: McCormicks?

RT: No, no, no, no, no [BT: Well.] one that use to have the store right there b--, below RC's, er, below RC's office.

DW: Louis, Louis Pasture Toliet Company, Lou--, [RT: Huh?] daddy, Louis?

RT: Huh?

DW: Louis?

RT: No, no honey it wasn't [DW: Well it doesn't matter where it was at.] he died after not very long ago.

DW: It doesn't matter where it was at.

RT: Well anyway, they was tha--, tha--, that hotel was on them, on them lots there and it sit way back, we had a large front and the, and the hotel faced Stratis Street. Well the train come in, one of um come in bout, bout noon, come up from Huntington about noon and then went back in the afternoon to, to Cha--, to Huntington and the one left Logan then went to Huntington and come back then that evening at, uh, at that time at 9:45 p.m. And (laughs) they's two porters, one for the Peck Hotel

and one for the, and one for the, uh, Burskirk Hotel (microphone interference) and the porters used wheel-barrels to wheel any, the ba--, (laughter) the baggage for the men that they got to go to each one of these hotels and it was, it was a funny sight to see them fellas a wheeling that baggage up to the hotels for the, for the men that they got to go to the hotel that night.

DW: What about the fur?

SB: How bout the fur, [RT: Huh?] you were telling me about furs?

RT: About what?

SB: The furs that were sold in Logan?

BT: Furs that were sold, honey, [RT: Huh?] the furs that were sold.

RT: Oh yeah, along, up there bout them McComas's, between McComas's and Robinsons was a street there, there was a little three room cottage house and they was, uh, uh, a dentist in that house and, and a man a taking pictures. And they was a lady then I ain't going to tell her, who her name is cause she was a very, everybody knew who she was and I ain't going to tell who her name is, anyway she came in had her picture made with this fur around her neck. Well he'd taken the picture she got back down bout where the Copy Cat is she happened to think about it said, "I wonder if," s--, she called it of her fuzzy. Said, "I wonder," said, "if Mr. Chrisong took that of my fuzzy," said, "I'll go back to see." So she went back up said, "Mr. Chrisong," said, "did you take my fuzzy when you's taking my picture?" He said, "Yes, yes," said, "I think one thing about it woman I take everything," (laughter).

SB: Idn't that the truth (microphone interference). Mrs. Thornbury you were telling me before we started taping about telling fortunes when you were a little girl or growing up, won't . . .

BT: That was just pastime for youngsters, and uh, we had alot of fun just gathering up different places and we had different ways of telling fortunes, sometimes we'd, uh, eat salt and not drink any water and we'd go to bed, and uh, whoever we'd dream about well then that would be our, our future husband, we'd do those things and then, uh, another way of telling fortunes was, uh, to sit what, uh, they called a blind supper, you do everything back of you, [SB: Oh.] set all your plates or whatever you had, you'd have things ready and you'd set all this in back of ya. Then if you'd hear a noise outside like it was a saw or a, uh, any kind of, uh, carpenter work or whatever was it might be if we'd hear a noise like that well that's what our husband would do after we were married. And then, uh, another way we did, uh, uh, this lady played a joke on me, I was at her home and she told me that if I'd, uh, take a ball of twine and get up in the, they had a little barn loft [SB: Um, mmm.] setting out from um the home, said if I'd, uh, go at night time, at dark get up in that loft and throw this ball of twine out and start winding say, "I wind, who holds," and uh, if, uh, someone caught my ball why they'd tell me their name that would be my future husband. But I didn't get that far along I didn't, uh, know that they had a, I knew they had the dog but I didn't know that he slept in the barn. So they had fodder back in this barn loft and this, uh, was a little black dog it had a white ring around it's neck and I throwed my ball out and started talking, and uh, this little dog begin to scratch around in that fodder getting up to come to me I guess. I looked around I seen them eyes and that white neck [SB: Oh.] and I didn't go down that ladder, I jumped out, (laughter) that scared me till I didn't hardly know what I was doing (laughs) I didn't want that husband if he was colored.

SB: If that's the only kind you could have you didn't want him, did ya?

BT: I didn't want him that time (laughs).

DW: Sally, ask her about . . .

BT: So it was just, oh so many things we'd do, [SB: Um, mmm.] you know, uh, children at our time we had to make our own fun, we didn't, [SB: Yeah.] we didn't have all this television, and uh, [SB: You couldn't go to the store and buy games.] and we couldn't go do things like children do now so we had to make our own fun and, and we really had fun (laughter).

