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(SNP087) Howard L. Maiden interviewed by  
Dorothy Noble Smith, transcribed by Peggy C.  
Bradley

Howard L. Maiden

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM  
SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK

NARRATOR: Mr. Howard Maiden  
INTERVIEWER: Mrs. Dorothy Smith  
PLACE: Elkton, Virginia  
(Swift Run Gap)  
DATE: August 3, 1977

TRANSCRIBED BY:

Peggy C. Bradley

COMPLETED DATE:

September 1, 1984

Mr. Maiden served 42 years with the Park in Trails and Roads - '77.

D.S.: O.K..

H.M.: My family lived in the Park.

D.S.: Your family lived in the Park?

H.M.: Yes, ma'am.

D.S.: Where?

H.M.: Near Swift Run.

D.S.: Near Swift Run.

H.M.: Near Swift Run, near the foot of the mountain, <sup>NOT</sup> ~~down~~ at  
Swift Run Gap. You know .....

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: ... foot of the mountain.

D.S.: Uhhuh. What did they do for a living?

H.M.: Farmed.

D.S.: They farmed. What did they farm?

H.M.: Uh, ... grain. ... Uh, small grain, which is wheat, and corn ...

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: Had about eighty acres of farming land.

D.S.: Eighty acres?

H.M.: And, ... I was raised up on the farm.

D.S.: Did they raise any cattle?

H.M.: Had some cattle, milk cows.

D.S.: Yea. Pigs? ... Chickens?

H.M.: Pigs and chickens.

D.S.: Uhhuh. ... And, they had pretty good living, didn't they?

H.M.: Well, ... we thought so.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: A very good living.

D.S.: Uhhuh. ... Uh, what was the community life like? Did they

do a lot of visiting back and forth with ~~a lot of~~ <sup>other</sup> people?

H.M.: Yes, they did.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: That's about the only way we had to communicate was back and forth with your neighbors. Have apple butter boilings, and apple peelings, and bean string, and stuff like that, you know.

D.S.: What is bean string?

H.M.: Well, take and pick several bushels of beans and string them.

D.S.: Aaaah! And, you'd all get together and do that?

H.M.: All get together and do that. Boil apple butter.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: And, ... that was about the way that life was there at home.

D.S.: Apple butter boilings?

H.M.: Of course, I was right young then.

D.S.: Apple butter boiling took all night, didn't it?

H.M.: No, we'd get up real early in the morning ....

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: ... and put it on about daylight. You'd get your butter off by dark.

D.S.: Yea. Did they play any music during any of these times?

H.M.: Well, usually had some music.

D.S.: What kind of music?

H.M.: Mostly string music.

D.S.: Guitars?

H.M.: Guitars, and banjo, fiddles.

D.S.: Fiddles, aaah, great. Do you remember any of the songs they palyed?

H.M.: Nooo, can't say I do. Been a long time.

D.S.: Ooooh, that would have been great if you could have remembered. Were there any dulcimers that you know of, ... in the area?

H.M.: Any ... ?

D.S.: Dulcimers?

H.M.: No, .. not that I know of.

D.S.: Uhhuh. We haven't heard of any in ...

H.M.: No.

D.S.: ... the Shenandoah National Park. <sup>area</sup> No, I think those are mainly down in the Smokeys, don't you?

H.M.: I imagine they were, yea.

D.S.: Yea. Did they have any dances?

H.M.: Oh yea, had dances.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: And, they had ... people use to have what they called, lasses, ... uh, ... taffy pullings.

D.S.: Oh, sure.

H.M.: You heard of that, probably?

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: Pulling taffy?

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: Take homemade molasses and, you know, and make, ... Have taffy pullings.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: We'd have that for recreation. That was your recreation back in them days.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: People didn't have automobiles to travel around like they do today.

D.S.: No. ... Uh, ... was it sort of a hollow that your family lived in, or was it an opened area?

H.M.: It was pretty well open areas. Yea.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: We lived just off 33 down here, as you start up the mountain.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: It's real close to Route 33.

D.S.: Were they moved out then by the Park?

H.M.: Yea. ... Yea, we were moved out. My Dad then bought some land. ... Uh, bought probably one hundred acres, practically all of it wood land.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: And, he built a house, and of course, he gave me some land and I built a house. And, I'm still living there.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Yea. Did they object to being moved?

H.M.: No. ... No, ... we didn't. ... No, my Dad didn't complain at all.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Great. And, so the adjustment wasn't very hard?

H.M.: No, it wasn't.

D.S.: They got adequate compensation for the land they bought?

H.M.: Yea. Uhhuh. Uhhuh.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: Yea. And, we moved out in ... we moved out in 36, I believe it was.

D.S.: Yea. Do you recall any of the herbs they use to use?

H.M.: No, I couldn't say I do. I know I heard them talking about using them and all but, back ... I was rather young, you know, I didn't pay much attention to anything like that then.

D.S.: Yea. Uhhuh. Right.

H.M.: But, older people did use a lot of herbs and things.

