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(SNP083) Louise Long interviewed by Darwin
and Eileen Lambert, transcribed by Peggy C.
Bradley

Louise V. Long

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ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK

NARRATOR: Mrs. Louise Long
INTERVIEWERS: Darwin & Eileen Lambert
PLACE: Page County - Luray, Va.
DATE: March 16, 1986

TRANSCRIBED BY:

Peggy C. Bradley

DATE COMPLETED:

September 29, 1986

D.L.: Well, why don't you tell us something about your, What you called it, Spinetop? Is that it? You go up

L.L.: No, ... the Spinetop was the Varner

D.L.: Yea. ... Why don't you tell me a little bit about that since you started to do it. ... It's up Rocky Branch kind of ... by the brick church.

L.L.: You go in by the brick church and you make a turn to the right ... and it takes you up and across the mountain ... over in there somewhere. We haven't been on over in there for years. I don't reckon.

D.L.: You were in Rappahannock County....where you were?

L.L.: We probably were.

D.L.: Crossed over the Beahm's Gap like and

L.L.: That's right.

D.L.: ~~And~~ and

L.L.: And the last time we went I went with my Grandfather and when we got up in there we had to follow the creek. Get in the creek and drive ... the roads was all gone. And we drove all the way in the creek ... in a buckboard.

D.L.: Yea. (Laughed).

L.L.: And we spent two nights and we stayed in Ed Hershberger's house that time because our's was beginning to go down so. We hadn't been staying in it for awhile and we spent the night there and that's the last time and that was before I was married.

D.L.: Yea. And you were on below the creek where you were running toward the East and down the mountain toward Rappahonnock?

L.L.: And we followed that all the way nearly to where we were

to stayed at.

D.L.: Yea.

L.L.: The road was gone.

D.L.: Well, you must gone down pretty far off the top then?

L.L.: Well, did you ever know where the Ed Hershberger's place? It joined that.

D.L.: Approximately, yes.

L.L.: It joined that.

D.L.: This was more on top of the mountain though, wasn't it? Between Beahm's Gap itself and North a little bit?

L.L.: Well, it wasn't too far down the other side of the mountain.

D.L.: Uhhuh.

L.L.: Probably part of it was.

D.L.: One time or another he had a swimming pool up there.

L.L.: Now, I don't remember that.

D.L.: Well, it was probably much later than when you were going up there.

L.L.: But I know at nights you could hear the wild cats they had a place they called Wild Cat Cliff and you could just hear them hollering. Oh, it's just

D.L.: (Laughing)

L.L.: I was scared to death to go out at night up there. They had two families that lived up there , was Jesse and Jeff Wyatt and they had families, and one of their wife was killed; a snake bit her in the garden. She was just young.

D.L.: Oh, gosh!

L.L.: But we would go, when we were kids, we would go and they

would see us coming and they would gather us Hazlenuts.

D.L.: Uhhuh.

L.L.: And when we'd go up there they gave us a bog of Hazlenuts. But we loved to go. It was Grandpa Varner, and Uncle Jake, and Uncle Martin; it was three brothers that owned it and together. Just like up on the mountain ... it was three bothers.

D.L.: One reason I wanted you to go ahead with that ... I'm interested in how far back this kind of grazing on the Blue Ridge goes ... and I bet it goes way back, doesn't it?

L.L.: Well, Oh yes it does. This belonged to my grandfather's father, Hamilton Varner.

D.L.: Uhhuh.

L.L.: And that was way back. Uh....he lived here and I guess he was around He was 80 some when he passed away... and Grandpa was

D.L.: And you probably didn't go with him driving cattle but he did drive cattle from here

L.L.: Yes, they drove cattle.

D.L.:over and it was in the Summer?

L.L.: In the Summer ... in the Spring.

D.L.: You would start out inwhat, June or...?

L.L.: They start out in April.

D.L.: April? OH!

L.L.: They would come back around first snow.

D.L.: Oh, about November?

L.L.: Usually wait until it snowed. (Laughed) That's right.

D.L.: So they were really up there about six months?

L.L.: Yea.

D.L.: This was the case with you on Tanner's Ridge too?

L.L.: On Tanner's Ridge. When we opened the gate in the Fall all you had to do was, they would be standing there ready to go and they would strike out and if there wouldn't be nobody in front of them they would run all the way home. Of course with the, you know, with the cars and all, well somebody had to go in front and hold them back.

D.L.: Yea ...

TAPE BAD

L.L.: I'd say around ten miles. I've walked up and back many a time.

E.L.: How many did you take up there?

L.L.: We'd take up around three hundred.

E.L.: About three hundred?

L.L.: About three hundred and then some of them would have calves before they went up. Most of them would have a calf when they come back.

D.L.: Have calves up there?

L.L.: Uhhuh.

D.L.: Did you have somebody staying up there to watch?

L.L.: We had Carrie and Joe Thomas, lived on our place in this ole house. I had a good picture of it and I sent it away to have a larger one made and when I get this smaller one back I'll mail it to you all.

D.L.: Yea, I'll like to see a picture of it.

L.L.: And I ahve a few picture here I'll show you that I had taken up there in 68. But, no, a talking about the cattle drive; there were three brothers, one lived in Mill Creek,

he would bring his cattle out to our place and put them in the lot the night before. And then the next morning Lewis would bring his' over and they would take all three bunches out of the bottom and you would drive them and you'd get up there, oh little before noon. And we would take a truck, some would walk awhile and some ride awhile. Of course, my husband's father, he was getting older and he didn't walk so much of the way, he usually brought the truck. And if the calves, the little calves, sometimes they would break down we would put them in back of the truck ... and haul them up there.

D.L.: What was your father's name?

L.L.: My father?

D.L.: Well....

L.L.: My husband's father the Long?

D.L.: Yea, your husband's father?

L.L.: Arthur Long.

D.L.: Arthur Long?

L.L.: Arthur W. Long.

D.L.: Was he from the Longs that originally settled at Massanuttten?

L.L.: No.

D.L.: Right here ...

L.L.: Now, I think that's a differntuh...

D.L.: That's a different family?

L.L.: Yes. Uhhuh.

D.L.: That¹ was the Phillip Long and the

L.L.: That's right.

D.L.: ...some Stricklers.

L.L.: That's right.

D.L.: About eight of them settled at the Massanutten. Over by the White House where that monument is.

L.L.: Yes.

D.L.: He isn't of this family?

L.L.: No.

D.L.: But they must have also come very early?

L.L.: Oh ... You have heard of Dr. Long, haven't you?

D.: Yes.

L.L.: Ole Dr. Long?

D.L.: Dr. George H. Long, he was my doctor....

L.L.: Alright now Oh well now Dr. Long's father ... was a brother to my husband's grandfather and they were brothers.... And they, he was born on, there where we lived up on the Hawksbill on the old Long farm. And Dr. Long lived up on the highway, do you know where Rex Burner's Plumbing is?

D.L.: Yes.

L.L.: Alright now. Well, that's where he lived. They ... all that belonged to the Longs and my husband's grandfather got the place where we lived and he got the place up there where Rex's lives.

D.L.: Yes. ... Yes, I see.

L.L.: And he died ... Ole Dr. Long died about a year after we were married in 1937. And then his daughter married John Spitler and they lived in the place. Both of them are dead now and their daughter married Rex Burner and they live there.

