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# (SNP053) Miley Frazier interviewed by Dorothy Noble Smith, transcribed by Victoria M. Edwards

Miley Jackson Frazier

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Interview with Miley Frazier

Part of the Shenandoah National Park Oral History Collection, SdArch SNP-053  
(SC# 4030)

Interview conducted at Unknown Location

By Dorothy Noble Smith on November 12, 1975

Transcribed by Victoria M. Edwards, November, 2009

Key

[DS:] Interviewer, Dorothy Noble Smith

[MF:] Interviewee, Miley Frazier

[Notes regarding transcription technique]

[unintelligible] Unable to understand more than one word

\_\_\_\_\_ (??) Transcriber's best guess

- Speaker makes abrupt change in sentence

Refer to the Baylor University Style Guide for consistency in transcription

Total interview length: 00:54:57 min.

[Begin audio file, 00:00:01 min.]

DS: -Mr. Miley Frazier. Where did you live, Mr. Frazier, in the mountains?

MF: Well, I think it was in Rockingham County. And it was near Mission Home.

DS: Near Mission Home.

MF: Mm-hmm, that was a post office, that was the post office. And it's where there's, there was always a preacher there and they had schools there and, well they, I don't know what they called 'em, mission people. That's the-

[00:00:50, tape may possibly take a break]

DS: All right, now Mr. Frazier, where exactly would you say in the mountains this was? Was it where they now call Patterson Ridge?

MF: I don't know what they call Patterson Ridge.

DS: Was it near Ivy Branch?

MF: Oh yes. Yeah.

DS: Uh-huh.

MF: Yeah, it was just--it would have been not very much, but a little south of Ivy Branch.

DS: A little south of Ivy Branch.

MF: Yeah. And this here, now the Skyline Drive goes right through that place now. Pretty close to the house we lived in, to where we do live, that old house there.

DS: Okay, what did the house look like?

MF: Well, it was a house that was built, if they build 'em now they call 'em cabins, it was built out of logs.

DS: A log house, right. How many rooms?

MF: I think we had about four rooms.

DS: Four rooms, okay. How many were in your family?

MF: Six.

DS: Six children.

MF: Mm-hmm.

DS: All right. Were you the oldest or the—?

MF: No. I was the youngest boy.

DS: The youngest boy.

MF: It was, I used to [unintelligible], there was four of us, but one of my brothers died when he was about seventeen, but my older brother, now he went through World War I, but now he's dead, too. Then I had the third brother, and he died when he was--in '77.

DS: The one who died when he was seventeen, what was the matter with him?

MF: Typhoid fever.

DS: Typhoid fever. That was quite a bad disease, wasn't it in those days.

MF: It was in them times.

DS: Yeah, and did any of the rest of your family get it.

MF: No.

DS: No? That's unusual. How many acres did you have?

MF: What, do you mean the Pattersons?

DS: Well—

MF: I didn't have any.

DS: You didn't have any. The Pattersons brought their cattle up, do you know how they brought--which way, direction?

MF: They come more there where Allan lives (??) at.

DS: In Bridgewater.

MF: Yeah. Into Grottoes. Up, from Grottoes up to Brown's Gap, they called it. Now there was a [unintelligible], he used to call it Brown's Gap, and when the road, to get there, I think that they did call it Brown's Gap. And 'till you get up to where the park road is now, the Skyline Drive, of course you didn't used to drive then, but you went out then according to the way the drive goes now, but was just a road then. You could drive on it with horses and a wagon.

DS: Right. How many cattle did he have, do you know roughly?

MF: Yeah, just about, of course we seen to these cattle. Two hundred.

DS: Two hundred cattle.

MF: And about fourteen colts, you might say horses, they was some of 'em big as horses,

fourteen—pastured about fourteen of them a year.

DS: Oh.

MF: And there was fourteen hundred acres of land.

DS: Fourteen hundred, he was wrong then, he said two thousand four hundred. He said twenty four hundred. So it was fourteen hundred.

MF: Well now, later on, Allan's dad, but that weren't on the first we lived on, bought another farm over there. That's where he wrote that in from.

DS: Oh, I get it. This was all bluegrass?

MF: No, lot of it was just mountain man (??), and some of it in timber and grass. It weren't all pasture ground.

DS: Uh-huh. Was it all fenced in?

MF: No.

DS: Then how did you keep track of the cattle?

MF: Well, it was all fenced in where they grazed the ground.

DS: Oh, I see, I see.

MF: But not all the land.

DS: Uh-huh, yeah, okay. All right, now you were allowed to farm there, weren't you?

MF: Oh yes, yes.

DS: Okay, so what did you farm?

MF: Say what did I farm?

DS: Yeah.

MF: You mean what did we raise?

DS: Mm-hmm.

