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(SNP057) Matt Graves, Sr. interviewed by Deedee Deane, Vee Dove, Phil Hastings and John Dooms, transcribed by Peggy C. Bradley

Matt Graves Sr.

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NARRATOR: Mr. Matt Graves, Sr.

INTERVIEWERS: Ms. Vee Dove
Ms. D. Deane

PLACE: Rose River Fire Road (Madison Co.)

DATE: December 18, 1975

TRANSCRIBED BY: Peggy C. Bradley

COMPLETED DATE: March 25, 1987
INTRODUCTION

The following taped interview took place on the old New Market-Gordonsville Turnpike, in what is now the Rose River Fire Road of Shenandoah National Park. This interview took place on December the 18th, 1975, between the hours of 10:30 A.M. and 2:30 P.M.

The gentleman being interviewed is Mr. Francis Matt Graves, Sr., a long time resident of Syria, Virginia. The women conducting the interview are Miss Deedee Deane and Miss Vee Dove of the Madison Eagle Newspaper of Madison, Virginia. Accompanying this party are Mr. Phil Hasting, Assistant Chief Naturalist of Shenandoah National Park and John Dooms, Seasonal Naturalist in Shenandoah National Park.

Due to uncontrolled conditions, vehicle noise and the number of people conducting the interview, there will be a lot of background distortion. Nonetheless, the tape has a lot of value in that during the taping session, most of the old home sites and cemeteries from Syria, Virginia to the Skyline Drive on the Gordonsville Turnpike, coming from east to west, have been located. The true value of this tape will be enhanced if one has a map where these homes sites and cemeteries were marked.

Assistant Chief Naturalist Phil Hastings marked the map as we passed the home sites. So the map, in conjunction with the tape, should be of some value in the future.
D.: What is this? Chestnut logs? Or what do you remember about it?

M.G.: Well, I don't hardly know, but they moved out down in the neighborhood of the Novum section down there.

D.: Uh-huh. Do you know any of his family that's still living?

M.G.: No, I don't right now.

D.: Uh-huh.

M.G.: But, this was all open in there. Now, you can see how long it's been - see all those trees - see that was all open down in there.

D.: Uh-huh. They must have homes or something in there.

?: Did you say you interviewed a Dodson person?

M.G.: Well, they did. And then this was a field all open up in here. See all those trees have grown up since then.

D.: Yes.

?: I interviewed Hunter Dodson. He lived up in Hazel Hollow.

?: What relationship -

?: Oh, I'm sure they were all related.

?: Well, they say they're not, so I don't know whether he'd claim relation to this one or not.

In the book "Skyland", the Dodsons are referred to many times. In fact, Seldon Dodson is referred to in "Skyland." That's how I remember his name.

D.: Now, Mr. Matt, do you think that Seldon Dodson was the one that built this or his father probably built this?

M.G.: No, I don't think so. I don't know who started it out, but he was the last one lived here that I know -

D.: He was the last one that lived here. Uh-huh.

M.G.: Yes.

D.: Why is it that the place isn't torn down?
M.G.: There's a section in here somewhere that wasn't in the Park. I don't know exactly where that was. It was a little place in here that don't belong in the Park yet that was run around. I don't know exactly where that is.

?: It's on the map here.

M.G.: I don't know exactly where that is. It was a place in here somebody cut some - somebody come in here and cut some logs through here a couple years ago. I don't know exactly where that is - whether it was going along the road. Now, yonder's a -

?: Yellow mark -

M.G.: .... yellow mark right yonder, so this is the place right in here where this - there's a little boundary that don't belong to the Park.

D.: You know who it belongs to, Mr. Matt?

M.G.: No, I don't.

D.: Did they just refuse to sell to the Park?

M.G.: I don't know why it was run around. But, somebody come in and got some logs off of this place just - oh, four or five years ago.

D.: Uh-huh.

M.G.: But, I don't know when they made these boundaries here or what, and I don't know where it goes to.

D.: Do you want to take pictures?

D.: Yes, I want some pictures.

(Machine apparently cut off)

M.G.: That one girl that went off one time, she come down to the house, and had to take her over to Staunton.

D.: Oh, dear.

D.: Well, now, his house is gone now, I guess.

M.G.: Yeah. The house is gone. That's all in the Park. This was always a scarey place, I always thought, when you'd come down here where - the team - it's so
close to the river. Look what a bank you got here to go down.

D.: It's just straight down.

M.G.: Straight down. Yeah.

D.: You know this Haywood Mountain?

M.G.: That's Haywood Mountain back there.

D.: Uh-huh.

M.G.: That's Haywood Mountain there on your left.

D.: Who lived right here, Mr. Matt?

M.G.: One of his sisters. His sister had a log house right across the river there.

D.: Did they ford the river or did they build a bridge?

M.G.: Yeah. Yeah. They had to ford the river.

D.: Fored the river.

D.: Well, did any live on Haywood Mountain?

M.G.: Oh, yes. It was a lot of people lived on Haywood Mountain. Mr. Hamp Frey
had a farm up there - grazing farm.

D.: Oh.

M.G.: And Mr. Hamp Frey and Mr. John Frey and the Utzes all had a farm up there

D.: All right. Did you get to it from right here?

M.G.: Well, they would go from here or they could go up on the back side - on the back
side, they took the cattle up on the back side up at Weakleys up there close
to that bridge - you know where the bridge is up on that -

D.: Above your orchard?

M.G.: Yeah. On up above the orchard. The bridge up there - it went off right
there at that bridge. And then you could come out at the Byrd's Shelter -
up yonder - was just right over from that.

D.: Uh-huh.