D.L.: Yes. ... Well, there were Spitlers that had cattle up on the mountains nearby between your two places?

L.L.: Well now

D.L.: About up here where the Pinnacle Picnic grounds are?

L.L.: Now that was Charlie Spitler.

D.L.: That was Charlie Spitler?

L.L.: He had a place at the Pinnacles. ... I've been up there.

D.L.: Yea.

L.L.: When they was putting that road through on Skyland,
why we would go up there at nights and go and

D.L.: (Laughing) Now that place you were talking about on
Tanners Ridge, was that not in the Park or was in the
Park....or part of it in the Park?

L.L.: It bordered the Park. It goes right to the Park line.

D.L.: There was ... some kind that three different Longs, not
just Lee Long, but Paul and William had about five
hundred acres that was actually in the Park. I don't
know weather, .. your husband's name was Arthur?

L.L. Uhhuh. He was Arthur, Jr., he was named after his father.

D.L.: Yea. ... I don't know ... you didn't get a divided half ...
that the Park took half of it?

L.L.: No.

D.L.: That must have been a ...

L.L.: I tell you, there was a Bidler that joined us.

D.L.: A what?

L.L.: A Bidler.

D.L.: Bidler? Uhhuh.

L.L.: Joined us ... one one side ... and the Park took that.

D.L.: Was he a cattle ...

L.L.: Yea. ... Uhhuh.

D.L.: ...man too?

L.L.: Yea. ... Uhhuh. Yes, ... owned cattle.

D.L.: It was up on Tanners Ridge where you had Thomas....

L.L.: Yes, and I had the house and I'll send you a picture of it. Their children were all born up there and they looked after the place. We had a room that we would stay in when we would go up at nights. My husband and I rode horseback up there a many a time and spent the night. And, we just loved ... I liked to go up there to eat her cooking.

D.L.: (Laughing)

L.L.: Now they didn't have anything fine, but her house was papered with newspapers. But she was just as clean and she kept it spotless. But she was really a good cook and she made hoe cake every meal. Do you know what hoe cake is?

D.L.: Yes, it's made out of corn meal.

L.L.: NO!

D.L.: It isn't? Well, I don't then.

L.L.: It's made outIt's made something like biscuits only they made it in a big cake and roll out and bake it in the oven and some people put it on top of the stove in a skillet in a little grease and

D.L.: Made with wheat flour?

L.L.: Yes made with wheat flour.

D.L.: I be darn!

L.L.: But she made that every meal. I thought, I can see her now ... she fixed pork and then she took some of the grease and put in another skillet and cup up raw potatoes and she fixed some ... I don't know, everything just tasted better.

D.L.: Was she cooking that in the fireplace?

L.L.: No, she cooking on

D.L.: Just cooking on an old stove?

L.L.: Stove. It was older than what we usually had down here, uh....

D.L.: That's intrigues me. You know, ... we...we, we... talking about people cooking in the fireplace ... apparently the pioneers generally cooked in the fireplace, but when did they change to stoves. Apparently even up in the mountains they all changed to stoves. ... Nearly all of them were cooking on stoves then.

L.L.: Well now it was before my time and I'm 68.

D.L.: Uhhuh.

L.L.: I guess

D.L.: Maybe 1900 or 1890.....?

L.L.: I would say somewhere along there.

D.L.: They were making stoves here in the valley. Made the iron and made stoves, but that is another story.

(All laughed) Well, this one, to follow up on this.

This arrangement intrigues me. This house belonged to you. I mean it was on your land?

L.L.: Yes, it was our home, our house, yes. And we kept a room especially for us when we wanted to spend the night, but we'd eat with them.

D.L.: Did they pay rent?

L.L.: No. No, they didn't.

D.L.: Did you pay them to work?

L.L.: Well, they never worked but very little for us.

D.L.: So, it was just sort-of a courtesy arrangement?

L.L.: That's right.

D.L.: You didn't have anything in writing?.....

L.L.: No. No.

D.L.: ...saying they could live there? Just that they always had lived there maybe?

L.L.: That's right. I guess this went back ... my ... was probably ... Uh, ... uh, ... Arthur's grandfather, my husband's grandfather's people owned this place and that was Rubin Long. They probably bought it.

D.L.: There must had been a younger Rubin Long because there was a Rubin Long living on the Hawksbill ...

L.L.: Yes.

D.L.: ...not far from here about 30 years ago ...

L.L.: Yes.

D.L.: ...or maybe still does? Although he probably died.

L.L.: No, he's dead.

D.L.: But his son, I think, was one of the Sheriff in the last thirty, forty years? ... Aman worked with me named Ross Benson was often visiting the Longs in the 30s and 40s.

L.L.: There was a Brubaker, kin, close kin, Abe Brubaker, was Sheriff, he was close kin to the Longs.

D.L.: Yea. Can't think of his

L.L.: His mother was a brother to Dr. Long, a sister to Dr. Long.

D.L.: Uhhuh.

L.L.: ~~Ole Dr. Long~~ Now he was Sheriff. Abe Brubaker was his name.

D.L.: Yes. We are taling to Louise Long. This is, what day is tody ... March the ...?

L.L.: Sixteenth.

D.L.: The sixteenth and we are at the old Varner place. You were born here?

L.L.: I was born on the land but not....

D.L.: Not right here...

L.L.: ...in this house.

D.L.: ...in this house?

L.L.: My sister was born here.

D.L.: Yea. This is on the , you speak of this on the Hawksbill?

L.L.: Hawksbill.

D.L.: Yea. We are talking mostly about thier cattle grazing way up on Tanners Ridge next to the Park which is typical of the type of grazing that took place, I guess all along the Blue Ridge Mountain in the pre-park days. Uh, ... and we were earlier talking about the place over in Rappahannock County and go up Rocky Branch and over Beahm's Gap and that was Louise's parents cattle business.

L.L.: Well, they lived at Spinetop. Uhhuh. Spinetop, I don't know why they called it that.

D.L.: But the one on Tanners Ridge was her husband's operation, the Long family. She was just saying they inherited from the ... I mean it came down from the great great grandfather.

L.L.: Of the longs, yes.

D.L.: Of the Longs.

L.L.: Uhhuh.

D.L.: This ... this place, not this place, but the land up there was being used for the cattle way back by ...

L.L.: Oh, yes.

D.L.: ...the great great grandfather?

L.L.: Yea, Uhhuh.

D.L.: How do you suppose you got the meadow up there in the first place? ... Who cleared it and planted it?

L.L.: Well now, that I couldn't tell you. Unless it was some of the Longs.

D.L.: What would you have to do to keep it going?

L.L.: Well, ... now if it was ...

D.L.: Did you have to cut brush?

L.L.: ...if we had to cut brush we would hire people to do that. We would take them from down here and take them up there. We kept ... we did a lot of spraying and we had to keep our fence up.

D.L.: What did you spary, to kill thistles?

L.L.: Yes, thistles. We had to spray for thistles every year or they would just take the place.

D.L.: Even in those old days all those thistles were around?

L.L.: Yes. And, of course, they didn't do too much about keeping up the buildings, they had a barn ... We put the horses in when we ride horseback up there. And later on we had a corral. ... Now, you have been on Tanners Ridge on our place, haven't you?

D.L.: Yes.

L.L.: Alright, ... Uh, ... you probably went by a little log cabin ...

D.L.: We did ... right down there ... We go up there usually go up there to visit ... recently to visit the Glicks.