MF: Well, corn, potatoes and cabbage, tomatoes, things like that.

DS: Wheat?

MF: No, raised some rye, we didn't raise wheat though, raised rye. Wheat didn't do too good back there then.

DS: You know, that's what I've been hearing, that wheat did not grow well in the mountains. So you had to—

MF: The ground would freeze and spew up so bad. You know, get kind of hollowed out underneath, and wheat didn't do too good. Now, there was some wheat raised back in there, but we didn't. There was some. It wouldn't do as good as it would out in this part of the country.

DS: So you had to buy your flour.

MF: Yeah.

DS: Okay. How did you get money to do things, to buy things like flour?

MF: Well, there weren't much work to get out and make some. Well, we would, we raised a lot of potatoes and cabbage and things. We sold a lot of that.

DS: I get it, yeah, uh-huh.

MF: And during, (chuckle) during all them days, back in there, of course that's what they all raised now, pasture and gone, was big chestnut trees. All great big ones. And they'd be just loaded with chestnuts [unintelligible] every year.

DS: Sure.

MF: And we would, of course not after I got grown, but after we was coming on, up to fourteen or fifteen, we'd get enough chestnuts in the fall of the year to buy our winter clothes.

DS: Yes, right.

MF: Selling the chestnuts. Bring 'em up to Grottoes. And sell 'em to the merchants over there.

DS: When the chestnuts were gone, what did you do to compensate? You had to get money then some other way for your winter clothes.

MF: Well, we most always had got enough from off of the chestnuts to do us through the winter.

DS: Yes, but when there were no more chestnuts, what did you do?

MF: Well the chestnuts come every year.

DS: I know, but then they died.

MF: They were gone after the season was out, yeah. Well. They didn't--we always arranged to have some enough of 'em to carry us through the winter, which was four or five hauls. And we raised our own potatoes and had cabbage, turnips and all that, and all kind of vegetables that you needed and we raised our living, all but just the sugar and the coffee. That's all we bought at stores, taking out our clothes. Of course, we didn't have to buy clothes every month, nothing like that.

DS: Did you have apple orchards, and--

MF: Yeah, we made apple butter.

DS: Yeah.

MF: Yeah, we made sometimes a couple kettles of apple butter.

DS: Sure. That was a fun time, wasn't it?

MF: Oh yes, and that was a good apple butter, better than any you can buy out of the stores.

DS: Right. Right. And all the neighbors got together--

MF: Yeah, we made apple butter and they'd be a bunch to come in to help. They made it different than what they do now. They could boil apple butter until eleven or twelve o'clock at night.

DS: Sure. Because it was a party time.

MF: Yeah.

DS: Sure.

MF: That's right.

DS: Yeah. Did they do any dancing?

MF: Yeah, they would have dances, some of 'em would. After have these apple butter boilings and then have the dance.

DS: Mm-hmm. So you had music while it was going on.

MF: Yeah.

DS: And did anybody pass the jug around?

MF: No, they didn't have that. Because that might would have caused trouble.

DS: Oh really?

MF: (chuckle)

DS: Then you missed fun. (laughs)

MF: Well, some of 'em might've got a ruling (??).

DS: Yeah, uh-huh.

MF: Now, some of 'em might've, some of 'em might've did have some.

DS: Sure. Right. Well, Mr. Patterson said they used to have just enough to keep things going.

MF: Well, probably some of 'em did.

DS: Just enough to have fun.

MF: Yeah, I've known 'em to have it. Some of 'em.

DS: Now, who were the others that were the tenant farmers on this property?

MF: You mean was there-

DS: He said-

MF: There was no others on the-

DS: Was there a Garrison?

MF: Not on that. There was on the other farm, the farm that Patterson bought. But not on the farm that we lived on, now there was another Frazier, George Frazier.

DS: Oh, George Frazier.

MF: Mm-hmm. Now he was on part of this land, but that was fenced off different from the land that-it belonged to them, but it was [unintelligible] because we seen two team go over on that, it was fenced between this land. And that was George Frazier.

DS: I see. And your father's name was?

MF: Tom Frazier.

DS: Tom Frazier. Okay. Was there a Garrison up there?

MF: Yeah, Boise Garrison.

DS: Boise Garrison. Now what—

MF: And his daddy's name was Doc Garrison.

DS: How far away were these homes?

MF: That fellow by the name of Boise Garrison lived about a mile from where we did, but only on the other land.

DS: Yeah, about a mile. Was that about how far away the houses were apart?

MF: Oh, some of 'em was further than that, that was the closest that there was to us. The next would have been about two miles.

DS: Mm-hmm. Would they come for the apple butter boilings?

MF: Oh yes.

DS: Sure. Nobody minding walking or did they come by horseback?

