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(SNP063) Rosie Hurt Hoffner interviewed by Nancy Smith

Rosie L. Hoffner

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I: My name is Nancy Smith. I'm in the home of Rosie Hoffner in Wolftown today. Rosie, what was your maiden name?

RH: Rosie Hurt.

I: Hurt? H-U-R-T? Did you have quite a few brothers and sisters?

RH: Uh huh. Twelve in all. Two died. My little sister, she got burnt to death by a fireplace, old fireplace that we had. She was standing by it. I was twelve years old then. And she caught a-fire by the fireplace. My mother and father went up to Grandma's. It was in January. We tried to put it out but.....We thought we did, my brother and I. She-all of a sudden, she was standing in the middle of the room in the middle of the floor. And she had this outer slip, this flannel slip. It must have caught it all, underneath, this blaze all of a sudden....She was burnt so bad that she died at twelve o'clock that night. That was terrible. Mother almost died from it too. She didn't eat for nine days. She was in the bed sick, nine days.

I: That was probably hard for her to get over.

RH: That was just before my other brother was born.

I: Were you born up in the Park somewhere?

RH: Yeah, I was born right next to Hoover School.

I: Was your house right close to the Hoover School?

RH: It was about a mile.

I: And what were your parent's names?

RH: My mother's name was Bessie Hurt and well, she was a Weakley first. Weakley was her maiden name. And my father's name was Wesley Hurt. Yeah, they're both dead. But my oldest son was born up there too. In the same bed I was born in. See we didn't go to the hospital then. My youngest son was born in Quantico.

I: Mind if I ask you how old you are?

RH: I'll be sixty the 19th of December. This coming December.

I: Were most of your brothers and sisters born up there?

RH: Yeah, all of them. Yeah, there was nobody born in the hospital.

I: Did they have like a midwife? Or, did just the family...?

RH: Yeah, well Grandma and Dr. Ross, he was with some of us....

I: What was your Grandmother's name?

RH: Fannie Weakley. And then, my other Grandma was Louise Burraker. She was married twice see. She was there a few times too. We didn't go to the hospital then. When my oldest one was born. See, we got married....My husband was in the Marine Corps and he traveled all over. He weren't in one place very long and when my oldest son was born, he was in Cuba.

I: But, you were down at the Marine Camp at that time?

RH: Yeah, so.

I: Well, then did you leave the mountains between the time that you grew up there and you met him....?

RH: The way I met him was at Hoover's Camp. The Marine Camp. They had the Marine guards there.

I: Huh.

RH: First man I went with and the last. See... the Marines married a lot of them up there.

I: Oh really?

RH: Yeah.

I: I didn't know that. How old were you then when you finally left the mountain?

RH: Well, let's see. When we moved....I still stayed with my mother and father. My husband was always here and there. It was ten or twelve years before we got to go to house-keeping. And then we moved to Quantico. Of course, then my mother and father had moved down here.

I: Oh really? Down to Wolftown?

RH: Right back here.

I: But they're no longer living?

RH: No, neither one of them. My mother was seventy-six when she died and my father was seventy-nine.

I: Do you know where they were born, your parents?

RH: They were born at Syria.

I: Syria?

RH: Well, my father was born in the same house that we was. And, my mother was born at the other place up next to Hoover School.

I: I probably need to find out where those home sties were then I'd have a better idea. Then, how about their parents? Do you know where their parents were born?

RH: They was from up at Big Meadows.

I: They were born up there too?

RH: Yeah, they was born up there too.

I: I was sort of wondering how far back....John Weakley was your Grandfather?

RH: Yeah.

I: Were you the oldest one in your family, or what was your....?

RH: No, I have a sister that's sixty nine. And then next to her is a brother and then next to her there is another sister. She's dead. Two of us dead.

I: So you're about fourth down? What was your house like up there?

RH: It was a log cabin. It was made out of logs. It had a fireplace. Then they didn't use cement, they used mud. It was alright though. It kept warm. Upstairs though it wasn't. I remember when my oldest little son, you know,.... I kept him.... We didn't have a baby bed, you know, I slept with him. And, in the winter time it would snow and would sift in the cracks. But, it was a good livin. But, everybody was healthy though. More than they are now.

I: Really?

RH: Yeah.

I: Do you remember any sicknesses while you were growing up, any major? Like I know there was a flu epidemic in the early 1900's or something. Did that affect people up there?

RH: My uncle's wife died then. Of that. But, I don't remember too much about that. I heard them talk about it. I don't remember too much about it. We had chicken pox and mumps and all that. Measles. We was first going to school in Richard Hollow. That was about five miles down.

I: Did you walk down?

RH: Yeah. Walked ten miles a day. So then after President Hoover built the school up there, we started going up there.

I: How old were you when you started going to that school by Hoover?

RH: Around ten, I guess.

I: How many kids were going then?

RH: I think it was around....I don't exactly remember. It must have been around maybe twenty-five, thirty. There weren't too many there. They were from Big Meadows, Stanley, over in that and then over my way too; Meadows Hollow and Syria.

I: From all the adjacent areas?

RH: Yeah.

I: Was there a teacher there?

RH: Yeah, Christine Vest. She was nice. I think she was from Kentucky. She married also a Marine. Marines got a lot of wives up there. Weren't too many scattered over the mountain there. Lot of us married Marines up there.

I: How long did the Marines stay?

RH: They stayed uh.....I can't remember exactly when the camp broke up. Let me think. I can't remember now.

I: Did they stay just to build the buildings or did they stay longer?