L.L.: Does this look like it?

D.L.: And ... gee, it could be ...

L.L.: Now, that's ... that's

D.L.: ...is that down in one of the

L.L.: That's right.

D.L.: Yes, down toward the bottom.

L.L.: And across the creek. ... Little creek goes by.

D.L.: Yes, it doesn't look quite like that now, but ...

L.L.: Well, I haven't seen it for years.

D.L.: But there is a

L.L.: I haven't been up there at that little creek for years.

D.L.: ... a long building down there fairly close to a creek.

L.L.: That's right.

D.L.: And they got kind-of a like just below it that they built since you ...

L.L.: Yes, that right. We built that ... No, arrowhead built that lake, they bought it. The people bought our place built that lake.

D.L.: Uhhuh.

L.L.: You're right. The fence goes by that lake.

D.L.: Yes. Yea.

L.L.: So, you know where that is?

D.L.: Well, is that ... that the place where the Thompson's lives?

L.L.: No. ... No.

D.L.: That's another place?

L.L.: Now, that's not the place. You go on about one-half mile further.

D.L.: Higher up?

L.L.: Up, that's right. You go down and then you go up. And, I'll send you a picture of it, if you want it?

D.L.: O.K., I would.

L.L.: As soon as it comes. I sent it away to have a larger one made. My daughter took the big one I had, she liked it. I told her I would get me another one made and I'll let you have this one then.

D.L.: But, what did you do with this log building here?

L.L.: Well now, I guess it is still up there.

D.L.: I mean ... what purpose did it serve?

L.L.: Well, the house ... Well, ... I don't, we really didn't use it for anything much but salt and then we built our corral there and then we took all our cattle there and rode them ...

D.L.: Uhhuh.

L.L.: Separated them.

D.L.: Alright. Now, did the tenant put out salt for you? ... You called them tenants?

L.L.: Yes.

D.L.: Is that what you called them?

L.L.: Yes, I would say so. Yes, they were people.

D.L.: I mean that's what people usually call them, tenants. But a tenant is usually somebody pays you something.

L.L.: Well, not they never paid us anything. They weren't able to.

D.L.: Well, ... this seems to be the custom. Do you suppose there were Thomases there before these Thomases?

L.L.: Probably there...

D.L.: That they had had this cabin for a long time. How did they first get to liver there? I mean ...

D.L.: Well now, I really don't know that. I don't know that, I

never talked to them about it.

D.L.: (Laughed) This puzzles me because I've run into so many cases like this. Apparently they have always lived there and they ... the family raising the cattle always owned the land and

L.L.: These people were there a long time because they were up, I expect, in their eighties when they died.

D.L.: Yes.

L.L.: They had about eight children.

D.L.: The Thomases are old time people on Tanners Ridge and some of them lived as far up in the Park too.

L.L.: I know they had children that lived in the Park.

D.L.: Yes.

L.L.: I know when we would go up there and spend the night and they would find out we were there you would hear them all a'comin over the mountain singing and they would come that night and they would sing. We had a big time.

D.L.: But did they do anything like putting out the salt for the cattle?

L.L.: If we didn't get up there they knew they were to do it. We tried to get up there about every week. If we didn't get up there they would put it out. We always kept a supply. We kept it in a little log building and then we kept some in the barn up where the Thomases lived.

D.L.: How do you put out salt for the cattle?

L.L.: Well, we had salt boxes for years and years ... and they had little tops over them where the cattle could eat out of, but then in later years, you see, they come out with a salt block.

D.L.: I remember.

E.L.: We know about salt blocks, but we don't know about that earlier salt.

L.L.: Well, the earlier was just a plain white salt and there would be little.....

D.L.: Be little grain but ... maybe 1/8 or 1/4 inch across. ... I've seen kind of salt like that, it's not like you'd have in a shaker, be bigger grain.

L.L.: Well, we'd

D.L.: About as big as the end of my finger.

L.L.: No, we had the regular, looked like table salt.

D.L.: Oh, it did!

L.L.: Uhhuh.

D.L.: I be darn.

E.L.: We're thinking of ice cream salt.

L.L.: Yes, that's sound like ice cream salt.

D.L.: Put in ice cream, but we all, but we didn't put it out for cattle because we had rock salt. When I was a kid out West we raised some cattle too.

L.L.: We had just plain white salt. We'd get it in 50 pound bags.

D.DL.: Aaah.

L.L.: We'd always take a lot of that, around 15 or 20 bags and put it in the building.

D.L.: Was you land all fenced?

L.L.: Yes sir.

D.L.: How much acreage did you have up there?

L.L.: Six hundred.

D.L.: Six hundred acres and it was all fenced in. Was

E.L.: What kind of fence did you have? Was it wire fence or ..

L.L.: Well, you can see the old rail fence. You can see some of that up there yet, of course they are not using it, it is all fallen down. We had to put up wire fence because you are not allowed to let things get out on the Park and then, of course, you had people who lived next to you and they had to keep up the fence too.

D.L.: You kept on with the cattle business up there until you sold it to this Skyland Lake.

L.L.: That's right. And we didn't own but about half of that for up until for about ... oh, we bought some of that off of the ...uhhh...I don't know how many years back it has been The Longs didn't own all of it at first. We bought some off of a Mayes and then I think ... Uh, ... what is his name? ... A Price, ... Charlie Price. ... Charlie Price bought it.

D.L.: Uhhuh.

L.L.: Bought part of the Mayes' place. We bought part and he bought part, is the way it was. But when we sold it, we sold it all to Skyland Lakes. They got around six hundred acres.

D.L.: But there was a Bidler.....?

L.L.: I can't think of that Bidler man's name. But I know when we went out, it was two place ... it was a place you could go in on our place. ... I mean a road and then you could drive through and come on out up next to the Park. When we come out we'd have to cross to come up to the Park. We'd come cross a Bidler's land.

D.L.: Did you get married into the Long family just after the Park had been there or?

L.L.: Yes sir.

D.L.: Then you don't know anything about the people displaced by the Park up there? There were Lee Long and there were Brumbacks. There

L.L.: Now, it took their places.

D.L.: Yes. Down further South was Koontz.

L.L.: Right.

D.L.: I don't know how many others, but up North there were a lot of them. Of course, there was Lee Long, I guess a different family of Longs to you.

L.L.: Yes. Yes. The Longs also owned a place over in Madison....
Uh, ... you know where Skyland is?

D.L.: Yes.

L.L.: Right before you go into Skyland, you would come up from like our place right here and cross the road and go back down what they calledahhh...What wassome kind of falls.....

D.L.: White Oak?

L.L.: White Oak Falls.

D.L.: Yes.

L.L.: You went back down over there and the people by the name of ... what was their name.....I thought I'd never....
Corbins. Buck Corbin

D.L.: Oh, that's Throughfare Mountain!

L.L.: Alright now, I read. .. I didn't get the book on the mountain ... I don't know.....on the Skyland.... I don't know who put it out or anything but I did read it.
...a little in it and it had about the place my husband's father owned and it had about Buck Corbin living there.

D.L.: And that was Arthur Long, Sr.?

L.L.: And that was his place too and it took that place but it left this one.

D.L.: Yes.

L.L.: They had two places.

D.L.: Was that a cattle grazing place too?

L.L.: Yea. ... Uhhuh. They had just a small log cabin.

