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Matt L. Hanna

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ORAL HISTORY

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Date April 22 — Matt Hanna (Signature - Interviewee)

Rt 2 Box 202 (Address)

Date April 22 — John Hanna (Signature - Witness)

Matt Hanna

JH: Uh, I'm at Ona, West Virginia and going to interview my father, Matt Hanna. Ask him a few questions concerning our Appalachian Culture class. It's April the 23rd, 1975. Uh, dad how long have you lived here at Ona, in this area?

MH: Son I've lived here all my life. Uh, I live within a mile of, uh, where I was born and raised. Although I've been away slight periods of time, I've lived practically all my life right here.

JH: Uh, talking about, uh, times a changing, have times changed very much in your lifetime?

MH: Oh my goodness, the time's have changed I suspect more in my lifetime since, uh, since the early in this century and now times have changed, uh, more radically than they had up until that time. A person who was born where I was would been far more at home in the time of, uh, George Washington or even the pilgrims or perhaps the, uh, the middle ages then he would now. Times have changed with all the inventions and the way to travel and, and all the many immediate things that you can think of, times have changed radically everywhere.

JH: Uh, what kinds of, uh, schools did you attend when you were young?

MH: I attended the school that everybody attended, that lived in rural West Virginia that was a one room school. In fact, uh, only 40 years ago within this small county, Cabell County that we live, they were more than 100 one room schools. But I've seen them all disappear. I went to the one room school until I, uh, was about, uh, almost 15, yes bout 15 years old. And then I went and boarded, see there was no high school in this part of, uh, of, uh, Cabell County so I boarded and went to school at Milton, the high school. But, uh, I spent my 8 years, 8 grades, I don't know it might have been more than 8 years because I started to school when, and went some when I was 4 years old. There was no law, you could go to school if you wanted to and if you didn't want to you didn't have to. So since I wanted to I went to school some when I was 4 and 5 years old and, uh, I remember that when I was 7 I was in the third reader. So, uh, at that time, uh, they was people going to school, they's very small children and grown up young men and women. They'd go part of the year just to

have somewhere to go and, uh, get a little education. But when spring came, spring plowing time the young men would go back to their plowing and, uh, then the fall they didn't go to school. But during the winter months they went to school and in one room school they might been 50 or 60, uh, children and, and young folks of all ages. How they ever learn is a mystery but somehow or other they did.

JH: Could you tell us little bit bout maybe some of your early teachers?

MH: My early teachers, well I remember the first teacher a little bit. The thing I remember about her in those days, of the, uh, schools, each little one room school was a entity to itself and each one had 3 trustees who, uh, who hired the teacher and looked after the school and my dad happen to be, uh, one of the trustees of the Barker School that I went to school and where by the way you went to school later. Uh, my dad was trustee and I remember very well a young woman coming on a white horse to see dad to, uh, get his approval to be the teacher. And she did get to be the teacher but I remember looking up at her on the horse and I said, uh, I'd like to go to school and she said you come right on. So I went at the school that, uh, year a little bit. I don't remember much about the school but I remember that very vividly.

JH: Uh, what kind of games did you play when, when you were in school?

MH: Oh, we had all kinds of games, the bigger boys played, uh, fox and dog and wooded hills around there and at noon they'd have a fox chase. One would be the fox, the fast runner and he'd give him a head start and, uh, and then the dog would take after him. They might run for miles and sometimes they didn't get back in time and the teacher talked pretty rough to them but it was expected they might not get back by the time that bell rang. By the way a bell was, uh, like, uh, farm dinner bell, up in the balcony and they rang that bell long. The, uh, the first day of school, I'm off the subject of games but I just happen to remember this. The first day of school the janitor, the, he's usually a boy that went to school there. Rang that first bell about