DW: Ask her about our old Christmas.

SB: What'd you tell me about old Christmas?

BT: Well, uh, that was, I guess everybody knows that that's an old saying and I think a true one, uh, anyway I believe in it. Uh, my cousins and I had two cousins about my age that lived near where we did [SB: Um, mmm.] so I went to their home to spend the night on old Christmas. So we decided we'd go down to the barn and stay till midnight to see if, uh, the cattle would low, they always told us they'd get down on their knees and pray, you know. So we went down to the barn, and uh, long about twelve o'clock why one of those cows mooed a little bit and that scared us, we didn't stay to see if they were on their knees (laughs) we went to the house (laughter). Oh, so many things that we'd do that we really had fun that children today would, they wouldn't even fool with it.

SB: No, we'd be better off today if we had things like that.

DW: Right, uh, I, a real funny one mother that is just a little bit maybe off color, was when Uncle Albert took the calf into the house to look in the mirror.

BT: Uh, maybe I shouldn't.

DW: Oh go on tell that one.

BT: Well that, that was, would it be alright?

SB: Oh yes, that's fine.

BT: Uh, I had two brothers they, they were both a little older than me, and uh, when dad and mother would go away from home why we just did anything we wanted to

for fun. So, uh, they had a calf there a great big yearling I guess he was that the boys played with and they, uh, put a halter on that, uh, calf and brought it in the house to look at itself and (laughs) when it seen itself why it, it was, it was going to fight, you know, it was going to go through that glass, and uh, uh, the boy that brought it in he said, "Help, help," said, "hold him Cal, hold him," and he run back with his hands to hold what was going to come in the floor to get it outside (laughter). [SB: Oh gee.] and so that'll do me.

SB: Well that was a good one (laughter) now . . .

RT: When I was a boy at home when, uh, father, catch father and mother gone I had a dog I use to take him in and let him see himself in the glass and he'd go to shaking himself, you know, and d'irectly he'd go to growling and he's looking at his self but he thinks it's another dog, you know, [SB: Uh, huh.] and he'd get so mad he couldn't hardly, I couldn't hardly do anything with him and I'd hold (laughs) him there and he wanted to go to that other dog because he, he wanted to go to himself but he, he didn't know it.

SB: Uh, huh (laughter). Why don't you tell me about preaching and baptizing?

RT: Huh?

SB: When you, uh, [DW: That was mother's specialty.] uh, okay, Mrs. Thornbury why don't you tell me bout the preaching and the baptizing?

BT: Oh (laughs) that, that's too much.

SB: No it isn't, go right ahead.

BT: Uh, well it's just like I said we did alot of things for fun, so uh, I use to preach alot. I'd go to church and I could remember what the preacher was saying, part of it anyway and the other children, uh, younger brothers and sisters why they'd sing and I'd get on the stump and preach and we'd preach and baptize (laughter) really

have a good time. Another thing about all the foolishness we could do.

SB: Well like you say you, you had your own entertainment.

BT: We, we had to and, and we did, we, we really had a good time (laughs). We'd baptize, I've baptized alot of time, baptize the younger children, I'd get um in the water and baptize um (laughs).

SB: Did it ever do any good (laughter)?

BT: I don't know we were all pretty mischief (laughter). That'll be awful foolish, I guess.

SB: No it won't. Uh, Mr. Thornbury won't you tell me about the early mining days, I'm sure you could elaborate quite a . . .

RT: Yes I can tell you a whole lot about the early mining days, our early mining days was with a pick and shovel. Of course we cut the coal, and uh, but after we cut the coal they, they, what they called the bug dust had to be shoveled out from, from under the cut, where they cut had to be shoveled clean out before they shoot the coal down. And after they got the bug dust out from under the cut in the, that we cut, they got the fine coal shoveled out from under it they had to bore the holes in and, uh, they use the po--, post and auger, they was heavy to set up and, uh, they had three bits and had a two foot bit, and, and a four foot bit, and a six foot bit, and you had to use all three of um to bore a hole because the post was only set once and when they bore up two foot, why then they put the four foot bit in, when they bore up four foot they put the six foot bit in and each bit cut two foot. Well they cut, put the hole up then as deep as the cut was then and they they had to clean that hole out that they bored, they use a scraper on, was on one end of the tamping bar. They cleaned that out then and then they made their cartridges then their ownelves. They used grain powder / SB: Uh, huh. / and they made the cartridges their ownelves and each man knowed just about how much powder would take to blow each hole and