D.L.: How many people could you think of that were running cattle up there on the mountain? And there were... further North from there you were getting close to the Brumbacks. ... I mean Spitler.

L.L.: Spitlers.

D.L.: But there must have been somebody maybe in between. Were they mostly Page County people

L.L.: Yes.

D.L.:were there any Madison County people running cattle?

L.L.: No. ... Don't know anybody from over in Madison, they were all Page County people.

D.L.: Yes. ... Up here now where your Beahm Gap and ~~son~~ on is ...

L.L.: Varner.

D.L.: Varner...did you know anything about a Burrell or a Burrall?

L.L.: No.

D.L.: Who has ...William Burrell had most of that land up what you call Neighbor Mountain now and he had a farm down here at Kimball and when the Park came along he was dead but

SIDE ONE ENDED

L.L.: We had mostly ... we had what you call short horn...
for years and then we started breeding Black Angus.

D.L.: Short horn is red isn't it?

L.L.: Yes. Then we had some Charolais too.

E.L.: They came in later didn't they?

L.L.: Yes. Uhhuh.

E.L.: I thought that was a later breed.

L.L.: But of them long time ago were short horns.

D.L.: Was 600 acres all grass

L.L.: No.

D.L.: ...or was some of it forest?

L.L.: No, a lot of that forest. That was why you'd be cutting
bushes all the time and keeping the land clear as much
as you could. Now it's just all grown up, you couldn't
pasture anything. ... They tell me, I haven't been up
there.

D.L.: No, ... probably not. As soon as the sun is kept off
by the tree ...

L.L.: That's right.

D.L.: ...the grass doesn't grow much.

L.L.: That's right.

D.L.: But you did have lot of bush cutting

L.L.: Yes we did.

D.L.: ... and did you put fertilizer on it or anything?

L.L.: We fertilized ever so many years.

D.L.: Just regular commercial fertilizer?

L.L.: When they could get it on ... it was hard to get fertilize
up there. But they did fertilize some.

D.L.: Lime?

L.L.: Lime, yes. ... Mostly lime. I don't know weather they put too much fertilize ... some, but it's mostly lime is what grew blue grass.

D.L.: Blue grass is what you had?

L.L.: Yes.

D.L.: Mostly blue grass.

L.L.: And we had.....

D.L.: The blue grass started dying out and the crab grass and the oak grass and something coming in why then something was wrong, you'd better put more bertilizer.

L.L.: That's right. Whenever thisAh, ... what you call this whitebroom sage. When that start you better get to work.

D.L.: Yes, ..broomsage, that's a bad sign for sure.

L.L.: And thistles ... you've got to fight thistles all the time.

D.L.: Thistles will come even when it is rich, wouldn't they?

L.L.: That's right, come anytime.

D.L.: But broom sage, it comes when the ground is poor.

L.L.: That's right. Mostly lime it needs.

D.L.: Yes.

L.L.: But we had 3 or 4 nice springs on our place.... and of course, we had one watering trough. Had a tree hulled out. I guess you know all about the blite that killed all the Chestnut trees?

D.L.: I know about the chestnut blite, yes.

L.L.: Ah, we had trees that big around just laying everywhere dead. ... And it really made a good fire. That's what they burnt, all those mountain people lived They

didn't know what it was to buy anything to burn. We let them use all these trees.

D.L.: Uhhuh.

L.L.: What a waste.

D.L.: You'd go up once a week?

L.L.: Yes, we tried to get up there once a week.

D.L.: You never stayed up when the weather was hot down here ... and have a vacation up there a couple of weeks?

L.L.: Oh yes, we went up Oh, we never stayed that long at a time.

D.L.: (Laughed)

L.L.: We had work down here to do and

D.L.: Did you have horses to ride?

L.L.: Yes, we'd ride horses. My husband and I would ride horses up right often and spend the night.

D.L.: Uhhuh. Would you drive the cattle with horses ... or...

L.L.: We did several times.

D.L.: .. you had a truck, you mentioned a pick-up.

L.L.: But we usually went...took them with trucks. His father... drove them, the truck followed along the back.

D.L.: You had 300 cattle?

L.L.: Uhhuh. A lot of calves.

D.L.: Start to say it would be a job to keep them from getting away.

L.L.: Well, it was. We usually ^{took} 2 or 3 to watch people's yards. They would go along on the sides, then we had one aholding them back in the front and of course, we had to have a flagger in the front and back. But, the last year that we took cattle up there we almost caused a couple of

wrecks, they'd come around these turns on this 340 and they wouldn't know there would be cattle around them and they'd have to throw on their brakes. It just got too dangerous.

D.L.: Yea, people kept driving faster and faster.....

L.L.: They did.

D.L.:and the road got more and more improved.

L.L.: We've driven them all the way over to .. in the FTT Valley. We'd take them out to the foot of the mountain on Ed Hershberger's place. He has a place .. he still has ...his son...his daughter lives and we'd leave our cattle there over night and we'd drive them clear to Little Washington the next day.

D.L.: Huh! That goes faster than I would think.

L.L.: And over to . We would drive them over there.

E.L.: I love

D.L.: From morning to about noon you got them up to Tanners Ridge?

L.L.: Got them up to Tanners Ridge.

D.L.: What is it, about 8 miles?

L.L.: Eight or ten miles.

D.L.: Eight or ten miles. Three hundred cattle grazing on what? Three hundred acres of actually ground?

L.L.: I'd say 300 acres, that's about right.

D.L.: About an acre per cow?

L.L.: That's right.

D.L.: And they really put on weight?

L.L.: Oh yes, we didn't have to feed them anything.

D.L.: Then did you sell them?

L.L.: Alright, now they feed them all kind of grain and they get them away in about a year, but we took them up there for three years.

D.: Then at the end of that third year grazing in the fall you would sell them?

L.L.: And sell them and they would really weigh something. They were really nice.

D.L.: Would they be fatten still more before they were butchered? On grain?

L.L.: I expect so, yes. We sold them to buyers that bought .. they were called more of a stocker ... Uh, ... we didn't never feed anything else. Hay through the winter and grass in the summer.

D.L.: Yes.

L.L.: And I believe, we made more money on them than they do today.

D.L.: I bet.

E.L.: That's impressive to someone from the West. How many acres per cow out there?

D.L.: Huh! About twelve. (Laughed)

L.L.: (Laughed) With that it was really good grazing on the mountains, and the cattle did good because it was cool up there and they had all this woods, you know and all to lay in. ... And a, ... stayed cool. They did so much better up there than they do down here.

D.L.: Was the grass better ... was it just that it was cool?

D.L.: The grass was better and it was cooler and they'd eat acrons. And they

D.L.: They went right out in the woods then?

L.L.: Oh, yes.

D.L.: Go through the woods and eat acrons.

L.L.: They stayed in the woods and eat acrons.

D.L.: Well, that would be a lot what they might eat then.

L.L.: In the Fall of the year they eat a lot of acrons.

D.L.: Huh! Would they eat the bark off the trees? (Laughed)

L.L.: No. (Laughed) No.

D.L.: You know down here we.....

E.L.: Cedar trees over here, they ate the bark off them.

L.L.: Oh, my goodness!

D.L.: Yes, about 10 or 12 Cedar trees ... this Smith's farm, you know over there near the town's reservoir.

L.L.: I know, Linda Smith, she just passed away here several weeks ago ...