7 o'clock in the morning and all the, uh, the boys particularly would make a, a go for the schoolhouse and when that door was opened they rushed in and,uh, and got them a seat. Uh, usually as far back in the corner as they could away from the teacher and by the way they had double seats, you always had a seat-mate, had folding, uh, seats with desks and, and two sat in a, in a seat and sometimes the school's crowded three would sit in that. The boys sat on one side of the, uh, of the schoolhouse and schoolroom and the girls sat on the other side. Course if a boy was, uh, particularly anxious he'd find some excuse to get permission to go over and sit, uh, with the girls. If he was, uh, not very strong the boy's called him a sissy. But if he was a kind of a big boy, uh, he was kind of a hero because he got to go over, did alittle courting on the other side, you see. Now back to the games that we played, uh, out in the schoolyard they played, uh, bare base. Uh, they'd line up and have a tree at one end of the schoolyard for a base and, uh, and maybe the school-house back at the other end and, uh, they'd go back and forth. They'd rush out there from one side and then the other chase um if they caught them they got him on their side. Oh, they run like foxes, it was great exercise and, uh, then of course they played ball. Usually the ball was nothing more than a, a unravel stocking and sewed together to make the ball. Instead of playing baseball, throwing him out and tagging him, they threw the ball at him and some old big boy that could really throw, uh, would burn ya up with that ball. Well then of course they snowballed in the wintertime and if the teacher were a man, sometimes he were, was a man, uh, they'd have, he stand, he'd get a few of the bigger boys on his side and stand all the rest of um or they'd have snowballs and it's so tough you'd get hit. I can remember great big men hitting me with a snowball but you learn to be kind of tough that way. They even, and this seems rather crude and nobody'd do it now, but uh, when they didn't have any snow along towards spring they'd throw mudballs and (laughs) splatter ya. And, uh, then, uh, the girls and some of the boys would play drop the handkerchief that was a, a reign game and, uh, they'd play, they'd never run out of something to play. By the way, uh, I'm a little, uh, I may be a little hexed on this subject but I think, uh, that kids get in a little room and, uh, let him play what he wants to and he'll always find something to play. Without being too regimented, you may not believe that but now that's

been my experience.

JH: Getting back to the, your community wha-, how did people make a living back when you were, uh, living here?

MH: Well around here with the exception of a few men who went away somewhere to Charleston or maybe Huntington to work, uh, at carpentry or maybe get a winter job to supplement his, uh, income at a, at some factory or, uh, it was usually the Ensign shops now called the AC and F that made, uh, cars, railroad cars. A good many men worked a little of the year at that job but most of um aside from that farmed the hillside. They, uh, uh, most of the hills that you see in woods now were one, at one time cleared in the farm, uh, they weren't very good, the ground wasn't very rich and people made a, a kind of a hard living. They, they just managed to, uh, to raise their families but they had no money. Nobody, uh, very few people had any money. In fact, uh, if they needed somethings like coffee or sugar or a little cloth or, uh, manufactured tobacco, I say manufactured because a great many of the men smoked or chewed the tobacco that they raised. Most of them raised tobacco and, uh, took it to mouth in the wintertime. But aside from a few things like that they didn't buy anything and when they did they went to a store or to a peddler who ran a wagon through the country, uh, and traded their produce, eggs, tobacco, chicken, uh, surplus like that they saved and sold to buy the few necessities. But money was scarce and most of it was by barter, most of the trade.

JH: How has the community changed in your lifetime?

MH: Oh it's changed radically. Now when I was a youngster everybody knew everybody else. Families were, uh, lived, uh, in, in the vicinity for generation after generation. There's very little of transients, uh, living in those days. Well of course there was a few farmers who were sharecroppers who would rent a farm and, uh, part of a farm and farm it for a year or two and then he'd rent from somebody else but he actually didn't move out of the vicinity. But now you scarcely know your, uh, next door neighbor. People are going mobile in all parts of the United States now and that applies to Appalachia too.

