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(SNP013) George Berry interviewed by Dorothy Noble Smith, transcribed by Sharon G. Marston

George Berry

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D.S.: We are interviewing Mr. George Berry. Now Mr. Berry where was it that you were born and brought up?

G.B.: Above the Cool Springs.

D.S.: Above Cool Springs.

G.B.: Yes mam.

D.S.: How far up above Red Gate Road is that?

G.B.: Nearly a mile.

D.S.: A mile above there.

G.B.: About.

D.S.: Now Mr. Berry could you tell us uh, about your home. What was it how was it built?

G.B.: It was a log house.

D.S.: A log house. And then did you chink the log.

G.B.: Yea. Put dobbing in it they called it back then.

D.S.: Yea, dabbing did it keep the snow out.

G.B.: Yea. But sometimes it come through the roof. Be a hole you know...

D.S.: Sure. Did you have a shingled roof?

G.B.: Boards.

D.S.: Boards. They were Riled - out boards back then. We had board roofs.

D.S.: Oh, right okey. Uh, how many were in your family?

G.B.: Three...five with my mother and daddy. Three children.

D.S.: Okey. And your mother's maiden name was?

G.B.: Mattie...Jenkins.

D.S.: Mattie Jenkins. Was she from that area?

G.B.: No she lived at Ida. That's where my daddy got acquainted with her.

D.S.: How did he meet her.

G.B.: I don't know. He just got to going around there I reckon.

D.S.: Yea. How many rooms were in your house?
G.B.: Just two.
D.S.: Two. Did you have any sleeping upstairs?
G.B.: No.
D.S.: No. Did you have a basement?
G.B.: No.
D.S.: No basement. Okey. How much property did you have?
G.B.: Well an old table and beds. Just what you had to have you know.
D.S.: Sure. Was it handmade?
G.B.: I don't know. I don't remember that.
D.S.: Uhhuh. Did your mother cook in the fireplace, or on a wood stove?
G.B.: On a wood stove.
D.S.: Uhhuh. I bet it was hard getting it up there wasn't it?
G.B.: It might have been, I don't remember when they got it there. It was always there when I got up big enough to remember.
D.S.: Did the Gordonsville Pike run near your home?
G.B.: About a mile...it turned off of it up here where they call the Red Gate now, but that ain't the Red Gate.
D.S.: That isn't?
G.B.: No, the Red Gate was on top of the mountain.
D.S.: Is that Fishers' Gap?
G.B.: Yea. That's what we always called the Red Gate, but they call it up here now.
D.S.: Okey. Yea, Right. Uh, did your family have a garden?
G.B.: Yea.
D.S.: What did you raise?
G.B.: Tomatoes, and corn, and potatoes, beans, cabbage...
D.S.: Wheat?
G.B.: No...no wheat.
D.S.: No wheat. Then how did you get flour?
G.B.: Had to get that from a store.
D.S.: Alright. That meant you had to pay money for it.
G.B.: Yea, you had to pay fer it.
D.S.: Uh, would you trade out like chickens and eggs to get it or what?
G.B.: Sometimes and sometimes we had walnut kernals to sell, snits made out of apples you know.
D.S.: Then you had an orchard?
G.B.: Well, we went around and got them. Trees every which a way then. Get apples anywhere you want them.
D.S.: Uhhuh. Uh, roughly how much land did your father own?
G.B.: Didn't own none.
D.S.: I see. You just build the house and then...
G.B.: My granddaddy stayed on it, and my great-granddaddy, and my daddy. Never did own it.
D.S.: Okey. So your family had been there, for quite a long while.
G.B.: Yea. They called it the Bailey property. Run from Sugar Hollow up here to Pine Grove. Clear around that mountain. That track of land did.
D.S.: Somebody by the name of Bailey then owned it?
D.S.: Oh, I be darn, and they didn't mind people just building houses and living there and growing things.
G.B.: No, never did say nothing about it.
D.S.: Huh. And you didn't have to pay him any rent.
G.B.: Didn't pay him nothing.
D.S.: Well that's great.
G.B.: Didn't see him, but maybe once in five or ten years.
D.S.: Did your mother make your clothes?
G.B.: She made our shirts.
D.S.: Your shirts.
G.B.: Yea.
D.S.: No...she didn't make the overhauls.
G.B.: Not after we were about grown...when we were small.
D.S.: Yea, when you were small.
D.S.: Did she have a sewing machine?
G.B.: No, she didn't have one of those. She made them with her hands.
D.S.: She made them by hand.
G.B.: Yea.
D.S.: Now you said you were near Cool Spring? Um, that...your home then
was near a spring, right?
G.B.: Yea, it was above it.
D.S.: Above it...
G.B.: And we had a spring above the house, but sometimes you know that
would go dry...you know...in a dry spell. We would have to carry water
from down at Cool Spring. Had to carry it up hill.
D.S.: Wow. That must have been a job. Wasn't it?
G.B.: But it was good when we got it. Cold.
D.S.: You carried in pails?
G.B.: Carried it in water buckets.
D.S.: Water buckets. They were heavy. Water is heavy.
G.B.: I know they are.
D.S.: How old were you when you were carrying this water up the hill to the
house.
G.B.: I used to carry it when I was 9 or 10 years old.
D.S.: Oh my. You were a strong person.
G.B.: Oh, didn't carry so much at a time...but I made several trips.
D.S.: Oh gosh.
G.B.: I didn't mind it then.
D.S.: Yea, right. Now uh, alright now you grew these vegetables..how did you keep them during the winter?
G.B.: We had an old cellar..ground cellar..we called it..dug out in the ground you know and then covered the top..and fixed it so nothing won't freeze.
D.S.: You covered the top with straws..
G.B.: No, put boards on it and then put dirt on the boards until that would rot out and have to fix it again. It would last several years. Wouldn't last long..you know with dirt on the boards.
D.S.: Oh, that was really quite different.
G.B.: Yea.
D.S.: I recall you said something about your house was really in two parts.
G.B.: It was an outside kitchen.
D.S.: Outside kitchen. Was it covered in between?
G.B.: No, just walked out through the yard to the kitchen. Bout as fer as from here to your car.
D.S.: Okey. It made the house cooler in the summer then didn't it?
G.B.: Yea.
D.S.: Yea. I have often wondered, were those houses hot in the summer.
G.B.: Right smart hot.
D.S.: Uhhuh. Okey. Now your beds. Uh, did you use feather beds?
G.B.: No, straw.
D.S.: Okey, tell about them.
G.B.: Just went and got straw down at the barn, get we called it for the straw. It layed good..I'd be glad to lay on one yet if I had it.
D.S.: Sure. They must have been comfortable.
G.B.: It was alright..depending on where you put it you know..wouldn't be long when you lay around on it that it would pack down just about
right. You'd have to change them about twice a year.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Did your mother make quilts?