D.L.: Oh, ... they

L.L.: No, it's been a couple months ago.

D.L.: ...those cattle were in there and I thought those cattle looked like they are eating the bark off those Cedar trees...

L.L.: Oooh!

D.L.: ...we would drive by there to and from town quite often and gradually we realized they really were. They stripped the bark off those Cedar trees clear down to the wood.

L.L.: Probably hadn't been fed much that winter.

E.L.: Well, this was a couple of years ago.

L.L.: It was, I understand.

E.L.:

L.L.: ^{^^}Aaaah!

E.L.: Tell me what you wore when you went on these....

L.L.: Well, just Jeans.

E.L.: You wore jeans.

L.L.: Jeans...I know one Fall of the year...My husband and I went up, it was snowing. ... I don't know why anybody couldn't go with us... and we ~~said~~ we was going to bring the cattle home. So we went up and they were waitingAaah, it was a blizzard, it was just snowing and blowing across the top of that mountain... The cattle were all there at that road, there at the gate ready to come home. They wanted to come home. We opened the gate and we turned them loose. ... I mean they come down off that mountain just flying. It just happened when they got to the foot of the mountain why one of the boys that lived on our place ... one of the Thomases....he happened to be in town and he headed them off at the foot of the mountain and helped us home. We three brought those cattle all the way home. It wasn't much driving to it because they knew where they were going and they wanted to go. But that was about two years before we stopped and sold the place.

D.L.: Yes.

L.L.: But I believe that was the coldest I ever got. Oh, it was a blizzard, just snowing so hard and the wind blowing.

E.L.:

L.L.: Deed, I did, I was wrapped up. (All laughed) But oh, they were good old days, we had good times up there.

D.L.: You had all kind of cattle, I mean were they all steers that you would take up there.....

L.L.: Steers.

D.L.: ...just the steers you took up there?

L.L.: No, we would take the cows up and the steers.

D.L.: Because you said some of the cows got born up there and some were born down here?

L.L.: Yes, we had 300 heads of cows and then that was in later years ... we ... we didn't keep the steers over like that in the last. ... Oh, ten years that we owned the mountain place up there. That was before then when we kept the steers around three years and of course, we had the cows too. We had steers and cows then.

D.L.: Were there any bulls with them?

L.L.: Yes, each one of the boys had a bull.

D.L.: Did you ever have troubles with any of the bulls? Sometimes they are real mean.

L.L.: Not particular. But one time one of the Park people called us and told us to come up on the mountain that one of them had layed down, it was cool and the sun had been shinning on the highway and it was warm, it had made it warm ... and he had layed down in the middle of the road (All laughed) and when we got up there the people thought it was a buffalo. The tourist they didn't know, they never saw much , they never seen cows and we had a time a gettin him up. But you would be surprise the people all standing around with cameras taking his picture, thought he was a buffalo.

D.L.: (Laughed) Yea.

L.L.: We got him off and got him back in the cage

broke out. I don't care how good a fence you have.

D.L.: Oh yes, a bull sometimes get angry can go through anything.

L.L.: That's right. Late in the afternoon.

D.L.: We had two bulls when I was a kid and one of them I could play with. One of them would lie down and I could even sit on top of him and scratch his back and keep the flies off....I was about 55 years old.

L.L.: Yea.

D.L.: Then there was another bull that my Dad wouldn't let me get anywhere near. He was a littler bull ... smaller, a Jersey, it was a dairy bull. But this was a Derman, this was what we call a short horn Derman. The red one, the big one. It was a great big one. The little one was a Jersey one and it was a mean one.

L.L.: Oh, they are mean. The Jersey, the milk breed, they are mean.

D.L.: Yea.

L.L.: We had those down here, Daddy use to have a dairy, and they use to get real mean. But we had several that would go crazy on the way, I don't know what got wrong bringing them home ... and we had two go just crazy and if they'd hit you they'd killed you. We had a time with those.

E.L.: Do you have anything like local weekds that they'd get?

L.L.: No.

"LOCO WEED"

E.L.: Out West they have something like local weekds

L.L.: Yea, I've heard of that.

E.L.: That would make them crazy.

L.L.: We had the lightning, now that was years ago, to strike a tree and kill eleven at one time.

D.L.: Oh gosh! Killed eleven cattle.

L.L.: But, the most that I can remember, that was before I married into the family. But...the most I saw was two, two killed up there.

D.L.: Were the trees just generally a few trees scattered through the area?

L.L.: No. Well, some...then there would be spots where there would be maybe eight or ten acres of woods.

D.L.: Uhhuh. Then more grass than more woods?

L.L.: More grass.

D.L.: Sometimes like in the valley down here in the pasture, they would leave a big tree in the middle of it.

L.L.: That's right. Yes it.....

D.L.: Often times it's a Walnut tree.

L.L.: The picture of a tree I took up there ... My husband you see sort of how it looked, you can see some of the bushes there.

D.L.: Aaah yes, that's nice. I was struck, when I was going through the land files of the Park ... that the best land ... the most expensive land ... that they payed the biggest price for was grazing land. It was cultivated land. There was cultivated land, they raised corn patches and all of that but they pay less for cultivated land than they did for good blue ridge soil.

L.L.: That's right. Well, you see now they have

D.L.: Blue grass soil.

L.L.: ...their feeding lots. Feeding lots and people don't go to pasture like they use to.

D.L.: This kind of operation ... of pasture seperate from the home pastures...nobody does that anymore.

L.L.: There is a few. ✓

D.L.: ~~Driving~~ the cattle from one pasture to another.

L.L.: They don't drive them, but they truck their cattle.

It is several people from Page County takes their cattle over to FT Valley, Madison over that away.

D.L.: Ed Hershberger, did you say he...

L.L.: Well, he has a place at the foot of the mountain. As you start up the mountain., I don't know where...how to tell you.

D.L.: You mean out there on Pass Run?

L.L.: You know where Brookside is?

D.L.: Yea. ... Pass Run.

L.L.: Alright, it is about a half a mile or so up from that to the left ... to the right.

D.L.: Oh, that is Ed Hershberger's place where we count birds?

L.L.: Well now,

D.L.: It is Griffith on the other side?

L.L.: That's right.

D.L.: And ~~over~~..there is a round ridge all bare and

L.L.: Now, that's where we use to

D.L.:sometime we'd see cattle over there on the top of that ridge....

L.L.: That's right.

D.L.: ...we can see it from the Dam on the way up to our place. And you can look over there and you can see cattle silhouettes.

L.L.: ~~That's~~ where we use to leave our cattle when we drove them over the mountain. We would leave them there the night before. We'd take them there in the afternoon and start out with them. It would give us a good start.

D.L.: The Varners ... when doing this...

L.L.: The Longs too. ... We ... we had a place over there too and up there.

D.L.: Oh, you had a place?

L.L.: We didn't have a place, ... we rented land. Benaview, do you know where that is?

D.L.: Sure... it's way over

L.L.: That's right.

D.L.: ...in Rappahannoch beyond Sperryville.

L.L.: Mrs. Lowrey.... a Mrs. Lowrey had a great big home there ...

D.L.: Uhhuh.

L.L.: ...and we rented from here and we rented at Little Washington, and up the FT Valley.

D.L.: What if the bull broke down the fence and the cattle all got out?

L.L.: We had to get them back!

D.L.: How did you find them?

