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(SNP116) Jake Sisk interviewed by Dorothy Noble Smith, transcribed by Peggy C. Bradley and Sharon G. Marston

Jake Sisk

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NARRATOR: MR. Jake Sisk
INTERVIEWER: Mrs. Dorothy Smith
PLACE: NORTH OF NICHOLSON HOLLOW
DATE: December 16, 1978

TRANSCRIBED BY: Peggy C. Bradley
COMPLETED DATE: February 29, 1984
D.S.: We are interviewing Jake, and what is your last name?
D.S.: Sisk?
J.S.: Yea.
D.S.: Did you know Darwin Lambert?
J.S.: No.
D.S.: He spent quite a number of summers with the Sisks.
J.S.: No, they was probably... they are scattered all over the country now, some of the other bunch, I don't know.
D.S.: Where did you live in the mountains?
J.S.: Back out here not too far. I didn't live way back up in there, I lived at the bottom, almost.
D.S.: Uhhuh. Right at the foot of the mountains?
J.S.: Yes.
D.S.: O.K., great. Was there a lot of children in your family?
J.S.: Let's see, it is only two a'livin', some dead.
D.S.: How many was born?
J.S.: Five, I think.
D.S.: That was a small family.
J.S.: Yea.
D.S.: That was a small family. Uh... How did your mother take care of them?
J.S.: Well, my Father worked for one of the farmers practically all of his life. They lived in one of their houses, so...
D.S.: I see.

J.S.: You mean my Father?

D.S.: Yea.

J.S.: Thirty-five acres, twenty-four and a half, and ten and a half, two lots.

D.S.: Great. Was it mostly woods?

J.S.: No.

D.S.: It was cleared land?

J.S.: At least half of it.

D.S.: Uhhuh. What did they raise?

J.S.: Oh, just ordinary living. Raised a couple cows, of course milk, raised hogs, raised chickens, things like that.

D.S.: Any beef?

J.S.: No.

D.S.: Did you have a horse?

J.S.: Yea, they had a team of horses. They had to, back then.

D.S.: Sure. Right. Well, some people had a mule.

J.S.: Well, it could have been a mule. Some kind of animal to pull a plow.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Your nearest neighbor was how far away?

J.S.: Oh, I don't know. Neighbors was scattered all around.

D.S.: Were they about a quarter of a mile apart?

J.S.: Some more, some less.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Do you recall the name of your nearest neighbor?

J.S.: Well, you mean at our homeplace?
D.S.: Uhhuh.
J.S.: That would have been John Dodson.
D.S.: John Dodson?
J.S.: And, I had one uncle, my uncle's name was Jack, too. He lived just above from where we did, right below where John Dodson lived.
D.S.: Uhhuh. O.K.. Now, you had these vegetables, you grew turnips, and cabbages ....
J.S.: Yea, anything you can mention. We raised plenty of.
D.S.: How did you keep them over the winter?
J.S.: Well, they buried the potatoes at that time.
D.S.: Yea. Cabbages?
J.S.: Yea, cabbages.
D.S.: Turnips?
J.S.: Yea.
D.S.: Would you dig a trench and .....?
J.S.: No. What they would do was make a flat place on top of the ground and they would bury the potatoes under a mound so the water would run off.
D.S.: Yea. Well then didn't the vegetables freeze?
J.S.: Put dirt enough over them so they wouldn't freeze.
D.S.: What did you put over them?
J.S.: Just plain dirt.
D.S.: I see, so you didn't dig any trench?
J.S.: No.
D.S.: There's a first! There's a first. Most people dug a trench and put straw in the bottom and then the vegetables in.
J.S.: The potatoes, you usually put a little straw or something over them before you put the dirt over them. The turnips you just buried them in plain dirt.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.S.: Didn't need none.

D.S.: The cabbages the same way?

J.S.: Yea, the cabbages the same way.

D.S.: I bet they came out fresh, didn't they?

J.S.: Yes. Some people use to instead of cutting them and burying them some people buried them like that. But, most of the older people pulled up stalk and all and sit the head down and covered them.

D.S.: Yea.

J.S.: Just put the dirt around, leave that stalk up in the air.

