3-18-1979

(SNP040) Lola Deane interviewed by Dorothy Noble Smith, transcribed by Sharon G. Marston

Lola Deane

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Recommended Citation
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D.S.: Lola Dean, who at one time lived in Pine Grove.

L.D.: Right.

D.S.: Uh, now Mrs. Dean you say you lived at one time in Pine Grove. In other words you were not born there.

L.D.: No, I wasn't.

D.S.: Uhhuh, how come did you get into Pine Grove?

L.D.: Well, uh my husband and I after he retired from the Navy was looking for a home at the end of the road. And we thought that Pine Grove was a beautiful place. And thought this was a nice place of Will Gray's.

D.S.: What year was this roughly?


D.S.: 1950. Then you were there after the Park had come into existance. You were telling about an incident with your brother-in-law, was it?

L.D.: Uh, my brother in law loaned me his car to take his mother out for a drive. We had built this new road right after the war in Pine Grove...what I mean it had been built there while I was away——, and we decided to drive up there to Pine Grove and see what it looked like. And on the way up some children...young people rocked our car and then when we came back out of Pine Grove they rocked our car in the same place.

D.S.: Uh, frightening!

L.D.: So after we got home I was telling my brother-in-law about it and he thought that I had been snooping on him and got kind of peeved with me. And I was excited because I was afraid they had done damage to the car but anyway come to find out he was courting a girl up there at this same place where they had rocked my car.

D.S.: Well why do you suppose they were rocking it?

L.D.: Well the boys didn't like for other girls to come up or other boys to come up and court there girls.
D.S.: They were clannish then...
L.D.: That's right.
D.S.: Well. What other things have you noticed about these people? Uh, did they seem like everyone else or were they different.
L.D.: Well, a lot of uh, years before...like one cousin would marry another cousin and have children..they didn't seem to go out and bring..didn't court on the outside of their clan.
D.S.: Did you notice any mental retardation because of it or any problems?
L.D.: Then there is a couple that I know that uh, what I mean, they've come out of it some since they've gone outside and worked other places.
D.S.: Right. What I was meaning was because of this close intermarriage were there physical or mental problems?
L.D.: Yea, in a way. A couple families that I know of up in there told me that they never went to school a day in their life..that their mother kept them home, to wash and iron and look after the smaller children. So uh, there was one woman ..when I was left a widow..and a couple years later she was a widow, but she was much younger than I was. I begged her to come on the mountain and work with me..that I would help them. But still she never did. She'd never been to school in her life..she was just afraid to go out I think and meet the public.
D.S.: I..I can see how that would be, don't you? Yea.
L.D.: Yet, she had a couple daughters that went out and they are real good workers. up on the mountain...been there for years.
D.S.: Uhhuh, did they have large families?
L.D.: Well, about four or five.
D.S.: That isn't too large.
L.D.: No, the biggest majority of them...not compared to my mother, she had 11.
D.S.: That's a large family. Did they have gardens or how did they...
L.D.: Yes. They had gardens, they picked berries..uh cherry trees were plentiful, apple trees around through there in Pine Grove. And uh, then the people would
D.S.: Oh, the marrells...
L.D.: Mericles...
D.S.: Mericles.
L.D.: Mericles...and uh they all seemed to make a living...they canned their own vegetables. Raised hogs, butchered their own meat...
D.S.: Did they eat beef?
L.D.: Very few of them. Now I don't go for pork but...beef is mine.
D.S.: Yea, right. It seems to be sort of a common thing among these people. They did not eat beef. They had chicken of course...
L.D.: Uh, a few of them had chicken. But their main meat was pork.
D.S.: Uh, you say they didn't go to school...some of them didn't...do you know where the nearest school was?
L.D.: Yea. They had one right down the road there in Bine Grove.
D.S.: One room school?
L.D.: Uh, one or two room school. They tore it down oh, 15 or 20 years ago.
D.S.: Uhhuh, would that have been a long walk for some of the children? Back before the highway...the road was
L.D.: No more than a couple of miles.
D.S.: Yea. Well if these mothers kept the children home to do the laundry and everything, they must have been fairly clean people. Were they?
L.D.: I imagine they were. I didn't know them real well then. Um, all of them were good housekeepers. Every home that I was ever in.
D.S.: What were the homes like?
L.D.: Well, uh most of them had an outside johnny house. And they didn't have running water into the house. A lot of them get water from the creek...from the mountains. And uh..
D.S.: Did they have a Spring?
L.D.: Most people had a spring.
D.S.: Yea, and there they stored like butter and
L.D.: And they had springhouses. They stored their butter, milk and all out in the springhouse.
D.S.: Did they have cows?
L.D.: Lots of them had a cow, but they kept that for milk purposes...butter...
D.S.: Yea, not to eat. Yea, uhhuh. Did the men go out and work at any particular job, do you know?
L.D.: Most of them...them that I knew of in through there are root stone masons. And brick layers.
D.S.: Uhhuh. You wonder how they learned it. Don't you.
L.D.: You wonder how they did it, but...I know up on the drive...why most all of the stone work was done by men in Pine Grove.
D.S.: They...was there...well say your house...did you lock it? Did you have a key to lock your house.
L.D.: I had a key, but it was very seldom that I ever locked it.
D.S.: Uh, people were pretty honest then right?
L.D.: Yes, they...so far as I know they were real honest...once in a while some child I imagine would do it just to be in mischief...we missed a roll of bobwire. And uh, couldn't imagine where in the world it was and years later we found it in a pond where we think some child probably rolled it down the hill. So that was just some prank that I think a child did.
D.S.: Yea, right. Do you suppose that before Deaconess Hutton...have you heard anything about before she came if the honesty was there among these people. Or did she do it.
L.D.: I don't know...I give a lot of credit to her.
D.S.: I wish we could know what it was like before she came. Have you any idea.
L.D.: No, I don't...my sister-in-law is dead and gone now...she would have known...Really
I wouldn't...

