ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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CHATTANOOGA, TENNESSEE

An Interview With

Colonel Creed F. Bates
William A. "Lon" Keef
Cornet Summerfield Vandergriff

by

Frank Mickey Robbins, III
Charles Flowers

August 13, 1975

PREFACE

This manuscript is a transcript of an interview conducted by Charles Flowers and Frank Mickey Robbins. The tapes were donated to the Local History and Genealogy Department, exact provenance unknown. The Department dubbed these tapes on compact discs and audio files in 2010.

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This interview has been cataloged in the same manner as the other oral history tapes. A meter count to the tapes is at the top of each page, except for the fifth tape.

All effort has been made to transcribe the interview in the participants' words. Dialect and grammar have been written to reflect the spoken word. The information is presented as it was recalled by the interviewees at the occasion of the interview and has been edited only for clarity.

CHATTANOOGA - HAMILTON COUNTY BICENTENNIAL LIBRARY

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

PERSONAL DATA SHEET

Date 8-13-1975

1. Full name (include maiden name and married name, where applies):
   Cornet Summerfield Vandergriff (1886-1980, obituary 10-29-1980)

2. Current address and phone number:
   Sawyers Road, Signal Mountain, TN

3. Date and Place of Birth:
   Signal Mountain 1886

4. Mother's maiden name: Place of Birth:

5. Father's name: Place of Birth:

   Jake Vandergriff

6. Spouse's name:

   Bertie Vandergriff (1896-1976)

7. Children's names and addresses (if possible). Indicate daughters married names:
   David Henry Vandergriff
   Elvin Vandergriff
   Jack Henry Vandergriff

(OHP FORM F)

CHATTANOOGA - HAMILTON COUNTY BICENTENNIAL LIBRARY

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

PERSONAL DATA SHEET

Date 8-13-1975

1. Full name (include maiden name and married name, where applies):
   William Alonzo Keef (Lon) (1887-1977) (obituary 9-2-1977)

2. Current address and phone number:
   1404 Hollister Rd., Signal Mountain

3. Date and Place of Birth:
   1887 10-28-1887

4. Mother's maiden name: Place of Birth:
   Amanda (1850-

5. Father's name: Place of Birth:
   William D. Keef (1848- Tennessee

6. Spouse's name:
   Jimmie A.

7. Children's names and addresses (if possible). Indicate daughters married names:
   Peggy Pickett
   Sara McKnight

(OHP FORM F)

CHATTANOOGA - HAMILTON COUNTY BICENTENNIAL LIBRARY

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

PERSONAL DATA SHEET

Date 8-10-75

1. Full name (include maiden name and married name, where applies):

   Creed Fletcher Bates (Colonel)

2. Current address and phone number:

   4307 1/2 St. Elmo Ave.,
   Chattanooga, TN 37409

3. Date and Place of Birth:

   St. Elmo, TN, 2-1- 1894 (died 10-10-1975)

4. Mother's maiden name: Place of Birth:
   Liza Jane Lloyd

5. Father's name: Place of Birth:
   Lafayette W. Bates

6. Spouse's name:

   not married

7. Children's names and addresses (if possible). Indicate daughters married names:

(OHP FORM F)

Bates, p. 1

Tape 1, Side 1, 000

Interview takes place at Bates' home on Signal Mountain.
Dogs barking.

Bates: Don't eat them.

Robbins: Good afternoon.

Bates: Hey boy, how are you?

Robbins: You have a little voice box.

Bates: He just barks, he just barks.

Robbins: Good to see you again.

Bates: Where's the illustrious one?

Robbins: Hi, Mr. Bates, how are you doing? Good to see you.

Bates: Where's the illustrious one?

Flowers: I seem illustrious to you? Good to see you.

Bates: Good to see you, good to see you. Well, get a chair.

Robbins: Did you have a chance for your nap this afternoon?

Bates: Oh, yes, I did that nicely, got up awhile ago. Sit down, Charlie, and rest up. I'm going over there. I said in case I have to answer the phone, I'm right here. All right, there's our distinguished dinner guests book over there.

Robbins: All right.

Flowers: Oh, you've got a guest book now?

Bates: Oh, yes.

Flowers: I hope we just write our names, not a poem, I'm not up to it.

Bates: Some of these people have done just such a thing, I know. See, you've signed, he hasn't.

Robbins: Yes, I signed two weeks ago.

Bates: He's sleepy too, you haven't had your nap then.

Robbins: I forgot to take it, but – let's see, yeah, we all sign up here. I built a fire at our house this afternoon; it was sort of wet inside.

Bates: I haven't done it; it might be a good idea.

Robbins: A good chance to get the summer mildew out.

Bates: Yes, you're shadier than my place, too Robbins: Yes, Summertown---our family's house here is very---has tremendous trees right over the house that makes it real wet.

Bates: There's only one room here where it gets mildewy.

Robbins: You've got a good opening of sunlight coming in your house.

Bates: Right.

Robbins: We had so much shade that we had to take some of the limbs off.

Bates: What's today, tenth, isn't it?

Robbins: Tenth, September, the tenth, 1975.

Bates: September?

Flowers: August the tenth.

Robbins: I saw the dogwood leaves are starting to get reddish.

Bates: Yes.

Robbins: You can tell that fall's on its way.

Bates: Now Charlie, come on and sit down. I want to know what you have been doing. There's nothing that you can get by with, I know, but ---(laughter)

Flowers: I've left New York, I'm teaching at a university, the University of Rochester, which means---

Bates: What phase of English or drama?

Flowers: English literature and creative writing. It means that I'm there seven months out of the year, so I'm out of there the rest of the year, and I'm writing again. When I was in New York, I was just playing all the time and drinking too much, so now I ---

Bates: Too much beer, I can tell that.

Flowers: That's right. [laughter] There's less than there was, so I'm writing poetry again and writing a play and making speeches.

Bates: I see, I see.

Flowers: I'm convinced I'm going to write a great play in the next couple of years, and two years from now, I guess I'll come up with something else to do, if I don't do that. (laughter)

Bates: Good, good.

Flowers: That's my reason to live right now.

Bates: Where are you living now, down in---

Flowers: In Rochester. Right now? I just came into town 2 or 3 days ago, so I'm here for a couple of weeks.

Bates: Good, good. As I recall, several years ago, they offered you assistant editorship of the Times, isn't that right?

Flowers: Yes, I've thought about that a lot. I don't know; I don't know what happened.

Bates: I believe Marty [Martin S. Ochs] did that, wasn't it?

Flowers: Yes, it was Marty.

Bates: Either he told me or you told me.

Robbins: I don't remember telling you, but, yes, I might have.

Flowers: Yes, I've thought about that a long time. You stopped me from that.

Robbins: A long ways from New York City.

Bates: I think I'd be---- Martin and I are real good friends.

Flowers: Martin's doing well, you know, he's got his degree, and he's teaching now. He's teaching at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.

Bates: I know he was head of the paper when we saw him.

Flowers: Yes, but he stopped that. A new president came in, changed the administration. He got his master's degree in foreign policy or something like that, so he's teaching politics, and he's ---

Robbins: I love Martin, he---

Bates: I'm very fond of Martin.

Flowers: I still think he thinks that ultimate happiness is going to be being able to write a novel, and he he hasn't done that yet, so he's working at it. That's kind of a dark spot in his life.

Bates: In other words, the ultimate criterion of anything is to the extent what agrees with your views.

Flowers: Uh-huh.

Bates: And so his ---you see the similarity there, don't you?

Flowers: No, that's Martin's view. I promise you it didn't bring me ultimate happiness. (laughter)

Bates: You just---awhile ago you just got through saying, didn't you?

Robbins: Wealth, fame, and notoriety.

Flowers: Wealth, fame, and notoriety, that's ----- You people never have enough. His daughters now are just out of this world, it's just unbelievable.

Bates: Well, I don't keep many letters purposely, I do at times; just turn around. Patty is his second one, I believe it is.

Flowers: No, no, wait, Patty's the first; Celia is the second; Shelby is the third.

Bates: Shelby's the third. I just remember Patty was named after her mother, you see--- and I kept it. It was after her grandfather died, and, of course, I've known Ochs always because he used to live up here in the summertime, and so I went down to the funeral home, so I evidently saw the little girl there. She wrote me a note, and it was so nice that I just kept it. And especially Patty--- I remember her mother, of course, too, I remember her grandfather well.

Flowers: She has just graduated from the University of Chicago, I guess, and is a spectacular human being.

Bates: Really?

Flowers: Now, she was shy for a couple of years, or at least the last few years when I knew her. And now she is living in Chicago.

Bates: This would have been written in her shy days.

Flowers: And introverted, probably.

Bates: Now, let me see, is the youngest Shelby? Yes. She will be graduating, I think approximately this year. You see, Shelby is a very cherished family name there.

Flowers: Why, sure.

Bates: Now, I imagine that they gave up on having a boy, and so they named her Shelby. That'd be my guess.

Flowers: Uh-huh, that's right, that's right. That's exactly right; they talk about that. She's the brightest in the bunch.

Bates: She is?

Flowers: A mathematician, bright as can be. Well, I bring you greetings from Norman Bradley. I was just over there this morning for a brunch, and Norman says, "Hello."

Bates: Oh, you were. Good, good, he's a good man.

Flowers: Sure is. I don't know what it is about the Chattanooga Times, but they can breed the best human beings, it seems.

Bates: And of course, I was very, very fond of Alfred Mynders.

Flowers: I didn't know him.

Bates: Very fond of him.

Robbins: He was a publisher for many years

Bates: He was editor.

Flowers: Editor and publisher, and then he did that---

Bates: He published some and stayed in the Adolph Ochs Building.

Robbins: Yes, that's right, sure.

Flowers: No danger of it passing on. (laughter)

Bates: Who's the heir apparent, as far as you can hear now?

Flowers: Well, I think about that a lot, I think---it's hard to believe it, but I think that they all think Steve is the heir apparent.

Bates: (laughter) I can't---

Flowers: You wouldn't believe it, you wouldn't believe it, he---

Bates: Yes.

Flowers: He's become quite something. First of all, he married in the family.

Bates: He married in the family; he's always been something.

Flowers: Something. (laughter) He had the good sense, or she had the good sense, his wife, to find him.

Robbins: Do you want this door closed?

Bates: Yes.

Flowers: Very ambitious, very attractive. I guess you've met her, his wife?

Bates: Oh yes, I remember when he married her. Of course, he always had girls that were normal, a little better than normal, maybe. And so things are going to be just dependent on which girl he's going to [tape garbled] Time's going to be so-ands- and so-and-so. (laughter) And all the girls I knew went with [unknown] were Gentiles. Now, you remember going with--- Son, I knew Steve well, and he was their mother's despair, partly despair when he came to City High, and I treated him like a "Dutch uncle" and so did Ruth Scholze really pulled through. She treated him like a "Dutch aunt" And he's always been friendly since. Now, he didn't graduate in my last year there; he graduated the next year. We're talking about the same boy, I'm sure.

Flowers: Sure we are but that would have been what? Sixty---

Bates: Sixty-five, right. I thought he had ability and thought he needed a little discipline occasionally. All of us in this world are going to have the have discipline or we're not going to get anywhere. And so I'd administer it, but he always seemed very friendly, and very friendly to Ruth. After he finished college a year or so, he came back and would go and see Ruth. I remember we had --- oh, this was several years after I retired, why, Carmichael finally

Bates: got rid of ROTC. And so Steve was by to see Ruth after that, and said well, as far as he was concerned ROTC was for the birds, but says, "If I had been there, I'd have fought it. I'd have fought it, I'd have fought it."

Flowers: You may very well be speaking about the next publisher of the New York Times. They think very well of him in New York right now, the family. He's now in the business division of the thing they bought in Gainesville.

Bates: Somewhere in Florida.

Flowers: Gainesville.

Bates: Right. Well, anyway, he went to New York. I always asked the father about him---. I liked him, and I worked him over. It took me a year, and I had the opportunity to see anybody can do it. (laughter)

Flowers: I missed that opportunity.

Bates: Real nice kid. And so---

Flowers: That was my favorite.

Bates: One thing against you, you had book--- I mean when you went through school, there was nothing to do besides study, and so you did. [Much of this exchange was inaudible.] It's gotten to where the other principals around Chattanooga --- they say that extra curricular activities cause --- detracted too much from studies. Heck, there's no comparison between the academic attitudes and achievements we had at Chattanooga High School, so they couldn't say that about us. We just made them work more.

Flowers: Now, the case may have changed, but to get scholarships when I went to high school, extra curricular activities made all the difference.

Bates: Why, sure. But I always said I was going to have them anyway. Even if I didn't believe in them--- I didn't believe in them a lot. I was going to have them because I knew that if we didn't have a program that the kids would be interested in that we approved of, they'd have one of their own anyway.

Flowers: What's happened? Are you in touch with City High School any more?

Bates: Very little, very little, very little.

Flowers: Do you have any idea what it is now?

Bates: Well, I heard the other day that the registrar--- and I understand she died last night, and I just talked on the phone when Miss Ruth and I fixed up the obituary.

Flowers: Ruth Scholze is back there?

Bates: No, no, she retired years ago, some years ago, two years ago, and Amelia is now the --- you remember Amelia Bazemore --- she took over Ruth's place. She died very unexpectedly in the hospital last night. Her sister told Mrs. --- the school nurse --- she wanted me to write the obituary, and so Ruth and I have been working, getting data and getting it ready. It ought to be in the Times early, late this afternoon anyway, oughtn't it?

Flowers: It can be in anytime up until 9:00.

Bates: All right, that's good.

Bates: When I saw you all coming, I said, "Ruth, I'll phone back." She went over to see Amelia's aunt with whom she lived and checked most of the data with her, especially to get names straight and so on.

Flowers: And why did she die? Do we know?

Bates: I don't think they had an autopsy performed.

Flowers: Being completely mysterious, huh?

Bates: Right.

Robbins: And Amelia wasn't --- what was she, about late 40's, early 50's?

Bates: She graduated in the class of '38 I remember.

Flowers: (laughter) You never forget, Colonel.

Bates: So that would be about --- '21 would be about her birth date, wouldn't it probably? Wouldn't that be 54, wouldn't it? Somewhere this year.

Flowers: Yes, at least it seems young now. I probably didn't think that the last time I saw you, fifteen years ago.

Bates: I think that's---

Flowers. It seems younger and younger.

Bates: That's childlike to me. (laughter) Well, let's see, you graduated in the class of '60, of course, and so you were born what? '41 or '42?

Flowers: '42.

Bates: I mean '42, yes, '42 or '43. You were 17 or 18, depending when your birthday comes.

Flowers: You probably know this already, because I guess it happens to everybody, but some of my best friends are still from that class of '60. I just stopped in Washington to see Linda May, remember Linda?

Bates: Oh, sure, yes.

Flowers: She's living in the heart of Washington and teaching school, and [has] incredible energy still.

Bates: You were in an awful big class there.

Flowers: Like you're saying, we thought we were. We were a very close class.

Bates: You were.

Flowers: And Deena, Deena and Ross [Brudenell] who spent their honeymoon night here --- I guess you know --- are doctoring in North Carolina.

Bates: Yes. One of his brothers was over to see me some time not too long ago.

Flowers: Charlie? or Bill?

Bates: I don't remember which right now; I talked to both of them.

Flowers: I've lost track of those two, completely.

Bates: You haven't been married many times since. (laughter)

Flowers: Not many, no.

Bates: I see.

Flowers: After what I hear of the wedding night here with your cooperation, it since has an ominous undertaking.

Bates: What'd you hear?

Flowers: I heard that you'd roused them up in the morning by saying something like "Charge" or I don't know; I forget that story. (laughter) But they've remembered it with affection ever since.

Bates: Well, that's really good. They were in the --- he was by here along in the early fall, and just a casual visit. And sometime later he wrote me that he'd like to spend his week's honeymoon here. I didn't answer for a few days because I just kind of wondered what I should do. Then I wrote him, I said, "Well, a few, you'll freeze to death, maybe, but I plan to be in New Orleans..." See I have a married sister living in New Orleans, and a married nephew in Gainesville, he's a professor at the University of Florida. My brother-in-law was head of the --- oh, I guess --- civil engineering department at Tulane for years, just retiring now. And another son is my godchild, married and an oil man out in Corpus Christi. So we alternate, not alternate, isn't a good word, what's the proper word to use here?

Flowers: For what?

Bates: Alternate is just for two things, but people misuse it all the time; they use it for more than two. What is the correct word to use?

Flowers: For swapping around?

Bates: Yes! (laughter)

Flowers: Good simple Anglo-Saxon.

Bates: Of course, I knew that, but I just wanted to know a correct one. People misuse alternate, because alternate, really, correctly can only be used between two things. But people, those who speak good English too, just use it --- "Well, I have ten choices but I don't" Well, anyway, I believe I was in New Orleans that time. And so Thanksgiving, I guess it was, yes, I phoned and talked to him. He said, "Shall I bring Deena?" I said, "You'd better, you might as well get used to it." (laughter) Being boss. And so they came up late Thanksgiving after-

Bates: noon because I'd fixed dinner and I told them to come up later, and I showed them around over the place. The room that I would have taken, the one he would have taken, was down here in the swim house, you know, a fireplace in it, and a big double bed, and all the logs in it and everything just looked fine.

Flowers: This is Ross Brudenell and Deena.

Bates: Yes. They liked --- And the front rooms downstairs, big old-fashioned double bed in there, oh, I think that bed was probably a 120 years old, and bathroom right next to it. That was when people wanted double beds. I knew they'd take a double bed. That's when she took --- no, I said the boy and I would have taken the one down there for it was more romantic. Well, anyway, I don't rent, this is just purely hospitality. Most of young city people nowadays know nothing about wood fires, nothing. And I wanted to wait a little while before I burned the house up. [inaudible sentence] I was going to be gone, and I arranged for them to come here, fix their --- to keep the fires going, and have a fire going that night, and fix their meals. And I thought that just counted for a wedding present too, for that, and it did. They came, oh yes. So at that time ---I don't have them now, they burned --- I had a couple of feather beds, 1 or 2 of them, mother's old feather beds. I put both of them in the living room and our bedroom on the bed. I just don't want my mountaineer friends to hear about it. They'd say, "You shouldn't have done that, they will never find each other." (laughter) That's the least of my worries, least of my worries. You can add something, now, the next time, you tell it.

Flowers: Please don't do that, never will find each other.

Bates: Of course, I was gone down to Florida, I mean New Orleans. And I thought they were going to be gone at a certain time. I got in, I guess, that night from New Orleans, early morning, and I phoned up here to see if [inaudible] So I came on up. It was about 9:00 and they had to be over in Memphis before then. [inaudible] If I'm not mistaken, I got up here before they got up, I think I did.

Flowers: Mountain men you mentioned, what ever happened to Oliver Hartman? Is he still around?

Bates: No, Oliver died; I went to his funeral some years back. And I've always been sorry about that, because Oliver was one of the best posted persons on the mountain, he used to help me. And I'd been to see him right --- a day or so ago, a few days before, and that some morning, if I'm not mistaken, the day before, I guess. And he was just --- oh, sure, he wanted it. When we got over there that day --- he had a rupture and it had fallen on him, and he was ---

Flowers: The day you and I went over there?

Bates: Yes. Of course he was good, he died --- he would be 88 or 89 or so. But I always wanted this person's [inaudible]

Flowers: He lived here all of his life?

Bates: Up on --- yes, well, sasshayed between down here and [inaudible]

Flowers: You thought he was a murderer, didn't you?

Bates: Huh?

Flowers: You thought he was a murderer, didn't you? You thought he had killed some men?

Bates: No, I didn't, I didn't. He used to carry arms, but I never thought he killed anybody. He was good on local tales, though. I heard one on the caves the other day

Flowers: Oh, you did?

Bates: Yes. I was over here at Fred Simon's, you know who Fred is.

Flowers: Yes.

Bates: Some man over there I didn't know, he seemed to know me. "Creed, you ever hear any of them groans down there?" "What do you mean?" "Why, don't you know about that woman being murdered down there?" "No" "Why, I don't know why you didn't," he said, "this was long ago. A bunch of fellows had kidnapped a young gal. And in their rush to get away --- they knew they were being pursued --- they tied her in here in under the cave. And the posse, of course, didn't know about the cave, and just went on through there. And , of, some years afterwards, months afterwards at least, they found her corpse, I think it was, mostly just skeleton then, all bound down in the cave. And you know, Creed, people wouldn't go down there for years at night, because you could hear them moanings and groanings down at that cave."

Flowers: Where is this cave? I don't know Signal Mountain.

Bates: Have you ever been down there?

Flowers: No, where is it?

Robbins: It's just right --- a hundred yards, seventy-five yards from the house.

Bates: Take him down there, take him down there.

Robbins: We'll go down and see if we can hear this. The Indians used that cave, didn't they?

Bates: Oh, yes. I've gotten on persons so for digging there, because any digging to be done, I want to do it.

Robbins: Yes. Well, have you ever found any arrowheads and artifacts there?

Bates: No, except what somebody else has dug; they give me some of them.

Flowers: Yes, yes. Cherokees?

Bates: I imagine so, I imagine so. Which reminds me, did you see that article in the paper About digging down on the ---

Robbins: Oh yes, down at the Craven's house.

Bates: No., no, no, down at the --- down on Moccasin Bend.

Flowers: I didn't see the article.

Bates: Well, Elizabeth Patten's ---Mrs. Cartter Patten --- gave me a --- look right there --- No, that folded up paper --- no, no, over there, right there by the pliers on this side, on this side.

Flowers: Yes.

Bates: It takes him a little time to catch it, don't it? (laughter) She handed that to me at church this morning.

Robbins: Well, now, Dr. [Jeff] Brown is also digging at Craven's, I think, at the same time, isn't he?

Bates: Maybe so, I don't know. Well, Dr. Brown phoned me sometime in the spring, and it seems like that they are going to put sewers along the creeks here. And he wanted me to --- he checked with me and see if there are any --- I think they learned their lesson about Cameron Hill, going ahead without checking.

Flowers: Have they learned their lesson?

Bates: I hope so.

Flowers: I hope they have too.

Bates: I'm one of those chaotic suers, you know, Mrs. Patten and the Currey girl and 2 or 3 others of us -- we started suing them before they started drilling.

Flowers: Oh, you did?

Bates: Yes. I'll tell you this little anecdote.

Flowers: When was this?

Bates: Along in the spring. So some of us had been building [inaudible rest of sentence] I forget the lawyer's name, Tanner, I guess. And he was really pursuing it. And, of course, there were about 8 or 10 different things we were suing, you know. Better housing and everything that's been connected with it.... And, of course, they had some very cynical remarks and article in the paper about the [inaudible] as they went by the river in their yachts. Of course, they were hitting at Mrs. Patten there.

Flowers: (laughter) Yes.

Bates: And so, when they had the trial, and 5 or --- at least 5 or 6, maybe more, bright, young lawyers that were trying out their talent, you know, and ---

Flowers: Against you?

Bates: Against our group. And then the oldest one of them, by far, was Bryan Wilkerson; he's a man in his seventies and he's been very ill. I had him in school when I first started teaching at Central. And we've always been quite friendly, and his daughter in school, too. So they made some comments and Mrs. Patten --- she's very nice, so they didn't get anywhere with her much; they made those insinuations, you know, and also Mrs. Currey. Louise and I have lived next door to each other. And so they hadn't gotten down to me, and they were going

Bates: to adjourn. I didn't want them to adjourn and told Judge Wilson, I said I had some things to do tomorrow. (laughter) I wanted to go on now. When they got in there, he started on me, and I sort of --- I was waiting for him, never said a word, never a word. And I taunted him a little, and so afterwards, I said, "Well, now, Sam, those bright young fellows, they didn't say a word to me." He said, "No, I told them when you went on there, 'Better watch that son-of-a -bitch, he'll ruin you.'" (laughter) And I don't know what would have happened, but I'd try to come up with some of his expectations. I'd get a little ammunition on the way, which I've forgotten now. But that suit got nowhere, but still being tried.

Flowers: It is still being tried?

Bates: Yes. What could be done, I don't know, but the lawyers are still going on with it. [Tape ends mid-sentence.]

End Tape 1, Side 1
Begin Tape 1, Side 2

[Tape begins mid-conversation.]

Flowers: What was your feeling about Cameron Hill? Why did you think it should stay?

Bates: I thought it was a natural place with historic import. I thought it was a pretty place up there.

Flowers: The houses you mean?

Bates: The general lay of the land. And I thought if they were going to put something up there, they ought to --- I wanted [inaudible]

Flowers: Oh, did you?

Bates: Yes. And they don't know better than what they're building.

Flowers: Oh, what they're building is a disaster so far. But you weren't moved by the architecture of the place?

Bates: Some of the houses, yes. Some of them have been fine. I may be a little hipped on preservation, but I think you can judge the type of people in a community by how much they appreciate certain things of the past, certain things they are given, good design, and so on. We had everything going nearly. Some of us succeeded in getting the old Union Depot, just part of it really was built before the war, just the shed part. We got that on the National Register, but that only means that you can't use federal funds for it.
And so one of their buddies bought it and tore it down before anything could be done. We couldn't have done anything anyway. Of course, he didn't use any federal funds. Then over on Cameron Hill, I think maybe --- I don't know how authentic ---- I was on this committee. I was reared out there in St. Elmo and the adjoining hills. She just saw snake heads and everything else over there on Moccasin Bend. You know about the story, Mexico City and the eagle and the serpent and so on. She even had serpents head over there in ---

Robbins: Uh-huh, she thought Indians had come up and made certain mounds there in the shape of those animals.

Bates: Right.

Flowers: Oh, she did?

Robbins: She had some contour maps to show it. In fact, she found the same forms of animals throughout the city of Chattanooga: Cameron Hill and some other things over there where Riverside High School is. She saw all types of land formations where the mounds, she thought, could have been built many years ago, as part of an animal worship culture.