MF: Always walked with lanterns. They'd walk, well they'd walk four and five miles to go to church at nights, with lanterns. Take a lantern. That was the only way they had to travel then, [unintelligible]. Maybe five or six in a bunch would go together and would have lanterns and have a lantern night. Maybe walk to church.

DS: Yeah. You had church then every Sunday?

MF: Oh yeah.

DS: Mm-hmm. And everybody went.

MF: Mm-hmm, that was some of these missionary people, of course the denomination was Episcopal, but they went—well, they wasn't missionary workers, they was good to raise—some people naturally live a little harder than others, more poor, and they was good to the poor.

DS: Yeah, uh-huh. School. Where was the school, there at the mission?

MF: Yeah, they was the one that had the, they had the—it weren't run by the counties like it is now. They the ones that furnished the school through these people.

DS: Did you all go to school?

MF: Yeah. Had a long ways to go, about four miles, have to walk back and forth. Sometimes through the winter, got so rough you didn't go for a couple of months.

DS: Yeah.

MF: And I didn't get a good education on that account.

DS: Right. How about in the spring and in the fall, weren't you needed on the farm?

MF: Well, according to—late in the fall, schools didn't start until tolerable late. But there was others there, because in a way—I didn't go to school after I was about fourteen or fifteen.

DS: How far would you say you went through school?

MF: I went about through the fourth grade, about as far as I went. Now, I had two sisters, they got a good education, but they stayed—it was mostly the school teachers was women school teachers. And they had a house built special for these teachers. They didn't stay there in the summer, could stay in through the winter. And my two sisters, they wanted to stay so much with 'em, because they would have been alone, and some of 'em maybe from way off. I just don't always know where. But some of 'em maybe was from way off, these school teachers. And my two sisters, not at the same time, stayed with school teachers through school. And got their education.

DS: Sure, that was great. Yeah.

MF: Yeah, my two younger sisters.

DS: Fine. But you didn't—

MF: Of course, they was right at school.

DS: Sure. But you did learn like reading and writing and arithmetic and all that?

MF: Yeah.

DS: Yeah. Okay. Now, to take care of your vegetables throughout the winter, what would your family do?

MF: Well, as to cabbage, we buried cabbage.

DS: Yeah.

MF: And we buried our potatoes. And what all we had, we raised a lot of cabbage and we'd make kraut. And homemade kraut's better than this here kraut you buy in the store.

DS: Sure, sure.

MF: That's the way it was done.

DS: Did you ever eat any--like you ate the hams, you had the hams.

MF: Oh yes.

DS: And did you sell any of them?

MF: Sometimes they might sell some of the hams. We always eat our shoulders. And side meat. Sometimes they might sell some of the hams and buy side meat.

DS: Oh, uh-huh. Yeah. Beef, did you eat beef?

MF: Hardly ever.

DS: Here you were taking care of all this cattle and you—

MF: Yeah, but them cattle won't last a long time. (laughter) And we lived up a good ways from where—now they drove these cattle from where Allan Patterson lives there, but it took 'em two days to do it. They go up to Grottoes from where Allan Patterson lives, I don't know—

DS: That's a long distance.

MF: Yeah, you gotta go through Mt. Crawford and all them places, you know where they're at.

DS: Sure.



MF: And then they would, they would stay in Grottoes, put up in a farm place, where you could turn the cattle in to the barn yard or something, and then they'd bring the cattle in the next day. They'd always get in about one o'clock, one or two o'clock the next day then, from Grottoes to where the farm was. That's probably anyhow fourteen or fifteen miles. Maybe twenty, from where their farm was to Grottoes.

DS: Yeah. That's a long way to drive cattle.

MF: Yeah.

DS: Did he use dogs to help him?

MF: No.

DS: No? No. Hmm. He and his brother would do this?

MF: Yeah, and probably, maybe they would have a hired hand to work for 'em and they'd just hire some boys expected maybe to bring 'em in. Maybe. Maybe Allan told you more about that than I could tell you about that. I reckon he knows the most, well, Allan and his father, his dad, and his son, maybe they'd have someone else to get them.

DS: He said that he used to stay at your home and had a good time when he did.

MF: Yep, and do work up there, put up fences and things.

DS: Sure, yeah. You must have fed him real good because he enjoyed the food.

MF: Well, I reckon—we always had plenty to eat. We mostly raised our stuff, we didn't depend on stores like they do now, we canned a lot of fruit. We made apple butter and if we didn't we can apples. Dry—and back in them days they used to dry apples.

DS: Sure, right.

MF: Dried apples is good. You can make fine apples pies with that, they don't dry no apples no more.

DS: Did you ever sell any of your dried apples?

MF: They did. I didn't myself, but my mother would.

DS: How about huckleberries, did you have many huckleberries.

MF: [sound of screen door opening and closing] Oh, plenty of 'em. Hello. [voice of female in background] That's my daughter-in-law there.

