

8-31-1978

(SNP023) Elzie Cave interviewed by Amanda Moody and Leigh Jones, transcribed by Victoria M. Edwards

Elza A. Cave

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Interview with Elzie Cave

Part of the Shenandoah National Park Oral History Collection, SdArch SNP-023  
(SC# 4030)

Interview conducted in Dark Hollow, Virginia  
By Amanda Moody and Leigh Jones on August 31, 1978

Transcribed by Chelsea Gutshall, April 2009  
Updated by Mary M. Darrrough, February 2010

Key

[AM:] Interviewer, Amanda Moody  
[LJ]: Interviewer, Leigh Jones  
[EC:] Interviewee, Elza Cave (Elzie is his nickname)

[Notes regarding transcription technique]  
[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

Poor quality of tape. As interviewer and interviewee walk around outside, Cave often does not speak into the microphone and interference is frequent from passing trains, wind, and other disturbances. It is extremely difficult, and at times impossible, to make out exactly what is being said. Those difficulties have been noted on the transcript.

Total interview length: 01:33:16 min.

[Begin audio file, 0:00:01]

AM: I'm at the Cave Family cemetery with Mr. Elzie Cave and we're looking at the people who are buried here. Now, Click Cave over here is the son of Newman Cave?

EC: That's right.

AM: Was Newman Cave your grandfather too?

EC: No, he wasn't my grandfather. No.

AM: Let's start from the beginning. There was Jimmy Cave and Jimmy Cave had several sons?

EC: He had--the oldest one was John and then he had one name Om and he had Henry Cave, that was my granddaddy, and then Newman Cave. That was the four boys.

AM: I see. Okay, now, is Click Cave's wife still living?

EC: No, she's dead too.

AM: Is she buried? They just haven't put the date on it?

EC: Just haven't put the date on it.

AM: I see. Where did Click Cave's family move to when they left the park?

EC: Ida.

AM: They went to Ida? Okay now back there is James Cave and Eliza Cave.

EC: That's my mother and daddy.

AM: Oh, I see. I thought your father was called Ashby or--

EC: Well, James Ashby.

AM: Oh, James Ashby. Oh now that solves a big problem for me. I've been wondering. What--let's see, your mother was a Hurt?

EC: She was a Colvin.

AM: A Colvin. And where was she from before she came to Dark Hollow?

EC: They lived back here in this territory toward the West Hurts someplace.

AM: I see. Back down there, around the Hoover School area?

EC: Somewheres in that territory, but you see that was before my time. I know--did know where my grandmother on that side was buried at. She was buried back yonder this side of--right smart piece this side of West Hurt over here on the flat. I seen it when I was a kid but I went in there last year to look for it and couldn't find it.

AM: Now John Cave back there would have been your great-uncle. And he was the one that fought in the Civil War.

EC: That's right.

AM: Was he the only Cave that fought in the Civil War?

EC: He was the only one of 'em that was old enough at that time.

AM: I see.

AM: Yeah. Now what about over here, Duelas Cave, it looks like?

EC: Who--what is it?

AM: It looked like D-U-E-L--

EC: Douglas.

AM: Oh, is it Douglas?

EC: I think that is what it stands for. Is it or not?

AM: Let's see. It looks like D-U-E-L-A-S. But maybe that's a 'g'. D-U-G-L-A-S. That would be Duglas. Now he was a fairly young fella. I've seen pictures of him.

EC: He was this feller's son.

AM: Click Cave's son, right. Click's name was Wiley? Wiley H.? Is that right? It says W.H. Click.

EC: Something like that, I'd hear them say. But we called him Click all the time; that's all we did.

AM: You know where that name 'Click' came from?

EC: No, we just got to calling him that. I don't think that was really his name.

AM: And this is his son? So Duglas would have lived right next to them?

EC: I believe after he left Cherry--see I left a little ahead of these people. I left in '34 and they didn't leave for another year or so. So I believe that this boy lived in what we called Jordan Holler when he--I believe he did when he died. That's over there, close. Click, he lived out on Ida Stretch. It's called Ida Stretch just before you get to that little store. And houses along the left hand side.

AM: Were they moved out? Or were they resettled by the government or did they find their own places?

EC: No, I believe Click did maybe, yeah. Click found his own place. Some of 'em was moved out. Some of 'em, they called 'em homesteads. I did. They built a whole lot on the farms. Some of 'em took them.

AM: Yeah. Didn't they have some trouble with Click's son-in-law, Burton?

EC: They might have did. I don't--

AM: I read some letters about that. I guess that was after you left though. That was about '37, '38.

EC: Yeah that was after I left.

AM: When you moved out, you say you moved over to the other side of the Drive?

EC: Yeah when I got married--you was the one I was talking to who said you'd seen an old stove and stuff, down above the falls?

AM: Yeah, above Rose River.

EC: Well I moved in that house when I got married and stayed there a year. And then I moved over here on Lester Gander and Will's place. And I was there when I left the park.

AM: Lester Gander's place?

EC: Uh huh. You know him?

AM: No, I'm just trying to get the name.

EC: Do you know James Gander down at the clerk's office?

AM: No I don't.

EC: Treasurer's office?

AM: That his son?

EC: That's his son.

AM: Is Lester Gander still living?

EC: No, he's dead. Him and Will owned it at that time. They both did.

AM: I didn't know much about that side. (laughter) I imagine there's a lot more buried in here that we can't see.

EC: Oh yeah, all back through here. But see there ain't no markers and I was just a kid when they was buried, the most of 'em. They all mixed up. Yeah it runs clear back down to that tree.

AM: You mean even in the fall when the leaves aren't out, you still can't see any more names or anything?

EC: No, I believe that's all the names. I don't think there's any names back through there; nothin' but stones.

AM: Maybe that's why this section's been maintained more. There's one right next to James Cave. It looks like a baby's grave. Two stones real close together over here?

EC: Where's that?

AM: There's one stone--whoops--right here on--there it is, under my foot. That looks to me like a baby's buried there or something.

EC: It do for a fact but I don't--I wouldn't know just who that--why that. There's a lot of babies buried in here but I can't figure--put on--awful close to that one, ain't it?

AM: Yeah it is. Now I was curious about the marker on John Cave's grave because it seemed like all Civil War graves are the exact same type of stone. Is that just something everybody bought? That type of grave stone at that time?

EC: I just wonder if the government furnished them maybe. Maybe that's the reason they was all--

AM: Yeah, seems like it 'cause they're all the same.

EC: That is in 19--did it say on there when he died? I believe it was 1923 if I remember.

AM: Let's see. I can't seem to make any date out on it. It might not even have a death date.

EC: That one might not even got a date. They--I don't believe they put it. But I'm satisfied it was--that's just the reason they ain't got one if the government furnished that thing.

AM: They must have because there's another one down at the south end of the park exactly the same.

EC: Well that's exactly why: they furnished it.

AM: I had thought they were people that were killed in the war, but just as long as they fought in the war.

EC: No, he weren't killed. Now my grandmother, her first husband died from the war.

AM: Was that the one that kept running off?

EC: That's the one that kept running off. He died that--he died about six months after he was shot but--

AM: That was a Hurt? Or a Colvin?

EC: No he was a Weakley. John Weakley. Her first husband was.

AM: Oh I see. And then she married a Colvin?

EC: She married a Henry Cave.

AM: Okay I'm on the wrong side.

EC: A brother to him.

AM: This was on your father's side?

EC: Yeah a brother to him.

AM: She married Henry Cave after she married John Weakley. Now there was another John Weakley, a younger John Weakley that was back in the meadow.

EC: Yeah lived down next to the Hoover School.

AM: Yeah I think that's the one I'm talking about. Yeah I heard that story that he kept running away and they kept coming to get him.

