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(SNP019) James Burner interviewed by Dorothy Noble Smith, transcribed by Peggy C. Bradley

James Burner

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J.B.: ... quite a lot of the hollows and a lot of the people.
D.S.: Great.
J.B.: Well, should I even mention some pre-Park episodes?
D.S.: Sure. It'd be beautiful if you would.
J.B.: Well, some of my first experiences in Shenandoah National Park, which was then not a Park, and perhaps was - the idea hadn't been conceived yet - was some people that lived in the Ida Valley that moved to Luray. There was an old gentleman by the name of Rupert C. Broyles, who moved from the Ida area to Luray, and ran a little dairy farm in Luray. And I used to work for this old man when I was a young lad going to school. And some -
D.S.: Now, Ida - you're not talking about people moved from the mountains into Ida?
J.B.: No. No. Not at this time.
D.S.: No.
J.B.: Not at this time.
So, he had a farm that adjoined the Park in the Ida Valley - what is now the Park. And even at that time, that he moved out, I don't think the idea had been conceived - uh - concerning the two great National Parks which they decided to develop in the east. One being the Great Smokies, you know -
D.S.: Right.
J.B.: ... and the other the Shenandoah. And, of course, these were to be carved out of already privately owned land rather than like the regular western parks which largely have been carved out of the public domain.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: So, I know that there was a lack of communication between the State and the Federal government and the mountain people. And you must realize, too, that many of the mountain people were squatters.
D.S.: Right.

J.B.: They did not have title to the land. The landowners let them stay there because they ran cattle in the mountain and things of this nature. And they would see that they were salted or that the water holes were cleaned out for the privilege of staying there. And, - uh -

D.S.: Are you from this area?

J.B.: Yes. I've been - my people have been here since way before the Revolution.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Matter of fact, my mother's people settled this part of the Valley, right here.

D.S.: Great.

J.B.: In Jeremiah's Run here was named after Jeremiah Woodward, brother to my ancestor Nehemiah. And they had a land grant -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: ... and they owned everything from Overall Run up to Pass Run from mountain top to mountain top. So we're old timers here -

D.S.: You are.

J.B.: ... both sides of the family.

D.S.: You are. Yes.

J.B.: And then some time ago, I read an article that you wrote on the Massanutten settlement. Right?

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And you mentioned the fact that John and Jacob Burner came down from Pennsylvania in 1734. My mother's people had been here for a hundred years before that.

D.S.: Oh. You should have called and corrected me.
J.B.: And, course, I'm kin to the old - the Rhodes - the Rev. John Rhodes, the old Mennonite minister over there that was massacred in 1764.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: By - he was my grandfather on the - on the maternal side.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: So any of the old families in Page County that still exist or have antecedents here, you might say, we're all pretty close kin -

D.S.: Right.

J.B.: .... if you go back a few generations.

D.S.: Sure. Right. So you've been here from the beginning.

J.B.: From the beginning.

D.S.: Right.

J.B.: Yes, I've been here. And one of my mother's forebearers, Col. Wood, was proxy for George Washington. And when he was in Philadelphia and New York, he stood for him in Washington and vice versa.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: He was a special emissary for him.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: So we have some of these artifacts -

D.S.: Yes.

J.B.: .... on the records, which - they're not great, but it's interesting.

D.S.: Right. But your - none of your family was affected by the Park coming in?

J.B.: None of my family was - we were river people - from west of the river. From Massanutten down through Burner's Bottom on the Warren-Page line.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: That was the Free State down there. Certain of the old Burners' heirs
eced from the United States and formed a Free State.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: They had their own schools, their own churches and everything-

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: They didn't even fight in the Civil War - some of 'em.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: They patroled their own boundaries just like the western - or back in the Middle Ages almost, you know.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: And I've heard my grandfather used to spend the weekend - he would ride from up in the Massanutten section - he would go down into Burner's Bottom to see some of his cousins. And he'd be gone for a fortnight or something of that nature - ridin' horseback. So - uh - my elder sister, Mabel, three years older than I, she's made quite a study of all of this -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: .... and she has a lot of documentation on the Burners as far as that goes.

D.S.: I'd love to see it sometime.

J.B.: And, she spent many years on it. And she's real accurate in what she does, too.

D.S.: Uh-huh. Now, you were telling about the family.

J.B.: Well, about Mr. Broyles. I loved this family very much.

So, he had one son that remained on the farm in Ida. And I was working with the old man off and on for several years, while I was going to school, at the little dairy farm. And we would - in the fall of the year on two different occasions, we would go up into what is now the Big Meadows area - it was Big Meadows then. We came up one time up the Red Gate Road and another
time up the old Hawksbill Gap with a spring wagon - a one horse spring wagon. And there was Mrs. Broyles, who was a Somers, that grew up right in the foothills of the Park there at Ida. And, of course, the Broyles family, and consequently, some of the Broyles lived over on the east side of Dark Hollow -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: .... which were related. We'd go up there in the fall and gather chestnuts. Now, what is now the area of Big Meadows - Wayside and Black Rock Motel - hotel - whatever you used to call it - that was - the chestnut trees were beginning to die, of course, but there was huge chestnut trees in there, which, after they all died during my era and my tenure in the Park - we renamed it the Ghost Forest -

D.S.: Yes.

J.B.: .... because all of these trees died.

We would go up there - and leave early of a morning and spend the entire day. And the chestnut burrs would actually be a foot deep on the ground after the frost had started hittin' 'em, and they would open up and they ran out. And we would flail the chestnut burrs with poles and then take long poles and rap the trees so that more chestnuts would rain down. We'd rake those back and you could pick up chestnuts just like pickin' up shell corn. And you learned to pick by the weight of 'em which was good and which wasn't. I mean, you could tell by handling 'em.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: And we would literally fill up a spring wagon bed, which was about 4½ feet wide and 8 feet long and 10 to 12 inches deep with chestnuts in one day - American chestnuts.
D.S.: Oh.

J.B.: And I've seen - then the chipmunks and the squirrels and everything - several species of those animals are gone now that used to be in there.
There was a large chipmunk that we called a chipmunk and then there was a little ground squirrel we called the lemmie. And the large chipmunk is almost disappeared. He was three times as large as the little chipmunk that you see now. And the common red squirrel. And he's practically disappeared. I don't know what happened to him. But, they weren't common then. They were - you might say they were common, but they were more unusual. The ratio was, say, ten or fifteen to one you'd see the little tiny chipmunk.
But, he was a big fellow. And, we referred to him as the chipmunk and not the little ground squirrel -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: ... in those days.

D.S.: Yes.

J.B.: But he has all but disappeared.
Then, there wasn't any deer in the Park in those days. They gone. And, I remember when my grandmother died at 84 years old, and she said when she was a girl that she had a pet deer at one time. But they all disappeared. There was a period probably 50 years, there wasn't a deer, say, in Page or Albemarle or Green or Madison or anywhere around.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And, incidentally, I did help to stock the first deer that were put in this area in Shenandoah National Park.

D.S.: You did?

J.B.: Yes. See, we had thirty-three that came from north - western Pennsylvania.
It was a CCC project.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: And we distributed them in the Park and turned them loose there.

D.S.: Where did you get them in Pennsylvania?

J.B.: Well, that was northwestern Pennsylvania - up in Kane County.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Northwestern Pennsylvania is where they came from.

D.S.: And did you go and capture those?

J.B.: No. Another CC project up there -

D.S.: Oh.

J.B.: .... they trapped 'em and put 'em on trucks then and delivered 'em down to us.

D.S.: I see.

J.B.: We didn't go after 'em.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: And at the same time, they delivered some to the George Washington National Forest.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Now, incidentally, of course, you know the Park in the beginning was so closely related and involved with the CCC.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: I always say if it hadn't been for the Civilian Conservation Corp, perhaps Shenandoah National Park would never have been on the map.

D.S.: That's right.

J.B.: They developed it and we had - there was Camp 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 12, 27 and Harmony Hollow's Camp 4. And I was a member - a local enrolled member in
Camp 1.

D.S.: Are you going to the reunion?

J.B.: I certainly am. Yes.

D.S.: I'll see you there.

J.B.: I don't know whether Jake's going or not. He was there last year. Superintendent Jacobsen.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And we enjoyed it very much the last time.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: Well, I attend most of 'em.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And -

D.S.: Yeah. How long were -

J.B.: Well, anyway, this -

D.S.: You with the CCC's?

J.B.: Well, I was with them - they had connected - that's where I first got my job with the Park Service. I took the Civil Service examination as a junior assistant and technician while I was in the CC camp and went to work with the Park Service. So I went up - I lived on the mountain for about four years - lived at Skyland at the Camp 1 area. And after I got this junior job, well, we boarded there, you know, for about forty-two cents a day.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And lived at the camp.

D.S.: Did you have much contact with the mountain people that were still there?

J.B.: Yes. I knew the Nicholsons and the Corbins and the Dodsons and the Taylors and the Broyleses. I spent nights in Dark Hollow with the Broyles family.
Several of those were in the CC Camp. I knew Jack I. We always called him Jack I. His name was Jack I. Nicholson. And I knew Kenny Nicholson down in the Nicholson Hollow area. One of those cabins is still maintained there.

D.S.: Corbin cabin.

J.B.: Corbin cabin. Well, that was another hollow. And I knew Woody and George Corbin. Have you interviewed George?

D.S.: Yes, I have.

J.B.: Well, I knew them quite well. Well, in fact, I helped move George out when he was put in settlement administration up Stanley.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Or out at Ida, they called it.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: I helped to move George out.

D.S.: Uh-huh. Are any of those people left?

J.B.: George is still living.

D.S.: I know that.

J.B.: Woody's dead. And I think George's only son is dead. And I doubt very much if any of those old people are living. It might be a few of the younger ones. Some of the young Dodsons would be living. And some of the younger Taylors. But Dealand Taylor who lived back in Hawksbill Gap is dead. And I knew his wife. And I knew several of his children.

D.S.: Would any of the Dodsons or Taylors remember anything?

J.B.: Well, one of the girls is a-livin'. She married a man by the name of Bates. Elmer Bates who worked for George Freeman Pollack for many years. He and his father, Wade Bates, while Mr. Pollack was still operating Skyland. And I forget the girl's name. But, she has remarried, and she is alive. I saw her Christmas a year ago, and she's still living. But, she was a daughter -
and there was a Della that may be living who was a son of - a daughter of Dealand Taylor who married Skyler Dodson. And she lived somewhere over around Sperryville or Little Washington, Virginia. I think she's still living.

