

MTM/VF EIS

Community Narrative: Superior Bottom, West Virginia

Interviewer: Tell me a little bit about how you and your family came to live in Superior Bottom.

Resident: Well my husband had lived there and well in fact he wasn't born in Omar he was born in Pine Creek. And then his father pastured a church there in Superior Bottom and they moved to Superior Bottom. I moved to Superior Bottom when I married him. And that is how, you know, I became a resident there of Superior Bottom.

Interviewer: About when was that?

Resident: We got married in 1948. But, we moved to Omar in 1945, but we moved up Pine Creek.

Interviewer: So when did you move back to Superior Bottom?

Resident: In 1948, we...we really didn't move away. He.... after our son was born in 1949, he lost his...well he lost his right hand in an accident at the tipple.

Interviewer: Your husband did?

Resident: My husband did. And they wouldn't hire him back, because they didn't think that he could do the work, you know, with one hand. And he was a GI, so we convinced him to go to college. And he went to, he enrolled in Blue Field State College, in September, 1949. And we went to Blue Field. And then while I was up there, he insisted that I take some classes. And so we did, so we stayed up there until he graduated in 1952. And we moved... came back to Superior Bottom and that's where we've been.

Interviewer: Oh okay. So you got a degree in teaching?

Resident: Yes...I got a degree in elementary education.

Interviewer: And what about did your husband, what did he study?

Resident: He studied um.... well, at Blue Field, they had started a course where you can be certified from kindergarten through 12th grade. And he took that, they called it the single curriculum. And then he did his student teaching on the elementary level and then he did it on the secondary level. But he graduated from there, and then he went on to Marshall. And he got his masters in Principeship of Supervisory. And then he took some masters plus classes in special education, because he was a director.

Interviewer: So both of you ended up in the special education field?

Resident: Yes

Interviewer: Did you work at the school in Superior Bottom, then?

Resident: I did... I started of first at Peach Creek, in what we call the 'trainable center.' And then they transferred me back to Omar, that was when they opened up as the... on the secondary. And then they made my husband Principal and I worked there. And then when he left...he became Director of Special Education. They brought in another principal, and I stayed there until... that's where I worked until I retired.

Interviewer: Until you retired. When.... when about was it when they opened up that school and then you started working there again?

Resident: It was umn umn, Fall of '67. 1967. Because that was the year...well in fact in July of 1967, and I was going back to Marshall. And had a wreck. Well in fact, came close to losing my life. But, thank God didn't see fit to take me then. But um, then... that is when they opened it up, they opened it up, that school in September. And my husband was Principal. And on the other side, half of it they were using if for Adult Education, but they gave the Adult half of the building and we had... we had the... I'm trying to think... we had the front of the building. The front side facing the main road. And they had the back side facing the mountain side. And that was the way we started the Douglas Omar School. It was a high school, secondary level, for special ed students.

Interviewer: So at that time you were now living back in the Omar and Superior Bottom area.

Resident: Yes we were.

Interviewer: And what was the community like back then... when you were living there and working there?

Resident: We had, well it had.... it had really started going down. See that's when the mines, they started closing the mines in 54'. And people started leaving. And then um, Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel sold the land, or leased it to someone and they would come in and truck the coal out. This was really the beginning of the depreciation of the community. And there was... most of the people didn't put anything back in the community. And then we started complaining about the dust and then they started oiling the roads. Trying to, you know, keep it straight. But, as far... it was really a close-knit community. It was.

Interviewer: Up until then or...

Resident: Well, and even now there... Some of the people who use to live there they come back. And when they come back into this area, they have to come back into Omar. And even some of them are upset now, because most of the houses are gone. And some of them look at them and tell me that it is depressing. I told them 'No, it isn't depressing.' I don't look at Superior Bottom as being a loss, and something that isn't going to come back. I looked at it as if is well, I've expressed it as a pregnant lady getting ready to give birth to something. And this is where I expect, I expect Superior Bottom to come back and I'm expecting people to live there. And...

Interviewer: So it is just going through a cycle of change.

Resident: This is what I see, and this is what I believe is happening - just a cycle of change.

Interviewer: That is interesting view point, and a very interesting way to put it.

Resident: Yes.

Interviewer: Very positive way to look at everything.

Resident: Uhm hum.