EC: Yeah they did and they sentenced him to be shot. He run and then they was looking for him and so they saw him on the river and they shot and they thought they got him. That's all the reason they quit looking for him. He fell in the river and it was up and there was a place washed out back under the banks so they told me, my grandmother told me. And he crawled under there and they was looking for him for awhile and they didn't see nothin' pop up and they went and told that they killed him in the Shenandoah River. So he got out of there and made it home and he lived back yonder on that mountain where I told you somewhere this side of West Hurts at that time. And they didn't live right here at that time. And so he was afraid to get out to go to a doctor or anything. He just left--he was shot in the hip and lodged agin' the bone. And he made it six months will all that stuff in there. Its gangrene killed him or blood poisoning or something. And the doctors said they could have saved him like nothing if he would have had nerve enough to come out. They would have loved to take it out, you know, if he'd made it that long without any help he could have made it awhile, couldn't he?

AM: Yeah, that's too bad.

LJ: Why was he being shot at?

EC: Well you see they had done sentenced him to be shot at sunrise and then they had orders to shoot him on sight after that.

AM: He was a deserter.

EC: Yeah he was a deserter.

LJ: Oh, I see.

EC: He had run two or three times. My grandmother's told me about him many times. She'd didn't need--they had no telephones, no nothing, at that day and time. Didn't even have lamp lights. And she said the first thing she knowed they'd surrounded the house. She didn't know they'd even sentenced him to be shot. And while they were there she said it was a pouring rain and all the lights they had was just big splinters on the bar. And a little old candle maybe. And she said this same one where they let him get away--a feller let him get away intentionally. He had two of them, a Sisk and him, handcuffed together and so Sisk had a big arm and this feller had a little bit of arm and he told him, said, "I believe you could get your hand out of there if you tried." And said he tried and he said, "Yeah, I could." See it couldn't go no tighter on his arm then it did on the big feller's arm. And he--this guard he had him in charge. He guarded him out to the woods and he slipped his hand out and he said after they had run up this way he heard them shoot and he went back to them with them come apart, which they did. But he wasn't responsible for that. If they knowed they'd let him get away they'd have took him in the place. But he happened to be the one that was out when John Weakley did reach his home. And he just pushed him off and whispered to him and told him how many of 'em was in the house and it wouldn't have been like that if it hadn't been a pouring rain. But the rain was so hard they had to run him in. And then the next day or so's when he got shot. They had orders just to get him any way they could. (laughter)

AM: That's too bad. And John Cave didn't never run, huh?

EC: No he never run.

AM: Where did the family first come from when Jimmy Cave first came up?

EC: Jimmy Cave come from the Page side but I had a fella named Paul and he was in here ten, fifteen years ago and he tried to trace it. And he got--I don't think he ever did get it straightened out. Part of 'em come in down here about Williamsburg and part of 'em come in up the other way here some. And he just didn't know which he come--he straightened it out which was which. I think they come from England.

AM: Yeah, I'd think they'd be English. Well I guess we can go on down a little further. Glad to get all these names straightened out here.

EC: Oh, when that man died and I was in Wilmington, Delaware working on the B&O Railroad at that time. And then--

AM: When John Cave died?

EC: And I went to down here when he was--and seen him when they brought him by [unintelligible] and I was here to the burying. And I know that's that's when the date should have been was 1923, 'cause that's when I was up. I got a right smart job here this time again, ain't it?

AM: Yeah it's grown up quite a bit.

EC: And several things felling. I'd have to bring my axe along.

AM: Was your father living here when he died?

EC: Yeah he lived over on yonder at the old home place over there on the Rose River, right up about--I think it's about half a mile above where you were talking about. Have you been down that trail? You've been down that trail, ain't ya?

AM: No I haven't been down the one that cuts across. Now I've been around from through the copper mine.

EC: Red Gate. Have you been--you've been all the way down that?

AM: Yeah. Right, right.

[14:08, tape breaks]

AM: The church was burnt?

EC: It burnt one time when it was real cold in there and they had a big fire. [sounds of a train going past] They shut all the drafts off and the thing blowed up.

AM: When was that?

EC: I don't remember just exactly what, when it was. But it was a right smart while before the park took it, cut logs and built it back. But I don't remember what year it burned in. It burnt about midnight, something like that. They was up there about ten o'clock or eleven. They cut the drafts off and it was a new stove and it blowed up. It blowed all to pieces.

AM: Wow. (laughter)

LJ: So did the people just around here build the churches themselves?

EC: That's right.

AM: Who built it? Did John Cave build it?

EC: No, Gird Cave built it. Everybody just hoping that.

[pause in interview as train goes past]

[15:32, tape breaks]

EC: They was so thick and they were big too. Some of them three foot two or something. He said you could hardly tell it was daylight when you went through here, that was how dark it was.

AM: That's from these big hemlocks?

EC: Couldn't hardly tell when daylight was in here he said, it was so dark. And that's why they named it Dark Hollow, you see?

AM: Oh I see! Dark Hollow.

EC: Yeah I believe that's the reason.

AM: From all the tall trees. Some of these are some of the biggest trees I've seen around the park, some of these big hemlocks. Did they have a lot of lumbering coming through here?

EC: You see, they bought that kind of bark for the tannery at one time and the people cut it and peeled it all out. That's the reason there ain't no big ones here now.

AM: Which kind of bark?

EC: They bought that kind of pine bark.

AM: The hemlock?

EC: At one day and time.

AM: I didn't know they took the hemlock.

EC: Yes they did. At one day and time that's what went with all the big ones through here.

AM: So it wasn't so much lumbering; it was more bark peeling?

EC: Lot of times it weren't even this--the logs were saved. It was just the bark it was after. You take the chestnut timber--well after it died, people cut most of that for extract. They used that for tanning too.

AM: Yes, I've heard that.

EC: They ground it up, used it in some way for tanning purposes.

LJ: When this road was for toll, what was the toll--what would you pay?

EC: I have no idea. It was back yonder. I'd say maybe five cents or a dime, something like that. That just would be my guess.

AM: There was no toll on it when you lived here.

EC: Oh no, no.

AM: Well I would imagine there was toll on it--

EC: I believe that the toll ended with the war maybe.

AM: I would think so. I think it was probably a private road when it was a toll, wouldn't you think?

EC: Now you take over yonder where I live that--where I told you I lived last in 1930, we had an awful fire in that mountain. And I'd hear talk it was a wagon broke down on that curve with these here cannonballs, a load of 'em. And one boy got blowed up there, fooling with 'em.

AM: Up near Fisher's Gap.

EC: Yeah. Right on that last--you come up that away, it's on the last sharp curve. Right over below the road there. And so when in 1930 when the fire burnt, it burnt the stakes off around the property where I lived on. And I went down to fix the fence to keep the sheep and cattle from getting out. And I found two of 'em laying there with the leaves burned off of them. They'd been laying there all that time.

LJ: Did they get caught in the fire and that's what--

EC: Yeah. The fire burnt all that time but they never went off. But they were loaded. I let old man Cave down there at the foot of the mountain have them. Herb Cave. He lived down there just above the church; that house on the left coming up right above the church. I let him have 'em and I think he took 'em to Washington and done something with 'em. But there was a whole load of 'em and two boys got fooling with 'em. Said one kept begging the other to come on. Said no he was going to get that.

AM: Got himself blown up.

EC: Well it did blow. It killed him, blowed his legs off. And I'd hear talk of that. I wasn't dreaming of finding one but when I was fixing the fence I found two of 'em laying on top of the ground. I reckon almost a hundred years since that war ended. I'd say it was about '32 or '33--probably it was in '30 or '31 when I found it. For I was fixing the fence back where that fire burned it away.

[19:38, tape breaks]

AM: This is George Cave's home site here.

EC: Right there.

AM: I thought it was. Did I hear a story and some say it was Gird Cave's family and some say it was George Cave's family, but there was a house that was covered over in snow and two children died in it?