he would make his cartridges, uh, whatever amount of powder he thought would take to pull that one hole. And then he'd take his, his, uh, tamping bar and run his needle in, into the, into the cartridges that he'd made and he'd push it clear back then as far as the hole was [SB: Um, mmm.] and then he tamp that up then with that needle in that, in that powder. And he use clay to tamp up with (talking in background) and when he got his hole tamped up good and his tamping in there good then he could pull that needle out and they'd be a hole then would be from, from the end of the, from, from uh, the face of the coal would go clear back in the powder. And then they used what is called a squib, [SB: Um, mmm.] and uh, you had to be very careful bout mounting that squib cause it had a fuse in, a fuse, fuse, little fuse on it if you get it too close it'd catch you before you'd get away from it. But when, if you lit it on the end then they had a minute then to get back and get in, get in safety and break through someplace else where the coal wouldn't hit um and hurt um. Well when that fuse went back into the powder it would spark with it and that set the powder off then and it exploded and brought, brought, shot the coal down and then the loader loaded it out with a, with a shovel into a car. But we used mules now to take these cars into where the loader was at and used mules, the same mule we use him to pull where we load when it got loaded. And each driver had about eight or nine men to haul coal for um and, uh, we hauled an awful lot of coal that a way. (Grandson enters room) hello buddy.

RTIII: Howdy pa pa.

RT: So, uh, that went on for years and finally they come in then with a, with a, loading machine so that was back bout 19 and 21 when they, loading machines come in, they was coming in and they didn't pr--, prove much successful at first, well people, the companies didn't like um because they cost too much to, to run, to run um coal. Now the Monitor bought one of the first, first Joys that ever come into Logan County. And we took it in the mines and it took too many men to load a, a, a li--, little amount of coal that we had because it was a track machine and the head of it was

stiff, it'd go straight ahead but you couldn't turn it [SB: Um, mmm.] automatic like they do nowadays. And we had to have men then to shovel it on each side of the, of the Jo--, of the Joy shovel the coal then upon the conveyor line and then brought it back and put it in the car. Well the men didn't get but about four cars, four cars a piece so that didn't pay so they had brought it out and sidetracked it and we went back then to loading it by hand again. But finally Goodman come out then with a, with a, with a machine that was very successful. It didn't have to have no track on it, it was a caterpillar machine and it go, you take it anyway but it had handles on it like a plow [SB: Oh.] you pick the handles up and you go one, you go a way and push um down it come back. Well you push down on one handle and pull up on the other un you could turn that machine any way you wanted to, you had to push down on one handle and pull um up on the other one, well it, they proved very successful and from that time on they went then, we kept on improving and kept on improving finally everything went to mechanical work.

SB: Uh, would you tell me about, uh, the Blair Mountain War in 19 . . .

RT: Well I don't know much about that, I was only up there one day.

SB: Uh, huh.

RT: The general superintendent he come to me one morning and told me said, "You have to go to Blair Mountain today." And he took then five men from Monitor, we went up there on Blair Mountain and we was up there all day. I was up there when the first shot was fired. It was fired in the afternoon about 4:00 p.m., just one shot with all, all these pe--, no two, two or three shots fired at, uh, but didn't do any damage to anybody. So our manager he lived in Huntington, so he heared about this trouble and it started over about, over about, uh, Madison. And he heared about this trouble coming and he come up and the second

morning when I got down to the mines why he was there and he said to me, "Did you go on Blair Mountain yesterday?" And I said yes sir. "Well," he said, "you're not a going today," he said, "and don't you let any of the men go up there because," said, "we're not, we're not a running a war," said, "we're running a coal mine." And he said, "And you keep all our men here and we're going to work everyday." Well that Blair, that lasted for two weeks, that, that, that trouble did but I don't know anything much about it because I wasn't there, I was a working in the m--, I was a working everyday. But I had, did, I did though take supplies, blankets and, and uh, and food and stuff like that where the men could get it to take with them the next day for the, to feed the men but I didn't go on the hill, I was on, I was gone on Blair Mountain one day.

