

## **MTM/VF EIS**

### **Community Narrative: Werth, WV**

**Interviewer:** You started to tell us, well, tell me a little bit about how you came to live here and how your family came to live in the Werth area.

**Subject:** Well, I worked in the coalmines for six years. That is how we paid for everything. And I hand loaded. And then I went to work on the railroad and I made it here so that I would have better access to, ... I lived up here at Raven, on the other side of town. I moved here so that I would have better access to where I worked. I worked out of Tioga and Island Freight. I worked thirty-four years for the railroad. Invested on the railroad. When I first moved here in fifty-one the first outfit on this side, Tassa Coal Co. had just begun. Island Creek was on the other side over there. The people on that side had all kinds of trouble with Island that had all kinds of stuff from the mountain come down into their yards and everything else. And then Tassa moved in here. When I brought this place I had to put in a sewer system. Just had the outside system. And I put a sewer system in. It cost me about three thousand dollars to put it in to standard, you know, what it ought to have been. I dug a trench from the house here clear to the creek six foot deep put a tank in out there. And put three lines in there. One was over the other with rock in between the two. Well this outfit moved in and that stuff washed off the hill. The sewer system quit working. When I went over there to see what was the matter the creek, the bed of the creek, is that much higher than the discharge on the sewer system. I wanted them to repair it, but they wouldn't even talk to me about it.

**Interviewer:** Sediment off the ...

**Subject:** Yes, off the hill raised the creek bed.

**Interviewer:** Raised the bottom of the creek bed above where your discharge pipe is so ...

**Subject:** It was I'd say 6 feet from the bottom of the creek bed when I put that sewer system in. It filled up with silt until that was 3 foot from the bottom at least. And it filled up above that. The silt did. Until couldn't even, it couldn't ... I put in another sewer system. It is not near as good and it is going to have to be redone. Because it is the original one I put in here. The one they destroyed. Because it didn't work after they, well there wasn't any way to drain it. The wasn't anything that came out of there except clear water. See, you had them two lines one over the other and them leach fields and everything else. It was a little bitty clear water that came out the bottom. That when they stopped it up it backed it up and stopped it all up. It filled in out here until I had a swamp in the yard. It was a swamp.

**Subject II:** Yeah, it was so muddy it was knee deep.

**Subject:** I had seen these trucks, with the bed down on the ground. That much mud. And we could not bring our cars. And had to leave our cars over on the main highway. Yes, you couldn't get it over here and back because of the mud in the road.

**Subject II:** And the kids had to go to school.

**Subject:** Those trucks I had seen buried down right out here until the bed was in the ground.

**Interviewer II:** The wheels were down in the mud.

**Subject:** They would have to get dozer down in here and pull them out. Now this was Tassa Coal Co. T, A, SS, A, Tassa Coal Co.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, I have seen that name.

**Subject:** Now the company that came in after that was Hobet. And Hobet was all together different. I don't care for the mining anyway, but if you are talking about mountaintop mining. But, Hobet was 100% better than Tassa Coal Co.

**Interviewer II:** Yeah, Hobet I think was from the original landowners. Howard and Betty is that is what someone..

**Subject:** I don't know. I knew the Superintendent. He was from a family around here. I knew him since he was a little fella.

**Interviewer:** So, he was from around this area or somewhere else?

**Subject:** Yes. He just recently passed away about three months ago. He was younger than I am. But I knew him, knew his dad.

**Interviewer:** Have you all lived in this area for your whole life?

**Subject:** I was born up in Tioga. Do you know where that is?

**Interviewer:** Yes. I have not been there but I know where it is.

**Subject:** I was born in Tioga in 1923. Then when I grew up I joined the Army. Then I served about 4 years in the Army. I have been around here or in Webster County ever since. She was born... her home was in Webster County.

**Interviewer:** So, you moved here about 1951?

**Subject:** Yes.

**Interviewer:** And they were already mining on one side,....

**Subject:** Yeah, and then they started on this side over here. I had to lay boards across here to get over to that road to get across the swamp. Then after they got ride of them, I hired a dragline to come in here from Peerless Eagle Coal Company. My brother was superintendent for them and he managed to get it in here. I got the dragline here. Dug up a hole for a pond and filled the yard in to make me a yard out there all at the same time. But they just made a regular swamp out of it. Right out there in that holler out there was a cornfield. And I didn't own that. "Specific name" over here owned that. But the people that rented off of them lived across the road here, across from me. And they finally got in corn. I wish you would go out there and look at. It is full of wild rose bushes, cattails, and you need hip boots to get through there. And they had a cornfield out there. Mind you. You see it never did straighten-up. And I had a water tank back up here. I drilled a hole back in... there is a seam of coal laced in there. I drilled a hole back over top of that seam coal, there was water coming out. I took an old mine auger and went up there and drilled. And I built me a tank and fed that water right in. And that was really good water. Had gravity fed ...for the house. And after they got to shooting, it got acid in it. And I took it, a sample of it to these people that put in filters. And they said that much acid I couldn't do nothing with it. It was just that much acid from where they shot.

**Interviewer II:** Your water supply was ruined?

**Subject:** Oh, it was ruined and I put another tank in out here. There was a spring out there. Before that stuff was forced off the hill and there was a spring out there. And I built me a tank out there and put a line in and a pump. And it is good water it wasn't as good as this. Now after 30 years, my boy was working for Hobet. He was sampling the water and so forth and he was a bookkeeper. And he wanted to check that and he went and got a check of it and the acid is gone. So I went and put a new line in and now I have two sources, places to get water. I can I can turn a valve and I can get that off of the hill, or I can get this out here.

**Interviewer II:** Now there was that one time, how long ago was that?

**Subject:** It took about 30 years for that to clear up.

**Interviewer II:** Thirty years to clear up and now it is non-acidic, it is potable?

**Subject:** Oh yeah, its good again now. But they're wanting to put in another mine out here, what will it be like again?

**Interviewer II:** Oh so they are going to pursue it?

**Subject:** Oh there is no doubt they are talking about it. The one fellow has the backing, and so they've got money to do it. I don't see how they will make any money. But like I said I mined for six years and that coal out there- the highest I have seen of it is about 20 inches. That is what happened to the people that tried to mine it before. They had to cut bottom with the cutting machine in order to get their cutting machine through there. I don't think you can make any money out of

that, but the people that is talking about mining it I don't think have any experience in mining. One of them inherited millions from his pappy and used the money to back it. But I know he don't know anything about mining and the other fellow I don't... there is a whole lot of doubt about him.

**Interviewer :** That actually brings up an interesting question that I wanted to ask you all. That is how do you hear when the mining is going to come in? Do you read about it in the papers?