EC: That was Gird's.

AM: That was Gird's. Okay I thought it was George.

EC: No it was Gird's.

AM: Now where does George Cave fit in?

EC: He's Gird Cave's brother.

AM: Okay so he's another son of John Cave then.

EC: There was three of 'em: Gird, George, and Luss. Luss lived down in Rich Palmer and he finally moved to Baltimore. He's dead now. All of 'em dead.

AM: This is a pretty easy place to pick out because it's so flat but there's no foundation or anything in there. But I assume--

EC: Yeah he had a good sized house I expect. It could be that when them Marines was in here crushing rock to put on this road, it could be they hauled the foundation away.

AM: Oh that's a good point!

EC: Yeah it could be. You see they stayed in here a year and more.

AM: Well that--when the Marines were in here for Camp Hoover?

EC: No they was in here after that. On what do you call it?

AM: Rapidan Road?

EC: No they was in here on maneuvers. They stayed in here. This road weren't all that rocky. They put rock in it and crushed a lot of rock and dumped it on the way up. That's how come so many loose rocks are on it. But I know it didn't sit on the ground. It sit right here where this stuff is covered.

LJ: What is this stuff we're walking on?

AM: That part of the foundation right there?

EC: That's part of it. They hauled--somebody hauled--somebody must have hauled a lot of that stuff way. It was on a foundation 'cause I remember it looked like this.

AM: It's kind of banked up, the ground. Yeah you can see a line. There's another one down there.

EC: Somebody took them all away from here for some purpose. I think they hauled [unintelligible] that's where Uncle George lived.

AM: Okay.

[22:01, tape breaks]

EC: He was the first one in this territory.

AM: Jimmy Cave was? Like before the Weakleys and all the other families? The Thomases?

EC: Back there in Big Meadows where Frank Weakley lived there was a feller back, way back there in Jimmy Cave's day, there was a feller that lived there by the name of Brannon.

AM: Brannon? I never heard that.

EC: He was the first feller who ever lived there. That's where--

AM: Right up in Big Meadows? Well, that's good to know.

EC: He was the first feller ever--you know where the CCC camp set there?

AM: Yes.

EC: Well, feller Brannon had a house there. That's the first man ever lived there.

AM: Who moved in his house after he left? Would that be--

EC: I don't know but in all my days Frank Weakley lived there you see.

AM: Right.

EC: But it was the Brannon who was the first man that ever lived there.

LJ: Is that old home site [unintelligible].

AM: I don't think so. Looks too small to be a house.

EC: Now when there was a surveying the line between the park, Madison and Page through here, I happened to go into the clerk's office--the treasurer's office talking to Jimmy Gander. I talk to him a lot when I'm down there. And he was telling me what a time they was having a trying to run the line. He said they got hung up at Weakley Spring and I asked him where was he at. He said they're still at Weakley Spring. He called that--

AM: Where the meadow is?

EC: See the Weakley place is out yonder--well you live the area where we was sitting and you pass one little overlook. The next overlook you come to, that's the Weakley place out there, going back towards Haywood's Mountain. So I told him where the spring was at and he said they went in there and took right off and run it exactly. (laughter) Somebody had told him that that was the spring. But you see that ain't the Weakley place. That was knowed as the Brannon place. Somebody just called it 'cause Frank Weakley lived there for a long time.

AM: Frank Weakley moved from there to back north?

EC: No, he died there. Now he was in the war I think. I think he was a Yankee though.

AM: That's interesting.

EC: He was too young but he'd sneak off and go to it.

AM: Fought with the North, huh?

EC: Yeah. The camp was out there somewhere about the river. I don't know where he lived at that time but I hear them say many times they couldn't keep him at home. He weren't quite old enough but he'd sneak out though. I don't know if he done any fighting or not but they finally decided to keep him. Heard them say his daddy went and got him every single time. He'd sneak off and go back again so they finally kept him until the war was over.

LJ: Most of the people fought for the South.

EC: Oh I know. [unintelligible] I don't know why. But he liked the Army. He said he wasn't old enough to fight but they finally kept him. Now the best spring, the coldest water, that was in this country was right here but somewhere or another they covered it up. I don't know how.

AM: Right here between George Cave and Gird Cave's place.

EC: That might be some of the same water that comes up there but they ruined it someway. There was a path turned off here and went right under there and that spring. There was a big water trough there too. People watered horses. That was considered the coldest water in this country. I reckon that's because this is so north in here, I imagine kept it so. So I don't know whether that still comes up there or not but the spring was right back around that by the sugar maple. After they worked in here, the Marines, they changed everything.

AM: Changed everything, huh? Does this go up to the Gird Cave place right here?

EC: Yeah. John Cave's house sat right here.

AM: John Cave's house was closer to the road then?

EC: It looks that way. [unintelligible] Right back in here. [unintelligible]

AM: The trees have grown up where the house was. So he was a little bit more away from the road. He had about--he had a lot of children, didn't he?

EC: Right, ma'am.

AM: Did he have a fairly big house?

EC: Pretty good sized house there, I'd say.

AM: How did he and Tom Cave become preachers? Were they ordained or they just decided they were going to be preachers?

EC: Just decided they were going to be preachers, I reckon.

AM: It was more or less a Methodist church, wasn't it?

EC: Uh huh.

AM: And he did a lot of preaching in other places, didn't he?

EC: Yeah Gird did. Yeah.

AM: Preached in Luray and--

EC: Stanley and different places. Shenandoah.

LJ: Was most of this cleared in here?

EC: Oh yeah. There was acres of it cleared. It was cleared all--you might say all the way down around that road and in below the road where it makes the crook around there. That deer seems like he's wanting to know what we're talking about.

AM: Looks like that. Is this something right here?

EC: That was where the cellar was.

AM: Okay, that's what I thought.

EC: So that was where the cellar was.

AM: There's some of your shoes there, Leigh.

EC: Better leather [unintelligible] that lasted all that time.

AM: Yeah that's some good stuff. Look at that. That was a boot I guess.

LJ: Yeah, a pretty tall one.

EC: That was a high-top shoe. The people in here--of course it's fell in you can see the bars yet though.

AM: Yes, you can.

EC: They tore them down too. He dug this so if any water I reckon got in there and that's the way you walked in. They had a door here and walled up nothing never froze in 'em.

AM: Oh I'm sure that's what we saw at Tom Breeden's place, same thing.

EC: Yeah they had one. Everybody in this country had one practically. They had put split-punch in something like that thick out of the timber, out of oak timber, and then

they put dirt over the top of it. If that ever rotted out, well they shoveled that dirt off and put another roof and put dirt back over it.

LJ: So nothing froze when it was--

EC: Not a thing.

LJ: And this is the place where there was so much snow that kids died?

EC: Yeah. It was fifty--that man lived right up the road there where I--George Cave, he measured it. In all up through here where it didn't drip a bit it was fifty-six inches on dead level.

LJ: Wow.

EC: And that was one snow.

AM: And that covered all of Gird Cave's house so he couldn't get out the door?

EC: Just about and covered over old man Weakley's house and he didn't have but one way out.

AM: I heard that his--Frank Weakley's house was all covered up. I heard that from Mrs. Judd. Now what happened with the two children? Were they--did they die because they couldn't get out of the house?

EC: No they had diphtheria. No, they didn't die because they couldn't get out of the house. They died of diphtheria.

AM: Is it true they used the benches in the church to make the coffins?

EC: That's right. Now you can imagine all them people were used to snow and it took one day to get them here to the church.

AM: A day. Gosh.

EC: And it took the next day, all day, and said it was night coming away, to get them--to get that child from the church up there to the graveyard. And to get from--when they got back home it was practically dark.

AM: That child was buried in the graveyard up near Fisher's Gap.

EC: That's right.

