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(SNP095) Magdalene Mooney interviewed by Gloria Updike

Magdalene Mooney

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Interview with Magdelene Mooney
Part of the Shenandoah National Park Oral History Collection, SdArch SNP-095
(formerly SC# 4030)

Interview conducted at Unknown Location
By Nancy Smith on February 17, 1999

Transcribed by Tiffany Cole, July 2010

Key

[GU:] Interviewer, Gloria Updike

[MM:] Interviewee, Magdelene Mooney

[Notes regarding transcription technique]

[*unintelligible*] Unable to understand more than one word

_____ (??) Transcriber's best guess

— Speaker makes abrupt change in sentence

Refer to the Baylor University Style Guide for consistency in transcription

Total interview length: 00:57:59 min.

[Begin audio file, 00:00:01 min.]

Magdelene Mooney: Should I use my middle, my name Simonpietri would ring a bell better up there.

Gloria Updike: Okay.

MM: Just say Magdelene Simonpietri Mooney.

GU: Okay.

MM: Or is that too long?

GU: That's fine, that's fine.

MM: Okay.

GU: This is, let me see, this is Wednesday, February 17th, 1999 and this is Gloria Updike, the interviewer. Is it Madeline or—

MM: Magdelene.

GU: Magdelene. Okay. Magdelene Simonpietri Mooney. Right. And you worked up at Skyland for a number of years.

MM: '33, '34, and '35.

GU: So for about three seasons?

MM: Right.

GU: But you were in there in the winter too?

MM: My brother, Gus Simonpietri, and myself, Mr. Pollock said if we'd like we could take Heaton Cabin and operate it during the winter months. Keep an eye on the property and so forth. So we decided we'd like to try it. I did whatever cooking had to be done for whatever guests we'd like to come up on weekends. We did that through the winter months until the Skyland opened which I think it was May.

GU: Opened for the season?

MM: Opened for the season in May.

GU: And you said some of 'em would go skiing?

MM: Some would go skiing. Some would be writing books. What they would like to do would be to sit by the fireplace after they'd been outdoors for several hours. They wanted something to eat when they came in and they loved to sit by the fireplace and get warm and continue on writing their notes or whatever they wanted to do.

GU: Right. And you were telling me some of the jobs you did up at Skyland.

MM: I was cashier for the dining room. I had to be in there for breakfast, for the middle day meal, and for the evening meal. And I also did taking care of the thirty-six bungalows to see that they were in readiness for whatever guests came. And in that section of the job I had approximately eight maids that I supervised.

GU: Now what about the people who built their own, who owned their cabins?

MM: The cabins when Mr. Pollock first started out up there as I understood it, they used tents. They had to come up the back trail from Luray. There was no Skyline Drive at that time and there was a telephone on a pole at the bottom of the mountain there that if you wanted to go up to get to the top of Skyland, you had to ring that telephone and alert the person up at the top that you were coming up because only horses could go up and down that trail. And there could not be a horse coming down and a horse going up at the same time.

GU: Oh, because it was too, they would run into each other.

MM: It was too narrow and too steep. Absolutely.

GU: Okay, okay. I often wondered about that. Okay.

MM: Scary.

GU: Right, right. So the people who owned their own cabins, did they have maids or—

MM: I don't recall that part of it, but Mr. Pollock told me the story on that was say for instance Heaton Cabin was named after Dr. Heaton.

GU: Right.

MM: These people came in from Northern Virginia and were friends of his. And they, after the tent ordeal, they started building their own cabins. And Appledore was named after Appledore family. Craig was named after Craig family. Heaton was named after Dr. Heaton and so forth.

GU: Right, okay. Now you were telling me a little bit about Addie Pollock.

MM: Mrs. Pollock in the days that I knew her she was an extremely private person. She was very quiet, lovely mannered. I did not get to see and talk with her a great deal like I would have liked to have. Frankly I was too busy. I would see her walking in the mornings on the different campus of the Skyland Hotel. She had a friend with her that, in some religious order?

GU: Yeah, but the Swami, I think they called them the Swami at some point.

MM: I don't know what they're called. At that time I just don't remember. But he was always the lead person when they were walking.

GU: You were telling me he walked a little in front of her?

MM: A little in front of her. And that's what I mean when I said he was the lead person.

GU: Right. So they just went for walks or they—

MM: Just for walks and meditation.

GU: Oh, they meditated?

MM: Meditated.

GU: In the gardens or somewhere?