**Subject II:** We see them out there drilling and so forth.

**Subject:** My grandchild is an attorney - who works for the Judge. They have to come through there to get your permits and everything. And I found out about it – that they were wanting to put in another mine. Now they did deep mine out there. And like I said they had to cut bottom, and it wasn't profitable. They had to give it up. That is why they were mining there. Because it was so low. They went back here on this hill dozens of times. They had the “specific name” boy up there, that I know, he cored drilled back there and he told me that when they were in the side of the hill he couldn't actually legally tell me what they would find. Because that is suppose to be kept... But he said that near here, on the side of the hill, they got the last coal out. He said there was about 16 inches back under the middle of the hill. Now you can't mine that deep mining. There ain't no way. Up here, in this holler above here, it runs up here at about three foot. And when they want to show somebody, the people that don't know no better, when they show somebody. That is where they take them. (laughter) They don't show them the samples where they core drilled up there.

**Interviewer :** So, just to finish my thought then, do you see the permits posted in the newspaper at all?

**Subject:** No, when they strip they are supposed to post it in the newspapers. But you'd have a hard time we had to figuring out where it is. Because when they put it in there they don't specifically specify where it is. You know. I they maybe have Braxton County on one side of the line and Nicholas County on the other and so. But to exactly where it is, they don't want you to know.

**Interviewer II:** It is just basically a legal ad print. They are probably small fine print that we always use to just call them as buried in the legal ads.

**Subject:** I don't know where they get a copy of those maps. But it is not current.

**Interviewer II:** Right, right.

**Interviewer:** Did they put it in the local paper too or only in like the state...

**Subject:** In the local paper, in the Nicholas County Chronicle. Recently they did have a lot of their maps in there. But it where they were trying to get their money back where they had their, ... Oh, I forget what you call it, how you say, before you buy you put so much down and then they

are trying to get their money back. Some of them do get their money back but they don't have anything. Now like I said, this Hobet was all together different. I'd seen what happen here. All those seams of coal that lay back north of here. When they come up here, they come together. You had 27 foot of coal on this mountain. Now you had binders in between the different seams. But you look at all that, some people really don't think that we described that there was that much coal. But that is what we said there were 27 foot of coal. Now Tassa came in they cut around and left big pieces of the middle. And then one fellow over here, he lost 2 of his coon dogs up there that went up there on that end and they came off of that high wall.

**Interviewer II:** Oh boy.

**Subject:** It took \$200 and some dollars for one of them. He was very teed-off.

**Interviewer II:** You mean they actually fell .....

**Subject:** Yes, fell over the thing. Oh it looked like these pictures of the moon up there. Then when Hobet came in they took those out and leveled it off.

**Subject II:** It is pretty up there now.

**Subject:** Oh, it don't look bad. But they talk about plowing it you know. But there ain't no way. You got about two and a half inches of topsoil then it is rock. There ain't no way you can plow.

**Interviewer II:** Just enough to put some grass on top of it.

**Subject:** Yes. Yes. And the only thing that grows on it is locust trees. I planted chestnut trees up there and they got about that tall and died. There was nothing there for them and there was too much acid in the soil. And there wasn't no coal company that wanted to put out the money to put fertilizer on that to make it grow something. It costs too much.

**Interviewer II:** Those locust trees they will grow about anywhere.

**Subject:** Yeah, they grow on a dry log. Hobet tried. They are a lot better than that other outfit. But there are boulders in these hollers out here that are half as big as this house. That Tassa rolled over there and there weren't nothing nobody was going to do about them. You see they are still down in those hollers and places. And there are two big slides where they just dumped the refuse over the hill. It is dangerous, you have to go around it.

**Interviewer:** Can you see that from the street at all? From 55?

**Subject:** No. You have to go up here on the top of the hill and look over there. Before they just bumped it over the hill. Now that was Tassa that done that. Hobet didn't do any of that. Because they took the coal out and then dropped that back in. They filled it back in. But like I said you don't

have no topsoil. But it is a lot better than the way it was when Tassa had it.

**Interviewer:** One of the things we are trying to get a gage of is how things changed in the community before the mining was there and while it was there and after. You described some real stark physical changes to the land and your water systems and I have heard stories of wells drying up and the blasting shaking the houses. Are there, did you have those types of impact as well? Did the blast shake the house? And ....

**Subject:** Yeah it did. My chimney out here, it cracked it. And you can see out there where I put tires and plaster it into the house. Now it hasn't moved any more. I hope it stays it has been that way for about 20 years. But that chimney it was cracked from the blast. Oh they shook the house. The windows and everything. They, both this outfit on that side and this one up here both. Yeah they put off a big enough blast.

**Interviewer II:** Now did you report any of that damage to the mining companies at all?

**Subject:** I didn't, no...

**Interviewer II:** You knew there was no use of doing it, because...

**Subject:** I will give you an idea. Now the way I see it the government. It was the State government and the County government were in with the coal operators. I will give you an example there was a guy named "specific name", over here on Little crick. He had a nice farm. He got it from his daddy. He inherited it. And he had big bottoms over there, that one bottom must have had 200 acres in it. And they flooded... now this was Island crick... they flooded Little crick. They just filled the bottom up. The crick filled up. And then the water overflowed. And brought suit against them. And they had more money than he did. It suffered on in the courts for 4 years. And then they had a hung jury to start with. And one of the members of the jury that helped hung the jury, was the baby sitter for "specific name" which was one of their superintendents. And a few days after the trial was over here she is driving a big new automobile. She didn't have that kind of money I wonder where she got that automobile?

**Interviewer II:** Very interesting. We can only speculate right?

**Subject:** Yeah. And then they had another trial. It cleared them up again. It was, ...a some how, he got 'em. But he was about out of money. But they had another trial. They awarded him \$300. Now if that wasn't a laugh. Two hundred acres of bottomland. He'd grow corn and hay. And gone. Now it was gone. There ain't no two ways about it. When cattails grow up in your bottomland you ain't going to raise hay off of it.

**Interviewer II:** Not at all. It is too wet.

**Subject II:** It filled in the crick at the end and it went into his land.

**Subject:** Yeah, it filled the crick. They let the refuse run off of the hill. Filled the crick up until it was level full. And there was nowhere, when the water is not allowed to leak, there is nowhere else to go.... All over his bottom!

**Interviewer II:** You can't grow anything except cattails in wetlands.

**Subject:** I am prejudice and discouraged about them coal, because I have seen enough of it to make you sick. And you know. I was down through Kentucky here about three years ago, about two or three years ago. And I came up Route ... 15,... Ahh, what was that? 23 there? It comes over. And stripping down there was just like it was up here. I am telling you it would make you sick to look at it.