G.B.: She made some.

D.S.: Did she get together with the neighbors to make quilts?

G.B.: No she was at home up there and we didn't live to close to anybody. Fred Laffy was our closest neighbor, you know, I told you.

D.S.: But you didn't tell the tape.

G.B.: No, I didn't

D.S.: How close was he?

G.B.: He was about 3/4 of a mile...up from us. That was the closest.

D.S.: Now how did your family get money to buy these things that you needed?

G.B.: Work out a little and make what little they could.

D.S.: Alright you say work out a little. Did your father have a job?

G.B.: No just work at different places, for people...then in the fall go cut corn..and shuck corn. My mother used to go and wash over at Mr. Bob Breeden's. Walk from up there over and back. Wash. Fifty cents was all she got. That's what I tell you

D.S.: Who were the Breeden's? Were they in the mountains too?

G.B.: No, they lived over here...you know where the Blakemore place is?

D.S.: Yea.

G.B.: Down here, where you go down...well back over on the hill.

D.S.: That's quite a long walk.

G.B.: Yea it was...go over there and wash on a washboard too.

D.S.: Every day or...

G.B.: No, once a week.

D.S.: Once a week. Oh my goodness. All of you did a lot of walking, didn't
G.B.: Yea. You had to then, or you wouldn't go nowhere.

D.S.: Uh, did you like gather wild strawberries, and huckleberries and things of this kind.

G.B.: Yea, we use to pick a lot of them.

D.S.: Where would you...

G.B.: Used to pick huckleberries and sell them.

D.S.: Where?

G.B.: Down here at the store.

D.S.: Which store?

G.B.: It belonged to Vernon Knight then. E.L.Knight but we always called him Vernon.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Is that where you took your eggs and your chickens?

G.B.: Sometimes and...but we eat the most of our eggs, that we'd get. We'd mostly keep them. They wasn't but 12¢ a dozen. Wasn't worth taking to the store.

D.S.: Oh, 12¢ a dozen.

G.B.: Yea, that's what they were. That was in 1930.

D.S.: Yea. Then you used the Brown store for all your shopping?

G.B.: No we'd go to Kiblinge's if you needed anything like a pair of shoes or a pair of overhauls...something like that.