You may see people who have lived in a dozen different states and the community is, uh, is unsettled in that respect. People don't know each other but it, it was when I was a boy you didn't travel very far but you knew everybody and you knew family. It's changed in that respect greatly.

JH: Going back to, uh, farming when you were young, tell us, uh, some of the things you had to do on the farm, some of the chores you had.

MH: Well, uh, most people had rather large families in order to, uh, to make a living the young people had to work. As soon as a, a boy got, uh, 8 or 9 years old he, uh, followed his dad, his older brothers out to the field and hoed corn. Most of the work that was done had to be done by hand, uh, course you used horses to plow but, uh, we had to do, cut with hose and youngsters learn to work very, very quickly. Then on top of that everybody burned wood and even the smaller children had to carry in that wood for the stove. Had a big woodbox, everybody cooked with wood and you had to keep that woodbox filled and always they were hogs to slop and, uh, chickens to feed and, uh, uh, cats and dogs to take care of and, and uh, cows and horses and soon as a boy or girl got any size at all there was milking to be done. Everybody had some work to do, uh, pull leads for the hogs or go and get corn to feed them and everybody worked but, uh, they was an advantage in that because usually the father was right along with his, uh, youngsters and they'd worked together and if it was hot when they got to the end of the field they sometimes sat down under the, under the tree and talked and, uh, young people had a great deal of, uh, contact with, uh, older people. I think that's one of the things that's, uh, that is not so good in our society today. The young and the elder don't associate, but in those days they did. Now when I was a very young boy I knew a great many soldiers from the war, the war between the states both, uh, north, northern and southern. Now some of my people were, uh, with the union and some of um were confederate and I knew both sides and I would talk to um and these old fellas would talk to a kid and the kid would listen. We learn a great deal from such people and, uh, so it was an experience that I wouldn't have missed. I, I'm sorry that, uh, the young people don't have more, more opportunity

to, uh, talk and associate with the older people today it's a, it's a great lost I think both for the old and for the young. That's been a radical change cause the old people either lived with your family or nearby, everybody had, uh, uncles and old fellas that they called uncles. It was customary for anybody that was of any age to be called uncle. There was old Uncle Bill Arthur and there's Uncle Newmar who actually was my great uncle but I think every boy and girl in the whole country called him Uncle Nem, there's Uncle Nem and Uncle Lou Roe. Uncle Jimmy who was Uncle, uh, Lou's father I suppose old, uh, old Uncle Jimmy who I knew when I was a very small boy, must have been born, uh, 1825 or somewhere in there and lived to be a real old man. But I knew those people and associated with them and learn alot from them. And worked with old Uncle Bill Arthur who, uh, who had gone through the Civil War. I remember some of the last work he ever did, he and I helped a man take in tobacco in the fall. I remember Uncle Bill's tales very fondly.

JH: Well let's switch from, uh, people and go to food, what were some of the foods of your past?

MH: Oh I suppose that, that we were pretty well off fed. We had to raise nearly everything that we had to eat but, uh, we had an abundance of that. Everybody had plenty of potatoes, corn, beans, tomatoes, uh, onions, all kinds of vegetables. And for meat mostly people of the hills depended largely on pork. They, they would raise hogs and kill them, how I don't know, why they didn't kill beef as, as much as they did, uh, uh, as much as they should have, as people do today. But mostly people ate pork in fact always the Appalachian has been a great pork eater because the hogs were easy to raise. Now in my boyhood not many hogs ran loose. There was some people that let their hogs run loose but they eat up everything and got in their gardens. Well everybody in my time kept their hogs up but they still raised hogs. Now cattle they kept but cattle was kept largely for a milk cow, uh, we had, uh, we had bacon and ham, uh, most people had it in abundance. Sometimes you would run out of bacon along up in the summer and, uh, you got meat hungry and along in the fall before