**Interviewer:** Yeah. That is part of what we are trying to get the report together. We are probably not going to change what happened in Werth. But maybe in will impact what will happen on Route 23, or some other community.

**Subject:** Yes down there.

**Interviewer:** Let me ask you something else. When you moved in, the kind of community that was here and the population that was here, did you see any change in that population that could be related to the coal mining at all? Or surface mining?

**Subject II:** Well, they're just not as many people here.

**Subject:** That did have anything to do with the surface mines. When we moved here there was a mill up here. It was an abandoned sawmill and they probably employed, oh, 8 or 9 hundred people. That mill burnt while we lived here. But you have seen them... there were several houses up there that mostly belonged to the company. That was Ely-Thomas Lumber Co. I believe it was you that wanted to know about all of those buildings? Those were the garages for the employees because they didn't live here. They lived all over and they brought their cars in there and they put them in the garages while they worked on the mill and in the yard and everywhere else. But the mill up there burnt down. My dad worked for them and when the mill burnt down, he was a lumber inspector. A lumber grader. He worked for the First Valley Lumber Co., in Tioga for 28 years. As a lumber grader. That was the second biggest mill, I think, at least in the Eastern United States.

**Interviewer II:** Wow.

**Subject:** It was a double band sawmill. And I got tapes of that old saw mill and them sawing lumber. But ah, I don't know whether you have ever seen those, big band saw mills? But you see that saw was, well it is probably 50 feet long. But it goes, you know in a ...

**Interviewer II:** It is like a big belt.

**Subject:** It is like a belt pulling, like that, around and the carriage that carries the logs, you see it is steam operated. And they roll that big log over on that see, and it goes by just about that fast. And then if you are the “dogger” on the carriage they say that you were screwed in those carriages. You better get a hold, because when it back it went like that. It comes all the way back and then back again. And I mean they had to hold on when that thing went. It is steam operated. You see Tioga had a double band. They had two saws, one on one side of the mill and one on the other. They brought big logs in there at that time. I got pictures of those old engines hauling logs and they wasn’t little poles like you are getting in this day and time. They was logs.

**Interviewer II:** There was a lot of board feet lumber in one of those things.

**Subject:** Oh gosh. The Lumber Company had so much lumber up there in stacks that the insurance companies wouldn’t insure them. I use to ride the old No. 5 Engine of Tioga, oh they had trains. About 6 trains. And the No. 5 up there, there is a No. 4 up at Cass now. And it wrecked and rolled in the holler of Sprucey Low Gap up there, and killed three people. One of them was my uncle. Rolled over in the holler at the top of Sprucey Low Gap. But I use to ride that from down here at Summersville, I went to high school down here. And I would come to Muddlty catch that train and ride it to the Tioga. Got off down there about a mile. I got off there. But I rode that old No. 4 which was No. 5 on the Shady side.

**Interviewer II:** So, other than the mines, the lumber company around here did a lot of the employment.

**Subject:** Oh yeah. They had way more than the strip mines. The strip mine don’t employ very many people.

**Interviewer II:** Because they let the machinery do the work.

**Subject:** Yeah. You it uses mostly heavy equipment operators.

**Interviewer:** Did you work on underground mining or the surface mining?

**Subject:** I worked in the underground. I loaded the trucks. I got paid for... Way back then I held the record for the most coal ever loaded in Tioga. I loaded 27 tons, 500 pounds in one day.

**Interviewer II:** Oh, boy!

**Subject:** That was the record for the most coal that was ever put out by one man.

**Interviewer II:** Oh my heavens.

**Subject:** But, back then base wages was, I think when I quit the mine, was \$17 a day. Of course I was averaging about \$28 a day. By hand loading, I was averaging more than the base wages. And I quit and went to work on the railroad for \$9 a day.

**Interviewer II:** OH, you really gave up some cash there.

**Interviewer:** Were you looking for a change in work or what made you decide to do that?

**Subject:** For one thing I've got a leg broke in four places in there and oh it was dangerous and I figured I had better get out while the getting' was good. And I got a chance to go to work on the railroad. And I went to work on the railroad. But, you heard me when I was paid \$9 for 8 hours. But back at that time you hardly ever worked less than 15 or 16 hours a day. So you made a little more money than that. But it was mostly overtime. Now it changed over a period of time. Now, when I retired I made something a little over \$200 a shift and I hardly ever worked 8 hours. You see I belonged to the union and we cut the working hours down from 16 to 14, to 12. And when I retired, why then you could only work, they could only work you a total of 12 hours. But that is a long time.

**Interviewer:** Twelve hours by today standards, when the average workday is like 8 hours. A typical workday. But twelve hours, we think we work overtime when we work 12 hours. But when you pull almost double shifts working 16, that's a long time. And that is the job and you have other things to do at home.

**Subject:** Well, you betcha. When we just worked 12 hours, you see I had to keep the time for the crew, I had to be there ahead of time in order to fill out all the papers and after the shift was over I had still had more papers to fill out on what was done and what needed to be done. It wasn't a bad job maybe I wouldn't see a boss for 2 or 3 months. I would talk to them maybe, on the phone and on the radio. But if you had a major big job. But you could take the time I spent 12 hours and then 2 more hours that would be 14. By the time you came home and eat and sleep, you about lived on the job.

**Interviewer II:** Oh exactly. Like we live on the job sometimes, but that is really living on the job.

**Subject:** And they didn't know when Sunday come.

**Interviewer II:** They made you work on Sundays too?

**Subject:** I worked 9 months without a day off. And that includes Saturdays, Sundays and Holidays.

**Interviewer II:** Were you married at the time?

**Subject II:** Oh yeah, I did all the work here.

**Interviewer II:** I bet you were happy for that work schedule?

**Subject:** Oh, we have been married for 57 years and she said that was why. We didn't live together. I lived on the rail.

**Interviewer II:** You guys are doing pretty good these days. You are retired. Fifty seven years, that is quite an accomplishment.

**Subject:** I have been retired .... 18 years.

**Subject II:** It went so fast, that 18 years has.

**Interviewer II:** So did you notice any change? Like in the population, seems like the population from what it was before the mines came in and during? Did you see any increase in, like people, leaving alone the mill out here? Was there any noticeable change in the local economy or how many people actually lived here when the mines came?

**Subject:** No. Not, ... Now down here below here was Raven. And they put in the deep mines. And you see all them little houses there? Now the company built most of those houses. After they put I the deep mine, it increased the population down there at Raven, that little town down there already. By quite a bit, because see all those people that lived there, most of them worked in the Raven mine. But up here and through here, no it didn't seem to make any difference when the strip outfit moved in.