D.S.: Yes. Were there any doctors near?

H.M.: Yea. ... We had doctors, we had house-calls ... uh ... there at Elkton. We were about four miles out of Elkton.

D.S.: Then you were lucky, because so many of the babies that were born had to be done by midwives, ...

H.M.: Yea.

D.S.: ... or by, sometimes just by the mothers herself.

H.M.: Right.

D.S.: Yea. You were fairly well-off, all of you.

H.M.: Yea, we were close to town.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Do you recall any of the families that were neighbors? The size families that they had, did they have big families or ...?

H.M.: Well, some did. Some families had maybe, six or eight children, maybe some as many as eight or ten children.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: The family of Baughers, uh ... Joe Baugher, lived close to us, probably call <sup>or</sup> ~~our~~ next-door neighbor. The name of Edgar Williams, who lived close by. ... Well, they didn't have very large families, probably be maybe four or five children.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: And, ... uh ... Can't just think of anymore right now.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: But, ...

D.S.: A neighbor, a close neighbor with you having eighty acres, wasn't that close, was it?

H.M.: No. No, it wasn't that close up there.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Were there many berries here in this area for you?

H.M.: Quite a few berries, yes.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: People then would like they'd have a little orchard.

I know at home we had a little orchard with apple trees and cherry trees on it, ... and a lot of blackberries, dewberries.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Were there many wildlife?

H.M.: Well, not as much as it is now.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: I think since the Park was bought ... they made a Park, a Shenandoah National Park out of it. Why, the wildlife has moved in more.\*

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: Because, I don't ever remember seeing a deer until I was working here in the Park.

D.S.: Right. How about schools, did you go to the Elkton school?

H.M.: Well, no. Went to a little country school there, uh.... right close to home. Walked to school, the school is still standing. Did you notice, probably didn't notice it, at the foot of the mountain on the left as you started up the mountain, is the school. They turned it ...

D.S.: I'll look for it.

H.M.: They turned it into a resident.

D.S.: Oh, is that right?

H.M.: And the ... So, as you go back down, just as you go off the mountain you look to your right, you'll see it. Called, Swift Run School.

D.S.: Was that through eight grades?

H.M.: That was seven grades.

D.S.:

D.S.: Seven grades?

H.M.: Yes, that was as far as I went.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: Then I could have went to high school, but I didn't, and I guess I thought I had enough. (Laughed)

D.S.: (Laughed) Yea. Right. Well, that's off the record.

So, then your first job up here was, you said, with roads?

H.M.: Bureau of Public Roads.

D.S.: Bureau of Public Roads. Now, what did they do?

H.M.: Well, the work that I did in the Bureau of Public Roads was, drove a tractor with a crane on it to lift stone for these guard walls along the Skyline Drive.

D.S.: Oh, I see. Uhhuh.

H.M.: That was the first work that I did here.

D.S.: Then, did you work in the conjunction with the CCCs?

H.M.: I did some, yes. I did the wall work first and then I was the equipment operator.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: I would ... They sent me around different places, different CCC camps and run this equipment because the CCC didn't have operators to run the equipment.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: So, I worked at ... worked at various CCC camps, Grottoes, and all the camps that was on the Drive.

D.S.: Were they a nice bunch of people?

H.M.: Yes, they was. Yea, ...

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: ... most of them was real nice.

D.S.: Yea. Uhhuh.

H.M.: Sure was.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Uh, ... so that was for how long did you do that?

H.M.: About from 34 to 36.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: And, I worked for the Bureau of Public Roads.

D.S.: O.K. now, ... what were the area like then, were there many trees?

H.M.: Well, no, it wasn't. They wasn't as tick as they are now. The Park has grown up a lot. A ...

D.S.: What kind of trees were left here, do you recall?

H.M.: It was some of most all kind. It was a lot of hard wood and soft wood trees. ...

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: ...left. And, when I first went to work with the Park Service the, well, with the Bureau too. I worked for the Park Service, I worked from one end of the Skyline Drive to the other. In other words, from Front Royal to German's Gap. So, but ... to 48. ... Then in 48, the split it up into three districts.

D.S.: Yes.

H.M.: Which is; the North, Central, and South. They sent me down here in 48, and I been here every since taking care of the South District, from Swift Run to Rockfish.

D.S.: How many trails were there in 48 when you started in this district?

H.M.: Well, about the ... about the same amount of trails that it is now. Uh, ... the CCCs built a lot of these trails.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: And, of course, about all I have done is maintain these trails.

D.S.: Yes.

H.M.: Of course, they had been built and had been neglected for repairs and all for quite a few years. But, the trails now ~~now~~ are much improvement over 48.

D.S.: How would you improve the trails?

H.M.: Well, you would work your surface. Where they were left unworked the water would get in the trails and erosion would set it.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: And, we would mow them. They were kind of get over grown.

D.S.: Doesn't that make it look more natural having them over grown a bit?