Flowers: She thought Cameron Hill was built for that reason?

Robbins: No, not necessarily, no, not Cameron Hill, but I think she thought that may have fitted in. Actually she thought that fitted in with the way other things were built around it, she thought.

Bates: This fellow [Dr. Jeff] Brown in the archaeology department at the university, called me sometime this spring. He mentioned the sewers along some creeks. I said they'd learned their lesson evidently, some of the promoters had, about Cameron Hill. They'd asked him to check on that, and he was asking me about some of them. North of the River, the 2 best people I know of are this fellow, Braden Williams, I know him pretty well. So we got together with him, and I told him then about Moccasin Bend, and they ought to see some of her people. The Sunday before I went to the hospital on Tuesday night, very unexpectedly, [my cousin] Bob Long, who's my favorite cousin, he was so concerned.

Flowers: Yes.

Bates: And I think probably he might be interested in a few other things in this world more than anthropology research. (laughter)
He --- I've always known him to --- he shows me his best side. And so he was drinking my cider which reminds me --- look under this chair.

Robbins: Oh, have you got a little cider?

Bates: Yes, look in this closet, old safe, old-fashioned safe, and get some mugs, and the to the Frigidaire and get some cider. I put everybody to work except myself, just like I always did. All right. And so I asked him about the papers that his mother had. He said he'd turned them all over to a fellow who used to be a county tax assessor. He was in Sunday School this morning; you weren't there.

Robbins: I was at Sunday School.

Bates: You were sitting back there.

Robbins: Yes. Sherman Paul.

Bates: Sherman, yes, Sherman Paul. And I would have gotten in touch with Sherman but [as] I said, on Tuesday night, I went to the hospital. Then I was out the running pretty much since. And so Mrs. Patten came across this other; she showed me that this morning. She wants us to work on making that area of Moccasin Bend an historic site.

Flowers: What does that mean, it will be protected from development?

Bates: Yes, right.

Flowers: By the federal government.

Bates: Yes, I think --- of course, during the Sunday School lesson and singing, we didn't have too much of a chance to talk.

Flowers: What's worth saving up here? You see, I'm from the flatlands, a poor boy from Brainerd, so I don't know; I never quite understand why you all get to Signal Mountain so much. Do you think this is God's country?

Bates: Do you know what you are going to be soon out in Brainerd?

Flowers: What?

Bates: You're either going to be "salt and pepper" or altogether "pepper" right?

Flowers: I think so, I think so.

Bates: It just looks that way to me.

Flowers: Uh-huh, to me, too.

Robbins: Do you want the big mug?

Bates: No, I won't take any right now, thank you.

Flowers: Thank you. Has this just been made?

Bates: Well, let me see, the --- when I was in the hospital like a sick dog, I was kind of [inaudible] You talk to your immediate family and then say, "Don't you advertise." I saw a preacher out at the Methodist church where I go to and said I've been living here about a long time. He came to see me twice, I think, and came out a day or so before this. Then next Sunday, he announced to the congregation that he had been to see Colonel Bates, and he was getting along better, and he was probably home by then. He said, "They did his gall bladder, and they found it filled with apple seed, yellow jackets, and corncobs." (laughter) And that afternoon, why, the superintendent of the Sunday School over here at Union Chapel was here with Dan White. Dan is one of the White boys that owns that linotyping company, and he's one of my old boys that lives in and goes out to the same church in St. Elmo. And he heard that that morning, so he was telling me about it. So the next Sunday, Warren announces it over here at this one [church]; the yellow jackets and corncobs have appeal.

Robbins: They sort of give apple cider a little tang, I guess.

Bates: Right, right.

Flowers: How do make this stuff? I've never known; do you just squeeze apples?

Bates: Well, all I do is squeeze apples and grind them up in the squeezings.

Flowers: This is just apple juice, then.

Bates: That's all it is.

Robbins: Remember that time --- was it Charlie that was helping you make them? I think you [Mickey] got some pictures of Charlie.

Flowers: You're the little fellow that had 1 eye, the glass eye.

Bates: Oh, you mean old Jim.

Robbins: Jim, yes.

Flowers: Is he still living?

Bates: Sure, he's just 88.

Robbins: Good gracious, I thought he was an old man. (laughter) Long and many years to go. What's your recipe for apple cider, besides the yellow jackets and the few rotten spots?

Bates: [pointing] See that book right up there on top of Harvard Classics, on top of the shelf, I imagine. [book retrieved] Do you think that thing looks like me?

Robbins: I wouldn't have recognized you.

Bates: Are you familiar with this book?

Robbins: Chattanooga Cook Book.

Bates: Yes. Somewhere in here.

Flowers: Oh, Helen [Exum's cookbook]

Bates: [looking through book] It's in here some place. I'm not used to turning to it too much.

Robbins: Do you use your best apples for cider?

Bates: What do you think?

Robbins: (laughter) We tried making it with our worst apples one day, and it was a little too flat.

Flowers: Do you have a cider press?

Robbins: Yes. Ideally speaking, should you have about one piece of rotten spot for every 9 pieces of good apple, or what do you think is the --- (laughter)

Bates: Well, that's according to how your taste runs. (laughter) Wasn't that a good answer, Charlie? What name do you go by? Charles or Charlie? Why don't you go by Charles still?

Flowers: That changed, you know, when I went up north, I never got over that. In the South, they always called me Charles.

Robbins: Of course, a rotten spot is pretty ineffective, I guess, unless there's a worm in it, wouldn't you say?

Flowers: That's a protein.

Bates: All right, now here we are. [recipe found in book] Recognize it? All right, read it out.

Robbins: Charlie, want to read it?

Bates: No, let's you read, he's drinking.

Robbins: "Summertown Cider in the Chattanooga Cook Book" Creed Bates says, 'The nectar of the gods is the elixir of the fruit of fruits.'

Bates: How do you pronounce that word?

Robbins: (laughter) Why don't you pronounce it?

Bates: I don't know how. We can stand it all right; I just didn't want you to say anything that would grate on Charlie's ears.

Robbins: How would you say it, Charlie?

Flowers: That's fine.

Robbins: Okay, okay. "It is the fruit of fruits, the apple; for making fresh cider, note a few ground rules. One, keep the mill clean, including washing good immediately after using."

Bates: I think I put "well" but I notice they had "good" in there. (laughter) All right now, on that, when I was a kid, everybody had a cider mill. You could get them for 10 or 12 dollars, I imagine. And I'd go around to play, and everybody had a little orchard; nobody sprayed in those days. And I'd see them make cider, just bring up the apples, dump them in, never wash the apples, never wash the mill. When they got through, they never washed the mill either. (laughter) I got so I didn't like to drink my neighbor's cider.

Robbins: That sort of tended to attract a few yellow jackets, I would imagine, under there.

Bates: That would attract yellow jackets, anyway.

Robbins: "Number 2, mix the varieties of apples use, Old Virginia Winesaps are tops."

Bates: Yes, I always mix my apples. Now, old-fashioned Virginia Winesaps make good cider by themselves, but I usually mix anything I happen to have; I mix several kinds together.

Robbins: What are some of the other kinds that you think? Would you try to get a green apple like a Golden Grime or a Golden Delicious?

Bates: Grimes Golden Delicious? Yes, they make good cider, but I get something that makes a browner one, too, like some of the red apples.

Robbins: They probably make a prettier cider, too.

Bates: Yes, they do.

Robbins: "Number 3, cider can be made from the time apples come in during the summer on through the season, but fall is the cider season."

Bates: Right,. fall is the cider, no comparison, no comparison.

Robbins: Why?

Flowers: Sweeter apples in the fall?

Bates: Right. Now, this cider's made of more mature apples, and a lot of fall cider would be because we had an awful time squeezing them; they'd just "squush, squush, squush." But this is better than most of green apple cider; I mean early apple cider, but it's not as good as fall cider.

Robbins: Let's see, in the making of it, you said that you should cut out the decayed pieces.

Bates: Right.

Robbins: Did you always have time to do that?

Bates: I usually took time.

Robbins: Uh-Huh, that's good. "Wash, rinse, and drain -" Do you want to read, why don't you read the part about making?

Bates: No, read.

Robbins: "Gather apples, cut out the decayed places, wash, rinse, and drain, then grind. If you have a small mill with wooden sumps, it is difficult to use mellow apples. With a large press, using burlap cloths, mellow apples give good results."

Bates: Do you know why, for instance, the top of cider mill, you can't use mellow apples.

Flowers: Mellow apples, what do you mean?

Bates: Mellow.

Robbins: The soft ones?

Bates: Well, mellow is dead ripe.

Robbins: Yes, because they would slide through the slots.

Bates: That's right. But when you use burlap bags, why, it's all right.

Robbins: "After filling the tub with ground apples, place in position to press, letting the juice run into a large container. Strain the juice through a white cloth or filter paper. Place in jugs and put in the refrigerator. Even better, if you have a wooden keg or barrel, let the cider remain in this container overnight. Then rack off. Parenthesis, pour off the top liquid, leaving the sediment in the bottom, close parenthesis, and place in jugs, keeping always in a cool place. If left in warm temperature, cider ferments quickly. Cider in the refrigerator, if racked off every few days, will stay fresh much longer. But friends and neighbors will usually solve this turning into vinegar problem. (laughter) I guess we helped you do a little racking off just about 5 minutes ago.

Bates: All right, now, there are all kinds of ways of making hard cider. I remember, for instance, there was an old fellow used to live down here below us, and I remember one time grinding apples on his place --- the only one who owned a mill -- I was down there a few weeks later, and he had a 15 gallon keg, as I recall, and had taken a rubber tube and [inaudible] the other end down lower he had water. It had been down there 5 or 6 weeks.

Bates: "Creed, taste that" That was 50 odd years ago, maybe 60 years ago. And, boy, I took it up just like I was drinking some cider, and the top of my head almost shot off. (laughter) It was hard as could be. Then I was kind of like a primitive Baptist preacher who was one of my old school boys, "Professor what you want to do there, take a toy balloon and put over the top of the jug of cider; in 6 weeks, it'll be real good." It was the same principle.

Flowers: You never admitted to when we were in high school that you made hard cider.

Bates: I don't.

Flowers: Oh, you don't. (laughter)

Robbins: You've heard about it.

Bates: Oh, listen, do you think I made cider --- somebody said, "When did you start doing this?" I said, "Well, that cider mill, my father got in the summer of 1903." Back in those days, people walked a lot more that they do now. On Sunday afternoon, there'd be any number of families walk down from Summertown.

Robbins: All the way out to your place.

Bates: Sure.

Robbins: Seems like that'd be a ---

Bates: Mile.

Robbins: Mile walk.

Bates: They'd come down to the cave and Father and Mother and their parents were usually good friends, and sit on the front porch and talk and drink cider. See, a lot of the families didn't have cars, and a lot of them didn't have horses and buggies, going back and forth....

Flowers: Did you grow up here all your life?

Bates: I lived in St. Elmo, but my father bought this place before I was born.

Robbins: Were you born up in Cleveland?

Bates: No, Father was.

Robbins: I was up there with the man that runs the peach orchard up there, and he said that you had relatives that grew up there.

Bates: His land is on the Bates Road.

Robbins: Yes.

Bates: And my grandfather had about a thousand acres of land right along in there.

Robbins: Right where the peach orchard is?

Bates: Some of them. Of course, he's got peach orchards scattered.

Bates: But I know his home is on the Bates Road.

Flowers: You're related to Grady Long in some way, aren't you?

Bates: No, just friends.

Flowers: I thought you all were cousins or something.

Bates: No, I don't think so. I asked him up to Thanksgiving dinner last year. One thing I had cousins who apparently be inclined. I thought they'd be congenial. I like Grady. See, my grandfather [inaudible] All my people on both sides [inaudible] even that family over in Bledsoe County.

Flowers: What brought your father here?

Bates: Do you mean this place right here? Well, I have my theory, I don't know, but I have the theory. I just finished saying that my grandfather, my mother's people, settled over in Sequatchie Valley. One of her aunts, Aunt Fan was the first white child born in Sequatchie Valley. That's in that book. Take down that book right there.

Bates: This is some place in here. [searching pages] Now, read that out.

Robbins: Says Sequatchie by Leonard Raulston and Jim Livinggood.

Flowers: Betsy McNair, 1785-1859, mother of the first white child born in the Sequatchie Valley, was married 3 times.

Bates: She was my great-grandmother.

Flowers: At the death of one partner, she took on another. Her pithy comment on these alliances, "As long as there's a single man in the valley, I'm not going to slop the hogs." (laughter) Did you make that up or did---

Bates: I've heard it all my life. (laughter) Oh, she's got a number of descendants in this section of the country and all over the southwest.

Flowers: Looks like a hell of a tough woman, strong jaw. [photograph between pages 86 and 89]

Bates: Oh, boy! (laughter) The story goes that when she was an elderly widow, she lived at the home of her youngest son who happened to be my grandfather. I never saw him, but they said he was 6'2", weighed 250, and he was a farmer. He was also at one time or another a county judge, and in both house of the legislature. He had a wife and several children at this time. Grandmother still sat at the head of the table. That's the point I'm making there. There was a Yankee trader trying to make a deal with her and getting nowhere fast; she was pretty sharp, herself. And, finally, in exasperation, says, "Madam, I'm telling you, I've fooled with 2 smarter women than you." She says, " Yes, I'll tell you I've buried 3 smarter men than you." (laughter) Women always like that.

Flowers: What brought her?

Bates: Her husband. I guess that western urge; they were both from up in southwest Virginia. I think she moved over into East Tennessee before they were married, and ---

Flowers: Sequatchie looked like good farmland.

Robbins: Had they been coal mining or farming in West Virginia? definitely.

Flowers: In those days, farmers.

Bates: Oh, definitely, they were farmers. In fact, these posts on the front porch came from the farm.

Flowers: Your father wasn't a farmer, was he?

Bates: Well, he was raised on one, and he always kind of liked to dabble with it, but he wasn't much of a farmer. No, he ---

Flowers: He bought this as a summer place, I guess.

Bates: Right. I started to tell you. You saw that, then. Now, it was over in Sequatchie Valley; well, in the early days what they did, they took up the valley land for good farmland. His great-grandfather's land was between the Sequatchie River and Walden's Ridge where it wasn't too wide. I mean the area wasn't too wide, not really. At the time, why, he just took the mountain land. His son, my grandfather, lived there for almost all of his life. I imagine at one time or another, he had at least 10 or 12, maybe 15, thousand acres of mountain land. It didn't cost him anything, just took it up. My grandfather --- it's custom for all the valley farmers doing that --- would take cattle up there in the summertime and leave them. They'd fatten pretty well on the growth.

Flowers: Just let them alone for the summer?

Bates: Yes.

Flowers: They'd find them somehow.

Bates: But they'd come up in the summer to salt them and check calves and brands on the cows and things like that. There was one place on ---

Flowers: So it began as a working thing, not just as a cool place to be in the summer.

Bates: Well, it was working, yes. And so there was one place where they had all this land was a good chalybeate spring, you know what chalybeate is, tell him what chalybeate is.

Robbins: Means it had minerals.

Bates: Especially what?

Robbins: Especially iron.

Bates: Right.

Flowers: What's the word?

Bates: Spell it! This is one of the few chances you'll ever have to tell this bird something in English.

Robbins: You'd go wild spelling like this, C-H-A-L-Y-B-E-A-T-E, isn't it.

Bates: Right.

Flowers: I haven't seen the word, I don't think.

Bates: Perfectly good word, in fact, it means mineral. I've looked up the derivation of it a time or two, but I don't remember it right now. But I know the common usage of it is mineral, but especially iron. For instance, name the chalybeate springs that you know of up here.

Robbins: Mabbitt Springs.

Bates: Name 2 or 3 others.

Robbins: Well, there's springs all over the mountain, I guess.

Bates: Yes, but well-known ones. You had one over at the top of the mountain, I mean over at Signal Mountain.

Robbins: Yes. Are you talking about the one that used to be near Wright's store or Hy's store?

Flowers: There's one on the W Road.

Robbins: Which one are you thinking of?

Bates: I'm thinking about Burnt Cabin Springs; that's a famous one over there.

Flowers: Where is Burnt Cabin Springs?

Robbins: That was written in the book about the Conner family.

Bates: Open that second drawer there. Incidentally, that's a pretty old piece of furniture there. [looking at article] No, this is one I kept about Lookout Mountain --- a girl I'd had in school about 60 years ago, something like that.

Flowers: Somebody has to tell me why it's important that it is a spring with iron in it.

Bates: In the old days --- maybe I don't have any more of those, I kept some of these --- oh, don't let this fall out please. No, it's not in here. Do you see another piece of the Hamilton County Herald in there? [continued searching, didn't find article]

Flowers: Somebody's offered me a Civil War photograph, almost from this point, by George Barnard who was a Brady photographer, for 200 dollars. Does that strike you as a sensible price? Do you keep up on those things?

Bates: Well, I don't know about price; I think it's a pretty good price for it.

Flowers: A beautiful photograph.

Bates: It is?

Flowers: Beautiful. He was a poet, I think, among photographers at that time.

Bates: A girl I'd had in school once upon a time. She married a grandson of the original Whitesides here. She wrote me and said she had a bunch of these old pictures and deeds and so on.

Bates: "Do you think anybody's want them?" I wrote her, "Yes, of course." It created quite a stir. For instance, there was the original deed where her grandmother-in-law had transferred the point and sold it to the government. All kinds of land grants and picture and so on.

Flowers: What did you do with it?

Bates: When I got them, I first took them out to Mrs. Allen. Do you know Mrs. Penelope Allen Johnson? I would say by far, the best-posted person on the early history of Chattanooga, without a moment's hesitancy on my part, Mrs. Penelope Allen Johnson. She's the great granddaughter of James Whiteside, [she's] very bright, 88 years old, mind is sharp as a tack, and she's done a tremendous amount of research; in fact, Gilbert Govan, I believe, once, told me, before they wrote The Chattanooga Country, they tried to get her to write a book she'd done so much work. Of course, he's wonderful, too, I'm not underrating him.

Flowers: Oh, Gilbert's terrific in every way.

Bates: Right and on the Civil War, he's the best there is. He has an exaggerated opinion of what I know, and when he makes a comparison to [that] it embarrasses me. He and Mrs. Allen, they're just wonderful. She's like he is, awfully good on all phases but each one's better on certain ones.

Flowers: Is this just a hobby with her?

Bates: For a while, it was a livelihood, too. She was Times editor for the "Family Leaves" for years.

Flowers: Oh.

Bates: In the thirties, she was also state --- they don't call it research ---genealogical research person for the UDC --- I mean the DAR. When I first told her -- turned over to her the packet... [Tape runs out in mid-conversation.]

End Tape 1 Side 2, 703
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[tape blank before 188]

Robbins: Did the water help her?

Bates: They loved it.

Robbins: Really?

Bates: She got a lot better, I don't know whether it was from the mountain air, the water, or whatever it was, but she got a lot better. And so incidentally, Alfred Mynders [inaudible] And so that started the habit. My family's habit of going to the mountain in summer goes back to 1862, and not every summer, but several summers. In fact, my sister, Betty, was born up there one summer. After my father and mother married and moved out to St. Elmo, I imagine things were ---and they had the idea of going to the mountain in the summer. Father heard about a little mountain farm being for sale. We came up and looked at it, and it was the first day of July, leaves weren't out, and the place was all grown up and so on. We looked out over that way and saw the distant valley and the forward mountains and bought the place. I'm sure the old house was right down near the road there. Down in the cave was a very, very cool little spring which had to piped a long distance and then in the tub, and for years, that's where we got all our drinking water. That pleased the boy of family, I was pleased; that was 3 times

Bates: a day trip down there.

Robbins: You know there's a great deal of concern today about the impurities of drinking water that's coming through municipal water systems and everything. So that shows that they were quite a ways ahead of their time for looking for good pure water.

Bates: I wouldn't want to use that water now because in those days --- [laughter] See the little edifice up at the corner of the garden up there, and think that two or three centuries have gotten down there in the cave -- Nobody's ever known the drainage on the watershed at all, and now there various people on the watershed.

Robbins: Did you have cistern for collecting water off the roof, too?

Bates: Oh, I used to have one, some tanks up there to use for wash water, but that was not till some years afterwards when the kids used wash water out of the branch. Do you know what I mean? That's really a term most of us, but I didn't know whether a Harvard man would understand branch or not. (laughter)

Robbins: Did you all have some big snows back in those days?

Bates: Oh, of course, I wasn't up here in the winter. I would come up a lot, but I mean I wasn't living. I remember when there was a big freeze in `60, I was talking to somebody down at the Free-Press --- that's [Charles] his favorite paper --- and they said, "Anything ever been like this before has there, Colonel?" I said, "Yes, February 1905." So they put in the paper "the biggest ice storm in 60 years." I imagine they checked it, but it was 1905, I remember that real well. We had it just as bad down in the valley then almost as they had on the mountain in `60.

Flowers: Did you ever worry about being vandalized in those days when the house was locked up?

Bates: Well, I'm glad you brought that up. My people started living up here in the summer of `92. Of course, I don't remember that, I don't remember quite a number of years after that. I recall that when I was along high school age and college age and thereabouts, I used to come up here, and I just come, for instance, on Saturday night, times of the square dances.

Flowers: Where were those?

Bates: On the W. [inaudible conversation but probably talking about using his foot as way to enter the house] I would come over here at night and push the door, and I think the door would open without any pass key. And then I'd light the lamp. Maybe if I hadn't been here in several weeks, I'd hold up the stairs and hold it up so anybody would get hit first and then look up and go to bed. Once in a while, during the winter, somebody would come in -- some hunter, I imagine --- push open the kitchen door and cook something. Nobody ever took anything. I think there was one little, bitty, a little old Victrola or something, phonograph, that she used to have, Columbia records. I think somebody swiped it one time. But nobody took things. And during the whiskey-making era, it was just as safe as could be. If I didn't bother them, they didn't bother me.

Flowers: Did they think you-all were out-of-towners, city folks, or did they just accept you?

Bates: There were excellent relations existing between the town people and the city people in those days, excellent, excellent.

Robbins: Between the mountain people and the city people, you mean?

Bates: Between the summer people up here---

Flowers: Yes.

Bates: Some proof of it: all right, Summerfield Vandergriff, you made quite a bit --- you remember he was over --- well, you remember when we had the Historical Society meeting here?

Robbins: I don't remember that I was, no, I don't think so, I was ---

Bates: Well, I suggested to them that Elmont McCoy would give the history of this side of the mountain and Arlie Hoodenpyle the other side. And, oh, we had about a 125 people here, I guess. When they got through, I said ---

Flowers: Are you talking about the celebration when you opened your cabin?

Bates: No, that was a house-warming.

Robbins: Okay, yes, all right.

Bates: Well, I see you've heard some "Johnnie Come Latelies" talk about the mountain. That's not altogether fair because Arlie is no "Johnny Come Lately" Well, I said, "Now, we'll have one of the real McCoys" I said, "Summer, when did your people come to the mountain?" Well, he didn't know too much about it, but we had agreed on about 1835 or 1840. And "Who's your first one up here?" "Grandpappy.," [replied Summer] Neal Vandergriff. [I asked] "How many children?" He named the. "Which one's your daddy" "Jake" "What other name did he have?" "Bear Jake" "Why" "Because he killed a 'bar' with a club" Well, everybody's eyes just sparkled, then he went all through that story. Among other people there that day was Summerfield Key Johnston --- you know who he is, I guess ---

Flowers: I forget. Who is that?

Robbins: A lawyer involved in Coca-Cola bottling.

Bates: One of the very wealthy men around town. Was descended himself in several ways from Sam Williams. Well, anyway, if I had known what I knew later, I would have brought it up, but I didn't. I asked Summer Vandergriff, "Where did you get that name anyway?" He replied, "Pappy named me for Judge Summerfield Key." He was one of the summer settlers up here. There's an old man living over here now. Let me see.--- Cessner Vandergriff, they spell it wrong. He was 86 last September. I said, "Cessner, where did you get your name?" His wife spoke up immediately "Cessna Sharp" Mr. L. J. Sharp was a very prominent man in Chattanooga. Four daughters, one of them married R. H. Williams; they live in Summertown; one married the Caldwell on Lookout Mountain, the Modern Maid---

Robbins: Caldwell.

Bates: And another married Scott Probasco, you remember who he was. And another one, married Bartow Strang. Another married Mr. John Poindexter, the Sharp girl who married away from here. And one boy Cessna Sharp. This man had been named for him Cessna Sharp.

Flowers: Yes.

Bates: All right. The oldest of the Simons I remember up here was old man Arch, that's Greg's grandfather. All right. His youngest child would have been Lorena, Lorena, my sister Lorena. Wilbur Currey, was supposed to name one of them after me, so he told me, but he kept having girls. So he named one girl after this girl I happened to be going with that summer. And when the boy finally came along, they were twins, so they had to give them twin names, so they stuck my name in the middle. So what wouldn't you say that would have been indicative of good relations between the mountain people and me?

Flowers: It would have been pretty good, I think.

Bates: Martha McCoy said in a little article she wrote many years ago about the history of the mountain that a very unusual relationship existed between the summer people up and the mountain people. The summer people looked on them with great interest on the peculiar ways and so on of the mountain people. And the mountain people looked on with equal interest the peculiar ways of the summer people. (laughter) And said a fine relationship took up which still persists, and that's true. I don't know about the town of Signal Mountain because they didn't have it.

Flowers: It's unique in the true sense of the word. You do have different types of people coming together in a pretty amiable way. It's very unusual.

Bates: Well, there was a very fine relationship. I've never known of a fight up between the summer people and the --- back in the days when it was purely summer.

Robbins: I had some good times with the Vandergriff family, Sammie Vandergriff, hunting possums, and I racked in one of them. Did you go out and hunt very much?

Bates: Some.

