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(SNP124) Davis Twyman interviewed by Dorothy Noble Smith, transcribed by Joy K. Stiles

Davis Twyman

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Interview with Davis Twyman

Part of the Shenandoah National Park Oral History Collection, SdArch SNP-124
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Interview conducted at unknown location
By Dorothy Noble Smith
November 21, 1977

Transcribed by Joy K. Stiles, date unknown

Key

[DS:] Interviewer, Dorothy Smith

[DT:] Interviewee, Davis Twyman

() Unable to understand word

Total interview length: 00:57:12 min.

[Begin audio file, 0:00:01]

Dorothy Noble Smith: First of all, I'm interviewing Mr. Davis Twyman, who has been a native of Madison County and Syria--

Davis Twyman: Yeah, always right around here in Syria.

DS: --all his life. Okay.

DT: Been here all my life.

DS: Now, Mr. Twyman, you having lived here all your life, could tell us something that we don't know: did the people from, that lived in Big Meadows, like the Weakleys and the Burackers, and so on, where did they do their shopping? Down here?

DT: They done some of it over to Kiblingers, over at the foot of the mountain. Stanley? You know Stanley?

DS: Yeah.

DT: And they done a lot of it right out here, coming in from both sides. My mom talking about () sometimes they come down here.

DS: How would they come down?

DT: Walk.

DS: They'd walk.

DT: () come down most of them walk.

DS: Was there a mill here that they could bring their--to get flour made?

DT: Down below, yeah, but this old house here had a mill on it one time but '93 washed away when that flood was here. () hollow was flooded at one time. We had a mill here made flour and my father when he was a young boy ran the mill, for his father, for his father.

DS: Is that right? And then when the mill was flooded out, they didn't repair it?

DT: Nah, indeed, washed it away. Undermined it and fell over.

DS: Yeah, and there was no--

DT: Undermined it, '92, was it.

DS: In 1892?

DT: 1892.

DS: Then how did the people get their flour?

ST: Well, there was mills all down below here. Got a mill in () we had in Madison County at one time fifteen or twenty mills! And today we ain't got a mill in Madison County! No ()! Got to grind ().

DS: Isn't that something?

DT: But () had mills here, over in the bottom of Nicholson Hollow, over to Nether's mill, round at Sperryville, Fletcher had a big mill, we got (), and we got flour down this-a-way on down to Orange on the river down there was a big mill

called Gilliam's mill. Then they'd grind our flour. But we had mills around here, corn mills, grind your corn, but didn't all of them make flour.

DS: Yeah, uh huh. Did the people come here to buy their kerosine and things like that, that they needed?

DT: They come out here to this store. About all they needed back in them days is something for their lamps. Wasn't no gas, I believe the first gas come out here to Syria was about the time they were gone. The car, first car, was up in here, belonged to a man that run the stores, it's a Ford. That's been a long time ago (coughing)

DS: That's right, that was a long time ago. So, you had quite a bit of contact with people like the Burackers and Weakleys?

DT: Well, () right much. I'd see 'em. They used to come to this church down here, and () to Big Meadows and sing, for our night meetings they had in them days. Horses, went to it, nothing but horses people rode. And these Burackers would come down and sing for them, they paid the singer, Richey.

DS: Really?

DT: (), Richardtown, they called it.

DS: Where was that?

DT: On above this store, you pick up the old turnpike, right on the old turnpike.

DS: Oh!

DT: () went right through, I believe went right through Richardtown.

DT: Uh huh.

DS: And there was, old man Richard was a preacher, had preaching by the son ()

DS: Umm hmm. In other words, they were pretty, they were pretty God-fearing people, right?

DT: Well, they were, yeah, they were. It made a living. That's the only way you'd even go, get tickets and stamps and things, in them days, on the way you had to (). They made shingles, peeled bark, made ties, all that stuff. Made a lot of shingles, that Richards did. Had a team all ().

DS: Well, did people in town here buy those shingles from them?

DT: Well, figure () that most of them went out () big farmers bound, cover their barns, () cover their barns. Yeah, they was made by Richards, most of them shingles was made. But, he still made () people all around () shingles and he'd buy them and sell them ().

DS: I see. Was that part way up the mountain? Richards' place?

DT: It's right on the turnpike, if you're going () the foot of the mountain.

DS: Oh, right at the foot of the mountain?

DT: Yeah.

DS: Did he, did Richards have like a store there, too?

DT: Store?

DS: Yeah.

DT: Very small store, he didn't, I don't think Drummonds even went up, I believe he went out and buy stuff at these big stores. And sell it. And he just got it for these mountain people, mostly, you know. Trade 'em, shingles, peeled bark, we'd haul it. All our bark over here went to Luray Tannery in them days.

DS: Yeah. That was a long distance to take it.

DT: () At one time they brought all the bark was peeled over here, they brought it up to Stanley. Schewers [sp?]. Ever hear of Schewers in Stanley?

DS: Yeah.

DT: Old man Schewers owned a place () bark for the Luray Tannery. And they hauled it over the mountain (coughs), and then they loaded it on a car () and carry it down to Luray. But it was too much of a trip for us to make in one day. I mean, one day over and one back to bring it, when you'd haul bark.