M.G.: Had to get on top to go up to the other place.
D.: I see.
D.: In the summer.
M.G.: Yes.
D.: Uh-huh.
M.G.: Yeah. They had a big grazing field. They'd take the cattle up there in the spring, and then they would bring 'em back when it snowed in the fall.
D.: Did somebody stay up there?
M.G.: Yes. A lot of those Woodwards - a fellow by the name of Ashby Woodward, stayed up there. And these people squatted - that is, they had squatter's rights on a lot of that piece of land up on there, too.
D.: Well, that's what I wanted to ask you about - some of these places coming up here. Were some of these people squatters along Dark Hollow?
M.G.: No. None along this hollow that I know of.
D.: Uh-huh. Well, what about Haywood Mountain? Where did it get its name? Do you know?
M.G.: No, I don't. I don't know where it got its name. I don't have any idea.
D.: Just always been call that. Huh?
M.G.: Yeah.
D.: Well, you can see that they would be able to get across there right easy.
?.: Yeah.
M.G.: Place where they had the commissary long years ago, where they would stop and bring stuff to sell for these people. And then it was kind of a big barn here, too, that they put their horses up at night.
D.: Well, then, it was like a lodge for people traveling?
M.G.: I don't know. Now, all this broke up before my time. But, they always called this the commissary where they brought stuff to have for the people.
D.: Now, who lived here? Do you know?
M.G.: The last time I knowed of anybody living here was the Algers. The Algers
lived here and then it was a feller by the name of Woodward across the river. And Brass Woodward was the last one that lived in here. And his wife was afflicted. And then they lived down towards Afton somewhere. They moved out from here; when they left out, they were one of the last people went out.

D.: Uh-huh. What Alger was it? Do you know?

M.G.: Well - uh - Mart Alger that lived back in back of Kermit Bayliss.

D.: Yes. I did that on -

M.G.: That's where -

D.: Martin Alger.

M.G.: One of them was shot here at this house. Somebody shot somebody.

D.: Florence -

?.: Florence Alger.

D.: Yes. What were their names?

D.: Sunshine Florence was one of the girls. And what was the other?

D.: Sunshine Florence Alger. Two girls. Sunshine Florence and -

M.G.: They lived right in here. That was Mart's place. Mart and Feeney. Feeney was the wife and Mart. And then they had a brother named Doc and another one, Sam.

D.: And then Feeney died and Mr. Alger married a real young girl.

M.G.: Yeah.

D.: Martin Alger did.

M.G.: He married a Seal.

D.: Uh-huh.

M.G.: That's right.

D.: Now, who shot who over here?

M.G.: Well, Henry Alger shot Doc Alger. I think it was. Something like that.

D.: Do you know what it was all about? Were they - Saturday night and been in the stills?

M.G.: Well, it might have been over a woman. I don't know. It was some family
affair.

D.: They were brothers?

M.G.: Yes.

D.: Uh-huh. Did they get killed?

M.G.: One of 'em was. Yes, it killed him.

D.: My word. The mountain people most of the time had their own way of handling their problems amongst them.

M.G.: Oh yeah.

D.: They didn't call the Sheriff. They just grabbed the shot gun.

D.: You couldn't call the Sheriff. By the time you rode all the way to Madison to get the Sheriff, you weren't mad anymore.

M.G.: Yeah. That was like calling the fire department after the house had burned down.

D.: Uh-huh. Did the people have slaves that built these walls or did they build them themselves?

M.G.: Built them their self, I reckon, if they wanted them built. They just put up - just rocks piled up. There's no mud between those rock walls.

D.: I wouldn't think these mountain people would be prosperous enough to have slaves.

M.G.: Well, these people lived as easy as any people you could ever lived. Now, they had the chestnuts that they got - gathered the chestnuts in the fall. And they sold them. Of course, they didn't bring very much at the time - maybe fifteen cents a pound to start with or a little better. And then maybe they'd come down to almost nothing.

D.: Uh-huh.

M.G.: And then they had some hogs. They'd butcher their meat. And then they had a little corn and stuff like that. And they'd go to the mill and get a little corn meal. And in the winter time, they didn't do anything. They'd work
maybe out somewhere by the day or something like that through the summer.

D.: Would they haul corn as far as - uh -

M.G.: No, they didn't haul nothing much. They maybe had a little bit - if they'd take it to the mill and have it ground up.

D.: That's what I mean. Where would they take it to have it ground?

M.G.: They would take it down there right above our place - the Kite's Mill.

D.: Kite's -

M.G.: Where they -

D.: Silam Kite?

M.G.: Yeah.

?: I've heard that name before by Mrs. Judd - was her name - up at Big Meadows. She wasn't a Judd, though. She was a Weakley.

M.G.: Who? A Weakley?

?: Weakley. Frank and John Weakley. She was related to them.

M.G.: Yeah.

?: Used to come down to Kite's Mill.

M.G.: That's right. Come down to Kite's Mill - there was four or five of those Weakleys. Now, my brother owned that place up there. And we owned all this land. Now, my grandfather owned up - my father owned all this land. See, my father was the only son that survived. He had two brothers and both of those brothers died. One of them died in the flood and the other one died with pneumonia. He was in his teens or maybe twenty some years old - something like that when he died. But, we owned all this land in here at one time. That's why I know a little something about this place.

D.: Uh-huh.

?: Where did you register your claim? Which County? Where did you go to register - get a deed and everything?

M.G.: Madison, I imagine.
Madison County.

D.: From 1793 on, to Madison. Anything before that is Culpeper.

M.G.: Now, you see, we owned this before the Park. The Park paid us about Six Dollars an acre for this land in here. I think that's about all. And one little tree would almost pay for that now.

I'll show you where we run out. Go on up the road. They had kind of a church here at one time before the Park took over. And then this old big barn - great big old barn was here when these people lived here. One feller lived across the river there. There's another - go out through here somewhere - I don't know exactly right where you go off at. But, right close here, there was a field along here. You see the road that looked like they had a field all along there, too. But, this was all open here, clear on up against the mountain, yonder, a right good ways when I was just a boy.

The Algers - old man John Alger lived here. And the grave yard is right up in this - in 'tween this -

D.: All right. The periwinkle - you can see the periwinkle up there on the sides.