RH: They stayed longer. They stayed as long as the President was there. President Roosevelt was up there too for awhile. Back and forth you know. Not for very long. Course he was kind of sickly. After we moved back then the Hoover School was moved. I often wondered what went with it.

I: Did you ever see President Hoover?

RH: Oh yeah, a couple of times. I spent the night with them a couple of times. I had real long blonde hair then and Mrs. Hoover used to braid my hair. She loved my hair. It was so long you know then. They took a lot of pictures around the camp of me with her. And with him, all that.

I: What did you think of them:

RH: Oh, I liked them. They were fine people. Wish I could get a hold of some of the pictures.

I: I see. That's what you were looking for the other day.

RH: Yeah.

I: We..., maybe I can--

RH: They do have some in one of the books that I did--that day. I have one of them, at Big Meadow, you know--

I: Did you get one of those books--

RH: Unhuh.

I: I was going to say we probably could--

RH: I mean I had another one, it was uh--and that burnt up in my house, when my house burned and I was lookin for my family.

I: There's a book at headquarters which if anyone had been there that day, they could have showed you. I didn't know where it was or I didn't know about it. It might be more helpful -- you could come another time.

RH: Unhum--maybe I could, I do that, I love to see it, you know. My husband, he took the pictures out of the Washington paper and then out of the magazine, I think it was the Life magazine. And, see he had them, but see he had them, but when the house burned up, everything burned up. I lost everything. I often think about all of that.

I: Uh huh--you'd like to have it?

RH: Yeah, nothing to look at now.

I: Umhum.

RH: I was standing on the bridge one time with Mr. Hoover fishing.

I: Really.

RH: Yeah, umhum--

I: Were you fishing or just Mr. Hoover?

RH: No I was just standing there with him, he was fishing.

I: Uhhuh.

RH: But I know the way my father used to, well, he used to raise cabbage, potatoes and all like that, a whole bunch of it, you know.

I: Uhhuh.

RH: Then he'd make saurkraut and pack it in the big flour barrels. Oh, we had it for the whole winter. Of course, in spring, they would put it in the jar and wild cherries saves it. But the way we got our shoes,--in the fall we'd sell cabbage and we'd go and get us chestnuts.

I: Hummm.

RH: And that's how he got our shoes for the fall.

I: Yeah.

RH: And I always dreaded to going chestnut hunting.

I: Oh, really? How come?

RH: They were all over the mountain, you know, and - it was a job.

I: Humm.

RH: Uh, we used to have a big leather - uh, saddle bag, you know, we used to carry them in. The white bags, you know, with the stripes -- they used to get meal in -- for your own corn and hogback, -- we used to take them and sometimes come back with them full and then he'd sell them.

I: Did you go out for all day long or how long would you to out?

RH: Yeah, most of the time we'd go out all day. It depended on how many - we uh --- We'd string them up like stringing snap beans and all like that, dry them for the winter time.

I: What time would this be; when you would go out?

RH: October.

I: October?

RH: October, Um hum.

I: I guess it would be sort of cold?

RH: Yeah, October and then uh, and sometimes we'd wish for a storm on the (they called) equinox.

I: Yeah?

RH: And that would bring the chestnuts down.

I: Oh, I see.

I: Where would he sell them at? Like at Syria?

RH: In Syria, yeah in Syria or Crigglersville.

I: How often would you usually go to the store?

RH: I didn't hardly ever go when I was young.

I: Um, hum.

RH: My father, he would take the horse, you know, and that's the way he went -- get the groceries.

RH: Once and awhile I went, but us children, we'd have to work around the house, like cuttin wood and like that for the fireplace; we had a lot to do but then in the winter time you could sit back and didn't have too much to do.

I: Um hum.

RH: We'd have everything done by then.

I: What things did you have to buy -- what things did you raise and what things did you have to buy?

RH: We had to buy like sugar and coffee, but, we raised our own mean, uh, and our own bread -- you'd take it to the mill and have it ground, you know, and it wasn't too much in the food line, that we had to buy, because we raised most everything. We raised beans, corn, cabbage, potatoes, everything like that -.

I: Yeah. Did you usually have a pig or a cow, too?

RH: Well, yeah, we had cows, you know to milk.

I: Dairy cows?

RH: Yeah, but, - he butchered as high as 8 and 10 hogs for the winter.

I: Um hum.

RH: Had the meathouse full.

I: Um hum - that would carry you through?

RH: Oh, yeah. (Pause) it was good living. But now, they won't even sell you a ham. People won't.

I: Yeah, not country hams, anyway.

RH: I know it.

I: Do you remember any of the games the kids would play when they were little? Any particular games that you'd like to play?

RH: Well, we didn't have very many -- uh, well, lets see -- we didn't have much games to play with -- unless we would play tag.

I: Um hum.

RH: We would play tag -- after we'd come in in the evenings from hoeing corn or potatoes or somethin. And we had a river right down by the -- not too far from the house. We'd go and jump in that and wash off and come back. We'd be so tired when we got back, from hoeing corn and all like that but after we'd do that it would rest us up, you know, and we'd play tag, -- oh, until we got ready for bed. It's different now, I can't hardly get around. I can get around, too, but I get tired awful easy, awful tired.

I: Do you remember any musical instruments --?

RH: Guitar.

I: Guitar?

RH: Uh huh, guitar and the organ.

I: The organ?

RH: Yeah. I used to play the guitar -- I remember I used to get up in the old cherry tree out on the hill. I'd climb up there with my guitar, you know, you could hear my voice all over the mountain (chuckling) -- I could sing pretty good then -- and play the guitar.

