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(SNP136) Myrtle Woodward interviewed by
Dorothy Noble Smith, transcribed by Mara Meisel,
Rebecca Popp and Heather Browne

Myrtle B. Woodward

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Interview with Myrtle (Mrs. Willie) Woodward
Part of the Shenandoah National Park Oral History Project, SdArch SNP-136
(SC# 4030)

Interview conducted at [not named, apparently in Madison County near Syria]
By Dorothy N. Smith on November 23, 1977

Transcribed by Mara Meisel, Rebecca Popp, and Heather Browne, May 2007-2008

Key

[DS:] Interviewer, Dorothy N. Smith

[MW:] Myrtle Woodward

[UF:] Unidentified Female

[Notes regarding transcription technique]

(*) Unable to understand word

[unintelligible] Unable to understand more than one word

_____ (??) Transcriber's best guess

— Speaker makes abrupt change in sentence

Refer to the Baylor University Style Guide for consistency in transcription

^^Note: Myrtle M. Broyles (born 1907) was the daughter of James Mason Broyles and Henrietta Sours. She married Willie M. Woodward (born 1903) on April 29, 1926. He was the son of William Ashby Woodward and Almira Dodson. The couple was living with her parents on Haywood Mountain, Madison County, in the 1930 census.

Total Interview length: 01:04:02 min.

[Begin audio file, 00:00:01]

Dorothy Smith: So, what was it like?

Myrtle Woodward: Well, we had plenty to eat. We had plenty of good beds to sleep in.

DS: How many rooms?

MW: Three rooms.

DS: Three rooms.

MW: Three rooms.

DS: Was this a clapboard house?

MW: This was a log house.

DS: A log house. Oh, those are the best.

MW: Yeah.

DS: Who built that?

MW: Well, now that's somethin' I can't answer. I don't know. 'Cause I just don't know who built it. I don't know that.

DS: Was it maybe your husband's father, or—?

MW: Well, now it could have been. I just don't know that. I can't answer that 'cause I don't know.

DS: Yeah, right.

MW: No, I don't know who built it.

DS: Yeah, those are great houses.

MW: But that's where we was all born and raised, right there in that one.

DS: How many of—?

MW: There was thirteen of us.

DS: Whew! Thir-teen!

MW: Thirteen of us, yeah.

DS: Oh my heavens! How did you all sit down to eat dinner at the same time?

MW: Well, we all had a big table. We had a big table [*unintelligible*] most of the time, if we didn't have company or somethin'. But it was like I said, we had a nice home. We had nice beds to sleep in and nice covers. Well it wouldn't stay two nights either, but it was, you know, good. And all of it was clean.

DS: Right. Now, as far as shopping, you only had to go and buy things like kerosene, right?

MW: Yeah, well, coffee and sugar. And we raised all of our other stuff.

DS: That's right. Where would you do your shopping?

MW: Well, we'd go over in Page County, most of the time. Sometime we'd come down here to Syria. Over here in this store – Ambrose Murray.

DS: How would you get over into Luray?

MW: We walked.

DS: You walked.

MW: It was about, I don't know, would say, how many miles. It was a long ways. I wouldn't know how many miles it was. But we had to carry our stuff most of the time, you know. We had a horse, but most of the time we'd just carry it.

DS: You would go into Luray itself?

MW: Well, it wasn't right exactly in Luray. It was about four miles. No I had one, close to Luray, this was over, close to Stanley.

DS: Oh, yes. Do you recall the name of that store?

MW: What was the name, Dave Keplinger's Store.

DS: Dave Keplinger's Store.

MW: Dave Keplinger. Then we'd come here to Syria some time. Ambrose Murray run that.

DS: Now, to get the money to pay for these things, how did you go about that?

MW: Well, we had to raise chickens, we had eggs, most time we'd take chickens and eggs, you know. And then my daddy would go away and work in the fall, in the apple pickin' and make money, you know. We didn't have to buy too much. We worked and raised everything just about up there, all except sugar and coffee and stuff like that.

DS: Sure. Yeah. How about the chestnuts? Did—

MW: Well, we used to pick a lot of them, too. Buy our winter clothes with them.

DS: What happened when the blight hit? The chestnut blight.

MW: Well, I don't think it hit until, you know, I don't know what year that was. I couldn't—

DS: It was somewhere in the early '30s, wasn't it?

MW: I guess it was. Well, we just couldn't find none then, you know, so.

DS: Now that took a cash crop away didn't it?

MW: Yeah, um-hm, it did.

DS: So then what did you do, raise more chicken?

MW: Raised chickens and eggs. You see, everything was cheap then. Didn't have to spend too much. But we made it.

DS: Did you do any of the peeling of the bark?

MW: Yeah, we done that, too.

DS: And men would carry them over to the tannery, or would somebody come by and pick it up?

MW: Yeah. Well, somebody'd come buy and pick it up. We'd peel it and carry it out to where it'd get took. But you didn't get nothin' hardly for that neither. See, everything was cheap then. But we peeled a right smart bark and carried it out.

DS: Yeah. Was that hard work?

MW: You're right, that was hard work. That was some kind of hard work. We peeled bark and carried it for no tellin' how far to get where it'd get took.

DS: How do you go about peeling bark off of a tree?

MW: Well, you just have to peel around the bottom of it and then just cut the tree down. Take your, we called a spud, we had to spud the bark off and straighten it out, just pile it up, lay somethin' on it, you know, so it would straighten out. And then you carry it out.

DS: Oh, I see. 'Cause I've always heard about this peeling of bark and I've always wondered how it was done.

MW: Yeah. That's how you'd do it. You'd peel around the bottom of it and then you'd just cut the tree down and then just finish peeling. Cut the limbs off, you know.