DS: Oh, really?

DT: Only went but one way.

DS: Where would you stay over night, then?

DT: () around the wagons and barns () stay. Lay down and sleep in them ().

DS: Well, that wasn't very comfortable.
DT: Well, feel better than I do today. I'm all achy.
DS: (laughs)
DT: (coughs) But it's true, but there was a lot of bark peeled through here. In fact, all the chestnut bark was cut out.
DS: When the chestnut blight--
DT: Yeah.
DS --hit, then the people didn't have so much to trade, did they?
DT: Didn't have what?
DS: That much to trade, so that they could buy things.
DT: No, I remember my father was a house builder, contractor, kind of small contractor. And I've heard him said, oh, people'd talk about what are we gonna do? To cover our bond to () Let's build fence. Chestnuts are all dying. That's all of your rail fences out of chestnut. Covered all them houses with shingles. Shingles would come from the chestnut. Good () make shingles and the others would make rails to build fences. And they wondered what they was going to do because of the houses, there. I remember () (coughing) couple of shingles. I don't know if all those () nobody got shingles on today, but a few years ago back it was, it was the (). () barn, cow sheds () had shingles on them. Made out of chestnut. Was made right back in the mountain. (coughs) But they got the roofing started, what they call galvanized roofing. And, we got to (). We had an old man by the name of Hammer Jack, colored fellow, from Stanley. He put--would come over here and stayed over here for weeks and weeks, and put on roofs for people, that is, we paid him. () about uh, about uh . . . near Stanley . . . New Market. Not New Market, Marksville! You know where that's at?
DS: Oh, yeah, yeah.
DT: And that's why () it was Marksville. Hammer Jack we called him, I don't know what his name was. He'd, he'd make, people go and set in the store, come out and talk to him. Hammer Jack, I want you to make me a cup. I remember a supervisor one time asked him and all he said when they told him that () Jack said he'd make it, he said, now I want a hammer on it. Said it'd be no cup if there wasn't a hammer on it, be no cup! Hammer Jack come from Marksville. (coughs)
DS: With the people coming down here, did you all have much chance to talk with them, and what have you?
DT: Not much, no. () Meet them at the store and most of the people's taken about all day to come down to the store and set a couple hours, buy the stuff, put it on their back, walk home.
DS: Umm hmm, yeah. You never went up there to visit them at all?
DT: I was up here, now, I used to haul stuff out () wagon. They was great big potato raisers, cabbage raisers, and I used to, fellows used to buy a load of cabbage up there and I'd go up there and haul them out, haul them out, load of potatoes.
DS: Who would you buy--who would you get those from, do you remember?
DT: We got most of them, potatoes from John Weakley's. The Weakley's furnished () the cabbage. John Weakley and Emmett Weakley, Be right this side of Big Meadows.
DS: That's right.
DS: About the () school. And old man Buracker lived around, he was a good man to raise potatoes, and he was a religious man. To tell a tale, I used to () bucket and he had a garden and he had a walkway right down () garden and right at the head of that walkway was the yard. And on beyond there was a () there. And they had on either side of this driveway down through there had parsnips. And I like parsnips, you know, and I said, after we're through getting these, I want to mess with () And he said, alright. Well his wife was up at the head, in the yard. And I said something about they make such a good wine. Man, she let into him! No, you get none of them here, no, she said, they was really strict (). You know, they wouldn't even let me have a mess of them to bring home? They said you going to make wine out of them, you don't take them from here. I said, I ain't like wine, I ain't like wine, but I hadn't (). Hadn't gotten none, no way, (

) tell people about, yesterday, about old Mrs. Buracker, when she come out with that book about the Park up there. () cabbage. () made cabbage up there, I'd haul cabbage not more than one head. () story () but I didn't! Eighteen pounds that cabbage head weighed!

DS: My goodness!

DT: And it was just as hard (), you know. Mountain cabbage was good cabbage ().

DS: Yes, it was good cabbage, yeah, umm hmm.

DT: And after they left from up there I knew when the Park came, there'd be nothing, you wouldn't get no cabbage, or nothing out of the Park after that.

DS: No. Do you recall how much you paid for that cabbage?

DT: I, I didn't buy them, these merchants buy them, I think they paid them something like five cent, () five cents a head. Head, then they paid us, () team, and I drove it, went up there and haul them out of the mountain for them. () say it would be a March () take a load of cabbage out that day, would be () March (), sell 'em. And they'd () potatoes and () sell 'em to local people. (). It was mostly Weakleys and Burackers that raised potatoes, well, there was one Hurt, Wes Hurt. He raised a lot of potatoes, I got potatoes from his place. (coughs) He used to, Wes Hurt and them had a () up there. He () Doubletop Mountain and they had it in potatoes and they'd come down here and sell them to the merchant down here and trade it out, you see? And () merchant give me () and bring 'em out for him. See () bring 'em out. And the () you have to dig 'em, you know. You dig your potatoes and put them in piles. Very big piles, about that high. Then they'd take this old chestnut bark around the tree, set up all around them, and throw dirt up on 'em, keep them from freezing. Well, it'd be late 'til we'd left, and then we'd have to pull all that down and pull it back, you know, and get the potatoes out. But they () we'd get () and get 'em, you know, and they'd, and they'd cover them up with dirt, put 'em in there.