I: Yeah?

RH: I know when I was going with my husband -- before we got married -- he'd say "climb up there in that old cherry tree with that old guitar and let me hear you sing." (chuckling) and I would climb up there and sing -- he enjoyed that.

I: Do you remember any of the songs you sang?

RH: Foggy Mountain top and --

I: Oh, really, yeah --

RH: And then -- uh -- let me see -- different ones -- Down the Old Road to Home -- and them Hymns. We'd did sing hymns too. My brother and I used to sing. Uh, I'd play the organ and he'd play the guitar -- everyone in my family, almost.

I: Oh really, could play?

RH: Yeah -- and we used to get together and you know, I'd play the organ and he'd play the guitar and we'd really have good music there sometimes. (chuckling)

I: Yeah. Would people get together and play together or was it mostly in the family?

RH: Just the family, uh huh, yeah. Well, we'd have a lot of company, too. The neighbors, you know, would come in -- on Saturday nights, or something -- sometimes we'd have prayer meetings -- Gerth Cave would come and have prayer meetings.

I: What was his first name again? Gerd Cave

RH: Gerd Cave, uh huh.

I: Gerd Cave? Is he from down in Dark Hollow?

RH: Uh hum, yeah. He lived down in Dark Hollow. He's dead now though, -- bout all the old people back then -- are gone -- and you know, when you sit down and start to thinking about all that, it really makes you sad, you know.

I: Uh hum.

RH: To think about all that -- we used to go over to that little church, sometimes up in Dark Hollow.

I: Oh, they had a church down there?

RH: Yeah, it was a schoolhouse and a church -- I mean -- so uh -- they had prayer meetings there -- a lot of times an we'd walk over all the way from our old place, to Dark Hollow to church, at night, -- take the lantern -- didn't have no other kind of light -- take the old lantern.

I: Did you ever see any wild animals when you were out walking around at night, or anything like that?

RH: Well, once and a while we'd see a bear.

I: Really?

RH: Yeah. Didn't see many deer then -- though -- they stayed back out of the way.

I: Was that a particular church or was that more just your own -- for people who wanted to preach?

RH: Our church, uh huh.

RH: Didn't nobody say nothing, either way -- whoever wanted to preach did -- then sometimes we'd walk to Richert Hollow. The first place I went to school -- they would have it there too -- and we'd walk all the way down there at night.

I: That was pretty far, huh?

RH: Yeah. That was a long way to walk too, to go to school, we'd start at daybreak in the wintertime, you know, start at daybreak and get back after dark. That was a long ways -- it would be so steep, it would be right down the mountain and back right up the mountain. Of course, we'd get a board sometimes when it was icy and we'd slide down on a board (chuckling) that helped out a little bit you know -- have to think way back to different things then -- how everything went.

I: How about dancing -- did they ever have dances and like that?

RH: Well, once and a while we would have square dances at the house, you know, at the neighbors house. Maybe like on Christmas eve -- something like that get together. Have a little square dance, lot of fun. Weren't too many people.

I: Who was your closest neighbor?

RH: Well, the closest neighbors was uh -- most of them was our own family, you know, like my grandmother -- and grandfather. John Weakley and Fanny Weakley that was my grandmother and grandpa, and then my other grandmother and grandpa and my step grandaddy.

I: That was a Burraker?

RH: Uh huh, Burraker. And then up at Big Meadow was Jim Weakley, Frank Weakley and all the Weakleys up there. Then on Tanners Ridge, was Tompkins, Lambs, Offenbackers.

I: Hum.

RH: Well, sometimes different ones would come too, from over there. We had a lot of fun. Was hard going, then, good going.

I: How do you think most of the people felt about their lives? Do you think they thought it was hard?

RH: Well, they was happy -- they were happy -- but after my father moved down here, he never was happy no more -- after he was taken sick, I don't know how many times he got sick-- he had a stroke, and he got better and then after he got better -- he couldn't hardly get around. I had to keep an eye on him, you know. He try to get back to the old place.

I: Oh really? Hum.

RH: Try to get back to the old place. I would go down there and fix him something to eat and take down to him and he have left, my mother would say, well, he must be trying to get back to the old place ---.

I: Oh really? Huh.

- RH: And I strike up the road and try to look for him and he'd be laying over here on the side of the road, he'd watch a chance when he thought you weren't looking and take to flight. Un -- he said he wanted to go back up there and die.
- I: Oh.
- RH: But the second stroke -- he didn't last but uh -- he lasted three months after the second stroke.
- I: Was he buried up there?
- RH: No, he's buried up here at Wolftown, my mother is too. Both of them are buried out here.
- I: Did he move down here in that community that the people were given, or did he move down here by himself?
- RH: Well, you see, where we lived, it weren't exactly on the Park and we wouldn't have to move then, right then but everybody moved.
- I: Oh, uh huh.
- RH: So, there's no need, so we might as well move too.
- I: Oh, I see.
- RH: But then after that I understood then that the Park did take it over, I don't know.
- I: Oh, I see. Right where you were, your family wouldn't have had to leave?
- RH: Yeah.
- I: I see, but most of the other people you know did move?
- RH: Yeah. Everybody. All the people up in there moved. (pause) As I say, my father was a hard working man, boy -- he'd make -- uh -- out of white oak, he'd make split bottom chairs, you know -- lot of things like that he would do -- but he didn't mind working --
- I: Un hum, how about your mother -- were there any hand craft things that she'd make, or did she sew and stuff like that?