**Interviewer II:** So, in terms of them actually adding incentives to the local community to help, you know, maybe roads or anything, no services were provided or extras added or any benefit like that was given by the coal company when they were here?

**Subject:** No. No.

**Interviewer II:** So what was here before, other than the coal in the mountaintops, you know, everything pretty much stayed the same over all?

**Subject:** Yeah. Nope, you see I hunted these places through here before they ever done any. And those over there too. I hunted ever since I was big enough to carry a shotgun. And I hunted all over these places and I liked to have been able to took a picture of what it looked like then and what it look like now.

**Interviewer II:** It is a whole difference.

**Subject II:** Um, Um. It makes a difference.

**Subject:** Oh gosh. This Island Creek, ... this poor old country clear through back to Tioga the tops is all gone. And they,...

**Interviewer II:** So aesthetically it is not,... the view of what you had and that is actually diminished?

**Subject:** Oh yeah.

**Interviewer II:** Are you still able to hunt up here?

**Subject:** Yep. The fellow that owns this, there was two of them, “specific name” and “specific name”. And “specific name” died. He just passed away this last summer. “Specific Name” I have know him for years and he is a good friend of mine. But ah, he owns, well I don’t know how much they own. But they bought this from Tassa and Hobet. What Tassa and Hobet had, they bought it. And like I say, they own minerals and all of it. I suppose there are other people in with him but....

**Interviewer II:** So the coal companies didn’t hold onto their land?

**Subject:** No, they got rid of it as soon as they could.

**Interviewer II:** They liquidated it off by selling it to new landowners. Private landowners?

**Subject:** Yeah. “Specific name” is the gentleman that owned it. And he doesn’t know how much he owns. He is wealthy. But there is a big pond on the hill up there, course he didn’t even know where it was. But I knew where it was, like I say I hunt, you know. And he wanted me to take this fellow up there who was going to talk about raising cattle up there in the summer time. And I asked him if he owned that. That was the only water on it. If he owned that? And he said no, and I have no idea. Now you think he owned that much land that you have no idea...

**Interviewer:** Oh what you own and what you don’t. Yeah

**Interviewer II:** It is quite hard to fathom in these days. Where a lot of us just own little plots of ground where are homes are. Not like our, my grandfather who owned hundreds of acres of ground for farming. That is very interesting. Yeah, we are trying to figure out also how the ownership,... did they maintain ownership over that land and basically that is no longer available for public or private use rather? Or what happens to the ownership of the land? That is interesting that they actually sell that off.

**Subject:** Well, “specific name” he told me he didn’t mind, he didn’t like people driving in there because of the insurance if they happen to run their car over the hill.

**Interviewer II:** Right, there is a lot of liability there right?

**Subject:** He said that he didn't mind if people hunt. Anyone could hunt on his property that wanted to. But I own land in Braxton County. I own a half interest in 700 and some acres down there in one place. Me and my brother owned it. Now he passed away. But I asked "specific name" about going back there and cutting some of those locust post. I wanted to put a fence in. I was building a fence down there. He told me to just use that lot down there. And I'll get all of the locust post you want.

**Interviewer II:** That is very nice of him. Sounds like he was a nice gentleman.

**Subject:** I only wanted about eight. He was a nice feller. He was here. He came here to see me little about a week ago

**Subject II:** Yeah, he knocked at the door....

**Subject:** She didn't know him.

**Subject II:** I have had heart surgery and I forgot. I have had two open heart surgeries and balloon surgery and I,... my memory of people has left me. They hug me down at Wal-Mart and the Lord knows who they are. They are people I use to know.

**Subject:** Her nephew's wife is a doctor and she said that when they used that heart bypass machine that there were air bubbles in there and you couldn't get them out. And these air bubbles cause miniature strokes. And those miniature stokes cause you to loose your memory.

**Interviewer II:** There is no oxygen in there and the air bubbles that leak from the blood, your blood stream. That is interesting.

**Subject:** And she had that open hear surgery. She was on that bypass machine 10 hours, the last time.

**Subject II:** They stopped it at 5 hours and had prayer. The doctor and nursed did. And that blood started going up right to my heart.

**Subject:** They had trouble getting her off the bypass machine after she had been on it 10 hours. Her heart wouldn't pick up enough pressure.

**Interviewer:** You are sort of dependent on that sort of thing.

**Subject:** Yeah, and they did what they call a sausage pump. It got put in her thigh there. And it helps boost her heart and then when the nurse came out she said "It is a workin'. You've got the light at the end of the tunnel."

**Subject II:** Oh, I have been doing good. I was just down to about 85 lbs. I had no appetite and now you can't fill me up.

**Interviewer II:** Well, that is the way you want to be right?

**Subject II:** Yeah, I want to stay hungry all of the time. But I just could not eat nothing'.

**Interviewer II:** Now, did you have to go to Charlestown for those surgeries? That is quite a long way to go for that.

**Subject II:** Yeah. Well what happened, I was getting' company, and my arm started hurtin'. If your arm ever hurt, so I'm thinking, oh I over did. It's your heart!

**Interviewer II:** Yeah, there is something wrong.

**Subject II:** So I just ignored it. I took my tylenol and go on about my business. Well I was getting company. And I had two hound dogs. Now this was just at the end of Christmas. I had just had a big Christmas dinner and all of that stuff. Here they come up the door and I have a heart attack. I had a major heart attack. It just happened that "specific name" had a glycerin tablet.

**Subject:** I had heart trouble before, and I kept the glycerin tablets. I usually kept them on my, on a thing around my neck, so that I would have them handy. And she had trouble breathing, and I said that is not arthritis. You are having a heart attack. And I gave her a glycerin tablet. Well by the time I got her to Summersville, it let up. And they run her through this EKG machine and everything. And one of the doctors came in and said she was alright she could go home. About 30 minutes, that is when they get the tests back. I told my nephews "Let's go have a cup of coffee and we'll come back and pick her up." When we started to drive here they come with that EKG machine again. I said "Wait a minute there is something wrong here." Then the other doctor came in then, and I knew him, "specific name". And he said "specific name" she has had a massive heart attack and we can't do anything for her. We are going to have to send her to Charlestown. But that doctor ...

**Interviewer II:** Yeah, a second opinion is always better.

**Subject:** They sent her to Charlestown. You see they called Charlestown, and they said they had a bed arranged down there. Then they took her in an ambulance to Charlestown. For three years I spent more time in Charlestown than I did here.

**Subject II:** I have been in Charlestown Hospital all that time. I had a blood clot and major surgery and I don't know what else. And he called John Hopkins, Mayo Clinic, they called everybody, this doctor "specific name" did. For them to help me. And all of them refused me. Them big hospitals.