DS: Now, what all did your family raise?

MW: What you mean, like—?

DS: Vegetables and stuff.

MW: Well, we raised beans, potatoes, and cabbage and turnips and most everything.

DS: They say the cabbages were better there than any place in this world.

MW: Yeah. It was. It was really good. You could raise most anything back there on the mountain. You didn't have to do then like you do now. You know, use all kinds of stuff to make it grow. It'd grow itself. We'd raise our corn, take it to the mill and have it ground. For cornbread, you know.

DS: Oh, yeah. And that was real nourishing. How about the beans – did you sell the beans at all?

MW: Uh-uh. What we raised we kept. We never did sell nothing. We just packed it away for winter. Raised punkins and 'simmons and all kinds of stuff like that.

DS: How would you store the beans so they'd keep through the winter?

MW: Well, most time we'd dry 'em, for snap beans. And just let the others dry on the vines and pick 'em off. We didn't hull 'em or thrash 'em out or somethin', you know. But most time we'd just leave 'em in the hull, so if we got ready to eat 'em, you know, then just thrash 'em out and eat 'em. Or hull 'em, one, you know.

DS: Sure. And they dried just that way?

MW: Yeah, they'd dry right on the vine. And you'd just pick 'em off. We raised enough to last us till next year, most time.

DS: And those were good beans. You can't buy beans like that now.

MW: No, 'deed you can't buy none like it now.

DS: No. No. Did you do any drying of apples?

MW: Yeah, we dried apples, too.

DS: And how about other fruits?

MW: Well, we didn't dry nothin' much but apples. Just like I said, snap beans, you know. Some time we'd dry cherries, you know, somethin' like that.

DS: You would dry the cherries?

MW: Yeah.

DS: Yeah. Did you have your own orchard?

MW: Yeah. Had an apple orchard, too.

DS: What kind of apples did you grow, do you recall?

MW: I couldn't tell you that. I don't know. I don't believe I could tell you that. [laughs]

DS: The reason I'm asking is, Milams—

MW: Milams, yeah, we did have Milams and Winesaps and, but now the others I couldn't tell you what the name of 'em was.

DS: I have two Milam apple trees.

MW: Boy, I wished I had some now. I love them.

DS: Ooh, they make the best apple sauce I have ever had in my life. Just, just wonderful.

MW: They do. Yeah.

DS: Ok. Now, did you ever make apple butter?

MW: I don't think we ever made any apple butter.

DS: You didn't do any apple butter boiling?

MW: I don't think so. I can't, but I don't think we ever made any apple butter. We just put the apples away and keep 'em through the winter, you know.

DS: Um-hm. How about sorghum? Did you make sorghum?

MW: What you mean, molasses?

DS: Um-hm.

MW: No, we didn't make that, neither.

DS: Now, with your neighbors, who was your closest neighbor?

MW: Let's see, what you mean, besides your kin people? Or just the kin people—?

DS: Any. Any that were your—

MW: Well, our grandmother, I think was the closest one that lived, you know, and Uncle Jim Woodard. And he ain't mine, but I called him my uncle. We all lived pretty close together.

DS: And were there any other families in there?

MW: Well, out on the ridge, out on top of the ridge where we was talkin' about the other day, there's a lot lived out there. Of course, we didn't, some of 'em we went around and some we didn't, you know.

DS: Yeah. The reason I'm asking, it wasn't all work. You'd get together and have some nice family gatherings, didn't you?

MW: Yeah. Um-hm. Yes, we did.

DS: And how about of an evening, would you all sit around and talk?

MW: Yeah, set by the fireplace and talk, yeah.

DS: What was your maiden name?

MW: Broyles.

DS: Broyles. There are a lot of Broyles in Page County.

MW: Yeah. I know. There is a lot of them everywhere yet around here.

DS: Um-hm. Yeah. How did you meet Mr. Woodward?

MW: Well, we was raised close together. We was raised up together. [laughs]

DS: That was handy! [both laugh]

MW: We grewed up together. We was raised up as children.

DS: Uh-huh. So there wasn't any real courtin' that he had to do. Oh, I think that's real nice.

MW: Yeah.

DS: Did you all play any type of instruments?

MW: No, I didn't. Ain't none of us could play. Well, yes, his brother Elvin (??) could play a fiddle.

DS: He could?

MW: Yeah.

DS: Did you ever do any dancin'?

MW: Little bit. [laughs]

DS: You did?

MW: Yeah.

DS: Uh-huh. 'Cause I think those are the greatest times. You know, it's too darn bad you didn't do that apple butter boilin'.

MW: Yeah. Well, some people did, but we hardly ever, we never did boil none as I know of, if did I just can't remember whether we did or not. I don't think we did.

DS: Yeah. 'Cause they made parties out of that.

MW: Yeah. I know.

DS: They'd have great times. And did you ever make any pumpkin butter?

MW: Huh-uh. No. Never did make none of that neither.

DS: Did you make pumpkin bread?

MW: Huh-uh. Never did make none of that neither. [laughs] I've heard a lot of people talk about making it, but I never, we never did make none.

DS: That's one of my favorites. I make good pumpkin bread.

UF: [*unintelligible*] recipe. (laughs)

DS: It really is. It's delicious.

UF: I never did make none.

MW: I never did neither. Never did eat none, as I know of.

DS: Well if you want, I will send you the recipe.

UF: Good.

DS: Sure. Because it's not that hard to make. When you found out that the park was coming in, what was your reaction?

MW: Well, I really hated it, in a way. Because we all really liked it back where we lived. Course, we was all born and raised there. Hated to get out. Nothin' to do but get out.

DS: Well, did they give you any money for the property?