M.G.: Yeah. It's right in between this place here. See all that periwinkle. Yeah.

D.: That's the Alger grave yard.

M.G.: Now, I don't know who was the last folks buried here. It seems to me like some of these Richards down here was buried here the last.

D.: It was which Alger?

M.G.: Old man John Alger lived here a right good while. The Algers - the father of this Mart Alger, that was down below here. And then he had another son that lived on back here - Ashby Alger - lived on back here a little farther.

D.: You said he had a big house. Was it log?

M.G.: Well, yes, it was a log house. It was two houses here - a log house and another frame house.

D.: Uh-huh.
M.G.: But this land was all on our place, you see, but these people lived here.

D.: Uh-huh.

M.G.: They the ones that lived here last.

D.: Well, you don't know who built the houses?

M.G.: No. No. I don't know who built the houses. The houses were old, old homes. But right in there is where this graveyard is. It's in between these two roads. Now, you come right back up there just in a little bit.

D.: I see - between the two curves here.

?: Did they bury anybody in here after the Park took over -

M.G.: Yeah. There's been several buried in there since the Park. I don't know who was the last one buried in there.

D.: Are the graves marked with head stones and things like that? Or is it just bare?

M.G.: Well, if they would be marked, it wouldn't be anything but just the stone. Maybe a stone that long stuck in the ground, maybe up just a little bit.

D.: Uh-huh.

M.G.: That'd be about all, I imagine. You could find some if you wanted to get out and look, but that would be about all it would be.

?: Something I'd like to ask you if I could. I've been interested in - is who made the coffins around here and what were they made of? Do you know where they got -

M.G.: Well, a feller by the name of Bowler made coffins a right good while. A feller, Hubert Bowler, at Crigsville made wooden coffins. They were shaped, you know, kind a - for your shoulders - kinda small for the head and then they'd come a little body and then smaller at the foot.

D.: Uh-huh.

?: Do you know what kind of wood he used?

M.G.: Mostly walnut.
?: Walnut?
M.G.: Yeah.

?: You don't remember how much they cost, do you?
M.G.: No, I don't.

D.: Would people who died, like the Algers that lived up here, would they go all the way to Criglersville for a coffin?
M.G.: Well -

D.: Would they make their own?
M.G.: No. They would - somebody would make a coffin for 'em, and it would be brought in.

D.: I see.
M.G.: And they would bury 'em here. That is, they didn't have an embalming or anything then. If it was in the summertime, and they wanted to keep them over, they would use ice, if they had ice. If they didn't have ice, why, they'd just have to bury 'em pretty quick.

D.: Uh-huh.
M.G.: But where they had ice, why they would put ice back packs around 'em to keep 'em maybe for a day or two.

Go up this a way with the cattle when we took cattle up on the mountain. Come right here and go right on up through this place here. And after he built that up there, why he worked that road out to Hiram Meadowses -

D.: Uh-huh.
M.G.: .... from up at what they call Wes Hurt's -


M.G.: .... where that little bridge is up there - the bridge was out for a long time. I don't know whether they ever put it back in - they did when they hauled this - the timber from up there.

D.: Yeah.
M.G.: But one place there where there wasn't any bridge, he built that road from there on around to Hiram Meadows and hooked up with the Meadows Hollow road.

D.: Uh-huh.

?: It shows where it comes across now.

D.: Now where are we?

?: Here. We're right here now. And this is the yellow blazed trail - five foot trail.

D.: Uh-huh.

?: And it comes on over here -

D.: Uh-huh.

?: .... and hits the Rapidan Road.

D.: It comes over here and hits this trail right here.

?: That's the same trail.

D.: O.k.

?: That's the boundary line.

D.: Oh. I know it hits this trail right here. This is Perry Meadows land. Right up in here is what I'm talking about.

M.G.: Well, when did they make this trail through here? What is it?

?: Continue on up.

D.: And then you get on that trail -

?: I think that's a fire trail -

D.: .... and then you go up to here -

?: I think it's a fire trail.

D.: We will come to this trail -

M.G.: Well, that's good. I'm glad to know that they got some -

D.: This is what they call Broyles Gap.

?: Oh, is it?

D.: Yeah.
The yellow is supposed to represent a fire trail.

M.G.: Well, when did they make that?

?: They got it marked over here. Yeah.

D.: That's been there.

?: I don't know.

M.G.: I never saw this.

D.: It's hard to get through there.

?: This map goes back to 1970.

M.G.: Well, Matt, Jr. and them said sometime - the last ride they made, they rode in there somewhere. And they come down on the other side of the stream.

And they was tryin' to get me to tell 'em where they were. I told 'em whether they were in the Lane place. And they said if they'd gone up a little farther, they'd a come into Hiram Meadows. Now, Hiram Meadows lives - this girl lives right straight across here from here -

D.: Uh-huh. Her house -

?: You said the Lane place. That's Lane stream - the family -

M.G.: That's the Lane stream that goes right down through there. We had a little farm - a little place right over in there. They had apple trees and things like that when I was just a boy. They didn't have to spray 'em or nothin'. They come there and picked apples and hauled 'em out long years ago. But, we never saved 'em or nothin'. Just brought 'em to the house and all. Old time Milam apples. The old time apples.

?: I want to ask you, Mr. Graves - Milam Gap - was that Gap named after the apples or was it a Milam family or what?

M.G.: It could have been. That's the only thing I know.

D.: It was a Milam man.

M.G.: I don't know. It might a been a man or what. But it might a been a man that started the Milam apples. The apple might a been named after a man.
So, it's hard to say.

D.: That's what Mr. Charlie Ross said.

?: Well, now, Charles Ross says a man by the name of Milam cultivated the Milam apple. And it's Milam Gap which for which it's named Milam Gap.

