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(SNP049) Annie Virginia Fox interviewed by
Dorothy Noble Smith, transcribed by Peggy C.
Bradley

Annie Virginia Fox

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK

NARRATOR: Mrs. Annie Virginia (Winfield) Fox
INTERVIEWER: Mrs. Dorothy Smith
PLACE: Front Royal, Virginia
DATE: May 14, 1980

TRANSCRIBED BY :
Peggy C. Bradley

COMPLETED DATE :
March 30, 1987

D.S.: This is Dorothy Smith, interviewing Mrs. Winfield Fox, who now lives in Front Royal. Now, Mrs. Fox is claiming that she doesn't know very much? but she did live there in Fox Hollow. Is that correct?

A.F.: Yeah.

D.S.: From June until April.

A.F.: June the 20th 'til April the 14th. We moved down here.

D.S.: Uh-huh. O.K. Now, your husband, was he from the mountains?

A.F.: Uh-huh.

D.S.: How did you meet him?

A.F.: He used to come down to the house - down to the home when we lived on - you know where you first go on the Park? That's where we used to live.

D.S.: Oh, at the entrance to the Park?

A.F.: You know where the - you pay there?

D.S.: Yeah.

A.F.: It was right on the bank. The foundation is still thar, isn't it?

D.S.: Yes.

A.F.: That's where we used to live. And he used to come by.

D.S.: He would come by to go to Front Royal?

A.F.: Uh-huh.

D.S.: And that's how he met you?

A.F.: Yeah. And, we'd - I don't know how many years we lived there. Anyhow, my uncles lived on the Park, and we - my uncle and them had to get away when they got it.

D.S.: Yeah. Well, how did he court you? Do you mind my asking?

A.F.: I don't 'member. We used to go to movies in town and all.

D.S.: Uh-huh. Did he take you to church or things of that kind?

A.F.: Yeah. We used to walk up thar to town a lot -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

A.F.: when we lived up on the mountain. We'd come down like at Dickey Ridge. Come down thata way -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

A.F.: and go to town.

D.S.: What would you go to town for?

A.F.: Mostly get groceries.

D.S.: You didn't raise everything you ate?

A.F.: Huh-uh. A lot of things we didn't raise up there that we had to have.

D.S.: What for instance?

A.F.: Like coffee and sugar and stuff like that. You know, we had a garden, but - and put up a lot of stuff in the summer, but in the winter, we had - and, of course, we had to have that in the summer.

D.S.: Sure. Right. Yeah. Well, of course, you didn't have any coffee or salt or things of that kind, but as far as the rest of the things, did you raise almost everything that you ate?

A.F.: Uh-huh. We had a garden back of the house.

D.S.: Have you any idea, roughly, the size of that garden?

A.F.: It was - seemed like it was a little bit bigger than these two rooms together.

D.S.: That would be about a quarter of an acre?

A.F.: It was back of the house. It was long as the house.

D.S.: About as big as the one you have here?

A.F.: Uh-huh.

D.S.: You raised what in that?

A.F.: All kinds of vegetables. I couldn't tell. We had a grape arbor through the middle of it.

D.S.: Uh-huh. And -

A.F.: That's where we walked out - back of the house it was a - we used to have an

old home -

D.S.: Yeah.

A.F.: Had a grape arbor down through the middle of the garden.

D.S.: Yeah.

A.F.: And then we had the garden on each side of it.

D.S.: Why did the grape arbor go there, I wonder?

?: They planted it there. Boy, how can you all come up with some of the questions you come up with?

D.S.: Well, the point is that it does shadow -

?: They just don't pop up automatically, you know.

D.S.: it causes shade -

A.F.: Uh-huh.

D.S.: and I would think that they would have planted it, you know, somewhere else, unless they were planting things -

A.F.: Well, we did have one up a tree like.

D.S.: Uh-huh. Yeah.

A.F.: One run up a tree.

D.S.: Yeah. O.K. Now, how about - did you raise any sheep?