SB: Well there was another reason why you didn't, uh, go back ∟ RT: Yes. ∟ and that had something to do with your wife.

RT: Yes, my wife she took to her children and then she, when I went on the Blair Mountain when Mr. Downing come up she took the children and went to him. She can tell you about that more than I can.

BT: Well while he was on the mountain course I was worried I didn't know whether he was going to get back or what would take place up there so I took the two children that we had at that time and I went to Mr. Downing and I asked him I said Mr. Downing you sent my husband on the mountain and I said now if something happens to him that he don't get back will you take care of me and these children, and uh, I don't remember how he answered me but anyway my husband didn't go on the mountain anymore.

SB: Now this war lasted only two weeks?

RT: Two weeks, yes, but now it wasn't settled until sta--, until the troops was sent in.

SB: Um, mmm.

RT: It was getting awful hot when they come in cause the, the, the union men wa--, was coming this way they, they stayed in town everyday on the other side a coming this way and when the troops come in, the troops come in, they come in the afternoon well then it was all over with, everybody went back to work again. It was just, just a little while, a couple of days the Monitor was a running again.

SB: Uh, when uh, when the mines were, uh, organize, I mean unionized, uh, how was this different, I mean there was more benefits, uh, the . . .

RT: Did, you mean did the men profit by it?

SB: Yes.

RT: Why sure, they got a better wage and they went to work least hours and another thing about it when they worked, use to be before that regular, the union come in if they worked overtime they only got straight time for it but when the union come in if they worked overtime one hour they got an hour and a half SB: Oh. And they got, they got time and a half for every hour they worked over the regular day's wages regular hours eight, or--, over eight hours why they got time and a half for every bit of it. And so, course that helped um, helped um an awful lot. Then they got better pay for their car because they was paid by the ton, all the cars, all the coal they put in that car they got paid for it SB: Oh I see. And they, they want to keep it up why that is their business, SB: Um, mmm. and they did do it too. And they brought um more, more money per car cause they's loading it by the ton. They wasn't loading by the car then, they was loading by the ton. The more cars, more coal they got in them cars the more money they got for it.

SB: You know in November of this year the new, RT: Mam? in November of this year the new union contract will come up, you know, do you think that the miners will be out very long or?

- RT: I don't see how they can. I don't see I, I, I don't think they'll be out very long I, I got, another thing about it I just got my doubts whether they'll be out a tall or not. Because idn't that a going to be when it's cold on top of the ground [SB: Uh, huh.]? And the government's not going to allow the people to suffer for want of coal. Because if they don't, if they don't, if they get out of coal why they're going to put the uniform on the men, put um back to work.
- SB: Yes because we depend on, [RT: Mam?] we depend so much on the coal [RT: We have to have it.] with the energy crisis and, and just the way things are.
- RT: Yes, we have to have it, we have to have coal. The hospitals have to have coal and the power companies has to have coal and so many different things has to have coal cause they're depending on that for their fuel, for their heat [SB: Um, mmm.]. Power companies has to have that in order to make electricity (talking in background) and everytime we use electricity in our home we're helping the power companies.
- SB: That's right.
- RT: Now we've got this house here all of it electricity, every bit of it. We don't have no coal, no gas, er nothing in here, we've got everything on electricity.
- SB: Well most people don't have coals, coal now.
- RT: Well, uh, we use, [SB: Coal (microphone interference).] we use to use coal in the house but we don't do it anymore.
- SB: Well I can remember when I was little we had a coal stove.
- RT: Yeah, but we don't have that coal no more and it's so much nicer and cleaner and so much more healthier. You've always got a good warm house and not only in one room but it's, it's the whole house that's warm and it makes so much healthier for ya in the wintertime.

You don't have the colds like you use to have
[SB: That's right.] because the house is always,
we get up of the morning our house is warm instead
of being cold it's good and warm.

SB: Yes, you use to have to get up and go to the coal
house and get a coal bucket of coal then come back
in and bank the fires up.

RT: That's right. I tell you one thing about went out
a frosty morning a many mornings pick coal out of
the (laughs) out of the frost and make a firing
stove. You'll get the, most of everything that
you want to know out of what we wrote there,
[SB: Yes, I'll submit this.] because the history
of here, uh, it's, it's, this is kind of a preliminary
(laughs) (break in tape).