MM: Most were around the campus that I could see. And they held a book in their hand which they used for that meditation I guess.

GU: Oh, okay. That's interesting.

MM: Now Mr. Pollock was much more active because he loved to ride his horse and use his bugle. And he had a lot of newlyweds that would come up for the weekends and many of the cabins were mainly for newlyweds. And Mr. Pollock always got a big kick out of getting on his horse bright and early in the morning with his little dog Ming Toy following him. And he'd start blowing the bugle right at the cabin that the newlyweds were in to wake 'em up.

GU: (laughs) I take it they didn't appreciate that a whole lot.

MM: Not at all, not at all. Because some of 'em would come in to me at the cash register and say, "Who was that guy makin' all that racket this morning?" I says, "Shh, that's Mr. G. Freeman Pollock himself, the owner." "Oh." And that was it.

GU: And then they couldn't say too much I guess. (laughs)

MM: [unintelligible]

GU: Right, right.

MM: What's next?

GU: Okay, well you were telling me about the time Mrs. Pollock called you to come to her home in the city.

MM: After my marriage, when I left Skyland, I went into nursing. Private duty nursing. I was at this particular time at my brother's home in Bethesda, Maryland taking care of a newly born baby. It was their first child. When I got this phone call it was from Mrs. Pollock herself. And I was surprised to hear from her because I didn't know that she knew where I was. She had checked with my oldest brother in Front Royal which was Gus Simonpietri as to where I might be and told her that I was nursing in Bethesda, Maryland at my brother's home. So she got the phone number and she called me. And when I talked to her she wanted me to come see her. She needed to talk to me about some private business. I will send my chauffeur and my car for you so you name the day that you can come which I did. And I was taken over to her home and we had a lengthy conversation. She served me tea and what she wanted with me is to let me know that her health was failing. And that she would like very much to have me come and take care of her. Nurse her. I could not leave the case I was on, but I was to get in touch with her when I could. Unfortunately she expired before I could get to her.

GU: Right, right. Wow. You were telling me about her house.

MM: Her home in Bethesda, Maryland, she had several rooms and to my recalling, each room that she showed me was carried out in the country she had visited.

GU: Right. The decorating scheme?

MM: Decorations of vases, pictures, carpeting, draperies, furniture. Perfectly beautiful. I thought I was in some museum. That's the way I looked at it.

GU: Do you remember any of the countries?

MM: India, South America, Germany, France.

GU: So it wasn't just Europe then?

MM: No, no. Quite a variety. And I only wish I could remember more.

GU: Right

MM: Mrs. Pollock quite a lovely person, soft spoken, clear thinking, my estimation—most attractive.

GU: Do you have any sense of what her lifestyle was like?

MM: Well as I've said before she was a very private person and she never made a scene of anything. I never recall her even raising her voice about anything.

GU: And was it pretty well known at Skyland that she financed some of her husband's projects?

MM: I think so. She had several relatives that lived up there at Skyland and worked there such as—

GU: Oh, okay, right.

MM: I presume you know about that.

GU: Wally Dyer.

MM: Wally Dyer and his brother. It seemed to me that there was a cousin and her son. There could have been other people, but I never came in contact with 'em.

GU: Right, right. Did you know anything about her first marriage? I think it was to a Mr. Hunter and they also had a cabin up there.

MM: I didn't know that.

GU: Oh, okay. I hope I'm not stealing any family secrets. (laughs)

MM: No. There again I say she's a very private person.

GU: So she probably didn't talk about that kind of thing.

MM: Not to me.

GU: Okay, okay.

MM: That's one place that messages did not get misconstrued. Skyland.

GU: How's that?

MM: I mean somebody said, "So and so" or something like that.

GU: So I'm not quite following you. Are you saying that—

MM: It was not a gossip place.

GU: Well okay, okay. That's what I was wondering.

MM: Did that help you? (laughs)

GU: Yes, yes, okay. (laughs)

MM: What you did was your own business.

GU: Okay, right. Well some people have theorized that sometimes there might be a scandal going on or something like that, but did that happen very often or did people talk about it if it did?

MM: No. The earlier days when there were people living up there in I guess the wooded area sections that were wild and wooly. There was one character, I do not recall is name, but he looked like a giant. And you never saw him clean shaved or in clean overalls or anything like that. He was always like he'd been, what do you wanna say? "Redneck."

GU: Okay.

MM: Choppin' wood, that sort of thing. He was very, very rough. And he had the idea that he was giant of the mountain?