[sounds of screen door opening and closing occurs now and again throughout the interview]

DS: Hi. That, was that a money crop for you?

MF: Yes, we sold huckleberries. We would can what we needed and then sell huckleberries, to get--I was telling you about the chestnuts, would buy clothes with huckleberries, too.

DS: Sure, right.

MF: You could sell all you picked. You could sell 'em.

DS: Right. Now, you did hunting, did you do any hunting?

MF: Oh yes. My brother and myself done a lot of coon hunting.

DS: Yeah.

MF: Yeah.

DS: Did you ever see any bear?

MF: No. There wasn't any, much bear around at that time. I think there was one, one time got into our corn and eat some corn. We saw its tracks. But I never did see any bear back there. They was scarce then.

DS: But there were bears.

MF: Yeah.

DS: There were some.

MF: Uh-huh. And about hunting, we coon hunted and then we bee hunted. Cut bee trees out in the mountain, get the honey.

DS: Sure, yeah, uh-huh. You ate the coon.

MF: Yeah, we eat coon then, why, I don't know why, but we eat coon.

DS: And how about rabbits, did you hunt rabbits?

MF: Yeah, rabbits. And squirrels.

DS: Did you sell the rabbits?

MF: Yeah, you could sell rabbits at that time.

DS: Live or killed?

MF: Killed.

DS: Killed. How much would you get?

MF: Oh, twenty-five, thirty cents.

DS: Hey, you lived high on the hog. (laugh) Most people got fifteen cents. Oh, really, that much.

MF: Well, it might—I believe it run around about that figures. Some of 'em more or less.

DS: But of course you ate some, too, didn't you?

MF: Yeah. Yeah, and we used to catch these coons and sell the hides, the fur you know.

DS: Sure, right.

MF: Ten or twelve dollars then for a coon hide, wasn't any higher than that now. They'll bring in twenty-five or thirty dollars now.

DS: Yeah, right. Fishing, did you have much fishing?

MF: Done a lot of trout fishing. When trout law was in.

DS: Where were the streams?

MF: Called it Big Run.

DS: Big Run.

MF: It did call Big Run.

DS: Would you do this any time you felt like it or just wait for a rainy day?

MF: Well, when the season's in, you can do it any time you want to, but a cloudy day was the best day. Now, if the sun is shining and your shadow got all the way into this water, your trout sees it and is gone. You'd have to stay on the side of the creek where your shadow wouldn't go in the water if the sun was shining. A cloudy day was really the best because you could walk on either side.

DS: Yeah, right, uh-huh. Do you feel that you worked hard while you were up there?

MF: Yeah, I did.

DS: You did.

MF: I did.

DS: Uh-huh.

MF: Worked hard through the, especially through the summer, there's more than what you could do in the winter. Get you the wood and stuff because winters then was rough.

DS: Yeah, they were.

MF: Oh yes. Snow.

DS: You got extra supplies in the winter?

MF: Oh yeah.

DS: To get ready?

MF: You have to. In them days, you liable to like to get a snow so bad, sometimes and blowing drift. That you couldn't hardly get out sometimes. Well, even with a horse. Yeah.

DS: You owned your own horses?

MF: Yeah, yeah.

DS: And cows?

MF: Mm-hmm.

DS: Chickens?

MF: Yeah.

DS: So you had the eggs and chickens to sell too, didn't you?

MF: Oh yeah. Well, now as I was saying, we didn't have to buy anything at the stores, but our sugar and coffee, and we most always bought the sugar and coffee with the eggs.

DS: Mm-hmm. How far was the store?

MF: Oh, about four or five miles. You could ride a horse back or you could walk if you wanted to.

DS: Sure. Now, one money crop was making moonshine. Was much of it done up there?

MF: Not when I was small, they weren't. It's been done since I been grown. Yeah. It's been done since then.

DS: Did they use rye or apples?

MF: I suppose some of 'em used, maybe used apples and rye.

DS: Mm-hmm, yeah. Because that was a Depression times and everybody needed money and that was a good way to make it.

MF: Well, none of that went on before World War I.

DS: No.

MF: No.

DS: Oh no, uhn-uh. No, but, I mean, you know, during the time, oh, say about ten years before the park took over.

MF: Oh yes, they come along and it was a good many of them that done that. They kept 'em out in the way they made it, and sometimes they'd get in trouble.

DS: (laugh) Yeah.

MF: And sometimes they'd get caught.

DS: Sure, right. I know. Were the people, would you say, friendly towards strangers?

MF: Ma'am?

DS: Were they friendly towards strangers?

MF: The people that was raised up there?

DS: Mm-hmm.

MF: Oh yes.

DS: Allan Patterson said they weren't. He said if they didn't know you, they didn't let you in.

MF: Oh, I don't know about that. Maybe some of 'em was that way.