D.S.: You wouldn't know.

L.D.: wouldn't know.

D.S.: You said before we turned on the tape something about Deaconess Hutton making a remark when she was in New York. Would you mind repeating that.

L.D.: Well, she made some remark about the people...past...in New York, which they who in Pine Grove got upset about it and let her know it after she came back.

D.S.: What was it she said?

L.D.: Well really I don't know exactly what it was that she said, but I've heard others talking say that uh, she said, uh, was telling how she brought them out of their backward way and helped them to learn a different way of life. But uh, I still think that uh, she evidently did. Because people from the outside was always afraid to go inside Pine years ago. And when I saw that new road built up in there, naturally I wanted to see what it was all about. It had been built there when I was away during the war. It had been made, and so that's why we drove up that way...chose that road to go on that day. And uh, Deaconess Hutton was there. The church had been built and she was there then, because I remember the Church.

D.S.: Right. Did any of the houses...were any of them log houses? That you know of.

L.D.: Yes. Right at the end of Pine Grove on the left hand side is a log house now, but its been weatherboarded up. And there are several others that were log houses, that have been weatherboarded up.

D.S.: What are the principle names up there...Grays and

L.D.: Pettit and Weakley.

D.S.: Gray, Pettit and Weakley, are the main names...

L.D.: Main names...those uh, most all of them have been born and raised there. A few girls have gone out and got jobs and married on the outside and uh, still they always settled back.
D.S.: Uh, you were saying that your brother-in-law was going with a girl. Did he marry her?
L.D.: He married her.
D.S.: What was she like?
L.D.: Clara ....... well her mother was but she had children, five of them, and was never married and then later the father of these children married somebody else and moved to Ohio. So she was raised really without a father.
D.S.: Yea. Was she uh, exactly like all the other girls that you knew at that time or was there any difference, in her that you know of?
L.D.: Well uh, she uh, did a lot of quilting, and was a marvelous dress maker. She could make some of the prettiest things I've ever laid my eyes on. And so, I imagine her mother taught her, you know to do those things. But uh, she was an awful sweet person. And her sister lives there, now, in Pine Grove and she is an awful nice person.
D.S.: She does? Uhhuh. And what's her sister's name?
L.D.: Her name is Gray. She married a Gray.
D.S.: Oh, I wonder if uh, she would mind giving an interview?
L.D.: I don't imagine she would. I was trying to think what her husband's name was.
D.S.: You can't find one Gray from the other Gray.
L.D.: Well, going up when you cross the creek there is a Southered...
D.S.: How is that spelled?
L.D.: SOUTHERED....and then the next house is her...Mrs. Gray, Elsie Gray; anybody would know where she lived. Be on the left hand side across the creek, uh, not too far from the church.
D.S.: I was just thinking, her first name is Elsie right...
L.D.: Elsie... Elsie Gray ...
D.S.: I can call Deaconess Hutton and ask her what her husband's name is. She would know. Cause she knows everyone.
L.D.: I was trying to think what he...he's worked for me a lot.
D.S.: Uh, were you ever there when they did the Kris Kringle?
L.D.: Oh, my goodness...they come up there in droves.
D.S.: Uhuh, what was it like?
L.D.: Well they'd all be dressed up and come in and...
D.S.: What would they have over their faces?
L.D.: Masks
D.S.: Uhuh, these would be masks that they would buy in the store?
L.D.: Yes mam. Some of them would be homemade masks, and dressed up real funny.