GU: Was that Mr. Nicholson, maybe?

MM: Got me again.

GU: (laughs) Okay.

MM: But, now my brother had opened up also a small little place in the cottage that there was one window would raise up. And he carried tobaccos, cigarettes, chewing

gum, ball candy, things like that. And this guy would come up to that window and ask for his chewing tobacco such as apple or mule. He would call my brother Mitta Gus. (impersonating speech impediment) There was sort of an impediment in his speech. And on one occasion my brother had left Skyland to go to Richmond and he said, "Now if he comes up to that window and wants tobacco, he will never offer to pay for anything. So I'm telling you kid sister, don't you argue with him. We just don't trust him. He thinks he's the king of the mountain. So if he wants apple tobacco, give it to him. Say, 'Okay, what else can I do for you?'" And that was that.

GU: So you kinda gave it to him for free just so you wouldn't—

MM: Get rid of him.

GU: Just to get rid of him.

MM: And no worries. Also I had been advised by Mr. Pollock that to be on the alert. I mean stay clear of him.

GU: Right, okay.

MM: So perhaps that's what you're speaking of. There were people up there that you just really want to trust. I mean this was with the woodsmen.

GU: Right, right. So you knew of some of the people living nearby certainly?

MM: Oh yeah.

GU: And it sounds like some of them would come over to the gift shop to buy some things.

MM: Most of the gift shop business was not started until the Skyline Drive opened. See that is why Gus had his little shop inside the cottage at that time because it meant they had to go down into Luray to get things like that, chewing gum or candy bars or cigarettes and so forth. And he did it for mere convenience. Well the word I guess got around that you could go up here to this little window and you can get, if you want candy or cigarettes or tobacco or films or something like that you can get it right there. So it was done for mere convenience.

GU: Right. Without running down to Luray.

MM: Right.

GU: Right, okay. Do you know anything about Addie's education? I've heard she was more well-educated.

MM: No, but I would say that frankly she must had one, a well-educated person. And I've been told all along she was a very wealthy person. But she was wise.

GU: Wise?

MM: Absolutely. Very, she was very intelligent.

GU: Knew what was going on?

MM: Absolutely.

GU: And what about her travels? Do you know anything about her travels? I guess that was mostly when she was younger?

MM: Younger.

GU: She didn't travel so much when she was married?

MM: No, when I got to know her in '33 and '34 and '35 I think I said before that she was quiet, well-mannered, very private, all of this must have taken place before that. Her travels.

GU: Right, okay. Do you know anything about Addie or any of the women, I was wondering if there was any interest in some of the women's issues of the day. I was thinking an earlier period with women's voting and that sort of thing. But of course you were there after that.

MM: Now this was more or less a place for pleasure, good times, horseback riding. Weekends Mr. Pollock entertained beautifully by having all of his guests and after dinner in the evening he would announce that we're gonna have a bonfire outside and later on we'll have music and have a wonderful time. And the men that served in the dining room were waiters, well professional type. They had one head waiter who was an extremely nice person. These were all black people. Well-mannered and gave wonderful, good service. And they at the end of the dinner evening hour, they would come outside and get this fire built up like a pyramid more or less. Somebody'd strike a match. Then the fun would start. And we had the music that would come up from Luray. We had plenty of food and roast weenies or whatever. Mr. Pollock was right in with everybody. Be sure everybody had a good time.

GU: For sure they had a good time; I've heard that. Ohh. (laughs) A little moonshine? Is that how— (laughs)

MM: A little moonshine. (laughs) Give'em the spirit.

GU: Uh huh. I assume that was always could be had at Skyland? You could find moonshine?

MM: Oh sure. I imagine there were a lot of people back in those woods that could make it, too.

GU: I've read that brandy was his favorite.

MM: Mr. Pollock's?

GU: Mr. Pollock's.

MM: He had a lot of favorites.

GU: (laughs) Oh, a lot of favorites. Okay. Let's see.

MM: He also had the largest, either the largest or the next to the largest collection of beer steins in the world. He was very, very proud of it. And as the guests would come they'd parade around in the dining room and he would give 'em a history of those beer steins.

GU: You were telling me about the little friend, the little visitor one day.

MM: Oh, one evening at dinner hour everybody was, the dining room would seat 125. The dining room was packed and Mr. Pollock was at his table plus his little Ming Toy dog sitting in the chair. Sitting like this (reenacts dog sitting in the chair). And he yells out, "Look out, there comes Minnie the Moochie out." It was a rat.