Robbins: Are you a pretty good hunter?

Bates: No, not too good.

Robbins: That's something you learn to do when --- I guess we were about 12 or 13 years old.

Flowers: What do you do with all these animals that you keep around this place here we heard? You've got everything from turkeys to peacocks, not peacocks, but guineas.

Bates: Chickens and guineas, turkeys and geese, ducks, I guess. I don't know why; they just fit in with the place, I've always had them.

Flowers: You don't raise them necessarily for food, they're just ---

Bates: Chickens, I do. I eat eggs so often; guinea eggs are just as good a meal as hen eggs. I want a couple for breakfast, guinea eggs in the morning.

Flowers: Haven't had one of them

Bates: Don't bother with your teeth because they're hard. Remind me before you leave, I'll give you a couple apiece for breakfast in the morning. They fit in the atmosphere; I've always had them. I just like them around. Let me see, what I was going to ask you while ago.

Bates: I was trying to find that thing about springs. I gave a talk a year ago last February, I remember the day very well because it was the day before my birthday. And when I got through, why, your buddy Lee Anderson --- he's one of my old students--- and I hear him everywhere, and I'm very proud of him.

Flowers: A nice man, a nice man.

Bates: I like him. I lost two of my good ones up at the Times, they just passed away last year, Paul Roane and ---

Flowers: Oh, no, Paul died?

Bates: Yes, Paul died; I had both him and his wife in school. And then the head photographer was one of my boys, too.

Flowers: George Hu.

Bates: George. In fact, I have some pictures that George made about the cave and so in his early days up here. And I've had some others that I like. Paul and Miss Bonnie Gilbert are the 2 people around Chattanooga that when I was doubtful about something about English usage, I would call up.

Flowers: [inaudible] was a breed you may not ever have come in contact with, I don't know about you, but people who work on the copy desk of a newspaper are more knowledgeable about the use of the English language and use of punctuation.

Bates: That was correct, wasn't it?

Flowers: To call Paul?

Bates: Yes.

Flowers: Sure.

Bates: When I'd call him, he's say, "Well, I know Miss Bonnie's not in town." (laughter) I'd say, "Right, but when she's not here, I get you."

Flowers: Don't go to a college English professor, go to someone like Paul. He was terrific. He never made a mistake, though a lot of trouble, and a good kind man.

Bates: We exchanged Christmas cards up till the last Christmas he was alive. George would get messed up with things and would come in a month later or something like that. [some of conservation inaudible] Spencer Wright was the one who got me on ---- and so they gave me a birthday cake the next day. And then I'd believe that's some of Spencer Wright's doing because you know what a voice I have, and I'd get the hiccup. (laughter) Well, anyway, I thought I had a copy of it, but I guess I gave the last copy to somebody the other day, some of your kinfolks, I think. Yes, it was, it was a young lawyer's wife.

Flowers: Kay Gaston.

Bates: Yes, she wanted to check it; I think she wanted to make a copy of it. I tried to give the person 15 or 20 minutes. I tried to give her just the skeleton form of the settlement of Walden's Ridge. I had quite a bit about the Anderson Pike because it was the first road ----

Bates: I'm not talking about the Indian trails and so on across the mountain. Most of the settlements got roads radiating from the Anderson Pike and near a spring. I was getting up about the Summertown, as old Grady called it, Mabbitt Springs, he used to say, the old settlers call it, and then Fairmount Spring, the old Academy and so on, and the Sawyers and up in there. Now they are coming out to another spring, almost impassable for years, almost impassable road. He said he didn't when there was hints that "Johnny-Come-Lately" community of Signal Mountain. (laughter)

Flowers: Why was the Pike built, first of all, to get from here to ---

Bates: You mean Anderson Pike?

Flowers: Yes.

Bates: It was first chartered in 1839 by a Colonel -- he wasn't a Colonel then, Josiah Anderson. I think it was one of the Williams boys with him. The original charter authorized building a road from a designated point towards Sequatchie Valley, down there where the valley road crossed the river. Across the mountain, Walden's Ridge was the most feasible route to a point opposite the city of Chattanooga.

Robbins: For trade purposes mainly or---

Bates: And just transportation. And then in 1841, as I recall it, it was revised. And they had to go just as far as, well, for all practical purposes, back to where the --- what's the name of the plant down there? Loraine? [Koehring Co., Lorain Division]

Robbins: Where the old gun plant was.

Bates: The old stage road is right at the end down there, just had to go up the old stage road. And I've got a charter of it, and it says "Josiah Anderson." In fact, in the dining room that old sideboard belonged to Colonel John Anderson. He was one of old Betsy's sons by her first marriage, the one that wasn't going to slop hogs as long as she had---- (laughter) Livinggood when he was writing this book --- you know why that book happened?

Flowers: Are you talking about the Sequatchie?

Bates: Leonard Raulston, who was county historian in Marion County, was doing the history; he had a heart attack, and so gets Livinggood and they widen the scope to include all of Sequatchie Valley. Livinggood called me up one day and asked me if I knew, more or less, about Bledsoe County, [said] he'd like to go over there with me sometime. So I phones one of my cousins over there to have dinner for all of us, and also to invite the county historian of Bledsoe County. We went over, and I mistakenly made that crack about the great-grandmother. (laughter) I don't think some of the relatives particularly appreciated it. She was very outspoken; I always heard that. She started a lot of sayings in our family. Anyway, I also went on to say that for years that section of Signal Mountain over in there, Walden's Ridge, was nothing but a wilderness. Cattle range in the summertime and also wild game and moonshiners at all seasons. It was a favorite place to go on picnics, especially, Burnt Cabin Springs. We'd go down on picnics and eat our lunches, and then go down to Signal Point. You know how Signal Point got its name, of course, Civil War, there was a station there at Cameron Hill.

Flowers: Was the government ever serious about trying to crack down on moonshining up here or do they just look the other way?

Bates: Oh, they had government agents up here one time, Leroy Williams and the Loomis boys and so on. Sometime if you are here, I'll take you over to Lon Keith's. Now, of the moonshiners that are left, I'd say he would be the most intelligent one to go to.

Flowers: I guess he keeps it a secret that he's a moonshiner.

Bates: Oh, not now. I mean, this is the old days, the big era in moonshine up here was the prohibition days.

Flowers: So he was doing it for business, not just for himself. He was making the bottled stuff.

Bates: He was a triple threat man. He was a good coppersmith; he told me had made at least 300 stills. And then he was a good grubstaker, you know what I mean by that?

Flowers: No.

Bates: How illiterate you are! How illiterate you are! I declare. You ought to know a lot more than he does.

Robbins: We were raised up here on the mountain.

Flowers: Tell me what it means, what's a good grubstaker?

Bates: Grubstaking.

Flowers: Oh, that's the guy that finds the water.

Bates: Oh, no.

Robbins: It's the guy that finds the best place to put a still, isn't it?

Bates: Ain't but 2 mistakes there. (laughter)Grubstake--- let me grubstake anybody, it's really a western parlance.

Flowers: Financing a still.

Robbins: Oh, yes.

Bates: What does it mean?

Robbins: Financing, just like Charlie said, isn't it?

Bates: Yes, financing. And then he did it on his own.

Flowers: How did they get it out of here?

Bates: Hauled it. I came across this fellow the other day, Darby or Dabney. In some way he got my name, [knew] that I knew more or less about the mountain; he wanted to know all about moonshining. I think he called me 2 or 3 times. I told him the best bet was this man I'm talking about, Lon Keith. I said, "He'll talk with me present, I know." I wasn't present at the time, but he saw Lon and wrote a book on moonshine. I think he was from Scotland. Lon was good; he knew a lot about such things. This thing about hauling makes me think. Did you

Bates: ever hear of Emma Bell Miles? Tell him who Emma Bell Miles was.

Robbins: She was most famous mountain painter and writer around the turn of the century.

Bates: Right. I guess her book's down in St. Elmo. There's been a good deal of interest in the revival of such things. The Tennessee Press is going to do a reprint of it. He sent some fellow down here, the year that he wrote me, to get just more information about the author so he could write the family. And he told me He was coming here, and I arranged for him to come up here and asked Griffin Martin--- you know Griffin Martin --- of course ---

Flowers: No.

Bates: Martin used to live in the old Bell house. I asked Griffin to come up for dinner that day, and so the man had dinner here, and of course, a lot of people knew a good deal about her. Then I thought I'd give him some of the real atmosphere. Her husband was a mountain man. She wasn't a mountain woman at all, married young here, came as a child up here. Father was a country school teacher. You should know something about here. I thought it would give him a little of the atmosphere. I knew all of her husband's ---that's Frank Miles --- all of them are dead, the last one was Doc who died a few tears ago. I knew some of the nephews. And one of them was that 86 year old man that I talked about while ago, who was sitting out in the yard, seated, splitting wood for the winter. He gave us several interesting anecdotes about her, about Frank and so one. One of the name, Cessna, you remember? Cessna Sharp?

Flowers: Yes.

Bates: I took him over to another one over there, a nephew who's died since, and he told me some things I never heard about at all. Then I took him over to the most famous of the Miles tribe, Uncle Joe, the famous bootlegger. This was a nephew. He just did a land-office business up till Judge Bachman died. Then he went to prison. This man had heard about Uncle Joe. Joe's son really didn't know very much. Said no, he had never helped "shine" any, said he used to haul some, and said that one time he'd taken a keg down to --- it was either Judge Bachman or Vice-president Garner --- I always heard that if Garner wanted a jug of liquor, he'd just tell one of this agents to come through here and get him a jug of whiskey. (laughter) He said he'd taken a keg of it down to the express office. Not long after, the express office called him and said "Hey, come down here, that box of books that you're expressing up to the vice-president is leaking." (laughter) I bet that fellow brings that right back to the story of her life. I bet he brings that in if he possibly can, because that's all he could talk about afterwards.

Flowers: Do people still do it, moonshine?

Bares: I understand very, very little up here.

Robbins: The price of sugar's gone up, maybe ---

Bates: Sugar's too high and they can't compete with the legitimate companies.

Robbins: We went up, we hiked up from Falling Water Falls all the way to our house one day, took about 3 hours. We counted about 20 or 30 bases that were still remaining from the old stills.

Bates: Oh, my yes.

Robbins: The stones were in place, around in circles and in some places there were 3 or 4.

Flowers: Were they paying off people? I mean hauling it out of this mountain, seems to me it's pretty easy to catch somebody, if you really wanted to catch them.

Bates: Well, now, you ought to talk to Lon, and he'd tell you about how much they paid other people. I've heard of the payrolls for the sheriffs and so on.

Flowers: Any of that stuff any good?

Bates; I don't know, a lot of it was consumed.

Robbins: I think when it used to be good was when they made it out of copper stills.

Bates: A good, old-timey moonshiner, he wouldn't be disgraced by making that out of a black pot.

Robbins: Yes, which is the lead.

Flowers: What does it taste like, was it like a bourbon?

Robbins: It had a sort of a vodka----

Flowers: Like vodka?

Bates: When Uncle Joe was supposed to make --- heavens, I don't recall, but I heard tremendous amount about it --- Uncle Joe was supposed to make a very fine type of it. I know the story goes that --- this was during the prohibition days and a national organization was having a convention in Chattanooga. It was comparatively small but very wealthy type of group, manufacturing or something. And so, as part of their recreational activities, they had a barbecue up at Burnt Cabin Springs. Burnt Cabin Springs used to --- most people over there don't even know where it is anymore.

Robbins: Well, I've heard that name, but I'm ashamed to say I don't know.

Flowers: Isn't it on Edwards Point Road?

Bates: Do you know where Golf Avenue is?

Robbins: Yes.

Bates: As I recall now --- of course, Golf Avenue wasn't there then --- it'd be down at the golf end of Golf Avenue and off kind to the --- that direction from the end of Golf Avenue.

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Robbins: Which is along about the 16th or 17th hole of the golf course.

Bates: At the end of it, anyway.

Robbins: Yes, at the end of the Signal Mountain Golf Course.

Bates: A little way down in the woods there. I'm going over and take a look at it. Of course,

Bates: I haven't been there in years, now.

Flowers: It used to be a park?

Bates: Oh, it used to be a favorite picnic ground. Of course, the water's contaminated; they used to --- For instance, on the diners of the Southern Railroad, they used to have --- carafes of ----

Flowers: Water.

Bates: Yes, that was quite the thing. Mabbit Springs --- I remember when Lon Smith used to haul wagonloads of that downtown in gallon jugs all the time and sell it.

Flowers: Was that for the taste or for the health?

Bates: It's for the health. Nowadays, they say "No merit to it" said "It's just the exercise and the drinking of water and so on did them good." But, of course, you know how all those ideas change, some people (tape runs out in mid-conversation)

End tape 2, side 1
Begin tape 2, side 2.

[Tape begins in mid-conversation.]

Bates: And so at a great deal of expense and contrary to the law, of course, a lot of booze was imported. And then also a special little silver flask, and just as the thing was about over, it's whispered that a keg of Uncle Joe's famous moonshine liquor was coming up. Said it was a dirty shame to see all those fellows getting behind the laurel bushes and emptying their flasks of that expensive imported Scotch to fill them up with Uncle Joe's (laugher) Would you like to go over to see Lonnie sometime?

Flowers: I'd like that.

Bates: You know him, I guess, don't you, Lon Keith?

Robbins: I don't think --- Is that the Keith that was in the Keith store?

Bates: No, it was a brother. This is the one that had that house right at the top of the W. He sold that lot for 35,000 cash for himself.

Robbins: Oh, the one where the old store used to be. The toll gate right there.

Bates: Yes.

Flowers: Toll gate? Did the W used to be a toll road?

Robbins: That's what I understand.

Bates: Oh, sure, Anderson Pike was a toll road.

Robbins: That's how it was built, was the toll on it. Was it private money or state money?

Bates: Oh, private money.

Flowers: So it was a business; you built a road and then you took money off it, and then ---

Bates: Yes. I have a feeling that the man who built it--- I know he sold the rights to it, it is sure, because there's one of the old toll houses still standing, one of them.

Robbins: Well, you can see the little sort of area there where it was, the walls, you've got the square walls there.

Bates: No, no, I mean over at the Conner house; there's a toll house, too. It was built in 1858.

Robbins: Is that over on Fairmount Road?

Bates: Yes, around there near Barker's store.

Robbins: Was that one of the entrances to the road or something?

Bates: That was the toll house on the road.

Robbins: One of them, okay.

Bates: I never heard of but 2 of them, one there, and one at the W; I imagine this one was started after the W one was quit, I think so.

Flowers: How much did it cost?

Bates: Well, I have a copy of the charter some place, and I could give you all the information on it, but I don't have it on my mind.

Robbins: Did they have to build some corduroy roads along the way because of the washes...

Bates: Now, just a moment, there's only one place where there's a corduroy road that I know of, may have been some other places in various marshes. Do you know what a corduroy road is?

Flowers: It's logs.

Bates: Log, all right, along the side of the road. I've heard a lot of people, including my father and mother say on the W there was a V, very steep. and to help about the washing, and also to provide better traction for the draft animals, that corduroy road was right at that part of it.

Robbins: You can still see where instead of taking the second top of the W, the road just went straight on up the hill, and you can still see the traces there.

Bates: Right. You know where all that bluff is blown off there?

Robbins: Yes.

Bates: That was hanging rock, hung over the old road. Nobody ever mentions it now because, naturally, it's in the past. You know where the old road hit the valley?

Robbins: Yes, it was north of where it comes down right now.

Bates: Oh, yes, right where Morrison Pond Road leaves Mountain Creek Road.

Robbins: Morrison Springs Road.

Bates: I mean, yes, that big tree there, which some of us had a hand in saving.

Robbins: So the W Road, then ran right into Morrison Springs Road, was that correct? it came down the mountain and then started towards Chattanooga.

Bates: There wasn't any Morrison Springs Road then. In fact, I've heard old Conner say that Mountain Creek Road, as far down was called the Anderson Pike in those days.

Robbins: How about the Levi Gap Road? That was a Civil War ---

Bates: The first settlers that came up here came up the Levi Gap Road.

Robbins: Okay. But that was not satisfactory for the heavy traffic that Anderson Pike carried.

Bates: Have you ever been up it?

Robbins: I've been down the Levi Gap on horses.

Bates: Yes, and I've seen wagons go up and down on it.

Flowers: Can you drive it?

Bates: Not now.

Robbins: It's almost washed away.

Bates: In fact, the last time I walked it, I had the hardest time because all the timber on the eastern slopes that big freeze of `60 had [wrecked] I thought I'd try it some other time when I'd feel better.

Robbins: When did you last try to walk it?

Bates: It was just a few years after the big freeze. But I've been up and down it many times.

Flowers: What kind of things up here do you have to worry about preserving?

Robbins: Houses or old landmarks?

Flowers: You mentioned the tree.

Bates: The tree down at the foot of the mountain, yes. It was an old landmark, too. It was saved at least for the time being. I've heard old-timers say that they'd heard when they were young, veterans of both sides of the war said that they'd rested under that tree. By the way, that's one of the three biggest oaks I know of in this section. There's not much bole to it. You know what a bole is?

Flowers: Where is it?

Robbins: There's a church right there now, I believe.

Bates: Right, Calvary Church.

Robbins: It's at the corner of Morrison Springs Road and ---

Flowers: I think I know where it is. The condominiums and apartment houses, Montclair, I believe. Why were they going to cut it down?

Flowers: It's alive, it's not endangering anything, is it?

Bates: It was in danger.

Flowers: It's not endangering anything else, is it? It's still alive and healthy?

Bates: Yes. They dug into the bank a good deal, but I think it's all right. I'd already talked several years before about it and nothing happened. But I was driving along there one time and I saw limb looked like [inaudible] So I went down to see the commissioner in charge at that time, and he wasn't in, but I talked to his secretary. She said she would talk to the city engineer. After New Orleans or Texas, one, Christmas, when I came back, the city engineer had already drawn ---- I got a lot of credit for saving that tree, but that engineer's the man that did it; I just sort of gave a little publicity to it. He'd already drawn alternate plans so the tree could be saved, provided we could get the consent of the people who lived off the other side. It was going to cramp their style. And so I went to your favorite paper again and got Exum --- I knew he'd be interested so he came out and took a picture of it and so on.

Flowers: What's happened to him?

Bates: Well, I've heard the same things you have, and I think they're back. I think he's back with her, but he's not working out there, I don't think he's working out there at all. No, he's smart as can be.

Flowers: And troubled.

Bates: Right, Right, very bright, he's a Princeton graduate, you know. Well, anyway, then that started some other people who were interested in it. This school over there gave a prize for this contest, and so on. They think they did it, which is all right. The main thing is whether you get a thing done or not, who gets the credit --- that's always what you're working for. The engineer really was responsible. We got the cooperation of the people who were going to build those houses over in their part of it.

Flowers: But, aren't there things like that up here you're worried about going?

Bates: Well now, I'll tell you another thing. You heard me talking about the old tollhouse. All right, the woman who lives there is kind of a curiosity. I think she just really has permission to live there. When W. B. Willingham was developing this shopping center over here ---

Robbins: Signal Plaza.

Bates: [He said] "Creed, I'd like to get that old log house and make part of it my office and part a mountain museum. And I took him over to Mae Conner, and I introduced him.

Bates: And then I went out and rummaged around through the old, old house, which is the front part of it. About an hour I came back, and they were at a stalemate. He was offering to build here a little house there, a little cottage, which would include a bathroom. According to neighborhood gossips, there's no bathroom, she just goes in under the old house and lifts up a plank. (laughter) That's hearsay purely. It would never be accepted in court. He was going to take that old house over to the shopping center, and it would probably be rebuilt better than it ever was. Mae said, "Yes, I want it restored, but I want it to stay here." I said," Now Mae, it's not a chance in the world, not a chance in the world." I said, "This is what he's offering, take it over there and fix it up better than it's ever been before, part of it a mountain museum. There'd be a big sign out there, Conner Tollhouse, that would be good for a 150 years, and they'd increasingly get interested." "I [Mae] want it here." Well, I said, "It will just rot here, [that's] what's going to happen." So, that's the situation now. Last fall, when I was over at the meeting of the county historians by Nashville, a county meeting, there was a good deal of talk about restoration. I heard some federal funds would be available. I told the people about that, and they seemed to be interested. And then I talked to several people around town and thought I had a little interest, but haven't gotten any so far. And I was talking to Kay [Gaston]. That's one reason she took it on, she seemed to be very interested. I think if some of the civic organizations up here get interested, they might do something.

Robbins: Is anyone living in the cabin now?

Bates: Mae lives in the back part of it. The trouble is, too, she doesn't own the property; she just has lifetime tenure. There's a whole lot of hullabaloo about that. I don't know what happened. Supposedly, she shacked up some bird or married him or something, and he finagled it from her, and they were offering it for sale. One of the close neighbors bought it to protect himself and gave her lifetime tenure. The close neighbor, I know well; for instance, when I took Wendy over there, I saw him first and told him. He said, "Anything is all right that can work out with her, Creed, but for gosh sakes, don't bring his name in it, the owner's, because if his name was mentioned, she'd go into a tailspin anyway." I think it'd be fine thing if something could be done there. Now, moving it wouldn't be so good, but there's no room there for marking anything much.

Flowers: Creed, is that woman Annabell Miles?

Bates: Emma Bell Miles.

Flowers: Emma. Is she the only arts and craftsy person from Signal Mountain?

Bates: She's the only person I've ever known in this section, who achieved even local fame, and she did better; she's pretty good.

Flowers: She was a landscape painter?

Bates: She was a landscape painter. She had 2 daughters, 3 daughters, I believe, but the twins I knew better. One of them, I guess she's got to be around 70, lives in Miami; she's an artist. After the house burned, her memory and little sketches; those that she'd drawn, maybe, 50 years before she, she painted that and framed it and sent it to me with her compliments.

Robbins: That's beautiful.

Bates: That, I appreciate.

Flowers: But her mother was a painter and also a writer?

Bates: A painter and a writer, yes.

Flowers: Regional stuff, history or fiction?

Bates: Mostly just descriptions of local people; I've told her quite a bit. I thought she idealized them a little, but she's good.

Flowers: What are some of the things that you know about the history up here on the mountain that you think are the least known or the most interesting? Do you have any thoughts as to things that you have told in stories?

Robbins: The stories about the Three Oaks Cabin and the house over there.

Bates: All right. In 1852, so the story goes, there's a man from the north, had an ailing son, and he thought the waters from this spring, now called Mabbits, would do him some good. So he bought 400 acres off the 5,000 acre Washington-Hixson grant, and built a house there where, you know, where the [inaudible] site it. By the way, there were 3 big oaks there.

Robbins: Where Jim Stites is living now?

Flowers: I think the Bowmans ---

Robbins: It's on Wilson Road.

Bates: Wilson Road. Do you know where the young Dr. Willingham lives?

Robbins: The Willinghams own it.

Flowers: Where the merry-go-round used to be at one time.

Bates: Yes, there were 3 big oaks there, and then the fall of `25 had a big drought, and 2 of those oaks died. I just happened to remember that. They've got a two-story log house there, the Wilsons. They stayed only a few years. [inaudible] The summer of 1873, there was a bad cholera epidemic in Chattanooga, and everybody got out of town that could. Several families including Judge Key --- there were 2 Judge Keys, one of them was Cartter Patten's grandfather who was later on not only United States Senator but also was a member of the Cabinet.

Robbins: Postmaster General, wasn't he?

Bates: Yes, that's right. One of the moves to conciliate north and south, you see. I think Miss Tommie Duffy's parents brought her up there, too. People would have come to the hotel then. Some of them liked the looks of things. I think the Key boys were the first ones [who] bought some land over there near where --- you remember where the tennis court used to be ---

Robbins: The Bryan's tennis court?

Bates: Yes. Of course, the Bryans didn't come in there until many, many years later.

Flowers: That's on the corner of Glenway Avenue and [inaudible] Street

Bates: Yes, right. Then in 1878, they had the famous yellow fever epidemic, and they got out because the air was pure up here, you didn't have the yellow fever. Of course, you know know why they didn't have yellow fever up here. You remember your biology class?

Flowers: The water was pure.

Robbins: No swamps for mosquitoes.

Bates: Right, the type of mosquito that transmitted the yellow fever germ---

Flowers: Could not survive up here.

Bates: Didn't thrive up here, right.

Flowers: Why? Because there was not stagnant water?

Bates: Well, I imagine on account of the coolness, that's what I think.

Robbins: Well, we still had mosquitoes but it was a different kind.

Bates: It was a different kind. It's in my passive vocabulary, the name of the type.

Flowers: Anopheles.

Robbins: Yes, I remember that too. Was that the bad one or the good one.?

Bates: I think it's the bad one. Pardon me. [telephone rings, conversation omitted] This lady is a person on the place, and they sashay back and forth to Jamestown more frequently that I do to Chattanooga. By the way, they're from up Fentress County, that's the Alvin York country, and that's a different culture. The story goes that when she was a young widow --- her first husband was killed in an accident --- and she was left a little so she got a job in Jamestown and built a little cottage on the outskirts. So one night, some buckaroo who thought every widow was fair play, you know, comes knocking at the door, let him in, let him in. Well, she would not let him in and after while, he "Let me in or I'll knock down this goddamn door, bust down this goddamn door." She said, "Bust ahead. I'm standing on this side with a 12 gauge shotgun loaded." (laughter) She discouraged advances. You can talk to them and get --- for instance, that thing up there you call a mantel, now, she probably wouldn't know what it means, but when she first started working here, do you know what she called it? Fireboard.

Robbins: Was she born in Jamestown, Tennessee?

Bates: Well, in that section out in the country.

Robbins: That's an old part of Tennessee. [telephone rings again, Bates answers] Isn't Jamestown the oldest English colony in existence in Tennessee?