MW: No. They didn't. No.

DS: So they moved you over here, is that it?

MW: Well, they moved us into Haywood, down here. And I think we lived there nine months, I believe it was, and then we moved up here, to this house on the hill up here. Been livin' there ever since.

DS: Yeah. Did Mrs. Clifford Harriman help you with this, or did Clifford Harriman help you with the moving?

MW: You know, I can't think of their name, but I believe he was one of 'em. I won't say for sure, I don't know the names, but I believe he was one of 'em.

DS: And how about your other neighbors that were moved? Were they moved near where you were?

MW: No. Huh-uh. But movin' ways close to where we was at. Was all scattered out everywhere. Different places.

DS: Aw. That's a shame. You must have missed them very much then.

MW: Really did. But wasn't nobody moved close to us at all, you see. None of our people.

DS: Yeah. When you sat around of an evening, did you ever tell any ghost stories or anything like that?

MW: [laughs] I think so.

DS: Can you recall any of them?

MW: No, indeed I couldn't tell you that for nothin'. I don't know.

DS: Ohhh.

MW: I don't even know a one. But I remember I used to tell 'em. I couldn't tell you, I just don't know what they was. I done forgot.

DS: Would you be trying thinking, so that we could get one down? 'Cause, do you know we don't have one ghost story?

MW: Oh? Boy, I don't think you'd get one from me, 'cause I don't know. I don't know 'em now.

DS: [laughs] Well, now you say there were thirteen children in the family that you were brought up in.

MW: Yeah, there was thirteen of us, and they all lived to be grown.

DS: Marvelous.

MW: The oldest one, when the oldest one died, he was 21.

DS: Oh, my goodness.

MW: Yeah.

DS: Did Dr. Ross bring all of them into the—?

MW: Dr. Ross was our doctor.

DS: Now, how would you get in touch with him?

MW: Well, let's see now. I done forgot that. I think we'd just have to send somebody after him. I think. 'Cause, see, people didn't have no phones then. And then he'd come to the foot of the mountain, and we'd have a horse there for him to ride up, you see, in his buggy. No, wait a minute. I'm wrong there, too. But he would ride a horse up. Let me ask Wood, then. Maybe he can tell me that much. [Goes and asks someone else, husband perhaps, and returns] Yeah, that's right. He got a horse at the foot of the mountain to where we lived.

DS: Where did Dr. Ross come from? Was he in Syria?

MW: He lived in Criglersville.

DS: Criglersville. Oh. Well that wasn't too far was it?

MW: No, huh-uh, not too far.

DS: Did you get involved in any way when Camp Hoover was being put in.

MW: No, hu-uh, I didn't. No.

DS: Did you see any of the activity going on?

MW: No, I never did see it. I didn't see none of that, at all.

DS: You never saw any of the Marines or anything?

MW: Let's see. Yes, some of the Marines would visit us sometimes. But now was that from Hoover's Camp?

DS: Yeah. Uh-huh.

MW: Well, you see, I wasn't at home then. I was married. But some of the Marines would visit, you know.

DS: Yeah. How far away did you move when you got married?

MW: Hmm, about four miles, I reckon. Somethin' like that. It was about, I'd say four miles anyhow?

DS: And the home you moved into with your husband, did he build that?

MW: I think so. I think his father did. I wouldn't be sure of that, neither. But I think his father built it.

DS: Yeah. And then you had to start doin' all the work in the garden all by yourself, right? [laughs]

MW: That's right. Yeah.

DS: And what did your husband do, then?

MW: Well, he, workin' the logs, and somethin' like that, you know, and he'd go away in the apple pickin'. And it was like I told you the other day, you know.

DS: That's right. Where would you do the apple pickin'?

MW: Well, Martinsburg, Winchester, and places like that.

DS: How would you get there?

MW: Go on the train.

DS: Oh, from Luray?

MW: From Stanley or Luray.

DS: Uh-huh. Yeah.

MW: Then they'd stay until apple pickin' was over and then come back.

DS: How about rattlesnakes?

MW: Oh, my Lord, there was plenty of them.

DS: Yes, there were.

MW: Yes, indeed.

DS: What would you do to protect yourself from them?

MW: Well, you'd just have to watch and be particular where you'd step and where you went, and just watch for 'em. That would be all.

DS: Yeah.

MW: They was awful bad up by where we lived. Towards the last, too, it got worse, you know, after the park taken it over, too.

DS: You know there are less now, and a theory has been that the deer kill a lot of them. And that that's why there aren't so many rattlesnakes as there used to be.

MW: Yeah, I know. You hardly hear tell of any any more. I ain't seen a rattlesnake for years. Yeah, it's been years since I've seen any. Last I seen was back on the Drive, one Sunday we was all back there.

DS: When you made the gardens, did you take the rocks out and make stone fences around—?

MW: Yeah. Um-hm. Most where we could make it. And then we had palings, you know, around some of it, too. Rod (??) the wood out and make the palings and put 'em up, you know.

DS: Um-hm. Yeah.

MW: Yeah, that's the way we had it. Sometime have a fence, everybody had different things.

DS: But you know, those stone fences were a necessity, because there were so many rocks in that area.

MW: Yeah, I know.

DS: Did you have any flat land at all?

MW: Well, not much. 'Cause mostly mountains, you see.

DS: Do you have any, was there any story handed down in your family, as to where the Broyles came from?

MW: No. I couldn't tell you nothing about that. I don't know.

DS: Um-hm. You don't know how long they've been living there?

MW: No. Uh-uh.

DS: You would think that would be one story that they would have told.

MW: Yeah. But I don't know. I just can't answer that. I don't know.

DS: Do you know anything about the Woodwards, where they came from?