D.S.: Do you know how much your father made helping the farmers?

G.B.: He didn't make much.

D.S.: Didn't make much.

G.B.: No, when he cut corn, he didn't go it by the day, he cut it by the shock, you know. Get about, the most I think was about 25¢ a cutting.

D.S.: So in other words...you raised corn, so you did take that to be ground?
didn't you?

G.B.: Mother kept some of it to feed the few chickens, with.
D.S.: Yea. Where would you take it to be ground?
G.B.: Will Miller's.
D.S.: Where?
G.B.: Will Miller's like you are going to Ida.
D.S.: Oh yea, there was a mill there wasn't there?
G.B.: Yea, he had a mill there where he ground corn for people.
D.S.: Would it be enough to last you a whole year? Would you grow enough.
G.B.: Usually at different times
D.S.: Uhhuh. But did you stock up particularly heavy before winter came?
G.B.: Sometimes we would, a little and sometimes we wouldn't. Just have
to go on like it was...
D.S.: Yea. Were the winters very hard? Up there?
G.B.: Yea, they was hard. But they are hard yet.
D.S.: Did you get much snow?
G.B.: Well, I reckon. I remember one time we had a little red pig and my
daddy had brought it up on the mountain from a fellow name Weakley,
and there come a big snow in March of 1924...I was 8 years old, but
I remember it good and I looked down there that morning and the
whole pig pen was covered up and my daddy said I know my pig is
gone and he went pushing the snow down to it and it went to grunting
and come out of the snow a stretching and wasn't hurt at all.
D.S.: Uh, before we started the tape the other day you were talking about
snow that came over the fences.
G.B.: That was in that time. In 1924.
D.S.: Uhhuh. And then it froze on top of that?
G.B.: Yea, boy that was a time.
D.S.: Yea. I imagine that people that had cattle the cattle just wandered wherever they wanted to.

G.B.: Yea. We never did have no cows.

D.S.: You didn't.

G.B.: No.

D.S.: No. and no calves.

G.B.: Some of them had cows around. They give you milk then. It wasn't like you had to pay 60¢ for a quart of milk.

D.S.: Did you get it often from these neighbors?

G.B.: Oh, I got a whole lot from a women lived over here in the field. Get milk. I'd tell my mother I was going to get milk as to have a trip. I wanted to have a trip you know.

D.S.: Oh, did your mother and father were they very strict with you?

G.B.: Yes, until I was... I didn't go down the road until after I was 16. Not down this a way. Only when I come to school.

D.S.: We're getting to school in a minute but I always wondered now if they told you to do something would you do it? Right away?

G.B.: You better do it.

D.S.: What would happen if you didn't?

G.B.: You'd get a tanning.

D.S.: Did you get many tannings?

G.B.: Sometimes I would. That was good for me. If they got them now, it would be a lot better.

D.S.: Yea, you're right. Can you recall any of the reasons why you got spanked?

G.B.: Yea, if you got caught telling a lie you got a whipping fer it.

D.S.: Oh, yes.

G.B.: Boy, be a lot of them now wouldn't it?
D.S.: I just cannot picture your ever telling a lie.

G.B.: I told a small one. Nothing to hurt nobody.

D.S.: No, no. Now about your school. Uh, where was the school?

G.B.: Around here...Forest Dale.

D.S.: Forest Dale. How far was that, from your home?

G.B.: It was over a mile to walk from home down here and back.

D.S.: Was it during the winter?

G.B.: Yea, we went to school seven months.

D.S.: Seven months. What about if it snowed heavy?

G.B.: Well, we'd go if we could thought you couldn't (make it)

They wasn't strict on you then about going like they are now.

D.S.: No, if you..now..the school went through what grade?

G.B.: Seventh.

D.S.: Seventh. So you went through seventh grade.

G.B.: No. I never made it..I passed from the fifth to the sixth and I never went no more. I was 16. I didn't go no more.

D.S.: You'd decided you'd had enough studying...you wanted to get out and make a living.

G.B.: I'd had enough of education.

D.S.: Uh, did your family do a lot of visiting? Like of an evening did you all visit people? Or of a Sunday.

G.B.: No. We'd go on Sunday right smart, but hardly ever

D.S.: Uhhuh. So what would you do at night?

G.B.: Go to bed right after it got dark.

D.S.: You didn't play any games or sit around and talk.

G.B.: Well sometimes we would..read a little..you couldn't read much by lamp light..like you do with the light now.