GU: In the rafters with the beer steins?

MM: In the rafters where the beer, and he was worried more concerned about the knocking down one of those beer mugs than he was anything else.

GU: Right, right. So it didn't knock the mugs over?

MM: No, no. Minnie took off. He screamed.

GU: He must have seen it before if he gave it a name. (laughs)

MM: Yes he did. Gave it a name. (laughs) And he screamed his, "Ohh!" Did that. He could be very loud sometimes.

GU: Yeah, okay. Now you mentioned that he and Addie sat at separate tables in the dining hall, is that right?

MM: They were separate. Yes. They lived in separate cabins and separate meal time.

GU: So did they sit down to eat with their friends or—

MM: I don't recall of seeing her in the dining hall eating.

GU: Oh, she didn't come to the dining room much at all?

MM: I don't think so unless she came in when other people weren't in there. But during the time I was in the dining room as cashier, I don't recall seeing her in the dining room. Mr. Pollock had his private table and a chair for his dog.

GU: (laughs) Okay, okay.

MM: Now you could go over and have a seat at his table and he'd be glad to have you. In fact sometimes he would invite you over and could have a nice conversation with him.

GU: Right, right. Now let's see. Did you know any of the other women who came up to Skyland? Any of the cabin owners?

MM: No. I think a lot of 'em must have passed away at the time that I entered up there.

GU: Oh, they had already built cabins and passed away?

MM: Oh, yes. Yeah they had been—

GU: By the thirties?

MM: A lot 'em. Because I never heard, well when I would take names for people that would wanna come up like reservations. We would like a cabin and it would be two in the party or three in the party or whatever. None of those names were familiar to me.

GU: So a lot of those cabins where the person had passed away then he would use it as a rental cabin.

MM: Absolutely.

GU: Okay.

MM: It stayed right there with the property whether there was a cash settlement between Pollock and the owner I know nothing about that. But the cabins kept their names such as Dr. Heaton and so forth.

GU: Even after the person passed away?

MM: Yes.

GU: You were telling me about the honeymoon cabin up there.

MM: Oh yeah. There was approximately several of them.

GU: Several?

MM: Uh huh. Several of the cabins were used for honeymoons. That was a real popular place for honeymooners.

GU: And you mentioned about your own honeymoon up there. You had one of the cabins?

MM: Yes. I had a cabin and Mr. and Mrs. Pollock, the cabin that I was in was he told me he said, "I want you to live in that cabin as a wedding gift from Mrs. Pollock and myself. And we want you to enjoy it. And all you will have to be responsible for during the off months when the other guests haven't come in is just to buy your food."

GU: So you lived there or you were just there for your honeymoon?

MM: I lived there practically the year round. I was in there when it was real, real cold weather. In fact it got so cold up there on one occasion that I had to go live with my parents. It was just too cold.

GU: Okay. So you were there almost year round then?

MM: Mm hm.

GU: Oh, okay. And they paid for everything?

MM: Now to show you how cold some of the nights were, the breath on your blanket, like around?

GU: Uh huh.

MM: You'd wake up and it was crusty from your breath like it was—

GU: On your blanket?

MM: Yeah! It was cold.

GU: So you had a fireplace?

MM: A fireplace to heat with and that's it.

GU: Uh huh, right. But if you had a bedroom in the cabin there was no fireplace in there?

MM: Just the one fireplace in the living room. And the pipes would run through that and when you built your fire, the heat from that fireplace would heat your water for your bathing.

GU: Right, right. Now was your cabin one of 'em along the edge of the plateau, along the edge of the cliff? Or was it back a little bit?

MM: It was, I might say closer to the dining room.

GU: Closer to the dining room, okay.

MM: See all of this is been in the past and I was up there in '94 for Mr. Pollock's big day celebration. And saw Wally Dyer plus a few of the women that had worked up there and we chatted and renewed knowing each other all these years. But as for remembering all the names, it's a little difficult.

GU: Right. You were telling me some of the things you used to do at Skyland with the, some of the different jobs you had at Skyland.

MM: Well, cashier. I assisted Wally in the post office. Many times we'd take horseback riding parties out. We'd leave early in the morning, sometimes when it was just a heavy fog, but we'd have our lunch packed in the kitchen and take our lunches with us and spend many hours. White Oak Canyon and the different trails. Very, very interesting. I learned to drive, to ride horses much better than I did when I first went up there. Oh, you'd better know, at least the horse had more sense than you did.