H.M.: Well, it would look more natural, but I don't think you'll find the hikers like it, that well. You'll get more compliments on your trails of being mowed and kept clean, and surface good and smooth, than you do if they were rough.

D.S.: Yea. Right.

H.M.: Of course, they would look maybe more like ... the wilderness, I reckon (Laughed) you might say.

D.S.: Yea. Sure. Right. Uh, ... now. Oh, what was I going to ask you? Uh ... how about snakes?

H.M.: Well.

D.S.: Do you notice sort of disappearing of the snake problems since the Park has been here?

H.M.: Well, I don't know weather there are or not. We still have a lot of snakes in the Park.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: I don't know if it would be any difference much from now or years ago. Probably, maybe it be more snakes than it was years ago.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: Because the people that lived in here would ...

D.S.: Killed them.

H.M.: ... killed the snakes. Where the Park protects them,  
you see?

D.S.: Yea. Right.

H.M.: ~~Because~~, that would make probably some different.

D.S.: You know when I was talking, like with George Corbin,  
all he could talk about was rattlesnakes. And, ... now  
you very rarely hear of anybody seeing a rattlesnake.  
So, I was just thinking, well, maybe they are disappearing.

H.M.: I don't think so. Of course, I don't believe I have seen  
as many snakes this year, but I don't know what might be  
the reason for it.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: But, when we see most of the snakes, I have men that mow  
behind the walls by hand and they see more snakes then  
than any other time of the year.

D.S.: Yea. Uhhuh.

H.M.: They will hibernate in that wall and then they'll come,  
maybe, out and lay along the wall.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: That's why they see more.

D.S.: Now back to the animals. Do you recall when you first  
begin noticing more animals up here in the Park?

H.M.: Well, ... back ... I would say along in the fiftys.

D.S.: In the fiftys?

H.M.: In the fiftys, I believe you would notice more animals.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Uh, ... Now, by animals, you are talking about  
deer, bear ....?

H.M.: Yea. Deer, bears, bobcats, foxes, ground hogs, squirrels, and back before this was a Park, see people use to hunt in here. Well, your small game, which is squirrels, and rabbits, and things like that, they was killed out pretty fast. They didn't have a chance to .. uh, ... to ... uh ....

D.S.: Multiply.

H.M.: ... multiply. Right.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: And, ... uh, ... of course, the other games, I don't know, I think what it ... It moved in, the larger, moved in it seems like later on, maybe in the fiftys, I would say.

D.S.: Uhhuh. What was your reaction when you saw your first bear? Were you thrilled?

H.M.: Yes, I was!

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: Yes, I was because I never did see a real bear, a live bear when I was a kid.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: The first live bear I ever saw was up here.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: I was going down the Drive one day and one run across the road in front of me.

D.S.: (Laughed)

H.M.: And, I was really thrilled. I surely was.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: And, the deer. ... Back over in Loft Mountain, the fields back in the fourtys and fiftys were still clear, they hadn't ~~growed~~ grown up and you ~~saw~~ saw deer for quite a distance. So, we were working along there one day we happen to ~~stop,~~ <sup>spot the deer</sup> saw

~~the~~ deer toward another ridge over there. It was probably a half a dozen or more deer, and that was the first deer I ever saw.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: Live deer.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Doesn't it amaze you that they found the best places here?

H.M.: Yes, it does.

D.S.: (Laughed) You wonder who telegraphed it to them?

H.M.: That's right.

D.S.: Yea, ... because they are here. Do you believe that there are thirty-three hundred deer, bear in the Park?

H.M.: Yes, I believe it would be, or maybe more.

D.S.: Have these new bear traps, ... uh, ... really helped the bear to go back to eating their natural food?

H.M.: I think so. I do, yes.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: They are some that has moved on, I believe. I believe there were more than three hundred one time, but maybe the bear has moved on since they have taken away some of the food away from them. Because, we have closed our land field and we have bear-proofed all our trash cans, so that pretty well takes his food. He has to go back, to go back to natural food, you know?

D.S.: Sure.

H.M.: And, I believe they move on. They move around when ...

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: ... when they can't get the food here. Why, they will move on somewhere else where they, ... or look for some more food.

D.S.: Uhhuh. You don't think the trapping of them and moving them out has ....?

H.M.: No, I don't think so. The one they trapped and moved comes back anyway. (Laughed)

D.S.: (Laughing) What was your reaction when having been moved from the Park area and you started to work here, did you feel ... uh, ... happiness about it, that you were back here in your area or did you feel sort of a resentment?

H.M.: No, I was proud of my job. I was proud to get a job in the Shenandoah National Park.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: And, I reckon I should say this. I reckon, I have enjoyed my work here. I guess if I hadn't, I wouldn't <sup>have</sup> ~~had~~ stayed here.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: But, sometime it's been a little rough, I mean it was one time. Pay wasn't as good and all.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: But, I've really enjoyed working in the Shenandoah National Park.

D.S.: How many trails are you responsible for?

H.M.: I have ... uh ... something like fifty miles of, probably of all trails, ... Appalachian and the Loop trails, it's around fifty miles, I imagine.