D.S.: Della Taylor Dodson.
J.B.: Della Taylor Dodson.
D.S.: Around Sperryville.
J.B.: Sperryville or Little Washington or Madison - somewhere in that area - the last I heard of.
D.S.: Well.
J.B.: And then Dealand had brothers by the name of Ren who was a school teacher that lived down at the foot of Red Gate Road. And he was a country school teacher and a very intelligent man. Well, Dealand was not an unintelligent man. He chose to live back like the mountaineers lived. But, he was rather an astute little fellow. And he worked quite a lot for - on Mr. Pollack.
D.S.: Uh-huh. The people with their lifestyle - they worked pretty hard, didn't they?
J.B.: Well, they worked spasmodically in season. They gathered berries. They gathered nuts. And there was a lot of - not wild cherries - they were tame cherry trees. They grew up wild.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: They were self-seeded. They dried cherries. They picked huckleberries. But, they patched on the mountainsides. Well, for instance, George Corbin now, was one of the most progressive that I knew. And George made a little whiskey, too. When they got hard up, they could always raise a little patch of corn on the mountain or a little patch of rye. They would grind this meal and mix it, and they'd make a little bit of moonshine and get a little spending money.
J.B.: And, course, they'd drink quite a lot of it, too.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: But, George -
D.S.: It was good stuff they made.
J.B.: .... but George was rather an exception. And Jack and Kenny Nichols and some of those fellows. And the Weakleys. They were a little bit more progressive. Now, George had a brother, Woody, who was just incapable of caring for himself. Somewhat - you might say - partially retarded. And Dicy Corbin was a woman up there that never married but had thirteen living children at the time we took the census to move out of the Park.
D.S.: Oh. Oh. That's the one that -
J.B.: And she even had several that was dead.
D.S.: Dicy Corbin -
J.B.: While I'm in this same vein, have you ever - have you talked to Taylor Hoskins?
D.S.: No.
J.B.: Well, you wanna talk to him. R. Taylor Hoskins, past superintendent of the Shenandoah National Park, lives in -
D.S.: Well, where is he?
J.B.: .... in Tappahannock. He was the first uniformed -
D.S.: You mean in Rappahannock?
D.S.: Oh. Tappahannock.
J.B.: Down below Fredericksburg in the - in you might say Cole's Point. Down in that area. Tappahannock. A little -
D.S.: Dicy Corbin. That's the one that Skipper Knowles was trying to sneak out.
J.B.: Yes. Yes, that's the one Skipper - well, see we made a census -
D.S.: Yeah.
J.B.: ... of all the people in there. We'd take one hollow - somebody else, you know, and I remember that Dicy had - at that time, I think, had thirteen living children and three or four dead. And I don't think she had the father - the same father for any two of them. I don't know.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: It kinda appeared that way. She didn't know who the fathers were.
D.S.: Yeah. He said everybody was afraid to even give her a lift anywhere for fear -
J.B.: She was a character.
D.S.: Where did she live?
J.B.: Well, on the east side back toward Thoroughfare Mountain.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: And, well, then there was a bunch of the Parkses. I should write a lot of this stuff down while I can remember it - just episodes. And I have never done it.
But, the Parks family, now, they were mixed up. And a lot of the Burackers, And there were a lot of feuds going on in those hollows, too.
D.S.: There were?
J.B.: There'd be a lot of feuds.
D.S.: About what?
J.B.: Family feuds. Just pure meanness - all I can tell you.
D.S.: I always thought that once they accepted a person, they were accepted.
J.B.: Well, yes. If they liked you, yeah they'd go to bat for you. But, when you went over to the next hollow, you might not be welcome at all because you were with somebody that they didn't - some mountaineer that they didn't
cotton to very well in the next hollow. The hollows were kinda independent.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: It might be two or three family names in one hollow.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: But, over in the next hollow, they just didn't gee with some of them at all. So, it wasn't the real knock down, draggin' out, but there was a lot of meanness.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: There was a lot of manhandling and a lot of them mountain girls were carried out in the bushes and just purely raped. They really were. No doubt about it. Taylor Hoskins can relate some of this. We had to go in and get some of those Dodsons, you know. They were mean as rattlesnakes. In fact, I saw Cletus Dodson shoot a man from Southwest Virginia by the name of Blevins. He wasn't any relation to Doc Blevins, but he had the same name and they came from the same territory, just because this boy was teasing him about one of the mountain girls.

D.S.: Well, those were his girls, weren't they?

J.B.: Yeah.

D.S.: So, he had no right to tease about it.

J.B.: Well, I know. And they -

D.S.: They respected their women very much, didn't they?

J.B.: Well, they did. I mean they didn't like strangers movin' in on 'em.

D.S.: No.

J.B.: That was one thing for sure, you know.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: But, they didn't treat 'em very well themselves quite often, you know.

D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: They were pretty mean to 'em. The woman's lot, I think, in the mountain
was pretty rough, more so than the man's. He was pretty independent.

D.S.: Well, didn't they have a very close family relationship, though?


D.S.: I mean, now, like a husband and wife - you never heard of divorce.

J.B.: No. No.

D.S.: No.

J.B.: No. No.

D.S.: Once they were married, it was -

J.B.: They accepted that for a lifetime deal.

D.S.: That's right. Yeah.

J.B.: They really did.

D.S.: Uh-huh. Where did the Dodsons live?

J.B.: Well, the Dodsons were down in between the hollows - down on Hazel Mountain.

They were scattered out pretty much. Skyler Dodson was quite a character
in his day. He was pretty mean and a great moonshiner. And he used to sell
moonshine to all the CC boys. Around payday, you know, he was sure that he
was gonna have a couple turns of liquor.

D.S.: Is he any relation to our Ray Dodson?

J.B.: Conceivably could be. It could very be. And you know, they were pretty
people. The Dodsons were all pretty people - that bunch.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: They were fair. Smooth complexions. Chestnut to straw colored hair. Didn't
talk with as much dialect as some of the other mountain people did. They got
out more. And they just acquired a little bit more outside knowledge and
learned how to use it against the - you might say against their own other
mountain people. They were a little more progressive.


J.B.: And the Dyers - the Dyers - that family - I worked with so many of these
people, see. I got to know 'em and I knew their families through them.
And occasionally, on weekends I - one would say, "Well, go home with me this
weekend". And I would. I'd go down to Dark Hollow or I'd go down to
Nicholson Hollow or Corbin Hollow and learn to know some of the old people.

D.S.: Great. Now, what would they give you for dinner, for instance?

J.B.: Well, you were welcome to anything they had -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: .... but they ate in season, too.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Now, they were - some of them were very prolific. Some of them dried
cherries. They dried corn. They dried beans. They dried apples. The
old time apple snits they called 'em, you know. And, they had those in the
winter. They lived off of fish and game a lot.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Some of 'em had pigs. Some of 'em had an old cow. Some didn't. I mean,
one man would have a couple cows and took good care of 'em. Had plenty of
milk and butter, cottage cheese and things like that. But, they ate corn-
meal mostly.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And they had cornmeal and sidemeat and beans, they were happy. Dried beans.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: But they ate all kinds of wild greens - green salads. They would pick seven
or eight different kinds and mix 'em all together - polk and lamb quarter
and rock lettuce - wild greens. Wild greens, you know, is something that at that time I wouldn't a dared pick and put 'em all in combination. I thought I'd poison somebody.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: They ate mushrooms - very fond of muchrooms, in season. And if it was good seasons, they eat pretty good. But they were not - in the winter time sometimes between Christmas and spring, they'd get pretty hard up. They'd wind up with sow belly and beans and cornmeal. That would be about all they'd had left. They didn't go in for canning a great deal.

D.S.: No.

J.B.: They couldn't buy - they didn't have jars and tops and things.

D.S.: Didn't they dig like trenches for cabbage and turnips?

J.B.: They buried cabbage and turnips and they even buried potatoes.

D.S.: Oh. I thought that that would freeze.

J.B.: No. Potatoes'll keep very good. They'd dig holes in the ground and line 'em with straw and pine needles and cover it over. And potatoes'd keep very well buried.

D.S.: Oh.

J.B.: Very well. They'd do that, too.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: But they weren't too ambitious, now. They ran out of potatoes, and they would run out of pretty near everthing before spring.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: They was looking forward to an early crop of berries and greens and things that were coming along. They'd get pretty hard up, most of 'em.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Those weren't progressive. Now, George was an entirely different kind of fellow - George Corbin, when we moved him out. Now, George had an old Model
T Ford automobile that we called the "Black Bat". He worked as a helper for stone masons up on the drive many years ago when we first started doing some of the stone guard wall. He never had this old car home in his life. So when we moved him out, we went down into Corbin Hollow from Hughes River Gap on the east side. It was an old road - trail went down. We had about twenty-five or thirty CC boys. We went down there and we carried his stuff - drive - carried the pigs out. Practically carried a calf and a cow out. Drove the cow and helped get the calf out. He had ten or twelve gallons of apple butter. He had dried bags of beans and corn. We carried his fodder out on the mountainside. He had cured meat - hog meat. I don't mean just a little bit, I mean four or five hundred pounds of it. And he had some - as well as I can remember - a little barley grain or something that grewed on the hillside patch. He had some corn.

And they were one of the most outstanding families, you know.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: When the others were starving, George still had plenty of food in his larder. I don't know how generous he was with his neighbors, probably not too generous because it was survival with those people, too, you know.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: But, he was really progressive. Now, he didn't have any money. And we moved them out - carried all that stuff up the Skyline Drive there, and put it on trucks - his animals. And you couldn't get to George's house with - the only way you could get up from the bottom of the hill up to his house was with a one horse slide. Now, he'd never had his old car home. And when we took him to Ida settlement there, and put him in, he drove the car - said, "Ole buddy", said, "I had you a long time and this is the first time I ever got you home."
Really, now, it was just a path up to his house from down at the creek to the bottom of the hill at his house. And that's what it was. And he'd take an old one-horse slide and he would drag a little something up and down there to the house.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: But he had a stable there. And he had chickens.

D.S.: Yeah. I was going to ask about the chickens.

J.B.: Yeah. He had some chickens.

D.S.: He said he had some chickens.

J.B.: But, they had a hard time maintaining those for the owls and the foxes and things like that. And they wasn't able to buy any wire as such in those days much. They had stick pens and picket pens and things like that.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: So you almost had to watch your chickens like you did your kids.

D.S.: Yeah. Right.

J.B.: But they were happy.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: And I think this was the most - well, one of the sensitive things that these people were in no way equipped to move out of the mountains. They had no preliminary training. They didn't know what to expect. And they were just lost souls, a lot of 'em, particularly those that were middle age and older. The younger ones, I think, were glad to get out. And it was a blessing for them because a lot of those had been inter-married. Some of 'em were educated. Now, some of the older people, the real old ones had had some schooling. And they taught the children to read and write a little bit, those that were adept enough to really learn. But, I think there was still some preliminary work that should have been
done there to try to acquaint these people what was going on. Now, they blame the Federal Government totally for this thing. They didn't realize that the State of Virginia acquired this land then passed it on to the Federal Government for administration and supervision.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: They all said, well, this all came out of Washington. I mean, they were -

D.S.: Then there was the resentment.

J.B.: That was the resentment -

D.S.: Yes.

J.B.: ... that everything - that the President and people in Washington did it all, see. It wasn't explained fully enough that the Governor of the State of Virginia appointed the Park Commission to do all the survey work and all this preliminary work in gathering up all these deeds and try and establish a boundary and what they were gonna take and what they didn't. And some people agreed in the beginning and then they backfired when the time came to go out. Actually, they - you might say they sold out so to speak and then when it came time to go, they didn't want to go.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Of course, there was a few of the older ones they left as lifetime tenure residents.

D.S.: Yes.

J.B.: But, I think it could have been more and it would have left a bit happier atmosphere perhaps.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Generally speaking.

D.S.: Yes.

J.B.: But -
D.S.: When you were with the CCC's, how many families were still there, roughly?
J.B.: All of them in the beginning. There hadn't been anybody moved out.
D.S.: I see.
J.B.: See, this came along several years - oh, I don't know when that exodus, you might say, actually took place, because they were building the resettlement area, see.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: Now, some of them could qualify and some of them couldn't. For instance, those that they knew wouldn't prove up, the welfare organizations then bought them pieces of property and gave it to 'em out right. Now, George Corbin had a brother Woody, that they bought a place right up here at Vaughn's Summit and gave it to him, lock, stock and moved him in. Well, he died there as a pauper. He wasn't able to work or anything. He had one son that used to work for me occasionally in the Park by the name of Austin. I see him occasionally once in awhile. But, these people were not - really not capable of caring for themselves in the mountain or out.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: Worse out.
D.S.: Yeah.
J.B.: Because they couldn't communicate with people outside at all. And other mountain people didn't share when you get out into -
D.S.: Yeah.
J.B.: .... the main malstrom, why people are not as kind as you think they are. Or it's considered.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: So, this happened to a lot of 'em. Now, very few of 'em actually - in
fact, George Corbin's one of the only few that I know that ever proved up on his property. Most of 'em stayed there a couple years and they just left.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: They had a little ground. They didn't give 'em any farming implements or anything like that. They didn't give 'em any seed. They didn't give 'em any know how. They moved 'em in a nice little house with running water and a bathroom and they didn't even know what to do with it.