hog killing time which usually's around Thanksgiving people rabbit hunted and, and squirrel hunted. Alot of wild game. Nearly every boy and man did some hunting of course I told you a while ago we had to work pretty hard but, uh, oddly enough work as hard as people did when they took a notion to go a hunting, uh, that was their prerogative they went hunting. When squirrel time came and that was when they got hungry they went out, uh, uh, rabbits and rabbits were abundant in those days and squirrels were much more plentiful than they are now. Uh, people got rabbits not only for the, uh, sport of it but they, most families ate alot of rabbit and squirrel. And,uh, early, early in the summer when groundhogs were young sometimes ate, uh, young groundhogs. Wild meat was, uh, was good and, uh, most everybody ate some but they had plenty of, of, of pork and, uh, vegetables. Well in the fall a big family such as I was raised in, I was one of eight children, uh, we would see that we had maybe a barrel of kraut and, uh, pickled beans and dried beans and, uh, canned and tomatoes, uh, up until I was a youngster, tomatoes were often canned in open jars maybe a gallon at a time with a, with a tin lid on it and sealing, sealed with sealing wax they would keep. And people dried corn and apples and nearly everybody had a orchard and, uh, orchard's very scarce in this part of the country now but in those days everybody had orchards and, uh, had plenty of apples, they seem to always produce. They'd have apples holed up in the ground to keep for spring and, uh, corn of all kinds and popped corn, walnuts were abundant in the wintertime the youngsters would pop corn over the fireplace and, uh, crack walnuts by the gallon, they had plenty of walnuts and sometimes hickory nuts and hazel nuts and butternuts. They'd make popcorn balls using sorghum molasses, nearly everybody raised, uh, cane. Sorghum cane and made, uh, molasses. A good many people kept bees and used honey it, uh, saved buying sugar, the, uh, honey's delicious and they liked it, everybody kept, uh, uh, cows, maybe two or three cows you'd have, they didn't produce too heavily because, uh, they were fed mostly on corn nubbins and fodder and a little hay but, uh, they produced, everybody kept cows. Some say a man was no good, no count and lazy if he didn't have, even have a cow. Everybody that had any get up at all had a cow or two. So, uh, milk was abundant and butter and, uh, eggs, everybody kept chickens but largely the, the chickens,

uh, produced eggs for a trade. You didn't eat as many eggs, you saved those to take to the store to buy coffee and, and sugar and, uh, pepper and chew, and chewing tobacco but eggs weren't for eating except, uh, at Easter time all the youngsters saw how many eggs they could eat, uh, on Easter time. You never hear of that any more but at Easter the next morning all the young fellas'd say how many eggs did you eat. Well if you ate less than 8 or 10 for breakfast you were the usual kind of a puny fella. But food I would say was, uh, plentiful, uh, such as it was. Now it wasn't as rich as people eat today but, uh, everybody ate residuous quantities of, uh, of food. People ate much more but nobody was fat, uh, a very few people were fat in those days. They, they worked hard, a man that weighed 175 was a big, big man. Most people were very lean but they ate a great deal because most of the food wasn't as rich as, as people are use to today. But they, they went after it, they really, uh, a family maybe the woman would cook, uh, 36 or 40, uh, biscuits for breakfast. They always ate a big breakfast had, that was one of the biggest meals of the day. Everybody ate heartily.

JH: Talked about, uh, pork and vegetables what about dessert, did you have any kind of dessert at all?

MH: Oh yes, sometimes some woman made cakes and pies and, uh, course alot of people baked some light bread but the staple bread that most people ate that I knew in our family was, uh, b-biscuit. They always had biscuits for breakfast and usually cornbread for dinner or supper, uh, and once in a while, uh, light bread which we'd bake 8 or 10 loaves at a time, uh, and it was delicious, it was heavy and, and hot with butter on it, why it would melt in your mouth.

JH: Uh, talking about bread,uh, did you ever see a mill or go to the mill where they ground the flour?