SB: Mr. Thornbury would you tell me about, uh, growing
up on the farm in Kentucky?

RT: Yes mam, I, uh, my daddy took me, uh, me into the
cornfield with him when I was five years old to thin
corn and from that time on I wa--, I worked with him
for years, uh, in, on, on the farm. I, uh, worked
for my father most of the time when I was on the
farm until I was into my late teens, uh, we uh, my
father raised an awful lot of corn and wheat and
oats, and uh, I was his help. And I learned to
quittal all that stuff when I was, uh, when I was
a boy bout, started in when I was a boy bout twelve
years old a quittaling wheat and oats, [SB: ' Uh, huh.]
and in, in, then I, b--, but before I could cradle
any though I had, I use to bunch wheat and oats, my
daddy tie the, tie the bundles and I bundle, bunched
it up for him and then he pick it up and tie it and
then put it in, in the schuck. I wasn't big enough
to, uh, tie the schucks, tie the bundles together
but I could pla--, bunch um for him. And we raised
an awful lot of cattle and, and uh, hogs and tuck
lots of hay and lots of corn lots of, all gra--, grain
for all, for all that livestock, you know, and we had
to raise an awful lot of it.

SB: Okay.

RT: But after we moved, after my daddy sold out of Sandy Hook and moved to Globe, Kentucky why see like he never did, he didn't do prosper at Globe like he did when he was at Sandy Hook.

SB: Yes we were talking before we started taping this, [RT: Mam?] you know, before we started taping this you and I were talking and it seems that we're related. You, uh, knew my grandfather and my great-grandfather [RT: Why sure.] would you . . .

RT: Why I knowed your great-grandfather when I gro--, when I was just a little boy. Reason what I knew him he married my great aunt.

SB: (Laughs) idn't that something.

RT: (Laughs) and your, uh, now let's see what kin were you to Oscar?

SB: I was his granddaughter.

RT: Was what?

SB: He's my grandfather.

RT: He's your grandfather, [SB: Uh, huh.] me and him use to play together an awful lot, when we were boys [SB: Uh, huh.] we use to go to his place and he'd come to our place and me and him we'd run and play and I remember that they, down now in Kentucky they use to be, I don't know whether they is now or not, but then they use to be alot of wild grapes, great big blue grapes.

SB: Yes, I remember.

RT: And we use to climb trees when they would get ripe me, you know, me and him would climb trees and pick them big blueberries, big blue grapes and eat um they were good.

SB: Uh, huh.

RT: After, especially after a frost come on um. And me and him we climb them trees and, and pick them blue grapes and eat all of um we wanted and we get down we run and play, play marbles or do anything we, just like boys use to be, you know, and there was, yeah I knowed and I knowed your, uh, your uh, grandfather's brother Jess and I knowed his brother Silas. Now they was some girls in the bunch of um but I don't remember anything about them.

SB: Nah, I don't remember either.

BT: That's odd.

RT: I don't know how many girls, I don't know how many girls there were because I, (laughs) [BT: That's strange.] at that day and time I wasn't inter--, I wasn't old enough to be interest in girls.

SB: Oh I bet you managed though, didn't he Mrs. Thornbury (laughter)?

BT: He still has his keen ear allright.

RT: But after we, after my daddy sold out at Sandy Hook and moved to Olive Hill, er, moved to, to Globe (clears throat) I started working at public works. I worked bricks, summer to the brickyard, uh, then I worked at a lime quarry, and uh, uh, then I worked at keggings, keg factory, and uh, I got a dollar a day for ten hours, ten cents an hour that's, uh, that's, and I worked at that for, oh bout two or three years.

SB: How old were you then?

RT: I started working at that when I was, uh, let's see, sixteen. And after (clears throat) after, (clears throat) after mother died why I never worked at public works anymore. I, dad didn't have no help, didn't have no, no housekeeper, my sister next to me she was married and had her family and, and had her own home

and the next girl then was only six years old. So I had to stay, I stayed with father then for one year and then he married again. And I never did stay at home anymore after that.

SB: And, uh, how soon did you come to West Virginia after that?

RT: I co--, my mother died in ni--, in 19 and 19, no 19 and 4 my mother died in 1904 and I come to West Virginia in 1906. I've been here every since. We settled here, we never have lived no, all our married life's been here in Logan, sixty eight years.