MW: No, I don't know that, neither. Can't answer that 'cause it's too far back.

DS: I know it's far back. Many generations that were there.

MW: No, I can't answer that. I don't know.

DS: How many families, roughly were in the hollow?

MW: Mmm. I couldn't tell you that, I don't know. It was right smart lived around.
What you mean, back where we?

DS: Mm-hm.

MW: I couldn't tell you that, I don't know. I just don't know.

DS: Would you say about twenty?

MW: Well, I would guess at that. It might be that many. I just don't know.

DS: Yeah. They were all kin to one another, right?

MW: Yeah. Most everybody was kin.

DS: How many children did you have?

MW: Eight. I want to show you that picture. Can I show it to you?

DS: Sure, yes!

MW: I'll show you my family. (Goes to retrieve picture) That's all my family.

DS: Oh, my, what a good looking family!

MW: Was eight of 'em.

DS: Oh, boy.

MW: That's the two daughters.

DS: Oh, they're nice.

MW: Thank you.

DS: Eight children! That's a heck of a lot to take care of. It's a lot to feed and it's a lot to make sure the doctor's there for and everything.

MW: Yeah.

DS: How about children's diseases? Were there many?

MW: Well, not too many. It was like people was healthier back there then than they are now, on the mountain.

DS: Yeah. Do you recall any herbs or medicinal things that you all used to help when people were ill?

MW: Oh, I could 'call a whole lot.

DS: Oh great!

MW: Oh, I can't think of the names of some of them. We had a whole lot of stuff. Something like sweet mint, peppermint, it was kind of a weed, this was. This wasn't no weed either, something you would make tea out of. And redroot.

DS: What would you use the redroot for?

MW: Well, if children had the diarrhea or something like that, you know. You could use that for that.

DS: How would you fix it? Would you mash it?

MW: Well, you would just wash it good and clean, boil the root. It makes a tea to it.

DS: And that helps with diarrhea?

MW: Yes, that helps with diarrhea.

DS: Oh great, you know all of these herbs people are beginning to find out now that they are working. If you can recall any others it would be marvelous.

MW: Oh, I don't think I know no more.

DS: How about poultice. Did they ever make any poultices for colds?

MW: What do you mean? Out of meal or something like that? Yes, I've made them already. Have them hot and hold them to you, hold them on your chest or something.

DS: You used meal?

MW: Meal.

DS: Cornmeal?

MW: I think that's the way they made 'em. Now I ain't sure. But I believe we made 'em, you know about that don't you? (speaking to unidentified female)

UF: I can remember 'em just taking mustard seed—

MW: Yeah, mustard seed. But they put that with meal and something too, don't they?

UF: You couldn't ask me, I don't remember about that—

MW: I don't know much about that neither. I never did make none of it, but Mama used to make it. You know, if children had a cold or something. And then, they had horsemint.

DS: What would you do with the horsemint?

MW: Well, make tea out of it, just like you would the peppermint and sweet mint

UF: How about cow mint?

MW: Yeah, they used to use that too. The ginseng, chip it up and make tea out of it. And red pepper. (laughing) I'll [*unintelligible*] my whole life, directly!

DS: Red pepper?

MW: Red pepper. You can make tea out of it, take the seed. Well, I think. I don't know whether you take the seed or take all of it. Just chip it up and pour hot water on it, put your sugar in it.

DS: I guess you would need sugar. I wouldn't want to drink any red pepper. I think that would give me diarrhea. (laughing)

MW: You know that was some kind of good for a cold. Really good for a cold. They used that right a lot of that the mountain, red pepper.

UF: And what was that, catnip, they used to call it?

MW: Catnip tea.

DS: Catnip tea?

MW: Catnip tea.

UF: It something with little green leaves. It usually don't get very tall. It usually grows around yards and placed like that, where old houses used to be, something like that.

MW: And balm (she pronounces it "bam"). Balm. It grows in a big bush.

DS: What do you do with balm?

MW: Make tea out'n it.

DS: My gosh, you had a lot kinds of tea, didn't you?

MW: Yeah, people used to gather all kinds of it.

DS: Why did you have to buy coffee then when you had all this tea?

MW: Well, we would mostly use that for a cold, you see.

UF: Cold, sick stomach. Something like that I think it would be used for.

MW: That's what that is used for. We used to gather up spicewood.

UF: People make tea out of that to drink.

MW: Yeah, just break up your little stick and put it on the stove and boil it, and put your sugar and cream in, if you wanted sugar and cream. Or just drink it like it was.

DS: Spicewood?

MW: Spicewood. Mm-hm. Grows in the mountains. But, I'd be afraid to use that now. I don't hardly know it since I moved out.

UF: One day I was over there at the house [*unintelligible*].

MW: I haven't made none for a long time. Yes, indeed, people used to make all kind of stuff like that when we lived back on the mountains.

DS: Why, that's beautiful. Okay, so this is all used for colds or anything of that nature?

MW: Sick stomachs. We used all kinds. People around there never had a doctor, without, you know, you really did have pneumonia or something like that. When we lived back there, they'd always doctor on their own self. That's the way we done.

DS: That's right. Sure. Well, when you had a knowledge of herbs, that you all had, there was no need for a doctor.

MW: Yeah, we all had the whooping cough, we used chestnut leaves.

DS: Chestnut leaves? Make a tea out of that?

MW: Make a tea out of them. And when you'd get a coughing spell, that's what you'd take. Drink your tea off'n that.

DS: And that would stop it?

MW: Yeah, that would stop it.

DS: Now we have no more chestnuts?

MW: Ain't that awful? I loved them, too.

DS: Oh yes, weren't they good to roast in the fire?