D.S.: Sure. Yea, right. They were good cabbages, weren't they?

J.S.: Oh, yea!

D.S.: I've heard they were the best cabbage anybody could ever grow. They hadn't been able to grow the same cabbage since they moved down to the low land. Goly! Uh... Do you recall any particular childhood illnesses?

J.S.: No.

D.S.: No? Uh... Was there anybody with croop or anything like that?


D.S.: Yea. What would your mother give you when you had the croop?
J.S.: Oh, I don't know. In those days and time they used Vick salve or something, they don't use it no more.

D.S.: Yea. Did you ever hear of using, it sounds terrible, turpentine with sugar for a cough?

J.S.: Used whiskey.

D.S.: You did?

J.S.: Yea. (Laughed) Some I made myself, sometime.

D.S.: Hey, good, good. That was good whiskey. What did you make yours out of, apples or ----?

J.S.: It wouldn't been whiskey if it would been apples.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.S.: I used rye and corn meal.

D.S.: Right. ----.

J.S.: I didn't do too much of that, I stayed away from here too much to make it.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Uhhuh. How was your house built?

J.S.: Well, the one we had was just an old frame house, it wasn't log.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.S.: Most of them around was log houses, but my Father when he quit working for the farmer, well, he moved back and just built. He use to have a sawmill on our place that belonged to us.

D.S.: Yea.

J.S.: Cut the lumber and built a frame house.

D.S.: Uhhuh. You know a lot of the pictures up there at the Park of the houses shows a ladder up against the house. And, we been wondering, was those ladders there because
maybe the roofs would catch on fire?

J.S.: Yes.

D.S.: They were? I thought that was it. Yea. There was danger there from fires. Yea, because everybody used fireplaces to keep warm, didn't they?

J.S.: Yes, at that time. After we built the frame house we had a stove in that.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.S.: But most of them had fireplaces.

D.S.: Yea. Now when you went to the stores, where was your nearest store?

J.S.: The nearest one to us where we lived was over Nethers Mill, up here across the mountain.

D.S.: Did you go to Nethers Mill!

J.S.: Oh, I been there hundreds of time.

D.S.: How did you get there?

J.S.: Walked across the mountain.

D.S.: You walked? That was a long walk!

J.S.: Oh, it wasn't long. We didn't notice it at that time.

D.S.: No, no nobody minded walking.

J.S.: My first trip away from here was I went away from here to work. There wasn't no road except a wagon road between here and Luray. So, I walked across that lots of time, go to Kimball, catch a train and go from there.

D.S.: Oh, my Gosh!

J.S.: When we was going to Winchester we walked to Kimball and catch the train and ride from there. And, ride
about as far as it went and walk nine miles to Winchester.

D.S.: Shooo. Uh ... Keep you strong, didn't it? doing all that walking? When you went to the store, there in Nethers, ... uh ... would you take things like eggs ...

J.S.: Oh, yea.

D.S.: ... and dried beans, and ...?

J.S.: Oh yea, mostly eggs. We didn't take dried beans.
Take chickens, always had plenty chickens to sell, you know?

D.S.: Sure.

J.S.: To buy groceries with, things like that.

D.S.: Did he give you credit or cash?

J.S.: At that time they'd give you a due bill.

D.S.: A due bill? Uhhuh. Right. So, you'd walk over there and what would you buy?

J.S.: Depended on what we needed at home.

D.S.: Roughly what? Like sugar and ...

J.S.: Sugar and coffee.

D.S.: ... kerosene?

J.S.: Kerosene, yes.

D.S.: Material for clothes?

J.S.: Yes, ... some. When I come along they had a lot of ready made clothes and all.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Yea. Did your mother do much sewing?

J.S.: Not too much.

D.S.: No? How about shoes? Did you youngsters have ...? A lot of the people had just one pair of shoes and they saved those for the winter?
J.S.: Well, a lot of them had the shoes, but they'd go bare footed in the summer if they did have them.

D.S.: (Laughed) Yea. Uhhuh. Did you have anybody near around you that could repair shoes?