A.F.: No.

D.S.: No.

A.F.: Just had cattle and horses.

D.S.: Cattle and horses. Now, you mean cows or do you mean cattle for beef?

A.F.: Uh-huh. Well, I got - wait I'll get 'em.

D.S.: Oh, I see. Now, these are pictures of the cattle. Oh, and they were not dehorned, were they?

A.F.: No. That's my - his sister-in-law.

D.S.: Oh. Uh-huh. O.k. So, you always had plenty of milk and butter and cheese

and things of that kind, didn't you?

Did you keep those in the springhouse?

A.F.: Yeah. Out in - where the spring was. Had a building there you had to set the milk in the water -

D.S.: Yeah. Right. Uh-huh.

A.F.: to keep it cold.

D.S.: Sure. Was the spring far away from the house?

A.F.: No. Just a little piece.

D.S.: Yeah. Uh-huh. The garden - if you don't mind, I'd like to go back to that. Did they have a horse to plow it with?

A.F.: Yeah. Had a horse.

D.S.: Yeah.

A.F.: That's the only way we could get it plowed up thar.

D.S.: Yeah. Right. Well, some people had to do it by hand. That was why I asked.

A.F.: Yeah. They had to - some of 'em spaded 'em up.

D.S.: Yeah. There in Fox Hollow, did they?

A.F.: Uh-huh. I don't know what -

D.S.: Oh, I see.

A.F.: There's the barn I was standin' beside of.

D.S.: Oh, boy. You had a good bar then too.

A.F.: Hadn't been long built that. Then had to tear down.

D.S.: Oh yes. Isn't that a crime? Those are gorgeous horses. They really are. They look as though they've got lots of good food. Yeah. And this is the family?

A.F.: Yeah. This is mine -

D.S.: Your husband -

A.F.: He's living over on the Browntown Road.

D.S.: Oh really. Were they all Foxes that lived in Fox Hollow?

A.F.: No. Merchan lived down below where we lived.

D.S.: Merchant?

A.F.: Oh. I can't recall his first name. Merchan.

D.S.: Merchan. M-e-r-c-h-a-n?

A.F.: There was one road they lived on. Then they moved over in the Fort after they left there.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

A.F.: Course, both of them's dead now.

D.S.: Yeah. Can you recall, roughly, how many families lived in Fox Hollow?

A.F.: I don't remember but two - three. Carters, you know. Foxes lived up there.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

A.F.: That was Carter's place, but they lived on it.

D.S.: Was this the Carter that had a large apple orchard?

A.F.: Uh-huh.

D.S.: Yeah. Uh-huh. Did any of the people work for him in the apple orchard?

A.F.: Ask Lemuel. He worked over there.

D.S. He did?

A.F.: Yeah.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

A.F.: He lived in the house over thar for a long time.

D.S.: Yeah.

A.F.: They had two houses. And he lived in the small one.

D.S.: Yeah. Was there any other way to make money up there? Did the people peel bark or make railroad ties or anything of that kind?

A.F.: No.

D.S.: No.

A.F.: I never heered nothin' about it.

D.S.: Well, there were plenty of trees.

A.F.: Yeah. There was that. But, when he had it, it wasn't many trees on it.
See, he had most of it cleared up but the wooded part.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

A.F.: Up thar where Dickey Ridge was, that was clean 'cause it had - he planted
corn up thar.

D.S.: Oh, who planted the corn? This same Clark?

A.F.: Yeah. We did.

D.S.: Oh. You did?

A.F.: My husband and them did.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

A.F.: Where Dickey Ridge was, it was all clean. That's where he put the corn.

D.S.: Oh. Then that was a large lot of corn, wasn't it?

A.F.: Yeah.

D.S.: Yeah. You dried the corn in the winter or -

A.F.: We fed it to the cows and horses.

D.S.: Oh. You didn't have it ground into meal?

A.F.: Yeah. Oats and stuff like that, he did.