SB: Yes, you celebrated your wedding anniversary yesterday, didn't you, your sixty eighth wedding anniversary?

BT: Yesterday was our sixty eighth, he didn't hear what you said.

RT: We raised, we raised four children and I'm thankful that I can, that none of um didn't have to work in the mines like I did but as I, I got all my four children through high school, ever one of them.

SB: You have scads of grandchildren now, don't you?

RT: Mam?

SB: You have several grandchildren too, don't you?

RT: Eight, that's all and I've got some great-grandchildren I've seen, I've seen two of um. One is a, I've got some lives in Missouri I've seen them that's all, the others I've never seen um yet. But you'll find all you want to know I think in, in this.

SB: Well won't you tell me bout what, uh, you talked about with your daughter yesterday that you wanted to tell me today?

RT: Mam?

SB: Won't you tell me some of the things that you wrote down? Uh, won't you tell me when you, you and Mrs.

Thornbury started housekeeping when you were first married.

RT: (Laughs) we started housekeeping in Sep--, in September of 1906 well we rented, rented, I rented a house before she, I come here first and then she, and about a month after that then she came to me but I rented a house before she got here. Well the man that we, that we, the house we went into the man moved out of it and we bought some of his furniture and in this furniture we got a stove. Well we couldn't move the stove it was so bad we had to move in with it (laughter). We didn't have very much money and we were, uh, uh, our table was a big goods box and we put, put up some quilts for curtains of the night and we started house-keeping on about fifteen dollars worth of stuff
[SB: (Whew).]. And I, we was happy with that and in a little while (clears throat) we saved up enough money we went down to the town of Logan then and bought us some furniture and bought some winder shades, and winder curtains, and rugs, and beds, and mattresses and all like that, and so we wasn't a little while then we was fixed up pretty good in our house then. And we went down to the man that owned the furniture store was named Huff and a man by the name of Schuff took us down, he lived right next to us and he knowed this man Huff and he, we, took us down there to, to buy some furniture he told him now he says, "Huff," he says, "this is a newly married couple," said, "and they want to buy some furniture," he says, "and they got the money to pay you for it." At that day and time Monitor paid off in gold, anything above five dollars [SB: Oh.]. (Clears throat) well we had, we had sixty dollars in gold so we begin to buy stuff and whatever, and everytime we'd buy something he'd give us something or other and you know that man give us almost as much as we bought (laughter). He just, he said because you, you got the money to pay for it he says I'll just, I'll just help you out and (laughter).

SB: Especially gold that would be quite odd today to go
[RT: Oh you couldn't do . . .] into a store . . .

RT: You couldn't get that now. Monitor paid off in gold oh for years they did, everything above five dollars why you got it in gold.

BT: I want to tell you how we got rid of that house that he rented that we bought the furniture from these people [SB: Uh, huh.]. Uh, they was, uh, a man lived down below us in a newer house, and uh, we wanted that house and we, we asked him, he, he wanted to move up where we were, get a little further up in the camp. And, uh, we asked him to change houses with us cause we was getting a little bit of furniture then, you know, we's kindly getting a little proud (laughter) and he said, "Well," he said, "I'll tell ya what I'll do," said, "you've got a clothesline already stretched up there," said, "if you give me that clothesline and fifty cents," he says, "I'll trade houses with you," (laughter).

SB: And he did?

BT: And we did. It was a fella by the name of Adkins, and uh, I don't know what his first name was but sometime or other he had hurt his foot and one toe stood up and they called him Trigger Toe Adkins. I never will forget him (laughter), so we traded houses with Trigger Toe (laughs).

SB: And, uh, where you lived then is where you live now, uh, I mean . . .

BT: Yeah, down by [RT: Lived down by Monitor then.] the camp, [RT: We lived down by Monitor then.] down by the camp, yes.

RT: In one of them little three room houses on the right, you know, where you start to go into Monitor?

SB: Uh, huh.

RT: Well we co--, we lived in one of them, I believe we lived in the second house, wasn't it, [BT: Second house there.] because we got, we traded, traded the house and got that new house I give that man a fifteen cent clothesline and a half a dollar to trade houses

with me (laughter).

SB: That's pretty cheap I'll tell ya.