J.S.: Oh yes, back in the mountain he always kept his shoe and last, all that stuff.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.S.: Nail the sole on, of course.

D.S.: Sure, right. Uh, how about flour and corn meal?

J.S.: Why, you'd go to the mill to get that.

D.S.: Did you go to Nether again to get that?

J.S.: Yes. Take corn out thar to have it ground.

D.S.: Yea. Right.

J.S.: Of course, flour ... they didn't have a flour mill there. The closest flour mill was up here at Fletcher's.

D.S.: Yea.

J.S.: He'd make flour.

D.S.: Well, I'm surprised you didn't use that mill?

J.S.: Up here?

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.S.: Well, it was so much further?

D.S.: It was?

J.S.: Yea.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.S.: You see, we wasn't, I don't know, about a mile and half right across the mountain was a store and it would have been seven or eight miles up here to this one.
D.S.: So, you lived more in the central section?
J.S.: Yea. Lived close to the foot of the mountain.
D.S.: Was you near Nicholson Hollow then?
J.S.: Not too far from there. The store was right this side of Nicholson Hollow.
D.S.: Right. Yea.
J.S.: Then, they had another one, ... right, one right just above the one and another one on further back they had another store and Post Office, it was called Old Rag.
D.S.: That's right.
J.S.: Old Rag Post Office.
D.S.: Yea. Uhhuh. Great. How about visiting, you just said you didn't mind walking a long distance?
J.S.: I didn't then, but I would now.
D.S.: (Laughing) Was there a lot of visiting?
J.S.: Well, neighbors yea.
D.S.: Uhhuh. Yea. When would you mainly do your visiting, on Sunday?
J.S.: We'd mostly go at nights because during the day we usually had something else to do.
D.S.: Yea.
J.S.: Take a lantern, a kerosene lantern was what we used for light.
D.S.: And walk?
J.S.: Uhhuh.
D.S.: Uhhuh. Did you play, ... did anybody play the banjo or the fiddle?
J.S.: We'd always play at some occasion.
D.S.: Uhhuh. Yea. What did they play, do you remember any of the tunes?

J.S.: Oh, all I can remember, yea, but off hand I can't tell you what they are.

D.S.: How about Turkey In The Straw?

J.S.: Oh, yes.

D.S.: Golden Slippers?

J.S.: Yes.

D.S.: Amazing ...

J.S.: Brown ...., Brown Jug, all that stuff.

D.S.: Brown Jug. Money Mush?

J.S.: Well, ... I don't believe ... Well, different places different names for different tunes.

D.S.: Yea. Leather Britches?

J.S.: Yea.

D.S.: Leather Britches, do you recall how Leather Britches went?

J.S.: No.

D.S.: Aaaah, come on! Can't you? (Laughing)

J.S.: No. No. I was working over Stephens City on the kiln. And, the fellers worked the kiln had shantys all over the place. And, some feller, he was playing a fiddle. He played one tune and I asked him what it was and he said that was Slow Joseph. Well, he played another one and I asked him what was that one, he said that was Fast Joseph.

D.S.: (Laughing)

J.S.: When he got to the third one and I said what was that, he said that was Flying Joseph. I said that is Joseph
enough, I'm leaving. (Laughing)

D.S.: (Laughing)

J.S.: One thing about me, I've got a lot of years, but my mind is just as clear as ever was. I can remember things that happened when I was just so high.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Great, you're just the one we want to talk to then. (Laughed) Uh, ... do you remember, ... I ask you before about medicines, you were saying poultices were used?

J.S.: Oh, yes ma'am.

D.S.: Did your mother make, like a corn meal and onion poultice?

J.S.: They made something with onions, (Laughed) I don't know what they had in it.


J.S.: And really, I was never sick a day in my life. I never needed that stuff. The first time I was ever sick was 1918, when so many people died with the flu.

D.S.: Yea. Right. That was terrible.

J.S.: I stayed in the hospital about eight or nine weeks.

D.S.: You were lucky to get to a hospital.

J.S.: It just so happened I was working for a feller over with Winchester, Mr. Lunen, that owned an orchard. He carried insurance on all of us to go to the hospital with.

D.S.: Oh, good. Did you ever...? Did your family ever use Dr. Ross?