D.S.: I thought they were given implements - tools.

J.B.: Well, some hand tools and things like that. But, now, I know one man that was a nephew of this Dealand Taylor that I'm telling you about. But, he bought up four or five of those resettlement places himself. He bought 'em from the government after these people moved out and wouldn't prove up on their thing. Couldn't keep 'em there. They just - the younger ones particularly. After they got up a little and got out and got a taste of outside life, they all moved out and went on, which was good for them.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: But, if they could have stayed a little longer and perhaps helped the older people -

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: .... get more acclimated.

D.S.: Right.

J.B.: But, very, very few of them ever proved up on their claim, so to speak.


J.B.: Then, well, to go back a little further. After the Broyles episode, then I had - the old Skyland when Mr. Pollack was in his heyday, I had a first cousin by the name of Sam Irvin, who was general manager for Mr. Pollack.
I had another cousin who married - by marriage - who married my mother's first cousin, named Milton Emerson, who got the mail and transportation contracts for all the visitors at Skyland.

D.S.: Oh boy.

J.B.: And we had a depot at the bottom of the mountain - called the Ida Stables, at the foot of the mountain. Then they had stables on top of the mountain for the horseback riders. In those days, they met the trains at the station for all the reservations that had been made for Skyland. They carried these people then by automobile - this was in the 20's now -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: .... by whatever jalopy it might be - up to the foot of the mountain by automobile. And from that point, they either walked to the top of the mountain or they went up by buckboard or surry or horseback. Some of 'em chose to walk. Some of 'em rode the old two seated surrys. And some went by buckboard. And, of course, they had horses - big horses there and wagons and they did all the freighting. They hauled all the - well, everything that they needed to maintain and operate up there. Milton Emerson had that contract with Mr. Pollack. And he also then got - later on - after Sam Sours' day of walking up from Stonyman with saddle bags carrying the mail, why, they took that over.

And, of course, Ralph and John Mims were running/Mansion Inn Hotel and when Pollack was in Luray, that was his headquarters. So they met every train. They brought the people to the hotel and Milt Emerson would pick 'em up from the hotel and take 'em to Skyland and bring 'em back.

And then when you got to Skyland, you were back in the wilderness.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: There was nothing north, south, east or west there. That was one way out,
you might say.


J.B.: You were there.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: You were really isolated. So, I knew this old man well. I knew Sam. But, then Milt Emerson had a son that was about two and a half years older by the name of Everett. He later on came with his father's wagons, but we were boys then in our early teens. And on weekends, from school, we'd go to Skyland or in the summer when school wasn't, boy, we broke our necks to get up there. Well, if any of the dormatories or any of the cabins or anything wasn't occupied, why Sam would give us a room we stayed in.

D.S.: Oh.

J.B.: And then, we ate better than anybody at Skyland. We went back in the kitchen and some of the old colored ladies from down in Blainesville and some of the white people, too, were cooks and maids and all that there. Why, we ate high on the hog so to speak.

D.S.: Sure.

J.B.: It was one girl there by the name of Evelyn. A great big brown skinned woman, you know. And she kinda took Everett and I under her wing, you know, as far as eating was concerned. And we would go to the back door of the kitchen and go in and eat bologna. We ate pretty good. And then after all the horses were put out that day for the riders and everything like that, there'd always be four or five or a half a dozen left. And Everett and I would mount the horses and we'd ride the mountains like two little wild Indians. All over.

D.S.: Oh.

J.B.: I've ridden all back through Big Meadows, down in Dark Hollow, back in the
Timber Lost out to Stonyman and all through that area, we rode. In those
days we carried a little .22 rifle with us, and we taught those horses
that we could shoot off those horses. We were wild little bucks.

D.S.: What would you shoot? Rattlesnakes?

J.B.: Well, yeah. We'd shoot grouse and rattlesnakes and -

D.S.: Oh.

J.B.: And - there was a lot of grouse in the mountains then. And they were
good eatin'. And it was no low then - Virginia State law or Federal law.
See, the Park didn't exist then.


J.B.: So for a period of three or four years, this went on, summer after summer,
you know. Then I got to - the first time I saw this Dealand Taylor, we
went back in there, and there was an old road that went from Skyland on
down by Timber Hollow parking overlook and back across Crescent Rock.
Actually, it went across the inner edge of Crescent Rock because you could
stand up on the wagon and look over the cliff. The road went down - went
down in - well, there's evidence of that there yet.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Down into the dip then into the Hawksbill. And there's an old graveyard
right there in the Hawksbill Gap, on the left side of the road now going
south, where all of those old Taylors and a lot of those people lived.
Dealand lived just a few hundred yards east of that in the gap.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And, we'd take a little bit of grain there in the fall of the year and a
few bales of hay down there for his old horse and his old cow - 'cause
ey didn't - now, you see, they coulda cut some wild grass, but they
wouldn't do this. They wouldn't cut wild grass and put up hay. And they wouldn't raise any hay.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: They had pasture nine months out of the year, see. But they didn't make much provision for feedin' their animals in the winter time. And if they had an old - if the old horse had a little bit of fodder and the old cow a little corn fodder left over from their gardens or their patches around, o.k. But, they got pretty hungry. Well, things were cheap then, and we'd bring hay from Luray and a little big of grain and take back there. Well, Everett and I would usually make that trip then from Skyland over to Hawksbill Gap, which in itself was better than a half a day trip -

D.S.: Uh -

J.B.: .... by wagon. Now, we wagoned that over from Skyland, see.


J.B.: And we got to know some of these people when they was - Della Taylor and the sister that I was talking about - young sister - Elmer Bates' wife. We got to know them. And they had an old grammer phone with the horn on it.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: Well, the old Edison grammerphone. And you could hear that old thing aplayin' before you got there. And the girls - and they could all sing. Most all of 'em could play a banjo or guitar or something like that.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And the whole family would sing. And then I remember the pow wows that Mr. Pollack used to throw just south of Skyland area now. That was between Skyland and the Camp 1 area. But this was when I was still a boy, never having any idea that I'd ever spend any time or know anything about the Park Service or anything - no connection.
D.S.: Right. Yes.

J.B.: That was way in the offage.

D.S.: Sure.

J.B.: And, he'd have tremendous big barbecue pits dug. Roast carcasses of hogs and cows - I mean the whole carcass-

D.S.: Um-

J.B.: Put on Indian skits of all kinds, you know. Dress half of those mountain people as the Indians. And he'd have those people hauling wood for days and days. And I guarantee you that he'd have a pole of wood there forty feet high and fifty feet through in diameter. And they would saturate that and set it afire and you could see it from Luray - that glow in the sky. And they would have their Indian dances and their pow wows and their barbecues. He was a royal entertainer.

D.S.: Yes, he was.

J.B.: That old man really was.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: And he always burned somebody in effigy. He had a cable running down - a rope - then somebody - some prominent figure of the day or maybe some prominent resident or visitor - and there were Senators and Congressmen - Harry Byrd, Sr. and his father before him. And, incidentally, I knew Harry, Sr. very well. I camped on the trail with him. I've split a jug and a bunk with him many a time.

D.S.: Oh.

J.B.: And I have a close grown cousin that was his secretary for many, many years. So I had a little in with him, you know.

D.S.: Sure.

J.B.: And I loved those old people.
D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: I had some unique experiences.

D.S.: Yes. You really did.

J.B.: And I knew Connie - Connie Worth and Elmer Cox and all the old gang. Dan Berry. I knew all those old guys. And had some - shared the life with them a little bit.

D.S.: What -

J.B.: In other words, rode the river with 'em, you might speak.

D.S.: Yes, you really did.

J.B.: And -

D.S.: Did you hear - do you recall any of the songs that they used to play?

J.B.: Oh, yeah.

D.S.: The mountain people?

J.B.: Oh, yeah. Well, most of 'em. They had some little ditties that would be a bar or two that - then they seemed to forget it. But the old songs like 'Golden Slippers' and 'Darlin' Nellie Gray' and 'The Old Gray Bonnet' tune and 'Liza Jane' and 'Comin' Round the Mountain When She Comes' -

D.S.: Oh, yes.

J.B.: .... and there was another one - 'Lorena' - 'Corena'.

D.S.: 'Corena'?

J.B.: 'Corena'. Corena, where'd you stay last night? Come in this morning, the sun shining bright.

It was quite a song. Most all of them knew that. And - oh, they had little - they had little - some little ballads. One was 'Way Down in the Lone Green Valley where the violets fade in bloom. There lies my sweet Morella, a molderin' in her tomb.'

They was all sad things, you know.

D.S.: Oh boy.
J.B.: All sad. Ever one of them. They was sad ballads.

D.S.: Did you ever hear them play the 'Fox Hunt' or 'Fox Chase'?

J.B.: Oh, yeah. Well, they did that on some of the old time fiddles. 'The Buffalo Girl' and 'The Two-Cent Girl' and the 'Fox Chase' and 'Rogers' - 'The Horn Pipe'. They knew it. But, they didn't know 'em by the name, they just remembered these tunes and they learned to pick 'em out. But they couldn't tell you what they were playing - a lot of 'em. They didn't know the names of 'em. But these tunes stuck in their mind.

D.S.: Oh.

J.B.: And they called 'em something else. Somebody would say well, play about - play a little about that dead girl or in the tomb or something, you know. Well, they knew they was talking about 'Poor Morella'.

D.S.: Oh, gosh.

J.B.: They didn't have specific titles. Names.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: And there was little ditties - bars. And they had some religious songs. If you knew enough about that type of thing, you could tie 'em in with some old hymns. A very few of 'em had a Bible or hymnbook or anything like that. Very few of 'em.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: But, they had - when they got in those places, some of the older people - they had been brought up to know these things. And some of those fellows were not preachers and didn't pretend to be. But, they would have meetins and they would preach. And I tell you -

D.S.: Oh! So that's how they had their services.

J.B.: Yeah. And, they did a lot of good quoting too, of the Bible. But, this was handed down. I don't know where a lot of them got their information. But I tell you, they were accurate. And -
D.S.: Huh! Speaking of handing down, did any of them ever mention where they came from? Any stories, histories - family histories about they got here?

J.B.: Well, some of them originated right from colonial people. Most of them lived back in the mountains for several reasons. I think possibly the most of them there was during the Civil War area - era - that some of them were just plain draft dodgers. They didn't want to be conscripted.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: They moved back in the mountains. They hid out. Some of them went back in there from trouble reasons. Some of these names, now - if you look back to even the signing of the Constitution of the United States - these names, now are right there.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: They had good names and a lot of 'em had good beginnings. The Deaverses and the Corbins and Dodsons - all those - they go on back now to early colonial times. But these were people that got in trouble or wanted to get away. They liked the wilderness. They didn't wanna live in towns. They didn't like - maybe they had brushes with the law.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: And a lot of 'em were runners -

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: .... for one reason or the other -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: .... because they couldn't have picked that type of life from - but after a generation or two, it became a way of life. That's the way I look at it.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: And then they were young and they weren't happy. And they wanted to go back. Now, you won't find a one of them now that's not proud of that - of being a mountaineer.
D.S.: I don't blame them. I would 'ave been too.