**Interviewer II:** Oh boy.

**Subject:** They thought it was too big of a risk. See she had full quadruple bypass. And it didn't work. She stopped again before she got out of the hospital. Before they released her. And then she had to have quadruple bypass again. And they couldn't get no surgeons to do it. "Specific name" he called all over the country trying to get anyone to do it. And then they done four balloon surgeries on her and then she was still having trouble and he said she was going to have to have major surgery again and so he tried to do balloon surgery again and he punched a hole thru the artery.

**Interviewer II:** Oh no.

**Subject:** Well when he did, something had to be done. And they called this, they call him a high risked surgeons, down there from one of the other hospitals. And he come over and he done the operation. Like I said it was 10 hours, but he said part of it was cutting away the growths from that other doctor done first.

**Interviewer II:** All of the scare tissue I guess.

**Subject:** Scare tissue, yes. He said there was a whole lot of, a long time. Probably the biggest part of the operation was cutting away the scare tissue from your first operation.

**Interviewer II:** Cutting away the mistakes that other people have made.

**Subject:** Yes.

**Subject II:** And you all don't know how active I was. I would go hunting. I'd walk clear to the top of the mountain. You all wouldn't believe. I mowed. I did everything. I was healthy.

**Interviewer II:** You hunted too.

**Subject:** Are you from West Virginia?

**Interviewer II:** No I am actually from Fulton County, Pennsylvania. And Alexa is from Philadelphia.

**Subject II:** You was out there where the plane crashed, then wasn't it?

**Interviewer:** He is a little closer to it than I am. But yeah, that is in our neck of the woods. Not too far.

(Multiple conversations going on at once.)

**Subject II:** I was being prayed for all over the earth. I mean to tell you, I got letters and cards mailed from all over.

(Multiple conversations going on at once.)

**Interviewer II:** This your trophy?

**Subject II:** Yeah, yes, that is me. If I had known, I had cleaned that room up before I let anybody in there.

**Interviewer:** We will be right back I guess.

**Subject II:** O.K.

**Subject II:** Now we had a hunting camp down there and I am the one that keeps that thing clean.

**Interviewer II:** The mining, did it interrupted any of the deer population up here? Made them,... There is not much forest cover for them up on top like there us to be.

**Subject:** There are a lot more deer now than there was, but the mine didn't have anything to do with it. See there were very few deer I this country before they started. The family down here, "specific name", I don't know, one of them was a judge and a lawyer and I don't know who all lived... in Summersville. And they imported deer from Michigan and they built pens down here. I use to find them. I don't know whether you can still find them or not. But it is by that old "specific name" place down there. And they raised these deer and they turned a few loose every year. They are the one who stocked deer. Not the DNR but the "specific name" in Summersville was responsible for stocking the deer around this part of the country.

**Interviewer II:** Oh interesting. How long ago? I hear the in the early 1900's the deer population was really bad around here.

**Subject:** That was ... I would say, when they started to turn them loose down there was in the fifties. When they started turning the deer loose. Before that there were very few deer in this country.

**Interviewer II:** Now it almost to like ...

**Subject:** I got a dog out there ...

**Interviewer II:** Like rabbits.

**Subject:** I got a dog out there, my grandson brought him up here when he was about that long. I didn't ask for him but I got him. He keeps the deer run off now.

**Interviewer II:** Right.

**Subject:** Now two years ago when grass was scarce, I fed them out here all winter.

**Subject II:** He would ring a bell and them deer would come.

**Subject:** See that bell over there?

**Interviewer II:** Yep. Yep.

**Subject:** I would go out there and put the feed out. And ring the bell and in 30 minutes time, there would be six or seven deer out there feeding. One morning I got up and all told there was, down there and back up here, there were 17 deer in my yard.

**Interviewer II:** Oh goodness, gracious.

**Subject II:** He would go after "specific name", that boy that loads. He'd know what "specific name" was after. He would just stop and run over there. He'd have to hurry up and get back to ...

**Interviewer II:** They will be coming in the house after "specific name" to find out where that feed is at.

**Subject:** I built me a bird feeder.

**Interviewer II:** I see that.

**Subject:** Was it last winter or the year before that?

**Subject II:** Last winter I think.

**Subject:** And it holds 20 pounds. Well it was lasting about four days. There ain't that many birds out there. There are a lot of birds but....

**Interviewer II:** 20 pounds of feed that is a lot to be eaten.

**Subject:** All of a sudden, "specific name" looked out there and there was a deer licking it out.

**Interviewer II:** Oh goodness.

**Subject:** I don't those deer should be eaten out of the bird feeder. Well, I told her and she'd done run'em off. She went out there a running and a hollerin' and a hootin' at it. And this one deer looked back at her and she came back in the house and he is back in the bird feeder.

**Interviewer II:** Not shy at all.

**Subject:** She took a rug out there and stood on the back of her chair, and threw it over top of it to keep the deer out of the bird feeder.

**Interviewer II:** They are not shy at all.

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**Subject:** Oh I enjoyed feeding them. I would go out there and shovel off snow to get down to the ground. And I picked apples down here, off of some of these trees from this old farm down here. Put them in the cellar and then in the wintertime, I would cut those up and put salt on 'em and take those out there and dump those out there. And them hole kernel corn. And boy them deer love that. They'd cleaned it up.

**Interviewer II:** Yeah it is like a treat for them.

**Subject:** They would come in there and get that every day. As soon as I'd ring that bell, there is a lot of people that come here just to see them deer. 'Cause about 4 o'clock in the evening I would go out there and feed and I would ring the bell and they would take about thirty minutes to come off of that mountain there.

**Subject II:** If they were going to survive, somebody had to feed them.

**Interviewer:** Sounds like living in this part was good for the deer and for you.

**Interviewer II:** Now what made you folks move,... Did you buy this? You built this house?

**Subject:** I built this... Well there were 4 rooms. I built this and built the den in there where you was. And the kitchen. I built those on it. And this was just four rooms here.

**Interviewer II:** So this house was here before you lived here.

**Subject:** Yeah, I brought it off of "specific name." Yeah, "specific name". I brought it off of him.

**Interviewer II:** What made you choose to move into the area? Was it the mines?

**Subject II:** No. It was on account of the phone. My sister had a phone and he couldn't get his call to work. There use to be there wasn't no phones. And so, she had one of those kind where you ring and when got he got his call, she'd call me on it.

**Subject:** I put a line, my brother owned the filling station over there, and they had a phone. You couldn't hardly get a phone at that time.

**Interviewer II:** Is that the old store over here?

**Subject:** It was across the road and downside of the railroad tracks. And he had a filling station and a garage where he done mechanical work. And he had a telephone. They got him a telephone because he did mechanical work and people called him. Well I brought two of these old crank phones and I put a line between here and over there. They'd call on his phone cause they needed work and he'd ring over here and tell me to go to work. That is how it worked. So, I was here where I could get to work. I 'd get the call and go to work. You see, they never knew when they was going to call you.