GU: (laughs) Uh huh.

MM: Which is very, very true. The horses really knew their trails.

GU: Right. Even though you went to a lot of different places.

MM: Now the horses came from Luray up to the mountain. And Mr. Pollock would rent the horses, but each rider had to pay for their horse that they used.

GU: When they went out on a ride?

MM: Mm hm.

GU: Okay. That's pretty much like that today.

MM: I think so.

GU: Just about the same system. Do you remember in the 1930s a social worker named Miriam Sizer came out and stayed at Skyland and worked with some of the families down in the hollows nearby?

MM: Oh, in the hollows?

GU: Do you remember her at all?

MM: I can't say that I do, but what I had heard about when the government came through to take over, there were so many families and I think they were frightened knowing they had to leave, leave that mountain and go down in the Valley. Some settled in Madison, some in Luray, and various places. And rebuilt their lives—

[tape break 00:31:13]

GU: I think we're all set.

MM: When I first went up Skyland, first time I ever, I had heard about it, but I had never been up there. And my brother Gus said, "Today we leave the car down at the bottom of the mountain. We phone up to see if anybody's coming down." Which all of this was new to me. "What do you mean we're going the mountain? You mean we're going up what I'm looking at?" "Yes. We go up single line. You can't go up two by two. You go up single and when you get up the top of the mountain, before you can come down you have to call down to see if somebody wants to come up."

GU: So there'd be somebody stationed at the top and bottom?

MM: No. You yourself. You test the phone; if they answered down there and they said, "Yes, we wanna come up." "Well you're just gonna have to wait till we come down."

GU: Okay, okay, right. Was it pretty steep?

MM: Very steep, very steep. The horses really knew that trail.

GU: So you rode horses up? Okay. And even with the horses it wasn't hardly wide enough for two side by side.

MM: And then when the Skyline Drive, when they started that, it was a lot of blasting and so forth going on. Quite noisy. But I remember one occasion when the Drive was open to the public, I was still cashier in the dining room and there was a door on each side of my cash register that opened. And people were coming in that door like crazy. Asking all kinds of questions and I lost my voice. I finally had to put up a sign, "No voice." That particular time people wanted something to eat in that dining room and we had served, we were out of all kinds of drinks, we were out of ham biscuits, we were out of food period. It was exhausted from the tourists.

GU: Coming on the Skyline Drive?

MM: Yeah. It was thousands of people in there.

GU: You must have been there right when it was opening.

MM: I was. I was there. Yeah. And what a Sunday.

GU: (laughs) I can imagine.

MM: It was like a funeral procession on that Drive. Cars were almost bumper to bumper.

GU: Wow, wow. That must have been the first day.

MM: First opening.

GU: And so Skyland, the dining hall was open, but kinda ran out of food. (laughs)

MM: Kind of! Yes, yes. (laughs) We even tried to get food out of Luray and of course the people were coming up from Luray section too. It was a big celebration.

GU: Yeah. Well what would the people, the people who owned cabins at Skyland, what did they think of all of this with the Skyline Drive opening?

MM: Those who owned the cabins more or less were deceased.

GU: Oh. Okay, okay.

MM: See it was quite a lot of years in between that.

GU: A lot of 'em had passed on.

MM: Now Wally could give you better information on that than I can. Cause he was up there before my time.

GU: Right, right. Now you said you filled in for Wally sometimes at the post office.

MM: In the post office. Skyland, you know. People confuse the two words, Skyland and Skyline. See Skyline was the Drive. Skyland was the Skyland Hotel and bungalows.

GU: Right. They're still confusing that.

MM: I wouldn't be surprised.

GU: They still get it mixed up. Right, right.

MM: And so from Panorama, which you would get to Panorama before coming to Skyland, was a distance of ten miles. A lot of people would stop at Panorama and say "How do we Skyland or Skyline?" "Well, you're right on Skyline now."

GU: Right. You were telling me about, you told me a great story about when you were driving a truck to get supplies for I think was it the CCC?

MM: The CCC camps. My brother drove a huge Chevrolet truck which had no top on it, but it had this canvas top oval shape. Like army trucks. And he would make frequent trips from Skyland into Richmond to the city market picking up fresh veggies, watermelons, cantaloupes, fruit, et cetera for the orders to fill the CCC camps. And on several occasions I would ride with him. We would sing songs to try to keep him awake and all and after dumping me over three times I said, "I think it's for me to take charge of the truck and you sit over in my place and go to sleep." So I drove the trucks to and from Skyland. And would take 'em into the different camps and the men at the camps would help unload. But we'd make as much as two to three trips a week.