J.B.: I'd been very proud of it.

D.S.: I would 'ave been, too.

J.B.: And, amazing to me that the diet they lived on and the way they lived, they were healthy.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: I mean by ratio -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: .... as today, they were far healthier.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And if the average person today lived on the diet they lived on, they wouldn't make it. And they were tough. They were wirey.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: They could run the hills all day and not puff.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: But they trapped and they hunted. And I said, they ate in seasons. And I don't know but what that was a good way. Year round, perhaps their diet was wholesome.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: But, - and say for ninety days, he ate all kinds of green stuff. And then in the fall, he ate all kinds of nuts and berries and fruits and things like this. In winter, he was strictly a meal and meat and bean eater.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: But, year round, his system probably retained enough of these vitamins or things conducive to good health.

D.S.: Sure.

J.B.: And they were very active.

D.S.: Yeah.
J.B.: They had to work.
D.S.: Yeah.
J.B.: I mean they had to cut wood to keep warm.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: And things like that. Everything they had, they didn't just pick it up, they had to do something to get it, you know.
J.B.: So.
D.S.: Yeah. How about herbs? Do you know anything about what their knowledge was of herbs?
J.B.: Very good. Oh, yeah. Yeah. They ate a lot of herbs. Not so many roots, because it's not that many edible roots in this part of the country. You get further down east in the Tidewater section, why there's dock alley, which - it's a root similar to the tarro root in South Pacific that the Indians used and it's kinda more like a wild sweet potato than anything else.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: They pounded that and baked it and ate it. But at the elevations that they lived, it wasn't too many herbs that they ate -
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: ... other than stuff that grew and bloomed and bore a fruit of some sort.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: Or a nut. Or a berry.
D.S.: Did they use any for medicines that you know of?
J.B.: Oh, yes. They used Penny Royal, Piperaceae, wild cherry bark and honey, Goldenrod -
D.S.: What would they use Gold -
J.B.: Well, they made a fine tea out of Goldenrod, mountain tea is Goldenrod.
D.S.: Oh.
J.B.: And it's not unpalatable. And, of course, they made, what we call root beer today, they made out of sassafras root. They made a tea.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: They didn't have - it wasn't - they made it out of the root. And they used berries and wild cherry. They made concoctions for colds and things like that. Wild cherry bark was one famous - then there was the horehound plant or vine -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: ... which they used for making cough syrups and medicines. Oh, they came up with some compounds that were somewhat unpalatable, but they seemed to do the job.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: And they used - if they had boils or deep infections or things like that, which was rare -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: ... among those people, even though they were, you might say, deficient from a dietary standpoint, they'd heal rapidly if they were cut. But, they would use - if they had an old piece of rancid meat out in the smokehouse, and you had a boil or something like that, they'd go out there and scrape that green mold and yellow stuff off of there and make a poultice and slap it on there and bind it up.

You know what they were using? They were using crude penicillin. They didn't know it, but that's what they were using.

D.S.: And these were things that were just handed down generation to generation.

J.B.: Generation to generation, yeah. Nobody knew why, but they knew it was good for this. They used onion poultices for pneumonias and colds, which we use
topical applications now like heat and Vicks salve and all this stuff, you know, with various medications. We use Deep Heat and we use Ben Gay and all that. Well, they used common mustard seed, ground, pulverized and made a paste out of it, and smeared it on a rag and tied that over your chest and wrap the rag around, and about five minutes you was on fire.

D.S.: They're beautiful. That is.

J.B.: Oh, well, they did this. They used flax seed if you got an inflamed eye — maybe a little irritated or something — dirt in it. They didn't have any disinfectants as such. They didn't have any alcohol. They didn't have any boric acid as we know it.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: They just didn't have it.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: And they would probably wash their eyes in warm water or — mostly cold water. Go down to the branch and wash their eyes. And maybe this is where they got the infection to start with, you know, —

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: .... from some amoeba in the water. But, anyway, they would take the flax seed, which is about half the size of a cantaloupe seed and drop one in your eye. Well, it looked like it would be very obtrusive to do that, you know.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: But, this thing is so slick and oily and it's the source of linseed oil, you know.

D.S.: Sure.

J.B.: And that thing would run around in the eye - leave it in there over night — something like that and the dirt and stuff would gather up and it would
come out to the corner of your eye. And wipe her out and once it dried off.

Yeah, they used to have thousands of those -

D.S.: Oh, I think this is so -

J.B.: .... and they were pretty good. Some of the old time women, they knew
certain concoctions and herbs that were good for this.

D.S.: When they were moved out, they didn't have these herbs.

J.B.: They didn't have anything recorded. They didn't have anything written down.

D.S.: No, but they didn't have any more of these herbs.

J.B.: No, that's true. They didn't know - they didn't have anything to use for
these things. And they didn't know about medicines and doctors too much
because -

D.S.: No.

J.B.: .... and they didn't have any money to pay for it anyway. And -

D.S.: Huh.

J.B.: They - what was I gonna say?

D.S.: I interrupted you.

J.B.: Oh. This Piperaceae is a little green - I can show it to you, it grows
wild yet. I've had my grandmother send me out in the woods to get it.
And it's a diuretic. And if they got a little bladder infection, little
kidney infection, something like that, or hurtin' across the back, you'd go
out and get this Piperaceae. It's a slim, long, green pointed leaf with a
white streak right down through the main vein.

D.S.: Sure. I know this.

J.B.: You know?

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: They made a tea out of that and you drank it.

D.S.: You dry it first?
J.B.: No. You made a green tea out of it. Out of the green leaf -
D.S.: Oh.
J.B.: ... made tea out of that. You could. It didn't make any difference.
D.S.: I found plenty of it in my woods.
J.B.: And they use this for a diuretic. A couple days, they'd be all right.
The inflammation'd be gone and they'd be - and another one they used -
Now, this is one that's far out. I'm still gonna write somebody about it.
They used the bottom most leaves of the Mullen plant. Dried it. Now,
that's a fuzzy - you know what the Mullen is - you know that's a fuzzy
plant. They dried it just like you would - of course, they used catnip,
too. They gave their babies catnip tea if they got the belly ache or the
colic, as we call it.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: And they used catnip tea. And that was real good. It's still good for
babies.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: But, anyway, they'd take this Mullen - now, a lot of the mountain people
did have tuberculosis.
D.S.: Yes.
J.B.: I think this was exposure in wintertime more than anything else from lack
of proper clothing, the heat, they'd get a deep cold and never get rid of
it.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: And maybe there was one evidence of your malnutrition, too, over the years.
D.S.: Could be.
J.B.: And once they got it, why, if somebody didn't get 'em out and get 'em to
a sanitarian or something, they died from it. Many of 'em did die from it
right here in this area since I've been here, back in this Mountain View section. A lot of people died of tuberculosis.

Anyway, they had a recipe or - you dried the Mullen leaf and you made a tea out of this. Now, you were supposed to drink so much of this every day. And from four to six months, then your tuberculosis would be gone.

D.S.: Was it?

J.B.: Sometimes it worked.

Now, this is a fact. Now, you drank the Mullen tea and this was supposed to be a sure cure for tuberculosis. Now, if they had a very severe cough - what they all - do you remember - did you ever hear of galloping consumption?

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Well, this was severe tuberculosis, you know.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Now, I don't know whether that would relieve a condition of that or anything -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: .... but, I would like to know the medicinal quality or product or the active ingredient in there that might have had some respiratory -

D.S.: Sure.

J.B.: .... and with today's research, you know, it would be very east to learn if this thing does have any beneficial qualities in it. They're finding out more and more that the herbs these people used were -

D.S.: That's right.

J.B.: .... were crude essences of some of our better drugs today.

D.S.: That's right.

J.B.: They didn't know why. But like I say, this was handed down from generation to generation. And they used it. They knew it was a specific for a certain
condition. And they used it. Sometimes it worked, sometimes didn't, just as modern medicine. Sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. So, they weren't ignorant. They made the most of what they had to do with. And they were good midwives. And good Grannies.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Out a long distance - they didn't lose any more babies by ratio than they lose today probably -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: .... with a midwife and an old granny.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Of course, I don't know what happened if they had a breech birth or anything like that. But -

D.S.: Oh. Yeah.

J.B.: .... those people were the type and nature - and active as they were, they had more normal births, I think.

D.S.: I think so, too.

J.B.: Yeah.

D.S.: Yes.

J.B.: Now, some of the children - babies may have been weak because the mothers certainly didn't have any pre-natal care of any kind -

D.S.: Yes.

J.B.: .... or build-up of any kind, maybe.

D.S.: But she wasn't taking any drugs, either.

J.B.: But she wasn't taking any drugs, maybe she was chewin' a little snuff.


J.B.: Smokin' an old clay pipe or something like that.

D.S.: Yeah.
J.B.: That was the extent of it.

D.S.: Yeah. You know, I'm really surprised that you have said that there actually were feuds because the people that I've talked to - they're oh, very self-righteous. Oh, no. No. No.

J.B.: Yeah. Well, you can see that. Well, if you read Pollack's book -

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: ... you could see there where there was some animosity toward him at times.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: Well, now, the Corbins might get mad at the Nicholsons for awhile. Maybe they'd work this thing out or maybe it'd go on for awhile. Then the Dodsons might get mad at the Burackers or the Weakleys might get mad at the Hensleys. And these things carried on for awhile. They weren't easy forgiving people. I mean an apology - if you did them an injury - now, an apology wasn't hardly sufficient. You know what I mean?

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: It was hard to accept. They didn't know to apologize and say I'm sorry. You was a son of a gun if you mistreated 'em or really did 'em a grievence. You couldn't wipe it out by saying you were sorry.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: You had to do a great deal more than that. You had to live it down another way.

D.S.: Yes.

J.B.: Go out of your way to live it down so to speak.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: If you'd just go up and say I'm sorry, he'd liable to shoot you if you'd tell him you're sorry. He'd say yeah, I know you're sorry. That would probably be his reaction, see.
D.S.: Sure. But, wasn't it a break for those people that you were there with the CCC's because they could relate to you.

J.B.: Well, I came from a stock of people, and I don't know - I've always been able to get along with people. I've been places over there, and I used to go places by myself in the mountains where other people wouldn't go.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: Said, you'd better not go there - down there. I'd say well, none of those people have anything against me. And I said I know some of them and I respect 'em. And I was always welcome. Never - I know a lot of guys that would like to have been more communicable with 'em. They wouldn't have anything to do with 'em. Now, it wasn't anything special I did. It's what I didn't do, I think, -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: ... as much as what I did do.

D.S.: Oh, I'm so grateful you were there with the CCC's.

J.B.: And, I did - I learned to love a lot of 'em.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: And I went down into - the Broyles family down in Dark Hollow. And the old man was at least six and a half feet tall. And when they started building their cabin down there, I think they just quit. If they'd put two more logs under it, the old man coulda stood up. But, he couldn't stand up in his own house. When he came through the door bent over, he had to sit down at the split log table on a log bench. He couldn't stand up. Now, Momma Broyles could because she was about five foot tall. And the old man about six and a half. But, he couldn't stand up in his own cabin. That's right. Just for the sake of puttin' a couple more logs in there. He was a squatter, too.
And one of his - what was the two boys? Elvin was one. And - to show you the diversity and intelligence and ambition of these people. This old man I'm telling you about had a brother that was a linotype operator for the old Page News and Courier. Joe Broyles. His brother lived over in Dark Hollow as a wild mountain - I mean a mountaineer that didn't have any ambition in the world. He had the same basic intelligence that Joe had.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Joe went on out and made something out of himself. He was the first linotype operator I ever saw. And a good one.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And a newspaper reporter later on in his time. The old News and Courier goes on back forty years - no, fifty now -

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: ... but Joe Broyles was correspondent and also a linotype operator.