MH: Oh my goodness we went every, in the winter, in the winter when fall the family corn got dry till, uh, next spring you, up into the summer you went to mill practically every week. Now not far away in any community there's a grist mill, course originally they had water mills to grind but when I was a boy they'd come down to gasoline. Either a

stationary engine or a tractor, uh, that would power this grist mill and everybody from the community or practically everybody took a sack of corn there on Saturday. It wasn't just a place to get your meal, uh, meal grind but a place to visit. The men would line up in order, they'd set their sacks in order and maybe loaf around there and chew and smoke and swap tales and talk about the fox hunt they'd had and had the best dog in the country and all of that, it was a place to visit. Then in the, uh, you took your meal there to grind it, you know, the miller would, uh, take out, he had a little box there that was an eighth of a bushel. If you had a bushel of corn he had a box that measured one eighth, an eighth was his toll for grinding it. He didn't get money he got grain, he dumped that in his sack when he ground the meal, the next, uh, sack was emptied into his hopper and he'd dip in and get his toll and so he would get, uh, in a day's grind several bushels of corn which he, uh, used for his own purposes, uh, feed um to his chickens or his stock or in some instances he made, uh, moonshine and although very few people made moonshine, some of um did.

JH: In, uh, pictures of the country and farm they always have pictures of people helping with barn raisings and house raisings, did, uh, you experience any of this kind of thing?

MH: Oh yes I, I saw a barn raising. Uh, most of the barns that I saw built were log penned you see, you know what a log cabin looks like, well the barn was, was made of a log pen but it wasn't chinked and dobbed like the log houses. That is the cracks were left open in that tan. They used that to hang the tobacco in and then to keep their cattle they a, a shed on all sides of that pen you see, uh, lower than the barn. The barn would be, well you might say two stories high but the shed would be one story high, kind of a lean to against that they'd build that around for their stock. Yes I've, uh, I've seen the barn raisings. I remember, uh, my brother, my oldest brother, uh, had a barn built and all the neighbors came in. Would be a man at each corner that stood up on, on that to chop the, make the notches fit you see, he would notch they call those corner men. The rest of them would, had skids, poles up for skids and they'd skid that log up with, uh, sharp poles shove it up as high as the pen had gone and these corner men would notch it and

put that log in place you see. Had four corner men and the house raisings are, the last log house that I saw built I, I was a young man at that time and I had the privilege of going to a house raisings. A good, uh, a good log house was built. Course I wasn't any skilled builder but I did help at that time and I remembered it always. But those days are gone they don't have, uh, log, uh, log raisings, log burnings and house buildings and barn raisings and, and clearings. Why if a man took a notion to clear up an acre or two of ground sometimes he would announce ahead of time and all the neighbors come in and they'd have a day's working. Well they would, uh, the women would go to cooking a day or two before, they'd have one of the awfulest meals you ever saw and these men would work at clearing, always had a man or two that didn't do any clearing he was the tale teller he, uh, he would tell the big lies and entertain the rest of um, uh, while they chopped and piled, well they'd clear a acre or two in a day and have a good time at it and then of course he was expected if they had a working to reciprocate and go and have it. They, uh, they made a day of it, they had fun, entertainment, and uh, company during that time and exchanged work. And if a neighbor got sick, er, and couldn't cut his corn they'd go and cut his corn and have a corn schucking for him, wood getting, uh, you had no trouble in, if a man was a good man and right people would flock into his help if he, uh, he was sick and needed help and do the work for him. It was expected, it was being neighborly.

JH: Well let's, uh, talk a little bit about the churches in your time, what, what exactly were they like?