GU: Oh that's quite bit. That's quite a bit.

MM: That's quite a drive, too.

GU: Yeah, yeah.

MM: But I didn't have any accidents.

GU: (laughs) Right.

MM: No accidents.

GU: Well tell me one more time about the policemen. (laughs) I love that story.

MM: I was driving Wally Dyer's real sporty new Ford Roadster which had a convertible top.

GU: Oh, it was a convertible.

MM: Convertible. And he told me, he said, "Take my car so you and Grace can go to church," which was down in Culpeper which meant we had to come from Skyland, hit Panorama, down into Sperryville and then 522 into Culpeper. Okay. We started out and I heard a siren and looked in the mirror and by gosh it was the traffic cop for Skyland. I believe the traffic was thirty or thirty-five miles.

GU: Thirty-five miles an hour?

MM: I was hittin' pretty close to, I was hittin' around forty. And he blew the siren to pull me over. I waved and kept going. So he decided that he'd get me, he knew I had to come back up on the mountain to go back to work at the hotel. So he decided he'd catch me as I came back from my trip to Culpeper. And he stayed at Panorama watching and waitin' for me to come back up on the mountain. Which he did; he pulled me over. And he was writing me a ticket and I said, "You know Pop Foster, I had really planned to invite you over for steak at the hotel today." "You had?" And I said, "Yes, but I think I'm gonna change my mind since you give me a ticket." And he tore the ticket up and nothin' else was said, but he appeared for his steak.

GU: (laughs) Right, right. That's a good story. I like that, yeah.

MM: I think he's dead now. I don't know. I hadn't heard anything about him being up there anymore.

GU: I don't recognize the name.

MM: Pop Foster.

GU: Pop Foster.

MM: Traffic cop for Skyland. Maybe some of the older rangers would know.

GU: Was he hired by Pollock or was he hired by the Park Service?

MM: I think by the Park Service.

GU: Oh, okay. It's probably in our records somewhere then.

MM: See if it is.

GU: Yeah, it's probably in our records and we have archives. It's probably in there.

MM: And Wally knew him. In fact I think Wally was at our table when we ate that Sunday.

GU: Oh, when he came up for steak dinner? (laughs)

MM: Yeah! Between my brother and myself, we had a lot of guests up there to eat with us.

GU: So that was fine with the Pollock's if you brought guests up?

MM: Yes. We paid for them, but we didn't have to pay for ours.

GU: So you didn't pay for your own—

MM: It went with my work.

GU: Right, right. But you never had to—

MM: Frankly I don't remember what kind of a salary I made. I didn't care.

GU: You don't remember if it was good money or—

MM: No, cause we had a nice place to live, Gus and I together, my brother. And he looked after me and I looked after him. And we had all our meals there and Mr. Pollock

would tell me, "If you have a girlfriend you'd like to come up for the weekend, let her come." And I mean he was extremely nice to us. Extremely nice.

GU: So it was a pleasant place to work then?

MM: Very pleasant, very pleasant. You had to have a set of eyes in the back of you.

GU: (laughs) Why is that?

MM: (laughs) These mountain people were a little bit shaky.

GU: So you were a little nervous of the people that lived nearby.

MM: Yeah. Daytime it was all right to roam around I would say by yourself, but I don't think it was very smart idea for a young lady to be roaming at night time alone. No.

GU: (laughs) Well that's anywhere I think, too.

MM: Today it is.

GU: Today anyway, today anyway.

MM: You get up in the mornings to walk from your cabin over to the dining room to get breakfast only half of you, part of your body was showing. The whole top of you was under cloud. And all you could see was two legs moving.

GU: (laughs)

MM: You've experienced that haven't you?

GU: Actually I have. (laughs)

MM: Yeah, it's kinda strange.

GU: I know what you mean. Right. (laughs)

MM: You'll have to cut, cut, cut.

GU: (laughs) I can leave parts out if you want. Now did you know any of George's sisters? He had, Wally's mother was George's sister. I think she stayed up there sometimes.

MM: She probably did.

GU: But you don't really remember her?

MM: My acquaintances was more with the quests coming in.

GU: The renters, the renters?