L.L.: Well, weas a rule they didn't go too far or not too many didn't get out at a time.

D.L.: Did you have a mark or brand on your own cattle?

L.L.: Yes, we had a slit in the right and a swallowfork in the left.

D.L.: A slit in the right ear?

L.L.: Uhhuh...and a swallowfork in the left.

D.L.: Shawfork, what is that shaped like?

L.L.: Like this....

D.L.: Swallow tail.

D.L.: Oh, just like the V on the

L.L.: Uhhuh, that's right.

D.L.: Yea.

L.L.: That was our mark and of course, the other all had different brands. ... Nobody had the same brand.

D.L.: Well, if any of them got loose you could tell whose cattle they were.

L.L.: Got out...well, that's the way we had telling whose it was.

D.L.: Yes.

E.L.: You didn't burn them with branding irons?

L.L.: No. No.

D.L.: No, ... that's Did you have anyother stock like hogs? ... You know, in the old days they use to pasture turn a lot of hogs loose in the woods.

L.L.: No, ... we didn't have hogs up there.

D.L.: Horses?

L.L.: Yea, they had horses.

D.L.: Sometimes let

L.L.: They had some horses.

D.L.: ...the horses run up there?

L.L.: Yes.

E.L.: How about the family that lived up there, did they have pigs?

L.L.: Yes, they had pigs. Now, ... but they kept them in a pen most of the time.

D.L.: Uhhuh.

L.L.: If they gotten out a couple times and they'd never found them.

D.L.: I think the Park would have really frowned on that if it was after the Park was there, but of course, they were there long before the Park came.

L.L.: That's right.

D.L.: I've read about cattle rustlers down operating in the Valley.....

L.L.: That's right.

D.L.: ...where people lived.

L.L.: Yes indeed. That Walter Yancey, he had dairy cattle, he lives down below Luray going toward Rileyville...and he counted his, ... I know it was last year and I don't know how many he was short then. So, they do it. ... I think they kill them and then take them out.

D.L.: Yea, I guess that's the way they do alright. Out West the rustlers maybe get a whole bunch of them and drive them.

L.L.: Out there yes.

D.L.: But I think here they

E.L.: Now they do it with those big tractor-trailer trucks.

L.L.: Yea, that's right. ... load them in. Now, we didn't have any problem with that up there.

D.L.: Never had any sheep up there?

L.L.: Uh, ... I think they did years ago... They raised sheep and took them up there. But, that was before We raised them after I was married, but we didn't take them on the mountain. But, I think they have taken sheep on the mountain.

D.L.: Uhhuh. People use to have always heeps when they... before they could buy clothes...in the old days. They had sheep because they needed the wool.....

L.L.: That's right.

D.L.: ...to card and to spin, and make clothes iwth, and blankets.

But I guess that died out too about the time of the Civil War, ... maybe before.

E.L.: Well, when you went up there with your grandfather when you were a little girl....

L.L.: Uhhuh. That's until right before we were married. We owned a place, the Park took it. Whendo you remember what year.....?

D.L.: The Park bought the land ... the State bought the land and paid for it in 1934.

L.L.: Well, we were married.

D.L.: But, they never got it to the Federal Government until the end of 1935. Just after Christmas. ... There was a big Supreme Court case trying to declare all this illegal. And, it went to the U.S. Supreme Court and didn't get declared for about 18 months after the state had bought the land. Finally it was then they presented it to the Federal Government and the Park became a Park in December 26, 1935.

L.L.: I know it was a couple of years before I was ... we were married in 1937 and I knew it was right before that.

E.L.: I'm trying to see you when you were a little girl, when I was a little girl we use to live in the country with a relative in Illinois. My Aunt and I could hardly wait to get over there and borrow some of their bib overalls.

L.L.: Oh yes, we wore bib overalls.

E.L.: We were in our glory when we got into those bib overalls. ... couldn't get us out of them the whole time we were there.

L.L.: I call them jeans, but then really back then they called

them overalls and the bib straps.

D.L.: Suspenders. (Laughed)

L.L.: That's what my husband wore all the time.

D.L.: Had the suspenders crossed in the back and ...

L.L.: Yes indeed!

D.L.:yes, ..you fastened it by this hook....

E.L.: A hook here.

D.L.: ...pull up the bib and fastened to the suspender.

L.L.: That's right.

E.L.: When I was little that was the thing and that came in style again just a few years ago.

L.L.: Yes.

E.L.: You see people running around again in bib overalls.

L.L.: That's right. We have right many farmers, I notice come into the Farm Bureau with them on.

E.L.: But you saw women and girls wearing them then.

L.L.: Yes, we did.

E.L.: Betty and I thought...oh boy, we couldn't wait to get home.

D.L.: She was a grown up girl before she just before she got married she was still doing it over here.

L.L.: Yea. Uhhuh.

E.L.: But, she was when she was a girl.

L.L.: Yes, when we were little too.

D.L.: Yes.

E.L.: Uhhuh.

L.L.: But I went with my grandfather two ... about two to three years before I was married .. over there.

D.L.: Uhhuh.

L.L.: It was the last trip we made ... when they ... we made one

trip after .. it was probably sold then, but they hadn't gone through with ...uh,...all the buying...paying us off and all that. .. We went right before then and that's when we rode in the creek.

D.L.: Somebody by the name of Kindall had grazing land up North of ... Hershberger's.

L.L.: I don't think they were from Page County, were they?

D.L.: May been from Rappahannock.

L.L.: I think they might had been from over in there. ... I did know those people. But, I do know that ~~Bud~~ Hudson did have a place in there too.

D.L.: Hudson?

L.L.: Bud Hudson.

D.L.: Yea. ... South of Page there were a lot of them in the Valley...in Rockingham and from Elkton and Patterson down around Grottoes and there were a whole family of different Patterson had a large amount of grazing land up on top of the Blue Ridge. And, maybe they still do, some, I don't know, It seems like they had the right to drive cattle across at portions of the Park to get to grazing land that was in ~~in~~ Albemarle County. ... But that ...I don't know weather they are still doing it right now, but they were for a long time even after the Park they had this...They somehow got reserved the right to use this. ... I think the Brown Gap road.

E.L.: Uhhuh.

D.L.: And drive cattle over it.

L.L.: Our place went right up to the bottom of the Park.

D.L.: Yes.

E.L.: Your grandfather's land owned in the Park now?

L.L.: Now...you mean my Grandfather's? Well, all that they took all that. ... All that's in the Park now.

E.L.: How did you feel about that? Did you ...

L.L.: Well, ... we didn't like it. ... Of course, we all loved to go up there. ... We didn't like it because we kids, because we liked to go up there. We'd go with the grandfather and his two brothers and now one of them had a daughter and we three girls would go with them. And, we had big times up there.

D.L.: Did you ever see any wild animals then?

L.L.: No, not particular. There were plenty of wild cats up there, but you didn't see them but you could hear them at nights.

D.L.: Yes.

L.L.: Oh, that was dreadful! Scared to death, afraid I would see one.

D.L.: You never seen any bears?

L.L.: Now we have over on our place. Lots of bears when we lived over on Tanners Ridge. We would see bears up there.

D.L.: Did the bears ever bother the cattle?

L.L.: Uh...no. No, ...never did have any trouble with bears. Snakes, it was so many. We had one...it was called,..