MH: Well the churches were, were Protestant of course, largely Baptist and Methodist. There were few, uh, United Brethren in the country but largely Baptist and, uh, Methodist. Now the churches were centers of, uh, of the community. Nearly everybody sometime or other went to church. Now they didn't all belong, I doubt that they were any more church members in those days than there are now. But everybody including the young went to church, not particularly to worship but as a meeting place. Uh, the, uh, regular church members would go inside and, and participate and listen to the preachers and all but the, the young men would go and, uh, they went to

have a good time and they congregated on the outside somewhere and talk and sometimes disturb the worshipers and maybe, uh, look, if the windows were open they'd look in because, uh, churches were the meeting place for the young people or for romance. Most of the young men got them a girl and a future wife at church because church was the place where everybody, uh, could meet and did go. There was very little entertainment at night anywhere and so, uh, they would go to church, maybe they'd travel miles and miles to go to churches, young men, they would group up and either walk or ride horses and outside the churches in those days were, were usually trees and for every tree they'd be tied a horse. People either walked or rode horseback, uh, sometimes if they had church in the day time the pe-, the men would load their whole family into a wagon (break in tape). Now as far as the worship service was concerned, they had various kinds of preachers. In those days some of the, of the, uh, preachers were very eloquent, particularly in the Methodist Church the presiding elder would come once in a while maybe a bishop would come and, uh, they were excellent in, uh, orators and good preachers. But in, uh, in my experience a great many of the preachers were, uh, ignorant kind of men, good men, but uh, not educated at all and, but they could get what they lacked in education they made up in muscle and emotion. Uh, if he raised his hands and jumped high and, uh, was very emphatic alot of people liked his preaching. Uh, in the winter they always had revival meetings in the wintertime and when they decided to have a revival it was a day and night affair. The preacher sometimes a visiting evangelist would come but he always stayed, he stayed with some of the, of the church members the commissioners, the decons or the leaders of the church he would spend the day. They not only had meeting at night but they had it about 10 in the morning and if they happen to be close to the schoolhouse it was quite customary for the teacher at that school to take their whole school and visit the morning, uh, service, the evangelistic service. I can remember having gone to one church, uh, like that course in this day and time the, uh, the separation of religion and, uh, and, uh, education and state, uh, that would be frowned upon greatly but in those days the community was very close together in belief and they thought that was the thing to do. And, uh, it was quite an experience. Now I said a while ago that the young people

went to church to, uh, to meet the girls and, uh, if a, if a boy, if a young man had some money that he'd got by working somewhere, uh, any, any great amount of money he bought him a buggy. Automobiles were rare and they's no use at all in the wintertime cause the roads were all mud. You couldn't travel in an automobile and the only cars you'd ever see were the early T-Model Ford, I can remember the first un I ever saw, but I started to tell bout the young men getting a buggy and if you had a, a pretty nice horse and a buggy oh he rode fancy and his, uh, his sweetheart was riding high. He would have a, a nice buggy, tied his horse up to his buggy but he always took his buggy whip with him because he's afraid somebody steal it. Everybody had a buggy whip for decoration if he didn't use it on his horse. He always carried that into the church with him to keep somebody from lifting it from him while he was gone. You'd see the young man throwing his buggy whip, my he was as proud as that buggy as a cadillac. He really had class if he had a buggy and a, and a nice horse. And as I repeated everybody, uh, went to church if not, if not for worship you went for social purposes to see people, to be seen.

JH: Could you tell us a little bit about the singing school, maybe some people don't know what a singing school is?

MH: Well in various parts of the country there'd be a, in the churches they would have a singing master, a singing school teacher who would hold about two weeks every night, uh, singing school. They used, uh, shape-note music, you know what shape-notes are I suppose, uh, nearly all of um were taught by shape-notes. The, uh, they had no, most of the churches had no instrumental music in it, no piano or organ, they had to do it by voice and the singing master would have a tuning fork. He had a, uh, you know what a tuning fork is. He would strike this usually in the key of "c" and he would back up and go (Mr. Hanna hums). He'd strike the pitch and then before they sang the song they'd sing the notes something like this (Mr. Hanna sings) Do-Re-Me-Me-Do-Re-Do-Re-Me- Fa-So-So-Me-La-La-La-Do-Do-Re-Me. And then they would then sing, they actually learn to read music pretty well. I remember the first time that I ever went to a singing school, I must have been, uh, 3 years old it stands out vividly in my mind. A great big old fella was the singing teacher, he struck that, uh, uh, he struck that tuning fork on the desk up there and he said now say "Do" and I said "Do" and he said

