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(SNP017) Preston Breeden interviewed by Edward B. Garvey, Charles Anibal and Samuel Moore, transcribed by Peggy C. Bradley

Preston Breeden

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E.G.: This is November 19th, 1982, and there are four of here
at Pocosin Cabin in the Shenandoah National Park. Pocosin
Cabin is at, between mile point 59 and 60, and it is about
sixty miles South of Front Royal. My name is Edward B. Garvey,
and I'm with Samuel Moore, both of us a long time members
of the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, and with us is,
Mr. Preston Breeden of Alexandria, Virginia who is born
and raised at, near the site of Pocosin Cabin where we
are right now. And, Mr. Chuck Anibal, of the .... Assistant
Park Naturalist, are you Chuck? Of the Shenandoah National
Park. Uh, ... Preston, you drove up here this morning with
Sam Moore, and you gave him a lot of information about the
cabin. Could you tell us just when you were born here
and how long you lived at the site?

P.B.: Well, I was born in 1917 and I guess I lived here until I
was, oh .... probably twenty .... twenty years old or
twenty-one. Anyhow, when I went to the CC.

E.G.: The CC, Civilian Conservation Corps?

P.B.: Yes.

E.G.: Uhhuh.

P.B.: Then I, ... after that I stayed there two years. I ... I
went to Alexandria then. I went to Alexandria in 1939.

E.G.: Oh, I see! So, you lived here roughly then from 1917
until 1937 or 38?

P.B.: Yea.

E.G.: Yea. Then you joined ...

P.B.: Off and on, yea.

E.G.: Yea. Then you joined the Civilian Conservation Corp. Uh, ...

Now, you were showing us pictures of the Breeden Homestead
and it was apparently just down about fifty feet from this
cabin and just above the road?
P.B.: Right.
E.G.: And, ... good! Those pictures were taken about when?
P.B.: Oh, I'll guess 19 .... guess 35 or something like that.
E.G.: Somewhere in that .... just shortly before you left here?
After, ... before you left. Right. O.K., that dates it pretty well. Were you here when the Park Service demolished the cabin? Did you see that done?
P.B.: Yes.
E.G.: How did they demolish it?
P.B.: Well, they had a bunch of boys that just tore them down. Tore down a lot of the houses.
E.G.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: And, they burnt up a lot of it, well, they burnt all of it up just about.
E.G.: Uhhuh. Was your burnt then too, or did they save some of the timbers?
P.B.: No, they burnt it all up. They didn't save any of it.
E.G.: I see. O.K.. I presume that was around 1938, because that's when most of the cabins were torn down in the Park. I know George Corbin's was. ... He was evicted then and I know Jones Mountain Cabin was scheduled for demolished at that time too. I'm guessin it was around 38.
P.B.: Yea, I guess it was. I ... I don't know how long my Mother and my Grandmother lived down in that ... Mission down there.
E.G.: Well now, did they ... Now, you mother was born not at the cabin, the picture you showed us, but she was born further down, wasn't she?
P.B.: Yes, she was born at, ... where my .... Great Grandfather
Newt Breeden and Granny Mary, the house is on about a hundred yard down there.

E.G.: Oh, I see!
P.B.: And, that is where they,... she was born.
S.M.: From this site right here?
P.B.: Uhhuh.
S.M.: Yea.
E.G.: So, your grandmother was born at that place?
P.B.: Uhhuh.
E.G.: I see. But, you were born on the new place?
P.B.: Yea.
E.G.: Now, were both places in existance when you, ... the time you were raised here?
P.B.: Uh, ... no, that had done .... uh, I don't know if it had burnt down or what ....?
E.G.: It was gone anyway?
P.B.: Yea, that was gone.
E.G.: Yea. Uhhuh. What type of farming did you do up here? What ... you operated a farm, I presume?
S.M.: Ed, just quickly, say that your mother, after you left, moved down to the Pocosin Mission and lived in the mission, is that what you said?
P.B.: Yea, that is ... I think my Mother and Grandmother was the last two that lived in this Park, that I know of anywhere.
E.G.: Oh, interesting. ... The mission then existed long after the ....
P.B.: Oh, yes.
E.G.: ... cabin was torn down?
P.B.: Oh, yea! They lived there for years down there.
E.G.: Like, how many? Ten, fifteen, ... twenty? (Laughed)
    This going back kind of far, ... I ... I realize but ....
P.B.: Yea, ... I guess, maybe that long. Now, the Park might
    have something nother on that, I don't know.
E.G.: Yea. But, they did live here a good many years?
P.B.: Yea, down ... Uhhuh.
E.G.: Just by the way, Chuck, do you recall when the last family
    ... uh, ... a number of families were given the life
tendency here, ... uh, when was the last one to leave?
C.A.: O.K., the last one to leave was, Annie Shenk, who lived
down in Kemp Hollow.
E.G.: In the Central Region?
C.A.: Just behind the Park Headquarters.
E.G.: Oh, I see.
C.A.: And, she left .... uh, ... let me see, ... about four
    years, I don't have the exact date, I think four years
    before I got here, would be about 75 or 76.
S.M.: That sounds about right.
C.S.: Yea, that's when she left. She had died just before I
    had arrived.
E.G.: Yea.
C.A.: And, ... at that time then that property then was turned
    over to the Government, and THAT was THE last one.
E.G.: That was the last one, yea.
C.A.: Right.
E.G.: So, O.K.. Alright. No, I did not realize that they had
moved down to the mission building. That was a stone
building, wasn't it? The mission building?
P.B.: The church was stone, but the other buildings was of
log.
E.G.: Oh, there was a residence beside of it?
P.B.: Yea. Oh, yea!
E.G.: Well, who had owned that? Before?
P.B.: Belonged to the Episcopal Church.
E.G.: I see. I see.
P.B.: That is the same one that own the Pocosin?
E.G.: Yea.
P.B.: They own one down on Middle River there and I showed him
on ....
S.M.: Route, on 33.
P.B.: All their churches, the Episcopal ....
E.G.: Yea.
P.B.: ... built out of stone.
E.G.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: Regardless where it was at. Where they had a building it
was built out of stone.
E.G.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: They tore this down ... and moved it down to Lower Pocosin.
... mission down there. And, they rebuilt the church
down there, just the wood part, they couldn't move the
rocks, ... the stones down there.
E.G.: Yea.
P.B.: And, then they, .... That stayed there for several years,
and they just give it up and ... Well, my brother's wife's
brother bought that property, and he's got a house built
E.G.: How many acres did you have?
P.B.: All toll, after my Great Grandfather sold this to Luther Kite, from Naked Creek near Shenandoah. At that time, after he bought this, bought that land over there. He had possession of 55,000 acres in Rockingham, Greene, and...

E.G.: Now, who is this? Uh, ... your?
P.B.: Kite!

E.G.: Not ... your ... not your?
P.B.: No, not none of my people what-so-ever. He's just a man, they use to be ... This use to be all grazing, there use to be a lot of cattle they use to bring from Shenandoah ... u in here and he would come up here and ...

E.G.: Did you actually own property here or ...?
P.B.: Not ... Not, ... I didn't, but my people did.

E.G.: How many acres did they have in their farm?
P.B.: I never did know how many acres.

E.G.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: But, he bought it off of them.

E.G.: I see. I see. What type of farming did you do here?
P.B.: Well, we just grewed what we eat ourself, like, taters, apples, anything that we'd ... they'd feed us. That's what we'd grow.

E.G.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: But, we didn't need nothing else.

E.G.: Did you have ... chickens?
P.B.: Oh, we had chickens, hogs, cows.

E.G.: Yea.
P.B.: Had our own milk ... cow.
there now. Then they tore that church down again and moved it down on South River, and it's being used as a house down there now.

P.B.: No, it's wood, not the stone, ...
E.G.: I see.
P.B.: ... the stone still stayed there, ...
E.G.: I see.
P.B.: ... just like it did down here.
E.G.: Alright. O.K.

S.M.: I remember reading at one time, Preston, that the reason they moved the mission from the upper to the lower because the water supply got bad up here, is that right, or what was the reason for moving it down, do you know?
P.B.: Wasn't no people.
E.G.: Oh, O.K.
P.B.: See, the Park had taken all the people .... Moved them out, so it was nobody to go to them no more.
E.G.: (Laughing) No one to go to church, yes.
S.M.: That makes sense.
P.B.: That was all.
E.G.: Yes.
P.B.: That was after my Mother and Grandmother lived there. Well, that church still stayed there, but then they'd come there. I .... it belonged to the Park, and I guess the Park gave it to them, or something or nother. Well, it was a mission to them, the Episcopal, still it was their's, I guess.
E.G.: Well, did your folks have an operating farm here?
P.B.: Yea.
E.G.: Did you have actually much cash income in those days?
P.B.: (Laughed) Didn't have none. I use to pick up chestnuts and sell them.
E.G.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: I use to pick those up and sell them. Twenty-five cents a gallon. (Laughed)
E.G.: That was about the only cash income?
P.B.: Yes. Well ....
E.G.: Did some of the men work else where?
P.B.: Well, uh when Well, I was When Luther Kite bought this land he bought some mills up here.
E.G.: I see.
P.B.: He had saw mills, stave mills.
E.G.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: Then he cut extract wood. He hauled extract wood ....
E.G.: What is extract wood?
P.B.: That's what they made they carried it to Elkton, Virginia and made the They ground it up and made ....
S.M.: Tanning bark.
E.G.: Oh, tan bark, I see. I see. Called extract wood, I never heard that expression.
S.M.: I heard that this morning. (Laughed)
P.B.: Then he had saw mills and stave mills and the last Well, that's up there where we had that gas station, that's where the last saw mill and stave mill he had, was down here. We made staves and barrel heads for Towel Barrel Factory in Baltimore. We'd haul a load of staves to Baltimore.
E.G.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: Towel Barrel Factory, and we'd pick up barrels and bring them back from that Calvery Distillery on Number One highway between Washington and Baltimore. From Calvery Distillery.