DS: Uh-huh. Yeah. Maybe he was just making a good story, too, because he's a good story teller. (laugh)

MF: I don't know him.

DS: Uh-huh, yeah. Because he said sometimes he had to go chasing after the cattle to round them up and take them back down and it was lucky he was known, otherwise they wouldn't have allowed him to go into their hollows.

MF: Mm-hmm.

DS: Do you think that might have been true?

MF: Well, the most of 'em back there where he would had to went knowed the Pattersons. And we know all of 'em that was back there. If we knowed 'em, it pretty well worked out all right for them.

DS: Yeah. Right. Grandfather's name was Herbert? Or was that the father's name?

MF: That was the father's name of Allan. Herbert. Now his grandfather was named John.

DS: John, okay.

MF: Now Allan's got a brother John, too.

DS: Oh yeah.

MF: But the old man was John L. Patterson.

DS: Okay. Now, when he came up to spend some time with you, would you know he was coming?

MF: No.

DS: You'd just pop in.

MF: They'd just come.

DS: And you always had enough for them to eat.

MF: Oh yes. And a place for 'em to sleep. Of course, in the last years, they built them a little cabin up there. Sometimes they'd be, they'd come up there for three or four days on the fence and they might be four or five of 'em. Now, but most always, one or two of 'em stayed over with us. But they always got their meals there.

DS: (chuckle) Okay. Now, were you married while you were still in the mountains.

MF: Oh no.

DS: No. No. How old were you when the park took over? When you had to move out?

MF: Well, when I moved out, I didn't have to move out on that time, I moved out before that.

DS: You did?

MF: Yeah.

DS: Okay. Why?

MF: My mother and daughter, well, they just wanted to get out from back there, it's a long ways back in there, [unintelligible] but my mother and my sister and their grandson, he was young, maybe twelve or thirteen, so we moved to Grottoes then. I was around twenty-two.

DS: Twenty-two.

MF: When I left from back there.

DS: All right, now you didn't have much education, what did you find to do?

MF: Oh, I could do most anything, anywhere I could.

DS: Such as? What?

MF: Oh, like farming, I worked on the railroad and I worked on farms and I worked at the factory. I worked that factory, Shenandoah [unintelligible] in Waynesboro one time.

DS: Wow, that was a distance away.

MF: Well, just from here up to Waynesboro, ten miles. Of course, there was cars then.

DS: Mm-hmm, yeah. Were you happy to move out of the mountains?

MF: Oh yes, yeah.

DS: You were?

MF: Of course, I liked the mountains, I still like the mountains.

DS: Sure.

MF: But I wanted to get out.

DS: All right, now, what would you do, like what would all of your neighbors do on a Saturday night? Would you get together every now and then and have dances or what would you do?

MF: Oh, some of 'em sometime, they would. Not too often.

DS: Did you set up an evening and play music?

MF: Oh yes. I had a brother that could play a violin and my third brother was a good banjo player.

DS: Well, that made an evening pleasant.

MF: Oh yeah. Nice time. Now, we had ball games around Saturday evenings. We'd have ball games. And different ones would all come in together and play ball.

DS: Okay!

MF: Oh yes, I expect there'd be about thirty or forty people maybe around. Even the ones that didn't play would come to watch us play ball. And during the summer, it was pretty well, they'd have balls games about every Saturday evening, sometimes on a Sunday.

DS: Oh, great!

MF: And most always on Easter Monday.

DS: That would start it, right?

MF: Yeah.

DS: Uh-huh. (chuckle) Hey, that's good. Where was the diamond, it was near the mission, or?

MF: Yeah, it was near there.

DS: Uh-huh, yeah. Okay, did you play marbles?

MF: Yes. Yeah. Yep. And they used to use three or four to shoot the marbles, they'd put the marbles out, I think it took about five, the way they played. And then they'd have a small marble and then they'd shoot, the one in the middle now, they call that the king.

DS: Yeah. (chuckle)

MF: And you knocked him out, you had the game right there.

DS: (laugh)

MF: And some of 'em maybe you would shoot and miss, and the other fellow, he shot one of 'em out, he got a shot and some of 'em could hit yours a good piece, by shooting that other marble, hit your marbles and keep your marble and he couldn't shoot no more in the game.

DS: (laugh) Oh gee, that's great.

MF: Yeah, they had plenty of fun.

DS: Yeah. Did you play cards of any kind?

MF: Some of 'em might, we didn't there.

DS: Checkers?

MF: Yeah.

DS: Mm-hmm. You do that in the evenings?

MF: Yeah, or at night.

DS: Mm-hmm, yeah. Particularly in the winter, or?

MF: Yeah, mostly in the winter. Not much in the summer. Always needed something then.