DS: Umm hmm. You'd go up with a wagon?

DT: Up in a wagon, haul 'em.

DS: Wasn't it hard to go up there with a wagon?

DT: Well, it was pretty rough, we had mules, that's all (). We used the pike some, go up the pike, pike was just in good shape then. Then we'd come down what we'd call (), come back down another way. And people lived, I don't say people down here lived, but the ones out around Madison, () and all some other ones up () down Luray road, some set () Orange, Culpeper. But that's what they lived on. Beans, made barrels of beans!

DS: Oh, yes!

DT: They'd have beans, pick 'em when they got dry, you know, and put 'em in, () winter time in, hull 'em, put 'em in () to cook. Beans. I don't know what color beans they was, I know I remember white beans, all kinds, I imagine. They had a bean every day, they called it a bird egg bean, you ever heard of it?

DS: No.

DT: It was a speckled bean, great big round, speckled bean.

DS: Bird egg bean?

DT: That's what they called them. Lot of people had them, and they brought more in than the others, always, () time.

DS: Oh!

DT: I don't know if they was any better, but people wanted some bird eggs.

DS: They were a lot better than you can buy in the store now.

DT: Oh, yeah.

DS: Oh, yes. Did any people from this area drive their cattle up to Big Meadows?

DT: Car?

DS: Cattle.

DT: Oh, yes, all these big farmers up here graze all this Blue Ridge Mountain, you know. From this side, it, (coughing) most of the people that graze that Blue Ridge Mountain was the Page people. Long, and (), and Beidler. Ever hear of Beidler?

DS: Yeah.
DT: Old man Beidler?
DS: Yeah.
DT: You didn't know him?
DS: No, I didn't know him, no.
DT: Old man Beidler had a place up there. You have a man, Brown, over here that married a Beidler woman over there, up there near Stanley, somewhere ().
DS: Yes?
DT: Right in behind the (). Beidler. He died here last year and I heard the other day she was in a home, God bless 'em, the old, Beidler, they only had one daughter.
DS: Well, how, they would take the cattle up that road, up that turnpike?
DT: Yeah. We had a man over here, was a commissioner of revenue one time, was it from Madison? My memory () let's see what it was . . . oh, I can't remember it right now, you come () Anyway, he was driving cattle from Madison () which is about eight miles from here, with two shepherd dogs, he had eighteen, twenty head of cattle up here, and came back down to the () [pitcher? picture?] place, the place at the head of Nicholson Hollow we call the () [pitcher? picture?] place? You ever been over there? Right close to Skyline Drive?
DS: Yeah.
DT: And he (coughing) used to say he had land up there, he claimed it, but when the Park come along, he never had no title to it! And then, well half of them did it, but some of them -- Long, () Long, they, some of them claimed it and got it, some way or another. But there was so much land up there had () used, and had some of it fenced. And here when the Park come along, they had no time to do it, you know. They never got it. But () farmers in Page County (coughing) of grazing--
DS: That's right.
DT: They fed them down at home and drove them up there and they (). () old man would get a lot of () they tell me any way he want. () And he had a boy out here, six, eight years ago, you know () head of cattle. Henry Long. And a hundred of them would go here to Page and a hundred of them would go to Front Royal, had a big farm in Front Royal, too. () and buy () year and a half old stuff ().
DS: Boy, that's rough on the cattle!
DT: He bought ().
DS: Yeah.
DT: () but they'd buy them. (coughing) Most of these fellows over here would drive them (). They'd come up and buy them, then they'd give you () to somebody, so much (). Probably two, three of them would get together and drive them out, old pike () to Stanley. New Market--not New Market, Marksville.
DS: Yeah.
DT: (coughing) ()
DS: Well, now, you said the Burackers used to come down and sing at the church. Did the Weakleys or the Woodwards or any of the--
DT: Well, the Weakleys come some, but the Richards and Burackers were the most people come down to the church which was the Methodist church in town, here. And they would come down, they used to have big meetings at night, you know. Don't have 'em anymore like they used to have. But down here at this () there'd be horses be tied down you's afraid to walk through 'em 'cause they're tied everywhere. And they'd come down here and sing for 'em. And they, and they was Christian people. Call it that Christian, whatever you want.
DS: Sure they were.
DT: They were good old people.
DS: Did the Burackers move down here, then, when they moved out of the Park, or do you know where they went?
DT: Well, I () wasn't many old Burackers here when the, when the Park was taking, in fact there was some young Burackers, and they moved down somewhere now, I don't know where, but they built these homes, see? At, you know--
DS: Wolftown.

DT: Yeah, Wolftown and out here below Madison, too, there. And some of them Buracker's land (). But the old man Buracker used to come to these churches, they would all pass through here. () said they had no () she, she and her husband passed away before the Park take ()

DS: Oh!