D.S.: Yea, how about um, things like checkers or something like that?
G.B.: Never did play none at home, but I've done a few of it around here.
D.S.: Uhhuh. Good game huh?
G.B.: Used to play Mr. Taylor...he was our school teacher during the winter.
   In the evening when summertime come and nobody doing nothing...play
   for hours at a time.
D.S.: What did Mr. Taylor do during the summer? Did he...he wasn't teaching
   school. Did he have a garden?
G.B.: Yea, he had this out here. He lived here...this was his home.
D.S.: This was his home.
G.B.: Yea. This belongs to his son now. Maybe you know him.
D.S.: No, I don't
G.B.: Used to run the grill in Luray.
G.B.: Well, this belongs to him.
D.S.: I'll be darn. Well now...it sounds as though you all just mainly did a
   lot of big work. Did you get up early in the morning?
G.B.: Yea, we'd get up early every morning. Nobody layed in bed then.
D.S.: No. And you'd go to bed when it got dark.
G.B.: A little bit after dark...sometimes we'd stay up a while. Nobody even
   had a radio then you can listen at.
D.S.: No, right. So you didn't visit much excepting on Sunday. When you visited
   what happened. Like if you saw somebody busy stringing beans what did
   you do?
G.B.: Ah, you'd help then.
D.S.: Right. You'd all sit around stringing beans. Did your mother dry beans?
G.B.: Yea. We use to dry them...hang them out on a scaffle. And then she used
   to string them on thread you know and hang them up, and they'd dry.
D.S.: Did you all make applebutter?

G.B.: We didn't make none at home. They'd make it around. I reckon.

D.S.: Yea. Was it a party?

G.B.: Nah...sometimes they'd kind of have a party with it.

D.S.: Well what's your idea of a party?

G.B.: Well, some fooling around and some not.

D.S.: Would they play music?

G.B.: Yea. And if you bumped the kettle, why you got a kiss.

D.S.: Did you bump the kettle often?

G.B.: I'd try to bump it.

D.S.: Oh, Mr. Berry. Uh, how did people go courting?

G.B.: What do you mean?

D.S.: How would a boy court a girl?

G.B.: Well he'd go see her.

D.S.: Huhuh. Did anybody watch over...did somebody always stay with them?

G.B.: ...watched pretty close. Had to be pretty careful.


G.B.: Bout the time you think you gonna fool around a little, why somebody would pop around the corner.

D.S.: How come didn't you ever get married?

G.B.: I just never did.

D.S.: Just never did find the right girl.

G.B.: I don't know why. I just never did. Didn't hanker for it I don't reckon.

D.S.: Right. Now, uh, when you..they'd make the applebutter, and they'd play some music. What instruments did they play?

G.B.: Used to play the French harp, the fiddle, and banjo.
D.S.: Were the banjos •• uh •• made out of possum hide?

G.B.: Yea, at one time they were. They wasn't like the ones they got now.

D.S.: Were possum hides good?

G.B.: Groundhog hides was mostly what they had.

D.S.: Groundhog hide. They were better?


D.S.: Uhhuh. Why were they better?

G.B.: They wouldn't dry out as quick or something. You want them to stay dry but when it gets damp weather the hide we called it would get loose and then it wouldn't have no sound to it.

D.S.: Yea. Right. What tunes were played?

G.B.: Oh, Turkey in the Straw, Way Down Yonder, Soldiers and all that stuff.


G.B.: Yea.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Was there dancing? Were there many dances?

G.B.: No we used to go and play for dances but...

D.S.: Okey what did you play?

G.B.: I played the guitar sometimes I'd play the banjo.


G.B.: I can play the old guitar a little sometimes when I get right lonesome by myself. I get it out.

D.S.: Get it out right now.

G.B.: I ain't lonesome. Not while you are talking to me.

D.S.: I'd love to hear it on here. You say you played with a group.

G.B.: Yea, Four of us.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Were there any otherplaces that you played?


D.S.: You did. Where on the drive?
G.B.: On the parking areas you know.

D.S.: That must have been fun wasn’t it?

G.B.: Oh yea, til they stopped it.

D.S.: Oh well...huh.

G.B.: But we had fun while it lasted.

D.S.: Sure. Yea uh, a group of you would get together and walk.. how far was it up to the drive?

G.B.: Five miles and two tenths from here at the store. Then it was nearly a mile to that parking area where we went.

D.S.: Oh, that was a long walk carrying your instrument.