**Interviewer II:** You were on call?

**Subject:** I was on call 24 hours a day. And you had to go when they called ya'. That is when I moved here to get the phone call to go to work.

**Interviewer II:** Now, knowing the impacts of the mining up here, what you had said about your water supply and what had happened out front. Do you think that would have deterred your decision to move into the area? If you knew what the impact was?

**Subject II:** Oh yeah. I would have never moved here. No way!

**Subject:** Oh that would have never happened. There ain't no way I 'd have moved here.

**Interviewer II:** You are not seeing, as far as you know, your not,... As long as there is no mining occurring up here in the future you are not seeing any re-occurring, continuing impacts or influences from the mining operations.

**Subject:** No. Now they consider this, I don't know how far up this goes, you all would have a better idea than I do. But this is considered wetland. Well the reason it is wetland is because the crick was stopped up and it over flowed. At one time it wasn't. But they tried to mine, they wanted to mine this down in the development and they couldn't get a permit on account it was considered wetland. So, I just hope this up here is too. So they can't mine out there any more.

**Interviewer II:** There is a lot more restrictions on wetland development than you said back in the fifties or so. If could drain it all and didn't see any value in wetland. But now they are seeing value in it so there is more protection on it.

**Subject:** Yeah, I hope that wetland goes clear up to Tioga. (laughter)

**Interviewer:** We should be so lucky, huh?

**Subject:** Oh, I have had enough of these mines now. You know even Hobet here. Them trucks came off of here continually. You had dust and you had mine black dust from the coal, blowing off them coal trucks. They wasn't covered. And then you had dust from the road, you know, from where the trucks kicked up the dust from the roads. It was a nuisance all the time.

**Interviewer:** Where did the trucks come out? Did they come out right over here?

**Subject:** Come right down around the road there. You see up there? Where the little trailer is parked? Right down around the road and then they went down by, in front of my garage there. My garage even went down this way to the trickle by the train. They had a tipple down there. They moved a lot of coal off there.

**Interviewer II:** Now a tipple would be where the train came through, right.

**Subject:** Yeah, they hauled a lot of coal.

**Interviewer II:** A stock pile down there to load it on the train, I guess.

**Subject:** They run it through the tipple to sort it and to make different grades.

**Interviewer II:** Oh right. Like size it.

**Subject:** Some of it they washed and some of it was mine run and then you had different grades. Tioga mine up there had 10 different grades of coal. Of course, I had to sort that, you know from different cars. Pick up the cars when I was conductor and had to put that in the train in certain places because it went different directions. The different grades of coal.

**Interviewer:** So, you saw how much coal was coming out of there? When you were working on the railroad.

**Subject:** At one time we used 8 diesel engines, four on each end of the train. You see, we took it across Sprucey Low Gap which was a little better than a 4% grade. That is the reason for that. Now with 8 engines, I could take 70 loads of coal across there in a trip.

**Interviewer II:** Wow. That is a lot of coal.

**Subject:** Yeah and most of them were hundred pound cars. Most of that came from Island Creek. They had both the deep mines and the strip mine, Island Creek did. And they were loading union train. Union train usually consisted of about 125 cars. But ah, usually I had to make two trips across there. You see I would make one trip and take them over and store those coals. Put them in the siding over there. And then I would come back and get another trip and then I'd put them together and take them to Island Dale and turn them over to another crew that took them onto town and to Graphton. I hate to think of the amount of tonnage I hauled out of there on that railroad.

**Interviewer II:** Now when did you, did you basically retire fro the railroad?

**Subject:** Yeah.

**Interviewer II:** Were they still hauling coal at that time?

**Subject:** Yeah.

**Subject II:** They quit. When “specific name” quit, the train quit running.

**Subject:** I always laughed at them boys and said that this railroad wouldn’t work without me. I quit and they did too. (laughter)

**Interviewer II:** From that day they were no longer operational?

**Subject:** They started digging the rails up. I don’t know if you noticed?

**Interviewer:** Yeah, I saw the ties beside the road.

**Subject:** Yeah, they took the rails up even. I was 34 years for them. Now the rails were there when I worked.

**Interviewer II:** Oh sure. They were there when you quit, but soon after they weren’t.

**Subject II:** The day he quit was the day they quit. Now that was amazing.

**Subject:** Now when I retired they were still using 6 engines. And we would use 3 on each end. But the coal was reduced down to where there wasn’t quite as much going out.

**Interviewer II:** So they didn’t need that 4<sup>th</sup> engine?

**Subject:** The reason we didn’t use 8. Well they was afraid that that rear engine was probably shoving them off when they had a derail... was shoving them off of the track. They were mistaken on that. That wasn’t the cause. Most of the cause of the derails was ‘cause they let the track get too wide. They didn’t keep it gagged in.

**Interviewer II:** It kept on pushing it out.

**Subject:** Yeah, they didn’t keep it gagged in good. But this one time we had a derailment with empties. And I had four engines on the head end and three on the other. And we had a derailment and I reported the track wide. And see it was on record where the clerk recorded it two or three times and you see. It was on record. The clerk would send it in and they keep copies of all of that. And

ah, because it fell in, they thought that they couldn't claim the insurance on that. So they sent specialist in here from Baltimore, to see what caused the derailment. Well anyway, they say that the helper engine pushed them off. I told them fellers, I said you boys better sit down at the table and have another meeting. That helper had 80 some cars ahead of him. He couldn't shove the train to the top of the hill, let alone turn it over and shut down, so it wasn't his fault. You all better redraw your. It is a tough call these wide tracks. You can look on the reports and see. I don't care what you call charges to, but don't you blame it on my train crew because it wasn't their fault.

**Interviewer:** Right it was the actually the track's fault.

**Subject:** I got a ranger boat over there in the garage. And bought me this...

**Interviewer II:** "It is not my place to run the train with a whistle I can't blow. It is not my place to say how far the train is allowed to go. It is not my place to shot off steam or even clang the bell. But let the damn thing jump the track and see who catches hell." (laughter) That is pretty good huh? They remember that huh?

**Interviewer:** I wanted to ask you guys to go back a little bit, when you talked about... how for example your front yard was pretty much a swamp at one point... Did the coal company ever come talk to you about buying you out? Or did you have the option if you wanted to move? Could you have done that? Did you stay for the job?