MW: Or boil them, either one. It was good. Pick 'em and pick you up somethin' and put you a whole lot on the stove and boil 'em and eat 'em. It was really good.

DS: Did you raise any animals? Did you have any cows?

MW: Yeah, we had cows. We had a horse, too.

DS: Pigs?

MW: Yeah, we raised hogs. Yeah, have our own meat.

DS: How about school? Where did you go to school?

MW: Didn't go to school. Wasn't no school. I mean school too, but it was so far away, we couldn't get to it, you see.

DS: Where was the nearest school?

MW: Now let's see. I reckon Syria would have been the closest.

DS: (Whistles)

MW: I guess, that's all I know of. I think Syria would have been.

DS: And that's about seven, eight miles?

MW: Yeah, Lord, it was long ways. See, you just couldn't go.

DS: No. How about church?

MW: Well, we'd go to church.

DS: Where was the church?

MW: Out on the top of the ridge, [*unintelligible*] talks so much about it, you know. Gird Cave. You might have heard talk of him I reckon. We used to go out there.

DS: Did you ever know the Deaconess Hutton?

MW: Who?

DS: Deaconess Hutton?

MW: No.

DS: She was in Pine Grove.

MW: No, I didn't know nobody from over in there.

DS: She's a beautiful woman. Oh, you just would love her.

MW: Is she living yet?

DS: Yes, still is. And she's had polio, she's had a bad heart, she's broken both her hips, and that woman just continues right on. You know you want to just hug her! One of those really beautiful people.

MW: You meet a lot of them like that.

DS: Yeah, right. How did you celebrate Christmas?

MW: Well, sometimes it was pretty good and sometimes it wasn't. People in them days don't do like they did now. See, what little they had, they had to keep. I mean, like your money or something, you know. They didn't go buy up a whole lot, like they do now. You had plenty to eat.

DS: Oh, I know that!

MW: You had plenty to eat. But didn't buy different things like people do it now. We didn't do it then, 'cause we just couldn't afford it.

DS: That's right. Did you make any dolls or anything of that kind?

MW: No, I never did fool with nothin' like that. Huh-uh.

DS: Because some of those dolls were made from dried apples or from straw, were very much loved by the children.

MW: Yeah, I know. I never did make nothin' like that. I don't know of nobody who did, living back there.

DS: So Christmas was just like every other day?

MW: Yeah. Course, I mean, you know, you'd have maybe bake a few pies or cakes or something like that.

UF: Put it this way, children didn't get a whole lot of toys like they do now. They might have got one toy and that was it.

DS: Well, that was all that they wanted, really.

UF: Children ain't like they are now.

DS: Now we overwhelm them, which is ridiculous.

UF: You can go to a junk pool and pick up more toys than children in them days ever seen.

DS: Right, and they cherished that one toy...

MW: Yeah, they certainly did.

DS: And, it meant a lot to them. In some of the places, they used to shoot off firecrackers at Christmas?

MW: No, we never done that either.

DS: No. Did the men get around and have a few drinks together?

MW: I don't think I'll answer that. I don't know much about that. (laughs)

DS: Well, they did in most of the places.

UF: Well, they still do that don't they?!

DS: They do! Was there much moonshining going on in your hollow? I'm no revenuer! The statute of limitations is over anyway. (laughs)

MW: No, they wasn't none much. Huh-uh.

DS: Because that was a good source of income.

UF: Yeah, I expect a lot of people done that. They had to make a living some way.

DS: That's right, yeah. And that was a very good source of it and they made very good moonshine that they could be proud of.

MW: I know it.

DS: I was just wondering with all those nice apple trees.

MW: Yeah. No, they never did make too much. I reckon they've made some in their time. (laughs)

DS: Then at the dances, they didn't do any drinking?

MW: No, indeed. It ain't like it is now. When you went to a dance, it wasn't nobody that'd drink. Everybody was sober.

UF: Well, in them days, no resident could afford to buy it, unless they did make it.

MW: Well, I'll tell you there wasn't too many dances. People didn't have too many dances in them days. Most of the dances we went to was at Skyland, you know.

DS: Oh! You would go up there to Skyland! Then you knew Pollock.

MW: Oh yeah, Lord, I know him well.

UF: Oh, I can remember him.

MW: I can too.

UF: He used to come to our house when, I remember, I was just a little bitty thing. And we had a picture frame a-hanging inside of the wall, and bed sittin' in front of it. Little bitty thing. Pollock (??) come and hopped right through the middle of the bed and stood and looked at that picture!

(Everybody laughs)

MW: Yes indeed, I remember him good. He used to ride horses by. We used to work for the Skyland people. I did.

DS: You did?

MW: I did. I washed, used to wash on the washing board, all day long from seven o'clock until six.

DS: Oh, my gosh!

MW: All day on the wash, from the time the Skyland people come in, you know, until it closed.

DS: Did you get to know any of what he called his guests?

MW: Oh yeah. But I can't remember.

DS: Did you know Mrs. Gillette? Mrs. Gillette used to come there.

MW: No. I don't know.

DS: And Senator Byrd came, a lot.

MW: Yeah. I don't know him neither. They used to ride by where we worked, you know, just great droves of them on their horses. Mr. Pollock with his old, what do you call it, bugle horn, blowin' that. We were seeing good old times then. (laughs)

DS: He was a flamboyant man, wasn't he?

MW: Yeah.

DS: He used to put on good parties too, didn't he?

MW: No, I don't really know much about that.

DS: Oh yes you do, you just said you worked at his dances.

MW: Oh yeah! Oh yeah! Dances! Yeah, that's right. We went to dances and things. Well we didn't know nothing about dancing. We'd just skip around, you know. Like people did back on the mountain.

DS: Sure, right. Well, the way we still do over in Page County.