Interviewer: Tell me a little bit more what you liked about the community or what you still like about the community.

Resident: Well in fact, I liked the relationship that the people had. And well, now it is just so quiet. And the birds, more birds... we've seen more birds, different birds in the last year and a half, close to two years, than I've seen in the bottom, you know, since I've been living there. And uhm, deer come out of the mountain and we can see them. Well, of course we had a bear that came down, well of course we're not too interested in a bear (laughing). But then before I moved from my old house, there is a big tree in the back of my house and a light pole and I was across the street at one of my neighbors one day and I looked and I saw a squirrel running down... down that tree. So, we had wildlife living there. And unh, it's just so peaceful that they were coming out of the mountains.

Interviewer: So back when there were more houses and more people it wasn't so quiet?

Resident: No, it wasn't so quiet. And we didn't have so many, you know, of nature's creatures coming down. Once in awhile at night they may have a bear come out of the mountains. And one time there was a deer that ran through the community, but that was it. You just didn't see them coming into the community. And I... we didn't see the exotic birds. We've seen blue birds, small little... they almost looked like canaries, and wrens, almost every kind of bird. Blue jays, yes. It was very... To me... and I just loved to watch the birds. And I watched them and you could hear them and you could see them. And different people have been talking about what beautiful birds they have been seeing.

Interviewer: Hum... That's really an interesting and positive change that I hadn't heard any one else mention. Is the close-knit aspect of the community still there?

Resident: It is still there. It is one of the things that is unique. We are close-knit but we seem as if we don't care. You know, lot of times... but we give each other their privacy. But, when we know that one is in need or one is going through something. People will rally to see what we can do to help them. And that is the type of community that we have, and that type of relationship that we have. And unum, well I'm blessed... my daughter doesn't think I'm so blessed, but if anyone knows that someone is going through something they will call me to see what going on or call me and tell me what is going on. And usually I'll see what I can do or see where I can direct them to get some help or something like that.

Interviewer: Do you think that is likely to change in the future?

Resident: It all depends on the people and umm... if we want it to remain the same we will. And but if someone should think "Oh I can't do anything," and you have their hope. It will be, if they're positive.

Interviewer: Do you think that any of that has been affected or might be affected because of the surface mining coming in and the changes with regard to that?

Resident: You know, I saw some disappointment, but it's... they're coming back. Everyone is they're trying now to do and keep things going. One of the things I told them too, I said, well, you know, people were coming in and trashing the community. And I told them, No, we have a community action group, that we were trying to improve our community. And as long as we have one person living in that community, and this is.... is ah going on, we expect the community to be decent. And able for people to live in and clean enough for someone to come in and want to live in. To want to live in it. So, that is what we are trying to do.

Interviewer: That sounds like that is a really strong and unique, as you put it, important part of the community - that you've all come together at least in that way.

Resident: Yes we have. We've had a few that, you know, well you don't ever have complete unity. But some will backed off and umh, well they... you know, and if some people they can't get their way about something then they drop out of it. It is as if they take the ball and go home. But then these same people have needed help from the community and they've asked, and it has done. So, I can see them slowly coming back and becoming involved. The only thing that... one of the things I missed the most we don't have the children that we use to have, because we use to do positive things with the children, we would give them like a little outing, or little wiener roast, or something like a picnic, at the end of school. And then we would do something, you know, at the beginning of school and try to do something to keep them encouraged.

Interviewer: When did that change, when when did there seem to be less children?

Resident: When they started moving out of the community, and they sold their houses. Because when the coal company came in to ask to buy the houses, they only wanted, I think it was 4, no it was 3 houses, at first. 'Cause they want my house, 'cause I'm right on the corner, and the "specific name" house that was on the corner, and the other place... which it would be hard for them to turn. And the house right beside me, because it is directly in front of the bridge. And they said that if they can get that, they could make almost, a straight shot back to the mine. And one lady in the community heard that the coal company wanted to buy the houses. And he said, well he told me, he said, that he wanted to buy the ones in a row down to the school. And ah... he said, and then all the way back to the mountain, because that was what he needed, he needed that for his men, and for his equipment, you know for them to park. Well, when we knew anything, this lady had knew about it because it wasn't gonna bother the houses on the creek. And she took a petition, and got the people to sign, saying they wanted to sell. Well, when we took it to the community group we would discuss it. And my concern was if they brought in all this equipment, we had little children that

lived, and most of the little ones lived in the houses along the creek, and I was concerned about them. Because sometimes they would get out, and they wouldn't be supervised, that they may get hurt. And I called him to ask him, you know, I wanted to talk with him see exactly what his plans were and he thought I was interesting in selling too, that I was speeding it up. And, I told him no, I was concerned about the children. And this is when I found out that this lady had circulated the petition, and that all of them wanted to sell.