RH: No, she married young too -- she married when she was fifteen.

I: Really?

RH: I think she had too many children, you know, that kept her going, that kept her going, -- she never did too much sewing. But now, like my grandmother, she loved flowers and she had the most beautiful flowers -- and I took after her, I love my flowers, I really like to watch them flower. I had them too, up at the old place where we used to live. But my mother, she didn't have bother too much with the flowers. And my older sister, she lived right next to the Camp up there, but she didn't marry--a marine, she married a fellow from over on Tanner's Ridge.

I: Oh, do you remember his name?

RH: Woodard.

I: Maud Woodard? Uh huh. Did they live there for a while?

RH: They lived right up from me, the camp too.

I: Did you know the Breeden's?

RH: Tom Breeden?

I: Let's see, uh -- I think it was Viola Breeden and Luther Breeden.

RH: Oh -- Luther Breeden, that's my uncle by marriage --

I: To the Burrakers, would that be or not?

RH: No -- uh -- she was -- uh -- my father's half sister.

I: Viola Breeden was your father's half-sister?

RH: Yeah.

I: They were related to Hurtz, weren't they?

RH: Yeah.

I: Or she was related to Hurtz?

RH: Her mother was a Hurtz. Yeah.

I: Did you know that family when you were living there; I mean did you ever see them?

RH: Well, they moved out -- I don't remember when they lived there because they moved out from up there; I think they moved to Winchester, somewhere--.

I: They moved out before it became a Park?

RH: Um hum. Yeah, so I don't remember when they lived there at all. Long time before we did.

I: Did you ever go down to Skyland when you lived up there? Did you ever go down there?

RH: My father used to sell rattlesnakes up there--.

I: Really?

RH: Un hum. He--uh--for George Polluck--He'd buy ever rattlesnake--he got three dollars apiece for 'em. I remember we was howing corn one day and I had my hoe like that, you know, and hit a rock, and I could hear that rattlesnake, and I hollared for my father, to come here, there's a rattlesnake here. And he had a twine string made like a loop and tied on a stick and that's how he caught 'em. He snared 'em and he got that one and right back there on the rock, there was another one, a yellow one. And in about a half hour he got another one,-- he got three. And we had like these big flour barrels, well, he took them to the house and he'd put them in that flour barrel, and he'd reach down the lid and put his hand up here, you know, to carry it--like this--bottom and top and those snakes would stand up and their heads would slide right over his fingers like that.

I: Oh?

RH: We was just hollaring (chuckling) but he sold them to George Polluck.

I: I see, uh huh.

RH: Out to Skyland.

I: Did you ever meet George Polluck?

RH: No, I didn't ever meet him--I heard my father but I remember when he'd go out there to sell 'em though.

I: Uh huh. What did your father think of Polluck, you remember?

RH: He thought--he used to work up there, my father sometimes. I think he got along alright with him.

I: Um hum. Did you have--well, I don't know, ways of being able to tell the weather from birds and animals, and things like that, or did your father have particular times when he'd plant, going by these signs?

RH: Yeah. The Almanac--.

I: Oh--The Almanac--uh huh.

RH: In the signs of the waterman was the time to plant potatoes--then in the sign of the fish, pisces, was the time to plant beans; never plant them in the sign of the blossom but plant flowers in the sign of the blossoms, they always did, that would make 'em bloom. We went by signs all the time. Yeah, we always went by the signs. A lot of people don't though, they don't anymore down here, but I do, I still do--I want you to look at my garden after while (chuckling).

I: Ok.

RH: But I always--still go by the signs.

I: Was there uh go ahead, what were you going to say?

RH: Just that a lot of people don't, you know, they don't believe in the signs, but I do, like you plant cucumbers in the sign of the bloom to death and never no cucumbers, hardly. Same way with beans--but still the blooms just drop off.

- I: I don't know very much about gardening.
- RH: We used to bury the cabbage, you know, in great big-- in the fall you know, we'd bury them in great big mounds and in the winter time go and dig out those cabbage and just as sweet as could be. Put a big hamb bone on 'em and cook 'em, you know, then cook the cabbage, you know, boy that's really good eating (chuckling).
- I: How about strawberries and huckleberries and stuff like that? Did you get any of those; gather them?
- RH: Huckleberries--a few huckleberries--well, there was a lot of wild strawberries--we'd go on the fields and pick wild strawberries, huckleberries, the same way--lot of cherries.
- I: Lot of cherries--hum?
- RH: Oh, we had three great big trees of cherries and I mean they was big trees and we had one grape vine that covered all over those big cherry trees, just every neighbor around there would come in and get grapes, cherries, plenty for everybody--and there was one fall, my husband, he was on three months leave, he came up there and he thought the grape vine was dead, so he took the axe and chopped it--boy, that like to broke my father's heart--but he didn't fuss at him, he--because they got along so well, but chopping that grape vine down--he thought it was dead---. I have an older sister that--uh--not the oldest sister, the one next to me--she also married a marine--Joseph Valurah. They live in Maine, now, but he's dead too. And her baby was, the first baby was born up there in that house, too. un hum--.
- I: Lot of memories associated with that house?
- RH: Oh, boy! We still had the bed that all of us was borned in.
- I: Uh uh huh.
- RH: Probably down there somewhere now.

I: Down?

RH: Across the--the oldest son lives there where my mother lived now.

I: Do you think maybe he has it? The bed?

RH: Well, it's a lot of beds down there, now, you know. My oldest son has grandmas bed, and I don't know how many hundred years old, cause that was her mother's.