UF: Do you know why she went to the dances? He played the fiddle.

MW: Yeah. He didn't play the fiddle for the dances.

UF: He didn't?

MW: Huh-uh. No. There was people, I don't know where they was from, would play for the dances.

DS: Does he still play the fiddle?

MW: No. Fiddle's tore up. He ain't played it for years. But he used to play.

DS: Could we persuade him to play one tune?

MW: He ain't got no fiddle. Hello (speaking to unidentified person, apparently entering the room).

DS: Hi (speaking to same unidentified person). He has no fiddle anymore?

MW: No, huh-uh. It's been tore up.

DS: Ohh. What tunes could he play?

MW: Lord, you've asked me something now. He could play anything he tries. (laughs)
Anything he wanted to play.

DS: Well, what would you want him to play?

MW: I don't know. I couldn't name none of the tunes much what he played.

DS: "Golden Slippers?"

MW: Yeah, he could play that, too. "Soldier's Joy" and all that. Most anything he tried to play he could play.

DS: "Soldier Joy?"

MW: Yeah. "Red Wing." Oh just, most anything—

DS: "Red Wing!" How about "The Fox Chase"?!

MW: I don't believe he ever played that.

DS: You've heard that though, haven't you?

MW: Yeah. I've heard it played on the radio.

DS: You have?

MW: But I don't think he ever played that.

DS: That's a hard one. We're trying to track down "The Fox Chase." What radio station have you heard it on? Do you recall?

MW: It's been a long time. I don't really know. Luray or something like that. I just don't know. They have it on so many stations here, part of the time I don't know what they have got it on.

DS: We would give anything to get that tune, "The Fox Chase." Up there at Skyland, how far away was that from your home?

MW: Oh, I wouldn't know what to say, about twelve miles, I reckon, something like that.

DS: How would you get back and forth?

MW: Walk.

DS: You'd walk!? Every morning and every night?

MW: Well, not to where I worked. You see, I worked for my uncle. He'd take in the laundry. I worked for him, you see. This was about four or five miles, I reckon, from where he lived to Skyland.

DS: Where were your children? Who took care of your children?

MW: I was single then, you see. I wasn't but about sixteen or seventeen years old, about sixteen years old then.

DS: Oh, I see. You were single.

MW: I was single when I worked there. And I stayed with them at night, you know, I would hardly ever go home, it would be so late in the evening. Got my bed and board, 75 cent a day.

DS: (laughs) Yeah, right. When the CCC came, did Mr. Woodward join them?

MW: No, he didn't go.

DS: Why? That was good money.

MW: I couldn't tell you why he didn't. I don't know. I don't really know.

DS: 'Cause quite a number of the mountain people did go.

MW: Why, you see, he wouldn't have been able much know how to climb around over the mountains like they did, and work like they all, they traveled everywhere, you see. He wouldn't have been able to done that like that. To travel so much, I mean.

DS: So you were a young girl when you were working?

MW: Oh yeah. I was young then. Didn't mind it a bit. When the day's work was done, I didn't know I had worked any. Worked all the whole summer, I did for him. Washed on a washing board. Boy, now that's a job.

DS: Yup. I've got it too. (laughs) And yet it had to be done.

MW: Yeah.

DS: Were there many, were you the only one that did the laundry or were there others?

MW: No. There was my grandmother, and my mother, and my aunt and different ones, you know.

DS: Well, then you could all talk while you were doing it. At least you weren't alone.

MW: Yeah. No, we weren't alone. Sometimes it'd be four and five of us together at work.

DS: Every day?

MW: Every day. Some nights we'd iron, having the load to go over there the next morning, we'd iron till one, two o'clock in the night, if you needed clothes to go over the next morning. Just a many and many a night we stayed up till one or two o'clock ironing. You had to iron everything then, you know, napkins, sheets, pillow cases, and everything.

DS: And the irons that you used were those you had to heat on the stove?

MW: Uh-huh, most of them. Then we had a gas iron. You used with gas, too.

DS: Well, when you had to stay there and iron, did you stay there then at Skyland overnight?

MW: Stayed at my uncle's, yeah. It wasn't right at Skyland. It was about four or five miles from Skyland, I reckon. I'd stay there—

DS: And your uncle was a Broyles also?

MT: No, he was a Taylor.

DS: Oh, he was a Taylor!

MW: Delon Taylor.

DS: Oh yes, I've heard of him.

MW: Yeah, I worked for him. I don't know how many years I did work for him.

DS: Well now, back to, how old were you when you were married then?

MW: I was 19.

DS: Nineteen. And then you stopped working at Skyland?

MW: Yeah. I stopped working then after I was married.

DS: I guess Willie put his foot down and says, "You're going to stay home." (laughs)

MW: No, he's been mighty good to me. We ain't never had no trouble, in that way, you know. I can say that for him. We ain't never had a minute's trouble since we been married. We been married 51 years.

DS: Oh, that's wonderful. How big a home was it that you moved into when you got married?

MW: Well, it wasn't a very big home. I think it was, the house and kitchen wasn't together, you see, it was separate. You cooked in one place and slept in the other. Just had that for a living room, place to sleep.

DS: Now, your children weren't able to go to school either, were they?

MW: Not until we moved off the mountain. After we moved off, we started them at school.

DS: How old were they when they moved off?

MW: I don't know exactly. Let's see. I couldn't tell you that. I don't even know what year we moved off of the mountain. I did know, but I forgot. One of them was five, and just different ages.

DS: So then it was good, really, in a way, that you moved out because it did give them a chance to go to school.

MW: Yeah. I said, that was one good thing. We did get off because they couldn't have learned. Had no school if we'd stayed back there.