G.B.: Yea, but we didn’t mind. We had about a quart of old mountain dew with us and we’d eat our dinner going up the mountain. Get tired of carrying it. Then when we’d get up there, we’d be pretty high and people coming around giving us something to eat and drink. We’d have a good time.

D.S.: Yea, that was fun. So then the people around here did make moonshine?

G.B.: They did. But I don’t know who they were. I know some of them is dead and gone. I know they can’t do nothing with them now.

D.S.: Oh no. Oh no. So where did you get your moonshine?

G.B.: Oh, used to buy it out here at a little above Stanley and give 50c a quart then. Go get it and have it ready for Sunday.

D.S.: Oh, you’d go up on the drive on Sunday.

G.B.: Yea. And on holidays. People come around and give you a little money... we didn’t ask nobody but they thought we was begging I reckon. Anybody take money if you give it to them.

D.S.: Sure. That wasn’t begging. Did your mother know herbs?

G.B.: Herbs.

G.B.: You mean like raising sage and stuff like that?

D.S.: Uh, well uh did she ever make anything if you had diarrheea?

G.B.: Ah, yea, got a weed and that stuff that I told you about before off a white oak tree. You trim the rough part off and get the sap. Before you got into the tree you know. Boy it was good...better than what you can get out of a store.

D.S.: Yea, really worked.

G.B.: Yea.

D.S.: Did it taste good?

G.B.: Yea.

D.S.: It did?

G.B.: Put sugar in it.

D.S.: Oh I see, yea. Uh... G.B.: Sassafrass Tea. Made that for...that made your blood thin. We drank it for the taste of it. Tasted good.


G.B.: Used it fer hurting in your stomach. Chew it and swallow the juice.

D.S.: Uh, what would your mother do if you had a cold?

G.B.: Well, she'd grease us with camphorated oil and lard and...

D.S.: Make a poltice

G.B.: Different stuff and put on your chest. Then put a yarn thing over that.

D.S.: Did anybody have pneumonia that you know of in that area?

G.B.: No.

D.S.: No. What would you do for a snake bite? Were you ever bitten by a snake? G.B.: No, my uncle was. He didn't even go to the doctor.

D.S.: What did he do?

G.B.: Didn't use nothing but a pan of coal oil. A wash bend or something about the size of that. Just kept putting his hand in that. It swelled
awful. And they told him to drink plenty of sweet milk. And he hated milk and he never would taste of it. My aunt told him if you don't take some you gonna die. But he said then I'll have to go...I ain't gonna drink no milk. And that coal oil...the first time he put his hand in it it made the bowl all look green where it drawed the poison out.

D.S.: Yea. Then did they throw that away and put fresh

G.B.: Yea.

D.S.: Uhhuh, and it worked. Yea

G.B.: Yea, he didn't go to no doctor.

D.S.: Was it a copper head that bit him or

G.B.: Yea, a copperhead.

D.S.: Copperhead. Did you ever have any?

G.B.: Yea. A big copperhead crawled across my neck when we lived above the Cool Springs.

D.S.: No.

G.B.: Yea, laying right in the bed. I jumped up right quick and and he went down in the bed. And I hollared and I said there is a snake in the bed. My daddy said it ain't nothing but that little black neck tie hanging there. Well, it had fell down...there was one hanging up you know and my brother...we both slept together and he said it ain't nothing but an old black necktie. And when they went over to look it began to move off. He said no, I see it ain't no necktie now. And he got a hold of my brother that way and jerked him out of the bed and he got one of them and looked real good and there was another great big one around the bedpost. You know how them old bed post stood.

D.S.: Yea. How did they get in?

G.B.: through the door. We didn't have no screen door and it stayed open you know. Hot weather, and boy I didn't sleep no more that night.
D.S.: Golly, what kind of snakes were they?
D.S.: Oh boy.
G.B.: They got one of them, the other one got away and never did get him. I was afraid that one might come back, but it never did.
D.S.: It went out the door.
G.B.: I don't know where it went. I was too scared to look for it.
D.S.: I wouldn't have stayed in the house that night. Oh no. That's terrible. Oh, and oh did you wear shoes all year round? No, I didn't think about none until I seen one.
D.S.: Oh, you crazy...
G.B.: I still don't. I don't think about no snake unless I see one.
D.S.: So you'd wear boots and shoes in the winter. Uh, would they last all winter long or was your father a cobbler?
G.B.: No he could fix them you know. Put a sole on them if they got in a bad shape. You better make them last you all the winter, cause you wouldn't have nothing to get a new pair with.
D.S.: No. No. Boy. So you'd start wearing shoes well when it got cold.
G.B.: Yea. Say along about the last of September
D.S.: Uh, had you ever gathered chestnuts when you were a boy.
G.B.: No, I never did gather none. My daddy and mother used to go back on the mountain and back there where Big Meadows is now. They trees
D.S.: Yea. Did your family or you or anybody around you peal any bark?
G.B.: My daddy used to. I never did peal any.
D.S.: Tell about it. Where would he take it?
G.B.: He'd peal it for other people...you know. For Charlie Koontz
and ones like that, you know. Have a peal in the spring and cut the log up and make lumber out of the log and kill two birds with one stone.