DS: There was one area that I was told, there up north a little bit, where in the winter they had only two meals a day because they'd get up late and didn't have much work to do.

MF: Oh no, we most always had three meals. Get up early, no matter how rough the weather was, we'd get up early, not later than five o'clock in the mornings, matter not snow or snowing or how it was, we'd get up early.

DS: And what would you do?

MF: That was just the way of doing, though, they'd get up early, have dinner at twelve o'clock and then between four and five have supper.

DS: Was there any work to do?

MF: Even if there weren't no work to do, only just around home, like everybody do, you know, seeing to a sock or doing things around that warranted it (??) something or another, weren't nothing else you could do in the really rough weather and snow. Unless you was out cutting wood or hauling wood or something.

DS: How far did you have to go to cut the wood?

MF: Oh, not very far.

DS: Uh-huh, yeah. Did you ever peel bark?

MF: Some. Yeah.

DS: That was another way of making money.

MF: It was. We'd peel bark and sell the bark.

DS: Mm-hmm.

MF: At that time, there was a tannery in Elkton. I think that was run by Cuvers (??).

DS: Would they come and pick up the bark?

MF: No indeed, they'd have someone else that had, they would have it, well they could haul it out there on the wagon and haul it to Elkton.

DS: Yeah. Oh, then you had a wagon, too?

MF: Oh yeah. Yeah, they had wagons.

DS: Really lived it up high.

MF: Yeah, I didn't have it myself, of course I was younger then.

DS: Yeah, but your family had it.

MF: Yeah.

DS: Mm-hmm. There was always plenty of milk because you had cows.

MF: Oh yes. Yes indeed.

DS: And did you have a spring or a well?

MF: We had a spring.

DS: A spring.

MF: Best kind. Good spring water. Now there was two springs there at the home. Now, one of 'em in the summer time, the water was warm, weren't good in the summers. Now, it must have been running near the top of the ground. Then we had another spring in the summer time, was cold water and in the winter time it was warm. Now it must have been coming deep from the ground to be warm in the winter. Now that was the difference in the two springs. One of 'em was cold in the summer and the other was warm in the summer.

DS: I'll be darned.

MF: Yeah.

DS: I've never heard such a thing.

MF: Of course, the way that I figured it, that the one that was warm in the summer, must not have been too deep in the ground. And that put out very cold water, I always figured that come from deep in the ground, by being colder.

DS: Sure, yeah. Were they far from your house?

MF: Oh no.

DS: Ah hah. So then you could get the warm water and have something warm to wash with.

MF: Yeah, if you wanted to.

DS: Yeah, mm-hmm, great. Do you know how the fellows courted the girls?

MF: Do I know how?

DS: Yeah.

MF: I don't know too much about that part.

DS: You never saw any fellows courting?

MF: Oh, I saw 'em, yeah.



DS: Well how did they do it?

MF: Well, they'd, oh, well lots of 'em would go to churches then on Sundays and things and they'd walk together with her, if they did have a girlfriend and they'd walk together, maybe he'd hold her by her hand.

DS: And that was about it, right?

MF: That was about it.

DS: So she knew that he was sort of interested.

MF: Yeah. I reckon both maybe was.

DS: (laugh) That's great. Did your mother know any herbs or--what would she do, for instance, like if you got a cold?

MF: (chuckle) Sometimes give us a dose of salts or castor oil. And that castor oil was awful.

DS: (chuckle) Yeah. Did she ever give you turpentine and sugar?

MF: Yeah, but you can't take that turpentine now, different from what it was then. Turpentine'll kill you now.

DS: Yeah. And coal oil and sugar, did you get that any time?

MF: Yeah, if they had the croup or something, but you better not use it now.

DS: Yeah, I know it. Did she make any poultices?

MF: Yeah. Take a, have a ray of coals and she'd take onions and kind of put 'em in the pan with some grease and heat 'em and get 'em hot and put it in a cloth or something and put it to your chest, hot. Maybe leave it there all night. But that onion poultice took all of your--or mustard, too. Mustard. Now mustard would have gone to, would turn you red or maybe leave you, leave it long enough it'll blister you.

DS: Yeah. Mm-hmm. It worked.

MF: Yeah. That was good for pneumonia.

DS: Yes, uh-huh. Was there much of that?

MF: Not too much. I had it one time while I was living back there.

DS: You did?

MF: Mm-hmm.

DS: And your mother used these poultices?

MF: Well, they had doctors. They were using them. They used, they done that on small children.

DS: Where did the doctor come from?

MF: Up Nortonsville.

DS: Nortonsville.

MF: Down along on the other side of Mission Home, then. He was the only doctor, well, he rode a horse and went to where he could go.

DS: Were you alive during the flu epidemic?

MF: Oh yeah. I was about seventeen years old.

DS: Was it a bad one?