DT: (laughing) Before the Park come.

DS: Yeah, right. What was the reaction of the people here in Syria when the people from the mountains moved down? Were they accepted?

DT: Yeah, they were, yeah, I think. You mean the qualities, the way they lived?

DS: Yeah, they were a bit different from the way you all were, their customs were different--

DT: In a way.

DS: --their education wasn't as good . . .

DT: No, no, they had no schooling there.

DS: No.

DT: But they, they got along with everybody, everybody liked them. They was very plain people

DS: Yes, they were.

DT: And then (coughing) we had, we had a letter . . . Dyers, did you ever hear of the Dyers? Dyer, D-Y-E-R, Dyer.

DS: Yeah?

DT: They come from Maine, here, in the wartime, got started up there around the Rag, Old Rag ()?

DS: Uh huh.

DT: And that mountain got full of them, of Dyers and there are a lot of them living up in here.

DS: Oh.

DT: Young Dyer. And they were good people, they made baskets, () Bring them out here to the store and carry them in one of these (). Dyer.

DS: And they're still there?

DT: Yeah.

DS: Uh huh.

DT: I tell you, I had a sister went to school up in Pennsylvania, upper end of Pennsylvania. No, she went here. I believe she went to Boston. Anyway, she had a friend. I, I tell you, in Pennsylvania she was a nurse, my sister was. And she () up in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, one of, one of them states up, you know, right close to Massachusetts. She come home with her one time, she's a very plain woman, a nurse, around I would say twenty, thirty years old, and she--we lived out here at the store at that big house directly next to the store. And talking () set out talking one day, so I know it was true, I wouldn't lie. But these Dyers went out of the room, and had the baskets on their back. And the Dyers come from up where she lived, up in New Hampshire.

DS: Oh.

DT: Matter of fact, don't that join--

DS: Yes, it does, umm hmm.

DT: Come from New Hampshire. And said, Mr. Twyman, () said them people said they're Dyers. One of them must have come from out of state. That's what the () up there. So the next morning she wanted a horse. I think () went with her, one of my sisters, and () visit the Dyers. And she found out that, where they come from by their talk, she said, in the tree they had, see, I believe they have a (). Talk like 'em, that way, like 'em. And come to find out, the first Dyer come here skipped the army and come here. When the war was.

DS: Yeah?

DT: And he stayed here in this mountain until he was married to somebody and had his family. () a lot of Dyers. Good people. All mechanics. Saw mill, grist mill, do most everything. But, but some of them ().

DS: You know, speaking of people coming from places, where did the Twymans come from?

DT: () started the Twymans down 'tween here and Orange, down Tywman's Mill--

DS: Yeah?

DT: --that whole section in this book'll tell you about them. How they owned a slew of land there at one time.

DS: Yes, now do you recall when they first came to this country?

DT: No, I can't, I don't know. I don't know, they must have come here early though, 'cause () got old Twyman died way back before I heard of him. I don't, I don't know if, they're english, I think.

DS: Sure, that's an english name, right?

DT: (coughing) () and where they settled, I don't know. But seemed to me they settled down there in Norfolk or Richmond, down in that section, I don't think the first one ever, but the Twyman started, they started down in Twyman's Mill, in that book was a lot of them, and there was no great big family of Twyman's, I think my father, William, had a family of nine children, that's about as big as any Twyman family I knew about.

DS: Wow, that's a lot of children.

DT: Right, but most of the families in the () they get two and quit. But they used to have, you know, great big families.

DS: Sure, right.

DT: My aunt, she was a McCulloch, and I think she had nine or ten children, ten, I believe. Now, but they don't have no more than two. Take all these Graves that's over here, the young ones, they all, one of them's got one child, some of them two, not over two, no. (coughing)

DS: Yeah.

DT: The Page people, we got a lot of people over here come from Page, come, I don't say they come from Page, come from Rockingham, all over () They're Kites.

DS: Yes.

DT: And the Graves, all come from Page County.

DS: Yeah.

DT: That's the way they got over here, when the Park was built, it followed that pike over here and got to buy land, and they thought there's gonna be a big thing. So back then, you had one at Wolftown, below Criglersville they're Kites, Kites and Graves, you know, owned a lot of territory at one time. (). But () always told me that's the way they (). Bunch of Graves over here got over here by coming up here and putting up a barn. And they change the stage horses out of it. Old man Graves running it, is how they tell me, for years. Old barn standing, I think yet.

DS: Oh, uh huh. How about when Hoover, President Hoover, was looking for a place to have his camp? Was there much interest here in Syria?

DT: Well, yeah, but that's the army, you know, () Always a bunch of soldiers out here at this store. Most all the time. (coughing, voice becoming very hoarse). The way that Hoover got the camp here, he sent a bunch of fellows up here to Charlottesville. () [Elmer Conner?] had picked out a place but they didn't like it. I don't () wrong with it () And they didn't like it, and they come back to Madison and stayed all night there. In them days you're driving by train or bus--I mean, not bus, weren't no busses(). And they had a man out here by the name of Thomas Hurley. You'd heard of the Hurleys?