This is an amazing thing. Some of them were so brilliant, you know, -

D.S.: Oh, I know they were -

J.B.: ... that they got out.

D.S.: ... it's just that they didn't have the education.

J.B.: Yeah. That was some of it. Joe did get it. Like the Taylors, I'm telling you. Ren got to be a country schoolteacher and became involved in civic affairs around - uh - oh - what is that hollow right - Knight Hollow.

Knight Hollow up the Red Gate Road.

D.S.: Oh yeah.

J.B.: And - Kite Hollow and Knight Hollow. And Ren was a country schoolteacher and a good one. Very intelligent. I think he was a - later on maybe a - might have been a principal of a little secondary two or three room school or something like that there in those days, you know. And brother, Dealand,
why he could have been less concerned about gettin' an education.

D.S.: What was the schooling like that they had? Do you know?

J.B.: One room.

D.S.: One room.

J.B.: Yeah. They had all the grades from first - some of 'em five or six. And some of 'em went through the seventh grade, if you had a qualified teacher. But, now, a lot of these teachers were not - didn't have certificates. A lot of 'em were jest pick up people that could read and write.

D.S.: And they couldn't start in September because the children were needed on the farm.

J.B.: Oh no. No. No. No. Well, I'll tell you my own experience in this. When I was a lad across the river over there, we had what they call seven month school.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Now, when - the crops had to be in in the fall. And the seedin' had to be done. You cut the corn about this time of the year, if the season was good or by frost anyway. And you cut it and you shocked the corn. You put it in the shocks. You didn't have a corn picker, this was all done by hand. You cut it by hand you shocked it.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Well, maybe when you got the corn shocked, you didn't bother it anymore. Then you had to order your ground to get your winter barley and your winter wheat in the ground. You had to get this in now. You only had a couple weeks to get this in. Harrow this ground, plow it, fertilize it - get it in before frost, you know.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And - before the ground froze. So, by - you wanted all this done by, say,
first of October, anyway, or -

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: Then you came back by Thanksgiving time, then, you were ready to get back in - start shucking your corn and baling your fodder and haulin' that in. And you took this thing in steps because you didn't have time. You didn't have the machinery. It was all done by -


J.B.: .... by horse and hands. So this is the way you had to go about these things. Not the way you wanted to do, but the way you had to do it.

D.S.: Right.

J.B.: It was climatic and conditional -

D.S.: Yeah. So -

J.B.: Now, the mountain people were not much farmers, you have to bear this in mind. They were patchers. They didn't have any farms as such.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: They had a little hillside over there which was on the sunny side of the hill with fairly good soil. And they maybe had an old horse to work it up or maybe they worked it up with a grubbin' hoe.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And by choppin' hoe. And tell you the Lord's truth, the women did most of this. The men didn't do a lot of it. The women did most of that chopping, 'cause they had to feed the young uns. And they chopped the weeds and they planted the corn and they got it off, and they cleaned it and they cooked it. The men didn't do much of that, now. Honest to goodness, they didn't. Some did.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Some didn't. They were a little bit independent.
D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: But, they was always the first ones at the table, you know, with the biggest share. Now, this is ironic, but it's the truth.

D.S.: Sure.

J.B.: I mean I've seen this and - but the old man's word was pretty much the law.

D.S.: Yeah. Right.

J.B.: Ma didn't balk him too much, you know.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: But, if he did get on a rampage and she said, well, I'm gonna take my bonnet in my hand - put my bonnet on and put my foot and my hand, and I'm gonna leave these days. And then the old man, he'd start scratchin' around a little bit harder. That was an expression they used - take my foot in my hand.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: To do something taken a foot and a hand.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Oh, they had so many quaint - then I remember some of the old men and older women. They talked very genteel. Some of the real older Corbins, I don't know what was one of the oldest men - he had a great big beard - real old. They had a real ramshackel place. But he was so old then that he couldn't do much about it. But that old man talked with a - well, a rather remarkable vocabulary, I thought. And pronunciation and diction was not as quaint as mountaineers. I didn't know anything too much about his boyhood, see. But, he came from - now, he was one of the old Corbins. He came from quality folks, so to speak, somewhere down the line.

D.S.: And it may have been that he inherited this, his father had spoken this way - father and mother.
J.B.: Right. But, I mean -

D.S.: But, you know, that they -

J.B.: See, you go back - I'm talking about - this man - I'm talking about three generations of 'em that I knew.

D.S.: Yes.

J.B.: This man was the older generation of the three. And generation-before him we're talking back over a hundred years, see.

D.S.: Right.

J.B.: So, they coulda been valley folks and well educated. And some of 'em were. Some of 'em just sneaked off and left home for various reasons, you know -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: ... and wound up - they'd go back there and marry one of those mountain girls and decide they were gonna stay back there. Well, in one generation - or their offspring would be mountaineers.

D.S.: Right.

J.B.: Now, it wasn't all of 'em that was all along old timers.

D.S.: No. Uh-huh.

J.B.: Everyone of 'em could say I've got a brother or sister or aunt or uncle that's down there in Culpeper or over in Orange or someplace like that, you know, that they were ordinary, common folks. You know -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: ... with a little bit more acrumen and a little more get up and go.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: And I think the pathetic thing about it - some of 'em stayed there too long that they'd gotten a little bit more dilatory and a little bit more lazy the longer they stayed.

D.S.: Yes.
J.B.: So many people think it was unkind, maybe, to get 'em out, but it was the best thing that ever happened to future generations.

D.S.: I think so, too. Yes, I think so, too.

J.B.: The older people, I can understand that.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: Tremendously hard on them. There was no way they could make a new life for themselves.

D.S.: No.

J.B.: But the younger ones - yeah, it was good.

D.S.: Right.

J.B.: It was good.

D.S.: How about dances? Did they have dances?

J.B.: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. They had a lot of jigs and they would dance some of the old-time dances. They knew the Virginia Reel - parts of it - and the old-time square dances. Oh, yeah, we'd get out in the front yard at night and the old man'd be pickin' the banjer and somebody's old sqawky fiddle, you know, and have a hoorah, you know, dancing and pass the corn jug around. Just have a real good frolic.

D.S.: Oh, that's great.

J.B.: Yeah. They'd really come in. The young people and the old people, too. They're crazy about it. First thing you know old grandpap and grandma and all of 'em be right out there with you, you know.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: They'd make certain figures of the old time square dances, you know. And some of those girls could sing beautifully. And some of 'em were just like swans, you know, could dance and cut up. And they were pretty.

D.S.: Yeah.
J.B.: Take wild berries and strawberries and things like that and the other stuff they used, and make their lips red. And pinch their cheeks, you know. and, aw, they'd go down to the creeks and brush and comb their hair and wash, you know. All of 'em had a calico gingham dress, you know.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: And very few of the men wore underclothes.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And, I don't know anything about the older ladies, but very few of the young women had anything but maybe a pair of feedsack panties or something like that.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Made out of gingham or calico. It was their ambition to be able to have enough money to go to the store and buy 'em some silk panties or a pair of silk hose.

D.S.: Oh.

J.B.: Or a petticoat -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: .... paisley petticoat with -

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: .... lace on it or somethin' like that.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Aw, and they loved it. And boy, I tell you, some of them when they'd dress up they were real pretty.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: But they were plain. There was very little make-up, you know -

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: .... their faces were just shiney and pretty, you know.
D.S.: Nothing -
J.B.: Even if their features weren't too pretty, they were still pretty people.
D.S.: That's right.
J.B.: Yes.
D.S.: Yeah.
J.B.: I think that's one thing, maybe, that I've been fortunate in during my life.
    I think that I've learned to see beauty in people within rather than their countenance.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: I learned that, I think, very early. I've always been able to look at somebody and not look at his physical features as a part of their -
D.S.: Yes.
J.B.: .... necessary requirements, you know.
D.S.: That's right.
J.B.: Or evaluation.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: Most - I always say a lot of pretty people are very vain.
D.S.: Uh-huh. They are.
J.B.: But look at the mirth or happiness in people's eyes -
D.S.: Eyes. Look at the eyes and you can -
J.B.: .... the expression and -
D.S.: Yeah.
J.B.: .... and their mannerisms.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: And this tells you more about people.
D.S.: Sure.
J.B.: And some of the most beautiful people that I have ever met in my life are the homeliest people God ever made.
D.S.: Yes.

J.B.: And I mean they're absolutely beautiful people.

D.S.: Yes. Right.

J.B.: And you look at 'em, you don't see this homeliness, you see beauty.

D.S.: That's right.

J.B.: And I think this is a great thing. And I think I - maybe this is why I got along with the mountain people. A lot of 'em would - took that old codger there - maybe they were dirty - their clothes weren't clean. An old man'd put on a pair of red flannel underwear in the winter time, you know, if he had any, and he wore 'em 'til spring. He didn't take 'em off.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And if you'd get down wind of him - now that's the God's truth.

D.S.: That's right.

J.B.: And I've done that. I've worked with some of 'em in the CC camp - some of them mountaineers - that were drafted in as local members to try to teach some of the city boys that came in, you know, how to keep from killin' themselves in the mountains and the woods.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And they were good at it. But on a warm day in the winter time, you always wantta be up wind from 'em.

D.S.: How long were you with the CCC's?

J.B.: I was with - well, actually - golly, I don't know. When I went in World War II, I was still with 'em. I handled quite a few jobs. I wasn't at camp too long, but then I got this junior assistant's job. And I moved down to Headquarters up on old Main Street, and the old wooden building is gone now. And - in the administrative office.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And, I worked then. I went back on the mountain on two or three different
jobs, you know, and lived different places - at Big Meadows and Skyland and backwards and forwards over the years. Then I was a Park Ranger for a few years. And -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: I've been everything. A little bit of everything. I've done everything probably in the Park anybody else has ever done.

D.S.: I imagine -

J.B.: I worked in engineering for quite a few years.

D.S.: I imagine that you have seen so many changes in -

J.B.: Well -

D.S.: ... not only in the type of regulations, but in the Park itself -

J.B.: Well -

D.S.: ... the land.

J.B.: Yes. Yes. Well, I remember when we was going back to the origin of the Park, you know. The Act of 1916 and so forth, which is the basis or foundation on which these Parks were established.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: It appears to me that somewhere along the road, we lost our original objectives. The consensus now among the new thinking and the new generations - in my honest belief, I believe this is why men like Conard Worth, Beard, Elbert Cox and many, many others - I name these because I was born - old Senator Harry Byrd. The concepts of the National Park Service and objectives today are far different than what they were. Not that we don't maintain the same slogan, so to speak. It's for now and forever, for all future generations -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: ... whatever we do. But they're changing their scheme of the thing. I think they're concentrating more now on the influx of people and we've got
to be a people handling agency rather than a conservation and wise economy. That's what we've gotten into.

D.S.: You're right.

J.B.: And I don't like it. That's one reason, honest to God, that's one reason I quit. I could still be working. One reason. I just - every now - ever time I went to Washington - and I've been to schools all over the eastern United States for the National Park Service - Philadelphia and New York and Washington - hundreds of times. I took advantage of ever bit of training I could get, 'cause in the beginning I read the Romance of the National Parks in three volumes. You ever seen those?