Flowers: You're thinking of Virginia.
[some conversation concerning Jamestown omitted]

Bates: The oldest settlements were up in East Tennessee, and the next oldest were over around Nashville, Cumberland settlement.

Robbins: Well, back to the Three Oaks that you were telling us.

Bates: Yes., all right. I've never known, and the 1 person I could have found out from, I didn't have sense enough to ask her, would have been Mrs. Z. C. Patten, Sr. I talked to her time and time again, but I never did think to ask that. I don't know when they started calling it "Three Oaks" When I first remember, there was a frame hotel in the last part of the last century, and it was called "The Three Oaks" and it had been called "The Three Oaks" many, many years before then. And that was torn down about 1938 or 1939, and I remember the foundations were those huge logs like sills for a log house. People came up there in 1978. That revived interest, accelerated interest, that is to say, increased interest in people settling there. Then sometime in the early 80's, the only thing I'm sure of is I've got a copy of the minutes of a meeting of 1883 [in which] the lots were all divided up to be sold and everything.

Robbins: That's down on the county plat book.

Bates: Oh, yes, I got a picture of it in the county plat book. That's where your folks lived on the Beech property.

Robbins: I think so.

Bates: I know that. See, my uncle, Uncle Creed Bates, owned that place once upon a time, along in the 90's.

Robbins: Did he own all the area that now what we call Walden?

Bates: Oh, my, no. He just owned [inaudible] land, and I have a feeling it was about 9 or 10 acres, but I could be dead wrong.

Robbins: Was there every much Indian activity around Mabbitt Springs, or did the Indians mostly live down on the river?

Bates: Well, now, let me see what I've heard. I heard some old timers say they've all died out now – that the Indians never lived up on the mountain much. Except they'd come up hunting in the fall of the year, especially, and for game, and also to gather chestnuts to make their flour. And, of course, that would be one place where they'd camp because there's a good spring there.

Robbins: Yes. Have you ever found any arrowheads on your property?

Bates: Not too many, no.

Flowers: They were Cherokee I assume?

Bates: I think they were. The Indians, from all I can hear, lived near water, streams where fishing was good, canoeing was good, and the land was good where the squaws could till their corn. Don't you think that's a good practice, so the squaws could till their corn?

Flowers: Terrific. (laughter) They were farmers, though, the Cherokees, weren't they?

Bates: Oh, they had cornfields and so on, patches of this.

Robbins: How about Civil War activity, double bridges in the Horseshoe Corral Road, and Signal Point, I guess would be the 3 ---

Bates: Corral Road, you know where it got its name, of course. Do you know where the corral was?

Robbins: Not exactly.

Bates; I can show you the place where Oscar Walker's great-grandmother was living, lived on that place at the time. He [Oscar] remembered her. He talked to her. He said the federal soldiers could buy cookies from her in daytime and steal potatoes at night. Oliver Hartman always said there were 2 corrals, there was one over in Flipper Bend, it really should be Flippo Bend, but they don't say that.

Flowers: Where's that?

Bates: Well, it's that last big knob that North Chickamauga Creek goes by. I've been over there several times . One of Oliver's sons thinks that's the spring, but I don't think it is. I'm still working on that.

Flowers: Flippo Bend?

Bates: His name was Flippo, but they call it Flipper Bend. I imagine you know how people mix up things. (laughter)

Flowers: Is there a story in your name? Why are you named Creed? Or is there a story there?

Bates: Yes, all right. I was named for my uncle, Colonel Creed Bates of Chattanooga; he died before you were born. What year were you born?

Flowers: 42.

Bates: He died in 1928. He owned that place for awhile. Everything was purely summer up here then. And I'm not mistaken, he was named for a very well-known Methodist minister along in the early days of this section of the country, Creed Fulton. I have a feeling that Creed Fulton --- now this is pure speculation --- I have a feeling he was of Scotch descent because Creed's not an unusual name in Scotland. I've heard the name several times.

Flowers: It was taken for religious reasons, wasn't it?

Bates: I don't know, I've just heard of it. I just heard when I was in England and a little in Scotland. I haven't checked on it.

Flowers: Do you still go up to Harvard? You don't go to Harvard every year anymore, do you, since you left City High School?

Bates: No, but I couldn't have been treated nicer the last time I was at Harvard. Ben Cotton was there; do you remember him?

Flowers: Is he still there? Sure I remember him

Bates: No, he's retired now. He was through here not long ago, he and the man that used to the military man out at McCallie and before that had been in charge of ROTC work at Harvard, a very fine gentleman. When I had to give a speech in `62, he spoke at Chattanooga High School commencement. I remember he had dinner with this man. When I happened to see his face, he had been 2 years retired then. He and his wife were going or coming to Florida or some place, and he said he tried to get in touch with me but couldn't. He was

Bates: very friendly; in fact, I couldn't ask anybody to be nicer to me than he was while I was there. I was the only person from the South, I think.

Flowers: You were?

Bates: Yes.

Flowers: Tell me what we're talking about, this was an annual meeting of ----

Bates: This was an administrative meeting. I was there about 5 times. It would be the first time, I think they introduced a few of us, not over 4 or 5. Is it that Deerfield Academy up in Maine that's so famous?

Flowers: Deerfield is in Massachusetts.

Bates: Massachusetts is it? Yes, that's right. I'm thinking about the place where the Pattens go, it's Deer something, and it's ---

Flowers: Deer Island? Deer Fox?

Robbins: Deer Island.

Bates: [inaudible] He was an old man then, I guess he was up in his 70s, maybe 80s.

Flowers: Boynton.

Bates: Yes. He introduced him, and then they said they had somebody from the far South. You know they had the Freedom Riders up north; they came down South. And so when he introduced me, "How did you happen to come here, Colonel?" I said, "I'm just a Freedom Rider in reverse." (laughter) But he was nice, he was nice. I phoned him when I first talked to the sponsor of the class and so on to start work with them, and they thought it would just be wonderful. I phoned him and he said, "Just a moment please" and ended up "It's clear I'm coming, I'll be there."

Robbins: We've been talking about 2 hours, and we don't want to wear out your voice or anything.

Bates: Well, it was already worn out when you came. (laughter) Yes, I remember that I have to get around and see several people in town, among others, Warren Knox, and the next are the Martins on the program of speakers.

Flowers: Oh, I didn't know that.

Tape 2, Side 2 ends
Tape 3, Side 1,000
[begins mid-conservation]

[Much of this tape takes place while traveling in a car to Lon Keith's house. Bates, Flowers, and Robbins look at some of the historic sites on Signal Mountain on the way to Keith's house. Some of the conservation concerns giving directions and is not that illuminative. Also, the various noises make the tape difficult to hear.]

Bates: Well, I remember this: we leased several hundred acres up on those mountain lands we own on Dayton Pike to Bowater. Right here. So I was going to suggest

Bates: to them that they put in the contract to require any of our family to have the right to hike, hunt, or camp on those grounds. And I remember the representative said, "Now listen, as far as hiking, we can't do anything about that, anyway. I mean we can't keep people off. As far as your camping's concerned under other restriction of [inaudible] it isn't in the contract." So that wrote his private letter saying it was all right. He said, "I bet you I'll get an interesting piece of [inaudible] He was right. 88 year lease. I don't know what I'll do when it's expired.
We're on Northern Avenue now. This is the northern limit, the northern boundary of the Mabbit Springs tract. And the main street in those days from up here about Fairmount Pike a straight line down to corner in our fence. But I don't think the road every actually extended that far. Now we're going through a sharp turn up here in a minute. You've been over here at Albritton's, haven't you?

Robbins: Yes, I have. Pretty house.

Bates: Right. See that sharp curve, beautiful house, 8200 square feet.

Flowers: That's a pretty good size.

Robbins: You have some beautiful land, too. Who did you buy it from?

Bates: Well, I've bought it through several hands the last few years. Originally it was the Uncle Jimmy Smith place. And it was part of the Pete Willy 100 tract. That was off the 700 acre tract that George Roberts got off about 1861.

Robbins: That's where Charlie Perry lives right here, isn't it?

Bates: Charlie, yes. Right, Mountain View Baptist Church. I think we ought to get Charles over some time and get him Christianized.

Flower: Think it'll help?

Bates: Well, it couldn't worsen. (laughter) Charlie, do you sing much?

Flowers: Do I sing? No, I never have.

Bates: But you have a good resonance to your voice.

Flowers: It's something I've always wanted to do, but since I've played instruments when I was young, I'm embarrassed to do it until I have some training.

Bates: I'm corrected, then. You do have a very, very nice resonance.

Flowers: I've been known to sing in 1 bar or another on certain occasions. Plenty of which are best forgotten.

Bates: Left. I really should have gone out the other way but this all right.

Flowers: Beautiful, I can say that for it.

Robbins: It's pretty up here; that's Fairmount Road, beautiful.

Flowers: What was that little community we passed through? Were those people farmers?

Bates: Fairmount. Nobody farms any more.

Flowers: What do they do for a living?

Bates: Jobs in town.

Flowers: All the way down town?

Bates: If you'd read that little story I made about Walden's Ridge, you'd explain all that.

Robbins: The one that was in the paper about 2 weeks ago?

Bates: What paper?

Robbins: Kay Gaston wrote one up from the information that you had given here, but that was mainly about the chapel. I guess that wasn't about Walden's Ridge.

Flowers: You mean your Thanksgiving memoirs, that one.

Bates: And now over to the left, you can see the oldest log house on the mountain. Go slow so you can see it. This is the one I'd like save, but there's not much chance of it. Go ahead.

Flowers: Oh, this is the Toll House.

Bates: Old Toll House, right up --- get another hill in a moment. See right here? Go around right in front of it and then we'll come back. Turn left and go on in there, and then I'll let him see it.

Robbins: This is only about half a block from Barker Store.

Flowers: Where's the old Toll House?

Bates: Right there.

Robbins: Are we on one of the old part parts of the road?

Bates: Oh, my yes, the old Anderson Pike's right over there; that's where the tollgate was. The man that owned that then built it probably on these 1000 acres right here. Now some of his descendants there live in a "tenant for life only" situation. Let's go back and turn around now. Would she be a sight for you? Charles, that would be something you could write a real story about.

Flowers: She's living there now?

Bates: Yeah.

Robbins: Oh, this is the old Anderson Pike.

Bates: Right here yes.

Robbins: I haven't been on this road at all.

Flowers: I can't believe it. Ten feet away, a suburb out of the 50s. And there is somebody living in there.

Bates: Yeah. Reckon she goes and sits on the same row with some of the people in some of these good mountain churches, they up and move, afraid they'll get lice or something. (laughter) And she won't open the door for a lot of people, she will for me because she thinks I'm sort of half-native, too, and also ---

Robbins: You think we ought to go in and talk to her?

Bates: It would be fine if it wasn't for Lon probably waiting on us.

Robbins: She'd be a nice person to interview, give you a different ---

Bates: Watch out now, this is bad. Straight ahead.

Robbins: You know we ought to take a few pictures now and then, and keep them in a scrapbook or something.

Bates: Now, old Jim wouldn't be a bad person to interview either, or Jim Richardson there. For instance, his parents were supposed to have been slaves, of course. And now Jim is no "Uncle Tom," he was on the grievance committee down where he worked for years.

Robbins: He's about, he's in his nineties, isn't he?

Bates: No, he's just 88, 89. But he just likes to tell about the white folks [inaudible] maybe get 50 cents a day for washing all day, but given enough of groceries to last a whole family a week or two.

Robbins: Which foundry did he work for?

Bates: What?

Robbins: Did he work for Ross-Mehan?

Bates: No, he worked for the plant out in South Chattanooga.

Robbins: Mueller?

Bates: Whoa, go slow, go slow. I'll come back to that in a minute. I want to show you something else. Go slow right here, slow. All right, now see right here, those are the steps of the old Academy. About 1858. People came from all over this section of the country to go to it.

Robbins: What road are we on right now?

Bates: Well, I don't know, there's a little road right here, but we were on the ---

Robbins: Fairmount Road.

Bates: We were on West Fairmount Road.

Robbins: Oh yeah.

Bates: Let's go back there.

Robbins: Whose house is this?

Flowers: I always wondered where that Fairmount Academy was.

Robbins: This is a new house of somebody's.

Bates: I don't know who's building that.

Flowers: They're building them out in the sticks.

Bates: All right, now we'll go down this to the left and then turn immediately to the right on Hollister Road. Right there's where we're going. No, no, right, immediately to the right. You didn't go to City High, did you?

Robbins: (laughter) Baylor doesn't teach correct driving.

Flowers: Doc Bock teaches you how to steer and that's about all.

Bates: All right, let's kind of ease off the side of the road here somewhere.

Bates: Hiddee. [to a young child]

Grandchild: Hi.

Bates: Is your grandpappy in? Hey, Lon, how are you?

Lon: Come in, come right in.

Woman: Wipe your feet.

Bates: You're right. (laughter)

Lon: She's bad to give order, isn't she?

Bates: Lon, this is Charles Flowers.

Robbins: Mickey Robbins, hi, good to see you, how are you, Mrs. Keef?

Lon: How are you getting along?
[Lots of conservation, unable to tell who is talking or what they're saying.]

Bates: All right, sir, ready to go? I'll ask you some questions first. All right, what is your name?

Lon: Willam A. Keef.

Bates: Usually known as what?

Lon: Lon.

Bates: Lon Keef. What date is this?

Lon: August 13.

Bates: 1975. Where are you living now, Lon?

Lon: I'm living with my granddaughter, Mrs. Connie Nixon.

Bates: What place?

Lon: Well, it's Hollister Road, Fairmount.

Bates: Signal Mountain. How long have you lived on the mountain?

Lon: Well, I've lived on the mountain 61 years.

Bates: I see. Have many changes occurred on the mountain [since] those days?

Lon: Been a lot of changes, yeah, that's right.

Bates: Well, Lon, these young gentlemen are very interested in some of the activities going on especially during the Prohibition days, moonshining. (laughter)

Robbins: Don't want to lose that art. We want to get your recipe.

Bates: I think you were familiar with more or less those activities.

Lon: Yes, sir, some. A good deal. Too much, I guess.

Bates: What various capacities did you serve in those days?

Lon: I suppose a city salesman for a chain and moonshine stills, I guess. (laughter)

Bates: City salesman is close enough. Tell us how you operated.

Lon: Well, I owned and operated a dance hall down at the W, for, I believe, it was 13 years.

Robbins: At the top of the W?

Lon: Yes, I got acquainted with what was supposed to be the better class of people, doctors and lawyers ---

Bates: Including me.

Lon: Including Creed Bates. (laughter) He was a customer of ours at the dance hall. I operated that; I'm also a coppersmith; and I got to assisting the moonshiners in doing their work for them.

Bates: About how many stills did you have a hand in setting up, you guess?

Lon: I guess I made a 100 or 125.

Bates: One time you told me 300.

Lon: I guess I have. I don't know now; I'm getting a little bit aged in my remembering.

Bates: How old are you now, Lon?

Lon: I'm 88 in October.

Robbins: Copper was the best metal to make these stills out of.

Lon: Well, yes, other metal would rust out ---

Bates: The moonshiners considered it a disgrace to have anything except copper stills, didn't they?

Lon: They wanted that, if they could get it. I made them for them.

Bates: You made them for them, and then you grub-staked some of them too, didn't you?

Lon: Yes, I let them have some money and provisions.

Bates: And also you did some on your own, didn't you?

Lon: Well, I owned 1 or 2 outright. More than that.

Bates: More than that, I would say. What are some of your best localities for them?

Lon: In the Horseshoe we did some and down the Brow, we done a lot down the ---

Bates: Down there in front of me.

Lon: Yes sir, in front of Creed Bates, and he was my neighbor, but he never knew we was down there so much. One time, I'll tell you this, we moved up the Brow, and it was awful foggy weather. We moved in the back yard of Dr. Inger; when it cleared up, we seen what we'd done; we heard they got out of there. (laughter)

Bates: He was at that time living down at the old Rank place where the Stities now live. Their backyard, at least in the old days, extended down to that branch down there. You'd sit that stuff in that branch, just down there by the side of it.

Robbins: You probably used the water coming from that branch.

Lon: Oh yes. And so we got out of there, of course. We didn't have to be run out.

Bates: Where were some of the biggest plants?

Lon: Well, we had ---- The biggest one we ever owned was in the Horseshoe.

Bates: How big was that one?

Lon: Well, that was a capacity of about a 150 to 200 gallons a day. 24 hours we worked. We worked a crew of 13, that was including the cook. He done our cooking and housework.

Robbins: Where is the Horseshoe?

Lon: It was in the middle of the Horseshoe, it's the old Mazey place. There was a big log cabin there and we ---

Bates: Wonder if that cabin is till standing then.

Lon: Well, it's not now.

Robbins: What did you do to hide the smoke?

Lon: We didn't hide the smoke; we just let her go.

Robbins: But you were so far back, I guess ---

Lon: Well, you see we was contributing to some of the satchels, then. So we didn't care about the smoke. Now, a fellow came over there and wanted us to --- got mad about what we was clearing up his land, you know, for wood. We talked to this man that owned it, said, "Gonna have to pay for that," I said, "Gonna have to pay me for cutting all this timber and clearing this land up for you, if you want to get hard." So he said, "That'll be all right. Just drop it." So he did.

Bates: About how much land did you cover with your operation?

Lon: We covered a place bigger than this house, the distillery part, and we had a shed over it to keep out rain.

Bates: Lon, somebody told me that you all blew whistles for lunchtime.

Lon: We changed shifts there just like they do at the sock factories. (laughter)

Robbins: Did you run around the clock?

Lon: Yea, we run--- that is from Monday morning until about Thursday night. Then we'd all go home, except the cook.

Robbins: That was just a 4 day work week then.

Lon: That's all.

Robbins: You were way ahead of your time.

Bates: But how many hours a day did you put in then?

Lon: We put in 24 hours, but you see, we changed shifts, 12 hour shifts -- 2 shifts. Hadn't got into the 8 hour day.

Bates: What would each shift do?

Lon: Each shift would manufacture whiskey. We'd have to put this up and just run it off.

Bates: Tell them about how you made a batch of whiskey.

Lon: We'd have to cook this meal, first run; that's what they call sweet-mash whiskey. When we'd cook out a box, we had boxes 8 feet long and 4 feet wide and 4 feet deep which held half a ton of sugar and meal, other mixes.

Robbins: What kind of meal was it?

Lon: Corn meal, and we used some sprouted corn.

Bates: How did you sprout it?

Lon: Sprouted it in barns and places ---

Bates: How would you sprout it in barns?

Lon: We put it in manure, droppings of horses. Then we'd grind it up in a meat chopper and make malt, and that'd make the stuff to work good, you know. Then if we couldn't do that, we'd use yeast, Fleishmann's Yeast, and make it work off that way.

Bates: For 1 good batch of whiskey, about how much meal and sugar would you use?

Lon: Well, I guess we used about a ton of sugar a day.

Bates: A ton of sugar a day.

Lon: Not after it was cooked in and you got a good start, you didn't have to --- you'd just freshen it up with meal. Maybe you'd cook 2 or 3 bushels every run, and throw away some. We generally had a lot of wild hogs, they'd eat this mash if we throwed it away. If they got a hold of the mash before it was run, they'd get terribly drunk. (laugher) The least pig there would jump on the biggest boar on the mountain. That's the kind of whiskey we made. It's true. They didn't know no better.

Robbins: Did you hold them off until Thursday night?

Lon: No, just about any time they'd eat it. But that wouldn't make them drunk after it's cooked. A box, maybe, would be leaking a drop or two, and a hog would stand there and just suck it until it couldn't walk.

Bates: Now go through the operation. Start out from scratch and explain the operations, briefly.

Lon: We had what we call a heater and that was between the still and the condenser. And we'd fill that heater up and then fill up the still and stir it up good.

Bates: Fill it up with what?

Lon: Fill it up with mash.

Lon: We made the mash out of meal and water and yeast, barley if we could get it, which we did get a whole lot of.

Bates: And how long would that mash stay in there?

Lon: It took about 4 to 5 days, 6 days sometimes. It was according to the weather; if it was very cold, it took longer. We tried to work everything off our round before a week, you know, there was one round a week, and have it back.

Bates: You took the mash and put it in the pot?

Lon: In the still. When we emptied the still, when we made a run, we put it back up and let it out the heater. It went back down in the pot and then [we'd] fill the heater up. We'd do that to speed up the operation. It was pretty nearly a boiling point when it got there after running the mash off 2 hours.

Bates: After you got it in the still --- carry on from there.

Lon: Then we'd bring it out, had 2 two-horse wagons, you know.

Bates: I know, but from the still - you heated it up in the still and explain what happened.

Lon: We put it in the kettle to cook. Of course, it'd hold 50 or 100 gallons. It was after we distilled it. Then we'd put it in 10 gallon, 16 gallon kegs and put it in this two horse wagon and come out with it. When a wagon would bring in a load, we'd take out a load. One night before Christmas, this Christmas week, I counted 525 gallons coming out.

Bates: One night?

Lon: One night. And out there we had a lot of 50 gallon barrels too, that we transported it in.

Bates: What did you do with that when you got ---

Lon: We stored it; we had a place to store it out in [inaudible] They'd come up and get it in a car.

Robbins: Did they have some fast cars in those days?

Lon: Pretty good cars, Buicks and ---

Bates: Who were your customers, mostly, bootleggers downtown or what?

Lon: Downtown. Now, I used my whiskey that I made, I sold it to different [inaudible] I got it over the W, you know. I'd charge cash to deliver it from there. But the men that was with me, Godsey, Thomas; they sold to the colored crowd, you know.

Bates: Who did you sell yours to?

Lon: I sold mine to golf clubs, some hospitals, hotels...

Bates: What about the Mountain City Club?

Lon: I sold, I guess, 200 gallons a month there. (laughter)

Robbins: That must be your best paying customer.

Lon: Well, they was about the best one I had; I had them, for guess 4 or 5, 6 years.

Robbins: Did you all have a franchise system that sort of excluded other people from business?

Lon: No, no, no, we couldn't do that; but the club wouldn't buy it from other people.

Robbins: What was your brand name?

Lon: Well, just Signal Mountain Moonshine, I reckon.

Robbins: Who, after the Mountain City Club, was your next biggest customer?

Lon: The Patten Hotel was pretty good; and I didn't do too much at the Read House. Somebody else had that.

Bates: Who were some of your private customers…

Lon: I don't like to tell that because there a lot of the people still living.

Bates: I said their professions.

Lon: Oh. Well, lawyers and doctors and manufacturers and ---

Robbins: Any professors or teachers?

Lon: Well, yes, we had some.

Bates: How much did some of them take?

Lon: About the biggest thing I ever delivered to one customer was 50 gallons.

Robbins: That must have been a good party.

Lon: A lot of people used a lot of that. The biggest deal that I ever made at one time to any individual was the Golf and Country Club, 250 gallons that one deal. Another time, I took 1800 pints over to the Signal Mountain one day. It was pinted up, and they wanted it all ---- I don't suppose this is going any further, is it? Not going to be published or nothing?

Robbins: And they wanted 1800 pints at $2.00 a pint; it all had to be a uniform color, you know, so one man's bottle wouldn't look different to another. So I didn't have that much, and I burnt sugar and colored it. (laughter) It was Nathan Bachman's home, not his home, but that old place where Dr. Puckett grew up.

Robbins: Up on the top of the hill?

Lon: Yes.

Robbins: That's a nice place.

Lon: It was vacant, that is, they didn't stay there. And I had the key to it, and they had a bathtub in it, and we poured it all in the bathtub, stopped it up good and tight so it couldn't get out, filled it full. And my partner helped me do all this and my nephew, I told them that we got the tub full, and I said, "Now---" [interruption in tape, some conversation lost]

Bates: Did you crawl down on the side there?

Lon: We went over that. There was hickory tree --- they call it Little Falls.

Lon: Well, we piped our water from Little Falls around under there. There's about 300 feet, I guess.

Robbins: Did you have a little gap where you could walk down under the bluff?

Lon: We just held to a hickory tree and had a rope tied to it. Then we let our stuff over of a night. We didn't let much over, only on dark nights when people couldn't see us. And the way we got our wood, I had 2 big trucks, so we filled them trucks full, and we'd drive up in front of this place as close as we could get and act as if we had a flat tire, you know, so people passing wouldn't be suspicious. A lot of them offered to fix us, help us, you know. We'd say, "No, I'm about done now." And soon as we got clear, we'd throw off as much as we could, 2 or 3 of us, and we'd throw it all over the bluff, and that's how we got our wood. Then another time, I had a little still, not too a big a one, around from the Hamptons' this side of the Hamptons'. He had a coal mine out of the top of the road where we dug our coal, hardwood coal. We didn't have to get firewood.

Bates: How'd you get down there? There was a kind of a pathway down there, I believe.

Lon: Yes, there's places you can get down there. This side of the W.

Bates: No, no, I know it, but I know Lillian Cope used to live there.

Robbins: Is that where Mr. Clarence Mills lives right now?

Bates: No. He lives farther down this way.

Flowers: Was all this during the 1920s, during Prohibition?

Lon: Yes, sir. It was during World War I, about 1918, wasn't it? You was in the War?

Bates: Yes.

Lon: I done a pretty good shipping business, you know, I sent it by express, put it in barrels, tagged, and put it in trunks. You see, if Mr. Bates or you was in Atlanta and wanted whiskey, I'd ship it to you. You can't help what people send through the mail, and they couldn't catch me because I'd sign a fictitious name. And I've done a pretty good business that way.

Robbins: Where was your fartherest away customer?

Lon: Well, down in Deland, Florida, that was about the fartherest away.

Bates: How about Washington?

Lon: Well, I sent a little up there, not too much, didn't have too much business.

Bates: Uncle Joe Miles did most of the sending up there, didn't he?

Lon: Well, I don't know whether he ever sent any off or not. Of course, Judge Bachman was a Senator a whole lot of the time. I guess he carried it up there.