M.G.: Well, they've changed these names of some of these roads and stuff like that. It used to be Milam's Gap or the Red Gate Road or something like that. They've changed 'em from one thing to the other. It's kinda hard to keep up with.

D.: Uh-huh.

?: Was the Milam apple a real good apple?

M.G.: Yes. It's a small apple. It was an apple that you could meller it and make a little pulp. It was almost like apple sauce, that is, you could suck the whole thing out.

D.: Did they keep good over the winter?

M.G.: Yes. They were a very good apple. Very good keepin' apple. It was a smaller apple. There're very few of 'em any more now.

D.: I saw a bin box of them down at the packing shed.

M.G.: Well, that was a Russet, I expect. Russet Milam.

D.: Yeah. It was - uh-huh.

M.G.: Brown.

D.: Little brownish looking.

M.G.: There's one tree of that up above the lodge. Up there - right in the road above the lodge.

D.: Uh-huh.

?: We have some up at the Gap - Milam Gap -

M.G.: Yeah.

?: .... the Park. There're a couple of trees up around there that have quite a few. They are small.
M.G.: Yeah.

D.: Uh-huh.

D.: Oh, my goodness -

M.G.: Back in the corner.

?: Was it Charlie Smith that lived here?

D.: And they had this old sow in the house under the bed.

M.G.: Well, I don't know whether she was under the bed or not, but in a corner - sow and a litter of pigs.

D.: Do you know if there are any relatives of these Smiths in Madison County now?

M.G.: Yes. Some of these Corbin boys that work down for us are distant relatives.

D.: Mike Corbin?

M.G.: No, not Mike. There's Boot Corbin and his boy. Boot married one of the Alger girls.

We'll eat all of the cookies directly.

D.: Well, that's what I brought 'em for -

M.G.: Well, that's enough now.

?: They are delicious.

D.: I'll tell Mandy. Mandy made 'em for me last night.

M.G.: Now, we owned all the way up to here. Just a little ways up yonder here.

?: Beyond here. All the way up, you say?

M.G.: No. Back this way. Down there where I showed you where the log was alongside the road.

D.: Uh-huh. How many acres was that, Mr. -

M.G.: I don't know.

D.: No way of telling?

M.G.: But this all went to the Park. Course, it was always in woods. It never was no farm or fields or anything up here. It was always just mountain. And the
timber has never been, you know, has never been very large. It's been cut off long years ago. None of the trees is very large, you see, here.

?: These people that lived here - you all didn't mind them living on your land at all?

M.G.: No. No. They worked backwards and forwards. They would come down home and work and something like that. They 'd spend a week down there someplace. We had a out building there that they stayed in.

?: If they cut a little bit of timber or anything, did you all mind that?

M.G.: Yeah. That's right.

?: I mean - they didn't really cut any to sell or anything?

M.G.: No. No. They didn't bother that.

D.: Well, do you know - who did you all acquire the land from? Do you have any idea?

M.G.: No. I don't know know, it was my -

D.: Was it from a lot of people or -

M.G.: it was my grandfather's. I don't know whose it was - who it was first.

D.: Uh-huh.

M.G.: A lot of these land grants, I don't know - now there was a fellow name of Shirley that owned so much land all down about Syria and all in through there.

D.: Uh-huh. They said Thomas Shirley had more squatters on his land than anybody's ever known of.

M.G.: I reckon so. He owned -

D.: 'Cause he owned so much.

D.: Uh-huh.

M.G.: owned a big lot of it. I don't know how much or how the boundaries were.

?: You know when you think today, the big towns like Richmond and Harrisonburg, and they call this the Gordonsville Turnpike. You wonder what was so special about New Market and Gordonsville. Could you tell me why New Market was - do
you know why they'd have a turnpike between these two?

M.G.: Well, it was no railroad in the valley -

?: Uh-huh.

M.G.: ... and to ship anything out to any distance, they had to go there to deal.

?: To New Market?

M.G.: Yeah. It took about four days to go from New Market to Gordonsville and back.

D.: Gordonsville was the center of the railroad activity.

M.G.: It was a railroad terminal.

?: This was really the way you had of getting over to New Market, wasn't it? The one way.

?: Well, New Market must have been a thriving place years earlier because Sugar Hollow - down where I'm talking about -

M.G.: Yeah.

?: .... German's Gap - they found that the Presbyterian missionaries sent people into Sugar Hollow and Rockfish Gap in 1734 -

M.G.: Yeah. That's right.

?: .... and the missionaries came from New Market.

M.G.: Yeah. I don't know why it was, but it was always the New Market-Gordonsville Turnpike. It used to be a couple fellows - a couple brothers of the name of Windle - Jake and Tom Windle - and they would come over in the valley here and buy cattle. Buy 'em by the head and them they'd bunch 'em all up. And then they'd get ready and they'd drive 'em across this mountain here. They'd hire somebody to drive 'em.

D.: On this road?

M.G.: Yeah. Drive 'em right over this road into Stanley. We'd take 'em into Stanley and then somebody else would pick 'em up from there and drive 'em on into - or they'd load 'em maybe at the station in Stanley. But anyhow, they would pick up these cattle and bring 'em - horses, too. They'd have a lot of
horses and cattle and all that. That was long years ago.

?: Did they ever have a slaughter house down there or just cattle pens?

M.G.: I don't know. They never had no slaughter house in my time. They just butchered out in the field anywhere around the house. Hang 'em up with - cut two poles and put a hoe around the top of them and hang 'em up on that.

D.: Back to Charlie Smith's house. How big was the house?

M.G.: Aw, it wasn't very large.

D.: Two rooms?

M.G.: About two rooms. Two rooms and maybe a little kitchen on the side. Maybe a little loft upstairs.

D.: Uh-huh.

?: Did he have a spring running anywhere?

M.G.: No. I don't know where they got the water. I don't know where the stream was. It musta been a spring back there somewhere though.

D.: Most of the time, they didn't build a house somewhere unless they did have a spring close.