D.S.: Huh-uh.

J.B.: They're three paperback volumes about 8 x 10½ or 12 inches called the Romance of the National Parks. I read this when I was a lad. This - then I decided this was what I wanted to do if I could get into it some way. And eventually I did. But that romantic concept - and the Romance of the Park is the real essence of the whole thing as far as I'm concerned. I mean - when I say the romance, I mean the basic concepts - the ideas that started, that builded it. I helped to bring it this far, and now I'm afraid other factions, other ideas are gonna - bluntly speaking - are tearing the hell out of it.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: In some ways.

D.S.: You mean that if we had no Skyline Drive?

J.B.: Well, now, no, I don't mean that. That is all right. But that's enough.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: That's enough. That's use of access. That opens it up. And, of course, I'm very much in favor of these wilderness areas that they're establishing. This should have been done years ago.
D.S.: Right.

J.B.: We desecrated wilderness areas in the beginning.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: We went down in Corbin Hollow. We went down on the Thornton River and tore up and downed sawmills and things like this. And they had no historical value at that time. They wanted 'em out. Well, we fought against this then, but pressure was too heavy then. And everthing come from the top down then. There was no two way communications -

D.S.: Yes.

J.B.: .... for us to reply back. But it's better now. But, I think that the - the thinking - I see the younger and new generation coming on - interpretation now is the thing. But, I don't know whether we're doing the right kind of interpretation or not. I think sometime that we're a little bit off bead on it.

When I see the Visitor Center at Big Meadows, I think it's a joke.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: It's just a joke.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: It doesn't tell me anything.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And I'm kind of ashamed of it.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: As long as I was with the Park Service, in fact - if they'd give me three years and twenty men, I'd come up with a great deal better deal than they've got anyway.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Just from absolute memory alone.
J.B.: I wouldn't need a hundred million dollars for technicians of all kinds and historians and all this. I'd just go get me a few old mountain people I know yet and we'd put her together. Things like the geology, the ecology and things that I know which they're not expressing the Park Service in these visitors centers. No way.

D.S.: They're not. They're not.

J.B.: No way.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: Not its objectives or its past -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: or anything. They're not telling the story properly.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: I'm a naturalist by heart. And I roamed the mountain. That's what I do right now - ever day. I'm out somewhere along the rivers or the hills. And I transfer this information down to my grandchildren -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: in show and tell and things like this in school.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: I take them things. Indian artifacts - I take 'em certain plants and shrubs and trees that are rare. And I make them look up some of the history on it, you know -

D.S.: Sure.

J.B.: in the books. And I tell 'em the folklore that I know behind it. Like here - I took my grandson last week to get a couple bunches of paw paws. You know what a paw paw is? It's a native fruit that grows along the river areas and the hillsides. It's a first cousin to the papaya.
D.S.: And they're here?

J.B.: And they're here. They grow in clusters of from one to twelve. I took him - day before yesterday I took him one cluster of seven that were that large around and that long. And they taste very much like a papaya. And my dad and the mountain people always called 'em river bananas. And they taste exactly like a mashed banana would taste.

D.S.: Umm.

J.B.: And about everybody - people that lived here all their lives don't know these things. And I happened to run across these in the spring and I could see the little fruits were developing. And this has been a tremendously dry year.

D.S.: Sure.

J.B.: They grow in the shady rather fertile soil on the bottomland and the slopes that go up. Of course, at the bottomland, if you have floods or anything like that, that usually gets rid of your fruit, but it doesn't kill the tree. It's a tree rather than a shrub.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: But, he had 'em all at school. Aw, they just thought that was grand.

D.S.: I want to make sure this is going.

J.B.: But, maybe we're gettin' way off the subject -

D.S.: No, I don't think we are.

J.B.: .... of the mountains.

D.S.: No. We're not. We're - you're covering more things than I ever anticipated we were going to. Now -

J.B.: Well -

D.S.: .... you say you started first at the Headquarters.

J.B.: No. No, I didn't. I got out of high school in '32. And there was no way
of me going to college at that time. There was no money. My father had 
been dead for quite a few years and I was kinda the mainstay of the family. 
So, I had to do something. And I worked summers - like you say, you know, 
any way I could to make a few nickels -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: .... and help out the family. And, you know, the CC camps in this area, 
particularly, when they first were started, they were - all came out of 
Fort Humphreys, Virginia, which is now Fort Belvoir.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And they were assembled there and indoctrinated there, outfitted there and 
moved out. And it's incidental, the first camp was Camp Roosevelt - NFI. 
And the day that they moved in, I happened to be over on the Shenandoah 
River with a first cousin of mine. We were down on the river dip net fish­ 
ing. The river was up a little bit and the water was cloudy. And we 
were dipping the yellow suckers. And we looked down and we could see that 
low water bridge - they have a high water bridge there now where the low 
water - and here came this - well, it looked more like a circus than any­ 
thing else straight across that bridge. Well, that fascinated us to a 
certain - didn't know what was going on. And there was non-descript vehicles 
of all kinds. There was red ones and green ones and some army and some 
civilian. And most of these boys were out of Philadelphia, New Jersey and 
the east side of New York -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: .... the first ones. They'd never been out in the woods. And it had been 
raining days before that. And it rained a terrible storm that afternoon. 
So we were only several hundred yards from the river up to the elbow in the 
road that they had to turn and go up in the mountain. We beat it over to
the road. We wanted to see what was going on.

So, we got to talkin' to some of the people and they confirmed their directions and so forth as to where they were goin'. And they moved right into the wilderness area right out in the woods. There was nothing. There was nothing been leveled. Nothing been made ready for 'em or anything. They had to go over there and clear out places to even set tents. Nothing had been done other than there was some springs of water over there that they knew was good water. And it rained for two or three days and nights. And that was my first notice of the CCC. Some of the officers talked - and they were regular army officers at that time.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Later they were replaced by reserve officers, you know -

D.S.: Yes.

J.B.: .... as they could replace 'em. So then Camp One - that was in April and Camp One - the latter part of April - and Camp One moved in in May. The same year. And then Camp Two about two weeks later. And the first three camps were established in this area - anywhere.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: So Camp Two, they're kinda sponsoring this get together, you know.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: They'd like to think they were the only camp in the area. It wasn't but one that out dated them, see.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: Or pre-dated them. And that was the 334th Company - Camp Dern, which I was a member of. And if we have longer, if I can help you on any of that, I've got some of the old army and naval journals that have some write-ups on Camp One in particular.

D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: While I was there, we were the Third Corp area - best camp in the Third Corp area which - by military inspection - which included Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania. And we had - we were the honor guard then when Franklin Roosevelt dedicated the Park there at Big Meadows.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Camp One was the honor guard. And, oh - this was a wonderful life. I enjoyed this, too. I enjoyed that tremendously. And that's where I really got first communication with the older generation of these people. Now, when I was a lad - telling you about these episodes at Skyland and things like that, I didn't have the opportunity other than very short visit -

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: But after I was in Camp, why I got to know some of these people and got to visit them and got to be friends with a lot of 'em who had - some of 'em were incorporated in the Camp. It was local enrolled personnel. We had fifty of 'em, to tell you the truth.

D.S.: Oh boy.

J.B.: A full company was 220, but 50 of these people were local enrolled. And they wanted these - most of 'em were mountain people. Not all of 'em, but some of 'em were.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: And about half of your supervisory personnel were local enrolled, and the other enrolled came out of - were political appointments out of whatever source.


J.B.: We had some - some people that were supervisors of older boys out in the woods that shouldn't have been. 'Cause they came out of the cities themselves, and they weren't real -
D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: .... capable -

D.S.: Well, it was good that they had the mountain people helping -

J.B.: Well, they did -

D.S.: .... in the woods, wasn't it?

J.B.: .... if you wanted to know something about working in the woods or doing things in the woods, you shouldn't be ashamed to go ask one of these or watch him very closely.

D.S.: Yeah. Right.

J.B.: Watch how he handled an ax or a tool or something like that. And this was a lifetime thing with them.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: They soon learned the safe way and the correct way to do things.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And after I became safety officer for the National Park Service for many years, and we'd go out and - on these training programs, you know. And I'd pick out all these men that I knew had backgrounds in the woods, see.

D.S.: Sure.

J.B.: And I'd say now if you people want to know how to use a tool of any kind, I said here's a man born and raised with tools from the woods.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: I said now I can't tell him how to use the tool. I said he can tell me. I said if you watch this man and listen to him and he tells you you're doing something wrong, he may not be your boss, but you'd better listen to him.

D.S.: Right.

J.B.: Now, these people wouldn't put themselves forward, though, see.

D.S.: Yes.
J.B.: And you watch him, then. It was hard to make leaders out of 'em. A few, yes.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: But they were really there to - that was the objective by hiring these people. But, maybe ten per cent of 'em would take a little bit of leadership. Most of 'em, they just wanted to go on and do their work.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: But we soon learned to put two or three boys with this man and say, now, don't you let these boys get hurt.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: You take care of 'em.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: Well, now, he'd do that.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: But, he wasn't gonna push him one way or the other, you know.

D.S.: Yeah. Right.

J.B.: But they knew how to use saws and axes and cutting tools of all kinds.

And if anybody has any intelligence at all, he can watch somebody doing a better job than he can do.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: So this worked very good in the old days.

D.S.: Sure.

J.B.: Course, you had a lot of smart alecs that wouldn't learn anything anytime, but - that is among the youngsters coming in.

D.S.: I'm not surprised about that. Yeah, actually, by and large, those fellows with the CCC's were a pretty good bunch.

J.B.: It was one of the most valuable experiences and one of the most entertaining
I've ever had in my life. I've been all over the world since that - been around the world several times, I guess, and that was the most beautiful, most rewarding - I wouldn't take anything in God's world for the couple years that I spent with those men.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Learning people and personalities and living with, sharing with and - sickness and accidents and all the things that happened. You take a hundred men living together for several years - most everthing happens sooner or later.

D.S.: Sure.

J.B.: And I had a great desire always to help people.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And I did. I did. And I wound up with the same job in the United States Navy - helping people rather than shooting people. So, I was proud of that, too.

D.S.: What did you do in the -

J.B.: I worked in orthopedic surgery overseas for twenty-two months. And then I worked - aw, let's see - in Newport, Rhode Island; Great Lakes, Illinois; San Diego, California; Charleston, South Carolina - did specialist work there. And then when I went to sea, I went on a brand new naval hospital ship as an o.r. technician in the South Pacific.

D.S.: Oh, my Heaveans.

J.B.: And I was really proud of that.

D.S.: Yes, I should think so.

J.B.: So, I can say I didn't create any misery for anybody.

D.S.: Right. You helped.

J.B.: Tried to help.
D.S.: Yes.
J.B.: That's really what I wanted to do.
D.S.: Right.
J.B.: And I didn't really ask for it. But, I had some ambitions of being a doctor. But, that takes a lot of time and a lot of money which I never had. Just never acquired. And just never had time. I had a couple years pre-med and so they slapped me into the medic corp in the Navy.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: Which I was proud of after it was over.
D.S.: I should think you would be.
J.B.: I was very proud of it. Had some real - real experiences.
D.S.: Yeah.
J.B.: I was with the task force that went into Nagasaki where they dropped the second atomic bomb. The initial task force went in there - course that's nothing to remember or think about or -
D.S.: Right.
J.B.: .... to mull over. It's past and gone. And we can't change it, but -
D.S.: Uh-huh. Right. Well, it was after the war you came back and became a -
J.B.: I came back to the Park Service. I left the Park Service when I was drafted and -
D.S.: Yeah.
J.B.: ... and I came back.
D.S.: Uh-huh. Yeah. Ranger duties, I imagine, are a whole lot different now from -
J.B.: They're different now. I'll say rangers now and people.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: In the old days, it wasn't so much a people problem.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: Now, you've got different people handling your checking stations and things like that. You're getting different types of people or contacting the public. I don't know. I've been away from it nearly four years. But, I just don't - I don't like it like I did. And I could see the things changing - the thinking in Washington.