you're right son. And, uh, I was I guess so, uh, that stuck in my mind. It stuck for the fact that as the years went by and, uh, some years ago I wanted to revise the old thing so I myself taught several singing schools and, uh, only recently have I quit that I've been as far west as St. Louis and, and the Ozarks of Arkansas doing that thing and it might have all gone back to the time I was 3 years old when old man Moses told me to say do.

JH: People celebrate Christmas different w-, uh, ways now a days but how did you celebrate, celebrate Christmas when, uh, you were young?

MH: Well, uh, as a boy, uh, most of the celebration for Christmas as far as I was concerned, uh, were firecrackers. Now, uh, we think of firecrackers, fireworks as traditional for the 4th of July but we paid no attention to the 4th of July. That was about the time we was laying our corn by, die we had no fireworks for them, but Christmas without fireworks would have been nothing so we had firecrackers, roman candles, sky rockets, uh, presents were rare, uh, nobody could afford many presents but, uh, Santa Claus always brought a little candy and, uh, banana and oranges, maybe some kind of a book and, uh, but fireworks, we had to have fireworks. Then everybody and, uh, ham was the tradition for Christmas and sometimes if you'd get to the city we would have oysters on Christmas, that was something fine. Popcorn balls and, and candy we had, and of course the, uh, the men of the family usually had a, a little, uh, spiritual, uh, I was going to say spiritual, they had some spirits at least for, uh, eggnog and so on and, uh, the kids could smell it but, uh, the women always would bake, uh, cakes and, uh, and had a, had to have a big ham and, and maybe, turkeys weren't very prominent. People raised some turkeys but I don't remember very many of um ate turkey at Thanksgiving or Christmas but they'd have fried hens. But they always had to have that ham was the main thing and, uh, Christmas trees were, were rare in this part, uh, I remember the first one I ever saw my older sister had a Christmas tree you had to light it with, with candles, they were really dangerous I mean wax candles. There was no bulbs and no electricity in this part of the country in fact, uh, uh, rural West Virginia hadn't been electrified all over by any means only since the late war. After 1945 rural electrification became common throughout West Virginia.

Electricity was unknown to us we used, uh, kerosene lamps and heated by a fireplace and a wood cook stove, but Christmas was a big day. I grew up, uh, we was a good size boy in my teens, we always went to Uncle Newmar's store on Christmas Eve and, uh, and Tim Flagg was the expert firecracker and roman candle shooter and we'd all, all the men, young men would pitch in and buy these and Timmy'd shoot them and, uh, course some of the boys had, uh, a little, uh, uh, spirits and, uh, Uncle Nem was very jolly on, on Christmas Eve, oh he was, that was the most generous time of his life until he got real tipsy, in the early part of the evening he would dance what he called the "Shotish." Somebody would play the French harp and Uncle Newmar would dance but after a while Uncle Nem got a little tipsy and, and when he got so much why his wife would come out and lead Uncle Newmar and he'd have to close down and that was Christmas Eve, uh, in the teenage, the young men and the boys. Uh, a great time. Then Christmas Day course was, uh, was kind of a anti-climax after the night before Christmas which we'd have the big feed and, uh, by the time evening came we'd fed the stock it was over.

JH: Talking about, uh, Appalachia, are you interested in preserving the cultural heritage of, uh, Appalachia?