M.G.: No. They had to have water. They had water - a spring somewhere.

D.: Uh-huh.

?: In a individual family like this, I wonder when someone died, if they carried their family down to somebody else's cemetery or did they have their own around here.

M.G.: Oh, they - most of 'em had their cemetery - all this hollow was buried here. Now, they had a cemetery down at Richards across the river on down there. It's a cemetery in that Richard's Hollow. It was across the river. Somebody was buried down here - aw - a couple years ago. And they had to make a bridge to get across the river - that is, foot bridge. I don't remember who that was that was buried there. But they all had a burying ground someplace that they'd take 'em to.
(Machine was apparently off for a time at this point)

M.G.: Different groceries and stuff like that and put it right down in this little gate to the copper mine.

D.: Where did people live that worked in the copper mine?

D.: I expect it's just to put -

M.G.: Huh?

D.: Where'd the people live that worked in the copper mine?

M.G.: They had a building down there. A fellow by the name of Brigham - I believe it was -


M.G.: Brigham run the copper mine. And then a old fellow by the name of Hall worked for him.

D.: Uh-huh.

M.G.: He was one of the last that had anything much to do with it.

D.: That's what Miss Mary said.

M.G.: The last that went out. But they had a nice building down there, but the people in the mountains up here stold so much stuff out of it, and then the place was burned. They had a nice, great big log cabin with a veranda all around. Nice porch and all.

D.: How many people worked for the copper mine?

M.G.: Oh, I don't know how many. It was a whole lot of 'em. I don't know -

D.: Were they like -

M.G.: It didn't run so long. That is, that I know of. And then they had a saw mill in there one time. Davis and Ashby, my brother, come up here and hauled a lot of logs out one time.

D.: Uh-huh.

?.: Was the - who ran the mine? Was it a company that owned it or an individual?

M.G.: Yeah, it was a company.
?: Company.
M.G.: Yeah.

D.: And this Brigham man owned the company?
M.G.: Yeah. He was head of it at the time.

D.: Mr. Matt, I've always heard that the mountain people were very superstitious. Did they do everything by signs?
M.G.: A lot of it. A lot of it was signs. They would plant and stuff like that by signs.

D.: Did they go by that also for putting a roof on a house and building fences -
M.G.: No. They had to do that when it had to be done. No, I wouldn't say that.

?: Mr. Graves, I understand there was a stave factory up at the middle of the Meadow. Do you know anything about that?
M.G.: That was at Big Meadows - right out from Big Meadows.

?: Do you know where it was in the Meadow? Would it be the middle of it today, or do you know?
M.G.: No, you wouldn't - unless you go back to Big Meadows - drive back to Big Meadows.

?: I mean when you look out into the Meadow, have you been there in a long time? Have you been up to Big Meadows in -
M.G.: I know where Big Meadows is.

?: Well, when you look out into it from where the Visitor's Center is -
M.G.: It's way on back this side - it's back this side now, that big field - that big meadow was a great big field -

?: Uh-huh.
M.G.: .... and the concession is built on the back end of that.

?: Yeah.
M.G.: Well, that was the Koontz's - Charlie Koontz and some of them's land back there. But the stave mill was back where that water - swamp - it's kind of a swamp back there -
M.G.: There's a big spring where old man Frank Weakley lived -

M.G.: ... and a big swamp - well, the main stream that goes down near the hollow -

M.G.: ... lays right at that. Now, that big stream and then it's a kind of a cliff right out the other side the spring where a road come up there. And the CC Camp was right at Mr. Frank Weakley's house. Right up the other side of Mr. Frank's -

M.G.: Yeah.

M.G.: Yeah.

D.: O.K. For the edification of a city girl, what is a "stave mill"?

M.G.: Well, it's where you make barrels.

D.: Oh! A barrel place.

M.G.: It's a barrel stave. It's about that long and then they're cut out. And then they're kinda grooved like so they make the round. They're fixed so they'll make the barrel. And then they have a stave to put on 'em and then they have to make a headin' that goes into the barrel to hold it together.

D.: Oh, so they made barrels.

M.G.: Well, they went out to make barrels and stuff like that.

M.G.: Oh, did they?

M.G.: Oh, yeah.

M.G.: Shipped them all out, then.

M.G.: We used them too, and then they had a stave mill down - right there at my house. Right there below the store. Mr. had a stave mill there.
And there was also a stave mill up there at this center - where they have this Christian Center -

D.: That was there at -

M.G.: ... there at the Old Kite's Mill.

D.: ... Kite's Mill.

D.: Did they actually put the barrels together there?

M.G.: Oh yeah. Yes. They were made and everthing right there.

D.: What kind of wood did they use?

M.G.: Mostly poplar. It's a soft wood.

?: Is anything left of Kite's Mill now?

M.G.: Oh yeah.

D.: Yes.

?: What about the Richard's Mill? The people at Dark Hollow, did they use - did they use - not - did they walk over by Richards? I don't understand - did they not use Richards?

M.G.: Well, that was just a small mill.

?: ... any big stuff -

M.G.: They didn't use that fer it too much.

?: Uh-huh.

M.G.: And then the store, too - they didn't have a store down at Richards to amount to - just small stuff. Very small stuff. Just one little room.

?: Where was the nearest big store?

M.G.: Down at Syria.

?: Did you all run that?

M.G.: Yeah.

?: The Graves?

M.G.: No. We didn't run it. We furnished the building there for a long time.

There was two stores at Syria at one time. One on the corner of my lot and
on the corner on the other lot. And both of 'em burned one Sunday morning.

D.: Oh my -

D.: Oh. They both burned at the same time.

M.G.: Both burned the same time.

D.: Who owned which one?

M.G.: We owned the upper store. But somebody else was running that. We owned the -

D.: The building.

M.G.: .... the building. But the other store was a fellow by the name of Lock -

D.: Was it L-a-u-c-k?