J.S.: Oh, yes.
D.S.: Did you know his son is still alive?
J.S.: I don't know about that.
D.S.: I interviewed him.
J.S.: I been to ole Dr. Ross lots of time myself.
D.S.: Right. He was a wonderful doctor, wasn't he?
J.S.: He died. He tried to commit suicide, too, you know?
D.S.: Well, his mind went. Yea. I tell you this, before
he died he took every record and burnt it because he
said, "My business and my patients business." It
was too bad.
J.S.: I tell you what he told me, you know vick salve use
to be a great medicine?
D.S.: Who?
D.S.: Vick salve, they use to use that a lot. He said if
you didn't have a cold just rub vick salve on and you'd
get one.
D.S.: (Laughed)
J.S.: He wouldn't use it at all.
D.S.: Yea. Uhhuh. Yea. ... He'd come by horseback, wouldn't
he?
J.S.: Yea!
J.S.: When so many people had the flu. ... You see, ...
the way it got to this part of the country a bunch of
soldiers, ... you know, wasn't fit always to overseas
duty, they got them over in the orchards to pick
apples, so they bought it to Winchester. Didn't get
on this side of the mountains, West of the Blue Ridge,
this is East, over here.
D.S.: Yea. Right.
J.S.: It got over here .... after Christmas.
D.S.: Ooooh! So, that's how it came here. I oftened wondered.
J.S.: Well, that's how it got to the state of Virginia.
D.S.: Yea. Yea, great. Thank-you very much for bringing it to us. Uh, ... speaking of how things got here. Did you ever have it handed down in your family where they came from originally?
J.S.: No.
D.S.: Nobody ever said? That's too bad. You know, I had a picture ..... 
J.S.: Most, .... of my family was, back as far as I can remember, was born, and growed up, and raised here.
D.S.: Yea. Uhhuh. Yea. They had to come from somewhere. Did you ever hear of the great animosity or the dislike of negroes? I had some people tell me if a negro dare ever step a foot in the mountain, he was sent out like crazy.
J.S.: Let me tell you something else you don't know, too.
D.S.: What?
J.S.: You see all these old stone fences about over the country?
D.S.: Yea.
J.S.: Well, that ...., the one had stone fences, they were the slave owners.
D.S.: Yea.
J.S.: I don't know wheather you everknowed that or not?
J.S.: Where you didn't see no stone fences, they didn't own slaves.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.S.: A feller right out here, George Moore, great grandfather, ole John Moore and Charlie Green, from out of Washington, was two of the biggest slave owners in Rappahannock County.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Boy. Oh, boy! Do you know how fellows went a'courting girls?

J.S.: Well, (Laughed) they'd take a walk through the woods, all I can tell you. (Laughed) No other place to take her.

D.S.: Yea. (Laughed) Did they make much-to-do about weddings?

J.S.: Well, ... not too much. They'd always have plenty of food or something like that, but they didn't make no big thing out of it.

D.S.: Yea. Not the way it is done now?

J.S.: Oh, no!

D.S.: Yea. Now, on a very unhappy subject, the funerals. Did they do any embalming?

J.S.: Not that day and time.

D.S.: No. They kept the body in the house?

J.S.: They even made the coffins, out ... a shop here or a shop there. I tell you where one is at yet, still standing there. Over Slave Mills.

D.S.: Over where?

J.S.: Over Slave Mills, use be coffins in there. A feller by the name of Will Regger use to make them.
D.S.: Will Regger?
J.S.: Will Regger. George Regger, his father before him made coffins and he followed it up.
D.S.: Uhhuh. They didn't charge much for them, did they?
J.S.: On, no!
D.S.: Yea.
J.S.: You could buy a coffin at that time for about eighteen or twenty dollars. Not more than . . . Uh, . . . twenty-five at the most.
D.S.: Yea.
J.S.: That's just rough, now.
D.S.: Yea. . . Sure. When it came time for the funeral, was it there always a minister handy?
J.S.: Oh, yea.
D.S.: Oh, O.K.
J.S.: If there wasn't one there then, if the weather was bad so the preacher couldn't get there, they'd set a date, you know?
D.S.: Uhhuh.
J.S.: And, have it on Sunday.
D.S.: Yea. Did everybody stand there at the grave site until it was filled completely?
J.S.: No.
D.S.: No?
J.S.: No.
D.S.: That's different, too. That's different too. O.K. . . Did they use head stones or did they use rocks?
J.S.: They used rocks mostly. You can find some in ole graveyards around, yet.
D.S.: Right. Yea. The biggest rock you could find you'd put, right?