MM: Yes. Showing 'em where they had to go and get 'em to sign the guest book and settle with 'em when they got ready to settle up. That's what through me more or less with them.

GU: Do you remember the kinds of activities that some of these guests would do?

MM: Tennis, hiking, horseback riding. I believe they allowed fishing. I mean government property, they had their do's and don'ts, but I think that was okay.

GU: The women and the men would do all of these things?

MM: Yeah. Yeah.

GU: There weren't really—

MM: That was activity for them up there. And as I say every weekend was a big party. Pollock had big parties.

GU: So it was mostly weekends were the big parties and weekdays were a little quieter?

MM: A little quieter.

GU: And were there any of these entertainments that the women didn't do or were they pretty much able to do everything?

MM: Everything they wanted to.

GU: Whatever they wanted?

MM: Whatever was permissible.

GU: Right, right.

MM: I think I remember seeing some bicycles up there too. Bikes that they would ride out. And you know had some people prefer riding bikes and walking. Whatever reason it would be for that.

GU: Boy it must have been rough ground up there for bikes.

MM: But remember I was just about eighteen years old and so I was a busy body. I thoroughly enjoyed meeting people and that's what you have to enjoy.

GU: Do you remember any of the careers that some of these people were involved with?

MM: Some were authors of books. Some writers, skiers, mountain climbers. Let's see, a lot of people used to love to walk up to Stony Man Peak. And several of us young ones one evening were walking up, it happened to be a beautiful moonlight night and we heard this rustling of leaves and so forth, sounded like they were following us. And of course we turned around; in the moonlight you could see if it was an animal or a person. And it was three of us girls with our dates and our dates said, "Shh, just be quiet. Go over and stay over there. We'll take care of it." Come to find out it was a hound dog. That's just one little thing that happened. But it was kinda scary.

GU: Yeah, I bet at night.

MM: Particularly in those weeds, trees. But it was beautiful. Have you been up?

GU: Yes, yes. I've hiked up to the peak a number of times.

MM: The have a lookout place at Skyland. It's like a boat, right?

GU: Right, yes. That's gone now. But was it like a deck sort of thing?

MM: Yeah, it poked out and you could go like it was all very well supported by big pieces of stone cut in the mountain. And gosh, all the visitors came and said, "Have you been over there to the lookout?" And people just loved that spot.

GU: Yeah, Wally Dyer showed us where the spot was.

MM: And it's been removed?

GU: At some point it was removed.

MM: I don't remember seeing it when I was up there for that occasion. I don't remember it.

GU: Cause that's when he showed us where it was.

MM: How 'bout Mr. Pollock's cabin, is it still there?

GU: No. His cabin isn't, but hers is still there.

MM: Oh, it's still there.

GU: Hers is still there.

MM: Cause I looked for it, trying to place in my mind just where it was and somebody, some of the visitors said, "Oh that Mr. Pollock's cabin I think has been removed." And I felt real sad about that.

GU: That woulda been gone by the time, by '94.

MM: The time I told you about, I stayed in Keppy's (??) cabin for that weekend for him. And I didn't realize, see he was a snake charmer and I did not realize that in the bathroom there, up over the john was a shelf and an old suitcase with some holes in it. And I heard a rustling noise in there. And when I realized what it was, it was a snake. And I was supposed to stay in that place that night so I decided to get out of there and close that door. And I couldn't care less what happened to that snake.

GU: So he was keepin' it there in his little suitcase?

MM: Kept it in the suitcase. Coulda been two in there.

GU: Yeah. (laughs)

MM: But I didn't hang around there.

GU: Right. Now let's see. Did you have any other stories or memories that you can think of that you wanted to share?

MM: Yes. When Mr. Pollock learned that I was engaged and I was planning to get married, he said, "Well, I would love to see you married in front of that stone fireplace in the dining room. And all you have to do is tell me okay and I'll arrange everything." And I said, "Thank you very much Mr. Pollock, but I've already made arrangements to be married in my church in Culpeper, Virginia."

GU: Right. But he really wanted you to get married up there? Was hoping you would.

MM: He didn't want me to marry the person I was marrying. He said he had a friend who was an old bachelor that owned a duck farm. "Duck farm? What's that got to do with me?" He said, "He's just rollin' in money." And I said—

GU: You said no. (laughs)

MM: So I don't know whatever happened to that guy. I said, "My mind is made up."

GU: Right, right. And you said your husband—

MM: That didn't go down here did it?

GU: I think it did, but I can—

MM: Block it out.