E.G.: I see. I see.

P.B.: Me and my brother.

E.G.: So, you had a little cash income from that?

P.B.: Yea, from that.

E.G.: Yea.

P.B.: We made ... Working on that we made ten cents an hour.

E.G.: Ten cents an hour?

P.B.: That was big money.

E.G.: Gosh! How old were you then, Preston?

P.B.: Oh, I guess I was around thirteen or fourteen, something like that.

E.G.: Mmmmum! No minimum wage laws then. (Laughed)

P.B.: No, indeed. (Laughed)

E.G.: Well, that would have been around 1930 or 1931?

P.B.: Yea.

E.G.: Of course, ten cents an hour was .... Gosh, I worked for twenty-five cents an hour myself during those time painting a whole house. So, I ... I ... know that there wasn't much money floating around.

C.A.: Let me ask a question.

E.G.: Both of you ask questions.

C.A.: You mentioned Kite owning all that land up here. Just North of right here, where the fire road hits the Skyline Drive is a place is known as The Kite's Debbing. Is that the same ....?
P.B.: This is it.
S.M.: This is it?
P.B.: All the way through.
S.M.: So, it wasn't just that one place on the drive, but it's running all the way ...
P.B.: No, not all the way through. From just near that picnic ground up there ....
S.M.: Yes.
P.B.: From there all the way back to where I showed you before we got to that cabin ....
S.M.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: That was his land.
S.M.: Uhhuh. O.K. That's where the name came from.
P.B.: All the way through. Went all the way down to .... Aaaah, down to where Samuels lives. Down about, I guess, about half a mile from here.
S.M.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: And, then .... it was, it joined up, the Green Spring. That property where the house is on up there. That is when he bought it from .... Well, I guess it was the Moyers from .... from Standersville. Uh, .... the land, it was 900 acres in it. Charlie Breeden bought the first, down in the lower end of Collic Run there. And, let's see, he had 300 acres, I guess then .... about 350 acres. It suppose to be 350 acres, it altogether he had the 500 acres. Well, then it was 350 acres above up here. He bought that from Moyers in Standersville. And, that was the land, 900 acres, belonged to the Moyers, but it was a Spanish grant from somewhere nether. The deed was on a piece of
sheep skin, about that big. That's over at Charlottesville. Well, maybe ... Berry had all the papers with it, but it was split up in three parts. So, Berry bought the Collic Run off the ... Uh, ... Luther Kite's daughter, lives on Naked Creek, Anna Mae Comer, but then ... the top part ... Being my cousin worked for Luther Kite for so long, that Green Spring, why, he willed him that. So, that's why that belonged to Breedens. That Green Spring. That top, I'm telling you about, where that cabin is.

E.G.: Uhhuh.

P.B.: That was my cousin's. He sold it to Berry about six or seven years ago. I guess, 300, well, it is suppose to be 350 acres, they surveyed it ... and they ... when they got down to the bottom there, ... the surveyor said it was only 288.

E.G.: That's happens you know? Three hundred fifty acres, more or less. (Laughing)

P.B.P Yea, that's what it says on all of it.

E.G.: Yea. ... More or less.

P.B.: But, ... he didn't get down to where it was at, because my aunt had bought 40 acres from Charlie Taylor down there and that was suppose to be added in on that. As fer as I know, that land is down there now, it doesn't belong to anybody.

E.G.: Preston, when you were living here, as a boy in your teens, and up to the time you left, was this land all cleared here?

P.B.P: Yes.
E.G.: No trees?
P.B.: Huh-un, all pretty blue grass sod. Well, it might be
some locust or walnut trees on where the cattle was.
E.G.: Yea. But, by large it was clear?
P.B.: Yea.
E.G.: How did you store your apples and vegetables over the
winter?
P.B.: We dug a hole in the ground and put boards over top of it.
You just move a board and reach in there and the taters
stayed just as good. Turnips the same way, dig a hole
and put them in the ground. But, apples we'd always pile
them up and put fodder over top of them. We might ...
E.G.: Above the ground?
P.B.: Yea, just pile them up in a pile and just put this fodder
all around them. They'd put up a hundred ... pile up a
hundred bushels of some .... Oh, it was plenty of apples
here, you didn't have to worry about that.
P.B.: Oh yea, that was all orchard all down through there.
E.G.: Yea, I know there are a few trees still here.
P.B.: Yea. You go on down a little further and you'd run into
another big orchard. Then you go over where them Taylors
all come from .... I guess, it was 20 acres of orchard,
or more over there.
E.G.: Yea.
S.M.: Now were those orchards just for local use or did you sell ...,
sell off apples?
P.B.: Yes. Well no ... they usually give them to people if they wanted them. They didn't sell none.

E.G.: Preston, you say it was mostly all cleared, so there were not much game around here then?

P.B.: Rabbits and squirrels.

E.G.: Small stuff?

P.B.: Yea.

E.G.: Yea. Deer and bear were pretty much gone from this area?

P.B.: Well, ... (Laughed) I guess they was still around, but nobody never did hunt for them or anything like that.

E.G.: Uhhuh.

C.A.: Did you ever see bear? Yourself?

P.B.: Yea.

S.M.: You did see bear here, growing up?

P.B.: It use to be on ole one come around here all the time, but I don't know. ...

E.G.: When you were still living here?

P.B.: Yea.

E.G.: Yea?

P.B.: But it ... it never did bother anybody and I guess we just never did bother it.

E.G.: Bother him. ... Uhhuh.

P.B.: Him or her, whatever it was. (Laughed)

E.G.: Yea. ... Even after the cabin was built here, as late as late as the sixties, ... we had one bear that frequented this area. And, he would systematically demolish the kerosene box we had back there. So, they built this real sturdy one, but up to this time that bear seemed to just love that kerosene box. It smashed it regularly.
P.B.: Yea.

C.A.: You mentioned something about a deer to me before we ... before we started talking.

P.B.: Yea. ... After we lived ... After we moved down to the Mission, down there. There was an old deer with two fawns over at the Meadows's place. So, I guess Vern Snow must have shot the ole mother deer, something happened to him; and one of the fawns. Well, then the little one taken up with our cow. Now, I don't know how it lived, ... but it lived. Just a little white spotted thing, but it stayed with the cow. Then it grewed up. ... It got grown and ... it taken up with an ole white horse we had. And, as fer as I know, the Rangers, I think, taken a lot of pictures of that horse and that deer. Now, I ain't fer sure, but they said they did. Now weather they did or not. ... I don't know what happened to the horse. I think somebody over on the Tanners Ridge or something nither come and got the ole horse.

C.A.: You were telling me about a pretty good story about someone trying to get on that deer.

P.B.: Oh, that was my cousin. Yea, we was over there at the Meadows' old place, Mac Meadows, ... His right name, Meadows and ... I told the boy, "Now, we'll catch that deer if you want to catch him." "How are you going to catch him?" I said, "Well, get up on the ole white horse and ride along and when you get a chance, just streight up and go side way on the horse and just scoot off down stradle the ole deer." He did! And, that deer taken off down through the bushes with him and almost killed him
before he could get off.

E.G.: Oh! He did ride the deer, huh. (Laughing)

P.B.: Yea. The ole deer just walked along side the horse just like it was a colt or something. He was sitting on side ways and all at once down he ••••• (All laughing)

Before he taken up with the old horse he stayed with the cow down there. One time I fastened it up in the shed there with the cow. Oh boy, he didn 't like that. I thought he was going to kill the cow before I could open the door.

C.A.: What year was this about, when the deer was out here?

P.B.: Well, it wasn't ...

S.M.: About how old were you then?

P.B.: I was in the twenties, I guess.

S.M.: Oh?

P.B.: It was after my Mother and them moved from here down to the ••

S.M.: Is that after your time with the CC then?

P.B.: No, ... it was before I went to the CCs.

E.G.: Probably around 36 or 37, somewhere in there. Uhhuh.

S.M.: Were deer common then, around in the area?

P.B.: Yea, it was quite a few around there.

C.A.: Why do you think the people didn't hunt them much, ... because you would thought they'd need the meat.

P.B.: I don't know why. I've been a reading, ... I get that Virginia Wildlife and in 1929, it was only 28 keer killed in Virginia, was checked in.

E.G.: Twenty-eight deer in the whole state?

C.A.: That was checked in.

E.G.: That was checked in?

P.B.: Now, last year what was checked in was 70 some 74 thousand and something. And, that was checked in ...

E.G.: Yea.