D.S.: Uh-huh. Oh, you raised oats, too?

A.F.: What they call -

D.S.: Rye?

A.F.: Yeah. Had that ground.

D.S.: Uh-huh. Was the mill anywhere near there or was it in Front Royal?

A.F.: Right down here on the creek.

D.S.: Well, that's not far.

A.F.: It's gone now.

D.S.: Oh. Yeah. Right. So they had a wagon to carry these things?

A.F.: Uh-huh.

D.S.: Yeah. And the two horses to pull it. I'll bet when the circus came to town, you all went to it. Did you?

A.F.: Yeah.

D.S.: Yeah.

A.F.: He had four horses to it most the time, when he was haulin' stuff. 'Cause I 'member when he went up thar - going home one time, a storm come up, and it lightened, and it'd flash right down - the horses went right to the ground.

D.S.: My gosh. That's terrible.

A.F.: They got sceered.

D.S.: Yeah. That was a bad storm.

A.F.: Uh-huh.

D.S.: Have you ever heard how long the Foxes lived in that hollow?

A.F.: I never did hear 'em say. I know it's been a long time 'cause my father, Winfield's grandfather and all lived up thar, I think -

D.S.: Uh-huh.

A.F.: I don't know how many - have they got that down up there?

D.S.: Somebody made a tape of it, but you couldn't hear.

A.F.: Oh. Lemuel might know more about it -

D.S.: Yeah. Uh-huh.

A.F.: cause he lived up thar a long time.

D.S.: O.k. I'll ask Lemuel that. Now, your husband, where did he go to school?
Do you -

A.F.: Up Harmony Hollow.

D.S.: In that same hollow?

A.F.: No. This is up Harmony Hollow.

D.S.: Oh. Harmony Hollow. Oh, yes. Did you know Ed Hickerson?

A.F.: Uh-huh.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

A.F.: Ed lived up thar.

D.S.: Yeah. Right. Was the lifestyle of the people in Fox Hollow very similar to that of Ed Hickerson's? Do you think?

A.F.: Yeah. They used to go - all up thar - most of them days used to go together to school.

D.S.: Uh-huh. And did the women make the clothes or did you buy them in Front Royal?

A.F.: I don't know. Seemed like they made 'em 'cause - see when I was up thar, I wasn't up thar long.

D.S.: No. You weren't up there long, but you were there through the winter which was the bad time.

A.F.: Worst part of it.

D.S.: Was it a hard decision for you to make to say that you would go up there to live?

A.F.: He was talking about - when we married, he was talkin' about have to leave.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

A.F.: We had to - he was talkin' about that then. He'd have to move 'way from up thar.

D.S.: Uh-huh. Yeah.

A.F.: Then we moved down here.

D.S.: Actually, the life that you lived up there, wasn't much different from what you'd been living.

A.F.: Oh, a lot different.

D.S.: It was?

A.F.: When we lived over on the Park road, thar, it was handy to go to town and everthing. But up thar we had a long ways to go.

D.S.: Oh, yeah. I hadn't thought of that.

A.F.: To walk.

D.S.: Sure. Right. Yeah. So, you'd think twice before you ran out of coffee.

A.F.: Do without.

D.S.: Yeah. The people, did they make, like, sasafrass tea?

A.F.: I heered them talkin' about it, but I don't think we ever did.

D.S.: I've heard that it's very good. That it tastes good.

A.F.: Uh-huh.

D.S.: And some used it medicinally. Did you know of any of the herbs that the people used?

A.F.: I never heered them say nothin' about it.

D.S.: Yeah. I imagine they were a little too close to Front Royal to use herbs, because they could get into a doctor or the doctor could come to them.

A.F.: Yeah. I reckon they did. I never did hear nothin' about it.

D.S.: Yeah. Uh-huh.

A.F.: A lot of people used to make it, but I never heered nothin' about it here.

D.S.: Yeah. Uh-huh. Was there a doctor that would come up there regularly? do you know?

A.F.: Indicating yes.