D.S.: Yea. Oh, you take care of the Appalachian trail as well?

H.M.: In this district.

D.S.: Uhhuh. I heard a hiker one time complaining because the Appalachian trail here is so easy that all you need is sneakers.

H.M.: All you need is what?

D.S.: Sneakers. (Laughed)

H.M.: Sneakers.

D.S.: And, they are use to needing the hob-nail boots. They said, this is no fun walking through the Shenandoah National Park. (Laughed)

H.M.: Well, can't please everybody. (Laughed)

D.S.: No. No.

H.M.: Some like their hob-nail shoes and some like their sneakers.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: Some likes the trails like they are and some don't like them.

D.S.: Yes.

H.M.: It's hard to please everybody, just like everything else. You can't please them all.

D.S.: How many people do you have working for you, to keep up these fifty miles?

H.M.: Uh, .. in the winter.... In the summer time I have uh, ... eighteen to twenty men and in the winter time, now I have usually around six to eight men.

D.S.: Do they keep going over the trails all winter?

H.M.: Well, yes. We have work to do. We plow off the snow of the Drive. See, that it is ...

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: The Park is a year round Park and we plow snow when it snows.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: We have a lot of work we can do. And, if it doesn't snow why, a lot of rocks comes off the banks. We always find something to do.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: If it gets so bad up here, why we can go down around the park boundry and have some work to do down around the park boundry.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: Some of the fire roads, maybe where are not on the mountain quite so much.

D.S.: Uhhuh. That's right, the fire roads has to be kept open most definately, don't they?

H.M.: Yea, we keep them open. They have, I think, about thirty some, around thirty miles, maybe thirty-five miles of ... fire road.

D.S.: Do you have much problem with all of this drought, ... we're induring? Do you think that the Park is in danger?

H.M.: With the drought? Well, I would say it was, as dry as it is, if a fire would get out ... and, ... I think it would be bad.

D.S.: Have you given any thought to telling people they can't light fires?

H.M.: Well, I don't, because that is not my job.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: I mean, the Rangers takes care of that. They suppose to tell them where they can camp and all and ...

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: ... ~~type~~ with the maintance. You see, I don't get in on that.

D.S.: Yea. Have you seen any new trees since the Park has come into existance?

H.M.: Well, the most of the trees that has come in the Park, I think you will find are Locust trees. It seems to have come in more so than any other trees.

D.S.: I thought Locust came and then were replaced by hard woods?

H.M.: Well, ... I think you'll find, ... if you have ever been to Loft Mountain, you'll see where the Locust moved in. That was cleared land, grazing farm one time, and after they, ... uh, .. the Park got it ... uh, .. the Locust taken over.

D.S.: Wouldn't it have been smart to have left that the way they do Big Meadows, as a grazing land, ... for the deer?

H.M.: Well, I think so. Maybe, a lot ... maybe, other employees, other people of authority in the Park, maybe don't think so. But, I think it would have been nice to have ... uh, ... to kept some land different, ... some in each district to be kept open and let the ... for the deer to graze.

D.S.: Yea. Uhhuh. Yea. People loves seeing them.

H.M.: Yea. I think it would be good to have some cattle grazing around in the Park. Why, take down in the Blue Ridge Parkway, they have right aways, all they have, but you ride along the Blue Ridge Parkway you got ... You see cattle grazing up the mountain there, pretty green bluegrass.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: I think, a lot of people like to see that.

D.S.: Yes! Right.

H.M.: But, I guess they couldn't have that here in the Park.

D.S.: Yes.

H.M.: I guess, it wouldn't work in the Shenandoah, because they have too large an area.

D.S.: Have you any idea how many homes were in this particular area right here, before the Park took over?

H.M.: No, I ... I wouldn't want to make a guess on that.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: Because, it was quite a few. They were right thickly settled in there. ... In the area around my home.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: And, I wouldn't want to make a guess on it.

D.S.: Was Simmons Gap a ... uh, ... uh, .. homesteaded place also?

H.M.: Simmons Gap was named the Simmons Gap Mission Home. You know where the Rangers lives? It was a church, a Mission Home Church.

D.S.: Oh!

H.M.: They turned it into a resident.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: And, then they moved the mission, when the Park bought the land, they moved the mission down off the mountain. And, it still goes as a Mission Home down out of the Park.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: On the East side of the mountain.

D.S.: Yea. Why was it named Simmons Gap, do you know?

H.M.: No, I don't . I never did hear that. I never did hear anybody say why that they called it Simmons Gap.

D.S.: Swift Run Gap is easy to guess.

H.M.: Yes.

D.S.: But, ... uh, ... Simmons Gap has always intrigued me, the same as Thornton's Gap has intrigued me.

H.M.: Right.

D.S.: How these various names came into being?

H.M.: Well, I wondered sometimes myself, why, where they got all these names for these overlooks, too.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: But, I don't know.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: Like I say about Simmons Gap, I don't know ...