G.B.: No.

D.S.: No. So he did this for other people.

G.B.: Yea.

D.S.: Then he didn't have to worry about getting the wood somewhere and the bark somewhere.

G.B.: Somebody else hired to have it done you know. They'd take the job and then they'd get a bunch of men and then they'd peal.

D.S.: You had no horse yourself?

G.B.: No.

D.S.: No. Umm...

G.B.: I was aiming to tell you something else and forgot it. Oh yea. It was my daddy and all of them went to Manassas one time to work at a logging place you know. And they hated the place so bad that they, one man, and they put him to cook, and he had the best job of all and every one began to say he was quitting and coming home. So the boss went to the cook and said all of them quit and you got the best job of all here. Said I don't reckon you are gonna quit are you. He said yea if the rest of them quit, I'm gonna quit too. Well he said, I reckon if all the rest of them going to hell you are going to go to. He said I reckon I would.

D.S.: That was a long way away to go, wasn't it. How did they get there by truck or wagon or...

G.B.: Well, I think they took them by train. Had to go out here to Stanley and they paid their way on the train.
D.S.: Oh yea, how long was your daddy gone?
G.B.: I don't remember. I've just heard them tell about it.
D.S.: Hum. Boy. Uh, there was a drought...a very bad drought...uh, what year was that? Do you recall?
G.B.: 1930, there was an awful bad one.
G.B.: It's hard to tell, I don't hardly know. They had a little something give them through the winter...called drought relief...Get an order you know. It was a tough time.
G.B.: No. Wasn't nothing that year. I know we cut a little futter off for people down on the Hawksbill Didn't get nothing for oursdf We didn't get but 10¢ a shock Cut all day and might get a dollar and come back 10¢ all you can get. Have to walk back to it.
D.S.: The chestnuts had gone and the drought came so the people must have been in pretty bad situation weren't they?
G.B.: They was. But they pulled through it someway.
G.B.: Nobody didn't starve. Might have had to do without a lot of things. But still they made it.
D.S.: How did you celebrate Christmas?
G.B.: Ah, sometimes we had a Christmas Tree, and go Kris Kringling.
D.S.: Oh, you went Kris Kringling. What would you do?
G.B.: Nothing, we just dressad up different, put something over your face and strike out. So nobody wouldn't know who you were. And then after you stayed there a while you'd take your face off. Then they'd treat you.
D.S.: Give you something good to eat?
G.B.: Give you some cake...some different things.
D.S.: Uhhuh. How long did you do this?
G.B.: Ah, we use to do that nearly every year. For several years.
D.S.: Uh, did you start before Christmas?
G.B.: Start about a week. And then go til two or three days after Christmas.
D.S.: How far would you walk? Doing this?
G.B.: We'd walk to Ida, from here...from up here.
D.S.: You did!
G.B.: And Pine Grove...you know where that is.
D.S.: Sure.
G.B.: And that's a right good walk.
D.S.: Yea. Did you ever know Deacon Hutton?
G.B.: Sure. Is she still a living?
D.S.: Yea. Isn't she a wonderful person? She said one time to me the only thing that keeps her going is God, grit and grace.
G.B.: She sure knows.
D.S.: Yea. Did you ever go ever there at Christmas time? Pine Grove. I was over there at Christmas time and other times. Sometimes.
D.S.: Was there a lot of drinking at Christmas?
G.B.: Right smart. But not any more than usual. Well there is more people now than there was then around you know.
D.S.: Sure. The grown ups didn't do Kris Kringling, did they?
G.B.: Sometimes. They'd go along.
D.S.: They did. Oh, gee whiz. Then the whole family would go along.
G.B.: Ye: all take a mule and go.
D.S.: Yea, Huh. What kind of a lock did you have on your house?
G.B.: A lock? Guess it was an old...I guess they called them a pad lock. I reckon.
D.S.: You did lock your house?
G.B.: Yea, we locked it. If we were going to be gone all day.
Just a little while we never fooled with locking it.
D.S.: Was there much stealing?
G.B.: No there wasn't much stealing.
D.S.: In other words if somebody needed something, they'd ask you for it.
G.B.: Yea. And that's the best way to do always ain't it?
D.S.: Sure is.
G.B.: Then if they turn you down...they have to stand good for that.
D.S.: Yea. Right. You had some good friends that you used to play with.
G.B.: Oh, yea I had a lot of them.
D.S.: Can you remember some of their names.
G.B.: You mean like in school...
G.B.: Ah, I couldn't tell you all of them.
D.S.: Okey. Well what would you all play.
G.B.: Play different things. Used to play fox you know and get out after one another.
D.S.: Chase the Fox. Uhhuh.
G.B.: I wish I could run that away now.
D.S.: Yea. Play marbles?
G.B.: Yea, we use to shoot marbles. Used to play Rook a whole lot.
Do you know that card game?
D.S.: Rook?
G.B.: Rook. — play with cards, you know.
D.S.: Yea.
G.B.: Liked that.
D.S.: You liked things that were rather different. You liked Rook, you liked checkers. Anything that challenged the mind. Right. Yea. You pitched horseshoes?
G.B.: Yea. I liked that.
D.S.: Do you know of any illnesses that the people had? Oh like diphtheria or uh, the flu or...you said no pneumonia...measles.
G.B.: No, I remember when I had the measles. My mother got them when my sister was born. I carried them in to her. But I didn't aim to get them. I didn't know the man had them before I went to the store. We lived in Jersey for two years...I didn't tell you that...we lived in Jersey for two years and I come to the store...Kiblinger store...and the fellow in there had the measles and I got them...didn't hurt me much. Just before my sister was born my mother got them. Come might near killing her. Then my sister was born and she was broke out just as thick as...you couldn't put a pin down. Didn't hurt her...the baby you see. Boy might near killed my mother. But I didn't know he had them or I wouldn't have went in the store. But he didn't say nothing. Just sitting in there and I went in there and didn't know it. I went to getting them my uncle come to the house...my daddy said to me what is the matter with me...you breaking out there. They thought I had the hives. Getting the hives you know how you break out.
D.S.: Sure.
G.B.: Then my uncle looked at me and said the hives nothing...my God said I smell the measles in here. Said I can even
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smell them. I never hear tell of that. But he said he
could. Said it's the old time measles. And that's what it
was. Then we all three got them. My daddy had had them years
before that.