DS: And without the chestnuts, it was getting harder and harder to make money, wasn't it?

MW: Yeah, you're right about that.

DS: I should think it would have been terribly hard. Though you do grow everything that you've got, still you did have to have money for clothes. Or did you make your own clothes?

MW: Most made our own clothes then. We hardly ever bought anything ready-made.

DS: You didn't spin your cloth, though, did you?

MW: Huh?

DS: You didn't weave and spin your cloth?

MW: No, uh-uh.

DS: You had to buy that.

MW: You had to buy the goods, but it wasn't that—

[*tape break 00:46:29*]

DS: What kind of quilts did she make?

MW: Well, she'd make, would buy goods and make them. Cover them, and have blankets, and stuff like that, old blankets. Just cover them and put, what do you call it, pad-cotton?

DS: Patchwork?

MW: Yeah.

DS: And then would she tie them through?

MW: Tie them, tie them out, yeah.

DS: Those are pretty.

MW: Yeah. We had plenty of bedcover and plenty of beds and everything.

DS: Did you ever make any quilts?

MW: I have made some. Yeah. But, I ain't made none for a long time.

DS: Do you still have them?

MW: No. I don't think I have [*unintelligible*] that I made.

DS: Where are they?

MW: Well, they've wore out, I reckon.

DS: Oh! Well, that could be. I could understand that.

MW: I pieced quilts and you know, just put your spars (??) out and make them. Yeah, I used to make a lot of them when we lived back on the mountain.

DS: How long would it take to make a quilt?

MW: It wouldn't take too long if you stay at it. I mean having nothing else much to do. But, take a right smart while if you didn't you know, sew a while and then you have to get up and do this and do that.

DS: Would you put anything in between, like a cotton batting or something?

MW: Yeah, um-hm, we'd make them out of that too, sometimes. You know how make your quilts and put them on each side of it, just pad cotton, or bat cotton, whatever you called it, in between it and just tie them out.

DS: Nice and warm.

MW: Oh yeah. Really warm.

DS: Well, what are your most vivid, vivid memories of living up there? What's the first thing that pops in your mind when you think of it?

MW: I don't know. I don't really know. I wouldn't know what to say.

DS: They were happy times, weren't they?

MW: Yeah, um-hm. It was happy. We lived good, I can say that.

DS: And how about, uh, there was more of neighborliness, wasn't there? If anybody got sick everybody pitched in, didn't they?

MW: Oh yeah. That's right. Everybody helped each other. One family get sick, one neighbor wait on themselves, the other neighbors would wait on you. And if they got sick, we'd wait on them.

DS: That's right. With building any houses or anything like that, would they all pitch in to help build?

MW: Well, you see there wasn't nothing much like that built up there. And the place you lived in about all was built. Not much built that I know of.

DS: But now, like the home when you got married?

MW: That was, see all that was already built.

DS: That was already built?

MW: But now who built it, see, I don't know.

DS: I wish you have had some story handed down about where the family came from.

MW: I couldn't tell you that, I just don't know.

DS: Well, you have given us a tremendous amount of information.

MW: Now I have give you this, now what is that going to amount to?

DS: What is that going to—?

MW: I mean I won't, people will not be called to court, or nothing like that will they?

DS: No.

MW: I mean, that's what's worrying me. (laughs)

DS: Why would they be called—?

UF: I wish I had something to tell her.

MW: I'm just a wondering, you know it won't come to nothing, will it? What I've told you?

DS: This is just for the history of the park, as I told you.

MW: Oh, I see.

DS: That is literally all it is. It's just to build a background and history for the park. For example, we have learned quite a bit about the Nicholson Hollow.

MW: Now you see, I don't know nothing about that. I never would fool—

DS: Right. But, we have no information whatsoever about where you had lived. So, the customs are slightly different in each one. And this is because different people came in there. And we're trying to build up a whole history of how each area lived. Those on the west side lived entirely different from those on the east side of the mountain. The northern section of where the park is entirely different from the central section. So, that's what we're trying to do. So, court!?

MW: Well, I thought, maybe, you know.

DS: I should think you could have trusted me by now.

MW: Well, I know you wouldn't, I just thought, you know, it could come to something like that in time.

DS: No, you have my absolute word on it. While, we're talking about where people lived, now let's see this is the central section, I wonder if maybe we could locate this on the map. I'll try and get this all oriented. (unfolding map)

MW: As long as you know something about that, I don't know. I can't tell you.

DS: (looking at map) Here we go along, where is, there's Byrd's Nest 1, here's Big Meadows, so let's see. White Oak Canyon. So here's Skyland. All right, there's Skyland. Buzzard's Rock? Does that mean anything to you?

MW: Yeah, Buzzard's Rock is, let's see, that's right back here I think.

DS: Yeah, I mean that's nowhere near where you lived.

MW: Yeah, it is. Buzzard's Rock.

DS: And, I'm trying to find Crescent Rock and I can't see it on here. So you lived, sort of, right around here? You looked up toward Old Rag?

MW: Yeah.

DS: Were you very far from the ridge or about midway?

MW: Well, I wouldn't know what, we lived about two or three miles from—

DS: From the ridge?

MW: About two miles I'd suspect. It might have been a bit further than that, I won't say exactly.

DS: Okay, well that gives us a pretty, see here was Camp Hoover.

MW: Yeah, I know where that's at.

(tape break, 00:54:01)

MW: I imagine so. (laughs)

DS: All right. You say that there were some people that went into the Civil War?

MW: Oh yeah. A whole lot went in.

DS: And how about—?

MW: Now, the Civil War, let's see.

DS: The War Between the States, that would have been.

MW: Yeah, I know what you.

DS: Probably, they would have gone with Stonewall Jackson.