**Subject:** No, they never ... never heard anything from any of them.

**Subject II:** Yeah, our yard was a swamp.

**Interviewer:** But they never approached you about purchasing your property? What made you decide to stay here?

**Subject II:** On account of the phone.

**Interviewer II:** You needed that line of communications for your work at the rails?

**Subject:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Did you have any interactions with the coal company over the years before they came in? For example the one that came in after you moved here, did they talk to you at all about what they were about to do or not?

**Subject:** No they tried to keep it all a secret. They didn't want no one to know what they was going to do. I don't think. I talked to several of the neighbors around up around Island Creek up to Tioga and in through there. And they said if they would have knew what was going on they could

have probably stopped part of that. But we didn't know it until it was too late. We had no idea what they was doing or what it would do - the damage or anything else. I had never seen a strip mine.

**Interviewer II:** What would you do now, say for example if a coal mine wanted to come back in? What would be your reaction?

**Subject:** There ain't much I can do. Now what I own here, like they wanted to strip this in through here and I told them, I said you are welcome to go up there and walk on any of that you want to. But you keep your dozers off of that. I have had enough trouble and I don't want it stripped. You are destroying my water. I don't want my part of it stripped. So keep your dozers off of it. Well they tried to buy that on that side, and the gentleman that owns that over there said, "No way. You ain't getting' it." You see they didn't own the land. They owned the minerals.

**Interviewer II:** The mineral rights.

**Subject:** But now they own the land above that. But that wasn't where they could strip. Because that has already been stripped.

**Interviewer:** They need to own the surface rights to strip it.

**Subject:** Yeah, they have to have the surface rights, you know to strip it. They want to strip what I own in Braxton County, down there. And I told them there wasn't no way. And they said well you would make some money.

**Subject II:** Money ain't everything.

**Subject:** And we would spend your money and the money would be gone and the land would be all tore up.

**Interviewer II:** Yep. Money can't replace what was there that is for sure.

**Subject:** No, that other company put in two culverts over here in that pasture. They're little. The crick got up, the culvert stopped up, real early. So then they put in a bridge. And they used only timber. It wasn't treated or nothing and it rotted out. Well, I had trouble getting my oil in here. The heating is oil. I had to bring it in by the barrel because the oil truck couldn't get it past there. That was about the time that this outfit was moving in, Tassa. And I told ah, "specific name", the Superintendent, I told him I said "specific name" if you are going to put culverts in, put them big enough to take care of that crick or they'll just stop up and wash the road out again. He put two in that'd take care of the Gauley River!

**Interviewer II:** Yeah, small creeks they can get a lot of water running through them. They can come up pretty high.

**Subject:** Yeah, this one over here, no bigger than it is, it was up to that road this spring. It was over my garden. I have got a garden over there. And it was clear over the garden. You know it didn't hurt it all that much. Some of the tomatoes plants and some of the pepper plants died on account of it. But them culverts, if they hadn't been there we probably would have had nothing.

**Interviewer II:** Right exactly.

**Subject II:** They put the big culverts in.

**Interviewer II:** Look for the worst and make it through.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, but it was interesting that raise that point. Now you said that you knew him since he was a feller and he lived here? Was from around here? I haven't heard too many situations, from the people I have talked too, where that was necessarily the case. That the person that happened to be running the mine was from the area even or knew the people even. Do you think that was an advantage for you all?

**Subject:** It was to me because see I could tell, I could talk to him. They run up around the road here, and drilled a test well. They drilled several of them, water wells. They used the water to clean off the road, too. But my spring out there went dry. I thought they had sunk the spring. See they drilled a test drill on above it there. I talked to him about it and he brought a man in here on a backhoe and they dug that out. And they hadn't been the cause. The water in the line that went up there to where the spring was, was stopped up. But they put a new line in and cemented it in and everything and they wouldn't take any money for it. They paid for it. Now that wasn't Tassa that was Hobet. Tassa wouldn't even talk to me. When they stopped the sewer system up, I went down there to see them and they didn't want to even talk to me.

**Interviewer II:** Hobet was a little bit more approachable and that.

**Subject:** Oh yeah. But "specific name", he was great. And when he left here he was still the head of Hobet down there where they had those big mines in Southern West Virginia.

**Interviewer:** I have seen some of those, Hobet 21 and those down there...

**Subject:** Yeah, he was President down there of those. And he retired and moved to Florida and they brought him a ranch down there, a cattle ranch. And he passed away about three months ago. But I knew his dad and I knew his grandpa. I said you know when you are getting old when you know everybody's grandpa.

**Interviewer II:** Yeah, ok, if he just passed away then you did know some people way back when.

**Subject:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Did you know many people from around here that worked for the surface mines?

**Subject II:** Not that I know of. I didn't know 'em.

**Subject:** No, most of them that worked up there were from other places.

**Interviewer II:** They moved in their employment from elsewhere and set up shop there to work down here?

**Subject:** I don't know where Hobet is from originally before they come in here. But a lot of those people came from Beckley over here to work.

**Interviewer:** And in your experience they pretty much left when the mine left?

**Subject:** Yeah, when the mine left they left. Because then they did live her to start with. They just came in here to work on the strip.

**Interviewer:** When you lived here in the 50s and 60s, where there more families here than there are now or was it pretty much just like what we see here now?

**Subject:** There were quite a few more when we lived here. There was a house right across the road over there, where my garden is. Just right here in front of my driveway there was a house there and "specific name" lived there. And there was one, two, three more houses that have been torn down that was across the road. And then they lived in the old house that you see is down. And they lived in the big house above there and they lived, another house on this side of the road. Maybe one house down here on the bottom and one house over there on this side of the road. Now those are all gone. But most of the people that lived here are dead and gone.

**Interviewer:** Most of them stayed here through the mining and chose not to move away?

**Subject:** Yeah. They owned land and you can't just pick up and leave the piece of land that you own unless you sell it or something. There wasn't no one interested in buying; ... I know they wouldn't have wanted to buy this about the time that coal company was here.

**Interviewer II:** That is one of the things were looking at too. How your property values probably went down hill after, ... versus what they were before and then after mining operations, you probably saw a devalue in your property?

**Subject:** Oh yeah. You couldn't have sold this place about the time that Tassa was in here. From the mud over here in front of the house, you couldn't get your car into here.

**Interviewer:** You couldn't get across the mud to see the house let alone to sell it. Huh?

**Interviewer II:** Yeah, that would be quite a hard sell for a realtor or your own self to trying to sell it privately.

**Subject:** No, you couldn't have sold it when Tassa was over here. And like she said we had a swamp here in front. I had to lay boards across there, up on blocks, to get across there.

**Interviewer II:** That would be quite a way of life.

**Subject:** I didn't have the money to fight them, because see back then like I said, they had the money. They would keep you in court for three years.