Interviewer: So initially you, they all wanted to buy a certain number and really... the whole group of people got together and said why don't we all go. Why do you think in your experience they decided to do that?

Resident: Well, I think some of them... well it was for the money. I think that's what most of them were out, were after. But they did not get what they would have, had he ask them, you know to, to buy their homes. So, in fact different ones saying that... that they wanted to go, everybody wants to leave, he didn't have to offer them a lot of money.

Interviewer: Do you think that they got a fair deal?

Resident: Well, not as fair as they could have and he, well... As far as what we paid for the houses, we really got them very cheap, and then we had put a lot of expenses...gone to a lot of expense to repair them, remodel them. And what a lot of them got out of it, they could not have bought a house that was comparable for the amount that some of them got.

Interviewer: Tell me a little bit about your experiences, with that same process.

Resident: Well with that same process, they came and they appraised, and the lady that did the appraising, appraisal put in false pictures. She had appraised... made an appraisal of a property for another group, they wanted to put in a housing development on some property. Of the lady that bought this school property, this is one thing she was trying to do. This lady did the appraisal and the pictures, well in fact one of the things she was saying then, was that the community was too dirty, and you know, run down for it. And she put in a negative report, so the housing people turned it down. And well we didn't know that this was in the plan, this plan for the coal company was already developing and she knew about it because she was the appraiser for them. So when she came in to make the appraisal for us, to appraise our houses, you know fix up this package here, they put homes that are similar to yours. She put a picture of the house that was next door to me that she had taken on the first appraisal. 'Cause between the time of the first appraisal and the second appraisal, some renovations and remodeling had been done on that home. It didn't look like it did on the first appraisal. But she put that picture in there and I recognized it, and I pointed I out to her. And said, I told her, I said, look this _____ is a reflection on the integrity of your company. And I said it's false. And the man, I think _____ "specific name" was with him, and he looked at me and he said integrity? And the "specific name" said, but you know, I've tried to be honest with you. He said I've tried to keep my word. And I said, I know you have. I said, what you need to realize when they talk about your company, you're out here talking with the people, and you're the one they see as being dishonest. And I said this a reflection on you, as well as on your company. He thanked me. He said, I'll tell them. And I said now, I said I could not recommend this lady to do any appraisals, because of this false report.

Interviewer: And she worked for... his company?

Resident: His company, Massey, he worked for Massey. And he said I'll take it back to them and I tell them.

Interviewer: Did they give you a choice of what appraisers to use?

Resident: No, no they didn't. They had hired this lady, you know, to do these appraisals for everyone. And then of course they based it, course they went by court house, they based it on the, you know, the tax value our rate, tax rate. So what he was offering me for my home and my lot, well I couldn't have bought a new place for it. And we had, my daughter was living in Denver, Colorado, and my husband was bedfast. But let me tell you something, go back to the very first time they came to me. He and "specific name" came to me, and they apologized for coming because they had heard my husband was bedfast and was sick. And they apologized for coming because he was ill. And they said but we, and they told me what they needed, and they needed my house. They needed to expand the road. And I said well do you really need it? And he said yes, and he told me what he was doing. And I had heard a little bit about it, I said they... and they had, they had told me they didn't hire blacks. So I asked him, I said are you an equal opportunity employer? He looked at me and said yes. We hire anybody we think can do the job. And I said well okay, and I said now you need this. Your trying to provide jobs for people, lot of the jobs, I said you also trying to earn a living. And that God has blessed us to be past that age where we are retired and can live, you know. And I said, but if you need this to provide jobs, I won't stand in your way. I believe a job would be worth some place else to go. And ah... so, if you need it, and you will hire people. And I told him about my next-door neighbor and two other families right there in my community who needed work. And two of the men had sons who needed work. And I told them, I said now they need work, they can't find, and if you're willing to give them a chance, you know, if they want to apply. He said yes, we'll hire anybody. And so based on that, and I told him I will sell. And I talked with my husband he said he would sell. We were going to go Denver. Well, I would have to transport him by air ambulance. And my daughter went on the internet and found someone, well the man... we didn't know the man was dishonest. But she told me he said it would take \$20,000.