MW: I don't know if I can answer that or not. I don't believe I can answer anything on that.

DS: How about with the First World War?

MW: Well yeah, I know, I don't know but one, and that was my uncle, Fred Sours. He went and got, he was wounded in that war.

DS: Oh, really?

MW: Yeah.

DS: And there's one thing we talked about the other day, and we haven't mentioned on the tape. The influenza, that occurred during the war. Remember that flu epidemic?

MW: We talked about it the other day?

DS: That's right. And you were saying that so many people died from it.

MW: Oh, you mean the flu? Oh yeah, a lot of people died that year. A lot of people died. But now to recall their names, see I just—

DS: No, of course I don't expect you to recall their names, but did Dr. Ross come up?

MW: Dr. Ross waited on everybody. He was out all night, at night. All over the mountains everywhere, riding a horse. Waiting on people.

UF: Remember when papa had it to?

MW: Yeah, we all had, every one of us was down with it at one time. Grandma, and all them, see they didn't have it then, they waited on us. Well, when we got better, they all got it, we waited on them and other different families too, that lived close, you know, that we could get to. That's the way people was back on the mountain, we'd wait on each other. Cook beans, if they had something to cook, you know, take it to them. Everybody done that. Wait on each other.

DS: You know, you wonder how an epidemic like that, could come there, into an area that was really so protected as you all were.

MW: Yeah, I know it.

UF: Well, people, they worked out, though, a lot of them, didn't they? And picked up some stuff and they probably got—

MW: Yeah, that's what I say; they went to the apple pickin' and stayed till the apple pickin' was over, you see, and—

DS: And got the flu, and came home and brought it? Says, "Here, dear..."

(laughter)

UF: I remember my father, you know, telling me about that, he got it when he was away.

MW: He was telling me about that the other day, you know.

DS: That's right. Now he was saying that he was on the train. Now the train went into Stanley, was that it?

MW: Stanley, uh-huh. And I think they'd walk from Stanley.

DS: Yeah, because he was saying that he had to cross the mountain and he was with somebody else, wasn't he?

MW: He was with his cousin. They was all of daylight a-getting home.

UF: And they met up with Dr. Ross on their way home; he gave them medicine.

MW: Right on top of the ridge where I was telling you. There's a cemetery right there, too. You might know where it's at. They met up with him, Dr. Ross, right there and he give them some medicine, just like he told you he did, and told them not to lay down no more and keep on going till they got home. So I think he said, two o'clock when they got home, but they just, you know, they said they'd lay down a few minutes, then said, "Well I'd best keep a-going."

DS: And that was the worst thing they could do, laying down on the cold ground.

MW: Yeah. That's what Dr. Ross told them, you know. You might take pneumonia or something. So they kept on. They stayed together until they got down here to the, well down here, well back there on the ridge, somewhere, they had to separate. One went one way and one another to get home, so they was alone.

DS: That must have been awful, going in the dark, with this flu—

MW: Yeah. Right through the mountains too, this was. Well, one had to come.

DS: And with rattlesnakes. (laughs)

MW: Yeah.

DS: It's not anything that an ordinary person would have been able to do. Only a very strong person could do it.

MW: Yeah, I know it.

DS: Were you married then?

MW: No. He wasn't but sixteen or seventeen years old hisself then, I think, something like that. I just don't know exactly. It was right along in there somewhere.

DS: Well, that flu epidemic, really it's a wonder that you all survived it.

MW: Well, we wouldn't, I don't reckon if Doc hadn't waited on us. And then we doctored on ourselves, too, you know. That was awful times.

DS: Boy—

(bumping of microphone, *tape break, 00:59:53*)

MW: Well, I have to, I won't be called on to answer any more questions, now will I?

DS: No.

MW: Well, I'm glad to hear that.

DS: You mean you didn't like this?

MW: Oh, yes I did too! You know what I mean, I just—

DS: I know what you mean, I know exactly what you mean. Nobody will pester you anymore.

MW: Well, I'm glad. I mean, I liked talking with you and answering what I could and all.

DS: Yeah, right. No, nobody will bother you any further. But this will be there as Park record, in case any of your children or grandchildren ever want to find out anything about your back history. So, it will always be there in the Park.

MW: What, do you know what, just sign your name? What do you sign?

UF: Yes, I'll sign yours.

MW: Do you need a pen or pencil? It don't matter the difference, does it? I don't think.

DS: Do any of you all ever get together anymore?

MW: What you mean?

DS: Any of you that used to live up there?

MW: No, we hardly ever see each other any one, a lot of them is dead. A lot of the sisters and brothers dead. Maybe three sisters are living any more and we hardly ever see each other. Some of them lives far away and—

DS: Thank you. Now, I bet you're not going to mind what I'm going to do next. (laughing)
I'm going to take your picture.

MW: Oh Lord, I couldn't take a picture, I'm too dirty.

DS: Don't worry, the way I take pictures nobody would ever know it. I take the most terrible pictures in the world.

MW: My hair's all messed up.

DS: Oh, I don't think it is. Do think you her hair's messed up?

UF: No.

DS: This is a camera the park gave me to use. That's not good. And I'm still, sort of experimenting with it. I'm not exactly sure how it works. They told me to go around and take all the pictures I wanted to get in practice.

MW: I wished I was a little bit better, but I ain't.

DS: And I'm such a stingy person, I hated to go around and just waste film. So, I never did go around and practice.

MW: Well, does that make them?

DS: Yeah. We'll see in just a couple minutes whether I got a picture or not. Oh, thank you.

UF: Do you want this off now? (referring to recorder)

DS: Yeah, that's actually it's—

[End audio file, 01:04:02]

End of Interview