AM: Thought two children.

EC: Two of 'em? I think he had three buried up there maybe. I believe it was three.

LJ: Was this a big fire in here? Looking at those trees down there, see how they're burned out?

AM: Yeah.

EC: I imagine somebody just set them--I don't remember no--it could have been. That was after I left here it was never known right in this section in my lifetime but I know I heard them talk after I moved to Madison, down in Madison, I heard them talk about the fire broke loose over here at the copper mine. Went all the way up there. Yeah that could have been it. It could have got in here. It burned all the way up to the falls too I think. 1934.

AM: A few years after or--

EC: It weren't long after. I want to say it was in '35 or '6, something like that.

AM: And that was a copper mine fire?

EC: Yeah, it probably was. I wouldn't say for sure. Somebody could have just set them on fire for burning, I don't know. And it could have burnt then when they burnt down this house here. Couldn't it?

AM: Yeah.

EC: They burnt all them houses down though. But that's on that side of the road.

AM: When did the copper mines go out of operation?

EC: I'd say the last they ever did there was about 1910 or '11. The first time it was operated, the Irish operated it.

AM: When was that?

EC: That was way back there. I don't know what it was for.

AM: Back when the road was being built?

EC: I think that was before the Civil War. And then they just operated one bit. Then this copper mine company moved in here and they was operating when I was born, they said. They operated along about 1905, '06, and '07, and '08, on up there awhile and then they quit, moved out, and this old man Hall he stayed here to watch after it.

AM: He was more like a caretaker than a miner, right?

LJ: And that was the Kid? Billy the Kid?

AM: They say he was Billy the Kid? (laughter)

EC: That's so. Then, a few years later, one of these old men's son and a feller by the name of Davis, who was here the first time, they come back and offered a hand for a little while.

AM: Just privately?

EC: Yeah, just them two. And they quit and give it up.

AM: I imagine the shafts are still back there.

EC: Yeah them places is in there.

AM: I don't really want to go look for them. I figure I'll find them if I want to.

EC: Now I've been to one; this one they call Number Four. The upper one. I've been back in that as far back as where Gird lives. Lived there and there were two shafts there and one went down. That one was for the water. They had a walkway across it. But all that's rotted out. I wouldn't think anybody would try that anymore because-

AM: No, I wouldn't want to.

EC: It might look like it's solid and you might go down through it.

LJ: But you can still see the beginning of the shaft?

EC: Yeah you can--I expect you can see the beginning of it.

AM: Up on the side there? What's that big piece of cement that's down there?

EC: That's where the crusher sat on that. Either the crusher or the steam engine, I don't know which. They both sat on cement, seems to be like. I believe though that's where the crusher sat was on that.

AM: I think that's what Ralph Cave said about that, a rock crusher. So would the shaft be right above that cement block there?

EC: Well yeah. The one I'm talking about is way up in the mountain. But that one right there above that shaft--you see that pile of gravel? One went right in above that.

LJ: And how far does that shaft go? Do you know?

EC: I don't know how far that one went. This other one went--one of them went back about right near the crook of the road there. The other one went farther. But the reason they give it up was because there was some copper in there but the rock was so hard they had to put in a set of cogs and things every month or so and they said the machinery, it weren't worth it to tie the machinery up. They weren't getting enough to pay.

LJ: How'd they get that machinery up here?

EC: Come in this road.

AM: Did they take it down where that other trail goes off, below here? Where the bend in the road is?

EC: Well down yonder, yeah, where that road goes back. Some places they had, I heard them said they had as many as twelve and sixteen horses to that engine pulling it up the mountain. Some places they'd have to take them loose to pull them around the curves but they said that thing was heavy.

[36:39, tape breaks]

AM: If you wanted to get groceries or something did you go to Stanley?

EC: No. Well, sometimes we did. Sometimes we just went down to the foot there below the church, there was a store.

AM: Below the church?

LJ: This church here?

EC: No that church over there in Kite Hollow. No, there weren't none here.

LJ: Did you know Mr. Aubrey Sisk?

EC: Oh yeah.

[37:03, tape breaks]

AM: How often would you go for groceries?

EC: About every two or three weeks somebody would go to the store.

AM: Did, like, one person go for all the families around or--

EC: No.

AM: Everybody went.

EC: Everybody went (laughter).

AM: Well what kinds of things did you need to get? Like flour and sugar?

EC: Sugar and coffee. We raised practically, most everything here.

AM: Did they sell much besides bark and chestnuts?

EC: Well the hewed ties. Way back before my time I heard my daddy talking about they cut spokes to make wagons out of.

AM: What would they use for spokes?

EC: Hickory. And white oak. Then back in them days, practically everything like apples or sugar, all kinds of things come in barrels, they would cut hoop poles. That was what went around the barrels in that day and time. They'd cut like that little bitty stuff up in yonder. They'd cut hickories and if it was big enough they'd split it. And that would make two. And then they'd split rails and make rails for the fenced places.

AM: Shingles? They make shingles?

EC: Yeah, made shingles. I used to live down there, next to Criglersville and Banco and down in Etna, that's down there at Etnan, probably got them there. They had the books where they kept--where they watched people--where they kept stored notices and they had--paid people for splitting rails. Some of it was a penny a piece. Some of it a cent and a half a piece for splitting rails. Rail was a great low pay. Now I expect they'd charge you a dollar a piece to split wood.

AM: I would think so. Geez.

EC: Yes indeed he had on the books who was paid for splitting rails [unintelligible]. I was surprised to discover a penny a piece.

LJ: Not that much.

EC: Well we used to hew ties all down this road. Tote 'em up to the road or drag 'em down. Most you got for any was a dollar and a half or a dollar and a quarter. And they run down as low as fifty cent for the smaller ones. And you get half to haul them and you can see what you have to do for--

AM: A lot of work for not much money.

EC: My daddy, he said he'd walk from where we lived when he was first married and before to Graves's and work for fifty cent a day.

AM: You'd spend most of the day getting there.

EC: No, he had--you had to be there when the sun come up.

AM: When did he leave?

EC: He left--he said he left about four o'clock in the morning and he'd be there when the sun come up. Yeah back in them days they didn't pay any attention to the time. They worked from sun up till sun down.

AM: Geez. And all that walking. That's how many miles?

EC: If you went around this road here, there were several places he could cut off a little. But if you went around this road it was seven miles from up here at the top to Graves's Gate.

LJ: And that would take him just an hour or so?

EC: Yeah and he said it took about an hour and a half from up here.

AM: He would cut straight across instead of looping around?

EC: He just cut these crooks off. He went straight through it.

LJ: So, when it's straight, is it still seven miles?

EC: No, I imagine about five, five and a half, if you went straight down through there.

AM: Did you ever go down to Criglersville instead of to Stanley? It would seem like you're on the east side here.

EC: Yeah. All the people on this side voted at Criglersville.

AM: Madison County, instead of Page. So did many people vote?

EC: Most of 'em.

AM: There was moonshine down here?

EC: Some places.

AM: Ralph Cave said they didn't make much in Dark Hollow because of the church and being such a religious community.

EC: They didn't. The old man over yonder on that top of that mountain, he made it pretty regular.

AM: On which mountain? On Haywood Mountain?

EC: Old man by the name of Jim Broiles. Did you ever hear about him?

AM: No. What was the last name?

EC: Broiles.

AM: Hmm. Broiles.

EC: Yeah he made and drank much.

AM: Oh I think I have heard that name. Isn't it like B-R-O-I-L-E-S or something like that?

EC: Yeah, something like that. He made darn right smart stuff in his time.

AM: What kind did he make?

EC: Just whiskey.

AM: Rye?

EC: Rye. Corn. But now down here at the end of this road, what they call Richard Hollow, everybody in there made it.

AM: Down Richard Hollow, yeah. I've heard that. (laughter) Some of these places they might still make it.