RT: Well we got a new house (laughs) just completed. He'd, he'd rented it and move into it and I wanted it and I went down and I seen him I said I'd like awful well your house, swap houses with me, and uh, the mines wasn't a running very good and he went, that day we, they was off I said Howard swap houses with me. He said, "How much you give me?" I said I'll give you fifty cents and a clothesline, he said, "Well I'll go up and look at the clothesline." He went, we had it hung up, had it stretched out, you know, they hang clothes on, he said, "Give me fifty cents and this clothesline," and said, "we'll swap," (laughter).

SB: Just like that.

RT: I got a new house.

SB: Now you worked in the mines about seven years and you, you were promoted to mine foreman.

RT: Yes mam, yes mam.

SB: Uh . . .

RT: Then I worked at that port for, uh, for, uh, sixteen years then that port, was promoted into superintendent.

SB: The mines you worked in are they, uh, is the company still existing today?

RT: No, they're all worked out.

SB: When were they worked out?

RT: They've been worked out every since nineteen, 1950 was the last work they done here.

SB: Well what do you think about, uh, the way things are now as compared to the way things were when you

were growing up and when you were raising your children?

RT: Well they much, much, they much improved. People, uh, uh, they don't work hard like they use to. They, everything's done by machinery, done by, uh, nothing done by hand anymore. A man goes in work all day in the mines he don't handle a lump of coal, it's all done by machinery he does that with a lever.

SB: So actually it's, it's not muscle work.

RT: It's not manual no, [SB: No, it's . . .] no, no mining's not any hard labor now like it use to because it's all done auto--, with auto--, with, with automatic machines.

SB: Uh, do you think that the, the safety measures today are, uh, enough, I mean . . .

RT: Well now I can't say for that you see back when my, my mining days the, the company furnished the timber and a man had to keep his own place safe.

SB: Oh I see.

RT: And, uh, uh, really I believe back in that day and time the, the man that was working the place kept it safer than what it is now (clears throat). Because he's in there, he was with it all the time everyday, he was with it all the time and if he found a, a bad place in his roof why he reported that and that was taken care of right now [SB: Um, mmm.] because we had timbers in there and he, he would set, if his company hadn't sent in timber why he'd set up temporary timber in order to make it safe so he'd go on and work. Then the, it was up to the mine foreman to get a crew of men to go in there and make that place safe. The places were looked after, why I don't know that they's looked after any better or not cause if I's to go back in the mines now, I haven't been in the mines since '49. If I's to go back to the mines now I'd be a green horn after I worked forty six years, forty three years in the mines I'd go bout be a big green

horn now.

SB: Oh I think you would fit in though.

RT: (Clears throat) cause there's nothing work like it was when I was a, when I was a working in the mines.

SB: Um, mmm. Uh, well you left in '49, had they improved that much more?

RT: Oh Lord yes, yes I should say they have. And still improving. We have these continuous miners now, uh, four or five men now can put out as much as eighteen or twenty use, use to put out.

SB: Uh, huh. Well Logan County use to be one of the leading . . .

RT: I know that it did but it's nearly all worked out
/ SB: Oh. / . Olans now got a mine in Logan County and the, in this district right around here they've got two mines in Logan County is all they've got and they, look at how many mines they use to have.

SB: Well they're selling out too, aren't they?

RT: Yeah, selling out. They got, they've got no coal in this, in this part of the country. They've got one, they've got one mine up on Buffalo, they've got one over on the head of Dingess and over at Kelley. That's the only two mines they've got in Logan County.

SB: Do you think that there is much danger of having another, uh, disaster like the Buffalo?

RT: Of what?

SB: Do you think that there's a, uh, chance of having another disaster like Buffalo Creek in '72?

RT: Well now I, that depends on how this stripping goes.

SB: Uh, huh.

RT: They's an awful lot of mines that's full of water. It's safe as long as they don't disturb it, they let it alone, they don't go to stripping it, it can't get out. But if they strip that coal and, and, and mine that coal up and cut into that water, look out below. That's all I can say, look out below.

SB: And there is a chance of having that happening again?

RT: Oh yes. Because these mines, some of these mines is full of water just full of water as they can be. Everybody can't get out.

SB: Well is there anything else you would like to add?

RT: No, I don't know of any, whether they's anything more cause that's, well it's up, right up, up to date.

SB: Yeah, we're right back in '74, aren't we (laughter)?

RT: Yeah.

SB: Well this has been most interesting and I'm sure that the students at Marshall will really enjoy this and really will appreciate the time and effort that you have given here today and this is,
[BT: I . . .] mam?