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: ... where the names comes from.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Uh, ... of the families that moved out, I know you said your family were fairly contented about it, were the others? Did they have a job adapting?

H.M.: To the Park?

D.S.: Adapting to being moved?

H.M.: Oh, some of them did and some of them was happy, maybe to get out.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: But, some didn't want to go.

D.S.: Yea. Well, after they got moved, did you keep in touch with any of them?

H.M.: Some of them, yea. I think they were happy after they got moved out, ...

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: ... got settled. Seen a much better home than they had when they lived back, some of them back in the Park.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: Some of them had nice homes in the Park and some wasn't so good.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Yea. Right. Uh, ... the dances you had ... uh, ... where were they held?

H.M.: Mostly in the homes.

D.S.: Oh boy, they must had been fairly good size homes then?

H.M.: They ... Like I said, I don't remember, I was rather young

then. I don't remember too much about them.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: About the dances. But, I heard my folks talk about them.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: And, I think that had, they would hold dances, maybe or had held dances in the school house. It would be larger, you know?

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: Move the benches, the school desk around, you know?

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: And, have them in there.

D.S.: Right.

H.M.: I've heard my people talk about it.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: But, I don't remember. I never ... I never did go to one myself, I never did learn to dance.

D.S.: (Laughed) Oh, that's too bad, dancing is a lot of fun.

H.M.: Yea, they say it is. (Laughed softly)

D.S.: Yea. Uh, ... tell me in general about .... Well now, you started with working on the roads, ... uh, ... how long did it take them to build ... Well, for instance, this Southern section of the road? Do you know?

H.M.: Uh, this section of the Drive, I would say it was built in about a year and half.

D.S.: That was quick work.

H.M.: That's pretty close, a year and half.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Yea.

H.M.: Maybe it wasn't completed for travel in that time, but it was excavated and ... uh, ... maybe, base stone put down then.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: Maybe, I'd better say two years.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: Till it would be ready to open.

D.S.: It weren't that many trees to knock out of the way, were there?

H.M.: Well, yea it was quite a few trees. ... Uh, ... only in the grazing fields was where it was cleared.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: See, they went through where wooded areas, you know, and built the road. And, it only hit Big Meadows, you know, it hit in an open fields.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: And, in Loft Mountain we hit in open fields, but outside of that, why, most of it was ... uh, ... was wooded area.

D.S.: Do you know what they did with the wood they had to cut down from those trees?

H.M.: I think that they burned a lot of it up. They had to burn, I think, they had to dispose of stumps, you know?

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: Maybe, they give it to some people, I don't know about that.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: But, ... uh, ... I know they did, the contractor would have to burn the stumps and all, ... on the right of ways.

D.S.: Yea. Right.

H.M.: They may had give it to, ... See, they built ... most of the Skyline before they moved the people out of the Park.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: The Park wasn't dedicated, you probably know this, until in 1936.

D.S.: That's right.

H.M.: And, as I said, all the people wasn't out until about 1936.

D.S.: Yea. Right. No homes were left here?

H.M.: There was a few. Uh, ... probably welfare cases, you know, ... that they ... and real old. It was a real old lady left down here near where I lived, where our home was. And, she was left there 'til ... I believe she died there.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: She was real old.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: And, several cases they did that, you know?

D.S.: Sure.

H.M.: Didn't move them out.

D.S.: Right.

H.M.: Probably a lone widow or something like that, you know? They left them alone. Then, of course, they moved out as they passed on. Why, then they would tear the house down.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: But, that was all was left.

D.S.: Do you wish they had left some of the houses? Don't you think people would have been interest in seeing them?

H.M.: Yes, I do! I really do. I think they should have restored some of the old log houses.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: Would have been real ... People would had really enjoyed going in and looking at them and seeing how they ...

D.S.: That's right.

H.M.: ... the people did live.

D.S.: Were there any saw mills in this area?

H.M.: No, I don't know of any, ... right in this area. Sure, it was some, but I don't remeber just where they might be ... then.

D.S.: Uhhuh. It seems though it would have been?

H.M.: Yea, they were. ... There were a lot of saw mills around back in those days, but I can't remember just where any of them might been.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Yea. Alright now, I've picked your brain, you just start talking (Laughed) and tell me anything that comes to your mind.

H.M.: Well, I don't know just what to ...

D.S.: We want to hear anything you are thinking.

H.M.: ... what to say. Only just start out and tell you when I started and how I worked.

D.S.: O.K..

H.M.: As I said before, maybe I'm probably going over the same thing I did. I had maybe ... uh, ... when I started up there with the Park Service in 36 ....

D.S.: Uhhuh. Yea.

H.M.: ... I think I made thirty-five cents an hour.

D.S.: (Laughing) Big pay!

H.M.: That was big pay. (Laughed)

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: And, I worked from one end of the Park to the other.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: Until, I said 19 ....

D.S.: forty-eight.

H.M.: .... 48, I came down here and I've been here every since.

D.S.: Did they give you mileage, because that was a lot of miles to have to travel?