DS: Yeah.

DT: And he stayed up here while the Hoover Camp was --half the time these people has some land about (). And Thomas Hurley never did (). () he stayed up there and fished half his time, camped up there, () people up there, horseback - I don't know whether he got a buggy and horse back in there, but rode. (coughs) But when these fellow's cabin () stay all night down here at Madison, John Harlow's hotel and they was telling Mr. Harlow one day what their business was, you know, and told him about they'd been all riding () see what they were going to do. So he, Mr. Harlow said, I'm going to call the man he has been up to where the Hoover camp is now, () camp in now.

DS: Yeah.

DT: They call it the Wallace place, I think, the Wallace's owned it, or somebody. And what the () come over and talk with them. And they set a day that they were coming back up here and go horseback again up to, up to, this, where it's at now, where the Hoover camp is.

DS: Yeah, umm hmm.

DT: So we got on the move and we furnished the horses. People riding () had horses, () ride up there. (coughing) So they picked out that () camp there. But Thomas Hurley was the head of it. He's the man that hadn't been for him, they'd have went on back to, went back to Albemarle.

DS: Yeah.

DT: You know that, he didn't do nothing but fish and hunt and lead people. He didn't, but, people come into the county, he was glad to meet them, take them out and show them all over the county. () (coughing)

DS: Uh huh. Were you all proud to have Camp Hoover here, or did you resent it?

DT: No, I think they was satisfied, yeah. 'Cause Hoover, he () for the hard work he had, you know. Not by the people had a () just like he had, you know.

DS: That's right.

DT: And things got dull, () because he used his politics, you know, and he, most of the people thought a lot of him. () until they died. He was a good man.

DS: He was a good man.

DT: But they built this road down near the Hoover bridge, we call that Little Syria, (coughing) that mountain with () horse or mule or something, (). And then when they built it for () Eddie Chapman was the supervisor and he was a (). He kept getting () and he worked them, and he give them a dollar a day. But they worked night and day, down there to get him his road in time when he needed it.

DS: Yes.

DT: So that's the way that road got up there.

DS: Have you ever been to Camp Hoover?

DT: Up here? Oh, used to go up there () go up every Sunday. Couldn't go right to the camp, you know, but we'd go as far as they'd allow it.

DS: Yeah.

DT: But since he left there, () old buildings started going down, you know, I went up there, I'd say a couple times.

DS: It's beautiful.

DT: Yeah, yeah, it is. And they are, they're fixing it up now. Somebody said the vice-president's been up there a couple times.

DS: He spends almost every weekend there.

DT: Does he?

DS: Right.

DT: Very good man, I think, I like to hear him talk.

DS: Umm hmm, and he's there almost every weekend. It's, so it's still a beautiful place.

DT: Yeah, it is.

DS: Yeah, umm hmm.

DT: They, they made it, there's a woman living over here now, her father owned that land, that Hoover camp is on.

DS: Oh, really?

DT: She owned it, (). () She worked in a bank one time, and she () here, out here in, turn off when first you get to Madison, down that road () plumbing place down there, she works in that, and her husband owns part of it.

DS: Mmm hmm, mmm hmm.

DT: I just can't think of anything, that wasn't that--Wallace place back in there somewhere, but that wasn't built on the Wallace place. It was built on this woman's, I'm telling you about, her father owned that land back in there. (coughing) And he went () for that. Aw, I can't think of her, I know who (). Anyway, that's the way the Hoover camp got up in there.

DS: Yeah, uh huh. Well, I understand Madison gave him a great big party because--

DT: (coughing) After the ().

DS: Did you go to that party?

DT: I was down there.

DS: Umm hmm.
DT: Blimp.
DS: Umm hmm?
DT: Byrd was the, was the governor at that time, () Byrd, and he come up there in the blimp. ()
DS: That must have been a wonderful party!
DT: Oh, we had some of the Twyman's from Charlottesville () my home, stayed all night to go to it. Strong democrats, but they come down and went to that. () Hoover.
DS: Well, they say that Hoover was very touched by having this party for him.
DT: I imagine.
DS: Umm hmm, yeah. He and his wife did, did a lot, for the mountain people.
DT: They ().
DS: Yeah, they started a school, umm hmm.
DT: () a great woman, I like her. She, she's a great woman, the president's wife. And, we've had a lot of good ones.
DS: Yes, we have. Did the Buracker's ever mention anything about the Hoover school, that you know of?
DT: I think the Hoover school was () got done, you know--
DS: That's right.
DT: I couldn't guess. Man, I think, (). He caught a possum, he was even in the paper. You remember that?
DS: That's right.
DT: That's a Buracker boy.
DS: That's right.
DT: Caught it and gave it to Mr. Hoover and it was in papers and magazines and everything.
DS: And that's why they started the Hoover school.
DT: Yeah.
DS: Umm hmm, yeah.
DT: And that Buracker boy, I think he went down and he sold cars for a man in Culpeper after that. (coughing) And I used to buy stuff there and I got to know him. And he called me after that one night () peacock, I had peacocks (). And he told me that, said if I don't do something, Mr. Twyman, in the next few days, he's a figuring on moving. I don't know why the boy went, went out west somewhere. He left from Culpeper, went out west. But he never did come and get () so he must be out west. And he was a Buracker.
DS: Mrs. or Miss Yowell, Lucy Yowell, now, that's a name from Madison County. One of the teachers there at Hoover School. Did you know her?
DT: Lucy Yowell? I don't any (). It's Lucy Yowell, married some Yowell on over here?
DS: No, she married one of the marines at the Camp. A Harry Faulk. She married him. But she taught there, and I was thinking maybe you might--
DT: Well, there's another woman taught to Hoover Camp.
DS: Yeah, I can't--
DT: After that.
DS: Yeah, I can't--
DT: () named woman. but I used to know 'em, you know.
DS: Yeah.
DT: Just by, well I never meet 'em, but you've seen them and hear people talking about them. They had a good school up there at one time.
DS: Yes, it was a good school.
DT: (coughing) And it was a great help to them people.
DS: Right.
DT: I don't think the government, that is, the county didn't have much to do with it.
DS: The Hoover's paid for it.
DT: Yeah.
DS: Yeah. They paid for it themselves entirely. Now, with the people having come back, having moved down here, how many of them moved into Syria, do you know?