EC: Oh I know of--I know a few people through here that tried it, maybe made a dozen or so. Some way or another they didn't fall very much. They could get it if they were wanting it.

AM: Just go down to Richard Hollow and get it there.

EC: Yeah, that's right.

[43:12, tape breaks]

EC: [picks up midsentence] sit right in there.

AM: Just below the apple trees?

EC: Right in here this side of the apple trees.

AM: And this was Ralph Cave's house? But he didn't build it?

EC: No, Marv Cave built it.

AM: Marv Cave, son of Tom.

EC: Right in a flat place all filled in with briars. You can't get in there.  
[unintelligible] You can see here where [unintelligible] it was graded out here.

AM: Now Marv Cave was son of Tom Cave and Tom Cave was--I forgot.

EC: Henry Cave's boy.

AM: Henry Cave's boy. So he was your uncle? Your great-uncle.

EC: No. Henry Cave was my granddaddy. And Tom Cave was my uncle. Me and Marv were first cousins.

AM: Okay (laughter). I'm going to have to write it all down. I've seen pictures of Ralph Cave's place; they ran pictures of it in the newspaper.

EC: That's--right there's where it's at.

[44:19, tape breaks]

EC: Now when I lived here, every bit of this was cleared land through here, on both sides of the road.

LJ: So you could see the mountains on either side?

EC: Yes indeed. Look right out--

LJ: I bet that was pretty.

AM: Now you say there were some foundations down in here somewhere?

EC: What'd you say?

AM: You say there were some foundations down in here somewhere?

EC: Yeah if you go up here in front. I'll show you where.

LJ: You're pretty good at finding these places. Have you come down here a lot?

EC: No, but I was born and raised right here.

AM: It must be so different now.

EC: It looks a lot different but I'll find 'em.

AM: You can pinpoint every single one around here.

EC: Most everything I can find but I was just a kid when my mother showed me where her--my grandfather was buried back there on that mountain. And I come over there one day and--in fact, if you stop right there, I'll show you. Do you want to walk down there? It ain't but fifty yards.

AM: Sure.

[45:47, tape breaks]

EC: It makes a difference but if you get to where it has been cleaned up, you can pretty well find it. But if you get back in there where she showed you--

[45:59, tape breaks]

EC: That was an old drum.

LJ: Here's something too. Is that off of a tire wheel?

EC: That looks to me like that was a Model-T. That's what it was.

LJ: [unintelligible]

EC: No, that was a drum. Oil drum or something. But that was a Model T wheel at one day.

[End Tape (CD), Side 1, 00:46:37 min.]

[Begin Tape (CD), Side 2, 0:46:39 min.]

AM: This is Click Cave's house. Back where the apple tree is. Gosh, these nettles. It's like this over at the Breedon place too.

EC: Looks like [unintelligible] where people did live.

AM: I've noticed that. I've wondered about that--a spice book.

EC: I don't believe we can get through this way.

AM: I don't think we can get through at all. Under the apple tree would be--or it was right in the meadow?

EC: No it was right back there.

LJ: I think it was cleared out.

EC: We might have to walk right across above it. Maybe above it you could see down on it. Them things [unintelligible] barbed wire fence. [unintelligible]

AM: [unintelligible]

EC: [unintelligible]

AM: Did you used to fish back then?

EC: No I didn't fish back then--I fished a little all my life. [unintelligible] I fished more in the last ten years than I ever did before. Someone was always fishing. In the parks, you got to walk so far before you get to the river then you've got to walk back. That's the trouble with it.

[49:23, tape breaks]

EC: I reckon they can kill you if they try.

AM: I don't know; it's a lot harder to get 'em now. They used to give them, you know, to people that wanted them--give them places--

EC: My sister, she's had one ever since the park took over. They give her one, but I never got mine.

AM: She right below Tanner's Ridge? Isn't Gird Cave's wife's sister down there too?

EC: She was, she's--oh yeah, one of 'em. Yeah, one of 'em still lives down there. There was two of 'em; one of them is dead. Bertha, I think.

AM: Bertha?

EC: Um hmm.

AM: Bertha Thomas? Or no, she wouldn't be--she married?

EC: Yeah she's married to Frank Cave. Both of them are dead. She just died here about a year ago.

[50:29, tape breaks]

AM: --kept up by the people living down here or does the county keep them up?

EC: No the people kept this up, the trails through the top.

AM: Could you get a wagon through here?

EC: You can get a wagon through here and on across the creek, and up to the top of that mountain.

AM: Didn't they wash out in the winter?

EC: They washed a little but they patched them back up.

LJ: That road going up to the top of Haywood Mountain's really steep.

EC: From down where this goes in to. Yeah this other trail where it turns off, that horseback trail, they made the most of that. You come around into here and that's steep but they pull wagons up there and dump loads off. The way they did here, they'd come down, get another half load, and put it all on and get to the top. It doesn't pull very well through here.

[51:35, tape breaks]

EC: --worker I've ever heard of being done. My grandmother and her two sisters met people walking from here to Illinois. That had it all beat out here.

LJ: They walked all the way to Illinois?

EC: Every step of the way. They said they picked the women up out here at the river and carried them through up past the army camps, 'bout a mile or two. And then they walked all the way to Illinois.

AM: Now, was that during the war?

EC: That was right after--yeah, that was during the war. That was after her husband died. That was just right after her husband died and she had a little two-year--three-year-old kid who took that along with her.

AM: Why were they going to Illinois?

EC: See, when you got back that a way, the fighting was all over. They weren't fighting out there. And they walked all the way. Her two sisters stayed out there. They never come back. People now a' days walk forty, fifty yards, they think they done something.

AM: Yeah, that's right.

EC: Yes, sir. She said she walked every step going except a mile or two and then walked every single step back. Stayed out there for something like two or three years.

EC: Janie.

AM: Janie Hurt?

EC: Janie Hurt. There was a whole bunch of 'em.

AM: They used to talk about one that was part Indian, one of the Hurts. They used to--sometime down at the store. She looked in some huge barrel that none--

EC: That's Betsy, they called her. Betsy Hurt. Yeah I heard them tell that too, many times. Fixed up a barrel of molasses and [unintelligible]. I never seen her. But my mother's seen her. Said she was a powerful, big ole woman. But she was just a Hurt. But Mary and I think she was a Bluie (??) before she was married. I don't know where they come from but she was just a Hurt by marrying. Now I've hoed corn myself on both sides of this road right here. You can see that's been a long time. Isn't it?

AM and LJ: Yeah.

EC: [unintelligible]

AM: Now we're walking down from Fisher's Gap on the trail towards Rose River Falls.

[54:27, tape breaks]

AM: --by Click Cave's house. Would that go on and connect up with your place?

EC: That would come right on through and I remember when I was a little bit of a feller--Click was my uncle. I'd get out on the woodpile of an evening--and he'd come over a lot of times, about once or twice a week, and stay all night with us. And I'd get out on the woodpile and I could hear him when he'd leave home. He'd be a-singing and I'd know he'd be coming. (laughter) Everybody liked him. Never hear anything against him in his life, no times.

AM: They had a lot of trouble getting some of them relocated, sounds like.

EC: Yeah some of them--well they didn't go out in the right way. I blame that mostly on the people who were trying to get them out.

AM: I don't think they explained it to them right.

EC: No.

AM: Because as I understand it, [unintelligible] Ralph Cave and some of the others didn't want to sign the permit, you know.

EC: To stay.

AM: To stay. And so then they had--they sort of threw them out because they didn't sign the permits.

EC: They--well, I don't think I ever signed a thing to stay. I would have had to if I'd have stayed any longer but I don't think--I don't remember ever signing nothing to stay.

AM: Well you left Dark Hollow in '34 and moved across--

EC: I moved down next to Haywood on, back on to Haywood between there and Slate's Mill.