D.S.: Boy, boy, that was terrible.

G.B.: Sure it was.

D.S.: You are fortunate that your sister lived. You are the oldest
in the family.

G.B.: Yea.

D.S.: How old is...how much younger is your brother than you?

G.B.: Nearly three years. He was 60 last February, and I was 63,
the 2nd of this past April.

D.S.: And your sister?

G.B.: 53.

D.S.: Oh ten years. Ten years difference in our ages. You know
her I reckon. Lucy.

D.S.: Lucy?

G.B.: Lucy Breeden.

D.S.: Yes, I know Lucy Breeden.


D.S.: Yea. Right.

G.B.: That's all I got. And one brother...nearly dead now.

D.S.: And she loves animals.

G.B.: I know she does.

D.S.: Did you have many animals when you were growing up. Dogs and
G.B.: Dog...always kept just one dog. Had all kinds of little cats...
sitting around. Was all the time playing with them. Follow you
and everything.

G.B.: We moved from up there...when we moved we had two big cats you know...a blue one and a black one and we'd been living over there about a year and we hear'd the cat hollaring one night. And that was bout three miles from here. And my daddy said I hear a cat hollaring and we went out and looked and said there's our blue cat we had when we lived over in Kite Hollow and there it was. It couldn't find us.

D.S.: Yes, that's...

G.B.: That's something when they do that ain't it?

D.S.: Sure is. Yes.

G.B.: The Lord brought that cat back. We never could catch the black one. That's why...it was always wild. Couldn't never take it no where. It went to my uncles up there and stayed then.

D.S.: You mentioned moving out...how did you feel about being moved out of the mountain.

G.B.: Out of the park. I was glad of it. I didn't care...I wanted out.

D.S.: Why?

G.B.: I just wanted to get out.

D.S.: How did your mother and father react?

G.B.: Well, they didn't kick against moving. Or nothing. Them people come up there and told them what they'd do..furnish us a house somewhere..so that was alright. Mr. Zirkle..you know him..he was going to get us a house out on the river and taken my daddy out there and looked at it, but he didn't like it out there at all. Said he'd rather have one back
closer to where we lived. Then they got us one down here when we moved out of the park.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Uh, what did your father find to do, as far as work goes?