D.S.: There was.

A.F.: Dr. used to come up thar.

D.S.: Uh-huh. How would they get in touch with him? Did they have a phone?

A.F.: Them people up thar had phones from us - up on Carter's place, they had a phone.

D.S.: Oh, good. So them you'd go up there and phone -

A.F.: It wouldn't be very far. Go up there.

D.S.: Uh-huh. Did they use a doctor when they had babies?

A.F.: Indicating yes.

D.S.: They did.

A.F.: Yeah. Mine was borned up there.

D.S.: That's a shame that he died. What happened?

A.F.: It lived a few minutes.

D.S.: Oh dear. And that was your first baby?

A.F.: Lemuel's daughter - one of his daughters was borned that same week. She lives down town.

D.S.: Uh-huh. And that was your first baby.

A.F.: Uh-huh.

D.S.: I'm sorry.

A.F.: That's the youngest one.

D.S.: Oh my.

A.F.: He's gone, too, now. I ain't got but one and that's him.

D.S.: Was it in the service that he went?

A.F.: No. He was out of service when he died. This one is the only one I got living now.

D.S.: Uh-huh. Does he live near here?

A.F.: Down town.

D.S.: Good. Good. You're very fortunate to have him so close.

Well, you be sure and tell him about this tape. That it's going to be there. Now, when you got there, that house - you say you had to go out under the porch to get into another room. Right?

A.F.: You'd have to go on each porch to get in all the rooms.

D.S.: O.k. So, now it's winter time, and the snow is blowing, and you decide you want to go into another room. Do you put on coats, or just run like the

dickens?

A.F.: We slept down in the lower - in the back bedroom. We didn't sleep upstairs.

Winfield said he used to sleep up thar and snow would blow all over him.

D.S.: But there was weather boarding on that house.

A.F.: Yeah.

D.S.: Even so, the snow came in. That must have been a wild wind to do that. It must have been.

Of course, we know that the snow was heavier up there in the mountains than it is down here.

A.F.: Uh-huh.

D.S.: Sure. About how old would you say that house is?

A.F.: I don't know.

D.S.: Was it built by your husband's father or -

A.F.: I think it was. It was built long before they got it, I think.

D.S.: Uh-huh. Well. O.k. So, now - oh, I forgot to ask - did you have any pigs?

A.F.: Pigs?

D.S.: Yeah. Or chickens?

A.F.: No. We can't have 'em here. You mean here?

D.S.: No. No. Up in the mountains. Up there in Fox Hollow.

A.F.: Yeah. We had pigs.

D.S.: Sure. And didn't you have chickens?

A.F.: I forgot. I don't think so.

D.S.: You must have for eggs.

A.F.: Yes. We had 'em before I went up thar. But I didn't see none when we were up thar because things got into 'em too bad, and he had to quit.

D.S.: Fox?

A.F.: All kinds of things got into 'em and killed 'em. And I think he said he quit after that.

D.S.: Oh boy. Then you did without eggs -

A.F.: Had to buy 'em.

D.S.: until you went to town. Yeah. Right. Do you know if, like you went to get your coffee and your sugar and your salt, kerosene and things of that kind, would you pay cash for it?

A.F.: Indicating yes.

D.S.: You would?

A.F.: Cash.

D.S.: Uh-huh. So there were ways of making money up there?

A.F.: Yeah. He made money up thar. I think he sold corn and stuff that he had. He always had money up thar.

D.S.: Yeah. Uh-huh.

A.F.: Seemed like he sold - seemed like he sold wood - loads of wood. He would take 'em to town.

D.S.: Uh-huh. Yeah. Because you said he hauled things into town, and I was wondering what he hauled.

Did many people in Fox Hollow make moonshine?

A.F.: I didn't hear nobody up thar makin' it.

D.S.: That was a good way of making money.

A.F.: You'll have to ask Lemuel about that -

D.S.: Uh-huh. Yeah.

A.F.: I never did hear of it.