AM: And that was out of the park.

EC: Yeah. Oh yeah.

AM: Well when did you live up on the other side of Fisher's Gap?

EC: I lived up there from--moved there in '28 and lived there till '34. October '34.

[56:35, tape breaks]

EC: No I went down to--when I got ready to get out, I went down to Luray to the meeting they had. They had a plot of what they were wanting you to do. You could sign up for a homestead. And I told 'em--Mr. Kibler and Mr. Ashberger, they was anxious for me to sign up. But I told 'em after I looked over it, it didn't suit me and so I just told them I'd get my own place and get out. See they laid them things off to be able to look at them and I looked at the one that was at--

AM: In Ida?

EC: Ida. They laid them off in strips and every little strip run back down through the mountains but you, the way I seen it you didn't have much but a lane. They wanted you to go back there to get your wood and one thing or another. So I told 'em if it was all right, I'd just find my own place. And so I moved down there and stayed up--I stayed there for fifteen, twenty-five, thirty years.

AM: Well that's when you worked for the sawmill, right?

EC: Yeah. Well when I first moved down there I worked just around, first one place then another. Then I just started cutting pup wood, sawed logs, and then I went into the sawmill business. I stayed in that twenty-five years.

AM: So you didn't really have much trouble adjusting to moving out.

EC: No, I left--I'd been out plenty times--I left here when twelve years old, went to pick apples in West Virginia. The first time I went I wasn't but twelve years old.

AM: And you said you worked in Delaware?

EC: I worked in Delaware in '23 and Maryland, on the railroad. They had an extra gang. You know, they needed a lot of help. That was the way I got on that. I picked apples all over West Virginia.

AM: Did you work on the Drive at all?

EC: I worked on the Drive until it was finished, all of the hard surfaces. I worked as a contractor.

AM: Ralph Cave said he worked on it too.

EC: He did. I worked on it for the Albert Brothers, ones who built it from Big Meadows back to the other side of Skyland.

AM: 211 there?

EC: I worked on it clear to the tunnel. They had to maintain it there for a while. But

I worked from the other side of Skyland back to the Big Meadows. Little old road about like this went from the Red Gate right on back to Big Meadows.

AM: Where the drive is now?

EC: No, it was--it left the drive to the right, right to the side of where you, or where my pick-up's parked. It left and went up that a way and across. And I happened to be crossing there and this contractor who built the Drive, Albert Brothers, drove up there. He got out and asked me would I have any idea where that place was at. And I told him I did and he told me see if we could find it. He knowed about how far it was by the stakes. And I went back there with him and when we stopped we was within about twenty feet of where he wanted to start. And he told me, said, "Whenever you hear my machinery come up why, comin' up way," he said, "Come out to the top and I'll give you a job for a part in it." I worked for it. All he was supposed to do--he didn't hard surface. They just graded and maintained it there. First sprayed it with oil, just the dirt. Used it that a way for a long time. Then when the hard surfaces--the last work I ever done, when they hard surfaced it, when they were getting ready to hard surface, hauling the rock on it, I went back on the other end and worked where the quarries are three or four days or a week. And they--someone went up and they stopped the quarry. I don't remember why. But they stopped the quarry there for three or four weeks and I just never did go back no more.

LJ: Where was the quarry?

EC: Huh?

LJ: Where was that quarry?

EC: It was on back there, like you go to Lewis Mountain. On back there. I believe it's the other side of Lewis Mountain though. I believe it's the other side. It was the old Grover Meadows place.

AM: Grover Meadows, the one that killed his wife?

EC: That quarry was on the same place, right close to where he lived. Now you could go there and take a steep cut down but we'll walk around it most of it.

[01:02:13, tape breaks]

AM: Dr. Ross, he was the one--where was he located?

EC: Criglersville.

AM: Criglersville. And he could drive on this road with a car?

EC: Yes sir. He'd come right down here with a Model A.

AM: Was he the only doctor that came into Dark Hollow pretty much?

EC: He was the main one. Dr. Koontz from Stanley. Now I laid off to show you all--you hear people say, you hear people say--I'll show you when we go back--that they don't believe the chestnut timber will ever come back. Now look at that one. Look down there. I've been watching them for ten years in here. You don't see a bit of blight in them at all, not a crumb. And all up there where that other road turns out. I've examined them right down to the ground. People will say they ain't never going to come back but--now it used to be every time they got this tall they would kill 'em.

AM: Oh really? Because I see a lot this big now.

EC: Yeah, that's what I say. In my opinion they coming back.

AM: That's interesting. There's a bunch down--

EC: I believe the reason they coming back is that all that old stuff that had the blight in it is done rotted up. They--you take, here's one. There's a little dead limb on it but that had nothing to do with the blight. See there ain't a bit of blight in that to the ground. It usually starts around the side of 'em and kills. I'd say--I noticed up on that other log they just--now there's a pretty one right there. And that comes where one stood. See that come up from where another one died.

AM: I think they could just develop a resistance.

EC: I do. I believe they're coming back. I've struck several places. Now down yonder stands another nice one, standing right down in there.

AM: I see it, yeah. Well they're pretty slow growing anyway. You've been looking at these same ones you've been showing us?

EC: Yeah, but I haven't looked--I didn't get to coming around this road. I've been looking all through here when I walked through. Used to be ten, fifteen years ago, every time you come through here in July and August, every one you'd see with dry limbs on it and withered up. Withered up or something. You don't see that no more. That's why I think they--

AM: They're coming back.

EC: They on their way back.

AM: Now you see that one's got it. See the splits?

EC: Yeah, that one's got the sign of it. But you think a lot of them haven't got a bit of sign on them. I believe you'll find they'll come back.

AM: That would be nice.

EC: I've seen in plenty of chestnut trees through here three or four foot through the stump. There's a nice one. Crooked but that wouldn't stop it from having chestnuts on it, would it?

AM: No. The mining company owned all this area.

EC: Now look in yonder. Has leaves on it I think. I don't think they really owned it.

AM: I know the park paid them for it and the records, you know. Well the stuff--the land on the other side of the road, on the west side, was a man named Koontz?

EC: Yeah. Charlie Coom and Charlie Koontz. I worked with them many a days.

AM: Where did he live?

EC: He lived down by--you know where the swimming pool is?

AM: No.

EC: The Hawksbill swimming pool? You don't know where that's at? You know where the road turns to Ida?

AM: Yeah.

EC: Well you went on down just a quarter of a mile down there where that sharp curve is, close to that sharp curve, and turned to the right and went back to his place.

AM: He must have been a pretty rich man to have so much land. He have a lot of cattle?

EC: It didn't cost nothing. They got it for nothing. Now here, right here, if we'd have come from Click's the way I used to walk--see that old cattle trail? Right there's where I'd have come out.

AM: I see.

EC: And old man Hall, he used to live down in there next to the copper mine. When they went to the store, they just took right off down through there, they had a path, instead of going around this loop.

AM: Did Harry Hall teach school for a while?

EC: He teached some at Dark Hollow.

AM: Was that where most of the kids went to school?

EC: Well, they went there--I don't know. It was one or two years, winters. And the first feller I ever known teaching in the school was feller by the name of Copley. Little feller come in here, I don't know where he come from; I was too little for school. And he teached there in that house where Click lived in. They just had put it up and there was nobody living in it and he teached there for two or three months in the summertime. And they'd stay up close to Big Meadows and they teach school there one time there in the summertime. I think that was mostly in the summertime.

AM: Did most of the people--

EC: Only school that was ever in this country in reach of any of the children was the Hoover school.

AM: Two or three of them went over there, didn't they? I saw some Cave names.

EC: Some of Gird's and right many children. Griffin boys, my sister's boy, he went over there and some. And the Hurts come up the Hollow over there.

AM: Right. Berkers.