We'd have to guess who they were. And then they'd pile in...and then another
time they'd dress and come around. And it was always a trick or treat on
Halloween. But we always kept plenty of candy and apples...popcorn.

D.S.: How long did the Kris Kringles come around.
L.D.: About a week before Christmas.
D.S.: A week before Christmas.
L.D.: Did they come in and just not say a word unless you tried to guess who they
were?

L.D.: They'd knock, and you'd go to the door, but they'd make an awful lot of racket
coming up.
D.S.: It was sort of fun wasn't it?
L.D.: Yea.
D.S.: I wonder why they stopped doing it?
L.D.: I don't know. Now Deaconess Hutton, she used to take a little Christmas gift
to everybody...years ago. Never missed a soul.
D.S.: Um, what a job that must have been.
L.D.: And she used to have sales up there...where uh, she's given away a lot of clothes,
and a lot of them on these sales...different handwork...that appliances
would make things sell it real cheap. You'd go there and get awful nice things for a little bit of
nothing. And then they'd have dinners there at the church. And uh, well you couldn't cook at home what they paid...sometimes the men done the cooking, at these dinners. And it's just...well it's really something.

D.S.: Uh, this selling the clothes cheap, was that...she'd sell them I imagine...well I shouldn't put words in your mouth...but was it because the people didn't want to take charity, that she made them buy...

L.D.: Some of them, and then what they took in went back into the church. See the clothes were sent in from cities...different places would send them in to the church. And uh, well the money that she took in from all went to help the Church. And uh, a lot of people that were real poor...I know of a...uh giving clothes to families so the children would have clothes to go to school. Shoes and things.

D.S.: Did you notice the people going barefoot in the summer to save the shoes for winter, or did they wear shoes all year round...

L.D.: Well, I don't know...there used to be a family from out past my father-in-law's house, and it was real cold with frost on the ground and these children had a kerosene can and they come out from that way and my father-in-law walked out to the fence and he wanted to know what they were doing barefooted as cold as it was. The little boy said he had no shoes. And he asked him to wait a little bit and he wrote a note and gave it to the little boy...two little boys and told them to take that to Willie Robinson in Stanley. Willie Robinson fitted them up with shoes and socks and they go home and their mother gets all excited...so she goes to see Willie Robinson and asks why, says she can't afford to pay for those and he said well Mr. Dean had sent that note. Says he often uh, will give some child shoes or something and send a note in, to me. And bought them children shoes. But uh, so I know from that experience that other children I imagine have gone through the same predicament.

D.S.: Yea, I'd hate to think of going barefoot in the winter...that's terrible.
Your father-in-law was a kind man.

L.D.: He was. He was a good hearted person. He didn't believe....at one time he had money, but when he died he didn't. He believed in helping widows and children. This child her daddy had T.B. and was bad off. So he took it from that the child really needed shoes.

D.S.: Was there close family ties...as far...closer than now? Like did the husbands and wives really stick together....

L.D.: Well, I imagine that they did. Because there is a couple cases that I know where the men left, but whether they married or not to begin with I don't know.

D.S.: Uhhuh. How about feuds, were there any of those? Going on that you know of?

L.D.: Well uh they usually would fight over women.

D.S.: Uhhuh, yea.

L.D.: Uh, what I've heard..what I mean that always the men would start a fight over a woman.

D.S.: Uh, did you ever hear them use words that were not in common usage? Now I have heard that there was some Elizabethan terms that they used. Did you ever hear any?