**Interviewer:** Right. Did you notice at all, when your kids were in school, for example in some places I know that schools had been shut down because populations, you know, get smaller and smaller. Did you notice any changes in those types of things?

**Subject II:** No. No.

**Interviewer:** Kids stayed in school at the same place they started?

**Subject II:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** Ok. Is there anything else that we haven't asked you about that you wanted to tell us about?

**Subject II:** Oh I don't know. Just hope no more money is up there.... (laughter)

**Interviewer II:** Yeah, I don't know if we can prevent that. But I think, ... we don't make the decisions. We are just doing the study collection, the report effort that we are told to do. But, EPA and other agencies at the federal level and even State there, are going to look into the report and see what policy changes they might have to make. In terms of the actual mining operations itself. And part of that, would hopefully minimize some of the impact that folks like you have experienced over the years.

**Subject:** Yeah if any of them wants to see what that looks like, I've got a four-wheeler sitting back there, I can take them right back there and show 'em. The damaged that first company done that couldn't be reclaimed. You roll a boulder over, as big as this house, in one of them hollers you can't get it back.

**Interviewer II:** Oh no. Not unless you got a huge crane, a phenomenal power and the capability to climb up hills to get it back in place.

**Subject:** And when they dumped that refuse, them rocks and stuff over the hill, you know just dumped it over there, you got to see that to believe it, what that is.

**Interviewer II:** We toured a mine just south of Charlestown, Arch Coal. Did you ever hear of Arch Coal? Arch is a mine down off of the highway there south of Charlestown, but ah, I think it is the Robert T. Byrd Highway or something, it is called. We went there about two years ago. We were down there. That is just unbelievable, you know what, how much earth they can move and ah, just take it over to the next valley and start filling it up. So, a lot of refuge and debris.

**Subject:** They moved the shovel down there at Island Creek. It took them little over a year to shut that thing up.

**Interviewer II:** That mine was huge. Unbelievable.

**Subject:** It had enough electricity in there to run, I bet you, to run Summersville.

**Interviewer:** I think that is true. I have read things like that about some of those draglines, they take more energy than a small town.

**Subject:** They back one of them big coal trucks in the dipper and hide it. But I tell you they moved that in there on the railroad, brought it in by pieces. And then they was over a year setting it up, up there. It looked like a football field when they put it up there, set it up.

**Interviewer II:** Right.

**Subject:** Everyone who had anything to do with moving that in there got fired.

**Interviewer & Interviewer II:** Oh really?

**Subject:** Yeah.

**Interviewer:** What do you think that was about?

**Subject:** I think, ... it cost too much to operate it for what they got out of it.

**Subject:** Yeah.

**Interviewer II:** Yeah, that's a, ... we actually went on one of those, I think it was called Big John or something was the name of that. And we actually stood in the bucket and we have a photograph of that, I have it back on my computer at the office, and it is just unbelievable how people, you know, six feet tall get dwarfed by that huge bucket.

**Subject:** Can you imagine one of these, you put a big dump truck, coal truck in it?!

**Interviewer:** Yeah? The whole truck?

**Subject:** Yeah, the truck backed into the dipper up there. I think I got pictures of it somewhere. You had to go up a big ladder to get up in. I had in one of my friends, was a crane operator on the railroad. He operated the cranes. And he said he would like to see that. Well, I called the Superintendent, he works nightly out there, he was in charge of the personnel. And I asked him about us, about me taking my crane operator over up there to see that. So I told the trainmaster on the railroad that I was going to stop my train long enough to take my crane operator and let him see that. Now he was really impressed. I said do you think you could run one like this. The one that we had was miniature compared to that.

**Interviewer II:** I actually got to go up in one of those too, up in the big cab, in the cabin, up in the box with the controls and it is just like grand central station up in there. Unbelievable.

**Subject:** That one up there was huge. That is the biggest one I have ever seen - that one up there.

**Interviewer II:** It was a monster.

**Subject II:** Have you ever been to Calhoun County?

**Interviewer:** I have been through it. I've not stopped there.

**Subject II:** They were stripping there. You can see where the town flooded and so. In the Calhoun county "specific name"?

**Subject:** No, not much Calhoun county.

**Subject II:** Well, what county was it?

**Subject:** Well, part of it was Fayette and down through McDowell and down in that direction.

**Interviewer:** I saw, I was over McDowell County a few weeks ago, around by Route 52. You know, west of Welch. And a lot of those communities have been flooded out this past summer and spring. It is sad how that happens.

**Interviewer II:** Did you guys get impacted by the flooding last spring, down here?

**Subject:** No. When we they had the big flood, about two weeks later it flooded my garden, see.

**Interviewer II:** When you say the big flood that is the ...

**Subject:** That is the one in Fayetteville and all them over in through there.

**Interviewer II:** Just this past year?

**Subject:** Yeah. This past year. But about three weeks later it come and floods here and covered my garden over there. But like I said it didn't hurt anything. It didn't even bother the garden that much.

**Interviewer II:** Yeah, we say that on the news back home, that you folk had been impacted by the heavy rains and flooding.

**Subject:** Where we go to church, up there, you can't even get across the bottoms up there. The road that goes across there was completely covered. We couldn't drive through there with rains. But where we're at here, it doesn't bother me. It doesn't flood here.

**Interviewer II:** All right then, I think we covered everything.

**Interviewer:** I think we covered everything, do you?

**Subject II:** Well, "specific name" has told you his life story anyway! (laughter)

**Interviewer II:** That is perfectly, that is what we want to hear those things.

**Interviewer:** Yeah, that is exactly what we were hoping to get.

**Interviewer II:** Yes, those candid insights on what occurred and having an informal conversations with you folks. We appreciate your time.

**Subject:** You're sure welcome.

**Interviewer II:** It is good to know you folks, what little time we've spent together. From Alexa's standpoint we appreciate you folks letting us come into your home and sitting down here with you.

**Subject:** Yeah, most of the people that was here when this first, when Tassa was here, are dead and gone. There was a feller, "specific name", he is dead and gone. And then there was four boys that lived over there with their mother. They are all dead.

**Subject II:** And "specific name" lived over here across the road. They are gone.

**Subject:** The people that lived in these two houses are gone. "Specific name" are gone.

**Subject II:** We are going to be gone pretty soon, they are going to mark my own words.

**Subject:** And my brother he lived over there he is dead and gone. The next three houses down, the people who lived there are dead.

**Interviewer II:** Yeah, “specific name” he is gone. And we talked with his son, his youngest son this morning.

**Subject II:** Yeah, how is he?

**Interviewer II:** He seemed to be doing pretty good. He said he had a stoke and ..

**Subject:** He has had two.

**Interviewer II:** That is right two, and Alexa and I both told him that we couldn’t tell that anything had happened to him.