MF: Oh, I reckon it was. That was in World War I, same part as the armistice was signed, just about the same time it was signed.

DS: That's right.

MF: Yeah. We all, our whole family had it.

DS: And the doctor came?

MF: Yeah.

DS: Mm-hmm. Good.

MF: Doctor Keiger called. Of course, he was raised down here at Port Republic. His dad owned a farm and, but then he put up Nortonsville.

DS: Keiger, K-E-I-G-E-R?

MF: Mm-hmm.

DS: How would you get in touch with him?

MF: Well you could go to Mission Home and call him on the phone.

DS: Oh.

MF: We didn't have none back there in the mountain where lived. You could go to Mission Home and call him.

DS: Yeah. Okay. Now, there was a bad drought in 1930. You weren't up in the mountains at that time.

MF: Oh no, no. I was living over here.

DS: So you don't know how the people managed during that drought.

MF: No, I don't.

DS: Too bad. (laugh) Because I have been worried, one of the problems that I have--All right, now, Christmas time was coming along. What would you all do at Christmas?

MF: Well, they, generally, there wasn't much, but they generally have a, over there at the school that we went to, they'd have a Christmas tree. And the ones that went to Sunday school, and all, give 'em presents, give 'em some candy, oranges, and extra presents some of 'em.

DS: Did you ever get any toys?

MF: Oh yes. Small toys.

DS: Yeah. Little toys. Sure. Did you ever do what they called Christmas caroling?

MF: No.

DS: No. You didn't do any extra visiting during Christmas?

MF: Oh yes, we'd go around to maybe some of our friends and then some of 'em, we might would have company, too.

DS: Sure, right. Do you know if the grownups drank during this time?

MF: I know of many that did. Oh yes, I know, well, at Christmas time, some of 'em would drink then if they didn't drink no more the rest of the year.

DS: Yeah. (chuckle)

MF: A lot of them then, they said, "Well, I got my Christmas whiskey." Of course, now, that weren't my home, but that's the way it was, of course, I was younger. But I know that lots did.

DS: Mm-hmm, right. Okay, did you ever hear of, now,--Elkton has quite a reputation for having had a lot of fighting going on, a lot of fighting. And throughout the southern section, it has a reputation for it. Do you think that's a true statement?

MF: Well, it's been lots that went on around Elkton and towards Stanardsville.

DS: But not in your area?

MF: No.

DS: Not in your area. In other words, your people, you would say were more friendly?

MF: It was most of 'em, most of 'em was.

DS: Uh-huh, right, okay. (mumbling) Oh, what was that, I wanted to ask you along that line, can't think of it right now.

[sound of phone ringing in background]

MF: Let me go and see what that is.

[00:43:26, tape breaks]

DS: At Christmas, did you shoot off firecrackers?

MF: Yes we did.

DS: Yeah.

MF: Mm-hmm.

DS: Everybody seemed to have done that, didn't they?

MF: Yeah.

DS: Did you have Roman candles, too?

MF: Yeah. And firecrackers, too. Roman candles didn't make no crack, just up in the air. Yeah.

DS: Sure. And did, do you know if people deliberately started fires to make sure of having huckleberries?

MF: I believe they did. Back in them days.

DS: Did you ever see any fires that really got out of control and sort of wiped out whole areas?

MF: Oh, I've seen that whole mountain burn over, most of it. Yeah. Burned for a week at the time.

DS: Terrible.

MF: Yeah.

DS: Was fire anything to be afraid of while you were there?

MF: It weren't enough to be afraid of in person.

DS: Well, weren't you afraid your house might burn or—?

MF: It couldn't get to the house. Now, there's one thing usually you might have to be afraid of, would be most of, these mountain lands then was rail fences. They fenced the grazing land up with rails and you had to keep the fire away from that or it would all burn up.

DS: Oh yeah, yeah.

MF: And it would be a bunch get together way all the way back there and they was all friends and something like that would get out and people would come and help you. Soon as they found out, and you'd have to--what you couldn't do what they do now at the park, clean out and rake the leaves back and make a ring or something, and you have the fire up against this other fire lots of times, make a fire and have it burned back so when that other fire comes, it couldn't come no further.

DS: Yeah, mm-hmm, yeah. I notice you're a fire warden.

MF: Yeah, for the park.

DS: Did you--right, for the park. Did you have in this section mountain people who deliberately started fires after the park had taken over so that they could be paid for putting out the fires?

MF: Not that I know of. Lots of it gets out and a good bit of it, sometimes, not through this area but down around Elkton, I have heard of a good bit of it getting out and I have heard of some of 'em getting, having to pull time for it. But I don't know who they was. But I've heard of some of 'em getting caught.