L.D.: No, I can't say that I have.

D.S.: What we are also trying to do is trace where these people came from, originally, and most of them don't know. And so one of the best ways would be these language.

L.D.: Well, now, I've heard them tell me that there used to be years ago a colored family that lived up in there but as far as ever seeing I never did hear of any living in Pine Grove. Other than what they've told me years ago they used to be one colored family...who lived up in there.

D.S.: That's the first colored family I have heard of.

L.D.:NOW, Mrs. Gray..she's dead now..told me that there was a colored family lived on back from where I am against the mountain.

D.S.: Wonder how they were accepted? Cause they didn't like strangers.
L.D.: Uh, well now we had a little house we started to rent to a colored family one time up there... and they all gave us, in fact I had rented it to her, and they told me that if that family moved in, they'd burn me out. So uh, I went back on my word and didn't let them have it. The man was colored and the woman was white. And so we just went back on our word and told them to save trouble..

D.S.: Yea, Sure. Well I'm sure they understood why. They of course have changed a lot. Now with that road being through they've changed even more I suppose. If only we could go back 50 or 60 years and see what they were like then.

L.D.: And it used to be when anybody got hurt we'd run to Deaconess Hutton and they'd go there for medicine, if they were sick they'd call on her, and she had a girl that stayed with them that drove her...and she'd go help them, I know my niece, after we'd bought up there and was living there... little girl got burned... well the first thing they thought of doing was taking the little child there to Deaconess Hutton. And... which they did do and she gave her first aid before they brought her on down the mountain. And she was burned quite bad.

D.S.: Wonder how she got burned.

L.D.: Uh, her mother was heating sausage..canned sausage..you know it's canned with grease and you put the whole thing in a skillet and heat it there, and then moving that whole skillet from the stove to the table, I imagine it was hot in his hand and it burned through and he dropped it on the little child and it went down all over her head and she was burned quite bad.

D.S.: Yes. Well fires of course were a very bad thing for anyone to be afraid of... they... and there in the mountains I imagine they did. Did they keep ladders up against their houses that you know of?

L.D.: No, I don't really.

D.S.: We've been trying to track why there are ladders in so many of the pictures of those old homes. All up against the roof and we figured it was because of the threat of fire. But we don't know.

L.D.: Uh, I wonder if the ladders were there...now this old house that we had...it had
two stairways going upstairs...one from the dining room that went to a room, and one from the front of the house that went to two rooms. And they tell me that years ago that the girls stayed in one part and the boys in the other...and they were always separated. There was noway upstairs of entering from the boys quarters without going up the other steps.


L.D.: We tore that all out...remodeled that...after we bought.

D.S.: house divided. Uh, did they have any special herbs that they used that you know of?

L.D.: No, about the only thing that I know they had uh horseradish and most everybody made their own horseradish and to tell you the truth I like it better than the store bought.

D.S.: Sure...it was fresher, probably. And they used that on all their food or just

L.D.: Uh, when they'd be eating pork or beef they'd use it.

D.S.: Was there a doctor handy?

L.D.: No the nearest doctor was...years ago I think they had one out at Stanley...some years ago...he pulled teeth and...doctor too.

and later years then they always came down to Dr. Long in Luray.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Speaking of teeth...what condition were their teeth?

L.D.: Bad.

E.S.: Bad. Uhhuh. Yea, that was money they didn't need to spend they felt probably. Um, did the children have any signs of rickets?

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

D.S.: They all had a cow.... each one.

L.D.: Most all of them. What didn't have well get milk from them but that's

.....that's my sister...just came in.

D.S.: Oh, hi.....let's see we were talking about cows..milk...you said they all had a cow practically...
L.D.: Most all of them.

D.S.: And they all had an apple orchard?

L.D.: We had different ones had apple orchard, uh cherry trees...cherry trees grew wild all over the place up there. And blackberries, raspberries and years ago there used to be gooseberries. But uh, since the chestnut trees and the five needle pine, why they don't. I didn't know the government was doing away with the gooseberry and brought some from Kansas and put them out. And uh, they finally found them and came and killed them all. They told me they were killing five needle pines...a beautiful tree. And do you know that tree didn't die...do you know what they were doing...

D.S.: Oh yes. It was terrible having the gooseberries.