MH: Oh yes I am. I think it's a shame that, uh, that we loos our Appalachia, in touch with the Appalachian heritage such as the music and the dances and the, uh, stories, the tales that we told. Appalachian people are the greatest story tellers in, in the world I think,uh, they're natural story tellers. They may be uneducated even if uneducated they're very good and, and great story tellers and I think it's a shame that we loose that and the arts and crafts and you're not, you're not loosing it you're trying to preserve it and I've been highly interested in that part of it, in, in keeping the knowledge of it. Course our culture is, uh, disappearing, uh, you can't keep it from, from disappearing, uh, we're not going to live like we use to and you needn't expect to. But I think young people particularly ought to be interested in, in, in knowing something about their forebearers and how they lived and by the way I find that young people are greatly interested. There's been a great revival of, of interest

in Appalachian culture in the, in the public schools and in the university. The universities are conducting, uh, uh, classes that are highly popular at, at our own Marshall University Dr. Norman Simpkins has had a class there that has been popular for a good many years and, uh, one of the most popular and you hear about it, uh, everywhere that you go. I've, uh, I've been over the state and in other states and by the way, uh, Dr. Simpkins, whether you know it or not, is a, is a known nationally and even internationally as an expert in Appalachia.

JH: What do you think, uh, has brought about this revival of, uh, Appalachia?

MH: Well it's a philo, that's a philosophical question. I believe that the, at the root of the whole thing is a, is a desire of people to get down to basics. They feel that these people of, uh, our forefathers that lived in these hills, uh, enjoyed life. That they, uh, knew what really mattered and it seems to me that people have come to believe that, uh, that, uh, the simple kind of life is the most enjoyable. Now they want to kind of rough it but our, uh, they want all the modern conveniences. I think even the, the camping that you see and all these campers and tents that you see there is a, is a kind of back to nature or back to the basic, uh, way of life that is, uh, has interest, uh, the people in, in a revival of, uh, of, uh, knowledge of Appalachian culture. Then of course our schools, our universities and, and, uh, our public schools have, have done a great deal and the, particularly the West Virginia University extension people along with the arts and humanities council have, uh, have had the, what they call the mountain heritage weekends for young people and even for senior citizens all over the state. I've been fortunate enough to have attend a great many of these and participated in them. I think that's done a, a great deal to revive this interest. All of these things and the very thing that you're doing now, interviewing people is, uh, testimony to that fact.

JH: Do you look on the days of your youth as the good days as a, as a fact?

MH: Well son all.. all people look back on the past as the good old days, uh,you will be looking back on the good old days and your grandfather, your great-grandfather did that and your grandchildren if they, uh, live will do that. We all tend to, uh, romanticize the past, we, we think about the things that we enjoyed then and tend to forget the things that were tough. I don't know that we were in the good old days. If you'll look carefully into your history you'll see that they a generation or two ago or a dozen generations ago they had their problems that were just as great as the ones we have today, uh, as you grow older you will always tend to think, romanticize as the, as the good old days but I doubt that they were any better. They were pretty touch in many respects. We had some advantages and alot of disadvantages. Uh, times change you can't stop, uh, times changing, you can't stop progress of history. Reminds me of the old brother Ernest (?) that I often think about, old mountain preacher he'd, uh, clap his hands together, hit his hands every once in a while and I remember one time vividly he was talking about the weather. He said, that and god rest his soul he was a friend of mine departed long ago, but he said something like this, he said, uh, in talking about the weather he said, "Why, uh, brother," he said, "you can't stop the weather why," he said, "you just might as well try to stop the Ohio River with a boom, mop (claps hands). So you cant stop progress and we don't want to. Times will change but, uh, with all the change let's not forget the roots that we came from let's, uh, let's, uh, remember the good things as well as the bad and remember that we, we, we just don't, don't live isolated that we have our roots in, in these mountains and, uh, we have our roots in history. We are a part of, of all that went along before and we are contributing to the future as, as we live. That's the way life is.

JH: I want to thank you again for your interesting talk. I had a good time and thank you again.

MH: Well you're perfectly welcome son.