I: Oh really? Huh. Was there any Indian blood in the family?

RH: Uh huh, yeah.

I: Do you know what Indian tribe it was, by any chance?

RH: I don't remember, but my grandma, Hurtz, my greatgrandma, she was full Indian.

I: But you don't know which one?

RH: Oh boy, I heard my father say that she'd go down to Syria store and they used to have molasses, you know, in the barrels.

I: Un hum?

RH: There big barrels like that, you know, and they bet her I don't know how many dollars it was that she couldn't lift that. She just strattled it, lifted it three times.

I: (chuckling).

RH: You couldn't believe it, but she showed them she could lift it. She was strong, awful strong. My grandfather, he, my greatgrandfather, he was in the Civil War.

I: Oh really, was he?

RH: Uh, Will Hurtz.

I: Will Hurtz, huh?

RH: Un hun.

I: Did he fith around--

RH: Yeah. At Fredericksburg.

I: Oh, really?

RH: Yeah, uh huh. I had all those old pictures--.

I: That's too bad.

RH: I don't know who would have 'em.

I: Well, do you know how, let's see, she was your greatgrand-mother, Betsy Hurtz? Do you know how she met her husband, Will Hurtz? Do you know how they met each other, by chance?

RH: I don't remember. No. They used to tell me but I have forgotten about that. But I did know he fought at Fredericksburg--he got his arm shot off.

I: Oh.

RH: Some way or other he got back home, I don't know how. I heard my father tell how bad off he was with that arm--he didn't go to no hospital. Way back then, hard days too.

I: Yeah, I'll bet (pause). Do you remember if your mother had any, uh, like use any of the wild plants for medicines, or for cures or anything like that, do you remember?

RH: Ginseng for one thing.

I: Oh really?

RH: Uh huh. Ginseng was good for rhumatism, and sassafras tea, we'd drink that, that was good for rhumatism. My grand-mother used to make that all the time. Boy, she loved sassafras tea. But I didn't ever care too much for it. And ginseng, they would make tea. I used to have to go and help my father hunt ginseng.

- I: Oh really? You know how to find it then?
- RH: Yeah, uh huh. We used to dry it you know, got more where if you dry it, and take it to the store, we got pretty good price for it.
- I: Which store would you take it down to?
- RH: Down to the Syria store, sometimes it was Stanley.
- I: Have you ever heard of a, there's a plant that blooms at this time of year up there that has white flowers on it, kind of a spike--we call it crowpoison, I don't know what people might have used to call it, that is sort of poisonous--do you remember ever using that to keep insects away, or anything, or do you remember any plants to use to kill flies--remember anything like that?
- RH: Um hum--what did they call that? It had another name--I know exactly what you're talking about--but it had another name. Yeah, it does keep the insects away--and uh--what is the name of that--I can't think to save my life--. And another thing they had was nettle weed--boy--when you went through the mountain--I tell you they was bad too, they really sting--. They had a lot of azalea, mountain laurel, we used to call it ivy--.
- I: You used to call the mountain laurel, ivy?
- RH: Yeah, unhum, we used to call it ivy--even the old place had all those azaleas and mountain laurel out behind in the back of the old house--you know, up on that hill, how pretty that was. I often think about that--that good old cold spring--boy that was living--dried apples-- we'd dry apples in the fall--put them on the barn roof and the meat house roof--that was made out of shingles you know, homemade shingles, not the shingles that they have now, and come rain, we'd have to get them all in, when it cleared up, put 'em all back--boy--that was a job--too--then we would have apple butter boiling--everybody gather together, you know--and we have to peel apples for a couple nights, and then boil apple butter, that would take all day and them most of the night, to make it good--it was really good.

- I: Do you remember how you do it, make apple butter--was there certain ingredients you had to use?
- RH: Well, you keep cooking and cookin them--well--until it was just about ready, add the sugar after you get all the apples cooked we had a big 40 gallon apple butter kettle--and after that gets real thick then you add the sugar, whatever amount you're going to put in it, and after that cooks for awhile, then add all of the cinnomon--and spice--boy that was real apple butter too--.
- I: Yeah, I'll bet it was.
- RH: Took a long time to cook it but it was good--put it in big milk pots.
- I: Yeah, uh huh--crock you mean--?
- RH: Put it in the crock, some of it in jars, can it, you know--but, it was cold, we'd never make until winter--. But, down to zero--cold enough so that the apple butter wouldn't spoil--we had a big old milk house, spring house we called it--.
- I: Oh yeah, where you would keep things cool?
- RH: Uh huh--put those jars down in there, that apple butter would keep just as cold--and then have dinner plates on the top--.
- I: That was the only way of sealing it, you mean?
- RH: Yeah, dinner plates on the top and a clean rock on the top--.
- I: And that way it would keep--how long would it keep?
- RH: Oh, it would keep a long time--and the ones we would put in half gallon jars, and that would be all for the next summer--the next summer.
- I: Oh really, for all of the next summer?
- RH: Oh yeah, put it in a crock, and we would eat on it and it would keep through the winter time. People--them made and eat a lot of apple butter. I don't eat much sweet stuff.