P.B.: ... it was at least three times that many was killed and not checked in. So, I don't know why. People, they just didn't hunt them back then as fer as I know. I don't know why people didn't.

E.G.: Let me ask another question. Preston, in December you called The Potomac Appalachian Trail Club and informed them that you had been born and raised here. What prompted you to make a call at that time?

P.B.: I met one of your troops down there in J. C. Penney's store, and I saw he had, let's see what was on his back? Old Rag Mountain on his back, on back of his shirt, you know?

E.G.: Oh, I see.

P.B.: And, I said, "What do you know about Old Rag Mountain?" He said, "he told me he belonged to the Appalachian Trail Club. I said, "Do you ever go up on the Skyline Drive?" "Oh, yes," he said, "I go up there plenty times." I said, "Did you ever go to that Pocosin Cabin up there?" "Oh, yes," he said, "I been up there." And, I told him I was born and raised where that cabin was. Now, he couldn't believe it. I told him, "Yea, that's where I was born and raised."

E.G.: So, then he suggested that you call the club?

P.B.: Yea.

E.G.: I see. Bob King took the call, by the way.

S.M.: Then Bob called me and I think I suggested him to call you.
E.G.: Oh, I see. O.K.
S.M.: That's how it came about.
E.G.: Uhhuh.
S.M.: And, also the folks that wrote the other book, about the Northern part of the park. I, all of a sudden, can't think of their name. But, it's not important.
E.G.: Chuck, do you have a question?
C.A.: Preston, when you were mentioning the chestnuts, you told me ... that you ... that was a good way, about the only way, to get a little money in your pocket, ... cash money. Now, how important were the chestnuts to your family? Was it just sort-of-an extra thing to get some money to buy some shoes or ...
P.B.: Yea.
C.A.: ... or did they actually live off those chestnuts?
P.B.: No. It ... it was just something we would do. They boys would pick up chestnuts to make extra money. That was all.
C.A.: Uhhuh.
S.M.: Did you help with ... at all with the cattle when they would bring them up or did they bring their own people up to take care of them, when they drove them up from the valley?
P.B.: Well, they just brought them up and turned them loose.
S.M.: Oh, just let them roam then?
P.B.: Yea. Like back where Camp 3 was at ... Grover Meadows' place, I was telling you about, they had hundreds and hundreds of acres, I mean hundreds and hundreds head of cattle up there. They just run anyway they wanted to go.
E.G.: What area was that?
P.B.: Back where Camp 3 was back here, where that CC Camp was.
E.G.: Yea. That was ...
C.A.: South River.
E.G.: Oh, yes. I see.
C.A.: ... Camp
E.G.: ... I see, around South River.
P.B.: Yea, back around South River.
E.G.: Yea.
S.M.: Preston, you mentioned several times that you worked for the CCCs, could you tell us a little bit about it? Which camp you worked at and what did you do?
P.B.: Well, I was in Camp 12 and ...
S.M.: That's in the Northern part of the park, isn't it?
P.B.: Yes.
S.M.: Up by Piney River, I think,...
P.B.: No, ... Piney, ... it's about 14 or 15 miles from Panorama, up toward Front Royal.
S.M.: Which I think would be the Piney River Ranger Station now. I know that was a CCC camp there.
E.G.: Yea.
P.B.: And, the first work I did after I got there, I worked on that ... what is that first ...?
C.A.: Camp ground?
P.B.: Yea. ... As you come in?
S.M.: Dickey Ridge?
P.B.: Yea, Dickey Ridge.
E.G.: Oh, in the Northern section, yes.
P.B.: Yea. I had a bunch ... I worked there and we dug the
foundation for the septic tanks and things like that.
Mr. Gibbs, I don't know if you knowed him, he was a ....
After he left from there he became a Park Ranger, Chief
Ranger here.
C.A.: Bob Gibbs, he is now retired.
E.G.: Oh, yea!
P.B.: He was my superintendent.
E.G.: I met him this Spring in North Carolina.
C.A.: Did you really, I be darn!
P.B.: He asked me if I wanted to work a bunch of men and I
said yes. So, ... Levinduskie, was the ... was the ...
landscaping. He had Camp 12, Camp 10, and Camp 1, over
the landscaping of the Skyline Drive. So, I said, yes.
So, I takin' ... I got a bunch of men ... And, that where
you come in on the Skyline Drive from Front Royal, that was
all pretty bluegrass fields all up through there. Right
in that entrance there, I planted those Maple trees that
are there now.
S.M.: Oh!
P.B.: Where you came this way.
S.M.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: You come this way to come in on the Drive.
E.G.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: I planted those Maple trees there and from there all the
way back to my camp I just worked on the banks, digging
ditches or planting bushes. And, he would tell me what to
do and I would
E.G.: So, a lot of those azaleas and laurels and so forth,
were actually planted there.
P.B.: Planted there, yes.
S.M.: They sure do look natural now. (Laughed)
P.B.: Well, (Laughed) I guess so. Just over as you come in on the Drive, about 100 yards ... or maybe 200 years. About 100 yards from the Drive, direct over in that field, there's a cave there. And, we use to tie ropes on one another and go down in that cave. I don't know, it could be the end of that Endless Caverns, it's ... or Shenandoah Caverns is up there. But, you go ... we went with no lights nor nothing, just with the rope tied to one another. Instead being out there working we was down there.
S.M.: (Laughing) It was cooler down there any how.
P.B.: Yea. And, ... which they never did work the boys very hard, anyhow I didn't. But ...
E.G.: Were you a Forman or something?
S.M.: Did you spend all your time in the Northern part of the park then?
P.B.: Yea. I stayed there until ... my 2 years was up and then ... Levinuskie wanted to to go with his daddy up, somewhere in Mexico, but ... I couldn't understand that, ... he was a Russian. I couldn't understand nothing he said and I couldn't hardly understand good English. And, I said, No. But, he wanted me to go, I think it was to Mexico, with his daddy. To do landscaping, but I told him, No. So, I went to Washington and been there every since.
E.G.: Oh, you moved to Alexandria at that time?
P.B.: Yes.
E.G.: Yea. You been at Alexandria since what ... 1940?
P.B.: 1939, last part of 39.

E.G.: Did you get ... was you in the Arm Services?

P.B.: Yea, in the Army.

S.M.: Yea. There was a ... Yea, ... right out of CC camp almost.

P.B.: Yea.

S.M.: Yea, there are ten of thousand of ...

P.B.: I went there in Alexandria and went to work for a contractor, building houses and then ... I went ... I didn't like it, I was single. I went to work over Fort Meyers, working in a warehouse over there, issuing equipment to ... At that time things was getting pretty ... pretty close to war. I was issuing equipment to Officers going overseas, from this warehouse. Then war come along and tried to fasten me there on account somebody had to do that work. I said, No, because it was too many Spies around, everybody was into it; after everybody around there. I didn't know nothing about no Spies, so I come back home and went out to Standersville and I told them out there I wanted to go to the Army. I didn't have to go. So, I went to ... they inducted me in the Army. So, I went to Richmond and Major Moton, my major over there tried to have me to come back. He was going to send me back to Richmond ... Camp Lee, Virginia, there. And I said, 'Now, if you do, I'm going over the hill.' Said, I didn't want to go because everywhere you went it was something going wrong and ... I just wanted to get out of that. (Laughed)


P.B.: Well, I was ... my outfit was ... after I taken my
training in the ordinance ... Camp Lee moved me to a Camp in North Carolina and my outfit was the 44th Station Hospital. It was in the Pacific and I was just in the headquarters. So, we was down South Carolina in a lake having a big time ... nothing but all Officers. I think I was about the only Private in the whole bunch (Laughed) and we was having a big time, so drinking and they had a lot of money to spend, I guess. So, on ... when I come back, I'd taken a belly ache, about eleven o'clock at night before we got back. Now, they sent me up to the Clinic Hospital. So, I went up there and ... they said I'd better spend the night here. So, one o'clock in the morning my outfit, what was Headquarters, they shipped them out to ... somewhere in the Pacific ... State Hospital. So, they just stuck me there at the hospital. I asked them to let me go and catch up with them. Said, No, said they were flying them to the Pacific, I had to stay there. So, they assigned me to the hospital and I was bed-pan pusher the rest of my time. Nineteen months there. (Laughed)

E.G.: It's all part of the game.
P.B.: Yea.

E.G.: All part of the game.
P.B.: Uhhuh. Somebody had to do it.

S.M.: Yea. Preston, how many people actually lived in your house? How big were the family when you was living there?
P.B.: Well, there was ... my Mother, and my aunt, then there was three of us boys, and that was all.

S.M.: They were your brothers?
P.B.: Two brothers, yea.
E.G.: How many rooms did you have in that house? The one you had the picture of.

P.B.: That was ... but a new section over here. That was three rooms of a big kitchen, big living room, and a upstairs.

E.G.: Uhhuh.

P.B.: And built another one onto it. The one you can see the most there. You can see part of the scaffolding up the side of it.

E.G.: Uhhuh.

P.B.: To other kitchen and three rooms more on to it.

E.G.: Yea. You had about five or six rooms altogether then?

P.B.: Yea.

E.G.: When it was all finished you had a good size house.

P.B.: Yea.

S.M.: Did your family attend church at either of the Mission here?