J.S.: Well, it wasn't that particular, it was the shape of it more than anything else. You'd get..... if you could find a long one.

D.S.: Yea.

J.S.: .....flat, you know

D.S.: Yea. Right. Uh, ... did anyone tell ghost stories at nights, .... when you'd set around?

J.S.: Well, they probably did, but that don't worry me none.

D.S.: You don't remember none of them?

J.S.: I don't. Anyway, I don't believe in that stuff, from kid up. Didn't pay no attention to it.

D.S.: Aaaaah! Gee, I want to hear a good ghost story. (Laughed) Alright, now we are almost at Christmas time. How did you celebrate Christmas there, in the mountain?

J.S.: Oh, you'd usually come out with some candy and oranges and stuff like that. But, that was about the only time of the year they did have them.

D.S.: Yea. Firecrackers?

J.S.: Yea, occasionally.

D.S.: Did you do the Kris Kringle?

J.S.: No.

D.S.: You didn't? You missed a lot of fun. (Laughed) That Kris Kringle was great fun. Did the men do a lot of drinking at Christmas?

J.S.: Most of all of them. They always had whiskey up there at Christmas.
D.S.: Yea. Right. And, you kids went outside and shot firecrackers, right?

J.S.: Sometimes.

D.S.: Yea. Uh,... how about toys? Did you play marbles?

J.S.: Oh, yes.

D.S.: Pitch horseshoes?

J.S.: Yes.

D.S.: Did you ever pitch rocks?

J.S.: No.

D.S.: Did you ever hear of anybody pitching rocks?

J.S.: No.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Did you pitch pennies?

J.S.: Well, but in later years after I got working in apple camps and places like that, bunch of us did pitch pennies.....

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.S.: ....the one got the closest to the curb in the floor got the money.

D.S.: Yea. (Laughing) Alright. Now, did your father do any of the peeling of the bark on your trees?

J.S.: Ooooh, everybody in the country at that time had any wood land at tall always peeled bark, and then hauled it across the mountain to Luray. Didn't have no tan yard on this side.

D.S.: Right. Do you know how much they got for it?

J.S.: No, I don't. Don't remember back that far.

D.S.: Yea.

J.S.: Yea, I know how to do all that kind of work.

D.S.: Yea. It was a special thing to peel it, wasn't there?
J.S.: Yea, a spud.

D.S.: A spud, that's right. Yea. I've seen a couple of those and Gee, they look as though they'd do a good job. Yea. Uh.... Did you do a lot of stocking up for the winter when you went to the store? You know, like .... uh, ...before the snow came?

J.S.: Well, ... fact about it, they bout raised bout all the food they needed, except sugar, and coffee, and stuff like that ....

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.S.: ......and, of course, they'd go get that.

D.S.: Uhhuh. Medicines?

J.S.: Yea, ... they'd get somekind of. Some of old Yeger's linament or somekind of stuff. (Laughing).

D.S.: Yea. Uhhuh. Yea. So you didn't do anykind of special stocking up ......

J.S.: Oh, no.

D.S.: ....of sugar or anything.

J.S.: No.

D.S.: No?

J.S.: We wasn't that far from the store.

D.S.: Well, if a heavy snow came you were!

J.S.: Oh, well, ...... if .... if it came.... In case you don't know it, from bout the middle of this month, here as far as I can remember, I mean back in the woods, come a snow every, every year.


J.S.: I seen this road that goes out this way here, you know, where Mrs. Hall's house here ... out.... I've
seen that place you couldn't tell where the road was, you'd have to walk out through the field to get to the store. You see, we use to live over here in the Ole Moore's place after George Moore's father taken that over up there. My Father been foreman for him for years, then we moved out here and worked out here the rest of the time.