- I: Did your family make "sweet stuff" then -- you made apple butter, did you make other stuff?
- RH: Well, we made apple butter, cherry preserves, apple preserves, blackberry preserves, huckleberry, strawberry--peach, all kinds (pause).
- I: Do you remember any ghost stories or any stories about anything on the mountain--that you kids would tell each other, or anything like that?
- RH: Yeah, we used to tell and it would scare us to death in the night sitting, telling, things like that. Uh, they told so many, I don't know if I'll remember--I know they said one time--my father said that uh him and his mother was coming from Syria one night, and they had their groceries on their back, carrin them--I don't know how to tell that, they told it so many times--they said something just walked up to 'em and took a holt of that bag and took it right off their back and he couldn't see what it was.
- I: Oh, really, huh!
- RH: An they never did find out what it was--and they never did find out what it was and they said at different times in the same spot different people would come through--it happened to different people--the Laid place--that was the place where they had to come through--uh huh.
- I: Lade, Lade place?
- RH: Uh huh. Lade Place and at different times it happened to different people--up in that area--always when were in school we were afraid to pass by there--so that there was another way to go around--you know, the road forks at the, above the Meadows Hollow, I mean below Meadows Hollow, and you could go by Richart Hollow way, or by the Laid Place--so we'd detour most of the time and go by the Richart Hollow (chuckling). And different stories like that.
- I: Were you, as children, afraid of snakes, yourself? Or how did you feel about things like that? Were there a lot of snakes?

RH: There were a lot of snakes--yeah, a lot of snakes, uh, before Johnny, my oldest son, was born, I know I had a bed of flowers there, cosmos, and I know I was over in the flower bed, pulling the weeds, kind of stooped down pulling the weeds, and little Johnny was standing right by the flower bed--and we had chickens about big enough to fry--and a chicken when they get scared--like and they would back off--I said I wonder what that chicken is looking at--and when I looked I was right over a rattlesnake-- (chuckling), but it didn't try to bite me, that snake knew that I wasn't lookin at him--that's what it was, they know. Well, sometimes, people would get bit, Evert Hurtz, his wife, Lou Issac Hurtz, she was bit by a copperhead--and also her son was bit by a copperhead--they chewed tobacco then and they would take that chew of tobacco out and put it right on there.

I: Oh really, and that would help?

RH: That would help take the poison out, that flame,--I never did chew tobacco, and didn't want it, either (chuckling). Bad enough to smoke a cigarette.

I: Was there any other poisonous snakes up there, do you remember?

RH: Well, copperhead, and uh, house moccasins, and rattlesnakes; I believe that's mostly it.

I: What were the house moccasins, what were they like?

RH: They were uh, they were kind of like a rattlesnake, they was brown and kind of spots on the, you know--now a yellow rattlesnake has diamonds on like, then there's black rattlesnakes, and yellow rattlesnakes--my son killed one up here last year and he had it up on the wall.

I: Did you ever hear of whoop snakes, ever hear of those?

RH: No.

I: No?

RH: I didn't ever hear of them.

I: Do you remember anybody ever talking about having seen a panther or mountain lion or bobcat?

RH: I've heard my father say that he would hear them, you know, but they would never come close enough that you could see them.

I: Un hum.

RH: Yeah, I did see the bobcats, too, but we never did see a panther.

I: But you think that your father did hear a panther?

RH: Yeah, uh huh.

I: Do you know how he described it?

RH: Screamed, kind of like a woman, thats what he said--I don't know, I never did see any--I mean, not up there, I have seen them too--pictures, and then on television, too.

I: I was wondering whether there were any reports, now, today every once and a while we'll get a report of what sounds like a mountain lion--but we've never had anything varified, that's why I was curious as to know if there were any stories of earlier years of mountain lions.

RH: Well, they said they saw 'em, there were some up there--I never did see one (Pause). There was a lot of bobcats, though, I would see them. Wildcats, is that what you call them?

I: What did you all call them?

RH: We called them wildcats.

I: Did your father ever go hunting for game of any kind?

RH: Yeah, rabbits and stuff like that--he didn't hunt for big game though--much. Rabbits, squirrels, groundhogs--stuff like that--.

I: Did you eat groundhogs?

RH: Yeah, we used to eat them.

I: Do you remember how you would cook them?

RH: Well, sometimes they would boil them until they were real tender--then put them in salt and bake them, to brown them, you know. They were good, but, now, I wouldn't eat one for nothing. When we was kids growing up, we'd eat 'em, but since we've lived here in Wolftown--the neighbor down here used to kill em up--bait them at Graves Mill-- I said Robert, bring me one--he brought me one that had a tick on it--I never would eat a groundhog after that (chuckling)--I didn't want those--I just didn't want it then. But we used to love groundhogs00I know my father had two old dogs--named one was Buck and one was Bob-- and my father had gone to Syria store and he told us to be hoeing corn--and so huh--they was good hunting dogs, and they went with us over to the field--and a little while later, they was barking, and barking and barking and was after sometin--and you could tell they was at one place a barking--so I told my brother, Lloyd Hurt-- "They're after a groundhog!" And we ought to go up there-- we was barefoot, too!--right up the mountain we went--but we was afraid that my father would be back and we wouldn't be hoeing corn (chuckling), so we took off up the mountain-- and sure enough they had been digging a groundhog--and we kept digging and digging and digging until we got him out-- we got him, though--and you--I don't know if you know-- where the double top is, you probably do--you can see it maybe from Big Meadows--.

I: Yeah, I think you can see it across--.

RH: On Double Top there's two great big boulders, one on top of another--its right--you can see Fork Mountain then Double Top--we lived right underneath Double Top--and so we got right on top of that and we could look right down on the house and we saw my father coming up the road on his way back from the store. And we hollared down there to him, "Look what we have" (chuckling) and we were holding it up like that (chuckling) he said "I'll tend to you later" but he was such a big groundhog--he didn't bother us--he didn't say nothing. We was looking to get an awful beatin over that though. "Cause usually when he told you you had to do something, you had to do it. And you knew better not to do it too.