P.B.: Yea.

S.M.: Uhhuh.

P.B.: That was the school I went to.

S.M.: I was going to ask you about your education.

P.B.: That was all. The fifth grade was the most you could go to down there.

S.M.: Uhhuh.

P.B.: And, I guess I quit school before I finished the 5th grade, I don't know.

S.M.: Do you remember the name of the teacher?

P.B.: Uh, ... I guess ... uh, .. Mrs. Mike was taught one time and Mr. Collins taught one time until they closed this
school down. Was after the Park done taken everything and run everybody out. Then went down to the Lower Pocosin Mission ... See, they was all furnished by the Episcopal Church...

S.M.: Uhhuh.

P.B.: Wasn't no ... State didn't have no Schools then up here.

S.M.: When you were growing up here, when do you recall first hearing about a Park and what did you do about that? What it meant to you?

P.B.: The first ... the first about the park ... they come through and bought the right-of-way for the Skyline Drive. But, ... Luther Kite owned this land then and as fer as I can remember they gave him seventy-five dollars for the right-of-away then. From back there to around here.

E.G.: Seventy-five dollars for what?

P.B.: For the whole right-of-away.

E.G.: For how long? How long a ....

P.B.: Well, how wide the Skyline Drive is..

E.G.: Yea, but how long a distance?

P.B.: Well, I guess it was a mile or more. I could show you where his line was.

S.M.: So, almost to Lewis Mountain Picnic Grounds to up to where that cabin was?

E.G.: Yea, that would be a good mile.

P.B.: A mile or a mile and a half.

E.G.: And, he got seventy-five dollars!

P.B.: Yea. Seventy-five dollars. O. K., when the Park ...

C.A.: Just get the right-of-away?
P.B.: Just the right-of-away.
E.G.: Yea. I know. (Laughed)
P.B.: But, when the Park came along and bought that land ... then they taken that seventy-five dollars back out of it.
E.G.: I don't follow you.
P.B.: They taken that seventy-five dollars they paid him for the right-of-away back out of that ... E.G.: What they paid him for the land.
P.B.: ... for the land. Then ... this open land here, I think he got three dollars a acre for it, then the wooded land he got from one to two dollars a acre for it.
E.G.: That's about right.
P.B.: You had to take it because if you didn't they would ...
S.M.: They condemned it.
P.B.: I could show you back here where Vernie Foltz lived, he had a gas station too, on the Skyline ... just before you get to the South River Picnic Ground. They set his stuff out in the road there and set his building on fire. He wouldn't move .... I don't know whatever happened. I don't know if he ever accepted the money they give him for his place or not. That's what they did to him.
S.M.: His land was some of it that got condemned then?
P.B.: Yea.
E.G.: Now, when you say they, ... who are you speaking of ... It wasn't the National Park Service then, was it?
P.B.: Yes, it was the Park. Whoever owns it, I guess they was the ones.
E.G.: Because the State acquired the land. ... See, the Park Service didn't buy the land, the State acquired that.
C.A.: Then they denoted it to the...


C.A.: ... Government ... National Park Service.

E.G.: So, it was the State.

P.B.: Oh, if anybody had the money to fight them, they couldn't take it.

S.M.: No.

E.G.: Yea.

P.B.: Like the Ruler Company, owned that land, was hunting rights. I could bought you by... could showed you the land they owned. Like, it comes up to the Skyline Drive there at Camp 3, where the camp we was talking about. That State owned land comes up to there, you can hunt clean up to that Skyline Drive.


C.A.: Sure.


P.B.: But, ... and like the head of Ruler.

C.A.: No, wait. What's the question, you can hunt to the Skyline Drive?

P.B.: From here, no.

C.A.: You can to the back part of the Park boundary, yes.

E.G.: Yea.

S.M.: Which is not that close to Skyline Drive. Uh, but, I was thinking when you first heard first about the Skyline Drive and they were buying right-of-aways to build the Skyline Drive, but later you heard about a Park coming in and they bought more. When you first heard about this Park did you know what that meant or ... how did the people
P.B.: Well, all the people owned land they wanted to kick against it, putting a road through here. Well, they said it would benefit you. That's what the line that they give them.

E.G.: Uhhuh.

P.B.: But, they didn't know the Park was going to come along and condemn their land and take it. If they had been, it would never have been a Skyline Drive because they'd never went fer it. Now, if it was today they'd never get away with it. But, back then, people didn't know much or didn't care or something nother. But, ... today that would never happen.

S.M.: Uhhuh.

P.B.: Unless they pay a good price fer it. Like, today this land now is probably worth ... 10,000 a acre. Any mountain land is worth that now, most all of it now is.

S.M.: No, it isn't worth that much, but it's worth a lot more than it was then. (Laughing) That's for sure.

P.B.: I don't know, I can go show you some. ... Like I was telling you, I hunted up in Fredericksburg County, they built this lake around this four thousand acre and they got a road around the outside of it and ... Lots, maybe a 100 foot from there to the lake and they are only about as wide as from here across the road, maybe not that wide, and they sell for $50,000.

S.M.: Uhhuh.

P.B.: And, that's right up there in the mountain, and if you
look, it's everybody from around Washington, Alexandria, and Maryland that... every soul, and every lot is $50,000.

S.M.: I think having the lake must help a lot. (Laughed)
On that one though. (All laughed)
P.B.: And, on the other side of the road is $40,000.
S.M.: You mentioned your great-grandparents lived right down the hill here.
P.B.: Yea.
S.M.: You were talking about a few other houses, who... just name a few of the... who were just in sight of your cabin here. Where you could see them.
P.B.: The first house was where Charlie Breeden lived, right out streight down where from the...
E.G.: Was he an uncle of yours?
S.M.: What kin is he to you, Charlie Breeden?
P.B.: Well, his mother and my Grandmother was... was sisters.
S.M.: Was your mother a Breeden?
S.M.: O.K.
P.B.: And, he lived there and that's when he moved from there out to... you could see it then, but you can't now. He moved from there and went to Collic Run, that's part of the Spanish Grant land he bought from Moyers in Standersville. And then, I had a uncle that lived... well, just about a hundred yards down here. And, the house...
E.G.: That was a Breeden too?
P.B.: Yea.
E.G.: Your mother was a Breeden before she married?
P.B.: Yea.
E.G.: And, afterwards too. I see.
P.B.: And ... the next house, closest house ..... Well, it was a house just where you turn in here. There was a road, that same road goes on down to Hensley's Church, but that's grown up the other road. There is another one out there, I guess that's still open down ..

E.G.: The , is that what you mean?
P.B.: Yea.

E.G.: That one goes across the mountain.
P.B.: All the way down. Down to Hensley's Church, and on over to Elkton, Virginia. That's the way we use to haul ....

E.G.: Oh, I see.
P.B.: ... extract wood.
E.G.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: And, bark and stuff, when we hauled to Elkton, that tannery in Elkton. I even went this way when going to Standersville. We hardly ever hauled anything that away because there was nothing buying that away.

E.G.: I see.
P.B.: To haul it that away.

E.G.: Yea. You know, I asked you before if this was all grazing land and you said it was. But, you must have gotten that bark from some timbered area?
P.B.: Well, from here down to that Mission house, that's all .. that was all mountains.

E.G.: Oh, it was?
P.B.: It was. Where we got that extract wood it was, but over on that other side ...
S.M.: That was on the North side?
P.B.: Yea.
S.M.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: Just over the hill from that Lewis Mountain Picnic
Grounds. Well, about half a mile from there,
Rockingham County, and Page County, and Greene County
all joins together there.
E.G.: I see.
P.B.: Well, my cousin, the same one that owned this land here,
he has fifty acres out there. Still yet. And, he pays
taxes on that up at Harrisonburg, Virginia. He don't
have no ideal where it is, but I know where the land is
but I don't know where the Park. ... What part of the land
the Park taken or where it is. But, it was a house there
on that land.
P.B.: And, ... I'm certain he owns the land because he pays
taxes over here on fifty acres, I think. I tell him
I'd give it to the Park or something, instead of paying
taxes.
S.M.: On the way up, you said that there were three branches
... three Breeden family group up here, and yet you were
all un-related. Could you explain more about that? Where
were they located?
P.B.: Well, one was down in McMillon there, and ... is still a
lot of Breedens down in there now. But, I am not
related what-so-ever to them. And, then way down at the
foot of the mountain, at Hensley's Church, there is another
set of Breedens there.
S.M.: Over in Shenandoah Valley?
P.B.: Yea. Well, back down in that away.

C.A.: Down that way, yea.

S.M.: And, then your family group around here in the Pocosin area?


S.M.: Huh! And, you all spelled the name the same way, too?

P.B.: The same way.

E.G.: That's B-R-E-E-D-O-N?

P.B.: E-N.


S.M.: There's a Breeden Knob in the Park, I remember seeing it on the map ....

P.B.: I never heard of it.

S.M.: ... do you know anything about that? Chuck, do you know where that is?

C.A.: I'll have to look at the map.

S.M.: Yea. I was wondering if that's the same family or not?

E.G.: I've got the map here.

S.M.: I'd like to change the subject a little bit ...

E.G.: Go ahead.