Robbins: Senator Bachman carried it up?

Lon: I guess he did a little at a time, maybe a gallon.

Bates: I always heard the revenue officers took it up to him.

Lon: They might have.

Bates: How did you all get along with the revenue officers?

Lon: Pretty good. You see, they was afraid to fool with Joe Miles because he was a good friend with Judge Bachman.

Bates: And also Vice-president Garner, I've always heard.

Lon: I think Roosevelt was the president then. He kept me out of the penitentiary. He came down from Knoxville.

Robbins: Who did?

Lon; Judge Bachman. I called his wife and told her, "It looks like they are trying to get me in serious trouble, and I didn't want to leave my wife and family." (laughter) Offered me a job down in Atlanta. He said he'd call --- you know they had the W ---[tape ends here]

End Tape 3, Side 1, 519
Begin Tape 3, Side 2, 001

[Tape begins mid-sentence.]

Lon: With the WPA. And he come asked me what did I think. "Well," I said, "I think we ought to get up something better than the WPA. There wasn't no work to it. And so he talked with the President about it, and we'd laugh and talk about what he said. He drank some too, the President did. He told me.

Robbins: Did her ever stop by on his way to Warm Springs, Georgia?

Lon: No, he never did, the President never did, but Bachman did, I suppose, and carried it up there.

Bates: I heard that some revenue agents took it up there.

Lon: Well, they might have, now. Of course, you see they wouldn't have let me know.

Flowers: How did he [Bachman] keep you out of jail?

Lon: He come down here with a Federal Judge, and they like to have gotten in a fight, so my attorney said, about my case. He claimed that I was wealthy. You see, after you sell a gallon of whiskey and get arrested, you're rich from then on. (laughter) Financial problems aren't supposed to worry you. I've had a lot of people I knew, dance hall acquaintances, and they'd say, "Well, I didn't know you'd ever fooled with that." When they caught me with a gallon, [that] gave me a good advertising, and business picked up then. (laughter) After the newspaper.

Bates: How did you make brandies?

Lon: We didn't make too much brandy. Brandy's awful hard to make; it takes too much material to make brandy. It takes 4 bushels of apples to make a gallon of brandy.

Bates: Tell him how you fixed the apples before you made it.

Lon: Well, I'd just cut them up and bruise them up and put them in a tub (a wooden barrel sawed half in two), beat them up. That's all we had to do.

Bates: And how long did you let them stay in there?

Lon: They had to stay in there 3, 4, to 5 weeks.

Bates: Then they got what?

Lon: They were fermented, then.

Bates: They got slimey.

Lon: They got pink, you know, like they were rotten, but they weren't.

Robbins: You didn't worry about cutting out the rotten spots.

Lon: Oh, no, and worms either; they weren't supposed to be in, but we didn't bother much about it. Now people talk about making poison whiskey --- I don't know how you'd make it cause you couldn't drink it, you know. The revenue officers used to give us some trouble. If they wanted to catch us and couldn't, they'd put mothballs in our mash. Boy, then you've added something! You couldn't sell it. In fact, that'd give them a chance to catch you, and if you made it and got away with the whiskey, you didn't have nothing. They'd ruin you when they done that.

Bates: And I've heard that if one man running a still wanted to kind of get even with another one, he'd just put salt in the mash.

Lon: That was pretty bad, yeah, but nothing like mothballs. But I've drank a little whiskey that had mothballs in it, you could drink it, wasn't no harm, it never did bother me. It'd taste terrible; you'd belch. Boy, you could hear a man from here to the street!

Flowers: What about payoffs?

Lon: Well, now, that was a big thing. The operation I had when I was with Godsey and Thomas, everybody paid a little, even the men that worked there paid a little. The biggest thing that I knew of was 1,225 a month.

Flowers: How many people split that up?

Lon: The 3 operators, Thomas, Godsey, and myself.

Flowers: How many people got that much money?

Lon: Well, I really don't know. There was supposed to be 2 of them, revenue officers, but I don't know whether they got in on it, you couldn't tell. Another fellow got it, you see, I wasn't the satchel man. We just paid him, and he paid the others.

Flowers: I don't know that expression, satchel man.

Lon: Well, that's the man that carries the money, the satchel.

Lon: The satchel man is the go-between. We call him the satchel man.

Flowers: If you were doing payoffs, how come you got caught that one time?

Lon: Well, we just got caught. They didn't care nothing about it. I was caught twice. They'd send up to Dayton or down to Georgia and get a revenue man to come in and do his raiding. They'd keep you, get a hold of us, we couldn't do nothing. [inaudible] He [revenue man] was going to surprise us. He'd come up and talk to us, says "I'll have to take you in if you don't go." I said, "Well, I'll have to tell how it was." He said, "Good God! Don't do that, look what a mess you're getting us in." I said, "Look what a mess you've got me in." So we got out of that, paid a fine of $250.00, three of us in it. Next time that's when Bachman come down from Washington, and got me out of it. You see, my lawyer also talked to him on the phone, and his wife, Mrs. Bachman, told him. And so he caught the train and come on in, and we put the case off until he [got here]. Frank Carden told him that my lawyer was out of town, and one of my lawyers hadn't got here. So he put it off 2 or 3 days to give him a chance to come in on Sunday, and he come on in. Of course, he liked to come in anyway.

Robbins: Sounds like you had some good lawyers.

Lon: Oh, I had the best, you wouldn't ---

Bates: Were they also good customers?

Lon: Well, I couldn't say. No. Frank Carden was about the best lawyer in Chattanooga.

Bates: Yes, excellent.

Flowers: Did you pay off local officials as well as the IRS?

Lon: Yes, paid them in whiskey.

Flowers: The Treasury men or what?

Lon: No.

Robbins: The revenuers didn't mind having a sip or two, did they?

Lon: They had so much of that, they caught so much of it.

Flowers: They got as much as they wanted?

Lon: Oh, yes, they sold some themselves. (laughter) They had friends.

Robbins: There's nothing wrong with making a little money on the side. Particularly when you're on salary.

Flowers: Where did the sheriff fit into all this?

Lon: The way I got by the sheriff, Democrat and Republican, I'd give each one of them 50 to a 100 dollars campaign money. If a Democrat beat him, I'd go to the Republican and say, "Well, they got us, but we'll get them next time," you know, and pass it off. Of course, maybe I wouldn't vote at all. Sometimes, I'd be busy or something.

Flowers: Did you ever figure up how much of a profit you made, percentage wise off of that stuff?

Lon: Well, we lived such a high life that I don't know. (laughter) Betting on the horses ---

Flowers: What horses were around here?

Lon: Oh, they were in Louisville.

Robbins: Oh, the Derby.

Lon: They had bookies, you know.

Robbins: Here in town?

Lon: Yeah.

Flowers: Did you have card games?

Lon: I could never play cards much, I wasn't in that. I was a pretty bad crap shooter --- as long as I had any money.

Flowers: Were there gaming places here?

Lon: Oh, yes.

Flowers: Where were they?

Lon: One of them's on Seventh Street, ran a little house on the right. What's the name of that building on Seventh and Cherry Street?

Bates: Temple Court?

Lon: Yes. in the Temple Court and then next door to Temple court; they moved over there. But they paid the law to run. There wasn't much chance of beating a crap game.

Flowers: What were they like? Were these fancy places with roulette tables and all that?

Lon: Just pool tables and a bar and a floating crap game. One time we hauled to a lawyer in Chicago to the World's Fair. They had a bar in the streets of Paris. I got acquainted with them. They wouldn't buy now but jut 2 or 3 gallons at a time. They were afraid they'd get caught with it. And they'd mix them in with their bottle of bourbon. One night I took them [inaudible] One of the bartenders was gone, and he said, "Got a bartender gone tonight?" I said, "Well, I'm the bartender." He says, "You had any experience?" I said, "Yes, 25 or 30 years." He says, "That's something you ought to know." Wasn't nothing but just a glass of beer, drawing it out. I worked a day or two, done pretty well. He had some awful pretty waitresses carrying the beer out, the bar girls. About the third night, I got pretty drunk, like to got down on them, and they had me to go sit down behind them. And the next day we came in, and they told me how it had been, they said, "Understand, you got too much last night. I thought you told me you had 25 or 30 years experience as a bartender." I said, "Well, I didn't tell you that my experience was in front of the bar." (laughter) He said, "Well, do you want to go back to work?" I said, "No sir, I don't believe I do. I've got to go home anyway." And that was some place in the streets of Paris, some rough stuff in there.

Flowers: What was your dance hall like up here?

Lon: Well, it was a pretty nice place, nothing ---

Flowers: Does that mean square dancing, honky tonk, or what?

Lon: Well, square, round, and waltz. I had all kinds of dancing.

Robbins: Where did you get your music from?

Lon: They got the mountaineers up here, had a 3 and 4 piece band.

Robbins: I wish I had a dance hall up here on Signal now.

Flowers: How much did it cost to go there?

Lon: Well, we generally got $2.00 out of each customer.

Robbins: Did you sell anything inside?

Lon: No, I didn't do that. I was too busy. If you put somebody out on it, why, he'd keep all the money and tell you some kind of sad story. It didn't pay me. And they had plenty of people, you know, with intentions of taking care of that outside; you didn't have to have ---

Flowers: Lon, what got you interested in that? What made you start a dance hall?

Lon: Well, Dick Bush was the sheriff, and I worked with his daddy, and his brother built the dance hall. They didn't have too much money, didn't have enough capital, and couldn't get a loan. He run it one year, Hal Bush, Sheriff Bush's brother. I knew him, you see, before I moved to the mountain. So he asked me would I take it and run it. I said, "I don't believe I'll foot with it," but anyhow I moved in there and went to running it and operated it, I reckon I don't know just how long.

Bates: I remember when you stopped. You stopped in 1924.

Flowers: Is this the same Bush family that owns Bushtown now, down near Erlanger?

Bates: No.

Lon: That's named after them though, I reckon.

Flowers: There was an old Bush farm I thought down near Erlanger.

Lon: There's 1 or 2 of Dick Bush's sons, I think, in Chattanooga, now.

Bates: I know it, but this Bushtown would go long before that.

Lon: Oh, yeah, that Negrotown, ain't it?

Bates: Yes, right.

Lon: But I think it was named after some of the Bushes then.

Bates: Bushes are a prominent family in Chattanooga.

Lon: Yeah, oh yeah, good people.

Bates: You say, there was no amusement place around in Chattanooga, more respectful than your dance hall?

Lon: No, that's right.

Robbins: What was the location of the dance hall?

Lon: Right at the W, over the bluff there.

Robbins: Oh, yeah. Is that where the new house is being built right now?

Bates: No.

Lon: It's on the next block. You see, it was a post office, a dance, hall, grocery store. We had a post office there. I was in a moving picture there to a very small extent. A young lady come there. Do you remember they made a moving picture here? Do you remember that? They made it for a street over in Signal Mountain.

Flowers: When was it?

Lon: I don't know. They came over here from Hollywood and made the picture. I don't know whether it was finished or not.

Flowers: What year was it?

Lon: Well, I really don't know.

Bates: It was before 1924.

Lon: I believe it was during the War, maybe, during the first World War.

Flowers: What part did you play?

Lon: Well, I was working in the post office, and a young lady come outside and asked me, was there any mail? Of course, it was a silent picture, and I shook my head, "no." There wasn't no talking. She walked up and shook hands with me and asked me was there any mail, and then I shook my head "no."

Flowers: And you never saw the movie?

Lon: No, I never did. I never know what went with it, I wasn't interested in it much, then. Had too much other big-time stuff.

Bates: Tell them about the big killing you had on July 4, 1924. [Sam Godsey shot and killed Ike Bowman in a dance on the W, July 4, 1924.]

Lon: That was a moonshining killing. But the dance hall had nothing to do with it.

Bates: Not a thing in the world.

Lon: No, they just met here, drinking, and these moonshiners ---

Bates: Two big clans that had been rivals.

Lon: I had been connected with them; but I had quit about a year or two before. I seen they was going to get into serious trouble.

Bates: I remember that well because we hadn't moved to the mountain just yet, because there had been sickness in the family. And I know I got up from the car and started to go, and I thought, no, there's been too much whiskey being made up on the mountain lately and that's a natural place for trouble to start. I didn't go.

Lon: Do any of you people belong to the Presbyterian Church?

Robbins: My family goes here to Signal Mountain Presbyterian Church.

Lon: Well, I'm an elder up there, but you mustn't bring it up in church. (laughter)

Bates: He's an elder in the Wayside Presbyterian Church.

Robbins: Oh, Wayside. We used to over there, too.

Lon: They're dedicating a room to my wife up there.

Robbins: You've had a family that used to run Keef Store and ----

Lon: My brother runs Hatfield and Keef.

Bates: Gordon ---

Lon: No, Tom.

Bates: Didn't Gordon run the store down here?

Lon: Gordon run the down here, yes, just where Brown's got the hardware.

Robbins: Oh yeah, and then you've got another relative that runs a hardware parts place in Brainerd, don't you?

Lon: No, he's a plumbing man.

Robbins: Right, but he's a cousin?

Lon: He's a cousin.

Bates: Then the Keef Furniture Store down on Main Street --- [Keef also known as Keith.]

Lon: That was my brother. He had a partner, and the partner went down to Mississippi to visit some of his relatives. There was a child run out in one of these little red express wagons, and he [the partner] tried to miss him and turned his car over and [was] killed. They had insurance on the store, so if one died or anything happened, they'd have money --- the other one would, to pay it. So he paid his widow off, and my brother owned it for 20 or 25 years.

Bates: Didn't another brother run of the hotels downtown?

Lon: That was my cousin, Tom Keef, run the Northern Hotel, yeah.

Flowers: Where was that?

Lon: It was on Eighth and Chestnut.

Robbins: Where did the Keefs come from originally?

Lon: Well, they're natives of Chattanooga--- Wauhatchie is where they came from.

Robbins: And they were from Scotland or Ireland or ---

Lon: Well, they came from Ireland, I reckon.

Robbins: What do you think about all the whiskey making nowadays out of the radiators in cars everything. What do they make it out of? It shows you how much it's all changed, I guess, in the last 20 or 30 years. Really, it's not a product....

Lon: They don't make much now, not around here.

Bates: The timber's too high.

Lon: [There are] too many inhabitants up here, you know. Too much prowling of people in the woods, bother.

Bates: I've heard there were two places; it's a trim nightclub, town square, almost, one's down by the old Nagle place. Just looks like they've cleared up for manufacturing, down at the Horseshoe.

Lon: When we first tried to make whiskey, we didn't know too much about it. See they had the workhouse up here where Mr. Worley lives. The workhouse had moved back to Chattanooga and left [the building] up here. We went in there and put up in the workhouse. Some fellows came along after we got our stuff in there and got ready to run and go to work. Parties come along inspecting the wires, the telephone wires, all along. He claimed the wood was part of Sam Godsey place. Says, "That's they're fixing to trap us and catch us over here. " Got that old feeling? Decided to move out. I had a fine horse and wagon, about big enough for 4 mules; but anyhow he could pull it. And we moved over to the Nagle place. We moved this mash, now, and the still, and everything, and this wagon over there to the Nagle place down---

Bates: On the bench below it, wasn't it? Right down below it, wasn't it?

Lon: Oh, yes, we was down on the creek/ [had] a spring up there. Sy Brown had a camp, cabin, up there. We were right there. We went over there and set up. An old man - what's his name --- the fellow that owned the --- old man Carr -- he seen us moving in and out, bringing all this stuff; made 15 or 20 trips with that wagon getting in there. I had a big black raincoat, the other fellow had an army coat he'd got a hold of, Fred Frazier, Sam Godsey had a great big coat. Well, somebody turned us in. We went over there, and we made what mash we had up into whiskey. [Got] so much out of the way and 6:30, we decided to quit. They got an internal revenue officer, and he come up here and brought somebody from the Times. He raided that thing. We'd done made the whiskey, just made 6 gallons out of it. We'd wasted trying to get around but made some good whiskey. They asked old man Hollister trying to find out who we was, and he described me, said, "The one with the Negro.", said we were black and we was awful black ---- been up there 3 or 4 days. He said, "Describe the others, Frazier and how

Lon: he was dressed and all." There was a full sheet come out in the Times about the big still, seemed to be the supply for Chattanooga for some years, and had been up there for --- just a sight.! So, Luke Foreman was the deputy sheriff, and they asked him about ---- suspicioned me, had me down at the jail, suspicioned me of being mixed in it, you know. Somebody told them, I guess, that I was in it; I was supposed to be the Negro with the black coat on. (laughter) [While] one of the deputies was questioning me, this Pole, he was the chief deputy, said, "They ain't no use of questioning him. If he'd tell you what he knows, papers would sell for $1.50 a copy in the morning." (laughter) I didn't tell him nothing.

Bates: How about that time you helped get a corpse out---

Lon: Oh yeah, we rode that up from [inaudible] He was a retired lawyer, a nice old fellow named Jim Scott.
[no follow up about Scott on tape]

End Tape 3, Side 2, 306
Begin Tape 4, Side 1, 162

[Tape has gaps where tape stops or conversation is muddled.]

Lon: I'll tell you who gave me this horse. She was fixing to go off the mountain, Mrs. Fred Cantrell. They were in the electrical field business, pretty wealthy, and they done all that work out at Chickamauga Park. So she gave me the horse. I would ride the horse backwards and forwards... So I started in one evening late --- this is just fun talk now --- started in one evening late, [had] a rainstorm, you know, hail and ice. I couldn't go no farther, and I come to this cabin. So when I got there, a man and his wife begged me to stay all night, said, "You are going to get hurt and break your horse's legs." So I told them, "All right." He had a horse; we put my horse in with his horse. And there was just one big twin bed, you know, a great big one; had shucks in it and hay, matteressed, it didn't have them. They were just camping a little.

Bates: Just a moment. How many of you have slept on a shuck mattress?

Robbins: Oh, yes, they have those up in the Smokies, you know.

Flowers: I think, maybe, just 1 time.

Robbins: That was the old mattress, wasn't it?

Lon: Yes, yes. So when it came to supper, they didn't have nothing but peas and cornbread. I was pretty hungry, and her husband was kind of hungry, and she was eating, too. We was eating long and talking about the weather, and so on, and he told her, says, "You better not eat too many of them peas. There won't be a thing here for breakfast in the morning." She just slid her plate back, and I did, too. He said, "I'll get in the middle, and my wife on the back side, and you can lay along the front by me." I said, "All right." So the horses got to fighting up there that night, and she told him, says, "Bill, you'd better jump up and go up and take care of them horses." He said, " I expect I had better." He just about had time to get up there, and she reached over and punched me and said, "Stranger's now's your chance." I got up and eat the rest of the peas. (laughter)

Robbins: What did she say next?

Lon: There wasn't no more talk. (laughter) She went off to sleep. We have to have --- a lot of people would come around to the bar, you know --- they were supposed to be our friends and a lot of them was, but they'd just, every day, you know, come and get, maybe, a half a gallon or a gallon. Coke [a person] was bad for that.

Bates: Coke Rice?

Lon: Yes, he used to drink; but he sold it over in Summertown, you know.

Flowers: The very idea.

Lon: Yes, and he got it for nothing. Of course, he was supposed to helping us watch, you know.

Robbins: Did you have many people coming around that were not supposed to be looking?

Lon: We had a lot of them, of course.

Bates: Do you have any pikers?

Lon: Yes, a good many, but ---Most of the pikers was your competitors, you know, somebody that was in the game theirself. They was jealous of you or something, and they'd report you and get you tore down.

Robbins: Did you have any special techniques like using charcoal or anything to flavor?

Lon: No, we didn't use nothing but wood.

Bates: I know, but what did the whiskey go through?

Lon: Oh, yes, we filtered it some ---

Bates: What did you use? An old felt hat?

Lon: Yes, well, they had a place in Chattanooga you could buy filter tape. We put that in a funnel. It was a found disk, you know, and fold it up and put it down the funnel.

Bates: Really, did an old, felt hat do any good at all? I always heard it did.

Lon: Well, yes, it would clear it up, yes, it was all right.

Flowers: Did the taste change very much from 1 batch to another?

Lon: Taste? No, it's alcohol, and there's not much taste --- just one taste. Of course, it was sorry made; the longer it run after it got past beading, why, you have to run back.

Bates: Explain about beading.

Lon: Well, you take a small bottle and shake it, and if it beaded good, why, it was all right. Of course, you tasted of it; I was a taster a whole lot.

Robbins: Back in those days, you all didn't have to ferment it within a day or so. I've heard that now-a-days, they throw a chicken or squirrel in there, but back then, you had the time to wait until fermentation. I've heard of throwing a dead chicken or a dead squirrel in there,

Robbins: you know, to speed up the fermentation.

Bates: Have you ever heard of that?

Lon: No, we never put nothing in ours. Another friend of mine, Godsey --- after we all split up, everybody went to himself. He had some boxes, and they was on the side of the hill; they was down here, and he had a ramp, you know, to go over to bail that stuff out, you know, and take the still out of the box. And so 2 or 3 big hogs got in there, and boy, my, my, that whiskey, it tasted just exactly like pork. (laughter) And they drowned, you know. And they stayed in there several days --- it was bad weather. They certainly did make that whiskey taste like it was pork or something.

Robbins: Back when you all made it, in effect, you were making a fine bourbon almost, weren't you? You were making, really, one of the best early whiskeys available.

Lon: Oh yes, oh sure. Now, I don't know, maybe you would want to go home and make some. You can make it in a deep-freeze. Make some mash and put it in the deep-freeze, in a five gallon or something that you can get in the deep-freeze. Everything will freeze except the alcohol, and it will be like you had a top down there when you take it up, a big place in there. Well, maybe, if you got a big strong mash, it'll make a gallon, you know, in that freezer. Siphon it out, the whiskey, they ain't much of it in there, a quart or gallon or whatever you made. But it'd be clabbered.

Bates: Actually, I've heard people take a jug of or a big jar of hard cider and let it freeze, and the alcohol ---

Lon: Yes, that's the same thing. But it wouldn't do to put it in a jug, the jug would break, you know.

Bates: I know it.

Lon: And you'd lose a lot.

Bates: A plastic jug would be all right.

Lon: You could put it in a metal keg or something. But it'll do that; the alcohol won't freeze. Now, in making alcohol --- when I was in Chicago, I went to one of the stills supposed to belong to the Capone crowd, you know; I don't know whether it did or not. But this bartender in the company --- they wanted to hire me, but I didn't want to hire out. They wouldn't pay much, you know, they're gambling dagos, and Greeks, and things.

Bates: They would like to have had you just to show off as one of them Southern mountaineers is what they wanted.

Lon: Yes. Well, anyway, they told me they'd put me to working, and I told them I couldn't be working up there. I didn't tell them I had a business of my own. (laughter) But we hauled it up to Chicago right smart, but that's too dangerous. And my wife, she got into that, and she told us that we better quit.

Robbins: Did you haul it yourself?

Lon: Oh, I went along, yes.

Robbins: I bet that was pretty exciting.

Lon: Well, not much, you get used to it, the run.

Robbins: Did you ever have any chases?

Lon: Oh, yes, I bet you I've outrun 15 cops on motorcycles. If they'd get after me, I'd take them over to a rough street, and they couldn't take it, you know.

Robbins: Did you have a pretty fast wagon?

Lon: Well, we always had the motors in good shape, you know; we didn't have nothing special.

Robbins: What, Buicks?

Lon: Well, Buicks and we had 1 Cadillac, but it was a little too heavy.

Bates: How much is the most you ever made a year out of whiskey?

Lon: Lord, I don't know, never did get no time to count it. I just spent it, you know, and had a good time. I had one time $38,000 in money at one time. It was all in my wife's name. I had an awful good wife.

Bates: You sure did.

Lon: She didn't want me in what I was doing, the dance hall or that either, but anyway, I did. I made a good deal of money, that is I thought I did.

Robbins: You made a good living during the Depression, really. Times were hard.

Lon: Yes. Yes, I had 2 trucks that cost --- them 2 trucks cost about $7,000, paid for.....

Robbins: Did you ever go over to Lynchburg and see the big distillery over there?

Lon: No, I've been by there, but I didn't stop in.

Robbins: That must have been a prohibition distillery, too.

Lon: No, well, no, it was out then, you know. All moonshine whiskey, nearly, is pretty good. If it ain't, you can't sell it.

Bates: Can you remember the old White Oak Distillery down here?

Lon: Yes, it was right about there, Griffin Spring. Oh, then they moved it over on --- at the river, you know, Chattanooga Creek.

Bates: That's right.'

Robbins: Where were these road that you would lead the police over when they would start chasing you? Would this be in small towns?

Lon: Well, rough streets, cobblestone or anything ---

Robbins: Where? Up in Louisville or---

Lon: No, I mean in Chattanooga.

Robbins: Oh, here in Chattanooga.

Lon: I delivered there.

Robbins: Yes. Well, how about driving between here and Chicago?

Lon: Well, we just went along like any other citizen.

Robbins: Would you go into little cobblestone streets there in the small towns to elude them, or would you just get out on the highway and go 80, or how would you ---

Lon: No, we traveled at a moderate rate.

Bates: You weren't chased too much that way, were you?

Lon: Oh, no, they never ---

Bates: What are some of the big changes that have occurred on the mountain since you first came?

Lon: Well, hooking up to city water, I guess. Signal Mountain folks had a big dance --- you know, you remember the casino, I guess, don't you.

Bates: Oh, sure.

Robbins: Were these taken up on the mountain? [looking at photographs]

Lon: Well, I can't see well enough, brother, to tell nothing about them

Robbins: It says 1963.

Lon: 1963? I'll tell you who's got some pictures you ought to see. I can't see much about these.

Bates: I couldn't tell too much either.

Robbins: It looks like a big, black pot with some pipes coming out of it.

Lon: That was what they called a black pot.