Rattlesnake Cliff, we called it. ... I don't know who bought it, I pity them the ones that did. You could hear them just laying out on this big knoll, it was rocky...

and you could hear them just singing all the time. You know that rattling?

D.L.: Yes.

L.L.: And my husband would go up therw ith his gun and shoot them and I would say, "Oh, don;t" and he would say, "Ah, come here, let me show you this one". You could walk up there and uh, he could look down in each rock and they would be down in there. ... Uuh,...they'c be just be singing and scare me nearly to death.

D.L.: That must be one of th dens where they spend the winter?

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L.L.: It was.. and it was..sort of a little cave like...and it was rocky....and a lot of rocks with some grass over it but yet they would be laying just all over it.

E.L.: Uuh.

L.L.: And I said, I'd really hate to be the one who bought that. You know they sold them in lots. To buy that. You could go up there anytime and see them.

E.L.: Do you remember what time of year that was?

L.L.: in the summer.

E.L.: Summertime...would it be late summer maybe?

L.L.: Anytime during the summer.

D.L.:

L.L.: We would go up usually the third of April to the fifth and we bring them off...we'd usually wait until the winter got real bad...usually until the first snow. We'd go after them in the Fall.

D.L.: Yea. Those snakes would be gathering there in October... maybe even the end of September they would be getting together but they wouldn't be coming out until about May. So both the coming out and the going in would be the time you would be up there.

L.L.: They would be there all summer. I know they shot one one

time and it was 15 of those snakes in this ole snake that run out.

D.L.: (Laughed)

L.L.: And they tell me it is enough poison in one of those little ones to kill you. But all the time that the men went up there and hunted cattle and all, I don't think not one was ever biten. But they really seen some bad ones.

D.L.: putting bells on the cows were

L.L.: Yes, we use to....Oh, yes, ..years ago had bells on them.

E.L.: But....

D.L.: Just put bells on a few?

L.L.: On....yes, just a few. They wouldn't put them on a whole bunch, just several. And because that was a lot of land to go over when you were hunting them and usually we made a count on them right often, because of calving all... You know, they would always go off in the woods somewhere to themselves. And a lot of times they would have trouble and we have found them dead, found their calves.

D.L.: When Skyline Drive was built. You know Skyline Drive was built before the Park ever became ... about four years ahead of the Park ... and Hoover financed this. Well, he got together the money to start building the Skyline Drive because it was a depression and everybody...not everybody, ... a lot of people was layed off and he had to give them work... tried to and that's one thing he did and it's a local example here. ... But, anyway, they got quite a bit of that done like from Panorama to Crestland Rock or either all the way to Swift Run Gap and they still hadn't

bought the land and make a Park. So, it wasn't no Rangers, so for quite a while they had the Skyline

Drive with gates. ... It wasn't really wide open to the public but a lot of people were using it anyway, mostly construction people and others. But, for awhile they did have it open for the public when they had gates. They had to have gate people there when they went across somebody's fence they had to have somebody to close the gate because the people generally wouldn'd do it and they had a gate keeper to be sure to close the gate because cattle was all over that thing from ... well, not quite from Panorama, there weren't any right on Mary's Rock because it is so steep and rugged. But, immediatelly South of Mary's Rock it gets to widen out and will be grass and from there clear to Swift Run, I think, and of course sesume again after you get past that steep mountain ...High Top or whatever, and more down there, but the gate keepers. One of the first thing I ever knew when I came out here from Washington... was I got acquainted with some of these gate keepers.

There was one man... Delon Taylor, he was about ...

L.L.: I knew him. ... I knew him.

D.L.: /...around Crestland Rock, ... and he had a uniform of some kind. I think it was a ban leaders uniform or or something....

L.L.: (Laughing)

D.L.: ...it wasn't a gate keepers'...he was all fancy. He impressed everybody that came along. He was a gate keeper. The ideal, the whole ideal and need for these gates were cattle...it was just lots of them. I wonder

if you have any ideal ... if you could give this a wild estimate of how many cattle were probably grazed, ... say like from Panorama to Swift Run Gap. Make a wild guess to how many heads were on that mountain in the summer.

L.L.: Oh, mY!

D.L.: If you had 300, ther must have been at least 20 more people that had large.

L.L.: I would thin so, that right it would be at least 20.

D.L.: That would make 6,000.

L.L.: Yes. Oh, it was ever bit of that, I imagine, grazed up there.

D.L.: Then of course there were some horses...

L.L.: Oh, yes.

D.L.: ..up Panorama and ... I don't know....I can think of 6 or 7 people had them up there but maybe there were a lot more. I...I just don't know...but I know there's a lot more in the South distance and there were probably... it might be a wild crazy estimate to say there could have been as many as 15,000.

L.L.: I don't think so.

D.L.: ...cattle grazing each summer.

L.L.: I thin that would be...

D.L.: Somewhere near that.

L.L.: ...somewhere near that.

D.L.: Yes. Just wondering how big a thing this is ... We... we..you know when the Park was being created there was quite a lot of talk about the cattle people. But since ...we..we talk about mountain people who lived in old

tumble down cabins, but nobody says anything about the cattle.

L.L.: The cattle....

D.L.: And I don't know why that is.

L.L.: They have forgotten about the cattle. (Laughing)

D.L.: It's at least as important "History" and it involves a lot more land.

L.L.: That's right, sure did.

D.L.: It's a lot more money. Lot more investment.

L.L.: Speaking of the Park ... My father furnished Skyland for, I reckon for ten ... vegetables, milk, all the butter, and cream. ~~and~~ we were kids, we would ride horseback and he had saddle bags and he would put the cream in bottles, half gallon bottles...glass bottles ...two to a saddle bag and pack them. And we would ride up there and make sometimes as many as two trips a day.

D.L.: From the farm here?

L.L.: Uhhuh. Known as Skyline Dairy, Daddy's dairy was. We furnished milk up there...went horseback and drove buck boards and spring wagons,...that's the way we went. We'd go up to the foot of the mountain and there was people known as Emerson's Stables.

D.L.: Yea. ... Yea.

L.L.: Alright. Then they would ... of course they would take... people would ride horseback up there and after the road went through that all, you know, fell apart...Then they went by car. But, he use to take them all up horseback... Emerson's.

D.L.: Yea.

- D.L.: Or either on a buckboard or something like that.
But anyway, ... Daddy I know...then we got a coup...
a little Coup that had no windows or anything, and that's
the way we took our milk up there for years.
- E.L.: Was that the Red Gate road?
- L.L.: No...the Red Gate road
- D.L.: No...No,..that's the Skyland road.
- L.L.: No..this was the Skyland road.
- E.L.: We went up it that time we
- D.L.: Yea. ...in the ice, we went up that Skyland road, but
we been up
- L.L.: This was the old road the horses went up.
- E.L.: Yea.
- L.L.: Did you know Sam Sours? Sam Sours use to always carry
Pollick's mail. Uhhuh. ... I guess that is our neighbor's
father. ... Worked up there...I don't know weather he
carried the mail, but he was up there and had a lot to
do with Skyland. He lives next door and his father was
one of the best workers, I reckon they had up there.
- D.L.: How big a pasture did you have down here for the cattle
during the winter, of course they ... you fed them hay
I guess.
- L.L.: Well, it's about 165 in this farm here.....
- D.L.: This farm.
- L.L.: ...And, ... there's about...of course some of it's crop
land. ... I imagine out of the 165 we had around 75...
grazing.
- D.L.: But these...well, you wouldn't have..... Sure you would,
if you were keeping these same, you would have 300 cattle
here but ... everyonce in awhile you sold them.