S.M.: ... if you don't mind. Uh, ... on the way up, you told me a pretty interesting story about Taylor Hopskin, the Superintendent of the Park, (Laughed) do you want to repeat that one for the records. (Laughing)

E.G.: Yea. I know Taylor very well ... I saw him last year, ..., two years ago now.

P.B.: Yea. ... Just before we got ...

S.M.: The subject was moonshine as I recall.
P.B.: Just before we got to the Park, I showed him that ole big building there with a Postal Emblem, as you come up 33, before you get to the Park.

E.G.: I come that way many times, but I don't recall.

P.B.: On the left is a great big old house with big pillers in front.


P.B.: Oh, it was a bunch of us boys going up there, we was going up to get some moonshine liquor.

E.G.: Uhhuh.

P.B.: We just passed over, was walking on up there, we was almost up to .... I guess the Park, ... it was Park land. Anyhow, here come Taylor Hospkin and a couple more down, I guess the other men was feller officers, I don't know who they were. And, ... I noticed two of them had five gallons kegs on their shoulders and ... Taylor Hospkin said, "Breeden!" Says, "Where are you going?" I says, ... "You know where I'm going." He said, "It ain't no use going, here it is right here." (All laughing) We went to get moonshine liquor from that guy and they went up there and got it all from that guy. (All laughing) Them people lived in the Park and they was making it in the Park.

S.M.: Well, we're not sure we want to publish this.

C.A.: Taylor ... You said Taylor confiscated the liquor?

P.B.: Oh, yea! They had it.

C.A.: (Laughing) For the record!

S.M.: Yea, (Laughing) for the record!

E.G.: For the record, (Laughing) he confiscated it, yea.
Oh, Taylor can tell some good stories about this Park, and he tells them on himself too. So, I think the one on Taylor where I enjoy the most .... He was .... after he left the Park, he went out West for a long time. He was out at ... oh, out there at the New Mexico... Oh, I know, at the Big Cave .... what they call that cave?

C.A.: Carlsbad.

E.G.: The Carlsbad. He came back here as Superintendent, and he saw George Corbin. And, George didn't recognize him and he got started talking with him, and he said, "You ever know a guy by the name of Taylor Hospkin?" And, ... oh, George said, "Oh, yes" and he made some comment that wasn't too favorable to Taylor. And, Taylor loves to tell a story. He didn't know he was talking to Taylor, because it had been so long since he had seen him. But, say one little incident about Taylor that is kind of interesting .... This is almost over here now ... Is that? He was the one that evicted George Corbin, who lived up a little bit North of you here. He lived in the Central District , maybe you knew the Corbins?


E.G.: Or the Nicholsons?


E.G.: No? Alright, anyway, he evicted him to come over Ida, Virginia, and his whole family. Cold weather. And, Hospkin, himself, got a fire going in the stove so it warmed the place up. Just a little detail, but one thing that ole George always remembered even if fifty years later, he told me the story. And, he still appreciated that
little act of kindness. O.K., anything else you can think of, folks? We'll just pause here after a bit, after this tape is done. It is almost over with now. I think it is telling me right now that shes about ... I guess that is the cue. I didn't know this thing....

C.A.: Winks at you like that?

E.G.: Yea. It is getting near the end here. Alright, this has been mighty interesting and when this thing is over with I'll reset it and we'll have a little break here and then we'll discuss what else we want to do in the way of information.

(The tape is running and they are talking about maps)

E.G.: You know, Preston, we talked to George Corbin and they all hated to leave from here, but none of them would wanted to come back after they had been gone for awhile.

P.B.: No.

E.G.: Well, you felt the same way. The life you have in Alexandria is quite a bit different from what you had.

P.B.: Oh, yea. You know, I would like to move back to the country somewhere or nother ... if my wife wasn't working. ... I'm about twelve years older than my wife. She works in J.C. Penney's there in Alexandria, but now, as soon as she retires ... I'm going to move to the country somewhere.

E.G.: Uhhuh.

P.B.: I think I could go back and be a pioneer and live just like I use to live. *end* side 1

E.G.: And enjoy it.

P.B.: Grow everything that I need. The only thing that we ever bought here was kerosene lamps and oil and ...
E.G.: Yea.

P.B.: ... and flour. We didn't grow no wheat then.

E.G.: Uhhuh.

P.B.: But, we grew the corn and carried it down to the old corn mill and ground it down by water.

E.G.: Did you grow any buckwheat at all?

P.B.: Yea. ... Well, we didn't, but a lot of people around did grow buckwheat. Oh, yea.

E.G.: But, you had ... Now, did you buy your buckwheat or did you trade something for it?

P.B.: Usually we traded something fer it. Like, we'd go down to get ... Like, take corn down to the Mill, get it ground. Why, you always traded a gallon of corn fer grinding a bushel of meal. That's the way we paid.

E.G.: Uhhuh.

P.B.: But, money. I don't guess I had money, I don't know.


P.B.: You didn't need none. Ain't like it is today. (Laughed)

E.G.: No.

S.M.: Still don't need money, just use credit cards.

E.G.: Yea. (Laughed)

P.B.: Yea, I know it.

(E.Pause)

E.G.: This is a continuation of the tape -- November 19th. The four of us are now standing near the Upper Episcopal Mission. We are standing directly in front of the ... was this a Rectory at one time? Was this the resident of the minister?

P.B.: Yes.
E.G.: Yea. ... Uh, ... I guess they call it the Gouie (?), don't they? The Episcopal terminology? I think they did. Anyway, this is where ... after the Breeden home, near Pocosin Cabin was demolished sometime around 38 ... Preston's mother and grandmother came down to this building to live and they lived here for how long, Preston?
P.B.: I guess until around 39 or 40, something like that.
E.G.: Oh, just a couple of years?
P.B.: Yes, something like that.
E.G.: Yea, and then where did they go?
P.B.: Uh, ... went to Culpepper.
E.G.: Oh, I see. ... I see. So, they had this place two, or three, or four years, or something like that?
P.B.: Yea.
E.G.: They lived here? This building we are standing in front of and I'll get a picture of it tomorrow, is a well built structure built of wood with beams that are roughly 10 x 10 solid Oak or Chestnut ... and it was a VERY sturdy building and yet today it is largely collapsed now ... but there still are some pretty solid beams in here. Now, the Mission Church is about ... 40 feet from the building and it was originally a wooden structure, did you say ... uh?
P.B.: Stone.
E.G.: The originally one was stone also.
P.B.: Stone, ... up to the ... just the rafters and the roof was all. Just like that right there.
E.G.: Yea.
P.B.: All the rest was solid stone.
E.G.: Yea. When you were a youngester around eight or ten, you helped to pick the rock...

P.B.: Yea.

E.G.: ... for the church which stands here now?

P.B.: Yea.

E.G.: Which is all gone except the foundation, the fireplace, and part of the roof ... at the present time, ... this is 1982. And, the thing had concret steps, we can see those from where we stand. Now, the ... that cementary, do you want just mention that here, ... for the tape here? That we went through.

P.B.: The cementary was Samuels' ... Seb Samuels' family and I guess his friends, ever who ... I don't know. I just ... I never did see but one burial down there and that was a small kid was buried there. But, that was a Samuels and now who else, but I know it is a Samuels' graveyard.

E.G.: How many stones ... or people would you say was buried there. I saw maybe eight or ten stones.

P.B.: Well, I don't have any idea how many.

E.G.: Yea. But, ... the cementary looks bigger than that.

P.B.: Yea. It is bigger than what you can see there, because ...

E.G.: Yea.

P.B.: ... a lot of time they didn't stick up a stone. (Laughed)

E.G.: Yea. Right. Uhhuh. You saw one son, ... did they use ... uh, ... coffins in those days when they ....?

P.B.: No, ... something that somebody would make.

E.G.: But, they were coffins?

P.B.: Yea. ... Wood.

E.G.: I'm thinking back in Mike Corbins ... that day they had a .........
P.B.: Yea.

E.G.: ... a coffin maker at Nethers.

C.A.: Used a stick.

E.G.: Yea. Yea. O.K. Alright now, we saw the location of the second Samuels' home that belong to the son of the original. ... That's where you walk down to that, and the fence line are still here, the fence post. Anything else of significant here that we saw?

C.A.: I just want to clarify the buildings. Now, you said before the stone church was built, there was a wooden church, didn't you? That was where?

P.B.: Well, about ... just around on the other side of that tree there, someplace.

E.G.: Oh, I see! I see!

C.A.: This is beyond the rectory ...

E.G.: About fifty yards the other side.

C.A.: To the North.

E.G.: Roughly to the North, right.

C.A.: O.K., from where we are standing now? Uh, ... now do you know when that building was built? Was that building built as long as you can remember?

P.B.: Yea, ... fer as I can remember, it was built before I was born.

C.A.: Uhhuh. And, how about this building here where we are standing?

P.B.: That was here too.

C.A.: That was here before you were here. But, you were in your early youth, eight or nine years old, they were building this?
P.B.: Yea.

C.A.: The stone building, the stone structure....

E.G.: Yea. I see.

C.A.: ... was standing over here. For clarification; the fireplace is falling down and there is just a wall with a window and part of it standing.

E.G.: You are correct, ... right. That's right.

S.M.: Which was the part of the building where the Minister dressed and so forth, ... before he ...