EC: If I could--that's one thing I could never see is as much money as they spent building that building, tearing that building down. I could never see that.

AM: Well they didn't tear down the school. The ranger lives in it, up where we live. It was moved up to Big Meadows. They use it for a house.

EC: They tore it down, then, to get it up there, didn't they?

AM: Well yeah but they rebuilt it.

LJ: Where did you go to school?

EC: I never went to school.

LJ: Oh, I see.

EC: Never did. I bet you they spent--it might not have been that much at that time, but I bet you they paid them Grey boys couple thousand dollars to build the chimney to that school.

AM: Some of the Graves, you say?

EC: Grey's. Some of the Grey's out of--they had built it and if it didn't--and if they got anything wrong they'd come back and build it over. Boy that was the prettiest fireplace that--I was in there one time with Uncle John Weakley and looked at it. That had everything beat if you'd seen how they did fix that. I believe I'd have left that

stood down there where the Marine camp was on down in there below the Hoover firehouse. Why they had the finest kind of buildings in there and they just smashed 'em, burned 'em up. That cost money. I believe I'd have saved that.

[01:09:56, tape breaks]

EC: Then when I got big enough, I had to work.

LJ: So was picking apples your first job then?

EC: That was the first job I ever did away from here. No, the first thing I ever done was tote bark, drag ties, and stuff like that.

AM: Working as soon as you could walk, huh?

EC: That's right. Oh I--you learn a lot whether you go to school or not in ways.

AM: Sometimes you learn more.

EC: The way I learnt to read a little one thing or another, just looking at signs mostly and picked up a book once in a while.

AM: Did most of the people in Dark Hollow know how to read and write?

EC: Most of them, yes sir. Most of them did. Now my daddy, he never went to school a day in his life and he could pick up a newspaper and read it as quick as a school teacher could. He never went a day in his life.

AM: I imagine with all the activities at Dark Hollow Church there was a lot of Bible reading going on. Did anything go on at Dark Hollow Church besides the basic services? Was there--

EC: No.

AM: Was the service every Sunday?

EC: Practically every Sunday and every Thursday night.

AM: Did Gird Cave preach one week and Tom Cave the next, or how did it work?

EC: Well, no. Gird did the majority of the preaching and people come in there and preached. Old feller I know come there one time to preach. George Stanley. He died here just--I seen it in the paper here. It ain't been over a month or so. He was a hundred and one or a hundred and eight; I can't remember which he was. It was in the paper. And right around that a ways is where the old trail went around to the copper mine. People when we worked there, that's the way we went.

AM: That one doesn't come out at the falls?

EC: Huh?

AM: That one doesn't come out at the falls?

EC: Well you can follow it around and it'll come out. If you can follow it, but it's growed up awful just like this. You can see every bit of this land, we had in corn clear back, no telling where to.

AM: That was a lot of corn. (laughter) What did you need so much corn for?

EC: Well back in the Hollow, feed horses. That day and time there was just as much cornmeal to eat as there was flour.

AM: Is it--was it like a community corn field? Or was it--

EC: No, indeed, just belonged to any individual.

AM: I see. Let's see, we've turned off to the left opposite where that other road comes in.

EC: Yeah, see, this one goes down a little piece further before it turns down to the creek.

AM: Right.

EC: You can't miss it if you--

AM: Look for that one.

EC: See, it turns right in front of that big rock. Then another road goes down there and come around and comes in the back. It's awfully rocky out there but this is the way we went all the time.

AM: You haven't been on this one--

[01:13:38, tape breaks]

AM: --Click Cave was in there?

EC: [unintelligible] lived on down below the next to West Hurt. But it's funny--the funniest thing I ever saw. Must have been three or four hundred that weren't scarcer than now. I never knowed none of them to find over a pound or so. And when I run the sawmill up in Rappahannock, why three fellers come along there one day and got them some drugs they said doing the ginseng hunting. And it was a continuous thing with people coming by and going ginseng hunting. A hundred--I'd say there used to be one that was a hundred got into. I thought to myself, well they'll dig it all and there won't be a bit left. Ever since they went to dig it like that it seems likely more and more every year. I don't understand that. I can't figure that out.

AM: I don't know; we still have a lot of ginseng hunters.

EC: I know we do. I say, a hundred a hunting where there used to weren't one. Look back there--well I've been through the foot of these mountains; I've knowed the ones that weren't much higher than that. Haven't hunted much but there was scarcely none. If you hunted all day you was lucky if you found a pound, unless you run over an ordinary patch or something. But here lately, well the woods are full of 'em, the way they dig. I hear them say they're finding five and six pounds a day and like of that. Absolutely they dig up ten times as much there was when I growed up.

[01:15:34, tape breaks]

EC: --when I was cutting timber, I found several patches. I found a patch down there back at Etlan one time on what they called Mitchell's Mountain. That had a couple pounds in it. I dug the biggest I could to give it to my brother. But here lately, people hunt it all the time here in places. It's absolutely abundant stuff. Now here's something that looks like it. A lot of people think that's hitting it; that ain't no kin there. That do look something like it, though, doesn't it?

AM: Yeah, a little bit.

EC: Some people call that fool's ginseng.

[01:16:21, tape breaks]

AM: Where's this going to take us to?

EC: This is going to take us down to the house where we lived.

LJ: And that was above Rose River?

EC: Um hm. Rose River's right down in there.

AM: Was it called 'Rose River' back then?

EC: There's another bunch, right in a row.

LJ: Come back in the fall and see it when it's got berries on it.

EC: It'll be ready in the fall.

[01:16:51, tape breaks]

LJ: Wow, a lot's changed.

EC: It's all white oak. I've seen the water over every bit of this.

[sounds of people walking]

EC: This was part of it. And over here was the old chicken house.

AM: Look at that!

EC: It's the only thing they left standing. There was a horse barn right down there, and there was an old cow barn right--I believe a little of that is standing. You see it out through there? Apple trees, you see 'em? They're dead. All up through here. And this was cleaned up from here up to you know where that other trail comes down? It was cleaned up from here up to there.

LJ: So that was the chicken coop right in there?

EC: Yeah, that was the little chicken house.

LJ: And where did you say the horses--oh, way over there. Oh I see.

EC: Not the cow barn. But the horse barn sat here below that white oak down there. But that was lumber; I don't know, they might have pulled that down and used it for something. A feller, Fred Sours, lived here after we did.

LJ: Now is that Aubrey's father?

EC: No. Fred Sours was--they raised him. Doris Sisk (??) was--Fred Sours' sister was his mother.

LJ: Oh, okay.

EC: [unintelligible], but he was a Sisk. No, Fred Sours lived here a while after we left. And so he might have torn that down. It was put up with plank. He might have pulled that down and used it for something else. Might have torn down part of it, I don't know.

LJ: Mr. Sisk used to say the nearest person--

EC: Huh? What'd she say?

LJ: Fence down below it.

EC: What'd you say?

LJ: He said the closest homesite to that Sisk house was this way, over this direction. Would this have been the closest house to him?

EC: The closest one to him was old man Brow's. That is down below him, but the closest one coming this way was this one if he come this way.

LJ: Okay.

EC: But if he come the other way, I think he'd run into old man Ashley Woodard (??), and Nick Woodard (??) and them people lived back on Haywood's forty (??) and you got this far. Same way if you went out toward Skyland he'd run into Deland Taylor (??) down there and that Gap, you know.

LJ: Hawksbill Gap.

EC: Now my daddy said when he come here and cleaned this up, starting for to build a house, they just built here because that water was there, he built close to water. He said he cut white oaks that was three foot through the stump and rolled them out of the way to make room to build a house. And, when I got big enough to get about and help any, he had about six or eight acres cleaned up through here.

LJ: That took a lot of time.