D.S.: Did you do much hunting?
J.S.: Not too much.
D.S.: Well, there was rabbits around?
J.S.: Yea, but I use to set traps for them
D.S.: Yea. Did you sell the rabbits or?
J.S.: Oh, yea you could sell them at that time.
D.S.: What would you get for them?
J.S.: About thirty cents apiece.
D.S.: Hey, you got a lot! How about squirrels?
J.S.: No squirrels, it wasn't no for them. Couldn't sell them, get as you went along.
D.S.: Yea. Did you like squirrel meat?
J.S.: Yea! Squirrel meat is the best wild meat it is.
D.S.: Yea. Really?
J.S.: Yea.
D.S.: How about fishing, did you do much of that?
J.S.: Well, just small creeks, you know. Where, you know, there was any water to mount.
D.S.: But, this wasn't part of your diet?
J.S.: Oh, no.
D.S.: No? Then mainly what you ate was ... Uh, ... hams?
J.S.: Yea, we always kept the hams and the shoulders, and what meat they didn't use sides, meat they'd take to the store and sell it. But, you can't do that no more.

D.S.: No, that's right.

J.S.: Got to be government inspected.

D.S.: Right. Uh.... Did you do your own smoking or did you use salt and pepper?

J.S.: Just used plain salt, mostly. Hardly used any pepper.

D.S.: Boy, I bet they were good.

J.S.: They were. Ain't nothing you can add to the hams to make them good but age.

D.S.: That's right. How long did it take to age it?

J.S.: Well, you could ....... You put down salt, salt it at the same time. But, you salt the hams separate, you know?

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.S.: They stayed in the salt about six weeks and then you could hang that ham up in the ceiling of the smoke house and could keep that ham four or five years. The older it would get the better it was.

D.S.: Yea. Right. Mmmmmmm. Boy, oh boy. Did you ever hear of people deliberately starting fires, so they could get huckleberries?

J.S.: (Laughed) Well, I don't know if they deliberately started them or not, but that Hot Mountain back there use to burn over every two or three years. Then the next four or five years then the buckleberries would be so thick you couldn't hardly walk through them.
D.S.: (Laughed) Did your mother dry them?
J.S.: No.
D.S.: She preserved them?
J.S.: Canned them, never dried them.
D.S.: Do you know if when she was canning she processed them? You wouldn't know that, would you? A lot of people said they just canned them and they didn't process anything. I was just wondering why there wasn't any horrible disease, tomain poison or something. O.K., I know you went to school.
J.S.: Not much.
D.S.: Not much? Where was your school?
J.S.: Back in the woods.
D.S.: How far away?
J.S.: Oh, by .... out... Not more than a mile or two, wasn't very far, where our home place was. You see, I lived on the Moore farm, out here, for years, at least my parents did.
D.S.: Yea. But, when you were in the mountain, school started when?
J.S.: Nine o'clock.
D.S.: Uh,.... in October?
J.S.: Nine to four.
D.S.: Nine to four, in October or ....... ?
J.S.: Well, they started about the same time they do now. Season about the same.
D.S.: Oh, really? Was it a one room school house?
J.S.: Yes.
D.S.: What did they teach?
J.S.: Well, reading, and writing, and Arithmetic, that's about it.
D.S.: You were lucky. I know one school that only taught spelling. (Laughed)
J.S.: Really?
D.S.: Did you ever know George Corbin?
J.S.: I've heard of him, I didn't personally know him.
D.S.: He was the best moonshiner around. (Laughed) Is that how you learned of him?
J.S.: No... I..., I never did fool around them much. I was just kidding about making, about making the stuff myself. I've been around to see it made a lot of time, and maybe helped them a little bit. But, tell the truth of the matter, I never owned nothing to make it.
D.S.: Yea. Uh,...how far along did school go? How many grades were there?
J.S.: Well, where I went, ... you'd say,...it averaged about a seventh grade.
D.S.: Really?
J.S.: The last year I went to, I went through the seventh grade over to the F.D. Roosevelt Schoolhouse.
D.S.: Yea.
J.S.: That's where I made my mistake by not going no more.
D.S.: Yea.
J.S.: Because I had to turn down. I can do some fancy work, but I didn't have education enough to figure plans, you see.
D.S.: Yea. Uhhuh. That was one thing the children didn't
realize was their growing up that they needed the
schooling. Did y'all make applebutter?