E.G.: Yea, ... I see.

S.M.: A separate room, other words.

E.G.: You call that a Sacristy, ... I don't know, I guess it is. But, O.K. ... I think tomorrow I'll pace off the length of that church, but it was a pretty good size structure. And, Preston, you stated that the reason they quite using it was when the Park was built, all the people were moved out, so there were no more parishioners.

(Laughed)

P.B.: Right.

E.G.: So, we can blame the National Park Service for the demise of the Episcopal Church in this area. (Laughed) O.K.?

P.B.: Getting rid of all the "hillbillies".

E.G.: Yea. Anything else we want to comment about this area now?

S.M.: One thing that Preston mentioned, that all this land here were open fields here and it was tilled and ...

E.G.: Yea, cultivated fields.

S.M.: ... cultivated fields, not pasture, but cultivated fields.

E.G.: Yea. Uhhuh. This is little lower elevation land and ....
S.M.: The pasture is up on top of the mountain ... pretty much.

E.G.: Right. O.K.

(Tape Paused)

C.A.: Preston what was the ?

P.B.: You mean at home?


P.B.: That was a ... they called them cellars, you remember.

E.G.: You mean root cellars?

P.B.: Yea.

E.G.: Yea, for storing food.

P.B.: Storing food, they put it in a cellar.

C.A.: That was a big one. That's a big one.

P.B.: Yea.

E.G.: Let me have a look at that. I've seen the one at Corbin's Cabin and I've seen Corbin's , but ... Yea this is a ...

P.B.: It's fell in now.

E.G.: No, this was a good size root cellar.


S.M.: If they had enough food to fill that, they ate well.

C.A.: I'm curious about that stair well. I was wondering about that before, were there a second floor to this or ... 


C.A.: ... was it mearly a high floor?

P.B.: It was a second ...

E.G.: Well, commenting on the rotting stairways, we see in front of the Rectory and Preston states that this was a two story building. That was a well built building.
C.A.: Looks like it was a log structure and then with one story and then they ...
P.B.: Built on to it.
C.A.: Yea. Mean to build onto it.
P.B.: Yea, build onto it.
C.A.: O.K., the built on is what is standing now. The main structure is collapsed.
E.G.: We are standing in front of the formerly used root cellar which is a good 25, 30 feet long and as Mr. Moore stated if that was full of food (Laughed) there were a powerful lot of food here to tied them over the winter.
P.B.: down there, still standing down there.
E.G.: The area. We have just walked through the cementary and down to where the lower Samuels place was built, ... still has some hugh old apple trees that were used during those times. Yes, ... the beams in this Rectory building are ... 8 X 8, 8 X 10s and they are so smooth that we suspect they might have been sawed, but Preston states No, that they were hand hewn but finished off with a draw knife, so they looked almost as smooth as a sawed finished product. There is one Pine tree here amongst all the hard woods that stands is noticeable, it is almost 40 feet high and Preston says that was here when he was a youth. And, he is surprised that it has not grown to a bigger height than it has.
S.M.: Up here in the twenties, did they drive trucks up here? Were they able to drive motor vehicles up here?
P.B.: Yea, we had big truck ... Somebody got it, I was going to show you, we had an old truck we had sitting right here ....
somebody done got that thing.

S.M.: Well, you shouldn't left it parked there, did you leave the key in it? (Laughed)

E.G.: I bet I've seen it, because I saw one here ... not too many years ago.

P.B.: It was sitting right here and I don't know what happened to that.

E.G.: No. ... I've seen that truck. I read about it.

S.M.: Somebody went to a lot of trouble to get it out of here.

E.G.: They sure did because as little as ten years it was down here.

S.M.: I guess they could have gotten it up the fire road and just loaded it onto something.

C.A.: Probably being restored right now, worth at least seventy thousand dollars. (Laughed)

E.G.: (Laughed)

S.M.: Preston, one thing I was interested in, you mentioned, you talked about saw mills and so forth. Were there any large scale lumbering up in here by a lumbering company, or were they cutting logs and hauling lumber out commercially?

P.B.: Well, I guess you would call it commercial, they would haul it to ... like ties, they would haul them to Elkton.

S.M.: Railroad ties, you mean? Yea. ... Uhhuh.

P.B.: We cut a lot of them and then ... the biggest thing after the ... Well, the railroad got all the ties they wanted but, ... staves, ... making staves for ....

S.M.: Barrels?

P.B.: ...barrels. ...Whiskey barrels and oil barrels. We had ...
we made them for two different ....

E.G.: For what else?
P.B.: Oil.
S.M.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: We made ... the whiskey barrels only be made out of the
   White Oak. .......
E.G.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: ... or Chestnut Oak. There ain't a lot of them up here,
   but it was all White Oaks up in here.
E.G.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: And, ... whiskey barrels we made out of any kind.
E.G.: O. K. ... Was this ...
S.M.: You mean oil barrels, you made out of anything?
P.B.: Yea.
S.M.: Was this a small scale operation?
P.B.: Yea.
S.M.: A family or something, it wasn't a big lumber company....
P.B.: No.
S.M.: ... or anything like that?
E.G.: You see, further north, up around Jones Mountain area,
   north up around Staunton River, they did a lot of
   lumbering. They ran railroads back in there like ....
   was that anything like that around this part?
P.B.: No.
S.M.: This was just a small scale.
C.A.: What sort-of mill did you have? What kind of mill did
   they have down there, what was the power down there?
P.B.: It was a steam engine.
C.A.: It was steam engines. O.K.

P.B.: Yea.

E.G.: What did they feed into it though?

P.B.: Wood.


P.B.: Slabs.

E.G.: Uhhuh.

C.A.: How did they ... Did they run it by a creek to get the water?

P.B.: Well, ... most all the time there would be a spring or something like this. ... A spring right up there ... to use it to. Well, it run down through there all the time. You had to have water for it all the time. We always piped water into the boiler.

C.A.: Did you ever know of the situation of ... cleaning the ... hauling the saw dust out by just running the creek through there and letting it just run out?

P.B.: No. No, no. No, you couldn't never .... That happened to the Lumber Company down on that State owned land ... down there at South River. But, it wasn't actually his fault. And it got a high water and his saw mill was close and it run over and washed the saw dust down the stream and killed all the fish.

C.A.: Uhhuh.

P.B.: I don't know, ... they fined him something nother, I don't know. But, it wasn't his fault.

E.G.: It wasn't his fault. You mean, it wasn't deliberately?

P.B.: No.

E.G.: Yea.

P.B.: No, .. it did by, well you say, something; by the act of God.
C.A.: Uhhuh.
E.G.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: But, you ... No, you couldn't do that. You had to pile the saw dust up.
C.A.: On a mill operation like that, did they have enough slabs to keep the boiler going?
P.B.: Oh, yea!
C.A.: Just to cut ... just the ends....
C.A.: ...were enough ... for there?
P.B.: Yea.
C.A.: You mentioned killing all the fish, which reminded me of something. Mostly you lived off of what you raised up here, was the fishing worth while for eating purposes or just for the fun of catching them?
P.B.: Those ole native trouts, I'd like to take you down to the head of this .... Pocosin, down here and show you how many trouts are in there.
E.G.: Really?
P.B.: And, still in there. ... Ole native trout.
C.A.: It would be fairly small though, wouldn't they because it's back.
P.B.: Well, some of them, ... you know. What is we wanted to fish with ... fish down at the ... Some of us boys use to get together and take a burlap, it's against the law to do that, you know, ... take a burlap bag ... and go down there, ... and take, you know what a hickory is? And, make a hook like and make a new like.
E.G.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: Get down on the lower end of that stream, two, or three
gets up here, like in this hole of water ....
E.G.: Yea.
P.B.: ... and get messing around in there and all those trouts
would run out and we'd keep what big ones and turn the
little ones back in.
C.A.: So, you really got enough to make a meal?
P.B.: Oh, plenty! Oh, it wasn't no trouble to catch them.
You go down there and you see twenty sometimes and just
in a little hole.
C.A.: How far down the stream was it, far as the Lower Mission?
P.B.: Well, you didn't do down to the Lower Mission, you .. just
down ... just where we was at ... that old Mission house.
Go down about, ... I guess, about ... a quarter of a mile
and then you turn left and went over toward Hubert
Taylor. From this cabin here, you go streight down and
you run into it about a mile, or mile and half down.
C.A.: It was pretty far up the side of the mountain then
actually?
P.B.: Yea.
C.A.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: Pocosin come all the way up. ... This is the head of the
Pocosin right here.
C.A.: Uhhuh.
E.G.: We talked about hunting, of course, and you said you
didn't do much of that but ... we hadn't gotten to the
part about fishing. Early on the other tape, we were
talking about where you got your cash money from. And,
of course, up and down the mountain why some of the families
at least, used their corn crop to make moonshine, or apples to make apple jack or apple brandy. Uh, .. was any of that going around in this part of the country here?

P.B.: Yea, ... there was quite a bit, but this corn business I don't know. I never did ... if you never drink no liquor you don't know nothing about it. You know corn liquor is the worst tasting liquor in the world, but some people drink it. They call it corn liquor but you make it out of rye.

S.M.: Uhhuh.

E.G.: Out of rye?