L.D.: It was a beautiful pine tree in back.

D.S.: Did you...were you supposed to go with them?

L.D.: No.

D.S.: Okey. Uh, with all these apple trees did you ever see or hear of anybody making moonshine?

L.D.: Well, I've never seen the moonshine being made. But I've run up on old stills, where they've been.

D.S.: Uhhuh. So they did.

L.D.: So I know that they used to do it. And I've been out picking huckleberries run up on where the mash would leave there, but it would frighten me and I would get away from it.

D.S.: Okey. That, that I was sure was going to be your answer but I didn't want to lead you into it too much. Um the people were fairly honest, they worked hard.

L.D.: Yea, most all of them worked...

D.S.: Did you notice that the children had any childhood or were they made to work?

L.D.: Well years ago children used to have jobs to do and work, I imagine...uh, I do
know of some of them, that would get down and work you know even out in the fields...

D.S.: Yea. I just wondered did they play any games like marbles...

L.D.: Years and years ago, they use to play marbles...all young boys had a little bag of marbles and play with them and years ago they used to play horseshoes

D.S.: Yea. How about dolls. Did the girls have dolls?

L.D.: Paperdolls...mostly.

D.S.: I used to play with paperdolls...They did?

L.D.: Yea.

D.S.: Cut them out of magazines?

L.D.: Um, there use to be a Van Camp uh, I forget what magazine but uh, Van Camp similar to Campbell Soup used to put out dolls, paper doll dresses. and they'd cut them out and play house with them.

D.S.: Hey, that's fun. Uh, is there anything that you can recall...I have been doing all the questions and no doubt you have a lot of memories that you could share with us, without my leading you into it.

L.D.: Well.

D.S.: Your first reaction when you got there that I'm here among people that are different from me or was it that I'm home?

L.D.: Well, when My husband and I first went up in Pine Grove you felt a little different from the people, you were wondering if they were going to accept you. And uh, we my husband and I traveled a lot with the Navy and uh, we learned to get along with different people, different races so we soon learned to be friends with different ones. You was talking about hiding things...when we first went to see Will Gray about this place, he told us we'd get along with everybody but one man...it was his nephew and he'd raised him. And he said he'd steal you blind. My husband told him said no he won't. Said because I'm a free man, and I don't have to settle where there will be something like that. You been living here longer than
I have and I was just thinking about coming up here so I refuse to settle around anything that way. So later, a couple years later this man died...that was suppose to do all that robbing. And so I decided to go up and see Will Gray and see if he was still interested in selling and sure enough he sold to us. So that's how we happennd to go there. But we wouldn't have gone knowing that we would maybe have trouble, with a neighbor.

D.S.: How did you make friends? You said you made friends...with people, do..did you go out of your way to do things for them to show your willingness or did you just mind your own business.

L.D.: Will Gray when we bought the place from him he was going to take part of the money and build a little cabin at his brothers. But he really wanted to stay home where he was born and raised at. And uh, we decided that we would give him a lifetime right there and he was too old to work and uh, we had pasture land and let him rent the pasture and collect the rent for the pasture as long as he lived. We gave him that privilege because he had no way of going out and making any money and we knew as soon as the money was gone that we'd paid for the place that he'd have nothing so his nephew pastured the land and refused to give him the money for the pasture, and he couldn't believe that we had....so my husband just told him that if he wanted to find out if his uncle was telling the truth to go read the deed that we had put it in the deed and so then he paid it to his uncle. But uh, then the other people..most all of them are kin up in there, knew that we had treated that uncle fair and that's just how all made friends with us. Will Gray had the prettiest blue eyes I believe I've ever seen in my life. He was a small man. And uh, he had a couple sisters..they were both dead and gone when we moved here. And he was left there alone and uh he was very alert fellow. Smart little old man, and I reckon he wanted to be honest when he told us about his nephew that he'd raised..lived close, and we'd
have trouble with. And uh, myhusband just couldn't see that.

D.S.: Uhhuh, You enjoyed life up there?
L.D.: I really enjoyed it up there.
D.S.: What made you leave?
L.D.: Well, here I've got a trailer and my sister came here from California and she put up a trailer and so she..instead of moving into the trailer she moved herein the big house with me. And we rented out the trailer. And too many people..I think everybody is honest .. and I'd get too many people using dope in there, and soon as I'd find that out I'd get them to move and finally one fellow that went in there..he had bought the land all around me ...we'd sold off land. And uh, he'd come in and use the phone and run the bill up and denied doing it..use my washing machine and dryer and he kept wanting to buy and so finally I sold it too him so I could get away from all of it.