H.M.: No, we didn't get any mileage. And, we furnished our own transportation. That's what you mean, wasn't it?

D.S.: Yes!

H.M.: Yea, we furnished our own transportation. We went to, ... uh, ... Big Meadows is our maintaince area, and we drove, it was three of us at that time, drove to Big Meadows every day. Which was somewhere around thirty-five or fourty miles a day. Driving ... and, I remember when they started Park Headquarters. I was running the bulldozer... down, did a lot of excavation there, when they started it.

D.S.: Do you remember what the building looked like there, at Park Headquarters, before they started building?

H.M.: It was ... I don't remember too much about it, it was a dwelling there where the Park Headquarter sets.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: But, I don't remember. I remember them tearing it down<sup>and</sup> I worked in there with a dozer for a good while. And, I worked over in the maintance area for awhile.

D.S.: That was a long way from Elkton.

H.M.: Yea. We'd go to Big Meadows and then we'd get government transportation to headquarters. And, then go back on the mountain to get our cars and come home. It was quite a drive.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: Better yet than that, we drove to Dicky Ridge. You know where Dickey Ridge is? We'd go<sup>to</sup> Big Meadows and get a government truck and drive to Dicky Ridge and work and then come back to Big Meadows and then come home. That was quite a bit more driving.

D.S.: Yea. Right! Uh, ... did your thirty-five cents an hour include this transportation time?

H.M.: Yea. ... We would ...

D.S.: Well, that's one break!

H.M.: Well, they would give us eight hours, ... we worked eight hours and that travel time would be in that eight hours.

D.S.: I see.

H.M.: Sometime we'd be a little late, but .... but most of the time they was on government time. In other words, our traveling time was on government time.

D.S.: That gave you really only about six hours of work.

H.M.: About six hours a day would be about all you would get.

That is if going to ...

D.S.: Sure. Right.

H.M.: ... Dickey Ridge.

D.S.: Right.

H.M.: And, when you was going from Big Meadows to one end of the Park, why, you only worked about six hours.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Yea. So, that must have been quite a relief to you when they divided the Park up into sections?

H.M.: Yes, it was. I was real proud of it.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: Real proud to get down here a little closer to home.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Right. Yea. ... Uh, ... you got a nice little nitch here, taking care of this area. How long do you want to keep on doing it?

H.M.: Not too long, anymore.

D.S.: Really?

H.M.: No. ... If my plans works like I think they are, about another year.

D.S.: Who will they get to replace you?

H.M.: Oh, they can find plenty of them. People just ...

D.S.: Not with your experience!

H.M.: People just laying back waiting for my job.

D.S.: Not with your experience!

H.M.: Never think that you are so important they can't fill your job.

D.S.: Well, I know that is true. But, experience is something that ...

H.M.: That's true.

D.S.: ... you get only through hard work.

H.M.: That's good. I say experience is good.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: But, I always did say, never think that somebody else will step right in your job.

D.S.: Yea. Uhhuh.

H.M.: You're not that important.

D.S.: Do you have any trails on the ... let's see, be the ... Eastern side, wouldn't it?

H.M.: East side? Yea, this is the East side where we are.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: Your trail travel ... goes from one side, East side to the West side.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: It'll cross the Drive at various places, you know, and about half of it will be on the East Side and about half on the West side.

D.S.: Do any of them go to these areas where a home use to be?

H.M.: Well, I imagine they do. Uh, ... I ... I know I go to our home place, of course, the reason I do that is a right large cementary on our home place.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: Called the Maiden's Cementary. And, I visit that quite often. My Mother .... Mother, and Dad, and brother are buried there.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: So, ...

D.S.: Are the fruit trees still standing?

H.M.: No, the ... uh, a few still standing but they growed up, got so thick that they smothered, ... about smothered them out.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: They don't do much.

D.S.: Uhhuh. There is a place down below Skyland where the apple trees are still standing.

H.M.: Uhhuh.

D.S.: And, you know that there was a home there at one time.

H.M.: Yea. You can ride around through the Park at various places and you pretty near tell where it was a home.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: Because, you usually always see some fruit trees.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: Or maybe, a few rocks piled up where was a foundation of a house or something like that, you know?

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: And, sometimes you'll find a part of an old stove or something laying around these homesteads.

D.S.: Yea. Did you see anything or have anything ... uh, .. to do with this exploration that was being done into the ancient history of the Park?

H.M.: No. ... No.

D.S.: University of Virginia .....

H.M.: No, I didn't have anything to do with that.

D.S.: Uhhuh. That was a fascinating work that they were doing. O.K., ... so, you got thirty-five cents an hour, when did they up you?

H.M.: Well, let's see. I think in 1937, they put me on at ninty dollars a month.

D.S.: Oh!

H.M.: All the way up to ninty-dollars a month.

D.S.: You were made! (Laughed) Yea.

H.M.: That's when I got my permanent position.

~~H.M.:~~ Got leave, annual leave and sick leave.

D.S.: Oh!