G.B.: He worked on the WPA as long as that lasted. Near-a-bouts as long as it lasted. Got to where they moved them far away

D.S.: Did he work on the drive?

G.B.: Yes he worked for that. He worked for a

D.S.: Didn't know the name of it...tell you in a minute. Ralph Mills and Franklin P. it was.

D.S.: Uhhuh. And then after the WPA what did he do?

G.B.: Well he got heart trouble after that and got so he'd work a little around for people and help them you know, but he couldn't stand it all day at the time.

D.S.: What did you find to do?

G.B.: Well, I worked on the NYA at Stanley, I think it was three years, or a little more...then. You know what that was?

D.S.: Sure. And what did you do for them.

G.B.: National Youth Administration. Well it was a high school then...you know where the elementary school is now. That is where we was. Worked outside, inside, janitor, and everything, else out there.

D.S.: Uhhuh. So that gave you some training.

G.B.: Yea.

D.S.: And then what did you do?

G.B.: Well I went on WPA after my daddy got disabled.

D.S.: Uhhuh, Yea. And what did you do for them?

G.B.: Worked on the road.

D.S.: Now would you consider that working for the High? State
Highway Department?

G.B.: Well we had Highway Department bases most of the time but the pay was WPA.

D.S.: Did you find the fact that you had only five years of school as a handicap?

G.B.: No, never did bother with that. Nah.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Didn't bother you at all. Okey.

G.B.: As long as I can write a little letter I ain't bothered about it.

D.S.: Sure you can read and write, and add and subtract...what more do you need? Oh Gee.

G.B.: I can count / nobody can't beat me. So that's good enough.

D.S.: Did you ever go to any weddings? That they had up there in the mountains.

G.B.: I never did go to a wedding in my life. I never have been to one. Nobody...not since I moved out...

D.S.: How about funerals?

G.B.: Ah, I've been to them.

D.S.: Uh, what were the funerals like?

G.B.: They are sad. G.B.

D.S.: Oh, I know they are. I never will get use to that.

D.S.: Would the minister come?

G.B.: To preach a funeral? Yea.

D.S.: How far away was your church? What church did you go to?

G.B.: I don't belong to none.

D.S.: Well didn't your family go to church?

G.B.: Yea, they did. Our closes church is right down here.


G.B.: No, the Christian Church.
D.S.: Okey. The Bethlehem Christian.
G.B.: Yea.

D.S.: You walked to that?
G.B.: Yea.

D.S.: So the minister...
G.B.: My daddy's funeral was preached there. So was my uncle. My mother's was preached at the funeral home in Luray.

D.S.: Oh, uhhuh. Um, when they buried people when you were still in the mountain...would they use stones for markers or did they buy monuments?

G.B.: No they used stones.

D.S.: Did they write on them?

G.B.: The undertaker would always bring a little marker with a name on it...that's so the rain get down between there's still some of them sticking up here. You can't...but I know who's they are, anyhow. Still some of them sticking up here in this graveyard.

D.S.: Is that right?
G.B.: Yea. You noticed the graveyard right there?
D.S.: No I haven't.
G.B.: Yea, my mother's buried there and my daddy.

D.S.: Uh...what have I forgotten to ask you?
G.B.: I think you've bout asked me all of it.

D.S.: You were happy weren't you?
G.B.: Yea.

D.S.: Would you say that you had a good childhood?
G.B.: Yea.

D.S.: You worked hard...
G.B.: Nobody didn't bother me and I didn't bother them.

D.S.: Did you have...I forgot to ask you...in your gardens did you have a lot of rocks in the garden?
G.B.: Rocks...no...wasn't any rocks.
D.S.: No rocks.
G.B.: If you cleaned up a patch there, might be some rocks in that. But still grew good.
D.S.: Sure. Did you open up new ground? Every now and then for your garden?
G.B.: No. We farmed the same garden every year for as long as I remember. One end of it got right, the other end always done good.
D.S.: Did you use fertilizer?
G.B.: No, not until the last years. We'd done moved out then. Out of the park. We lived up here on the hill where we had another homeplace where we lived twenty years right up here. We was nearly up to it that day when we started up to the mountaintop.
D.S.: Oh really.
G.B.: Yea.
D.S.: Well you have been just the sweetest, most wonderful man.
G.B.: Well you said you wanted
D.S.: I sure would.

(Beginning 743 he played guitar and sang to 782)