GU: Okay, we'll block out what we were just saying. Right, right. (laughs) See I'm the one whose gonna go through and write this down so, yeah I can block out anything you want.

MM: Did you ask me if I could remember anything else?

GU: Right. But you also said though that your husband was the head cook, was it at the CC camp? The head cook?

MM: Head chef.

GU: Chef, right.

MM: Captain Murphy. Captain Paul Murphy. Where's that brown piece of paper? Let's see, here. Now this is Pollock's cottage. (GU and MM unfold paper and begin inspecting it for the remainder of the interview)

GU: Okay. Right, right.

MM: And this is, I found this in the paper about the CC camps. See, see?

GU: Yeah.

MM: This continued from the first page, let's see it would go over here. Now wait a minute.

GU: Oh, and here's the—

MM: Different names.

GU: Yeah, yeah.

MM: See if you see the name Murphy, Captain Murphy. He was a great person. I mean enough with this think talkin'.

GU: That's okay. That's okay. Well now I don't see his name right on here. Maybe it's on the other side.

MM: See if it's on here somewhere. CCC leaders. O'dell Stipes (??), you know I showed you the picture of he and his girlfriend. Okay.

GU: Okay, uh huh. Robert Mooney.

MM: Yeah, that's the one I was married to.

GU: Now, who'd you say, Murphy?

MM: Captain Paul Murphy.

GU: I don't see his name here. There it is, there it is. Right there.

MM: See how good I can remember?

GU: Yep, yep. (laughs)

MM: Now I haven't looked at this think for ages. Thank God, my memory.

GU: Now who was Captain Murphy? He was the—

MM: He was the leader of the camp.

GU: Of the whole camp?

MM: The whole camp. Yeah. And then see if E.K. Long is in there.

GU: E.K. Long?

MM: L-o-n-g.

GU: (pause while looking for name) I don't see him right off. What did he do?

MM: He was supply sergeant I believe.

GU: Oh, okay. That's him in the photo. Right.

MM: And then he joined the Air Force and he was head of the Air Force in Iceland during the war. Oh yeah. I've got all kinds of pictures of him. That's real funny. He was very much in love with this cousin of mine and they broke up. She married somebody else. And he was dating some major in the service and had gotten pretty involved. And one day in Culpeper I was shopping when they had the deep freeze in those big, you had to almost put your body in there. And I was down there diggin' for something and I heard somebody, I saw a hand come up and I heard somebody says, "Where have you been all my life?" I looked. "Oh my gosh!" So I said, "How did you know I was in here?" He said, "I stopped up here at the cash register and asked if they had ever seen you. Did you come in here to shop?" And they said, "She's right there in the back." So anyhow we dated for a long time. He asked me to marry him, too.

GU: Well you were quite popular. (laughs)

MM: Well that's when you're real young you know. But he died of a—. He married this major and they lived in Tampa, Florida and I mean I corresponded with her just as well and it was no secrets to it at all. We were just real good friends. In fact he was in my

wedding. That's how come he's dressed up like that cause he was in my wedding. And these two were at my wedding, too. That's Stipes.

GU: Okay. So he was in the CC. He was a leader of the CC as well. Okay.

MM: Yeah, he was. And they finally married. This was Paula. She gave me a photography.

GU: She's pretty, isn't she?

MM: This is, "Met Paula, Skyland, Virginia while working for Mr. Pollock. Paula was a registered nurse."

GU: So she worked with Pollock, too?

MM: No, she just came up there to visit with Stipes.

GU: Oh, okay. At the CC camp? Okay.

MM: Uh huh. She was a love, absolute love.

GU: She looks very pretty.

MM: She was from Poland. She's Polish.

GU: And she lived in Luray?

MM: No, she lived in Maryland. In Maryland. But when she would see Stipes or he'd go down to get her and bring her up. And then she would stay in Luray while they were visiting each other.

GU: Right, right. Okay. Well I think I've asked you most of the questions I have, unless you have other things you'd like to let me know.

MM: No, when I go to bed tonight, and lay down, I'll think—

GU: You're gonna think of 'em. (laughs)

MM: The blood is flowing to my brain better. (laughs)

GU: Well if you do just feel free to give me a call or drop me a note if you think of other things.

MM: Well you gotta give me your address—

GU: Yes.

MM: And give me Wally's address.

GU: And I'll just—

[tape ends abruptly]

[End audio file, 00:57:59 min.]

End of Interview