Bates: I've got some excellent pictures; I've got some of mine from the revenue officer.

Lon: Arthur Nixon got some photographs form that moonshine still. You see, mine got burnt up. A lot of them burned when I was burned out down ---

Bates: You don't remember anyone has the pictures of the old cliffs?

Lon: No, I don't.

Bates: Got any other questions? See, he's full of all kinds of ---

Flowers: I've learned a tremendous amount. It's really been interesting.

Lon: Enough to go in the business? (laughter)

Robbins: Sounds pretty good. (laughter) How long did it take you to get a big – a good size still running from the time you start putting in chips.

Lon: Well, since I was out of it quick --- well, my wife got after me to quit and just beared down on me. She was going to church and Sunday school, and she didn't believe in it. But, anyway, I ---

Robbins: Well, they did it back in the Bible days, didn't they? Didn't they make fermentation and fermented honey and all those things?

Lon: Yes.

Robbins: Back in the Bible? I think the Bible says it's okay, didn't it?

Bates: Show me the place in the Bible where it says that.

Robbins: It was Deuteronomy or ---there was someplace in there are several places in there where they made --- Well, of course, Christ made water into wine and and ---

Lon: You know way back, Sam Pike --- do you know Uncle Sam?

Bates: Sure on up the W there.

Lon: Steve! Steve was a revenue officer before we ever got into ---

Bates: I didn't know that.

Lon: Yes, and Steve was also a mail clerk on a steamboat from Chattanooga to --- what's the name of that town up there where the dam is?

Bates: Norris.

Lon: Kingston. Yes, he was a clerk on the boat they called the Joe Wheeler.

Bates: I remember the Joe Wheeler.

Lon: And it had another name, the Trig.

Bates: Right.

Lon: Used to have lots of excursions and dancing in the night; pulled a big fine barge for dancing. I went on lots of them; I knew the mate, and it didn't cost me nothing. That was before I was married. He'd blow his whistle, you know, to get his crowd and to let the people know there was going to be an excursion. That's about as big a way as they ad advertising. He'd commence blowing the whistle about 5:00, and my wife would say, "Lonnie, there's your buddy, he's blowing for you." And I'd go over and go with him and got to dance and have a big time, you know, for nothing. That suited me; I didn't have too much money. Anyway, I went --- I guess I went to a hundred of them

Robbins: Did you have many bad floods that hurt your still?

Lon: Yes, I've been washed out once or twice, you know, come a big flash and get in a low place. But you learn to stay out of that kind of stuff when you get into it. It costs something to get burned up, you know, get washed out, or torn down.

Robbins: Did you have any bad fires there?

Lon: No, I never had no fires.

Bates: Lightning never strike you?

Lon: No, never did, no.

Bates: Come in the still?

Lon: No, no, never, never did.

Flowers: You never got involved with feuds with other people?

Lon: No, I was always ---

Bates: You didn't, but a lot of your associates did.

Lon: Oh, yes, but I never would say nothing about nobody.

Flowers: A lot safer that way.

Keef: Yes, I just went on and sawed wood and said nothing, you know. I don't know, I couldn't say ----

Bates: He was mixed up with 2 of the biggest rival clans that were on the mountain.

Lon: Yes, Godseys and Bowmans.

Bates: Tell him about the time that 1 side captured somebody on the other side and ---

Lon: Fellow name of Cleve Eccles was working for Godseys, and Lawrence Bowman captured them, and supposedly tied them to a tree for 10 days, you know, out in the woods, just tied them up with chains; chained them to a tree for 10 days. I used to kid them; I told them not to tie them to a tree, but not to let them be dangling down that they ---
[The Chattanooga Times had a story, 7-6-1925, that related the kidnapping of Dr. W. D. Mason and Lawrence Bowman by the Godsey clan. These 2 were found handcuffed and chained to a tree on Signal Mountain and had been missing for 10 days.]

Bates: Oh, the papers were just filled with it; there was a great mystery and everything. They were about to starve them to death, but I understand when they took one of them to the hospital, he was sick or something, and give him some ---

Lon: They examined his stool, and he had blackberry pie! (laughter) They wanted to know where he got that blackberry pie if he's tied to a tree, you know. But Cleve's wife served them their meals, everyday, just --- and they moved from 1 tree to another. They looked all over the country. A big manhunt.

Bates: Oh, yes, the papers were just filled with it.

Lon: It was a sight.

Bates: That was along about 1924.

Lon: Yes, I guess it was.

Robbins: What do you think about what's going on in the world nowadays?

Lon: Well, in what capacity?

Robbins: Well, I don't know --- Watergate, FBI

Lon: There's been lost of Watergates but never yet had one opened once.

Bates: I think that's true.

Robbins: What do you think about all the young people, are they--- you know, they're sort of having a sip or two now and then, is that any different from the way it was 40 years ago?

Lon: Oh, yes, they've been using marijuana and all that kind of stuff.

Robbins: Is that about the same, or do you think it's ---

Lon: No, the cars is ruining 90%, cars and radio. The young people now, they don't think nothing of going to bed with a man now.

Robbins: Yes. That's changed.

Lon: Oh, Lord, yes. And they all drink, most of them. Of course, a whole lot of that started in the home, you know. A lot of good people, a man and a wife will, maybe, have a party and have a big lot of drinking, you know. Well, the young people see that and ---

Robbins: And back during the twenties, the young people didn't do it so much.

Lon: Oh, no.

Bates: Along in the thirties, they didn't do it, and early forties, they didn't do it.

Lon: One time down at the Patten Hotel, I took a young --- a nice looking lady --- I took her 10 gallons of whiskey. I always went along, you know, but I had just took it to the elevator, and the porter would take it up, wouldn't be any trouble. I was up there, and he took it up to her room, and I went up there to get me $120.00. She said, "You know, I'd give anything in the world to see a moonshiner." And I was all dressed up and had a diamond on as big as a horse's eye, you know. (laughter) And she run, just run and jumped a straddle of me, and I says, "You're looking in the face of one right now." She said, "I thought they had long whiskers, slouch hats, and stuff." I said, "Oh some of them do." I said, " I just dressed up to bring you this keg of whiskey." She run and hugged my neck; she thought that was awful to see a moonshiner. (laughter) It was a big thrill to her.

Flowers: Your hotel business you did through the porters all the time? The management must have known.

Lon: The management didn't want you taking that stuff around, and the porters took care of it. If they's see a white man taking a trunk up in the hotel, carrying suitcases, they'd think funny, you know. They wouldn't let you. When I served the Mountain City Club, I had to put this in pasteboard boxes and seal it up as if it were tomatoes or corn or some vegetables, you know, cases of the ---

Bates: It was corn, wasn't it?

Lon: It was corn, some corn, yes. (laughter) I took an old Negro one time a gallon of whiskey that worked over in Summertown for Eugene Bryan. Eugene Bryan was a city judge. It wasn't too good. I said, "Well, how was it?" He came to pay me; I didn't see him. He come down and brought me the money. I said, "How was it?" I knowed it was awful bad, pretty bad. He said, "Well, it was just right." I said, "Just right? What do you mean?" He said, " If it had been any rottener, I couldn't have drunk it, and if it had been any better, you wouldn't have sold it to me." (laughter) Said, "You'd have drunk it yourself." It tickled me. We had lots of fun out of it, you know, lots of excitement.

Bates: How much did you get for it in those days?

Lon: I guess we averaged about $12.00 a gallon, you know, where people took 10 gallons, $16.00 for one gallon.

Robbins: Was that the wholesale price?

Lon: Yes, sir. We didn't take many 1 gallon people, most of it was bigger amounts. I wouldn't hardly fool with that little.

Robbins: Taxes were a lot lower then, too, weren't they?

Lon: Taxes? (laughter)

Robbins: They were real low.

Lon: Well, it's all over with. I don't drink by any means.

Robbins: You don't drink?

Lon: No, sir.

Robbins: You used to sip it.

Lon: Oh, Lord, yes.

Robbins: But just not lately.

Lon: No, I ain't drink none in about 30 years.

Bates: As Lon knows, I never did drink at all.

Lon: I had a son that died at 63 years old, didn't know what whiskey tastes like.

Robbins: Did he help you make it?

Lon: No, he never fooled ---

Bates: Nick? You bet he didn't; I had Nick in school, in the student council.

Lon: Good man, good man.

Bates: This is Nick's daughter, isn't it?

Lon: No, it's Peggy's daughter.

Bates: Peggy's daughter, that's right.

Lon: Peggy's daughter is the one's that's out of a job, and she's about 20 years old. She graduated from Red Bank. And she's hoping to get in some kind of clerical work or secretarial or something.

Bates: It's been awful hard this summer to get jobs, I know that.

Lon: Yes, I know it has. I thought maybe you might ---

Bates: If I hear of anything, I'll let you know.

Lon: I thought you might know a school man and something when they start, and they might be hiring some help in their offices.

Robbins: Has she been doing secretarial work?

Lon: Yes, a little, yes, sir.

Robbins: Good.

Bates: He's a big time manufacturer right here.

Robbins: Lots of connections.

Lon: She don't want no factory work. She was up at DuPont ---

Bates: I'll tell you something kind of interesting. One of the PTA mamas --- she's a fine lady but she's always gossiping --- and she'd get "ya, ya, ya," around the group, you know. Something that was not too complimentary about the school; of course, it was an extra choice morsel. I found how to take care of her. When I'd see her with a group of ladies, I'd say, "Oh Mary (which is not her name), just seeing you makes me think of the gold times that happened at the W." I said, " You remember that time that your mother hurt her knee, and we took her into one of Mr. Keef's bedrooms, probably, and she fainted, and somebody said 'Get a stimulant, get a stimulant, and his wife came in with a gourd full of whiskey." And that lady said, "Oh, I just forgot, I've got a roast, and I'm afraid it's burning up right now." (laughter) Anytime she was in a little gossip group, and she'd see me coming, she'd leave, have to run and look after that roast.

Lon: I see that Mary Crouch is still living.

Bates: Yes, Mary is. She was one of the good dancers down there.

Lon: Yes, she was a fine girl.

Bates: The prettiest girl. The Newell girls.

Lon: Yes, Dr. Newell's daughters. Had lots of private dances. The young ladies and the men would give private dances out here.

Bates: As I say, I've never known any dances right in Chattanooga that were nicer.

Lon: They had a private dance, and the young ladies over in Summertown wanted a gallon of whiskey. They got after me. They know I was selling it, you know, talked to their --- after seeing that in the paper, everybody knew it. So I sold them a gallon of whiskey, and boy, my wife went after me. She said, "You ought to be in jail for such as that after selling them young girls that whiskey." My wife didn't know what it tasted like, I was the only one that done the drinking around our house. A fellow came to me once and said, "If you'd make me a little gallon still, what would I make?" I said, "You'd just make a big mess, that's what you'd make." He said, "I guess that's true." I had a little orchard up here. You know where the Lawrence place is?

Bates: I remember it.

Lon: 50 or 75 trees ---

Bates: Right, along James Boulevard there.

Lon: Yes, he wanted to go to making whiskey, wanted me to go in to make apple brandy. I'd done had some experience with that; it's a nice drink and a good little drink, but it takes too many apples to make a gallon of whiskey, too much work.

Bates: There's a few apples at times, not many times because he'd ship them all off, and that was many, many years ago.

Lon: Well, there's a way they used to make brandy up, you know, they made the boxes that they fermented in. And the revenue officer went out and measured the boxes, and, of course, then that was all the permit you needed, if they knew where the still was and everything. That's all the permit you needed, and you could go ahead and run it, but he'd just measure it and say, "Well, you're going to make 200 gallons out of all this here." Well, you had to pay the revenue on that much, you know, whether you made it or not. But if you made over, why then, you didn't have to pay the revenue.

Robbins: How would you make that apple brandy, just mash the apples up in the cider mill and let them sit for a couple of weeks?

Lon: Mash the apples, yes, there are cider mills all our right.

Bates: Nobody used them. They used to just take a tub and mash them.

Robbins: And then let it sit for about 2 weeks with sugar in it?

Lon: Oh, yes, 2 to 6 weeks, it was sometimes slow to get ---

Bates: It'd never get slimy.

Robbins: And pour sugar in it?

Lon: Well, we did on the second time, we didn't the first time. It made just as good the second time.

Robbins: What besides sugar?

Lon: Yeast would help it along.

Robbins: And then once you got that, you distilled a little.

Lon: Then you'd put it in the distillery and distill it.

Robbins: I bet that was good.

Lon: Yes, it was fine whiskey. And old fellow told me once, he was drunk and running a still. I went by to visit him, and he said, "That's good corn whiskey," says, "You smell the toe jam in the boy's foot that made the whiskey." (laughter) He was drunk, hisself, you know. It was getting near Christmas. He said, "We're making cheap whiskey for cheap people and good whiskey for good people."

Bates: Didn't you have a couple of missionaries to moonshiners up here for a while right after the war?

Lon: Yes, Said he was a missionary, Reuben Bolanger. Of course, I don't guess you knew him, but he traveled all over the country on a horse. He visits schools. He was gone 2 or 3 years; in fact, I don't know where he got his money to run on, but I guess he took up collections or something. He had a phonograph, you know.

Bates: And had 2 fine children.

Lon: That boy's a fine man and had a daughter. He lives over on Sawyer Road.

Bates: Right, think a lot of him.

Lon: Yes, he's a fine boy.

Flowers: Are you against whiskey now or did you just give it up for yourself?

Lon: No sir, I'm not, no, I'm not.

Flowers: Why did you give it up?

Lon: Well, I just decided I didn't want to fool with it. After they put whiskey back in Chattanooga, the authorities told me if I wanted to put up a whiskey store, that they'd see that I got the whiskey and be in the best location of Chattanooga. I told them, "Thank you, I'm quitting, no more for me." That was Ed Bass and 2 or 3 other commissioners. Ed Bass was the mayor.

Robbins: Did some of your friends set up stores later on?

Lon: Oh, yes, people I knew, but I didn't have nothing to do with it. My wife was so hot after me that --- one time, I told her, she was giving me a lecture, I said, "Now what you're saying just goes in one ear and out the other." She says, "I know that," says, "they ain't nothing in there to stop it. (laughter)

Flowers: You don't miss drinking?

Lon: No, I don't. I smoked cigarettes till I was 50 years old. I can quit anything. Anybody can. It's awful hard to quit drinking whiskey and keep on drinking, you know, take a nip now and then.

Robbins: What did you substitute for it?

Lon: Cold water or anything, water or anything.

Robbins: That's good.

Lon: I quit smoking cigarettes, put the package on the mantel, [package] was half gone. Just left them there, with matches and my cigarettes.

Flowers: What made you stop?

Lon: Just decided I wouldn't smoke them, making me cough, you know.

Flowers: How much were you smoking?

Lon: Oh, I guess, a pack to a pack and a half a day. Smoking for me was according to how busy I was.

Flowers: These were not filter cigarettes either, I guess? Camels or something?

Lon: Cigarettes are not very good for you.

End Tape 4, Side 1
Begin Tape 4, Side 2

[Tape begins mid-conservation.]

Lon: I believed it would cheer you up and help you up. But I don't do that now.

Robbins: But a cigarette makes you feel very drowsy and sort of draggy.

Bates: I think cigarettes are worse on the individual, but whiskey is probably worse on society. I know at least half the wrecks or two-thirds of them are ---

Flowers: That's true and cigarettes never cause the wrecks.

Lon: The marijuanas are about to take whiskey over. Just last night on the Morning Show after Johnny Carson, Tom Snyder --- he's the host, and they were talking about marijuana cigarettes. They had 4 retired policemen from New York, and they was explaining about what marijuana had done and what it does do. They claim that it don't do nobody harm, but I think it does.

Bates: What time do you usually go to bed?

Lon: Oh, I go to bed about 2:00. I live the life of Riley, if you call that, laying in. I had to quit driving my car on account of I couldn't see, and I gave my car away. I've given my furniture away, everything. When we carried my wife out, I went out and didn't go back. I sold the place.

Bates: And you sold that place, [where you] lived right at top of the W, about an acre lot. What did you get for it?

Lon: $35,000.

Robbins: Great. I heard there's a big house going up there.

Lon: And I give $300.00 for it. If I'd stayed with it, I'd have been worth something, wouldn't I? But I don't care for money, I don't need no money. I've got all I need. I give all that $35,000 away, but about $10,000.

Robbins: That was a good investment.

Lon: Oh, yes, well, when I bought it, I didn't buy it for an investment. I just bought it because it was close there. I've built a little souvenir shop there. But my wife [decided] she didn't want to fool with it. We didn't need the money much. She decided to --- when we had a rough year or two in there, had a grocery store or two. I give them away, two grocery stores, put them out on the book, you know. Then I got in the mine operating business as a sideline [inaudible] not very profitable.

Flowers: Here on the mountain?

Lon: Yes, we sold the coal to a cement plant. And I tried to get the Black Lung. Now I got Mr. Brock, but they turned me down on it. But I thought, maybe, I'd get Mrs. Lloyd after it.

Robbins: Marilyn Lloyd.

Lon: Marilyn Lloyd, yes. Now, some way she's connected with the coal operation business, and this money that they give out [for Black Lung]
I got several letters, and he's trying to get it, I reckon, or had some of his agents to.

Bates: I know several people who are getting it.

Lon: Yes, it's a big thing. You see, I'd get about $8,000 or $10,000 back pay if I can get it. And I might get it and just --- well, I can give it to people in the summer. It's money, I don't care nothing about money, much. I don't need nothing.

Flowers: Did you invest your profits in real estate?

Lon: No, no, only when I put it in houses and lots... four houses and lots of whiskey. (laughter)

Bates: He likes a well-termed phrase.

Lon: That was worth winning. A whole lot of them were gamblers. I [won] a lot of money. One night, we was on about the top floor of Hotel Patten, and I had a hat full of money,

Lon: drunk, I'm sorry to say. (laughter) They made me mad, and I walked over to the window and just dumped the whole thing. (laughter) I had 2 or 3 friends there. One of these other fellows gambling there, they wanted to beat me up for it, but they wouldn't let them. I don't know what would have happened if it hadn't been for the. I just dumped it out, I didn't have no better sense. But as far as money, I guess I made $1200.00 clear [a month] after I got in the whiskey. See, I had them trucks, I moved everybody up on the mountain and down.

Robbins: This is back in the twenties. That was a good living.

Lon: Yes, oh boy, my wife, why, she hauled ---

Bates: As much as if making a year teaching.

Lon: One time I --- maybe you don't want to hear it --- it's just a little funny thing. We had a colored girl worked with us, my wife had paid Sara. I'd been drinking several days. She was going downtown to buy groceries and do some shopping, and had the children all dressed up, you know. This Negro had a little white cap, you know, it was big dog stuff. So, I went out and seen them get ready to go. When I looked in the Frigidaire, there wasn't nothing that suited me; I was looking for buttermilk and stuff like that. "God almighty," I said, "A millionaire bootlegger living here," I said, "all dolled up to go to town, maid to take care of your children," and I said, "A brand new thousand dollar Frigidaire run to the tune of two dried up lemons." (laughter)

Bates: By the way, where did you get that flattop haircut?

Lon: Well, I get it down at Mr. Parker's. I busted my head, you know, and they had my head sewed up with wire, to pull my skull back together. And he couldn't cut it then, it looked so bad, that cowlick stuck all in there. So I got to cutting it with a flattop.

Bates: And becomes a youth of your age, anyway.

Lon: Well, I reckon.

Bates: Well, sir, it's been mighty nice.

Robbins: Thank you very much. We have enjoyed it.

Lon: Come back to see me. Come up to our church.

[The rest of the conversation is saying farewells. Tape stops and a new interview with Cornet Summerfield Vandergriff begins.]

Bates: We are going to make some tapes. Just for the benefit of the tapes, we are going to ask you a question or so which may seem foolish to you. What is your name?

Vanderg.: Cornet Summerfield Vandergriff.

Bates: Where did you get Summerfield from?

Vanderg.: Old Summerfield Key.

Bates: Right. Judge Summerfield Key. All right, sir, where do you live?

Vandg.: I live on the Sawyers Road.

Mrs. Vand.: Sawyer Pike, they've changed this now to Pike, Sawyers Pike.

Bates: All right, sir. Now, today is what day?

Robbins: The 14th of August.

Bates: All right, sir. Mr. Vandergriff, when did your folks come to the mountain?

Vandg.: I couldn't say for sure.

Bates: About when would you say?

Vandg.: Vandergriff came from Sequatchie Valley in ---

Bates: I thought he came from around Harrison.

Vandg.: Well, he first came from Harrison down at Sequatchie Valley, and then from Sequatchie Valley to the mountain on account of his health.

Bates: About when was that would you say?

Vandg.: (laughter)

Bates: I think we figured out one time, it was within about 5 years, one way or another, of 1835, wasn't it? or 1840?

Vandg.: Yes, somewhere around ---

Bates: All right. What way did he come up the mountain?

Vandg.: He come up the old Levi Gap.

Bates: And where did he settle up here?

Vandg.: He settled back here in what they call "Helican."

Bates: All right, good. How many children did he have?

Vandg.: Let's see, I'd have to count them up. There's Uncle George and Uncle John, Uncle Billy, and then Daddy, was 4 boys, and their 3 girls [inaudible]

Mrs. Vand.: One was named Ola, something like that.

Bates: Do you remember the house where they lived?

Vandg.: Oh, yes.

Bates: How big a house was it?

Vandg.: One room cabin.

Bates: One room cabin. Which one of the children was your father?

Vandg.: Jake.

Bates: Jake. What nickname did he have at first?

Vandg.: They called him "Big Jake" and "Bear Jake."

Bates: All right now, Big Jake, at first. Now, when did they change his name to Bear Jake?

Vandg.: He was coming up the Loggers Camp Road, bringing a turn of meal home from the mill, and a bear attacked him right in the middle of the road; and he killed that bear... After that, they called him Bear Jake.

Bates: He must have been a pretty big man.

Vandg.: Yes, he weighed about 225 pounds.

Bates: About how tall?

Vandg.: Well, he was around close to 6 ft. tall; he was a big man.

Bates: I always heard he had hands almost as big as hams, is that right?

Vandg.: They were awful big hands. (laughter)

Bates: He was pretty good on log work, wasn't he?

Vandg.: Oh, yes, he used the broad ax, a whole lot.

Bates: He was an artist with the broadax. What are some of the houses still standing that he got out the logs for?

Vandg.: The Kruesi house over there and Key's houses.

Bates: All right now, I'll explain, the Kruesi house is now --- it was the old --- he done it for Captain Smartt, though, didn't he?

Vandg.: Yes, Smartt.

Bates: Along about what year would take a guess at?

Vandg.: I wouldn't really know, that's past my memory.

Bates: Right. I think it was in early 1880's from what people have told me. I And the first one, of course, was the Key house where Mrs. Z. C. Patten lived for years, and now where General McReynolds lives. That's Topside. And incidentally, Topside is the only house on either Lookout Mountain or Signal Mountain or the town of Walden that is listed in the prestigious National Register of Historic Sites. Then there's the other house you got for the Keys was the house where Sam Chester lives now. Crossroads, isn't that right?

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: [Bear Jake] lived down over in this section, didn't he?

Vandg.: Yes, about a mile, right across the bridge over there.

Bates: Right about there --- about how far down the creek?

Vandg.: About a mile.

Bates: All right, sir. And I've heard that when he'd go to work in the morning, he'd trot. Is that right?

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: He'd trot all the way over. Did he trot all the way back, too?

Vandg.: I don't know. (laughter)

Bates: But you've heard he trotted to his work in the morning?

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: Right. And everybody kept out of his way. Now, you were born up here on the mountain, lived up here most of your life.

Vandg.: Most of it, yes.

Bates: And how old are you now?

Vandg.: If I live to see my birthday in April, I'll be 90 years old.

Bates: Twenty-seventh of April, isn't it?

Vandg.: Yes, twenty-seventh of April.

Bates: Right. The Half Century Club have had 2 birthday parties for him up here. And on his birthday year before last, they had a picture of 2 people holding a birthday cake; he had several of them. This gentleman right here, Summerfield Vandergriff and Key Johnston, Summerfield Key Johnston; they were both named for the same man, you see, Judge Summerfield Key. Judge Summerfield Key and Judge D. M. Key were brothers. Now, let me ask you some questions about the places around here. How did Marshall Creek get its name? Tell us about Marshall down there.

Vandg; Well, a fellow by the name of Marshall had a shingle mill right there on the creek, right down next to where that spring is up on the side of the mountain. He had a shingle mill; he cut shingles.

Bates: He cut shingles. How about the grist? Was it a grist mill, too?

Vandg.: Yes, he had a grist mill. He run a grist mill there, too.

Bates: And where'd you say the dam was?

Vandg.: Right below where the bridge is, just a little way.

Bates: Was it down, you know, where the swimming hole is?

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: Was it before you got to the swimming hole or after --- at the other end of the swimming hole?

Vandg.: The lower end of the swimming hole.

Bates: All right, sir, good. I guess that was before you can remember, though, wasn't it?

Vandg.: Oh, yes.

Bates: That's what I thought. According to the deeds he got that right after the Civil War. By the way, that bridge down there --- of course, that hasn't been there too many years, according to some of the old land grants and deeds and so on, that was referred to down there, where the bridge is, as the Bear Rock House Creek Ford.

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: Right. Now, tell us about the Sawyer School up here. About when was it started?

Vandg.: It's the oldest school on Signal Mountain, I reckon.

Bates: Did your father go there to school?

Vandg.: Yes. And my Grandpa Hatfield went there to school, too.

Bates: Right. Your Grandfather Hatfield and your father. Both his father and his Grandfather Hatfield were soldiers in the Civil War. His Grandfather Hatfield was on the Confederate side and his Grandfather Vandergriff was on the Union side, right?

Vandg.: And my daddy, too.

Bates: And your father, too. All right. And so they as little boys attended this school up here. By the way, who gave the land for that school?