Interviewer: To move your husband?

Resident: To move my husband, to fly him, you know, from West Virginia, out to Denver, Colorado. And so that would, and when they brought the appraisal I think he just offered, it was either \$45 or \$49,000 for my home and the vacant lot. And that would not have left enough to buy a home, it would have taken that to move my furniture. And so I told him, I said no, I can't do that. So then he offered to pay, they went on and they could it for a little over \$10,000. He said, we will fly him out there and let you keep all the money. And by this time my husband had become, well he loved Omar, he was born in Omar. And he asked me had I changed my mind about going to see his brother? So I had asked if he wanted to move to ... Virginia to be with his brother. Or either to Norfolk, Virginia. We have a young son there. We... our oldest son lives in Texas. I asked him, you know, if he wanted to go and live with either one of the children. And he answered no, he wanted to go where our daughter was. But he changed his mind, he was really anxious and I saw the fear on his face. And I had told him no, I said do you want to go live with "specific name"? He

said no, I want to go see him, but I don't want... I want to live in Omar. Then I said, well you said you want to go live with our daughter, and her son and daughter. And he said no, I want to go see them, I want to live in Omar. And he was afraid I was gonna take him out of Omar. And I promised him I wouldn't take him out of Omar. And that totally, I said now are you, do you mean Omar *and* this house or do you mean *just* Omar? And he kept saying just Omar. And I told him, I explained it again, I broke it down. I said now if we sell this house, we stay in Omar. We'll move in a new house, is that what you want? And he said yes, it would be all right to sell this house. But I prayed and asked God if he meant *that* house - don't let me move him. We were in that house when he passed, so I'm sure that's what he meant.

Interviewer: So you stayed for how much longer than before when you originally started talking to that company?

Resident: It's been over 3 years. Over 3 years.

Interviewer: Over 3 years. And how did the company react to your decision to stay? Was that something?

Resident: They were completely satisfied with it. They told me, and then they offered me property in Pine Creek. We use to live in Pine Creek, but Pine Creek has been, it has depreciated. And then drug dealers frequent up there and I didn't want to go up there, from what I had heard. Main reason, I would have moved away from my support. 'Cause I had a young man who would come in when I had to go to the store, and sit with my husband. And then my next door neighbor, when she saw the lights on or something, she'd call and checked on me. And this is what my neighbors did. And I didn't want to move out of that secure environment. And I told them no, I didn't want to go that far and I wanted to get as close as I could. So I knew that he wasn't taking all of the property in Superior Bottom, so I asked him if I could move to the upper part, some place in Superior Bottom. He first offered me a lot behind where I was, and I thought it was on the back. I said no I didn't want that. One night I had brought my... after I brought my husband home from the hospital, and it was beautiful. And I was out there, I was just saying Lord I love this place. 'Cause I had pine trees around, and it was just so peaceful. And I said, but I've given him my word, I'll sell. And I said, I don't want to go back on my word. And it was like he spoke to me, 'And what about back here? You will still be on the corner and it would be similar to where you are.' And I could just picture my home right behind that house. So I told him I wanted it. But then that lot was tied up - the lady that had had it, you know, she didn't do right. And another young man bought it for taxes and ah but, anyway. All this went on, and I just asked the Lord to let me... if I was going to stay in Superior Bottom, let me be where he wanted me to be. And they were going to put me in front of my church. Well ran into some difficulties with the homes that we picked out at Fleetwood. And when my husband passed the one I had picked out and settled on. I was trying to get one with enough area I could bring him in to the family room with, you know, the bed. And um, then this man, he didn't believe the coal company was going to pay for it. He started trying to pressuring us after he realized that to go ahead and close the deal. And well anyway, when my sons came in they went down to look and to see. One of them is in air condition and heating, and he felt the gas furnace would be better, than the electric. And um, so this was one of, one of the changes we had to ask for. Then they wanted the motion detecting lights and some other things. But the little changes... that they made, he said that it would be an additional \$1,000 to the cost. Well, "specific