D.S.: Yea. Right. Do you keep in touch with any of the people up there?
L.D.: A few of the people that I had worked with we call one another nearly every day. But the people that I sold too....

D.S.: No, right. Is there anything else about Pine Grove that you can think of.
L.D.: No.

D.S.: Is the church still as powerful up there as it was?
L.D.: Uh, yes I'd say so because Sunday mornings I come down to a Church here at Luray....but passing there you notice that the whole parking area there is full of cars. At Homecoming I think everybody comes home for it and there is always a good turnout for their dinner parties and all.

D.S.: When do they have their Homecoming?
L.D.: It's in the summer.

D.S.: Well this has been delightful. You have been a tremendous help...I sure do appreciate it....What were you just saying.
L.D.: Neighbors would come into our house without knocking. They'd just walk right on in. Hollar...anybody home?

D.S.: I wonder why?

L.D.: Well they just felt that close to you I reckon.

D.S.: Could be a bit embarrassing sometime.

L.D.: It has been a couple times.

D.S.: Could this be true... I imagine it was throughout the whole area.

L.D.: Probably it was... that was hard... about the hardest thing for us to get use too, there.

D.S.: I could believe that, yea. Isn't that something. Now you are mentioning that your father-in-law had a farm up near Big Meadows.

L.D.: My father-in-law's parents, lived up near Big Meadows. Up near there somewhere and uh, his name was Dean and he asked us to take him up to his old homeplace. And the CC boys were up there at this time and I'll never forget it... we went up and we hiked down... he found a big old chestnut tree down that he and his father had cut down still laying there, the house was gone and the garden was still there and a couple apple trees that he could remember that his mother used to sit him under the apple tree while she worked the garden. And he usthe would say that the way they had of telling time then was when a shadow came around to a certain place.

D.S.: That makes sense... almost like a sundial.

L.D.: And uh, he told about how... I don't know what war it was, but his daddy had a big place under the rock where he stayed hid. And his mother used to go there for milk and she would slip milk and something to eat back in under these rocks for him to get... he hid all during the war. And uh... does your father-in-law have any recollection of how large the garden was that his father had?
L.D.: Uh, no. The land was still...what I mean it wasn't grown up bad when we were there. You could still tell that it was a garden....

D.S.: About how large did it look?

L.D.: Almost an acre. They probably raised their potatoes, corn, everything there in this one plot.


L.D.: But uh, he used to tell where the old spring was, and the woodshed, different things, pointing them out to us. But what really amused him was the big tree that him and his daddy...chestnut tree...cut down...was still laying there, on the ground. He was all excited over that.

D.S.: Yea. Right. I'll bet he was. Have you any idea where the Dean family came from.

L.D.: No, I don't have the least idea. There is an old Dean cemetery, up there on the mountain.

D.S.: I know there is. Trouble was, those cemeteries they didn't usually mark who was in them. Were these marked? Do you recall?

L.D.: Well now his father was buried up there and then later was moved from there to uh, Shenandoah. And then later on in life his mother died and was buried in Shenandoah up there. But she had her husband taken up...

D.S.: If only they inscribed on the...so many of them just used rock. And they have no dates or anything.


D.S.: And that could have been priceless, to have. But this was near Big Meadows.

L.D.: Somewhere near Big Meadows, cause I remember taking him up there...I drove the car. And we parked up there on the level and hiked down

D.S.: That was down on the east...

L.D.: It wasn't too far down the mountain.

D.S.: Then that would have been down toward Camp Hoover.
L.D.: It could have been I don't know. I don't even know...I have a general direction of where Camp Hoover is, but Camp Hoover is the other side of the mountain.

D.S.: Yea.

L.D.: Well this was on this side.

D.S.: Uh, the Page County side. Oh. Uhhuh, Yea. That was what I was wondering if it was the Madison or Page County...

L.D.: I was going to say, I have never been to Hoover Camp, but I always had the impression it was the other side.

D.S.: You ought to go.