DT: Right down in here? I don't know if any of them did, as far as I know. They probably all went to either homestead.

DS: Yeah.

DT: Yeah, there must be twenty or thirty homes down here to Madison homestead. And they had one at Wolftown ().

DS: How about Boot Corbin?

DT: Nah.

DS: He moved down here, didn't he?

DT: He never did, but most of these people that moved out there stayed out there a while. They had these papers, said when they stayed on them so long, they'd own them, you know. But they'd of liked to sell 'em or trade 'em but (). Lot of them sold them, more () than owned them, you know. And it's a lot of them live out there yet.

DS: Yes.

DT: They () been bought from these people that moved out of the Park.

DS: That's right.

DT: ()

DS: What has Boot Corbin found to do, as far as work goes, do you know? What has Boot Corbin found to do as far as work goes?

DT: He ain't found nothing. You mean, he's never, he never done nothing, but go from house to house, rent you know, renting the house. He never had owned one that . . . But they graze a bunch of () graze that place, I know. () .

DS: Some of their boys growing up alright.

DT: Did you ever meet Boot?

DS: I don't think I'd want to.

DT: Why?

DS: From what you all were saying the other day about him, I don't think that, no.

DT: I don't know, they, they gave them trouble sometimes, but not a road or somewhere the truck () or fighting or something like that. Them boys used to take them down () not any more, used to be. But old Bootsie () I was over to Orange. Boots used to make hampers, I got old hampers in my truck that Boots made for (). I was over to Orange, and stopped by a store and Boots left here one time and went way downtown () and worked for some man. Lived on his farm. And I don't know whether this hog wash story we tell about the () of this man. And Boot returned to buy a knife to make baskets with. Well, it was \$2 and something for a knife in them days, which was a big (). And the man calls me aside and says here's a man () Mr. Twyman, () and he wants to buy a knife from me for \$2 and I think \$2 is what it's worth, said he'd pay me for it in the next week or the week after next, he makes baskets. () and I told the man, I said I never heard Boots but what he paid his debt. That's all I know, there's no harm in Boots. And if he tells you he's going to pay you, I think as far as I know he'll pay you. So I ()

DS: Well why did Mr. Graves say that he wished that Boot had stayed in the mountains and not come down here.

DT: (laughs) Well, where'd you get that from, at his store?

DS: Yeah. Why'd he say that?

DT: I, I , I never heard him say that. I never did. All the Graves () Graves is (). You know, () talking, just fooling and talking. But they like () they like Boot, I think. They got a bunch of boys and worked, you know. But I've heard them talking to fellows like that, them things you can talk to () . (coughing)

DS: Oh. Okay, well, that makes me feel better. Yeah.

DT: But Boot, I, I don't think Boot got a bad () it just, people that don't () much, and the boy, too, work very good () . Now, Boot is on social security and his wife, he's one of them boys that () live on their check, mostly, and work for (), got the cows, he works (), sells the cream, and cows () graze his land. And he works, he has his savings, () . I like mine. But they had a name, them boys, taking tools out of tractors and things, you know, to work for people, but I don't know, I () he going to get, I mean () . And Mr.

Graves set them down and called them boys did anything or not. But they wasn't that bad.

DS: () unlike the people of the mountains, they didn't steal.

DT: No.

DS: They were very, they realized that if you stole, you were going to be ostracized.

DT: They was, we had a lot of them back here in Nicholson Hollow, and about () they kill people, not to call him. But we had Sisks, old man Leighton Sisk, and old man Leighton killed him three people, () never pulled much time for it. He's back, living somewhere, now.

DS: Do you know why he killed them?

DT: Well, he killed one over here at () over here at (). They used to have on Sundays, have lifting rocks. And whoever lifts the most is the best man, that's the way they called () you know, just outright.

DS: Sure.