name” went down to like the payment and he told me \$2,000 dollars more. Then he started pressuring “specific name and he would call me, called my son in Dunbar. Every time he would... he wouldn’t call me to say anything. And then he didn’t call “specific name” and “specific name” would stop calling him. “Specific name” went down to make the down payment, he wanted him to pay all of it. He said no. If I ay you all, then “specific name” may not be satisfied. And so we’d would be stuck with it. He said I’ll pay you half of it and when you bring it and bring it in, I’ll pay you the other half. But anyway, that is the way it went. And went through, even in the first half, he wanted to add \$2,000 dollars on. And then “specific name” got upset with him and went to his friend. Back to “specific name”, at “specific name” Manufactured homes. He had brought one over from “specific name” lot, over for me to see. He put it there on the lot there at Rothmore. Trying to save me from having to travel and leave my husband. Well I went in - it was a beautiful home. But the fire place was facing the door to the great room. Right behind the fire place was the kitchen. And its an “L” shape, but it was small. I was used to a large kitchen. And the washroom was very small, and then the table, the kitchen table, it was really close together. And it looked as if... only if you could sit on the end it would be comfortable. Doesn’t seem as if you could be comfortable. And, I had 5 children, and I am 1 of 16 children. There is fourteen of us living. And when my sisters and brothers come, they come to my house. All of us are kinda hefty, and I just... I just had nightmares. I got claustrophobia looking at that, thinking about my family. And I needed some pantry space. Cause I had some pantry space. So I asked him if I could look some place else and he said yes, I want you to be satisfied.

Interviewer: That is interesting. So all through this really, the representative from the coal company has worked closely with you to make sure that you were satisfied. And you feel like he was very honest with you?

Resident: Yes

Interviewer: That’s good. What was the arrangement in terms of were they going to purchase your current home and pay for a new one. Or they...

Resident: They.... these people are purchasing my home and giving me a new one. Debt free. And they’ll landscape it for me, fence my yard. And he was going to give me a carport, but I had so much stuff that I need some storage. I had a little storage building but I didn’t think that would be large enough for they could move it. So, I told him that I wanted a garage. And then I could put some stuff in the garage. And the young men who was doing it... I thought that a 1 car garage would be enough of storage space, and so we bought a package. And he said that I should have 2... a 2 car, in order to have ample storage room. So, this is what we’re trying to do. And he was going to give me what he was going to pay for the carport, for the garage.

Interviewer: So you’ll have to pay the difference, a little bit, but that is okay by you.

Resident: Yes.

Interviewer: So you feel like you got a very good deal. Have you talked to the company about anything else? Do you have any dealing with them about blasting or anything else that the community has experienced?

Resident: Well now with the blasting, even before it started... they came by and they told us. And they did, that was why they did appraisals of our homes and took pictures. And so that in case the damage was done because of the blasting, they would pay for the damages. And this was one of the things they said. And now since it has started, you know, we hear it sometimes. But he told us anytime, just let them know, you know, if it disturbs you. And one of the things he was trying to do with me, he said he wanted to put me up on the end by the church. Because my husband was living, and he wanted him to be away from the bridge and not get the noise of the trucks coming across the bridge. And one of the things, I know about the men who working and cleaning off my property, they was throwing stuff in the creek. And I stopped them. Then one came and cut down the tree and let it fall in the creek. And I told him. He said oh no, they'll get it up, he made them get it up. And this was one of the things he's doing, he trying to work that way, to be sure that things are not messed up, not done wrong.

Interviewer: Did they come in and talk to you, and to people in the community before they started surface mining at all?

Resident: When they came in they... Well, when he came through, talking about the property, he told me what he was going to do. And the original plan, he said, was they was going to put in a shaft mine, up behind the mountain. And that he told me, he said, they don't plan to truck coal through the community. They're building a conveyor belt to go, I think to the plant at Stirrat, and that's were they plan to send their coal.

Interviewer: So you had information about what was going to happen

Resident: Yes.

Interviewer: How satisfied are you with everything that has been arranged, for you, in terms of your move?