D.S.: Yeah. O.k. So now, come Christmas. You were there for Christmas?

A.F.: It snowed then, I think.

D.S.: Was there much visiting on Christmas?

A.F.: We had a lot of people from the hollow and around come. But I think that Christmas they didn't come much 'cause I think we had a lot of snow that Christmas.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

A.F.: And then I went down home around about that time after the snow went on.

D.S.: Yeah. Did you ever hear of a thing called "Kris Kringlers"?

A.F.: I don't 'member.

D.S.: Kris Kringlers was when people, at Christmastime, dressed up sort of like Halloween.

A.F.: Oh yeah. I've heard of it, but we didn't.

D.S.: You didn't do it?

A.F.: Huh-uh.

D.S.: Some areas did do it, and others didn't.

A.F.: Yeah.

D.S.: And I was just wondering. Did they shoot off firecrackers?

A.F.: Only on 4th of July is the only time.

D.S.: Really? Not on Christmas? Well, bless your hearts. You were good little people. I began thinking that the mountains must have sounded like a war going on. Everybody tells about shooting firecrackers.

A.F.: No. I 'member when we was home, we'd throw 'em in a barrel of water on 4th of July. But I never heered of them on Christmas.

D.S.: Uh-huh. Deaconess Hutton said it still startles her when she hears the firecrackers at Christmas. They still do it in Pine Grove.

A.F.: Oh. I never heered about it up there.

D.S.: O.k. Great. Did they celebrate Thanksgiving?

A.F.: Indicating yes.

D.S.: They did. Turkey?

A.F.: Turkey and all that.

D.S.: Wild turkey or would they buy a turkey?

A.F.: Seems like sometimes it was wild ones they was talkin' about. But I don't

know whether they ever bought one or not.

D.S.: Uh-huh. O.k. Did anybody do much hunting?

A.F.: Yeah. They done a right smart of huntin' 'cause they got squirrels and a lot of wild animals.

D.S.: Uh-huh. Would they be for eating or for selling the pelts?

A.F.: I think they caught fox furs for to sell.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

A.F.: In the winter time.

D.S.: Did they -

A.F.: Red ones - you got more for 'em.

D.S.: Yeah. Right. Do you know roughly - can you recall how much they got for them?

A.F.: Seems like I heered 'em say Eight Dollars for the red one. But I don't know how much they charged - how much they got for the others.

D.S.: Did they sell rabbits or eat them?

A.F.: I don't think they eat many rabbits. I know since we came down here, we found 'em sittin' around sick and wouldn't eat no more of 'em.

D.S.: Yeah. Right. Yeah. Did people play banjos and fiddles and guitars of an evening?

A.F.: Only I think when my husband went down to Harmony Hollow to dances, and he played the fiddle. That's all I heered.

D.S.: He played the fiddle? There's nothing like a good fiddler, is there? Oh, how I love that fiddle music.

A.F.: Yeah. I 'member him playin' that for dances. But that's all I heered them say anything about that.

D.S.: The dances - were they sort of like square dances?

A.F.: Square dances.

D.S.: Did they hold those in the home or -

A.F.: No. I think they held them in Harmony Hollow.

D.S.: Well, that would be in a home, wouldn't it?

A.F.: Uh-huh. That's what they had, I reckon, them days.

D.S.: Yeah.

A.F.: I never heered them say.

D.S.: Yeah. Uh-huh. You never went to any of the dances?

A.F.: Indicating no.

D.S.: Shame on your husband for not inviting you to come.

A.F.: Well, I think towards the last he'd quit playin'. He didn't play for a long time.

D.S.: Oh, that's too bad. Did you ever hear about homemade banjos? Did you ever see any?

A.F.: That homemade fiddle that he had. A merchant made that - used to live down below him. Made him one. Then he - something happened to it and he went and had it fixed, but he never did get it back.

D.S.: Oh no.

A.F.: I don't know whether he ever could fix it or not. I think it got broke.