M.G.: L-o-c-k

D.: L-o-c-k or L-a-u-c-k?

M.G.: L-a-u-c-k - any way you want to call it. It was Lock.

D.: Uh-huh. Was he any kin to the -

D.: Peter?

D.: Yeah.

D.: Peter Lauck. Was he any kin to Peter Lauck?

M.G.: Yeah. I would say so.

D.: And he ran the one where Miss Mary's store is right now.

D.: No. He ran the one on the corner of Mr. Matt's place.

D.: Oh.

M.G.: Yeah. On the other corner.

D.: Well, who ran the one where Miss Mary is now?

M.G.: Well, B.S. Utz was running the one there when it burned the first time.

D.: Uh-huh.

M.G.: And then they built another one there and then that burned.

D.: Yeah. She said it burned two times.

M.G.: (Noise in background at this point)
Does Frank or John have any living relatives? Any Weakleys around that lived up there?

M.G.: Yes. Frank has some down at

?: Any Weakleys down at

M.G.: Well, I reckon. I don't know what happened to the boys. I don't know whether any of them is living now or not. But John had some boys that lived

?: Now, you were saying - who lived at this home site, Mr. Graves?

M.G.: What?

?: Who lived at this home site, Mr. Graves? Right here?

M.G.: Old man John Cave.

?: John Cave?

M.G.: Yeah.

?: Was Gerd Cave his brother?

M.G.: Gerd Cave was his son, I reckon.

?: He was a preacher?

M.G.: Yeah.

D.: Did he preach in a church up here?

M.G.: Yes. He preached in the church here. And he had a church over towards - around different places. He'd go around and have services at different places.

D.: What denomination was he? Do you know?

M.G.: Methodist, I reckon.

?: Do you know where the church was right here?

M.G.: Yeah.

?: Will we go by it on this road?

M.G.: The other side of the bridge. You got to cross the bridge first.

?: We'll go by it then.

D.: Was there any Breedens that lived over here?
M.G.: Yes. It was Breedens up here.

D.: That's Mamie Meadows.

M.G.: Mamie's father. I'll show you where that is.

D.: O.k. That's where I want to see, then.

M.G.: I think the other house was along here somewhere.

?: That's another Cave?

M.G.: Yes.

D.: The Caves all lived on this side of the bridge?

M.G.: Yes. Well, no. There's another Cave - Newman Cave lived on the other side.

D.: Uh-huh. So we've got Newman and George Gerd -

M.G.: Yeah.

D.: ... Cave.

M.G.: Yeah.

?: Did you mention that you thought Gerd Cave was still living?

M.G.: Yes.

?: Where does he live?

M.G.: Oh, I don't know whether he lives at Luray or not.

?: Uh-huh. And he was a preacher?

M.G.: Yeah. Ain't you got a Cave boy working for you? He can tell you about some of these -

?: He said he's a grandson.

M.G.: What's his name?

?: I can't remember right off hand. I was just in the Visitor's Center and he came in and we were talking about the Weakleys. That John and Frank had lived in the Meadow.

M.G.: Yeah. Well, some of those can tell you right much about the different places, too.

?: There's a Mrs. Cook who lives in Luray, who makes baskets -

M.G.: Yeah.
She does it the real old style. She and her husband take the white oak and they make their baskets. And her husband - I think his name is William Cook - used to get his white oak out of here. Do you know him?

M.G.: No, I don't.

?: She said she was Aaron Nicholson's granddaughter.

M.G.: Well, now, that on over - Aaron Nicholson lived over yonder on old Rag Road. There was all Nicholsons mostly over in that section.

?: But you know them -

M.G.: Well, I've heard of Aaron, but I don't know exactly where they lived. I don't know that section as well as I do this 'cause we had property back here, you see, and property up on top the mountain, you see. That's why we worked backwards and forwards. And 'fore I was married, we'd come up this road here and went into Honeymoon Hut. And had horses and we road all over the Big Meadows up to Fork Mountain down to Stanley and over to Luray and all over. Go from here to Skyland and spend the week up here.

?: Where is Honeymoon Cottage, you were saying -

M.G.: That was right below Hoover's Schoolhouse. Right where Frank Weakley lived. In the yard at Frank Weakley's house. And then they had a little schoolhouse there - a little log schoolhouse that my brother built. And then he had a man who could teach there - some of those children there' fore Hoover ever come up in here.

?: Uh-huh. So then you owned some property down there - you said right there. And that's where you had your Honeymoon Cottage -

M.G.: My grandfather owned the land up to the Hoover Camp. Joined in the Hoover Camp. And Mr. Hamp Frey, my wife's father, and her brother - his brother, owned the land where the Hoover Camp was.

D.: Uh -

?: Why did you call it Honeymoon Camp -

D.: Hut.
?: Hut?

M.G.: Well, they had several honeymoons that people would marry and go up there for their honeymoon.

?: I see. You know, we used to do something - have you ever heard of "belling"? I'm sure you have. Did you ever bell anybody? Do you know what belling is?

M.G.: Oh, yes.

?: O.k.

D.: I thought they were chivarees.

M.G.: Riding on a rail, too.

?: What's - now, I - what's "riding on the rail" now?

M.G.: Well, they'd just tie 'em to a pole and ride 'em - one get a hold of one end of the pole and one the other.

?: I never heard of that.

D.: Well, now, it was a chivaree when you got married -

D.: They called it belling, too.

?: Yeah. We used to call it belling. We'd go out and make a lot of noise.

M.G.: Oh, yeah. They made a lot of noise. They belled one of my boys one time. They - one of 'em married one weekend and he come back. And then the other one got married at the same time he come back off his honeymoon. And he come back to my house and spent the night. And they thought they'd bell him. And they were belling and carrying on. And they were standing down in front, and I was upstairs, and I just poured a bucket of water right out there on top of 'em.

D.: When was this? When Matt got married?