Resident: I've been satisfied, it's just going slower than I had thought it would. But ah, and I keep telling my daughter, but she was getting upset. And I said, we can't move ahead of Gods plans for us. He always in control, and we have to wait on him. And the other day when I was getting a little anxious, cause the cold weathers coming... And they put my new home in place in June, and then they didn't get everything finished. We... well was it June? We started to put furniture in there in August. We spent our first night in the home the 8th of October and we been moving in ever since. Waiting for them to get things, you know, fixed. And the landscaping well, instead of doing some of the grading before they put down this... They had to get, my home came in first then they had to get it off the lot, 'cause it took up most of "specific name" lot. So they had to get it in place. And so they, this is why they started the way they did. And then they're putting in another home above me and its cheaper, he explained to me, its cheaper to have multiple work done then to do one single thing. And this is what he's trying to do. And he said that the more he can save, on the landscaping and all, he'll be able to more. And ah that was one of the reasons he gave us the carport. And he went to the Health Department to see if it would be possible for us to use the same sewage system and so that saved money, freed up money for him to use, you know, towards the landscaping. And so I been very, you know, agreeable with him, because he's doing everything, you know, to try to

please us. And this is, now going back to “specific name”, with the home at Fleetwood... he had gone down and he knew a lot of things. But he’s not pushy he won’t, wouldn’t try to get me to change my mind. He would ask me questions, you know, make sure. And when he came in and talked with my children and they were asking him questions. And he said yeah, he said this is some of the things he was concerned about, and he said, I don’t want you mother to be taken advantage of. He said, and I’m not going see, allow her to be. And he said, I want the same things for her that I want for my mother. And he said these are some things that need to be taken care of. He became so emotional when he was talking about that, and I just thank God that he’s like that. And he pointed out to them some things that they needed to look for and be concerned about. So that’s the kind of support I have in him.

Interviewer: That’s really wonderful.

Resident: Yes. And when I called him about some things, he said well let me call the company and see what we can do. And then call me and said it would be all right.

Interviewer: So you have faith that he’ll stick to that._____

Resident: I do, I do.

Interviewer: What about ah, do you, how do you feel about your decisions to move? You’ve explained that you feel like it s the right thing to do and that’s...

Resident: Well, I, originally, I stand on my faith in God, in the Word of God. ‘Cause you know it says if I obey him and the Word dwell in me ... I can ask anything in his name and it will come unto me. And based on that, and I prayed and even when this was going on and my husband asked to stay in Omar, everyone saying you know, you don’t need to be hearing about all of this. And I asked, “specific name” about the dust and he said that... you know, he told me what he planned to do. And then I know there’s Federal, Federal regulations they have to do all they can to control the dust. But I prayed and asked the Lord he knew exactly what was going to take place in Superior Bottom. And if it would not be a place that would be good for my health or good for my husband... don’t let me stay in there. No matter what we felt, don’t let us stay where we would be in danger. And ‘cause it’s my desire to be where I can serve him and where he wants me to be. And even with the home, when it was going to be up in front of the church, I had even asked the Lord, you know, about that. But then I asked him, I said where ever in here where it will glorify you, because I want my home to glorify you. And still please me and meet my needs. And this is where we’re moving to the spot where I am. And that is the best spot. Better than the one where we were going to be. And I am content on that.

Interviewer: Let me back up a little bit and ask you about something else you had mentioned. You said that you had initially talked to the company about selling out, that you expressed to them their desire to see the people that lived in the community could get jobs. One of the things that I wanted to ask you about is what did you see as the benefit...ah what benefits did you see coming from the coal mining coming in to do surface mining. Did those jobs become a reality? Were there other benefits that you saw?

Resident: They haven't become a reality, yet. Because the permit has been held up, and they really haven't be able to start mining the coal. They have just progressed into building the road. They're building the road now, trying to get that in. And hoping and expecting to get the permit. But, the last thing...last time I talked "specific name" about it, this is one of the things he said, that they are still waiting to get the permit. But, they believe that they will get it. And as far as the people, you know, being... having jobs, you know, they had to move. And the young men, one of them is in Huntingdon. And the other one is in Logan. He is working at, I think, Bob Evans. Of course his father has another job. But his father was re-called back to the mine that he worked for. But, he's had a lot of health problems, a lot of surgery. And he said that this time it just didn't feel comfortable with going back to the mine. And the other two men...one has a back injury; and the other one went to work at the jail. And, of course he is off now with surgery and recovering from that.

Interviewer: Did they end up finding other work?

Resident: Yes they did.