Incidentally, I think we're becoming more politically involved. The Park Service was left alone politic wise for many, many years. Whichever faction was on Capitol Hill, why, we were almost independent to operate. I mean, politics didn't enter into it so much, you know.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Course we had to - our budgets and estimates and everthing, we had to take 'em in and sell 'em to Congress and all that. Which we had capable people doing it. But everybody usually was behind it a hundred per cent. I think a little bit more politics is creeping into it slowly but surely which I don't like.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: If the people had the know how, and there's a lot of people in there yet that do, and know what we want - and if we don't become involved too politically.


J.B.: I think that some of our Interior Department heads, in recent years, have taken a dim view of the Park Service in many ways.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: But, I'm the opinion that the National Park Service gives a $1.25 for ever $1.00 they spend on it. That the people get it back.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And, incidentally, it's not a dead weight on the tax payers. We have some
income, you know.

D.S.: Oh, I know.

J.B.: In fact, J.R. Lassiter, who was the engineer in charge and the first superintendent of the Park used to say that if they'll give me the intake said, I'll run the Park on it. That way instead of going back in the public coffers and have to be reappropriated -

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: ... so if that was set aside in a special fund so we can operate off of it.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And -

D.S.: And operate well, particularly.

J.B.: Yeah. We'd be self-supporting.


I don't want us to run out of tape there. I want to keep watching it. What do you feel about this trapping of the bears?

J.B.: Well, I think it's necessary if we're gonna have people. As a conservationist and a naturalist, I don't say that I particularly like it, but for safety sake and to keep down exhorbitant civil suits and torts claims and things like this, I don't think you have much choice. We're gonna have to - we're gonna have some people hurt.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: We're gonna have some property damage. And, I think they should be very humane with it.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: I mean as humanly possible.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: It's something we weren't faced with. And this has only happened in the
last ten or fifteen years.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: We've had a bear problem.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: And I think if we finally get enough of the proper type of refusing and garbage disposal, that this thing'll eventually take care of itself.

D.S.: The bears will go back to their natural food.

J.B.: There's not enough natural food in the Park now with the dry weather we're having for a bear to live. No way.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: So this is why he's gettin' so rembunctious so to speak.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: He's a big animal.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: And he needs some grub. And he's gonna get it anywhere he can find it.

D.S.: Sure.

J.B.: And he's gonna come in the picnic ground and clean it out. He's gonna do it. It's not that he's a vicious animal.

D.S.: No, he's not.

J.B.: It's just the nature -

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: .... of the animal.

D.S.: Sure.

J.B.: And I don't know the answer to it.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: But, I don't want to see 'em destroyed.

D.S.: No.
J.B.: This is one thing - if they move 'em out of the other areas, I don't wanna see 'em moved out just so somebody else'll kill 'em either, as far as that goes.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: I like to hunt and fish, too, but I kill very little.

D.S.: Sure.

J.B.: I like to get out and roam.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: And -

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: ... sometimes I think when I was a young lad, I killed a lot of game. But, now I've gotten to the age that I won't kill anything. I want everything to live.

D.S.: You know, I'm fascinated about those chipmunks that you were telling about.

J.B.: Ray Schaffner will probably be able to identify him. This little munk is two or three times as big as the little scooter - little boomer. We called 'em boomers.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Little tiny chipmunks, you know.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: Little bitty fellows. But there is a big one - two and a half or three times as large. I haven't seen one of 'em in years.

D.S.: And they were seen - you would see them all over the Park area?

J.B.: In the Park. In the - I've seen 'em in the Massanutten Mountain, too.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And that - we referred to him as the chipmunk and the other as a ground squirrel. That was our terminology when we were kids.

J.B.: But he is very, very rare. I haven't seen one in years. And I asked all the people - country people and people who live around the mountains, did they ever see one. And some of the old people knew what I'm talking about, too.

D.S.: Uh-

J.B.: Say, no, I haven't seen one in years.


J.B.: Well, I don't know. They were not common. They were pretty scarce in those days. It wasn't - they just -

D.S.: Couldn't be that they were living off of chestnuts?

J.B.: No. Not that long. In fact, I think the average squirrel prefers the white oak acorns to chestnuts anyway.

D.S.: Oh. Uh-huh.

J.B.: Now, the ground squirrel ate a lot of chestnuts, but the gray squirrel, he prefers an acorn to chestnuts, I'll guarantee it.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Or even a raw peanut.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Which they never grow in this country. But, I experimented with it a few times - the raw peanuts. And my people come from down in South Carolina there and go down there and get a half bushel of big goobers, you know.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: And bring back. Now, they don't like 'em roasted. But the raw peanut.

D.S.: That's what we buy -

J.B.: Yeah.

D.S.: .... and put 'em out for them.
J.B.: Yeah. They like the raw ones.
D.S.: Yeah. They do.
J.B.: I found that out years ago.
D.S.: Birds like them, too. Uh-huh. Little titmice and little wood - little woodpeckers.
J.B.: And the average gray squirrel doesn't like a walnut if he can get anything else. This black walnut.
D.S.: Yeah.
J.B.: They'll eat 'em but they prefer acorns and certain berries. They like hawse. They like dogwood berries. And - but the white oak acorn is his chief diet.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: And of course, pine cones. He likes that little -
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: .... heart out of the pine cone.
J.B.: And they've been working on those very hard this year because the acorns are scarce.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: In this part of the country, anyway.
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: And the hickory nuts - very tiny-like the end of your finger. And they're already eating those up.
D.S.: Sure.
J.B.: The soft shelled ones particularly.
D.S.: Yeah.
J.B.: The shagbark hickory, we call it.
D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: They're about all gone. I don't know what the squirrels gonna eat this winter.

D.S.: Come to my house and eat my raw peanuts.

The people in the mountains, when they didn't have chestnuts, that really was a terrific blow to them, wasn't it?

J.B.: Well, they sold a lot of chestnuts. They ate a lot of chestnuts. They made a chestnut meal. Not frequent. They still preferred the cornbread to the chestnuts -

D.S.: Yeah. But, I mean for a cash harvest.

J.B.: Oh yes. Oh yes. But, I think probably chestnuts and huckleberries -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: They sold a tremendous amount of huckleberries.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: In fact, Stanley and Luray one time had small canneries that canned huckleberries. And they shipped them around - all these little railroad stations along the Norfolk and Western from Elkton on down to Front Royal. Through the valley. Right here at Compton, here at Rileyville. Up at Kimball, Luray and Stanley and all those places. Those people were shipping out baskets of huckleberries by express every day when they were in season, you know.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And then they used to dry cherries. They had some kilns in the mountains - the mountain folks - made the old kind of dutch ovens and dried sweet cherries, sour cherries. It was almost a raisin like thing when they got done with it.

D.S.: Did they pit them first?
J.B.: Pardon?

D.S.: Did they pit them?

J.B.: Yes. They had a seeder.

D.S.: Oh.

J.B.: A little hand seeder.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And they pitted them, dehydrated them and bagged them up and sold them. Same way with the apple snits they called 'em. Dried apples.

D.S.: Uh-huh. I understood they put them on roofs.

J.B.: Well, they did. Dried apples and dried beans and corn and things like that. But the cherries - now, this was a pretty juicy fellow. And you had to dry these pretty fast or they would sour. The acid in 'em. And they'd actually build dryin' racks for 'em and put heat to 'em. They didn't want to get 'em any smoke. Some of 'em had ovens. Some of 'em had outside dryin' racks that they fired to dry these cherries in a hurry.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: I don't know that they ever dried any peaches in this country. I don't ever remember of that. They were growed - grew prolifically all over, but they didn't dry peaches as such. Or apricots.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: But cherries and corn and beans.

D.S.: Did they make pumpkin butter?

(JMachine was cut off at this point)

J.B.: His memoirs and autobiography, you might say. The old man was pretty old when he started. And I know that there's many episodes and many things that happened that should be in that book that are not in there.

D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: And things that I know that happened that - sometime this winter, I'm gonna try to do some writing. And -

D.S.: Oh.

J.B.: ... these things as they occur to me. I think about 'em at night and they come to me. And then I'm gonna take the tape recorder and even if I'm in bed, I'm gonna snap that thing on and I can talk a couple minutes to myself.


J.B.: And I should do this. I should do this when I'm - places when this thing hits you, you know. And sometimes your mind is astute and acute and you can follow a train of thought then if I try to pick it up tomorrow, it's not the same. You know what I mean?

D.S.: I know exactly what you mean.

J.B.: You got to get it when it comes to you. When your subconscious releases it and the thing gets activated, then you'd better do something about it right then.

D.S.: Can you recall now any of the things that are not in the book that you may have thought of?

J.B.: Well, some of the fictitious things which should be in as an entertainer. I don't know whether I read it once or twice. And I could remember by reading between the lines things that happened that weren't there.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: And this is what I - I wanna take that book and then I'm gonna take my pad and between paragraphs and between sentences and things like that, I'm gonna do some filling in that I know that these things have happened. That I think would make a more complete story or a little bit better sense. You know what I mean?

D.S.: I do.
J.B.: Not that I'm trying to prove or criticize what has got down, but I think I can make it a little more detailed.

D.S.: I know.

J.B.: More complete.

D.S.: Yes.

J.B.: Things that I know positively happened.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Now, far as I'm concerned, he and probably old Senator Byrd and his daddy before him, they're the real fathers of the Shenandoah National Park, as far as I'm concerned.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And I knew Mr. Pollock's first wife and his second wife. And I know that when he bought the Timber Lost Swamp, with their own private money. And I know that he'd built his own fire protection system up there, superior to what the State had and everything in those days. I've seen those mountains burn when I was a child for days and days and days and nobody fightin' it. Mr. Pollock had to protect his investment there -

D.S.: Right.

J.B.: .... and everything.

D.S.: So, how'd he do it?

J.B.: He organized the mountaineer people up there in fire fighting squadrons. And they responded and did him a good job.

D.S.: Did he pay them?

J.B.: He paid 'em out of his own pocket. And he fought fires down along old Stony Man, way on down out of his jurisdiction, you might say. But, you never know how the winds are gonna change and things. And he - all around - he bought that Timber Lost over there particularly to keep the
lumber company from gettin' in there and tearing it all out.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And it would have been more wild country over there from the Rapidan particularly south, you know, if they'd kept a lot of those lumbering interests out of there.

D.S.: That's right. He was a conservationist.

J.B.: Yeah. He - they thought he was a radical old man. In a lot of ways, he was, but he put his mouth - money where his mouth was and his time and his effort. And he made hundreds of trips to Washington with Carson, down here at Riverton, you know, he was a representative at that time in Congress.

He was on the Park Commission. In fact, he was Chairman of the Park Commission -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: ... in the acquisition days.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And he was - well, he was just johnny on the spot. I mean he wanted this to be a great national park. He wanted it worst than anybody in the world, I think.

D.S.: Do you think he would like it the way it is?

J.B.: Maybe. Being the entertainer he is, that he could become involved with the people again -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: ... to the extent he was. I think that this - he just loved this type of thing. And - well, he was wealthy one year and the next year he was broke. And he had a rugged life, but he never gave up.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And he always came back - came bouncing back some way or other.
D.S.: You know, they're thinking of making what was his home, you know, the Massanutten Lodge, into a historical museum.