J.S.: Oh, yes. Pretty near every family in the country made
applebutter.

D.S.: Right.

J.S.: Most of them would have a cane patch and make homemade
molasses.

D.S.: Sorghum

J.S.: Yea.

D.S.: Uhhuh. How did they make the sorghum?

J.S.: They had a special pan for it. Pour the juice in one
end of it, had troughs going through the other, until
they get down close to the where the flu was. Then
they would get down there, they would cook then. Clean
that out and have more a'comin along all the time.

D.S.: Did you have to keep scooping the skum off?

J.S.: Yes.

Would neighbors get together to do that?

J.S.: Yes. Use to help one another.

D.S.: Yea. Did you make a party out of it?

J.S.: Well, some did, some didn't.

D.S.: Well! Now, come-on tell me... did you make a party
out of it?

J.S.: To tell the truth I didn't have much to say about it,
the older ones looked after that.

D.S.: Yea.
J.S.: To tell you, after I was thirteen years old I left around here. I

D.S.: Yea, I know. But, did your family make a party of it?

J.S.: No, not specially.

D.S.: Yea.

J.S.: Oh, they helped one another that's about the only party was.

D.S.: Did anyone play any banjo while you all was working?

J.S.: No, they didn't use that.

D.S.: You know, some of them would get together, they would sing and dance and they played music and they had a real wonderful time. But, you just made it work, huh? Did they ever do this, if a fellow and a girl were on the opposite ends of the paddle, if the paddle touched the side of the kettle they got a kiss?

J.S.: I don't know. I imagine the thing would be gauged full of holes then. (Laughing)

D.S.: (Laughing) Oh, dear. Did you ever use your horse for transportation?

J.S.: Oh, yes. I use to use a horse. I use to you know, I use to work for a feller down near School house, if you take a colt and break him, they would let you use him for a year. You know, to ride on and like that.

D.S.: Great! Is there anything you can thing of that I haven 't asked you?

J.S.: I don't know. (Laughed)

D.S.: Did you enjoy life up there?

J.S.: Oh, yes!
D.S.: By the way, what kind of lock did you have on your doors?
J.S.: Had pad locks.
D.S.: You did? Why, was there any stealing?
J.S.: Well, I don't know about that particularly. Some would lock doors and some didn't. But, if you didn't lock them it was alright and if you did it was alright.
J.S.: Just occasionally you would find someone that would take something that didn't belong to them.
D.S.: Was they ostracized, if they did?
J.S.: Well, sometime they would get their self in trouble and sometime they wouldn't.
D.S.: Uhhuh. Did you ever hear of any feuds going on, or anything of that kind?
J.S.: (Laughing) No, I don't know.
D.S.: O.K.
J.S.: (Laughing) I've seen plenty of fights, at times.
D.S.: Yea. How did you.....
J.S.: I helped pick up one man that got murdered, that was at Nethers Mill.
D.S.: Really?
J.S.: Yes, well....
D.S.: Oh! Could you tell us the story about that?
J.S.: Well, John Nichols shot him, sitting up..... Come down from, you know where Nethers Mill is?
D.S.: Sure.
J.S.: Well, you know it was another ole building right above that, a old house. It was another ole store
house sits out next to the road, I don't know if it is still there yet or not?

D.S.: It is.

J.S.: That well, old man Ted Weakley, that was the man that lived there, and Will Corbin was sitting there. They had done shucked the corn and tied the fodder, and John Nichols called him and told him he wanted to see him. When he walked up close to him, he shot him. Over top the fence, off the horse, he shot him. Killed him dead.

D.S.: No reason?

J.S.: Well, yes and no. They were both in the moon shining business. They caught Mr. Will Corbin first and they handcuffed him and they knew where John Nichols outfit was, and they taken him on by there handcuffed. And, he thought well, that old man Will Corbin reported him and he shot him. But, he shot the wrong man because Festus Sutton was the man reported him.