Interviewer: Do you think that there will be other benefits from the surface mining coming in or are there some that I am not seeing?

Well I really believe that...well in fact one of the things that I am expecting and maybe it is just hoping. That the mines start working and they get all of their equipment and get the land fixed like they want to. I am expecting them to put in modular homes, ah manufactured homes. Maybe for some of the workers. But, this is one of the things that I am expecting them to develop the community, and develop the land.

Interviewer: That is a very good... that would be a wonderful benefit.

Resident: Umm hum, it is.

Interviewer: Are there any other impacts that you have noticed? Let me re-phrase that. Over the course of time that you have lived there, how would you say the quality of life may or may not have change in relationship to the mining coming in? Did it change that at all?

Resident: Well, from the beginning the quality of life has, you know, dropped because of the lack of mines and the lack of jobs. And with this mine coming in it hasn't improved anything the other than to free up the animals and nature to feel free to come in. And the peace that we usually have until, you hear, we hear the noise and stuff. But, I guess I've always... I, I can adjust to a change. When things start... I look for and expect the best. Until I feel, you know, that it is not going to happen. With this I am just expecting some positive effects.

Interviewer: Well that is good. I hope that that is the case.

Resident: Yeah.

Interviewer: Were there any negative changes at all?

No more than losing my neighbors, and losing the children. Well at one time we didn't have a dog, in the community. You know, not near, but then the people that lived around in Holler had a dog. Things like that, those are things that I miss and I would say is negative.

Interviewer: What kind of information do you ever see published out about the permit activity and the mining activity? Other than what you have been told first hand do you read anything or see anything?

Resident: I haven't been keeping up with it lately, but the last thing I read about was, you know, the case that is involving Blair. It had been returned to West Virginia. And the last I heard it was still held up, they had not made a decision on it. And until this decision is finalized the permits are being held up until after that decision is confirmed. That is the last that I've seen of that.

Interviewer: You read the paper regularly and take the paper?

Resident: I take, I take the Logan Banner and I take the Williamson New. And I try to keep up with it. I try to listen to the news, but for the last three weeks or maybe more. I haven't been really effective in doing that. Because when I get my paper behind, I'm reading my paper. And I end up falling asleep. (laughing)

Interviewer: Well you are busy these days with moving. Do you ever...remember ever seeing in the paper, did you read that permit information that was posted in there

Resident: Yes.

Interviewer: Did you find that it was ledge able and helpful to you?

Resident: Yes. I really did. I found out what exactly what was going on, and where it would be. And you know, I understood that part. And then I attended one of the meetings, that was when they came in and explained. I didn't hear...and one of the other meetings we had a representative from our community to go and they came back and brought us the information. So we try to keep up with it that way.

Interviewer: So they have been effective in sharing information? And that has been good? Okay.

Resident: Yes. And then, I've asked "specific name" you know, exactly what were they planning. And he would explain, you know, some of the barriers that they keep running into. One time he thought that Massey was going to back out. But, he went to the meeting and they told him, no, they were still going to go ahead. Because he is part of what you call the Stirrat Coal Company. Stirrat Coal Company is the company that will be operating under they Massey umbrella.

Interviewer: How do you spell that...the company.

Resident: S-T-I-R-R-A-T

Interviewer: I have seen that name. There's a town close by, right?

Resident: Yes, it is. It is above... up there. And that is where the tipple is, you know, or preparation plant.

Interviewer: Okay. I am trying to make sure that I asked you everything that I wanted to be sure and ask... Is there anything else that I didn't ask you about that you want to talk to me about or tell me about. It is about ten of one so...

Resident: There isn't anything else that I can think... Other than, I just thank God that he let me have the relationship that I had with "specific name" and he gave me someone with integrity. And you know, that I really can respect. Because I couldn't deal with people that I don't respect. So far from the day... first day I met him he has been a man of his word. And he has... and he has gone through some things, trying to keep his word. But he is a wise businessman. And if you are in business you have to try to operate as economically as you can, and he is no different than a smart businessman. And I said, but when he gives his word and he follows through with it.

Interviewer: In your experience has that been the case for the others who lived around you as well?

Resident: Yes. And this is one of the things that even now... One young man very close to me got anxious, and he... Well actually, if had not been for the grace of God he could have gone to jail for what he did. And uh, it upset "specific name" terribly, but God was merciful to him. And he got out of it.