EC: It did. I've seen 'em slide bark all the way off of that mountain down here to the creek many a times. That little old bark sliding towed it up the mountain and then slide it back down.

AM: [unintelligible]

EC: Huh?

AM: [unintelligible]

EC: In the woods, if it comes up in the woods, but if you have it opened and cleaned up and you let the undergrowth stay, it'll die right out, ain't that funny?

LJ: That is interesting, I didn't realize that.

EC: Yeah, they do, every one of them. Now you take up there in them old grazing farms where they come up with the other bushes that you notice they full of 'em.

AM: Yeah.

EC: But, same way about cherry trees. Right back through, two big cherry trees, and there's one stood right down there and they were the thriftiest kind but after the woods come up around 'em, well, they died out. And I noticed over there where I live, there was an orchard that was about an acre, Black Twig Orchard, and the--in '60, when I, 1960, I had the sawmill over there and ground covered with the prettiest apples, every one of them trees has done fell down, rotted up just like them and the poplar trees are this big around and as soon as the poplar come up, they die out.

AM: Those rocks over there were the chimney.

EC: That's right.

AM: What about these other places where rocks are piled up like down there?

EC: That one's just piled up.

AM: To make room for the garden?

EC: Yeah. The main garden was out there right below that old building down in there.

But they had gardening here and down there another little bench, they had two or three of 'em.

AM: What'd they raise?

EC: They raised most everything. Corn, 'taters, cabbage, beans, other kind of stuff, just like they do today.

AM: What's that piece of metal down there?

EC: Looks like that's an old drum.

AM: What were the oil drums for?

EC: People cut 'em in two. I don't know what that one's for. People cut 'em in two and used 'em to set iron kettles in, to heat water and stuff, instead of having a rack.

AM: Oh, I see.

[01:23:08, tape breaks]

EC: [unintelligible] mother [unintelligible] Dark Hollow [unintelligible] if something broke the [unintelligible] have to pay the double [unintelligible] iron [unintelligible] forty, fifty pounds, but I never see it no more. [unintelligible]

LJ: How about this piece right here?

AM: This looks like it goes here.

EC: That is a piece of the old stove. It was. That's some kind of old spring like out of a wagon, a spring wagon or something.

AM: Here, a country stove. Be a good place to take the camp kids.

LJ: I know, just thinking of that, a discovery walk on Saturday.

[01:24:42, tape breaks]

AM: [unintelligible] back over there [unintelligible].

EC: Back down below [unintelligible] on down that way.

LJ: So are we standing in the house right now?

EC: No, [unintelligible]. You could come out of the house and didn't have to go in the kitchen if you wanted to walk off, the porch, the house [unintelligible]. You can see now about how it was back here.

AM: 'Cause I found the stove right there.

EC: The house, you see, went from here and went back here and it went back yonder where you see it drops back down.

AM: Okay, yeah, and these are the foundations right in here.

EC: Chimney was right here.

AM: Do we have a picture of your house? This house.

EC: I doubt it.

AM: Can you up here again now that the sun is out, I'm trying to [unintelligible]. What

did the inside of this house look like?

EC: Well, it was a log house but most inside I remember was sealed and papered, most of it. And the main house and garden, there was a room then set back here, a bedroom and it had an upstairs to it, and it was a nice old house.

AM: What rooms were in it?

EC: Huh?

AM: What rooms? The kitchen was out there, and was this like a family room was downstairs?

EC: That's right. Then there was a bedroom back in this section. And there was--

LJ: Was the chimney by the family room?

EC: Several rooms upstairs.

AM: Bedrooms upstairs?

EC: Mm-hmm. And then there was one room--the porch went right out through there, of course, and the one room on the porch, as well as I remember and the rest of the porch run right into the kitchen.

AM: And the fireplace?

EC: Was right here.

AM: That was back in [unintelligible]?

EC: Mm-hmm.

AM: Was that just for heat?

EC: That's for heat, yes, that was all the heat there was. (laugh)

AM: And the stove was for cooking?

EC: That's right.

AM: Now that cow barn, how many cows did you have?

EC: We didn't keep but two.

AM: For milk?

EC: Mm-hmm.

AM: Did you have a spring house?

EC: Used to be a spring house right outside, but it's all gone. [unintelligible] I looked here to see if I could--there was a big rock that wide reached all the way across, that thing was that wide, about that thick, I don't know if I'd ever--they must have busted it up or them others fell on top of it, I couldn't [unintelligible].

[01:27:43-01:27:48, tape breaks]

EC: My mother, she died over in Timberville, with one of her daughters.

AM: When did she leave?

EC: I think she left about the same time that I did, in '34. I don't know whether she left right then or not. I just don't remember. I believe, though, she did, I believe she left just about the time I did, that was in October of '34. And I believe she left about then because she come down and stayed with me and my brother, he lived close to where I moved. She stayed there on our lot and then she had a daughter that lived over in Orange, she stayed over there right much. She just stayed there back and forth. Stayed there two or three months with one, then she'd go to the other.

[01:28:54, tape breaks]

EC: [unintelligible]. She was puritan as could be up until that time, but she went to live over by Timberville and we had a little old string and you pulled the light on to go down the steps and she got up early, she always did get up early, and she got up early and she reached for that string, I reckon, and she fell down the steps. She never got over it.

AM: Did your father build the house here?

EC: He built it. The closest house is up there where his mother lived, when he built this. And that down the hollow where Church Jenkins (??) lived I just [unintelligible], that's a mile here [unintelligible].

AM: Now, what was I going to say. There were three of you, you were all born in this house.

EC: No, there was more than three of us.

AM: Oh, so there's three of you living now?

EC: Two of us. There was about seven or eight of us and four of us boys.

AM: You and Walter and--

EC: Oscar and Willie. And then there was three girls. One of 'em died here in 1923 with the diphtheria. That was the youngest.

AM: Was there an epidemic in '23?

EC: Well, there was right much--she went over here with her father somewhere over here in Page--I forget where it's at anymore, I was in Wilmington, Delaware at the time. And they went in where somebody had diphtheria and she got it. I don't know that there was much going on. They tried to go and get the doctor but they couldn't get him in time and it kills you, boy that kills you in a hurry. That's what two of Gird's died with. And down here, I hearded my grandmother talk about it, Church Jenkins down there, he had five, I think, layin' in his house at one time dead, practically grown, years ago.

AM: How old was your sister when she died?

EC: Fourteen.

AM: Fourteen. That was the same year that you said John Cave died, that wasn't diphtheria too--

EC: No, that, he was just an old man, he died of old age.

AM: What were your sisters' names?

EC: Virgy (??)1.

AM: And what were the other two?

EC: Neely and Lula and she's dead and Lessie she's dead, too.

AM: So the only one who died as a child was Virgy with diphtheria. So that was pretty good, they raised seven and they only lost one, that's pretty good.

EC: When they lived here, when I was small--when I was real small, I don't know, I'd say four or five years old, we had an uncle that lived out in Cumberland, Maryland. My oldest sister went out there, they come in here and she went out there with 'em and there was a girl out there sick and she went in to see her before she come back and they thought she was just sick. And she had typhoid fever. And she come back here and in a day or two after she got back she gave it to the whole family.

AM: Dr. Ross come up then?

EC: He come day and night and so did Koontz. One would come one day--they finally both met here at the same time and one would--they fixed it so one would come one day and one the next so one of 'em wouldn't have it all to do. My sister that lives on Tanner's Ridge, she laid twenty-one days and never spoke a word. Walter, the one that died here just a month or so ago, he laid nine days before he spoke a word. They said it was a miracle, in that day and time, for that many of them to get over it, but they did.

AM: What's your sister's name on Tanner's Ridge again?

EC: Neely. She married Elmer Breeden.

[End audio file, 01:33:16 min]

End of Interview.

1 May be short for Virginia.

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Elzie Cave, 8/31/1978

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