H.M.: See, with hourly work, you didn't get annual or sick leave, either one.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: When you went on permanent, why, you got annual and sick leave.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: And, I had my little home that I built in 1938, and I paid for it with ninty dollars a month.

D.S.: Ooooh! What, you raised a garden to help you ...

H.M.: Oh, yea.

D.S.: ... with things and meals. Yes.

H.M.: We had our meats and garden ...

D.S.: Yes.

H.M.: ... couldn't had made it if it hadn't been for that.

D.S.: That's right. Yea. And, coming from a farming family, you knew how to do it.

H.M.: Yea, ... always liked my garden.

D.S.: You know, I was just sort-of thinking. You were talking about these, .... string beaning, and .... uh, ... apple butter boilings and stuff. Uh, ... how many, roughly, would come to those? Can you recall, how many families?

H.M.: Oh, it maybe as many as ... uh, ... six or eight families. Close by families ... would always come in and help peel the apples and maybe then the next day they would come in and, or some people would boil apple butter at night, you know?

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: And, they would come back and help stir the apple butter.

D.S.: Have you ever heard the story, that if ... uh, ... you know, the paddle had to go through the center and then around and around, and then if ... uh, ... if a paddle touched a side, you got a kiss?

H.M.: No, don't believe I ever did. I was always told that the stirrer had to go always round and through the middle.

D.S.: Yes.

H.M.: That was the way they always taught me to stir the apple butter.

D.S.: Sure. Right.

H.M.: But, I didn't never hear about the kiss.

D.S.: (Laughed) Something you missed out on.

H.M.: Yea. I was too young to know about the kissing. (Laughed)

D.S.: Did they make sorghum?

H.M.: Soyrgum? No, ... don't know of any. Never heard of that.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Sorghum, I mean.

H.M.: Oh, yea! Sorghum, yea.

D.S.: Yea. Uhhuh.

H.M.: Yea. Right. You made that up from cane.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: Yea, a lot of people made that. It was ... a neighbor, not too far away from our homeplace, uh, ... had the mill and made the sorghum.

D.S.: Uhhuh. What was the best kind, the light color or the dark color?

H.M.: I always liked the light color, the best.

D.S.: Now, how did they get the light color?

H.M.: It was the way they boiled it, I think. Maybe, they ... they boiled it longer turned it dark, I think.

D.S.: Aaah!

H.M.: I think I'm right on that. I'm not sure.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: But, if you wanted light sorghum they didn't boil it as long and if you wanted dark sorghum they would boil it a little longer.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Your family didn't make it?

H.M.: No, we didn't make it. But, it was a lot of neighbors around that did.

H.M.: Oh, I think we had made some. This family, you know, would have the mill, they would go around to different places and make it, the sorghum, you know, for other people.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: But, I don't know ... don't recall weather we made any at home, ... at our home or not.

D.S.: Since we are not mentioning any names, you will be safe to answer this question. Did you hear of much bootlegging up here?

H.M.: Oh, yea.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: They had ... There was quite a bit of that made in the Park.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: Before the Park taken it, no <sup>DOUBT</sup> doubt about that.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: Pretty near in every hollow, had a still.

D.S.: Yea. Right.

H.M.: Yea.

D.S.: ~~Is it~~ true, that then on a weekend, they use to come down

H.M.: out of the mountains and roar into Elkton, because I've always heard that story?

H.M.: Yea.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: A place that they call, you will notice when you go back over look, Bacon Hollow. Bacon Hollow, I was always told, was the ... more moonshine made there than any other holler anywhere around near. But, as you'll notice when you come to the Bacon Hollow over look, if you make a right and go over in the over look and look down in that holler, ther are a lot of houses down there.

D.S.: Still?

H.M.: Oh, yea. They are out of the Park. See, the Park is pretty close.

D.S.: Yea. Uhhuh.

H.M.: See, someplaces the Park boundary is not as wide.

D.S.: That's right.

H.M.: Right in here it is not wide, you can go up here at Loft Mountain over look and see houses .....

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: ... that are just out of the Park.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: Well, it's the same way at Bacon Hollow over look.

D.S.: Well, they are not still ... bootlegging?

H.M.: I don't think they are now. I think it is ..., they did that before the state come.....

D.S.: Yea. ..

H.M.: ... what do you call it? Uh, ... the to sell legal whiskey?

D.S.: Yea. Uhhuh.

H.M.: They ... That's when most of the moonshine was made. After the legal whiskey became available, why, ... they .. they couldn't, they probably couldn't afford ... They couldn't make anything on it, you see?

D.S.: Sure.

H.M.: Because, people wouldn't buy that ... they would go on and buy the legal whiskey.

D.S.: Sure. Right. Having Skyland here wasn't of any assistance to the people that were in this are, was it?

H.M.: Having the Skyline Drive here?

D.S.: No! Having Skyland with George Pollock?

*Side II →*  
D.S.: That startled you, didn't you, I'm sorry. But, is there anything else that you can recall about either the Park's improvements or ... the life before the Park, or anything along that line?