DT: And this fellow () rock lifting and (), you know. Called the other man out lifting or something and killed him. () there was a, back in Nicholson Hollow, () what you call it, was it Hawksbill? () They done all of the damage between their selves (). old man Leighton Sisk was up there, daughter married a boy, and, I think it was Leighton. Had a daughter married a boy and the daughter was sitting there at the fireplace. Old man Leighton had () dry wood to lay down on the fire, to make his fire the next morning, you know. And this boy took a () piece home to make a light so he could see. And he told him not to keep doing that, () and he shot him (). () And Mr. Graves () and Mr. Graves () go up there the next eve. Graves, old man Graves was a deputy sheriff at that time () wasn't no trouble, he walked on out his self, he didn't have to handcuff him or nothing. () they give them back in them days, them old people, () them a little time, but they didn't serve much of it. ()

DS: Yeah.

DT: () punishment.

DS: Yeah. Well, really, all of that area on this side of the mountain, is considered Madison. And all people up there, in those mountains, thought they lived in Madison County.

DT: (coughing) They what?

DS: They thought they were part of Madison County.

DT: Yeah. The line, the line would just run between the Page and Madison County, that line, you know, yet about five to six, eight years ago. And the last line, they run any way the water went, run the line, run that particular line. () Blackrock or () the line, we called it, but Big Meadows, that big hotel back there? Now that's in Page. But all this side you'd have the water run this way it ought to be Madison and Page would always claim it. But they run a line () up Big Meadows even now, most all of that was in Page at one time, they thought. But when they separated they made a line any way the water run. It come () water goes that way, then put the line up there.

DS: Oh, I see.

DT: I don't know, they got the line today, I think, they put it up about I'd say ten, eleven years ago, twenty years. When the first time they () they didn't () the Park. They were all in the park a long time. And it got so, () tax money in Madison County, here. What I mean, they wasn't getting much tax money, so () Page people was getting all this land and all, and they forgot to put taxes.

DS: Oh!

DT: Same way between Rappahannock and Madison, they just run a line between them two counties there a few years ago, seven, eight years ago. And they don't get () In Rappahannock and Madison. A lot of change that way in ()

DS: Yeah, sure. Did your sheriff mind going up into the hollows?

DT: Sheriff's? () a lot of revenue officers that was () these mountains. They would be pouring in sometimes to check on () a mean man. Sheriff would go with them, () and we had one by the name of () and one by the name of something else, () they wanted to get a man for murder.

DS: 'Cause those hollows could be pretty rough places.

DT: Oh, they were all right here. It was, but there was people (). When they pinned them down, by their clothes, they give up quick. () shot a man in his garden, working. Corbin, he shot a man by the name of Corbin. He was a Nicholson, I believe it was John Nicholson () on the road and he's working his garden and shot him, so . . . () moonshine. And he went to court, no, I mean () he never even got off his horse, I think, () his horse. He went on home. Well, that sheriff--

DT: Nicholson () John, some of these () wanted to go up there and get him, but they's afraid to go out and get him. So these two regular government officers, John () the sheriff (). They weren't quite () (coughing) But he wouldn't, he wouldn't () we had around () John Nicholson shot this man at () in his garden. But we had a lot of cold murders, in there, a lot of people would come out () (coughing) ().

DS Mmm hmm, yeah, right.

DR: And the first Collier truck ever I seen, that's been about 60 years ago, I saw it up to Sperryville, they had a tannery there. And they kept () mules, or hogs () Kimball during the day. That was the station, railroad station. Well, that station () bought them a truck just to go to the Tannery and Mercyville camp. And we were hauling to Markham and back. and this truck just has many, many, many () about 1:00 or 1:30, (). But we stopped out here where your turnoff, you know, to come to Madison () because he had to come up the road. And he was out about five miles. And that's the first truck I ever saw with a lot of slick . . . And the first car I ever saw was when we was heading home and it was the time of sunset. () man by the mane of G.W. Newman. He was a New York man, owned a big mountain ranch over there. And he'd come in () sometimes, in this big garden () horses, you know. He'd get that big () dug it all. Finally, that come along one day and that was the first car. ()

DS: Did you ever take advantage of all that nice moonshine that they used to make up there?

DT: ()

DS: That was good--they made good, good moonshine.

DT: They made some good stuff, yeah, I used to get it for people down below here, () one of them in Charlottesville, Fred Twyman, and old Doc Twyman down Twyman Mill, (). And they'd always ask me to get them five gallons of good apple brandy, not some () thing.

DS: Right.

DT: Good whiskey. And I used to get them, I had it out () when they'd come in, (). After the liquor store come on, (). I see very little of it being made, you know, it got so the young 'un, now the old people made good. but these young ones got to make it for their dollar ().

DS: Yeah, right.

DT: No, ma'am. There's a lot of ()

DS: There was a lot, yeah. Well, after all, it was easier to carry a bottle than it was to carry a big basket of apples on a mule, so I don't blame them. I would have, too.