J.B.: It certainly should be. Absolutely.

D.S.: They're going to do that.

J.B.: If it hasn't fallen down. I just don't know -

D.S.: It hasn't.

J.B.: I know I helped rehabilitate that whole area in there on time under CCC.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And when we had the old hemlock bark on all the cabins and everything. A lot of 'em are gone.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: The old Judd house is gone. The boat house. And so many of 'em that I knew. They were beautiful in those days. But they just disintegrated.


J.B.: And it's a shame that that scheme couldn't have been still employed. This type of combinations they got now, far as the National Park is concerned, leaves me - well, it just doesn't fit some way, you know.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Now, as you've noticed, there's a great move on to change the whole sign system in the Shenandoah National Park. It took us years and years and years to develop this wooden sign system to indoctrinate it. We developed it ourselves, designed it and got it almost a hundred per cent. And now the factions want to get rid of it.

D.S.: Really?

J.B.: Oh yeah. They wanna replace it for all prefabricated metal signs and all that stuff. Yeah. Been fightin' it hard. That's just since I quit. This beautiful sign that we developed, you know -
D.S.: Oh, I love that sign.

J.B.: ... it's picturesque. Now, in the beginning, we used the yellow-orange - almost a chrome yellow-orange background. Which I liked better than the white.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Now, over here in the National Forest, they started using the white. The State's using some white now. But, we were unique in our color system in our development. We developed our own stain and everthing.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And I helped develop that formula and work it out. And the designs and the lettering and the alphabets. And now they've gone to the white. Now, the white leaves something lacking to me just a little bit.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And then we went from the old chrome yellow-orange - we went to a lemon yellow. I didn't like that as well. In other words, this yellow was a little more obtrusive.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: A little bit a glare in the light. And this other was - never stood out to you - you couldn't read it quite as far off.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: But, what is a sign? You don't read a sign 'til you get to it anyway.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: But they were picturesque.

D.S.: Sure.

J.B.: And we spent years - I thought we had a good thing. Well, they came in from foreign countries and all the other services out in the west and everthing. And just literally copied our sign program. And now the factions wanna do
something - wanna change it again.
And well, it's like the State highway system, you know, just a few years ago or a few months ago. By 1978 or something like that, we're supposed to rehabilitate the whole State sign system. We're going back to the - I call it the hieroglyphics. It took us a thousand years to interpret the hieroglyphics and to learn to read and write. Now, we're going to revert again.
I think some of the attitudes and objectives that were important to us in the beginning are no longer important in the Park Service. This is what staggers me a little bit. They are thinking -

D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: .... not along the same thing -
D.S.: Yeah.
J.B.: We're talking about dollars and people.
D.S.: Yeah.
J.B.: And we never talked about that in those days. We had an objective, particularly leaving everything as undisturbed as possible. And rehabilitating what you could without gettin' exotic things involved. And that didn't revert to nature and doing - well, doing as little as possible -
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: My idea of the people that would enter at Front Royal and go all the way through Skyline Drive and don't stop - just steaming through -
D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: I don't think those people come to see the Park.
D.S.: They don't.
J.B.: And I say maybe seventy per cent of your visitation is this.
D.S.: And this is what bothers me. That they do and they even speed.
J.B.: Yes.
D.S.: If you're in a hurry, why did you come on the Drive? Yes.

J.B.: Well, I think that the Park Service itself is forgetting their own aesthetic values. I believe -

D.S.: They're trying to do their best to encourage people to take advantage of the trails. They're thinking some of making small trails right off of the overlooks, so that people will stop and walk a little bit.

J.B.: It's some beautiful places. I think there're thousands of places there should be little short side trails. Beautiful, beautiful, beautiful places.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: Doc Blevens and I, when we was young boys, we used to walk out at nights just to watch the sunset and things. I know some places off of the old Appalachian Trail just a few yards, you might say, like that. It was just a little walk out there that are breath taking. People don't even know they're there, you know.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: Different places. And -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: I always search things out like this. I never liked a crowd.

D.S.: No.

J.B.: I like to get away from the crowd. And I put an old pack on my back - even yet as old as I am - and take off over in the mountains, if everything's well at home, and say I'll be back in a couple of days.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: I don't care if it's raining or snowing or what. This is true - well, I get the full aesthetic values that way.

D.S.: You do.
J.B.: And I take my glasses with me and -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: .... and I watch the birds and bees and the animals and - I know things about the animals that a lot of your naturalists don't know. And - that I've seen and experienced and where to find 'em. When I was ten years old, I knew ever bird and ever habitat he had and the color of their eggs and their young. And I could identify them a half a mile off. I could see 'em by the flight pattern.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: Things like this. I always loved things like fishing.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And I know - I used to night hunt a lot. Not for the sake of trapping animals, but to learn something about their nocturnal habits. And man knows very little about the nocturnal habits of wildlife.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Very, very little. And I've spent many a long night along the river and in the hills just for this sake.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Just that I knew that there was a colony of beaver here or there was a raccoon faily here. And I wanted to see what happened.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And if you can't see 'em, you can hear 'em quite often.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: And I'm amazed now at the youngsters a growin' up - and if I hear a bird call now, I know exactly what this bird is. And when I see him, I see his young and I see his nest. I know his feeding habits and everthing like -
D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: But, if I tell 'em that was a call of a brown thrasher, which is a mockingbird - he's a good imitator, too, you know.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And well, when we was kids, we used to call them the sandy womper.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And here old - well, they call 'em the big yellow flicker now, when we used to call 'em the hellow gammer.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: Well, I can tell his knock or his peck from any other bird in the woods, you know.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And we have a lot of the pileated woodpecker here -

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: .... on these bluffs - river bluffs and everthing.

D.S.: We do. Yeah.

J.B.: And the hairy and the downy woodpecker has been very scarce around here the last couple of years.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: I don't know whether it's due to the dry weather or not. But, I saw a hairy woodpecker the other morning, but I hadn't seen the downy. And he's just a little bit smaller -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: .... then the hairy woodpecker. Almost identical coloration.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: But, they're very scarce here. I saw one big redhead and I hadn't seen one in several years. The giant redhead -
J.B.: ... we call him. He's pretty near big as a crow.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: And, boy, he was a beauty. Oh, he was something. The scarlet tanniger is gone.

D.S.: They have.

J.B.: Orioles around here. A lot of those.

D.S.: Before I forget, Mrs. Elmer Bates, that's -

J.B.: Mrs. Elmer Bates, she was the daughter of Dealand Taylor.

D.S.: And do you know where -

J.B.: And she is remarried -

D.S.: Oh.

J.B.: I don't know her present married name.

D.S.: Oh dear. How do I find her?

J.B.: But, they visit here - now, let me see. Ask David Taylor at the Park warehouse.

D.S.: David Taylor at where?

J.B.: At the Park warehouse.

D.S.: Oh. You mean Park Headquarters?

J.B.: Uh-huh.

D.S.: All right.

J.B.: He's related to 'em. If he doesn't know, he can find out for you.

D.S.: All right. And Della Taylor Dodson.

J.B.: Della Taylor Dodson - she may be remarried.

D.S.: Would David Taylor know her, too?

J.B.: David would know her, yeah. These two girls are sisters. Yeah, he'll know 'em. He might give you a line on both of 'em. Mrs. Elmer Bates - what is that girl? I should remember - but, her husband died. Elmer Bates
died years ago.

D.S.: All right.

J.B.: They were handymen - kinda caretakers and maintenance men for George Free­
man Pollock. And he married this girl right out of the mountains. This
Elmer Bates.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And they lived around Skyland in a cottage over there - in the caretaker's
cottage for many years.

D.S.: Oh.

J.B.: And old Mr. Pollock would get out there in the night - cold early in the
fall and the frost would come, and he would get around there on his horse,
and he would holler, "Elmer, Elmer. Wade, Wade. It's clearer than a bell
and cold as hell. Get up. Get up. We've got to see about the water."

D.S.: Can you think of any other names of people that either they or their children
would still be able to think?

We're looking for any leads that we can get.

J.B.: I don't know what become of the Thomases over on Tanner's Ridge. It's one
of those fellows around Page County somewhere. Ray Schaffner might have a
line on them. She was one of the last - his mother was one of the last life
tenure residents.

D.S.: You think Ray would know? All right.

J.B.: Ray would probably know as much about them as anybody. Some of the Thomas
family on - well, let me tell you something that's interesting while I think
about it.

You know this Walton family?

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: On t.v.? I'll bet if enough research was done on that, that when I was a lad
down at Tanner's Ridge, and the mission - Tanner's Ridge mission and the
mission down at the south end of the Park - oh, where the maintenance
headquarters is - where our maintenance headquarters is - what do they call
it? There was a mission there.

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: The Walton's sister's girls ran these missions through the Lutheran Church.
One of 'em taught school at the old Hoover School, which was torn down
years ago. This girl kept a diary all the years she was there. And I knew
this one girl. She was about - maybe just a little older than I. And there
was an older sister. And I'm bettin' my bottom dollar that there's a
connection between this t.v. thing on the Waltons and the diary that this
girl kept at Tanner's Ridge Mission.

D.S.: I interviewed a - oh, what was his name, now? Rev. Waterhouse. And he said
big Jim Walton did a lot of carpentry work for him. And he had a mission
there - an Episcopal Mission. And he said it wasn't too far from Charlotte-
ville. And he said I'm positive it's the same Walton family.

J.B.: It's the same Walton family, I'll betcha. Tanner's Ridge and Simmons Gap -

D.S.: Simmons Gap.

J.B.: .... mission.

D.S.: Simmons Gap, yeah.

J.B.: Yeah. Well, now, the - they work between - it was a Lutheran missionary
society who handled this. But these Walton girls - it was two of 'em.
There was an aunt and a younger girl - but, they was Waltons. And I knew
this girl. Talked to her on many occasions -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

J.B.: And she kept a daily dairy - they did - of everthing. And they did at both
of those missions. The Tanner's Ridge Mission - I mean the - Swift -

D.S.: Simmons Gap.

J.B.: The Simmons Gap Mission - that was torn down. 'Cause we sent one of our
powder men and they just blew it up and tore it down. But, the Tanner's Ridge Mission survived long after that. Many years after that. And one of these girls - now, whether it was the one at the Mission at the time I'm talking about - one of 'em taught school there at the Hoover School which is gone. You know probably about where that site was.


J.B.: And the old bell - schoolhouse bell is upstairs there in the warehouse there at the headquarters now. That should be put on exhibition at the Visitors Center.

D.S.: Sure.

J.B.: With the proper documentation.

D.S.: Right.

J.B.: Well, this is the -

D.S.: Or instead of there, put it where it was. Where the school was. Where the school was.

J.B.: All right. Build a little edifice there for it and put it up there with a commorative plaque.

D.S.: Right. Where the school was.

J.B.: Where the school was. Well, it's there. That bell's there.

D.S.: And it's down at the Park warehouse.

J.B.: It's upstairs in the warehouse. That bell. And it's in perfect condition. It was the last time I saw it.

D.S.: Oh, my gosh.

J.B.: We got it out one time on fourth of July celebration - some of the women, you know. We had it on the truck in kind of a Liberty Bell demonstration, you know, rather -

D.S.: Uh-huh.
J.B.: .... the historical value thing.

D.S.: Well, you know, you have just given us so much more than we have ever gotten.

J.B.: Well, sometime, when you get to assembling some of this stuff -

D.S.: Yeah.

J.B.: .... and you make a few notes or something -

D.S.: Yeah.