D.S.: Gee, that's terrible! Isn't it? Mmmmmum. Got any other stories?

J.S.: (Laughed) No.

D.S.: How did your family adjust to the fact that the Park was coming in?

J.S.: Well, nobody liked it.

D.S.: No.

J.S.: That was one of the dirtiest thing that ever happened to this part of the country.

D.S.: Right.
J.S.: Those people lived back there and they were all happy.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.S.: Made a good living, too. You go back there anyplace you wanted, and you always find plenty to eat.

D.S.: Right.

J.S.: And, some to that land... that they taken it, just taken it... and many people didn't get as much as a dollar a acre for it. Some of them... about ninety cents a acre.

D.S.: Yea.

J.S.: Some of them they handcuffed them to a tree, to a tree and burnt the house with them standing there lookin at it.

D.S.: Uhhuh. You were talking about the ground, it was pretty rocky, wasn't it?

J.S.: Yea, it was rocky. Lot of places they didn't use any horses at all, they'd go right through them rocks and gig holes right in the ground....

D.S.: Yea.

J.S.: ...and cover it up with a hoe and it make the biggest kind of corn. (Laughed)

D.S.: Sure. Yea. When the Park took over...., before the Park took over, did you ever go to Camp Hoover?

J.S.: No.

D.S.: You didn't? Did you have anything to do with knowing that about President Hoover, coming here?

J.S.: I remember, but I don't remember too much about it.
D.S.: Yea. Alright now, when the Park took over your land.... Uh,... how did your mother and daddy react?

J.S.: Well, we wasn't in the Park.

D.S.: You weren't in it?

J.S.: No.

D.S.: You were outside?

J.S.: Yea. The Park....you know where Cliff Weakley lives? You know.....?

O.K..

J.S.: Well, the Park line goes right above his house and we live over on this side of it.

D.S.: Uh... Your neighbor, how did they react, the ones that had lived up there?

J.S.: Tell you the truth, I don't know too much about that because , I tell you I wasn't around here too much at that time. (Laughed)

D.S.: Yea! You all were out picking apples at Winchester and carrying around in Stephens City and ....

J.S.: I worked the railroad some....


J.S.: ...finished cement for about twenty years.

D.S.: Uhhuh.

J.S.: Then that got a little heavy, then I went to using carpentry tools.

D.S.: Yea.

J.S.: Never did learn how to make nothing.

D.S.: (Laughed) Come on! Well, you know this has been very, very informative. You don't realize how informative it has been, and we sure do appreciate it.
If you can think of anything else... Debbie McCormick, can you think of anything?

D.M.: I just wanted to ask Sisk about, wasn't your sister real sick for awhile, what was wrong with her?

J.S.: No, she wasn't too sick. She was a diabetic, but she wasn't too bad a shape... she is still living.

D.M.: I meant when you all was young. Wasn't there a time when you had to take care of her or someone had to take care of her because she was real sick? I thought.

J.S.: My sister, no... Where you are mixed up on that is, our Mother died when she was thirteen months. I had a job, I did, finding a place for her to live until she growed up.

D.S.: Ooooh, what did your mother die of?

J.S.: Back out close to Government School house.

D.S.: Yea, but what was the matter with her?

J.S.: Pneumonia.

D.S.: Oh?

J.S.: My Mother and Father, both died of pneumonia.

D.S.: Oh, No! Gosh! Well, we sure do Thank-You very, very much.

J.S.: Well, maybe the next time you'll bump into somebody that will know something.

D.S.: Well, I'm sure they will. By the way, do you have any names of people that lived around here that lived in the mountain?

J.S.: None, except Will Burkley..., they all was chased out of the Park.
D.S.: Yea.
J.S.: He's about the only one around here now that lived in the Park. Of course, he got, you know, relations all scattered around.
D.S.: Sure.
J.S.: But, they growed up out there in the open.
D.S.: Yea.
J.S.: They didn't live in the Park.
D.S.: O.K. Alright....., I think this has been wonderful, and you don't know how we do really appreciate it.