BT: I just hope that tape don't sound too bad.

SB: Oh it sounds real good and it, it gives students a little, uh, background in what, the way things were when, uh, their parents and grandparents were growing up and then the, the contrast of, you know, way things are now to the way things were [RT: I, I think . . .] in earlier years.

RT: I think that they kind, they won't be out very long because they, they, the coal companies got too much at stake to let it last very long.

SB: Well I remember when I was growing up that some of those strikes were really long.

RT: Sure [BT: They were.] now you take back to nineteen and twelve, course you don't know anything about that but I do, and over on Cabin Creek and Paint Creek and over in there above Charleston there they had one of the awfulest strikes that was ever in the state. Coal on some, alot of the coal companies went broke. Never did mine anymore. Some coal companies lost everything they had during that strike, [SB: Uh, huh.] they wasn't, the ones what, what I mean was that the ones that wasn't strong enough to go on through with it see they was, back in that day and time all coal companies wasn't very strong, some of um wa--, was very weak. I know I worked for a man,, and uh, he said to me one day he was owner, owner of the mine and he says to me he says, uh, "Mr. Thornbury," said, "I'm not, I'm not a making any money." I said why are you not making any money? "Well," says, "I ain't," said, "I, I'm not a making a dollar." And I said well how come. "Well," he says, "this mine is not a paying me anything." I said why isn't it paying you anything? I said ain't you on a salary? He says, "No." I said, I said to him, I called him by, by mister I said why don't you put your name on, why don't you put yourself on the payroll just like you've got me on the payroll at a thousand dollars a month? I j--, I just called him by god by his name again I said all companies, the president he's on a salary, the vice president is on a salary, the secretary of treasurer is on the salary, I said and every man they've got working by the month's on a salary. I said and they draw their money I said but they, and then they, they're not a making the big money on, on the, on the dividends from this, from what they've got in it. I said that big salary is what they're getting. I said it's true they've been making a little bit of money on the dividend but I, they couldn't live on it [SB: Uh, huh.]. I said that big salary is what, you take big steel companies, alot of men is making a hun--, making a hundred thousand dollars a year but they don't own that much dividends, they couldn't. To many, they's too many stockholders. Same way in the mining, I had a man one time down here when I was bossing number one mine, he told me he says, uh, "I draw some royalty off this

mine." I said if you draw royalty what are you doing in here cutting coal? He said, "I don't get enough to live on." I said why? He said, "They's too many of us." Said, "You know how many of us there is that draws royalty off this mine?" I said no. He said, "Eighteen," / SB: My goodness. / he said, "We don't get enough out of that to live on." Said, "I get a little check every three months but," he said, "what does it amount to?" Said, "It's not, not enough for me to live on," said "I've got to work." Now if he'd been a big stockholder enough that he could been on, he could have held, uh, an office job then one, uh, one of the leading men of the company he'd, he could make a good living out of it. Because he, he could have got salary enough, now I'm going to tell you something. The man that was handling the coal for this man come up from Cincinnati and this fella that, the man that owned the mine told this man he said, "Mr. Thornbury wants me to put my, put myself on the salary of this mine here of a thousand dollars a month." He said, "Why ain't you on the salary?" He said, "No." He said, "You do as Mr. Thornbury told you and put yourself on, on the, put yourself on the salary of this mine, I just might use it and I'll get you a nickel a ton more on your coal." Well that nickel a ton more on the coal paid his salary / SB: (Laughs) / . And two months after that he said to me, "Well," said, "Mr. Thornbury," said, "I've got a bank account." I said you have, how much you got? He said, "I've got two thousand dollars in the bank," said, "That isn't so much I haven't had any money in the bank for a long, long time."

SB: You did (microphone interference) a good deed that time, didn't ya?

RT: I done a good deed for him, yeah, he thanked me for it, he said, "You know I never thought about that." Now, and he own the mine. But said, "I never have drawed a penny of dividends on it." I said well it's not big enough, you're not running enough coal. I said it takes it all full up you keep to pay off your men. Now you put your sal--, you put yourself on the salary I said you'll get some, you'll get some money, and he did.

BT: Okay that's all we know.

SB: Okay, well again I thank you, and uh, this is Sallie Barker, a student in Dr. Simpkins Appalachian Culture class (break in tape).