- I: Did you all celebrate holidays up there, like Thanksgiving and Christmas?
- RH: Yes, we'd always have a big dinner and everybody would come in and have dinner with us, like Thanksgiving. Most of the time at Thanksgiving, we'd butcher--that would be the big day. And a lot of times, we'd butcher some more of the hogs--in December--we'd butcher soon enough so the hams could cure before Christmas--we'd always boil a big ham for Christmas--and we had good hams, too. At Christmas time all of the different neighbors would come in. They'd celebrate Christmas with us.
- I: They say that you didn't have many toys and stuff--did you get toys at Christmas time or was it a time to get together?
- RH: We'd hardly have the money, you know, to have toys--my mother made us rag dolls--some years but we really didn't have the money to pay for toys.
- I: Did you feel that you didn't have much money then or did you feel that was just the way people live or--?
- RH: Well, we wished that we did have money, yeah, there were many times we didn't have no television or anything like that--just the victrola.
- I: Oh, you did have a victrola?
- RH: I never will forget--that the day that my sister burned--that was the day he ordered, my father, that day--ordered the victrola that day--and some records. She was six years old, and she was so glad that he'd ordered one. We didn't play after we got it--for a long time--after that--and then, when we did play it, it about killed all of us. She was an awfully pretty little girl, little April. Sometime I wanted to go, if I could, down there on the place, you know,-- there's a graveyard right above our old place.
- I: Are there any markers there?
- RH: Just rock--(pause). At night time many and a many night--oh, I would never live next to a graveyard anymore--many and a many night we would hear somebody a crying--above the house and that's where the graveyard is--and nobody was around to be crying. Jim Hertzberg died, then my little sister, she's buried up there. Different ones, you know, Evert Hurt--two of his children (pause). I was going to ask you something and I forgot it.

RH: Have you been down to Dark Hollow?

I: Just down the hiking trail is and then down to Rose River, I don't really know where the old school was down there.

RH: Do you know where the grave is, down there? Well, it's before you get to that grave down there--.

I: Hum. If I get down there, I'll have to try to find more things.

RH: I don't know if its still standing there--its been many, many years since I was there. That's just like--so many times I wanted to go up to grandather's grave. He made the little patterned fence himself. I don't know what you'd call them--we used to call them pavings. He hewed them out. And he said he wanted them around his grave and he wanted to be buried at the little church, below the garden whenever he died--and he wanted the little pavings. And he picked that himself--.

I: So that's where he is buried, then?

RH: Un hum. That day--what is the fellas name that went down there with us, now--

I: Larry Trombello; did he go with you?

RH: He was a young fellow--

I: Dark hair sounds like Larry.

RH: And he was searchin and searchin down there, you know, and he didn't find the grave, he didn't go down there too far. I told him not to go down too far because he might get bit by a rattlesnake. I didn't go down to the house because I just had my sandals on, you know, if I would have had boots, I would have tried it. And he hollared up that he had found an old washpan down there. I said "bring it on up here" (chuckling). I told him to wait until another time--because I was afraid he would get bit by a rattlesnake or something. Like the house here--and straight on down from the house--was his grave. Below the old garden--down here was the spring (gesturing) and then right out here then was the

school, the Hoyer school. The spring was between there and I could hear the water from the road there, I knew we was at the right place but then it was getting late and that's why we didn't go down to our old place, my father's old place. I don't think there's any house there now--I doubt if there would be.

I: Maybe the foundation would be there. Um hum.

RH: Used to have all the way around the house--those big snowballs (shrub) and, Nancy, they was a big as gallon buckets; you have never seen such big snowballs in your life. When Johnny was born, he was born on the 24th of May, and I wanted to see the snowballs so bad and you know how my mother was! She said "No sir, you got to stay in that bed". Now, they let you out of the hospital in three days--but I had to lie down for nine days--I thought I never was going to get out of that bed (chuckling). And, so one day, she was in the kitchen cookin dinner and I sneaked out just the same and got out on the porch and got a look at the snowballs when she said, "now, you get back in that bed, right now". Then, you couldn't do it. Now, you could have done it, the old fashioned way, yeah--.

I: When you had your baby, did you have a doctor or anything?

RH: Dr. Ross delivered me--he's dead now--and he weighed 10 lbs! A ten pound boy--both of my boys have been awful good to me, but---

I: Did you ever hear about the Corbins? Or the Nicholsons?

RH: Yeah, I've heard of the Corbins, didn't talk to them but heard of them. Didn't know too much about them. But they lived down past Richardt Hollow or Corbin Hollow, I mean--.

I: That would be at least 10 miles up North from Big Meadows.

RH: No, I didn't know too much about them.

I: Do you remember any wild turkeys being on the mountain?

RH: Well, a few--there weren't many though, a few though.