Vandg.: My grandfather.

Mrs. Van.: Well, Vincent gave it now.

Vandg.: Where it is right ---

Bates: Well, it's almost near it.

Vandg.: They moved it back on a little --- Vincent gave a half acre right behind where it stuck. It's all connected together, now.

Bates: Right: It's approximately the same site. There's been a school there then since well before the Civil War. Both his father and grandfathers were soldiers in the Civil War, and they went there as little kids, so it had to be somewhere around 1845, or somewhere in that neighborhood.

Robbins: Did you all build the first school?

Vandg.: Yes, the first school was built of logs and had a big chimney to do it for heat. They kept fire in the fireplaces like we do now.

Mrs. Van.: Summer, wasn't it a church and a school?

Vandg.: Yes. When Walker got in there and got to running up the records, he me to bring our

(Vandg.): preacher down there, and one of our deacons of the church, and he said, "That belongs to the Missionary Baptist Church," and said, "I'll make you all a deed."

Bates: That school has been in operation probably around a 130 years, at least.

Vandg.: Yes, every bit of that.

Bates: I think this is interesting. As best as I can find out, there's been a school on that site the longest of any site in Chattanooga or Hamilton County. In the old days, was it a free school? What did they have to do to go there?

Vandg.: Them that was able had to pay so much a month; they had to pay the teacher. The county didn't furnish no teachers then.

Bates: Right. It was called a tuition or subscription school. I believe Mrs. Hatfield told me that your grandfather was a small boy when he came from over in the valley and went to stay with some kinfolks and went to school there, and he just picked up chips for the fireplace. And then they said he remembered that there some people paid their tuition in turkeys, a turkey gobble or so, during the year.

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: That's historically interesting to me. Now tell us about the old hotel up here.

Vandg.: It was built way back in ---

Bates: About 1890, so some of the records show.

Vandg.: 1890, I reckon. It was 5 stories high and cupola on top of that, and you could go up in that cupola and see all over Chattanooga. They run it for years; I worked there the last 2 years it was run. Old Doc Skillern from Hixson burned the hotel down.

Bates: Why did he burn it? Insurance or what?

Vandg.: Insurance, I guess.

Bates: Did they serve pretty good food up there?

Vandg.: Oh, yes. They always had a good crowd, too, every summer.

Robbins: Where was that located.?

Bates: I'll show you up here.

Robbins: Okay.

Vandg.: It covered ¾ of an acre of ground.

Bates: It was very fashionable. Fred Fox, my brother-in-law, spent the summer up there when he was just a year old or something like that, he and his mother and father up there. It was a very fashionable hotel. That was back in the days when they had these hotels around springs, there at Rhea Springs and Sulphur Springs down in Alabama and so on.

Robbins: Did people spend their week or two vacation from the city and come up here?

Bates: What they did, as I understand it, the man would bring his wife and children up there, and he'd spend the weekends with them. Is that the way it worked?

Vandg.: Yes.

Robbins: How much was the room and board?

Vandg.: I don't know. And then lots of times they'd come and stay 2 and 3 weeks at a time.

Bates: Now, which road did they use to get here?

Vandg.: They used the old Fairmount Road.

Bates: The old Fairmount Road. Tell which way it went.

Vandg.: After you crossed the creek, it went up there and made that big turn and came right back like it was going to come back to the creek, and then turned back up to Fairmount.

Bates: Came up Fairmount. Don't they call it North Fairmount Road now?

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: Right. I think it's about blocked off, too.

Vandg.: Yes, they've got it blocked off.

Bates: Tell us about how you used to make lye soap.

Vandg.: They saved the entrails of hogs. They'd clean them entrails up and make lye soap out of them.

Bates: I know, but tell them how they did it.

Vandg.: They'd build them a hopper and put all their wood ashes in this hopper. Then, they kept it covered up until they got ready to make soap, then they'd pour water every day in that hopper, and it's run through them ashes. They had a pail down there to catch it. That lye would make the soap.

Bates: All right, now, can you tell any more about making the soap? You've made it, haven't you?

Mrs. Van.: Yes, I've made it.

Bates: All right, tell a little more about it.

Mrs. Van.: (laughter) That's just about it.

Bates: Go ahead and tell a little more about it.

Vandg.: You never did make it with lye, though, you bought yours.

Mrs. Van.: I bought lye and made it.

Bates: I can tell this is homemade with lye, though. Now, let me ask you this. Sometimes you cut it in bars and sometimes you left it soft, isn't' that it?

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: Which way did you usually have yours?

Vandg.: I usually left it soft.

Bates: Left is soft and put it in a barrel or half a barrel or something like that.

Vandg.: A keg or something that was just full.

Bates: I remember visiting some of my kinfolks when I was a little bitty kid up on the river. In the kitchen was a barrel of this lye soap, or half a barrel of it, and the cook would just stick her hand in it and get a ---- it was just about like mush.
Now, tell how you used to make homemade shoes.

Vandg.: They made them with wooden pegs. Instead of having tacks like we have, they just had to take a piece of maple and they'd season it really good, and they'd saw it off in little blocks about that big.

Bates: About an inch long, yes.

Vandg.: And then they'd split that up. They'd sharpen each side of these blocks and then split it up and had what they called "shoe pegs." They'd put soles on with them shoe pegs instead of tacks.

Bates: Have you ever heard that before?

Robbins: No.

Bates: What did they use, hard maple or soft maple?

Vandg.: Just old wood maple. They'd just cut one down and let is season good, put it where it would season out.

Bates: Now, tell us about Corral Road and where it got its name.

Vandg.: I don't know how the Corral Road got its name.

Bates: Oliver Hartman told me --- Oliver was your brother-in-law, wasn't he?

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: And he said that during the Civil War, at the time when the Confederates were trying to starve out the Federals in Chattanooga [and] that was the time when they had their signal station over at Signal Point. They fixed up a corral over here. I understand the corral was right over here on the road.

Vandg.: Yes, between here and the church house.

Bates: Between here and the church house on the old Oscar Walker's great-grandmother Gadd's place.

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: And there was a spring there in those days. It's gone dry now, I think. And they had the corral there for disabled stock and so on.

Vandg.: Yes, they built the road over the spring.

Bates: Is that it?

Vandg.: Blocked it up, yes.

Bates: Because I remember I used to see a spring there when I was a kid.

Vandg.: Yes. You see, Oscar Walker wouldn't let them put in record that the Corral Road didn't come no further than the forks of the Road up here. After it got there, then, it was called the Sawyers Road. But the Corral Road come plumb on down here ---

Bates: It should be called the Corral Road clear down to the schoolhouse.

Vandg.: Yes. Because the corral was up here between here and the church house.

Bates: Right, it was on the old Gadd place.

Vandg.: And there was on down at what they call Flipper Bend.

Bates: Right. Oliver Hartman also told me that he was going to show that to me but he never did. And I went over there with one of his boys a year or so ago, and I don't think we came to it; we may have, but he said that the old spring was where the power line came through. But other people told me it was not there in that power line space. There were 2 corrals.

Vandg.: Well, now there's a big spring over there. Where they put the power line through, he [Webster] run a fence through there and fenced that off, a barbwire fence, and kept his cattle back there. See, they keep that plowed up and sew grass every year, the power company does. So he's got a good pasture that doesn't cost him none.

Bates: By the way, where did the Helican get its name, have you ever heard?

Vandg.: Yes, there was a hurricane come through here. It tore all the timber down and everything; it blowed away houses. I don't know here anybody got killed or not, but I've heard my daddy talk about it, and he said, "You couldn't get through the woods after that."

Bates: Was he living when it --- did he remember it?

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: It was in his lifetime?

Vandg.: Yes, it was during his lifetime.

Bates: And that where it got the name, the Helican.

Vandg.: And he said you couldn't get through the woods for the timber that had blown down.

Bates: When you were a boy, was there much game up here on the mountain?

Vandg.: Oh, yes. There used to be deer and bear, turkeys ---

Mrs. Van.: Wild hogs.

Vandg.: My daddy kept us in plenty of meat, killing wild hogs and turkeys and deer. I remember the last deer he killed. He brought it home. There was a peach tree in the yard, and it had growed up pretty high, and a limb run out this way, and he sawed that off and had this string run out that away to hang hogs on. So, he hung this deer up on that peach tree. I remember that well.

Bates: By the way, when they used to hang up hams and sidemeats of hogs, what did they use for string usually?

Vandg.: You mean how did they keep it?

Bates: No. When they hung it up, did he have string or wires or ---

Vandg.: They split stuff.

Bates: I see. Did you ever hear of bear grass?

Vandg.: Yes, yes, we used to have it in our yard.

Bates: Yes, I've heard they used to hang things with it, too.

Vandg.: Yes, you could hang it with that.

Bates: Bear grass, I think is what they call --- let me see ---

Vandg.: They call it something else.

Bates: I know it, it's a – can't think of the name – it has a pretty big white flower on it.

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: I ought to know that name.

Vandg.: I know we had some bear grass and some other kind of a weed; if you touched it, it was just like something had stung you. That growed up right side by side, and we'd go out there like we was going to get some bear grass and get a stem of this, go in there and rub it over somebody's hand, and boy, they'd just have a fit. (laughter)

Vang.: It was just like being in a hornet's nest.

Bates: Let's how many children were in your family? Now, you've said how many children in father's family. [tape ends abruptly]

End Tape 4, Side2.

[Tape begins in conversation; some of the discussion was lost.]

Bates: All right, sir. What kind of social activities did you have in those days?

Vandg: Well, different things.

Mrs. Van.: Dancing.

Bates: Had square dances. What kind of music did you have?

Vandg.: A banjo and a fiddle.

Bates: All right. Do you know anybody that played the banjo and fiddle in those days?

Vandg.: I've picked for many a dance. I picked the banjo for years. Finally got tired of it and sold my banjo to Ralph Hartman. After he died, I sold my banjo, and I ain't fooled with a banjo since.

Bates: If I bring you one over sometime, will you play it?

Vandg.: Yes, I guess I could. I guess I could pick it.

Bates: How much did the people pay you for playing at those dances?

Vandg.: Oh, sometimes $2.00 and sometimes, it was $1.50, just whatever they---

Bates: And a drink of whiskey or so.

Vandg.: Whatever they could make up.

Bates: I see. What were some of the figures they danced? Do you remember the names of any of them?

Vandg.: Figure 8. Dosie. I pretty near forgot; it's been so long.

Bates: Let me see, did you have "Bird in the Cage?"

Vandg.: "Bird in the Cage," "Bird Out," and "Close Right In."

Bates: How about "Shoot old Dominecker"?

Vandg.: Yes, they had that.

Bates: "Shoot old Dominecker, shoot him dead, shoot old Dominecker
right in the head." (laughter) All right. Of course, I remember, I remember a
lot of them, 50, oh, 60 years ago.

Vandg.: Lige Wendt generally done all the calling; he was a good caller.

Bates: Lige was a good caller. I remember hearing him call lots of times. And then, he and Henry used to play, too.

Vandg.: I played with Henry. When Lige would be calling, why, I'd pick the banjo, and he'd play the fiddle.

Bates: What about churches? Did you go to church any much?

Vandg.: Oh, yes, we had to go. Every time there was church, why, my daddy made us go to church, Sunday morning. That was the first thing, "Get your things all ready now, get ready for Sunday School."

Bates: You mean you didn't tell your mother and father you just didn't feel like going that morning? Did you get by with that?

Vandg.: No.

Bates: You wouldn't have dared say such a thing, would you?

Vandg.: No. If we was sick, they knowed it. They knew whether we was sick or whether we was putting on.

Bates: And did you mind your parents better than children mind them nowadays?

Vandg.: Oh, yes, better. (laughter)

Bates: What would have happened if you hadn't?

Vandg.: Back then, they didn't spare the rod. I remember one of the last whippings my daddy gave me for fighting.

Bates: Didn't you say you knew some other people up here by the same name that had interesting nicknames? Didn't you know somebody named "Hogteeth Willie" Vandergriff?

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: How'd he get that name?

Vandg.: He'd kill anybody's hogs that he'd come across if he run out of meat; he wouldn't say he was killing wild hogs.

Mrs. Van.: That was Uncle Willie.

Vandg: Yes. He didn't care whether it was wild or tame; he'd kill it.

Bates: And you called him "Hogteeth Willie." Wasn't he the one that took up all that land over there about the Carson place?

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: And Uncle Jimmy Smith's place?

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: 150 or 160 acres right up from George Rogers. Then wasn't there one called "Knife Willie"?

Vandg.: That was his boy.

Bates: How'd he get that name?

Vandg.; He carried a big knife all the time, and he was awful bad to fight, and he'd cut you, too.

Bates: Didn't you tell me one time also he'd put it between his toes at school, or something like that?

Vandg.: Yes, he kept a knife or pencil or something between his toes. He didn't try to hunt, though. He'd get down on his all fours and crawl around the benches. The teacher whipped him, but it didn't do no good.

Bates: By the way, did you have pretty good discipline in your schools?

Vandg.: Yes, it was good.

Bates: The teacher ran it, did he?

Vandg.: The first teacher that taught school out here that I remember was old man Henry; that was Walter's daddy. And then the next teacher come from over in the valley about Gold Point or somewhere. What was his name? I can't think of it.

Bates: What did you all study? Of course, it would depend on what grade you were in.

Vandg.: A first grader started in on learning ABCs with what they called a Primer, then the first grade, second grade, and right on up.

Bates: Did you have McGuffey's readers, the blue-back speller?

Vandg.: Yes, yes, old blue-back speller.

Bates: Right. What time did school take up in the morning usually?

Vandg.: Eight o'clock. Turned out at four; they was strict, too, they'd be right on the job on ---

Bates: If you were late, what happened?

Vandg.: You'd have to have a good excuse if you got by.

Bates: How far did some of them come?

Vandg.: Oh, some of them walked 4 and 5 miles.

Bates: You mean you didn't have any bus service in those days?

Vandg.: Didn't have no buses then.

Robbins: Did they walk when it was raining and snowing?

Vandg.: Yes. I went to school through snow knee-deep.

Robbins: I bet you had to start out early in the morning.

Vandg.: Yes.

Robbins: Of course it was close to here, wasn't it?

Vandg.: It was about a mile over there from where I was raised it. And we had a near cut we called a pass where we came through, and then we come into this road up here right there where that spring was at. But now, it didn't make no difference if snow or water [was] knee-deep, you had to go to school.

Bates: Who were some of the students that came the longest distance?

Mrs. Van.: Some of them came from Fairmount here to school.

Bates: They came from Fairmount here?

Vandg.: Yes, from way up towards Anderson Pike up on this Corral Road, on up that road to Walkers, Hatfields, [and] Prices [who] used to live up there.

Bates: It didn't make any difference if the creek was up, they just had to get across the best they could, is that it?

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: How long did you have for lunch?

Vandg.: 30 minutes.

Bates: What kind of cafeteria did you have?

Vandg.: (laughter) We had to carry our cafeteria with us. There was 6 of us going to school; we'd take a half a bushel basket full so it would take 2 of us to carry it.

Bates: What did you usually take for lunch?

Vandg.: Well, anything purt near that we'd have at home. We'd have potatoes and beef, cornbread and biscuits, too. I had a sister that wouldn't eat a biscuit to save your life when she was growing up. She had to have her cornbread for breakfast.

Bates: By the way, how did you get your cornmeal in those days?

Vandg.: Take corn down here at the foot of the mountain to the Roberts Mill and have it ground.

Bates: Was that an overshot mill?

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: Tell this young gentleman what you mean by an overshot mill.

Vandg.: Well, there was a big water-run come from a big spring, trough built that the water come through. You could turn it off, and it could run off the lower side; turn it on, it'd run into this wheel and keep it going.

Bates: By the way, how long a lunchtime did you usually have? Do you remember?

Vandg.: We'd get an hour for dinner.

Bates: Did you have any recesses?

Vandg.: Yes, 15 minute recess, 1 of a morning and 1 of an evening.

Bates: What were some of the games you played?

Vandg.: Us boys generally always played fox and hound. Lots of times we'd be so far away from the schoolhouse when the bell rang, we'd be 15 minutes late getting there.

Bates: Were you a pretty good runner?

Vandg.: Used to be. I couldn't run much now.

Robbins: I've forgotten the rules of that game, but we played it once. What are the rules of that game fox and hound?

Vandg.: Well, they'd send some fellow out with --- give him a start on them to be the fox, and the rest of them, why, they'd be after him hollering and a going on, barking like a dog and running.

Bates: If they caught him, what happened?

Vandg.: They'd generally have a fight. (laughter)

Robbins: Did you all do a lot of farming up here?

Vandg.: Oh, yes.

Robbins: What were your farm implements?

Vandg.: Had an old wooden plow stock and a horse.

Bates: And the kind of a plow point you used, you called it a what?

Vandg.: Twister and a bull tongue.

Bates: Bull tongue, yes.

Vandg.: We used that twister to break the ground and then used that bull tongue to lay it off.

Bates: The bull tongue cut down. Do you know what one is?

Robbins: Is that an old heavy stick that goes down in the ground?

Bates: No. Tell him what a bull tongue plow is; you and I both know, but you tell him.

Vandg.: Oh, they're about that wide, about that long. You put them on your stock, and they go down in the ground.

Bates: I remember so well when I was along about high school age, or maybe a little before, along when I was maybe 12 or 14 years old, I guess, along in there, [that] we had a field of new ground and a Texas mare that didn't know how to do much farm work at all. I'd get out there in that new ground with that bull tongue plow, and when the plow wasn't catching on a root, the Texas mare would be --- she'd just stop, you know, and [I'd get] that plow handle right in my tummy.

Vandg.: I've had them kick me, too.

Bates: Tell us about hog killing in the old days.

Vandg.: Well, they'd fatten their hogs and ---

Bates: How would they fatten them a lot?

Vandg.: They'd put them in a pen.

Bates: But before that, what would they do with them? Before they put them in a pen, they let them run loose, the, wouldn't they?

Vandg.: Oh, yes, they run out in the woods till they got ready to fatten them. Our hogs all run out.

Bates: How's they get anything to eat? What did they eat a lot of?

Vandg.: Oh, back then there'd be good mast.

Bates: Mast, now, this boy's a city slicker, hasn't heard of mast.

Vandg.: All kinds of acorns. Now, what they call a bitter mast, that was a chestnut oak acorn, and they wasn't good until after the freeze come. But the post oak acorn, when went to falling, they was good; they would fatten hogs right on and keep them going until the chestnut oak acorns got good and when the freeze come on them. And then they'd get fat on them acorns.

Bates: You had a lot of chestnuts, too, then, didn't you?

Vandg.: Lots of chestnuts. Yes, I went out and gathered a sack full of chestnuts many a time, take them to Chattanooga, and sell them like candy.

Bates: I see. About how many hogs did you usually kill for yourself for the winter?

Vandg: We generally killed about 5.

Bates: Now come on and tell them about what you did with the meat.

Vandg.: We had a smokehouse built, and we'd hang our meat in the smokehouse, let it hang there about 3 or 4 weeks, and it'd season good. Then we'd put smoke in there and smoke it.

Bates: You salted it down first, didn't you?

Vandg.: Yes, salt it down, and then when we took it out of the salt, knocked all that salt off of it, hang it up, and let it season out, and then smoke it.

Bates: And you made your sausage right when you sold the hogs, didn't you?

Vandg.: Oh, yes.

Bates: How you would like to have a meal of that real good homemade sausage and hot biscuits?

Vandg.: That would be good now. It wouldn't be like that sausage you buy.

Bates: No comparison.

Vandg.: Because they put seasoning to it; they put the red pepper and sage and thyme, a cup of that in there, and they'd season it.

Bates: Did the dairy deliver your milk to you every morning?

Vandg.: No, we had our milk cow. We'd have to go out and milk them. We generally kept 2 or 3 good cows. Oh, I've milked cows; I'd get so tired of --- I'd wish I'd never see another cow. (laughter)

Robbins: How many cows did you all have?

Vandg.: Three. I've milked as high as 21 cows every night and morning for 2 years. But it wasn't here; it was out in Oklahoma. I was working for a dairyman, and I had to milk them. I milked 21 cows every night and every morning, I'd get up at 3:00 and by 6:00, I'd have them cows all milked.

Bates: Then you would put in a day's work.

Vandg.: Yes.

Robbins: What time did you finish up at night?

Vandg.: Oh, about between ten and eleven o'clock.

Bates: What kind of salary or pay did you get?

Vandg.: A dollar a day.

Robbins: Did you get to rest during the middle of the day, like they do down in Mexico?

Vandg.: Sometimes, they'd let you rest, and sometimes, they'd have you out putting up power lines and things like that.

Bates: Have you ever milked any? [asking Mrs. Vandergriff]

Mrs. Van.: Oh, yes.

Bates: But not 21 a day.

Bates: Was there ever much whiskey make around Sawyers?

Vandg.: Oh, yes, used to be a still in every hollow. Wildcats, I've made a many a gallon.

Bates: You have? Tell us how you made it.

Vandg.: I'd make it all night long; we'd work of a day, work of a night.

Mrs. Van.: Reckon your wine's ready to drink?

Vandg.: Yes, it's ready. Maybe he don't drink wine.

Bates: I don't. He will.

Vandg.: Do you want a drink of wine?

Robbins: I'll take a real small glass. Is it some you made?

Vandg.: Yes, I made some good grape wine.

[Tape stops and then resumes conversation.]

Bates: Why don't you think you have the wild blackberries so much now?

Vandg.: Well, I don't know why they ain't none, but you don't see many briars and what briars you see, it's generally old knotty things, they ain't ---

Bates: You said something about letting the stock run out, too.

Vandg.: When the stock run out, why, I don't know, I reckon they kept them bit off so they'd bear better.

Bates: And kept them cleaned around, they kept the grass and weed from around them.

Vandg.: Yes.

Robbins: Maybe the freeze hurts them a little bit, too, and maybe the pollution.

Bates: Yes, but you had heavier freezes when you were a boy, too, didn't you?

Vandg.: Oh, yes. We had worse winters then than we do now.

Bates: What was the biggest snow you ever saw up here that you remember?

Vandg.: 24 inches.

Bates: How long did it stay on the ground?

Vandg.: It stayed on the ground about 4 weeks.

Bates: About the 24 inches, well, what did you all do during that 3 or 4 weeks the snow was on the ground?

Vandg.: We didn't do nothing much, just kept wood and kept the fire.

Bates: Kept the fire going and also kept the stock fed.

Vandg.: That's right.

Bates: And watered.

Vandg.: We'd water the stock and keep the fire, that's all we could do.

Bates: And eat and sleep. How many big freezes do you remember up here?

Vandg.: I couldn't tell you, I've forgot them.

Bates: The 2 worse ones I recall were 1960, you know, just a few years ago, and in 1905, there was a big one.

Vandg.: Yes, and that's when the ice was all over everything.

Bates: Right.

Vandg.: Timber broke. Yes, they come a popping and a cracking.

Robbins: Just like a concert.

Bates: In 1960 and then 1905 was the same way.

Vandg.: Yes. Do you remember in 1905?

Mrs. Van.: I've heard about it.

Bates: February, along about the fourth of fifth of February.

Vandg.: The wire got so heavy with ice. [1960]

Bates: Oh, they just broke down all over the mountain. People didn't suffer from the big freeze in 1905 up here as much as they did in 1960. Because in 1905, as you said, you had the house heated by fireplaces, and your lights were lamps, coal oil lamps. And there were no electric wires to break down, no phones to break down.

Vandg.: We didn't have no electricity then. Now, they don't have no fireplace, no heating stove when it was cold, they'd have to go somewhere to stay.

Robbins: A lot of them went down to the hotel, I heard.

Vandg.: Yes.

Robbins: We stayed up here. Our freezer was not running, so we just lived off the freezer for about a week, all the good food that we'd saved up.

Bates: Right.

Mrs. Van.: I've got here my coal oil lamp yet.

Bates: I have a coal oil lamp or so. They're good things to have just like I've got a wood stove in the kitchen.

Mrs. Van.: I've got a wood stove.

Vandg.: I don't know the people that tried to buy that stove. We wouldn't sell it at all.

Mrs. Van.: Brother John gave me that stove.

Robbins: Oh, the one you're cooking on.

Vandg.: I cook on electric.

Bates: I do the same thing; we've got an electric range we cook on, but I've got a wood stove in case.

Vandg.: Mine will burn wood or coal either one.

Bates: Yes, mine will, too. And I think anybody's foolish that lives up here all year round that doesn't have a wood stove.

Mrs. Van.: I think so too.

Vandg.: That cool weather in the wintertime, I keep a fire in that cookstove; it helps keep the house warm.

Bates: Sure, sure. By the way, during the Civil War, have you ever heard that the Union Army moved cannon over to this section?

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: Tell them about that.

Vandg.: They come through the Horseshoe with it. [On] the old Harrison and Dunlap Roads; they come through here and took it off the mountain. I don't know where they took it.

Bates: Chattanooga, I imagine, or Missionary Ridge. That would be my guess.

Vandg.: It looks like they'd a went the other way.

Bates: Well, on the other hand, when you move a great number of troops, you've got to use more than one road.

Robbins: Yes, they had sentries up on the corner of Raccoon and Lookout Mountain and Signal Point who were watching for that road over this.

Bates: Another thing if they were bringing a lot of troops over, the wagon trains and everything like that, why, you would have had Anderson Pike all gummed up anyway with it. You know, bringing cannons is terrible on roads. And I can see why they'd bring them over this way.

Robbins: How did your friends happen to join the Union army?

Vandg.: Well, he was a Union man, I reckon, he ---

Bates: Weren't most of the mountain people Union?

Vandg.: My grandpa, Hatfield, and my daddy fought right against one another.

Bates: Of course, your grandfather Hatfield was raised over in the valley.

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: A lot of the valley people were Confederates.