DS: Because they were paid to put out the fires so they'd start it. (chuckle)

MF: Might have been. But up in this area, they haven't been any fire up in this area, up in here, not since the mountain came in, since the park took it over. Only one time, fire got out from the city in Waynesboro, the wind then blowed and coursed up in there and burnt clear up past the Skyline Drive.

DS: Wow. That's bad.

MF: Maybe fifteen years ago.

DS: Did your family in the winter, when you were sitting around, tell any ghost stories?

MF: Not much. Some of 'em might have, my mother, some of 'em might be.

DS: Do you remember any?

MF: No, I don't remember none of 'em.

DS: Ahh.

MF: I've heard 'em tell things, but I don't remember 'em now.

DS: Did you ever play any practical jokes on anyone?

MF: Wasn't nothing much.

DS: Nothing much. (laugh) Okay. Have you ever heard of where your family originally came from?

MF: No, I haven't.

DS: You don't know. There are a lot of Fraziers.

MF: Yep. Well, the most, most of the people that lived back in there where we lived, was relations to us, all of 'em weren't, but most of 'em was relations to us. Uncles, cousins. My granddaddy lived back there.

DS: What was your mother's maiden name?

MF: MacHardy (??).

DS: Oh ho, that's a good Irish name. Does she know, did you ever hear from how she got there into the mountains?

MF: Well, her name, I mean, her mother's name was Julianne (??) And she married--she was a Frazier then, but then she married a Frazier, but they weren't no relation.

DS: Oh. They weren't?

MF: No, they weren't no relation.

DS: Oh, okay. Speaking of that, that's another story--

[00:49:29, tape drops abruptly]

MF: No. I did one once, but they weren't no relations. A Garrison boy, now he married a Frazier but he was a Garrison and he weren't no relation to this woman he married, and they raised a child. It never was right. He was cross-eyed and couldn't talk good.

DS: Aww. That's a shame.

MF: Yeah.

DS: But that wasn't because--

MF: Well, he weren't just right, his mind wasn't much anymore. But it weren't because they was any relation, not as far as that was--

DS: Would you say that the people were healthy people, pretty much?

MF: Healthier then than they are now.

DS: Well, get up at five in the morning and go to bed at what time?

MF: Well, eight or nine. Not later than nine o'clock, unless they was up for doing something, like for making apple butter or for things like that. You know.

DS: Mm-hmm. They were happy up there?

MF: Oh yes.

DS: Okay. Is there anything that I have not asked you that you can think of that went

on up there in the mountains? The ground was rocky.

MF: Oh yes, yes. Most of it was, but it was good ground and you could graze, you could graze most anything in that. Yeah. If you—

DS: Did you pick out the rocks?

MF: No. Didn't pick up very many. Now, sometimes there was a big rock to pick up, but we always aimed to get ground that weren't that rocky.

DS: Oh. You could pick wherever you wanted, then.

MF: Most any place like that, yeah. Not out on the grazing land.

DS: No.

MF: We'd clean up grounds, where they'd graze the cattle.

DS: Your corn, where would you take that to be ground?

MF: Well, that was near Mission Home. They had a corn mill there, ground the corn. That's all it done, just ground corn meal. And that was better than the corn meal you buy in the stores now. It's ground on water. And ground so now, you grind it fast, and it ain't as good. Well, we used a lot of corn bread. Yeah, we'd take corn to the mill, have it ground, get corn meal. More corn we used then than there was flour, most of 'em kept flour and cornmeal. Maybe have biscuits for breakfast out of flour, maybe cornmeal for supper or dinner sometimes.

DS: Did your mother make her own yeast?

MF: I think she did. But I don't know how she did it.

DS: Rye, what would you do with the rye?

MF: Well, you could feed it to your hogs or sell it, what you didn't need, sell it to someone or sell it to--

DS: Did you have a threshing machine?

MF: No. They raised it out then in what they call cradles. Have a big sheet, lay this down where the oats grow, raised lots of oats. Take a cradle that's out (??), maybe two men on this side and two over there and the cradle's a while (??) and then turn them sheaves over and cradle 'em again. They got most of it out that a way. And gather the grain up and then put more down, cradle it out.

DS: Right. That's what I wanted to hear.

MF: Yeah.

DS: Sure. Worked good, too, didn't it?

MF: Oh yes.

DS: And then you feed that to the hogs?

MF: Yeah, you—

DS: After all that work?!

MF: The hogs or the chickens, the oats was a good stock feed. Now rye, you could feed rye to your hogs, but not to your horses.

DS: And you never thought of having that ground up?

MF: What's that?

DS: The rye.

MF: Sometimes, we'd have, take some to the mill and have it ground.

DS: Okay. Well, this has been really fascinating, Mr. Frazier. I sure appreciate what you have told us. And I am going to leave this on in case you think of something else.

[End audio file, 00:54:57 min.]

End of Interview  
Miley Frazier, 11/12/1975  
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