- I: Did you know any of the birds, or remember any of the birds that were up there then?
- RH: Well, uh--what do you mean?
- I: Just some of the song birds?
- RH: Yeah, robins, and mickingbirds, catbirds, blue jays, cardinals, all them. They were all up there. I never did like for anybody to kill a robin.
- I: Oh really, un hum.
- RH: My grandmother used to love to eat them--.
- I: Oh, really!
- RH: Yeah, and it made me so mad. I never did like to see anybody kill them. A little bird, unless it was a blackbird or something like that, cuase they're mean--they are mean to other birds, too. And then we had these little chipmunks; we'd plant the corn, you know--they would go up and fill their little jaws full up, full as they could be with the corn, we'd have to replant the corn (chuckling). There used to be so many of them. You don't hardly see a chipmunk down here.
- I: Oh, really, there are a lot up there, especially this year.
- RH: I lov'em too.
- I: Do you remember the winters up there? What were the winters like?
- RH: There was ones, sometimes, that was really bad. I remember one, it was in February, I think, the fence was six footm, you know, and that snow was over the top--you couldn't see no posts. It was luck that we had wood stacked up on the porch and it was above the windows; you couldn't see no window. I mean out the window, the snow was over the top of the window--I'll never forget that!
- I: Did somebody have to come and dig you out or could you get out?

RH: I don't know of any, everybody just shoveled away and survived through it. We used to have terrible snows up in there anyway. Now, we don't have snow much. And when the first snow would fall; we lived right along the top of Double Top when the first snow would fall, it would be there. The sun couldn't hit there where we lived but just once a day and that's when it was straight up, cause we lived close to Double Top and when the sun would get over here, we couldn't get no sun--it was cold--but cool and nice in the summer with the spring and everything; really nice. We didn't have a refrigerator and now you know how cold that water was--we'd set that big kettle of beans in the spring box; we'd have a big long trough, you know, and that water run all the time, fresh water running all the time and the trough would get full of water and it would run off and the beans would stay just as cold. We didn't have to put them in no refrigerator. We didn't have one any how. Same way with milk, it would have cream that thick on it.

I: Do you remember any industries up there; like stave mills or distilleries; any kind of a working place like that on the mountain?

RH: Stave mill--there was an old stave mill over at--Stanley, I believe it was--he used to work there.

I: But you don't remember any of them on the mountain?

RH: No, I don't remember--if it was, I don't remember it.

I: How about a distillery, do you remember any distilleries?

RH: Well, people used to make their own.

I: How about your family? Did they make their own?

RH: (Chuckling) yeah, we did, always did. They made it at Graves' too! An Everet Graves was the sheriff, shouldn't even made him apple brandy. (Chuckling) might as well tell the truth (chuckling). I helped them to make it.

I: Did the people that made it make it for themselves?

RH: Yeah, my father used to make it for the Graves', you know, and then he used it for medicine--like he would make calfrom out of it and then he would make uh I mean if anybody got a sick stomach--or something like that--just sweeten it, you know, with a little ginger--and a sugar and hot water--put in just a little bit and that would help your stomach. But uh we gave at the Graves'. They say they can make it really good--we'd have to beat up the apples, you know--we had a big old keg--they called it a keg--but it was as big around as this table. I imagine--fill it half full and when the cider was just right--he would know just how ripe it would be to make apple brandy.

I: How long would it take to make it?

RH: I don't know exactly, but first you have to run what they call--the first would be backins they call it--and then the next would be the brandy--after you run all of the backins off--and then you take a clean copper kettle--a couple worms or whatever you call 'em--.

I: Oh, the coil, I don't know what you call it--.

RH: They called it a worm (chuckling) that's what they called it--but that's not really the name of it--and when you would run it the second time, it would be brandy.

I: Do you ever remember any kind of trouble; would the law people ever come up there?

RH: No, I don't think so--but I never head of any trouble going on--not that I remember, I mean, probably was maybe before my time, or after. Everybody got along good, just about everybody got along good. They don't do it any more, it's different now.

I: How do you think people are different today?

RH: Well, I tell you today, I think the way it is, they have more, I'm talking about people my own age, like my brothers and sisters. They have more, like me, I don't have a car and I don't have no way to go unless somebody will take me and I got to get out to pay bills and to get

groceries, but they just don't think. Now, if I had a car, and I know that somebody needs to go someplace or something-- I'd be more than glad to take them--now that's the way I would feel--but these people now more or less--their own people for themselves--that's the way it looks to me.

I: And you think that people used to help each other more than they do now?

RH: Yeah, people used to--the neighbors would all come and help you at certain times--and then we'd go and help them. Many times like that, and now they don't do that--they expect you to pay every time you have them to do anything--and we didn't do that--we was glad to help the neighbors out and that was it--now they don't do that--you have to pay for every little thing--even my father, right here, as long as he was able, he would go around here to all the neighbors and not charge nobody nothing--but now you don't see it done like that. If they're going to help you, you have to pay them--that's just the difference. I weren't brought up like that--I like to help anybody that I can--anything that I can do--as long as I know that I can help them and can do it--I'm glad to do it. Now that's the difference from the way it used to be--.

I: How do you feel about the Park? When you go back up in to the Park, do you feel that what happened there was generally a good thin--or how do you feel about the Park?

RH: Well, in a way it was good--yes, I think its nice--really nice. Of course, it's sad sometimes, you know--thinking way back, how it used to be--but still, I think that's nice--if you could get back once and a while but that's the only bad part about it--I can't get back up there; now you can get passed by Graves' Mill here, go right up to within about, I don't think, more than a half a mile--from our old place--but see we can't get through the gate. I think the Park is nice--but I just wish I could go up. I'd just love to go up to Big Meadows--now that's the first time I've been there for two years--my son, he took me up there about two years ago--you see, they both work in Washington and they have to get up at two o'clock in the morning and it's a

long way to go back and forth to drive it, it's a long way to go back and forth. They don't get time to do much, like they used to.

I: Well, let's see, I guess I've covered just about everything I can think of, and I really appreciate you letting me interview you (chuckling).

RH: I am glad to do it.