D.S.: Oh dear. That's a shame. Oh, good fiddlers are so good. Well, so they all had a good education then, there in Harmony Hollow. And they had a church there, too, didn't they, in Harmony Hollow?

A.F.: Yeah. It's still up thar, isn't it? I think - it's where the school - had the school.

D.S.: Uh-huh. Did most people go pretty regularly to church?

A.F.: I think they did while they was up thar.

D.S.: Uh-huh. Yeah. Dear. Dear. Dear me. I've been doing all the questioning, and you haven't volunteered any of your own thoughts -

A.F.: I know. I -

D.S.: Were they a happy people up there?

A.F.: Yeah. All I knowed of they were. All them times, it were.

D.S.: Would you say they were fairly healthy people?

A.F.: They oughtta been. All lived to be old. All but Winfield's sister. She was twenty-one years old when she died. She had a brain hemmorage.

D.S.: No.

A.F.: The rest of 'em lived to be right old.

D.S.: Yeah. Do you know whether or not people had locks on their doors?

A.F.: We lived here don't know how many years and just here lately lockin' the house up.

D.S.: Uh-huh.

A.F.: They didn't think about all that stuff them days.

D.S.: No. They didn't. No. What would the people do if say somebody - a neighbor - by the way. How far apart were the houses? About a half a mile apart or a quarter of a mile, or about -

A.F.: Merchans lived about fer as from here out to your car from -

D.S.: Oh. Fairly close.

A.F.: Uh-huh. That's the only one. The rest of 'em lived about a half a mile or maybe farther.

D.S.: All right. Now, say somebody in one of those houses got sick. Would anybody help out?

A.F.: Yeah. See - uh - Foxes lived on Warder Carter's place and they come down. They'd wait on each other around.

D.S.: Yeah. Uh-huh. Would you say, then, that they were good neighbors?

A.F.: Indicating yes.

D.S.: Uh-huh. But they didn't do much visiting you way?

A.F.: Yeah. They always visited one another on weekends - somethin' like that.

D.S.: Uh-huh. Yeah. O.k. Sounds very, very nice up there. Have you any idea roughly how much property went with that house?

A.F.: See - I got the - it's on that paper. I forgot now - one hundred fifty acres, wasn't it?

D.S.: That's a good size piece of property, wasn't it? That was a lot to take care of. Did they grow flowers like you do here?

A.F.: Yeah. We had flowers out in the yard all around the fence.

D.S.: Uh-huh. Oh, you had a fence around the place?

A.F.: We had to have it around the house 'cause of the cows and horses.

D.S.: Oh. Yeah. After all, you didn't want them coming into the house, did you? What kind of a fence?

A.F.: Wire fence.

D.S.: A wire fence.

A.F.: But of course, around the other place, they had fence rails.

D.S.: Chestnut?

A.F.: I don't know. I seen 'em but I don't know what they was made out of.

D.S.: Uh-huh. Yeah. Before the chestnut blight came, most people made chestnut fences.

A.F.: It might have been. But, I didn't know what kind they were unless I asked 'em.

D.S.: Yeah. No. You wouldn't think of asking. So it was a wire fence that you had all around the house.

A.F.: Yeah. Around the yard, we had wire.

D.S.: Yeah. Uh-huh. So, and then you had flowers - did you have roses, too?

A.F.: Seemed like it. Mostly phlox they had up thar.

D.S.: Oh. Yeah.

A.F.: Like I got - I got some of 'em out here. When we moved down here, I brought

'em - a little bunch of 'em. I still got 'em.

D.S.: Oh, how nice. You moved here from the mountains, then?

A.F.: Uh-huh. Been here ever since we left up thar.

D.S.: You picked a lovely spot to come to. It really is so nice here. Yeah.

Well, can you think of anything else -

A.F.: Huh?

D.S.: Can you think of anything that I haven't mentioned?

A.F.: No. No more. I don't know anything.

D.S.: Well, you have been simply wonderful. You really have, because you have given us a lot -

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