P.B.: Rye crop, yea. If you just make to make it fast, but if you want to make it real good you, ... put the rye in a barrel, whole grain, let it set until it gets ready and you run it off and put it back in the barrel and set it over again. And, you can use that whole grain rye for about three different times.

S.M.: Oh! Did you put sugar in with it too?

P.B.: Yea.

S.M.: To get your high alchol.

P.B.: You take a bushed of rye, ... rye chop now if you want to make it fast, you know. A bushed of rye chop, fifty pounds of sugar. We use to get yeast in cans, you know? And, malt, put that in a barrel.

S.M.: Uhhuh. It was all very, ... was it very small scale?....

P.B.: Yea

S.M.: Production?

P.B.: Yea. They made five, ten gallons, the most I ever made. I ever saw make, I hope make as much as ten gallons.
S.M.: Uhhuh. Was that mostly for home consumption or to sell it?
P.B.: No ... (Laughed) nobody to buy it. Like everybody give it to them.
S.M.: They had their own already, I guess; huh?
P.B.: Yea.
S.M.: Or, no money to buy it with.
P.B.: No.
S.M.: Yea. ... How about apples, did you ... Did you use those too?
P.B.: Yes, sometimes. Apples, we never had ... Well, we did have ...some people did have cider mills where you make it. Grind them up, but to make apple brandy you got to beat them apples up to make a pulp like. And, they had old timey grinders for apples where you made that at.
S.M.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: But, we never did have one. Now, we never did fool with that because it was too much ... problem.
S.M.: Uhhuh. Well, you mentioned having two large orchards down here. Pretty good size, ... at least one here below your house and one a little further down.
P.B.: Yea.
S.M.: Now, a lot of those or most of them were eaten by your family, weren't they? That was one of your main food.
P.B.: Yea, ... and the hogs, one or nother.
S.M.: And, the hogs as well? So, ... well, Ed, where did you go?
E.G.: Right here.
S.M.: I just ran out of questions. (Laughed)

(Tape stopped here for awhile)
S.M.: Preston, we just went up on the drive and you showed us the location of the gas station that was up there in the very early days of the Drive, ... it was at ..., on the Drive at 60.2 mile mark. Could you tell us a little bit about the gas station? Who built it and ... you showed us the old well casing there too. Now, how deep was the well and what were the circumstances under which it was driven?

P.B.: Uh, ... the well was 6 to 5 foot deep and ... the lumber was sawed down at that saw mill down where I showed you......

S.M.: Uhhuh.

P.B.: ...the road going down to it.

S.M.: Uhhuh.

P.B.: That's where the lumber come from. And, ... me and ... this regular, the carpenter was Lawrence Lam, from near Elkton, Virginia.

E.G.: Lawrence Lam?

P.B.: Lam, ... Lawrence, yea. He was a carpenter, him and old man Ed Lam, who lived down on South River there, was the two general carpenter. But, there was a lot of us hoped build the house and the cabin.

S.M.: There were two buildings there then?

P.B.: Right. There's the house and there's the cabin. That's Mr. Wolfe and Mrs. Wolfe from Elk..., I mean from Washington, D. C..

S.M.: Uhhuh.

P.B.: He was one of them guys that watched stars. (Laughed) He had a big scope that ...

E.G.: No kidding! This is the Filling Station here?
P.B.: No, that's a house.
E.G.: Oh!
P.B.: The station was just out between the house and the road there.
E.G.: Oh, I see.
S.M.: Oh, O.K.
P.B.: All it was out there was just a small about ... I guess, 8 foot wide, about 10 or 12 foot long. Just a small thing. come up here, open the front up, sold cigarettes....
The pump was in back of the building there, between this and this.
E.G.: Uhhuh. Well, why did he build this after the Drive was constructed? Why did he build a house right on Skyline Drive?
P.B.: Well, he owned that property.
E.G.: He owned that property? That was before the Park came there?
P.B.: Yea.
E.G.: So, he thought he would just build his house and ...
C.A.: Make some money off it.
E.G.: ... be close to a good road, was that the reasoning?
P.B.: I guess so.
E.G.: Then he built the Filling Station later when the ...
P.B.: Well, it wasn't no station, it was just a hole in the ground, for the pump.
E.G.: Oh, I see.
P.B.: It wasn't no station there.
E.G.: I see. ... Yea, I see what you mean.
S.M.: What kind of gas did he sell, do you remember?
P.B.: I think it was Gulf.
S.M.: Gulf? Uhhuh. And, just the one pump?
P.B.: One pump.
S.M.: Guess he ... He wasn't able to operate it long, was he?
P.B.: I guess it was there a couple of years, as far as I can remember.
E.G.: Then the Park Service bought it and they tore it down?
P.B.: Yea. Before it could be turned over to the Park they had to buy that. That's why that fence is back. It had to be moved back, it was 150 foot off the Drive, you had to move.....
S.M.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: .... before the Park would took it over.
S.M.: Yea. ... So, he moved back onto his property and ....
P.B.: That's where that cabin was at.
S.M.: That's where the cabin was, yea.
C.A.: Explain how he moved that house back.
P.B.: We used railroad railings, ...you know?
S.M.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: We got them down Elkton.
E.G.: Rails.
P.B.: Then we had..... Well, didn't have to use whole railroad ties, just had .... layed blocks along underneath it. Which we had plenty of blocks from the saw mill down there. And, just layed them down and we had railings on it and it moved just as nice as ....
E.G.: Did it have wheels? Did you have wheels to put the whole house on? Or, did you just slide it on the rails?
P.B.: No, ... we just slide it. It had beams underneath of it.
E.G.: Yea.
P.B.: Wooden beams.
E.G.: How did you pull it though, what did you use to pull it with?
P.B.: Used a truck.
E.G.: Oh, you took a truck. Straddled the rails?
P.B.: Yea.
E.G.: I be damn! (Laughed)
P.B.: The cabin was longer, ... well, it was plenty of room for a truck in between it, you know? We just pulled it right on down.
S.M.: Well, I be dern.
C.A.: How wide?
E.G.: Yea. ... Yea.
C.A.: How long did the saw mill operate? About what period of time was that?
P.B.: Well, let's see. .... I .... we moved from down about a half of mile from Samuels, there .... Maybe, it wasn't that fer. That's where it was at first. No, first it was down here and then sawed out there and moved it over there. Then they moved from there on down below Samuels there where, You know, I showed you down there?
E.G.: Yea.
P.B.: Then we moved it from down there back up here, ... and then we run a stave mill.
S.M.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: We could sell staves, so we run a stave mill. And, the saw mill set at one place. I understand ... it was a hundred yards apart. I guess, when some didn't have logs to saw they made staves.
E.G.: What was the total time period, do you think it was about 4 or 5 years, something like that?

P.B.: You mean the time we had it down here?

S.M.: All together ... the whole time you were operating the mill?

P.B.: Oh, ... I guess .... Oh, no, longer than that. Because Kite or maybe he bought this land from my people around ... bought that land of our around 1916, I guess ... 1917 or something like that. He bought that green field, the land had cattle on it. He bought that in 1916, and after that he bought this land here. He owned the land on the other side long before that. In Rockingham County, I don't know how long he had that.

S.M.: To change the subject again, we were talking earlier. This is just getting it in for the record. Uh, ... about, .. I was commenting on what a good spring this is up here. I believe you said that you never known it to never run dry in all the many many years that you lived here ....

P.B.: No.

S.M.: ...that you folks lived here. It is certainly one of the best in the mountains. Do you know, .. have any ideal when your people came into the mountains here? I don't think we covered that this morning, did we?

E.G.: I don't think so.

P.B.: No, I don't .... I had a picture of my Great-granddad and Grandmother that lived there in that house there. And, I guess that picture was made maybe 130 or 140 years ago. It was on something like a piece of paper like that.

S.M.: Uhhuh.
P.B.: But, ... he ... he. As far as I know, he bought the Indians when they was down in there. In this section here.

S.M.: So, they were really early settlers coming in here?

P.B.: Yea. ... Uhhuh.

S.M.: Did they ever live lower down before the finally moved up in the mountain? Did you know?

P.B.: Well, actually he came from over in Rapidan, somewhere nother, I don't know where.

S.M.: Uhhuh.

P.B.: I don't know none of his people and his wife came from down on South River there. I believe her people was maybe a Jarrels or something. I believe she was ... her people was Jarrels or something nother.

E.G.: I'm going to interrupt here just a moment. I have with me an article that appeared in a, I think it was a 1936 issue of the former Potomac Appalachian Trail Club bulletin. It was an article it's name: What's In The Name Pocosin? Which traces the name and traces this area. A very detail article written by a, Mr. Harry R. Fulton, and the editor's note at the bottom of the page states that: "The bulletin welcome this authorted discussion from a new contributor of the background of Pocosin Shelter." They called them shelters then. "The lastest link in the club's chains of shelters." EDITOR. I don't have it on top of my head right now the date of this particular issue, but I think it was 36 and I will get it and supply it for the record here.

S.M.: Preston, can you go back a little bit to your childhood
here and tell us a little bit what it was like. What your days were like, when you were going to school at the Mission, how many days a week did you go down there?

P.B.: Well, when I wasn't a'hookin! (Laughed)

S.M.: (Laughed) How many days a week did you go down there?