Interviewer: How fortunate then that the company and the community were able to maintain the relationship despite that.

Resident: Yes. Well actually it was one of the things that involved him and the people that he had bought the property from. He signed their name.

Interviewer: Humm... so he signed falsely?

Resident: Right. That was it... He had, he had lied to "specific name" and he is trying to be sure the everything is legal and right.

Interviewer: Let me ask you actually other thing if you still have a little bit... You tell me, if you have to go you tell me.

Resident: Okay. Yeah, because I have a meeting with the lawyer and I need to let him know I'm coming. I have to pick up the young man. Okay.

Interviewer: This is my question and you tell me if you want to answer it. Uhm... Now I'm going to forget what I was going to ask you. It went right out of my head. But, I basically I think that we covered everything.

Resident: Okay.

Interviewer: And I really appreciate you taking the time.

Resident: Okay. And I know Massey's done a lot of things. And I know in my community, even with the people that dealt honestly with him, they received the same type treatment. We had some who tried to deal on it dishonestly and they wanted to get more than their property was worth. We had some people's houses that no one lived in, they were abandoned. And some haven't lived in them for years. And they wanted to get a huge amount of money. They got angry with him because he refused to pay. If they would sell it out-right some of them would not get \$5,000 dollars, but they were wanting \$50,000... \$30,000 and \$50,000 dollars. For this house that had no porch, it's leaking, and all of that. And so I believe in being honest and fair. I know that even with my home the way it is, it was... I have the better deal. Cause if I had lived in that house, again, I would have had massive renovations and repairs. But, God has blessed me to move into one that I won't have to worry about repairs for a while.

Interviewer: And you feel like you described the community's future as something of a rebirth. So it sounds as if you have plenty of good faith that the quality of life there is going to continue to improve.

Resident: Yes.

Interviewer: And you are not concerned about... company's use of the other property degrading the future of that area?

Resident: No, no. In fact, I see a positive thing in it, and that is what I am expecting. Well, in fact, I tell them when I have a big mouth and I don't know any better than to express how I feel. And if it is going wrong, I think I can speak to whoever is there to let them know how I feel and that I think it is wrong. But, I have to stay aware of the laws and, you know, be sure that I let them know that "Hey" you are out of the guidelines. And when I do that and people know that you know what they are supposed to be doing - they respect you for it. And then they won't try to do something illegal.

Interviewer: I very much hope that is the case. I applaud your faith and really that is a wonderful thing.

Resident: Well thank you. And this is the way that I operate and this... and God has been merciful to me. And he has given me favor with "specific name" and ah... my son that lives in Albuquerque. Well all of them were concerned. They was thinking I was being taken advantage of. And my son came in and he has a friend that runs the service station. In fact, they were in Cub Scouts together, graduated from high school together. And he went down and he was talking with him about his concern. This young man is a friend to "specific name." And "specific name" had discussed me with this friend. And he had told him of all the people in the bottom that he was *definitely* going to see that I got what I wanted. I had not harassed him. I tried not to harass him. I've tried to be honest and up front with him. So I said...well I told him, I said well before I went into this I prayed. And, I said that when I started I had to stand on my faith, and I believe it is going to all right.

Interviewer: Well good.

Resident: It is taking me a long time. It will. And you know? I have to say this too: When I was young, we lived at Pine Creek. And the dust sometime from the tipple would cover our porch and we lived through that. We moved over here when they first started truck in with this. In Superior Bottom it was just...you couldn't sit on your porch from the dust. Then the Federal laws, you know, improved that. And I know now that we don't have to live like that. The dust has had an affect on other people's health. I am not too sure of what has happened to me to me that caused me to develop asthma, but I know that God is still in control. And he will help us and we, we need to work with the people that have the mine, and they need to work with us. And try say "Hey" let us earn a living, but let us keep it as safe as possible. And I think that if we approach each other with respect and understanding we can get there faster and much easier than we can when we be start fighting each other and go with the a combative attitude.

Interviewer: That is a very healthy and good way to approach it.

Resident: It is. That, to me, is the best way to approach any situation if you want to resolve it peacefully.

Interviewer: Good. Sounds like it worked, too.

Resident: It is...it does. It does.

Interviewer: Thank you for sharing all of that with me and I really appreciate it. Taking your time.