H.M.: Well, I don't believe I do know of anything. I think the Park is a big improvement than what it was when it started out. I believe that.

D.S.: You don't have to play politics. (Laughing)

H.M.: I think it is a much improvement.

D.S.: It is!

H.M.: I would say it was.

D.S.: Yea. I'm afraid we would have just seen a large development of houses all along here if it hadn't been for the Park.

H.M.: You probably would have. Uh, ... they have a place here, you can see it ... uh, ... from Bacon Hollow overlook, it is a private land and it has been sold to this, B. K. Haynes, I know you have heard about him, and they got a house development going up there now. Real fast.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: And, I think that's what you'd seen here along the mountain.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: If it hadn't been Park here.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: And, I think the Park has really been good to all the little towns, and counties, and all in surrounding the Park.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: To say; Rockingham, Page, and all the counties that it goes through.

D.S.: That's right.

H.M.: I think it's been a help to, .. it certainly been a, ... it put a lot of employment ...

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: ... for people.

D.S.: Oh, yes!

H.M.: And, I think that the people ought to be proud of it.

D.S.: How about the number of visitors, have you noticed the increase in the visitation? Were there many that came when the road first was opened?

H.M.: Yes, it was. There was a lot of people, they were curious, you know, so many people to get up here and see what it looked like. You heard the Skyline Drive and then they just couldn't hardly wait to get up here to see what it looked like.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: Yea. I think, when they opened it, they first opened up ... was a lot of people come. Of course, when they first opened the Skyline Drive, they only opened it to Swift Run Gap.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: And, from there on into Waynesboro was opened then several years later.

D.S.: Yea.

H.M.: And, ... I don't know what the travel figure was back in them days, but I'm sure it wouldn't be as much as it is, maybe now, but it was good. I'm sure.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Yea. Well, this has been a fascinating thing and I think it is marveleous that your family came from here, that is an extra bonus. (Laughed) How many were in your family?

H.M.: Four.

D.S.: Four?

H.M.: Two boys and two girls.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Yea.

H.M.: And, all of us, all but one living.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: I still have two sisters, my brother is dead.

D.S.: You know the people that lived up here were very long lived, weren't they?

H.M.: Yea, most of the poeple lived, <sup>to a</sup> right old age. I guess the mountain air was what that did it. (Laughed)  
I don't know.

D.S.: Well, I think they had to keep in such good physical condition ... to climb up and down the mountains that ... that must <sup>have</sup> had to help <sup>ed</sup> a lot too. Now, people has to jog to stay in condition.

H.M.: (Laughed) That's right.

D.S.: Yea. Uh, ... you have not then added anymore trails? Have you thought of putting anymore trails in?

H.M.: No, ... I only add a few. I have added a trail at Loft Mountain, of course, that's more or less a walk, that's not actually a trail. But, it is a paved walk, about a mile and two tenths. I've just about got it completed. It is from Loft Mountain camp store down to the wayside.

D.S.: Oh, yes.

H.M.: And, what that's not what you call a trail.

D.S.: Well, since you knew where some of these homes were, have you ever thought of making a trail like down to where a home was and have a sign put up; A homesite was here, they raised this, this, this and this.?

H.M.: Well, I never thought of it, but I think it would be a good idea.

D.S.: You would get a lot of interest.

H.M.: Yes, you would.

D.S.: And, you know where those homes were.

H.M.: Know where a lot of them were, yes.

D.S.: Will you put that in you thinking cap and ...

H.M.: Guess I could, couldn't I?

D.S.: Yes. And, try to get that though, because I know that those would be the trails most used.

H.M.: Yea, they would.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: Yea, it be ... there are nature trails and they built. .. I built one trail, I did say I hadn't built any, I take that back. I built a Nature Trail here at Loft Mountain, at wayside. Leaves at wayside and makes a complete circle and comes back.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: And, it's the <sup>old</sup> little chestnut trees and .. where they are down, most of them are. They call it, The Nature Trail.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: And, I did build that.

D.S.: Yea. But, ... if we are going to keep this history alive, we've got to ... help people live it. And, you can live it more if you look at a spot and look around and see a lilac bush growing and then you try and picture the kind of people that lived there, and what they did, and ...

H.M.: Yea, that's right.

D.S.: Do you think the people would object to saying, So and sos cabin was here?

H.M.: No, I don't think so. I don't believe they would.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: Most of the older people <sup>all</sup> has passed on, but, of course, some of the younger generation still living. A lot of them.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

H.M.: And, probably some of them don't never even go back to the old home site. I know a lot of them do.

D.S.: Yea. Uhhuh. Yea. O.K., nothing more you can think of?

H.M.: I don't believe I have anything else to add to it. Can't think of anything.

D.S.: O.K.. I sure appreciate you taking all of your time. Well, I'll let you get back to work.

H.M.: Alright, glad to help you if I can in anyway, and ...

D.S.: Yes, you can. If you think of anything that you have not told us, because I'm sure you will, uh, ...