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: But most of the mountain people were Union, weren't they?

Vandg.: Yes.

Robbins: I wonder how they chose the Union. Was it because their ties were up north?

Bates: No.

Vandg.: I don't know why.

Bates: Well, I think it was because places they lived back here in the mountains and so on, they weren't slave owners; and their daddies fought under Andrew Jackson at New Orleans. For instance, his great-grandfather's brother was a soldier in the Revolution.
I'll tell you something interesting about this family. According to Mrs. Allen, who is the best genealogical expert I know around Chattanooga, the first Vandergriff they have a trace of is a Jake Vandergriff, who in the first part of the 1600's was one of the [burgermeisters?] I don't know what they called them in those days of New Amsterdam, you know, it's now New York City. Some of the family came on down into Maryland, I believe it was, and New Jersey. Then from there to North Carolina; then [from] North Carolina over to --- around up in Grainger County; from Grainger County down here in Hamilton County. Then he said his grandfather, who was William, first went over to Sequatchie Valley --- and then came up here, settled up here. One of his great-great uncles was applying for a pension, Revolutionary pension, and he said that he got in touch with his brother, who was William's father, Gilbert. Gilbert Vandergriff was --- said he could write his brother, Gilbert, who lived down in Hamilton County [and] he'd have the records of Revolutionary War information for him. Gilbert, as far as I can see from the census records and so on, was the first Hatfield, I mean, Vandergriff, in this county.

Vandg.: Yes, he come down there on Dayton Highway and lived awhile, when he first come here.

Bates: They called it the Valley Road in those days, I think.

Vandg.: Grandpa come down there in the valley; he stayed down there about 2 years, and then he entered this land up here.

Bates: Do you know what you mean by entering it?

Vandg.: He entered 100 acres, and then his brother entered a lot.

Robbins: Put it on the deed book?

Bates: No, no, no. He filed claims with the government. All my people did on both sides in Bradley County and Sequatchie and Marion and Bledsoe County. Got grants from the government, from the state.

Vandg.: They had to go there and stay so many years before they could get a deed for it.

Robbins: Seven years?

Vandg.: Seven years.

Bates: I don't remember the time. All right, now you ask some questions if you'd like to.

Robbins: Did you all do much lumbering around here?

Vandg.: Oh, yes, they used to be all kinds of sawmills around here.

Robbins: What kind of wood did they harvest?

Mrs. Van.: Summer had a sawmill.

Vandg.: I used to have a sawmill; I operated a sawmill, I reckon, about 10 or 12 years.

Bates: Did you do the sawing?

Vandg.; I done the sawing myself.

Robbins: What kind of power did you use to turn the saw?

Vandg.; I used a Hudson motor out of a car, just took it and --- Oh, I mean it would pull that saw, too.

Robbins: Did you run it on gasoline all day long?

Vandg.: yes.

Bates: Now most of them in the early days were run by water, weren't they?

Vandg.: Yes, steam boilers.

Bates: What kind of wood did you saw mostly?

Vandg.: I sawed mostly pine and poplar. Do you know old Loyal Ford?

Bates: Sure.

Vandg.: I sold him 50,000 foot of poplar lumber at one time.

Bates: How much for a thousand?

Vandg.: Twenty dollars a thousand.

Bates: What would that be worth now?

Vandg.: Oh, you'd get $125.00 a thousand for it now.

Robbins: What did he make out of it?

Vandg.: He built houses, I reckon.

Bates: What's the biggest poplar tree you ever remember cutting?

Vandg.: It was something like 4 foot.

Robbins: Did you cut many chestnut trees?

Vandg.: No, I didn't; I used to cut this chestnut wood and take it out to the tannery, you know. They ground it up and used it with the tan bark to tan leather.

Bates: Did you ever get out to tan bark much?

Vandg.: Oh, yes.

Bates: Tell him about tan barking.

Vandg.: I peeled bark for years.

Bates: Tell him what time of year did you do it?

Vandg.: You'd have to commence long about the first of April.

Bates: When the sap was rising.

Vandg.: When the sap was just right.

Bates: All right, now, go ahead and tell him about it.

Vandg.: We'd peel on all right for about 3 weeks, then we'd sit down for a about a week. Then it'd open up again, you'd peel again in a couple of weeks.

Bates: All right, now, tell him how you went at it.

Vandg.: Well, we'd call it ringing and stripping, we'd strip the bark here on top of the wall and ring it 3 foot long. And then, we had what we call a spud, you'd just take that and run that whole circle in one piece.

Bates: I have Hatfield's old spud at home.

Vandg.: I had 2 spuds, and I loaned them to somebody, and I never did get them back. I don't remember who got them spuds.

Bates: Your father and his hewing and getting out those logs for those houses in Summertown, what ever became of his broadax?

Mrs. Van.: Oh, John got it.

Vandg.: [inaudible] borrowed it [for] this museum and it's in there; it's out there on Lookout Mountain. If I ever go out there, I'm going to get it. I'd know it if I was to see it.

Bates: Did you ever do any hewing?

Vandg.: Not much. I never could use a broadax.

Mrs. Van.: Arthur done the hewing.

Vandg.: Arthur, he was a good hewer.

Robbins: How did you open up your roads back here? When you were building the road, did you just cut the trees, and then what did you do?

Vandg.: Yes, I just cut them. Cut out the trees and dug out the stumps.

Bates: You didn't have many roads up here much good until the last 15 or 20 years.

Vandg.: Just old dirt roads and half the time were in a mud hole.

Bates: Right, right.

Vandg.: I remember one time I went to a baptizing up at what they call the Blue Hole, driving an old Ford car, and I didn't have no trouble with it. It was high wheels, you know. My brother, Jake, he had a Buick, no, a Cadillac, and he'd get stuck all the time. I'd have to back up and pull him out.

[Tape ends abruptly]

[End Tape 5, Side 1]
[Begin Tape 5, Side 2, 000]

[Tape begins in mid-conversation.]

Vandg.: Right at the head of Chickamuaga Creek.

Bates: All right, now, there are 2 pools right there, 1 on one side of the Rice Ford and one on the other side. The one on the other side is called the Blue Hole, isn't it?

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: By the way, how many fords were there across the North Chickamauga Creek?

Vandg.: I didn't know but 3 there, [inaudible] Ford, the Gadd Ford, and the Harrison Ford; them three's all I know about.

Bates: Well, I've heard people speak of the Hixson Ford.

Vandg.: Well, Hixson Ford never was nothing but just a horseback riding ford.

Bates: It wasn't?

Vandg.: They couldn't get through there with cars or trucks or nothing like that, but just horseback riding, cattle hunters; they'd got horsing around there for cattle and ---

Bates: Oh, tell them about the people and cattle and the Horseshoe.

Vandg.: They used to bring them up here by the big droves, maybe 25 or 30 head in a bunch, take them to the Horsehoe, turn them loose. Come out every 2 or 3 weeks and salt them, see about them, and then late in the fall, they would come out here and take them off.

Bates: They came out and salted them in summer, checked about the calves and everything, I guess. See if the brands were being disturbed. Coming back to that tan bark, one of my most vivid recollections when I was a youngster up here was [that] as you come up the W, you'd meet those tan bark wagons. They'd be loaded with tan bark, going out to Scholze's Tannery usually. Lots of times, they'd just lock their wheels, going down the W, skidded them along.

Vandg.: They had what they call a skidder, and they'd fasten it at the axle and put it under the wheel, and when the wheel run up on it, why, it done the dragging and that saved your tire on your wagon. If you used just that tire, you'd have soon wore it out. Oh, it was a hard life back then, but it was a happy one.

Bates: Were people as neighborly then as they are now?

Mrs. Van.: Yes.

Vandg.: Oh, a heap more so. People don't neighbor now like they used to.

Bates: If your wife or you got sick back in those days, what would have happened?

Vandg.; Why, they'd come in and wait on you, and if you was out of wood, they'd go on and cut and haul up enough to do you till you got able to go back to work. It didn't cost you nothing. And the widow women in the settlement, they'd always go and cut their wood and haul it and put it right down in their yard. I had an aunt that was a widow, and they'd always keep her plenty of wood right in the yard, right where she could get to it.

Bates: And so you think in the old days, it was harder living, but a lot happier living, is that it?

Vandg.: Oh, yes.

Bates: Did you have to lock your doors at night to keep the burglars out?

Vandg.; Why, no, you wouldn't even have to shut them in the summertime. I've slept many a night with the doors standing wide open.

Robbins: Did any of the congressmen and the presidents ever come around this area and meet some of the people?

Vandg.: I don't know; I think there was a president come to Fairmount once, wasn't there?

Bates: I don't remember.

Vandg.: I think President Roosevelt, I think, come to Fairmount once and made a speech up there. I know I intended to go and something happened, I didn't get to go.

Robbins: Did he dedicate a government building or post office or something?

Vandg.: I don't remember.

Bates: Speaking of the post office, tell him about the post office they used to have over here at Sawyers.

Vandg.: Well, they used to have one over here; they did have it at the hotel, and when the hotel burned, they moved it out there to old man Simon's. Old man Alec Walker carried the mail on horseback. He just made 3 trips a week, Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. he carried the mail on a horse, rode a horse.

Bates: Now, they didn't have any post office in those days at Signal Mountain.

Mrs. Van.: No.

Bates: Why didn't they have one at Signal Mountain?

Vandg.: I worked there before Signal Mountain ever had a house built.

Bates: All right, there wasn't any Signal Mountain settlement.

Robbins: When did they start developing Signal Mountain on that side?

Bates: About 1911 or 1912.

Vandg.: I reckon about 1912.

Bates: You were a grown man, long before they did anything over at Signal Mountain.

Vandg.: Oh, yes.

Bates: There was nothing over there but Burnt Cabin Spring, and go down to the point and look at the scenery there, hear the water roar, and some fir down below where the Taft Highway goes down below the fire hall now, a fellow would point out to me and say, "Down there lives "Lying John" Brown"

Vandg.: Yes, I knowed him.

Bates: You did?

Vandg.: Yes. There was Lying John and Lem, 2 brothers. Lem lived on the side of the mountain, too.

Bates: They were really down on the bench of the mountain, weren't they, somewhere along in there?

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: Before they built the Taft Highway, that road that James built, there was an old trail down there, wasn't there?

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: Called it the "Old Government Road."

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: And I think before the Union forces during the Civil War worked out a road up there, I think even before that there was an old road up there. I think the early settlers had a -- I think it was an Indian trail up there.

Vandg: Yes, what they called the Indian trail.

Bates: Right. And I always thought that this road up here, Roberts Gap Road, was an Indian trail, too, wasn't it?

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: And Levi Gap was an Indian trail?

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: And I've heard the Anderson Pike followed an Indian trail a lot of the way.

Vandg.: I guess it did.

Robbins: Did you know any Indian families around Chattanooga when you moved in?

Vandg.: I didn't know any around Chattanooga. I've known Indian families that lived back in the Horseshoe. Old lady Rice claimed she was an Indian, I don't know.

Bates: I always heard she was half Indian, anyway. Coke, Coke was the one that could --- he was pretty good on iron work, wasn't he?

Vandg.: Yes, there was Jim and Coke and Lena.

Bates: Belina.

Vandg.: Two boys and one girl. And she run her old man off. They got into in and she run him off.

Bates: You don't blame her, do you?

Vandg: And Jim went to his daddy after---

Bates: Went down in Alabama some place, wasn't it?

Vandg: Yes, after he found out where he lived, he went too. Yes, I remember old man Rice Oh, he could use more snuff than any man you ever seen; he'd get it all over him.

Robbins: Did he raise tobacco?

Vandg: Yes. But he'd sell his tobacco and buy snuff. He wouldn't chew tobacco; he'd dip snuff.

Bates: Did you ever raise any tobacco?

Vandg: Yes, I've had stalks that high, leaves that wide.

Robbins: About four feet high and about a foot and a half wide?

Vandg.: Yes.

Robbins: Well, that's big tobacco.

Vandg.: This ground will make tobacco. My daddy used to raise all of his tobacco.

Bates: But have you ever seen cotton raised up here?

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: You have?

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: I never have, I've heard it wouldn't mature.

Vandg.: My mother had a patch planted one year, and we picked, oh, I don't know how much; we picked a lot of cotton. We had a half-acre in. Them big old bolls when they'd open up, would be just as white as snow. That's when you went to picking.

Bates: That's something new to me, I didn't --- I always heard ---

Vandg.: Jaggers on out --- you had to mighty careful; you'd just ruin your fingers on them jaggers. Yes, this mountain ground grows good cotton, grows good tobacco, too.

Bates: It grows mighty good potatoes, too, doesn't it, and cabbages, especially radishes, and things like that?

Vandg.: Yes. Well, it will grow pretty near anything, this mountain ground will. I raised as much corn on an acre of ground out here as they raise on any farm in the valley. I put in an acre there and got 58 bushel off of that acre. [tape at 109]

Bates: Of course, the rain comes in mighty handy up here. Anything else you'd like to say about the mountain? Oh, let me ask you this. In the old days, how did the summer people and the mountain people get along?

Vandg.: They got along pretty well, I reckon.

Bates: I never did heard anything else, did you?

Vandg.: Never did.

Bates: Somebody said, "Oh, wasn't there a lot of fussing?" I said, "Why, no, look who he [Mr. Vandergriff] was named for." Old man Art Simons named his youngest daughter Lorena after my sister, Lorena, and there were very friendly relations. I never heard of a fight between any of the city people and the mountain people back in those days.

Vandg.: No, I never did either. I know there was one thing they wouldn't allow, though. Back when I was a boy, they wouldn't allow a Negro up here. They had a sign down there at the creek up on a tree, big sign, "Negro, read and run, if you can't read, you'd better run anyhow." [laughter]

Robbins: Was that at Marshall Creek?

Vandg.: Yes.

Bates: Do you remember that sign?

Vandg.: Yes.

Robbins: Did any of them ever come up here?

Vandg.: Yes, they ran 2 or 3 off from up here, back when I was a boy. There was an old Negro stayed out here. Cunningham had a place out here. He kept a Negro out here all the time. He got kind of smart with the people, and so, one night, they went down there; and they commenced to knock on his door. Boy, he commenced piling chairs and tables and everything against that door, and you never heard a man pray so hard in your life. He'd say, "White folks, just let daylight come, and I'll leave this mountain and never will come back anymore." And he did, too.

Bates: Now, tell them about Boston over at Boston's Branch.

Vandg.: Oh, Boston, they ain't nobody ever bothered him.

Bates: And where did he live?

Vandg.: He lived down there in that big bend, call it the old Boston place.

Bates: Boston Spring there, wasn't it and Boston's Branch?

Vandg.: Yes, Boston Branch.

Bates: What did he do?

Vandg.: He raised a little crop every year. He mostly ate out of the woods; he'd kill a rattlesnake and cook it and eat it. Yes, he'd eat rattlesnakes.

Mrs. Van.: Where Boston's cabin was is on that lake.

Bates: That's where Boston's Lake is now.

Robbins: Where is that? I see, where the new houses are going up, out there near Corral Road, on Sawyers Road.

Bates: There's some new houses --- you've been to Boston Branch, haven't you?

Robbins: I think I've been by there, but they have it fence off.

Bates: He looked after the cattle for the farmers in the valley, didn't he?

Vandg.: Yes, he'd look after their cattle and salt them, and they'd go there and he'd fix them something to eat, feed them.

Bates: Right. Oliver Hartman told me that he saw him one time --- I think one of the valley farmers named Hamilton. Boston was going blind and Hamilton brought him back down in the valley.

Vandg.: Old man Hamill, I know him.

Bates: Oh, it was Hamill?

Vandg.: Hamill, yes. He seen he was going blind, and he took him to town, took him down there, and put him in some kind of home. Yes, they thought the world of that old Negro.

Bates: Well, now, I'll say this. When I was a kid, most of the families in Summertown and on the Brow had colored servants, and I never did hear any rowing about them much, did you? [tape 158]

Vandg.; No. I think they run 1 or 2 off over there about Fairmount, didn't they?

Bates: I've heard about Fairmount, but I never did hear it in Summertown.

Vandg.: I never did either.

Bates: Which is another sign that the relations between the mountain people and the summer people were very good. Because the mountain people didn't like the colored people. But, they knew these were just servants over there and just stayed up there as long as the white people did. If one of them had started living up there, that would have been different.

Vandg.: I think so. Yes, I used to do lots of work in Summertown, clean yards, build fences.

Bates: How much did you get a day, usually?

Vandg.: Dollar a day.

Robbins: Did you ever know my grandmother, Mrs. Joe V. Williams?

Vandg.: Yes.

Robbins: Did you work on her place?

Vandg.: Yes.

Robbins: That's where I'm living right now.

Bates: He's one of Judge Williams' grandsons.

Vandg.: Is he?

Bates: Right. Now, you think more of him now, don't you?

Mrs. Van.: Yes. [laughter]

Vandg.: Yes, I took the judge over there ---started over there with a load of lumber, and the law stopped me. I didn't have no tags on my truck. He said, "What are you doing on this truck out on a public road without any tags on it?" I said, "I didn't have any." I said, "This man wanted his lumber, and he told me he was behind me, bring it on, pay no attention to the tags." He said, "We'll jus go up there to Mr. Williams with you." And he followed the truck right on over there. He said, "Yes, I told him to bring it, tags or no tags," and said, "you let this man along."

Bates: What were you bringing?

Vandg.: Taking him a load of lumber.

Robbins: Oh, to build the house?

Vandg.: Yes.

Robbins: The house that's there now?

Vandg.: Yes, I guess I sawed the lumber that's in that house.

Robbins: You did? That's a nice house.

Bates: About when was that would you say?

Vandg.: Oh, I couldn't remember. But I had a sawmill for 15 years, bought a sawmill, and I sold lumber all over Summertown, Fairmount, and cut lots of ties for the Southern Wood Preserving Company.

Bates: How much did you get for your cross ties in those days? Did you saw them or hew them?

Vandg.: Sawed them. Paid me $1.25 for them delivered. And now it's $3.00.

Bates: Could you carry one of them?

Vandg.: Oh, yes.

Bates: About how much do those ties weigh, would you say, when they're green that way?

Vandg.: Well, they'd weight all the way from 125 to 175 pounds. And I'd carry them on my shoulder and throw them up on the truck many a time.

Bates: What's the most you ever weighed?

Vandg.: 151

Mrs. Van.: Guess what he weighs now. He weighs 115.

Bates: There's some new houses --- you've been to Boston Branch, haven't you?

Robbins: I think I've been by there, but they have it fence off.

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Vandg.: 151

Mrs. Van.: Guess what he weighs now. He weighs 115.

Bates: You've got Jim beat one pound. Have you ever heard anybody make dirty cracks about Old Jim?

Vandg.: No.

Robbins: Did you help build the house all the way to the top? Or did you bring the lumber over and somebody else built it?

Vandg.: Somebody else. I think Will McCoy built it, didn't he?

Robbins: I'm not sure. They built the house one time. One of them burned down, and they built it back again. My mother was born in the house that's there now. She was born on the homeplace, and the house was rebuilt after she was born. I guess, maybe, about 1910 or 1915, it was built back. I believe it was built originally long before that.

Bates: There was a house there in the 90s, I know.

Robbins: yes. And I'm not sure who owned that place before, do you know?

Bates: My uncle, Creed Bates, owned it for awhile.

Robbins: Oh, he did?

Bates: But not for long. He owned then also up there where ----

Vandg.: That was right up on top of the hill from the Rank place.

Robbins: It's right above the spring.

Vandg.: Yes.

Robbins: The spring is still there and has good water. My brother got sick up in New York City, and when he came home to visit, I got him a gallon of that water, carried it downtown for him to drink.

Bates: Well, we spoke about the Rank place, Mr. Rank, I believe his name was Amos, wasn't it, Amos Rank? He'd take a wagon load of gallon jugs of that Mabbit Springs water regularly downtown and sell it. Some man over at Fairmount did the same thing, and they called him "Waterman" Smith.

Vandg.: Elisha Smith used to haul it.

Bates: Right. Waterman Smith, and he had this son, they called Beepie George, right?

Vandg.: Right.

Robbins: Where did he live?

Bates: Right at the corner of what they call now Fairmount Road and --- What did they call that? It used to be Smith's Lane.

Vandg.: Yes, but they've changed the name of it now. [Some of the conversation omitted.]

Robbins: Where do people have their horses shod around here?

Vandg.: They had them there at North Chattanooga. Old Preacher Coffelt had a shop there in North Chattanooga.

Bates: Lawrence Miles had a shop up here, too.

Vandg.: Yes, he done some shoeing over here at Signal Mountain. And then there was another man that had a shop there in North Chattanooga. What was his name?

Bates: Coffelt is the only one I remember. But I remember Lawrence Miles had one over there.

Vandg.: I took a mule there to be shod, and the mule was awful bad to kick. He went to pick up his hind foot, and the mule kicked him. He commenced beating it in the side with a hammer. I said, "Hold on. You can't do that." He said, "Well, I don't have to shoe this old mule." I said, "No, you don't have to shoe him." And I took him up to the other blacksmith up above there, but I forget what his name was. He didn't do a thing in the world but just throw a rope down on the ground and took that mule up and throwed him down in his side and tied him and put the shoes on him and untied him and let him get up. He said, "that's the only way to do a kicking mule."

Bates: Didn't you ever have a blacksmith over here on Sawyers?

Vandg.: Not that I know of.

Bates: I remember Lawrence Miles was over there, and I think for a while there was one over in Fairmount.

[Bates and Robbins leave the Vandergriffs and have conversation in the car as they tour different sites on the mountain. They stopped at various points. Little historical data is given.]

Robbins: You say right here in this dip, there was what?

Bates: Where the Corral Spring was. Had the corral around the back. And Oscar Walker, who has since passed away, [his] great-grandmother lived here.

Robbins: This is about a half a mile east of Summerfield Vandergriff's house on---

Bates: Yes, between a quarter and half, on Sawyers Road.

Robbins: And then Sawyers School is near here, isn't it?

Bates: Yes, Sawyers School. I think that's of interest. I think there's been a schoolhouse here on approximately the same site the longest of any site in Hamilton County, including the city of Chattanooga. I don't remember the old schoolhouse. It was log, I don't remember it.

Robbins: The old schoolhouse I can remember was right in the middle of this area.

Bates: Right in there, yes.

Robbins: About 300 feet west of the original.

Bates: Yes, but that wasn't the original; the original was log and that was before our day. All right, go right down here. All right. I'm not going in there with you first; I won't get tripped. Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa. Just go round through there about a 100 feet and wander around, and you'll find an old basement.

Robbins: Let's see if I can park right up here.

Bates: Yes, you can turn around and come out the other way.

Robbins: Why don't I see that in the daytime, because I can't see much at night.

Bates: All right.

Robbins: I'll bring Mickey back here, and we'll go over there.

Bates: All right, you won't have any trouble finding it.

Robbins: It's right about ---about 400 or 500 feet south of the new school.

Bates: It's right along about in front of this.

Robbins: Oh, I see, due south of the school. I remember John Kruesi came out here a few times when they were doing some things at the school. He helped get them power out here to the school.

Bates: I don't remember. I know Bob Long came out a time or so.

Robbins: They must have had some help from the people of the community to run the school. This is developing out here a lot.

Bates: Oh yes. That's one reason I'm sorry I didn't ask him [Vandergriff] about how many people lived out here in the early days, who the families were. Do you want to stop and ask him, or do you want to come back some other time and do it?

Robbins: We could stop ---let's see, do you think he's started going to bed?

[They stop at Mr. Vandergriff's house. Tape has dogs barking. Conversation starts with the next line.]

Vandg.: Well, there was a family of Germans lived up here. I was raised up with them. Their name was Hetzel.

Robbins: Hetzler?

Vandg.: Hetzel, H-E-T-Z-E-L. They had 3 girls and 2 boys.

Robbins: Creed mentioned that we want to ask you who the families were up here originally.

Vandg.: Yes, Hetzels and the Hix, did I name them?

Robbins: I don't think so.

Vandg.: Hetzels and the Hix and the Scotts [and the] Millwoods.

Robbins; Were the McCoys up here a long time ago? Also, Creed said to ask you about the Bent Rock.

Vandg.: Dent Rock.

Robbins: Yes.

Vandg.: Well, it's right back over just a little ways, about a half a mile. Old man Dent had been over to Hix for a house raising. Back then, they'd work, you know, and the neighbors all around would go and help build a house and do whatever needed doing. He started back home and just sit down there by a big tree and took his hat off, stood his gun by his side, and put his hat over the gun barrel to keep it from getting wet down inside. And they found him sitting there dead the next morning.

Robbins: They don't know what happened to him, then?

Vandg.: No, they don't, they thought he froze; they thought he'd just give out and sit down there and froze to death. It was an awful cold, wet weather that winter. One of my cousins found him. When he found him, he hollered to the crowd: "Here he is, dead as hell."

Robbins: So that's where the Dent Rock name came from.

Mrs. Van.: Yes, that's where it got its name.

Vandg.: That's what they call it; they call it the Dent Rock because he died right there by that rock.

Robbins: What year was that?

Vandg.: I don't remember.

Mrs. Van.: Back before we married.

Vandg.: Oh, yes, I was just a small boy. I remember going to his funeral; he was buried right here at the Millwood Cemetery. I reckon he was the second son that was buried there. Old man Isaac Millwood's child was buried first.

Mrs. Van.: He was cutting a tree, wasn't he? Isaac Millwood was cutting a tree down?

Vandg.: No, that was Hampton. Hampton was cutting a tree, and it fell and caught him some way and killed him.

Robbins: Was that one of the early forefathers of Dr. Hampton?

Vandg.: Yes.

Robbins: The family that lives over on the Brow Road. That's interesting; I just wanted to get that before we get back because we thought it would be a good thing to ask you about.

[Tape stops here at 385 with no further conversation among any of the participants.]