L.L.: Well, this is my Mother's, but up there where I lived we had...we didn't have ... three each one of the boys had 100 head of breeding cattle. ... stock and then of course we had calves and then years ago they had the steers too. ... Of course, in later years they do like they do now, why they keep them about a year and fatten them and they are gone.

D.L.: Yea. ... Do you remember what price you were getting for cattle about when ... Say 10 or 15 years ago. ... What was it you clear?

L.L.: Uh, ... we was....

D.L.: Was it 10 or 12 years ago?

L.L.: Uh, ... if we was getting 30 cents or something like that and now you get double.

D.L.: Yea.

L.L.: And I have an old book of my grandfather's where they got 2 or 3 cents a pound...for their cattle.

D.L.: Of course, ... you could buy something with 2 or 3 cents (Laughed) in those days.

L.L.: Yes, ... in those days. But, then they didn't have anymore money than what people have now. ... I mean ... Uh,....

E.L.: Went just as far.

L.L.: That's right.

E.L.: You made less, but it went just as far.

L.L.: Just as far...that's right.

D.L.: Well...anybody got any other questions?

E.L.: I had somethingbut, I forgot.

D.L.: I just been surprised after getting into this that ... practically cattle was one of the first things ... one of

the very first things they did even as early as they started raising tobacco in Virginia, they started raising cattle. In large enough numbers to ship. And they'd salt...they had to salt it down and put it in barrels, Shipped it to England or somewhere or ship it to the West Indies Islands. ... There was a Commercial Beef operation here way back in the 1600s. And, when they began to finally to get over here where the mountains were it turned out the mountains, the Appalachians were the great cattle area of the whole United States for many...many years. Long before Texas,...and all that... Virginia had the most cattle of all.

L.L.: Goodness sakes, I didn't know that!

D.L.: Until Texas came along and got more.

L.L.: (Laughing)

D.L.: Well, Uh...

E.L.: What did you do up there when you went up with the cattle, did you sometime pick berries and that type of things?

L.L.: ~~We~~ We have done that. ... And in the Spring when we take ~~the~~ the cattle up ... one of the main thing was.... Have you ever heard of a merkel? It's a mushroom.

E.L.: Oh, yes!

D.L.: Oh my, yes.

L.L.: Alright now, that's what we would do after we saw that the cattle were all in and we had our lunch, then we all went merkel hunting. And, they were a little later up there, you see it's colder.

E.L.: Yea.

D.L.: Uhhuh.

L.L.: And it was just the time we took our cattle and we'd hunt those and we thought we had the biggest time.

D.L.: Would they be out in the grass or in the woods?

L.L.: Mostly in the woods. All the time you find them out much in the grass is under a apple, ... a old apple tree.

E.L.: Yea.

L.L.: And they are the big white one grows under those.

D.L.: Yea.

E.L.: They come later than the little brown one?

L.L.: Uhhuh, yes they do. Then you go down where it is damp and cool and close to a spring and oh, you get the nicest ones up there. ... We'd get a couple of gallons.

E.L.: Well, what did you do with them? ... Did you bring them back her or

L.L.: Bring them back here.....

E.L.: ...did Mrs. Thompson cook them for you?

L.L.:give them around. What did you say?

E.L.: Did Mrs. Thompson cook them up for you?

D.L.: Thomas.

L.L.: Mrs. Thomas? No, we'd bring them home. ... Give them around to people and then we

E.L.: Did you freeze them? You can freeze them. Did you ever dry them?

L.L.: No, I never did dry them.

E.L.: They dry nicely.

L.L.: Oh, they do? I didn't know that.

E.L.: Do you hunt them now days?

L.L.: We haven't for a year or two. Now, my sister, I guess you

know, owns up there close to you all?

D.L.: Yes. ... Yes.

L.L.: Now, we find a lot up there. That's the last time I been looking for them, about two years ago we went up there. Two or three years ago, I'd say.

D.L.: Up there on that place that Virginia Spitler sold to the Baughers...to the Huntley, that was part of the old Mussleman's place?

L.L.: Yes.

D.L.: They divided it up, Earl and Dorothy got one half and ...

L.L.: Uhhuh, and Pearl got the other.

D.L.: Pear Spitler who married

L.L.: Clark.

D.L.: Clark Spitler got the other half. They sold this place to the Huntley. ... Well, they were building this house and the contractor came and said, "Hey, do you see any mushrooms down here?" I said, "No, they haven't seen any but!.. . He said "Well, I got..." What was it, two bags full? Right off the site where he was building the house. (Laughed)

L.L.: (Laughed)

D.L.: They hadn't stired it up much yet but UH,...well, you know, it was a real good year for them.

L.L.: She told me...Mrs. Huntley, you say ...

D.L.: Yea.

L.L.: ...called right before you all came hunting Dot...and I told her she wasn't here. Well, she said to tell her I'm going to leave if they come in tell them we are going to leave about 5:30 and they wanted them to come up, said they

would call her next weekto come up.

E.L.: in today, the water is over the bridge.

L.L.: Oh, Goodness!

E.L.: The road was washed out so bad from that November storm. ... So, they parked up there and walked in.

L.L.: Dot says they have a beautiful place up there. ... I been up there, I've never been in... but we use to go up there and spend a week at a time. ... And cook out... outside. ... After we were married, a bunch of us all would go up there and have the best time. Right where that house was built...it was an old chimney standing.

E.L.: Yep, it's still there.

L.L.: It is still there? And it was an ole house. ... We cooked outside, made a rock place ...

E.L.: They still do that.

D.L.: The basement is there, the chimney is there, and the rock wall basement is still there.....

L.L.: Still there..... Uhhuh.

D.L.: ...the rest of the house is gone.

E.L.: Fell down. But, several years before they built that place, they'd take sleeping bags up there, keep them in their car ...

L.L.: Uhhuh.

E.L.:and they cooked out. They had a nice little place to cook and finally they brought in a little barn and they kept their camping stuff there.....

L.L.: Uhhuh.

E.L.: ...and just camped up there before the built their house. They loved to do that.

L.L.: Oh, I loved it up there. I tried to get that. I said, Dot, we ought to fix us a little cabin up there. But, we are getting too old now.

E.L.: Oh, no! You can go on.

L.L.: I love it up in there.

E.L.: Yes, it's nive.

D.L.: Well, we sure appreciate this.

L.L.: Well, it's not much, but...glad to be any help. (Laughed)

D.L.: Well, it's a lot of facts and lots of understanding.

I've done a lot of research into the cattle industry and I find that there were a whole bulletin....

there was a bulletin from the Department of Agriculture about the special characterists of the pasture on the mountains. ... Just why I...I don't still understand why it is so much richer...but apparently it is richer, facts.

L.L.: It certainly must be.

D.L.: They say on the Appalachians generally they didn't speak of this section of the Blue Ridge particularly...but the mountain grass, the mountain bluegrass...it's got to be blue grass.

L.L.: Well, I think... Well, I tell you this and I know it is the truth. The cabbages and potatoes, everything you eat up there is as sweeter and better than down here. Now, I know that.

D.L.: Yes.

L.L.: They have the best rhubarb...and their bean and everything taste better up there. Now, I don't know why, but it just taste better.