M.G.: Yeah, when Matt got married. I heard him come home that night. And Irvin was at home and they was gonna bell Irvin. And they were lookin' for 'em. And I think maybe we were sleepin' - some of 'em was out in the wash house and they didn't know where they were. They were all over the house. And some of the boys that come to Matt, Jr.'s weddin' were there. And they
didn't even wake up. They had a big time that night.

But I just got a bucket of water - I think it was Bobby I dropped the water on.

D.: Oh me.

M.G.: This is where the Breedens lived. Right in - here in this curve.

D.: Uh-huh.

M.G.: That was the Tom Breeden -

?: Tom -

M.G.: And he had four or five daughters. And Mamie was one of them that lives over there next to you.

D.: Uh-huh.

?: And you say the church was below the Breeden house?

M.G.: Yeah. The church was between this and - about halfway between here and the bridge.

D.: Uh-huh.

M.G.: And there's a little level part back there, I think - looked like maybe a - there was a square place was dug out

D.: Uh-huh.

?: Not too much level up in there.

M.G.: No. It's more yonder above the house, you see, back in there. There's kind of a ravine here, you see. Most of these places now - it's more level, but in these ravines where the water comes down, the rocks stick out more, you see.

?: Well, it looks kind of level right up here, Mr. Graves.

M.G.: It was on back up a little farther.

D.: Uh-huh. Well, where would their grave yard have been?

M.G.: The grave yard's up here on the left hand - on the right hand side in this flat after you get around this next curve.

D.: Oh, I see.

(Background noise)
?: Who did you say it was that lived right down there that owned the - that ran the mine?

M.G.: Fellow Hall.

?: Hall.

M.G.: Guy Hall. It was a house in here. Newman Cave - Newman Cave lived here on this curve.

D.: This is where Newman Cave lived.

D.: Now, this looks fairly flat here.

M.G.: Yes, it was. It was a great big house here. It was right on the edge of the road, too. Right close to the road.

D.: O.k. Now, let me get this Cave straight. Newman Cave lived here and his son was the preacher who lived down -

M.G.: No. No. I told you that was John Cave.

D.: That was John Cave.

M.G.: Yeah.

D.: And what kin is John Cave to Newman?

M.G.: I don't know. Cousins.

D.: O.k. I see. They're not sons or brothers.

M.G.: Yeah.

D.: All right.

?: It's real flat in there.

M.G.: And the cemetery is somewhere in this lower section on the right hand side in there. I don't know just exactly where.

D.: Uh-huh.

M.G.: But it might be if somebody had been buried in here right lately, it might be a trail or somewhere here that you could tell something about where to go down to it.

?: Was that the Cave cemetery?

M.G.: Yeah. The Cave cemetery.
?: Is that the only people that were buried in there - maybe Breedens -
M.G.: Well, there are Breedens and all would have been buried here 'cause they're right close, you see.
D.: Uh-huh. Yeah, that's right. Mrs. Meadows says Caves and Breedens are buried in the graveyard.
?: See there are a lot of old apple trees there, Mr. Graves.
M.G.: Yeah. Well, it was a kind of a open field here - apples in there. House was out back in there. The man that worked for us a right good while - his wife lived out in there. And her father was buried there since - about five or six years ago.
?: What's Norman's Hotel? Was it down Tanner's Ridge Road or what?
M.G.: Yeah. It was right on Tanner's Ridge.
?: Was it a hotel?
M.G.: Yeah. It was a big old - a great big hotel right on the mountain. Out on a kind of a - out on a peak.
D.: What happened to the hotel?
M.G.: I don't know. I reckon it was destroyed when they took all the other buildings out.
D.: They just -
?: That's one I hadn't heard of.
M.G.: We'd ride right down there - that road. And then there was another spring-house - a great big spring with a big trough right straight down from this section here on this little section out here.
?: Yeah.
D.: Well, now, would that be in Page County?
M.G.: There's a little road off from that. There's a big trough there where the cattle would go. And my wife and I - before we were married - rode all over this place.
?: Was the CC Camp right over in here then, where I'm pointing?
M.G.: Yeah. The CC Camp was back this side of that swamp. When you see that swamp right there where all those bushes are -

?: The trenches are still there. I found the trenches and I thought that was it.

M.G.: Well, now, the CC Camp was right on that little ridge right this side of that. And then the stave mill and another house was right out the other side of that. And then we went from that road there that you was talking about - went right straight down to the Hoover School.

?: O.K.

M.G.: Now, I don't know - it was another road that went out the top of this mountain here. I don't know exactly where that road went. But it was a fellow, Corbin, and a fellow, Long, that owned this place back out the other side here.

?: Was John Miller's distillery down the Rapidan Road? Still house?

M.G.: Yeah. A little down the Rapidan Road.

?: Was it before you get to Hoover Camp or where?

M.G.: There was nobody lived this side of the Hoover Camp that I know.

?: So the distillery was beyond -

M.G.: On down below - the still would be on down below there.

?: Uh-huh. Oh boy.

M.G.: We used to ride up to that.

(Noise in background)

?: If you'd like to see that schoolhouse, it's just right around here. I can wheel around there real fast.

M.G.: All right.

?: If you'd like to see it real fast. They reassembled it.

(Noise in background)

?: I talked to some people down here in Elkton that I know -
M.G.: It was down on this side of the mountain then -

M.G.: There was preachin' up there on Sunday. A lot of these people when they'd go, they'd walk right straight across there to the -

D.: Uh-huh.

M.G.: Any idea how many people were employed at that stave mill?

M.G.: No, I don't. I don't have -

D.: I believe that church was right along in here, somewhere. It wasn't in a road - just right alongside the road.

D.: They all walked to it. No cars or anything like that. I think that's about where it was.

?.: Did they have a regular preacher?

M.G.: No. Some of these people in the mountain - Gerd Cave or some of them would preach. Sometimes they would have a camp meetin' up at the stave mill. They'd have a camp meetin' up there maybe for a week or something like that.