DT: Yeah, they () a lot of (). They never did have too much trouble with moonshine in this mountain. They'd () one once in a while, but not too much. I think what () more than ever (coughing) () one would turn the other one in. He's making a little more than he did, and these younger ones, you know, and they'd report their own close friend. Sly, they'd try to do it. Got to catch 'em so they got them so scared they wouldn't (). About that time they opened up the state liquor, you know, and there never was much made after that. It's still made yet, but not back in this mountain, much.

DS: No. Now there's no chance to make it, now. The mountains is pretty much all Park land, now.

DT: () they got so () old iron pots () All the Twymans that I know drink liquor. There was a big line on () on account of the politic, politic people. They didn't do nothing much, it's all handed down to them. (coughing) But these politicians () travel, horseback, all over the county, taking ()

tomorrow night and talk. () Fred Twyman, Horace Twyman.

DS: Well, you know your recollections have done a great deal toward helping complete the picture. We have had very sketchy knowledge of how the people reacted after they were moved out of the mountains and we really haven't known how they settled into a community and you said that they settled in all right.

DT: Yeah, the people the government moved out?

DS: Yeah.

DT: Yeah, they been in good homes, the government had them built good homes.

DS: And they were all able to make a living pretty well?

DT: After they got out? Well, they, you know, they lived not much better than they did back on the mountain. They got work out here () that big sawmill out there, and a lot of little jobs, you know, they all got work, most all of them that I know of.

DS: And their children, then, had a chance for an education.

DT: Had a good school out there, that school, now, they had no school up on the mountain.

DS: Right, right.

DT: But do you remember used to be a toll gate between Panorama and--

DS: Yeah.

DT: You () (laughs, then coughs). I always heard () that they moved so many of these people out of the Park that they had no permission to move. And when they sent three or four trucks up there at that Park gate, that mountain, to move that man out what kept the toll gate?

DS: That's not true. It wasn't the man who kept the toll gate that had to be moved out like that. It was a fellow by the name of . . . now I can't remember.

[Melancthon Cliser]

DT: () around the toll gate?

DS: Down below the toll gate, at the horseshoe bend. He had a store, and he refused to move. And (). He's dead now, but his wife is still alive, and they had to finally send a sheriff in.

DT: It was right there () and they went back to Luray, the CC boys, or whoever they was, army, it don't matter, nothing, ().

DS: That's right.

DT: The commonwealth looked over the books and they had no right to move a man out of there.

DS: Yeah, and the--

DT: And they had to call Roosevelt or somebody important, or Congress to pass a bill that they'd move these people. Nobody () no law that they could move them out.

DS: Oh, no, no, there was very definitely a law of condemnation that they were permitted to move the people.

DT: Before the Park had taken them, had a law there?

DS: That's right.

DT: Well, I always heard it the way I'm telling you, I tell it to people some times like I heard. Went up there and the man told him, they done moved him out of the ().

DS: You know how they finally got him?

DT: No, I don't.

DS: They say he had a store and he also had a gas station in front. So they came up, in plain clothes and pulled up to the gas pumps. He came out to fill the gas pumps and they put handcuffs on him.

DT: () I didn't know he got that mad. I heard, the way I heard it, that Congress had to make a law--

DS: Congress had already passed the law. They passed that law years before.

DT: Before that.

DS: Umm hmm.

DT: Well, I never heard it just like here. The rest of the employees did give up?

DS: Umm hmm.

DT: Well, I'll be darned. Well, I never heard that one, I just heard it that

he, () they got no right to move.

DS: That's right.

DT: And he ain't going to move him ().

DS: That's right.

DT: And that goes back to, tell the Commonwealth what happened, they can't move him. The Commonwealth looked at his books or something and said well, you're talking about the law and here in the books it says they got no right to move. So, () they called to Washington to the Congress to pass a bill overnight that they could move these people out. That's what I always heard.

DS: No, the lawyer, we were very fortunate to have a good lawyer who had worked it all out, beautifully, and had it all passed, because this is the first time, in United States history, that land had been condemned for park purposes where people already lived. And they had to get a special law passed for that, yes.

DT: (coughing) Must have had to do that. As you said, they must have had to before this here happened because when they's () they're taking land () you know.

DS: That's right.

DT: () nobody can keep, ().

DS: That's right. So this law was already passed and he was the last one to be moved out of the Park. And he fought them. He fought.

DT: Did he lived right along on that highway there?

DS: Right below where the tollgate was.

DT: Down () down near that level down in there.

DS: Down near that big horseshoe bend.

DT: ()?

DS: Umm hmm. Yeah. He had a nice store there.

DT: Now, did the, the toll gate was down there, wasn't it? Or was it where the toll gate had been?

DS: It's where, the toll gate had been up above it.

DT: Yeah, had been. Now, it's all done away with.

DS: The toll gate was done away with around 1928. No more toll gate.

DT: Yeah, no more ().

DS: Yeah.

DT: (coughing) And you get them things, you know, () people are talking about.

DS: Well, have you anything further to add to our history?

DT: I would have, I would have gone up here, Miss Brown lives up above here.

() going up there, see if I can talk with her. She, she was raised back here in this mountain.

DS: Okay.

DT: But I don't know if you want to go up there or not. She was raised--

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End of Interview