P.B.: Five days.

S.M.: Just your ... regular five days?

P.B.: Yea.

S.M.: When did they let you out?

P.B.: Yea.

S.M.: What time of day would you, did you go?

P.B.: Well, we'd go from 9 till 2.

S.M.: Regular school day?


S.M.: When you got back after school, did you have a lot of chores to do, or would you ...?

P.B.: No, not much to do.

S.M.: Really?

P.B.: No.

S.M.: Your family, now your brothers, and your mother, and you were living off what you could grow here ...?

P.B.: Yea.

S.M.: ... most of the time. You had hogs, and chickens, and cows ...?

P.B.: Right.

S.M.: Somebody had to tend to all of those.

P.B.: Well, my older brother did the most of it. Well, we helped some, but everything just run loose and tend to itself.

Most of it.
C.A.: Then how did you fill your days? You were talking about fishing.

P.B.: Well, on weekends or something like that, and a lot of time we played hookey from school, that's why I didn't learn very much. (Laughed) Got our pole and go fishing. Wasn't much they could learn you down there, it was all... They didn't have many books or nothing like that. They just...

E.G.: How many were in the school?

P.B.: Oh, I guess maybe.... Oh, let's see.... I guess 10 or 12, ... something like that was the biggest.... was the most in it.

C.A.: What were you doing when you played hookey then?

P.B.: Just go out and get with a bunch of boys and go somewhere or nother.

C.A.: Running around?

P.B.: Running around.

S.M.: Did you play games or anything like that?

P.B.: Well, we played, like soft ball or something like that, a lot.

S.M.: Uhhuh.

C.A.: How about in the evening, anybody play music that you know of?

P.B.: No.

C.A.: Anybody in your family play music.....


C.A.: ...or neighbors, or friends?

P.B.: Before my time, my Mother use to tell me about it, what the old people use to do; the Samuels, the Taylors, and the Breedens, ... and the Shiffletts. They use to gether on Sundays and they use to fight. Somewhere they would
meet every Sunday, somewhere nother and they would fight. See which one was the best man. (Laughed) I mean they were .. they ...

C.A.: Every Sunday? (Laughed)
P.B.: Yea, somewhere or nother. If they use a rock on you, it would be the same thing. That's the way she use to tell me they did, when she was just a ...

E.G.: You don't mean just wrestling?
P.B.: No! No! Fight, every which one, ...if the Taylors was the best man, why that was ... Like the Breedens, they would put the best man against a Breeden, and a Breeden against a Shifflett or some other like that.

E.G.: Really?
P.B.: And, she would say, Oh, it was just sickening to see how they beat one nother. She said they would use a rock or whatever it was it they would use.

C.A.: Gee!
P.B.: That's what she said they use to do on Sunday. Now, she was just a little girl when ..

S.M.: Yea. ... What kind of animals did you have beside your hogs, and your cattle? Did you have any sheep?
P.B.: Now, ... Samuels had a lot of sheep.

S.M.: Had a lot of sheep?
P.B.: Yea.

S.M.: Using that pasture land.
P.B.: Uhhuh.

S.M.: How about household animals, what did you have, dogs or cats?
P.B.: Dogs and cats.

S.M.: Uhhuh.
S.M.: Uhhuh.

E.G.: Any problems with coons when you were small?

P.B.: NO, a lot of people coon hunted up there then.

E.G.: Uhhuh.

S.M.: That kept them down then.

P.B.: Uhhuh.

S.M.: Well, you said earlier that you, yourself didn't do much... do any deer or bear hunting. You just mainly went rabbit hunting...

P.B.: And squirrels.

S.M.: And squirrel hunting. What about the other people, were they the same way or some of them were deer hunters?

P.B.: No, I don't know why that ... Now, the Taylors over there, they use to do a lot of Fox hunting... and something like that. But, I never knew one of them to shoot a deer or something like that. They use to hunt foxes a lot.

S.M.: But, you saw deer up there? They were here always?

P.B.: They were here, oh yes. I don't know why people never did, but now that's all they think about is deer hunting. All they think about is deer hunting.

(Tape went off here for awhile)

graduated from the Head School up there, but I met some of about the dumbest up there I ever met.

S.M.: Where?

P.B.: From Pennsylvania. When I was in the CCs. I was the lead, I had anywhere from 12 to 25 men under me at all time. They couldn't do anything! They never ..., Well, a lot of people now never did see, ... We had double bladed ax, you know what they are? They never saw one of those.
E.G.: Well, that didn't make any difference.
P.B.: Saws ... Well, I thought everybody had seen some ....
     Well, Pennsylvania is in the mountains.
E.G.: Yea, but maybe they lived in town, see.
P.B.: Well, I don't know. This one boy got a letter there on
     Friday morning and his whole kitchen had fell in a mine,
     so I (Laughed) I felt sorry fer him. Yea, it just
     broke his heart, I guess it was. His whole half of his
     house had ....
S.M.: Caved in.
P.B.: ...fell down in one of those mines.
S.M.: You know it is interesting you mentioning the boys being
     from Pennsylvania because I think I said earlier ..... I
     headed down through the Southern Section before the Drive
     was built with a couple of those young fellows and I ...
     we got as far down as ... Black Rock Gap, and we spent the
     night at the old Black Rock Hotel there. It had been
     abandoned, but it was still the building there and we
     slept on the porch. And, at that time the trail went
     down the East side of the mountain because the CC hadn't
     built it along the ridge top yet. ... Went down river
     and ....
P.B.: uhhuh.
S.M.: ... then down and came up the South Fork and back on
     the ridge again. So, we went down there and we got on
     a little further, but more importantly I had eaten
     blueberries, and blackberries, and everything I could
     find ... all day long the day before and ....
D.G.: Oh, Judas!
S.M.: ...I drank a whole lot of cold spring water and I tell you, I was sick as a dog that day. (Laughing)

E.G.: Oh, man!

S.M.: So, when we got down to where the two forks of the river jointed together, we turned and headed out, uh, toward the you know the road going on out? I can't remember the name of the town now. And, there was a CC Camp there, just a little way ....

P.B.: Yea.

S.M.: past the Charlottesville reservoir, and we went in there and the Camp Commander said we could spend the night there. We ate there and so forth. Everyone of those fellows were from Pennsylvania. They talked funny (Laughed), at least they sounded funny to me. And, I remember it was very very welcome to sleep on a real bed again for us kids.

E.G.: Yea.

S.M.: For me to get well and know I could get some food down in me again, and anyhow, the next day we took off and hitched-hiked back up to Rockfish Gap and headed on South again.

E.G.: That can happen, ... I did it once too coming into Wilson Gap Shelter. ... I didn't eat supper, ... I just ate everything I had.

S.M.: Then a little later on we stopped at another CC Camp .... I guess it must have been somewhre near Big Island. Anyhow, Route 60 ... Interstate, ... not Interstate, where Route 60 crosses Grant, you know down there?

E.G.: Uhhuh.
S.M.: This time they let us stay there three days, and by the
time we left, why we were all talking with a Pennsylvania
accent. (Laughed)

C.A.: It's very catching.

S.M.: So, they must have had a lot of unemployed young fellows
up there in that coal mine country.

E.G.: Oh, yea.

S.M.: And had to put them in the CCCs.

P.B.: Just about all these camps out through here was the same.

S.M.: Is that right? Same as the rest of them too.

E.G.: Oh, those camps were wonderful things, they just ....

P.B.: They a lot of boys.

S.M.: Yea.

P.B.: This one big fat boy in there, ... he was ... He use to
play for some big band. Great big famous name band, but
back then they didn't have no music to play so they got
rid of him then. He joined the CCs. One half of this
barracks that I was leader over ... But, my men was in
another barrack. They wouldn't let you be the leader
over, stay in them barracks with them.

E.G.: Uhhuh.

P.B.: And, this boy was from Bacon Holler .... Knight, and ...
Homer Knight. ... And, this boy kept all these act
and he wouldn't say anything and I never did put him in
it because I knew how mean he was. I went to the bathroom
one morning, my assistant come up and told me to go
down.... the bathrooms was off from the barracks, and he
told me Knight and that boy was fighting. I said, Well,
you're the assistant why didn't you part them? He said,
Well, I wasn't ... I went down there, he had done
beat that big guy, it was just pityful. What it was, he was, ... Knight and them one half of their outfit moved people out of the part, down at them homes they built for them and the other half, I don't know, worked on trails or something nother. I think cut mostly of the dead wood or something out. He wanted to know if..... he asked Knight if them Hillbillies wore clothes?

Boy, that fixed it!

S.M.: Gee!

E.G.: Oh, ... asked him what?

P.B.: Asked him, did these Hillbillies wore clothes? And, that ended the whole works with him.

S.M.: Boy, I can well imagine! A man that had been born and brought up down there. Whoaaa! (Laughed)

C.A.: He hadn't head about the Bacons in Bacon Hollow apparently. (Laughing)

P.B.: No, (Laughing) they didn't. He wasn't near as big as he was, but just about as mean. ... He was just as mean as he was big, tell you the truth.

S.M.: Well, I think we better be heading on back, it is after four.

P.B.: Alright.

S.M.: It will be dark in a little while.

E.G.: This concludes the discussion at Pocosin Cabin.