D.: They were like circuit riders.

M.G.: Yeah. That's right.

(Background noise)

M.G.: And we had a two horse surry. And some of our relatives was with us. And we went to the Luray Cave. I drove a mule - a little old gray mule - and went to this cave. And when we come back, we went down this mountain here. I wanted to go to the bathroom, and I got out and give this girl the reins so she drove the mule down. So, she decided she wanted to get out after I'd gotten out. And I got down yonder about that bridge - I was waitin' for her. I went down one of these curves, you see -
D.: Uh-huh.

M.G.: .... so I got down to the bridge. Why, here come the mule and after awhile, here she come with the buggy seat. That's one of the things that happened. But that's been a long time ago. That was Grace Moser that was with me.

D.: Grace Moser.

M.G.: Grace Moser. And ole Preacher Moser that used to preach at the Lutheran Church - his daughter.

D.: I'll be darned.

D.: I swear.

D.: What about any kind of stories that the mountain people used to tell? Did they tell stories about unusual happenings like ghosts in the mountains or - uh - or any kind of folk lore things?

M.G.: No. Nothing that I know of.

D.: Mrs. Meadows used to talk about Mr. Pollock. She was so impressed with Mr. Pollock -

D.: All the mountain people were.

D.: .... because he had such a little foot. She would talk about that all the time - that he had the littlest foot she had ever seen.

?: I've heard that.

D.: .... on a man.

?: That's the second time I've heard that.

D.: She was very impressed with him.

M.G.: Well, I knew Pollock very well. He used to come down the house when we had meals, you know. He had horses up there and he would hire the horses out. And then they would bring a whole crowd down - ten or fifteen of 'em - and we would feed 'em down to my home place. And then we'd put the horses up. And then after they eat, why they'd get up and go back. He'd blow his horn when he'd come around the back road there so we'd know he was coming. We'd
get the horses and put 'em all in and feed 'em. Take the saddles off 'em. And then after they'd eat, why they'd all get up and go back.

D.: Did your family operate a lodge or -

M.G.: My home has always been a stoppin' place for the people on this road.

D.: Uh-huh.

M.G.: There's always been a place there. We never turned anybody away.

D.: Uh-huh.

M.G.: They'd come there and spend the night. And then if they're going over to the railroad or something thata way, it's always been a stoppin' place at my home place.

D.: Uh-huh. But you didn't have one that was up in the hollow here?

M.G.: No. No. No. We didn't have any place up above there, only the home place. We had a big barn there, and we'd take care of the horses and things like that when they'd come in.

?: You know, horses - uh - did you have a - I wanted to ask - you talked about driving a team of horses up here with, I guess, logs and stuff on it -

M.G.: Yes.

?: .... did you have a particular type of horse that you always liked?

M.G.: Well, mostly draft horses - that is, regular work horses, you'd only use 'em -

?: I mean did you have a special name for that type of horse - like Appalosas like you have today.

M.G.: Well, no. They were Percheons or Clydesdales. The work stock.

?: The work -

M.G.: Yeah. Percheons -

D.: Morgans? Did you have any Morgans?

M.G.: Yeah. The Morgans, too. The Morgan was a work horse, but they're using the Morgan now more for riding - that is for pleasure. More of a pleasure horse.
Well, what did you all use for a pleasure horse? When you'd come up - you say you used to come courtin' up here sometimes.

M.G.: Well, we had gaited horses, mostly. That is the - uh -

D.: Tennessee Walker?

M.G.: No. They was - uh - I don't know which it -

D.: Saddle horse.

M.G.: .... just a regular grade of a horse. But they were five gaited - three to five gaited.

?: You mentioned a surry, you know, everybody had a surry. Where did you buy your surry? Where did you get that?

M.G.: Oh, well, they were - well, any of the carriage places. They was a big carriage that had a top over it like -

?: Uh-huh.

M.G.: .... and you set back and drive two horse - two horse carriages. Had four - three seats in it. Two or three seats.

D.: There was a carriage factory in Madison.

?: Oh, is that where -

M.G.: Yeah.

?: You don't know how much those things cost in those days, do you?

M.G.: Oh, they didn't cost much at that time.

?: But were they comparable to buying a car today?

M.G.: Clidents was a buggy - that is, there's a buggy named Clidents that was from New Market -

?: Uh-huh.

M.G.: The Clinedents people lived in New Market. They made buggys and things like that.

?: If you had to go out and buy a buggy in those days, would the amount of money be the same proportionally as if you had to go out and buy a car today or -
M.G.: No. No.

?: ....... much cheaper?

M.G.: Very much cheaper.

?: Uh-huh.

M.G.: Everything was cheaper in those days.

?: Yeah. I didn't mean they were the same price, but, you know -

M.G.: Yes. They wasn't too much.

?: ....... didn't have to save for a long time to get it.

M.G.: No. No.

?: Well, most of the buggys -

D.: You could buy two horses and a buggy and then you'd probably be putting out the same amount of money as you would today to put out to buy a car.

M.G.: Yeah.

?: Yeah. Uh-huh. Well, was it customary, you know, like today, when a young man gets out on his own, you know, he gotta have a car. Was it a big thing then to get your first buggy?

M.G.: Oh, yeah. You'd get a horse and buggy. I had a horse when I was in my teens.

?: Uh-huh.

M.G.: And I kept a horse from that time all the way up until now.

D.: Did you buy your horses from somebody or did you breed 'em?

M.G.: Well, we bred 'em and buy 'em, and changed horses - trade horses.

D.: You ever broken one yourself?

M.G.: Oh, yes. Yes.

D.: Get tossed on the ground a few times?

M.G.: I've broken all kinds.

?: Did any of 'em break you?

M.G.: No. I've been thrown, though, but I never had a bone broke, though. No, I've gotten along very well in that line.

?: That's interesting. Thank you.