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William T. Arnold

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PC: The following interview is with Mr. Bill Arnold, a native West Virginian who has lived most of his 74 years around Clay County. I'm Patty Clark, his great, great niece.

WTA: Is that on now?

PC: Uh, huh.

WTA: Well I could start by tellin' you when I started to work in the mines.

PC: Well that would be interesting.

WTA: First work I done in the mines was 1911. I was eleven years old. I got 50 cents a shift for working 13 hours at night, dippin' water.

PC: Oh my goodness. I can't imagine that.

WTA: The next, uh, I got to school when they had school in the summer and worked, er, in the winter, uh, worked in the summer. And when I was 13, I was haulin' coal from six men in old Cow Hollor mine at Venetta, West Virginia gettin' one dollar a day and my board. Uh, uh, then after that played out, I went to work in another mine, same company, uh, tendin' to a trap door and that was a dollar a day. And quit that then and started loadin' coal and coal was about 30 inches high at 25 cents a ton.

PC: How old were you then?

WTA: I was between 13 and 14. Then we moved from that place to Lookout on Feenish Creek, uh, I went to work there, uh, the first day of May 1915. And on the 15th day of July I got caught under a slate fall. I had a skull fracture, a broke back and two broke legs.

PC: At 14 years old?

WTA: Fifteen.

PC: Fifteen.

WTA: I was outside then for over a year 'fore I could, my back would stand for me to stoop to work. For a year after I was hurt, when I stooped over to work at anything, when I straightened up it just looked like a fog would come into my face till I couldn't see through it, uh, I'd just have to rair back and twist around until that thing left my back. Uh, then I'd be allright until I stooped over and raised up again. Well that finally got better, and I worked at little jobs like tendin' to a mule stable and then run a mail route a year. Then I left out of there, un, went to Nallen, uh, worked over there about six to eight months at that big band mill at Nallen. I got, I made two dollars and a half a day there. That was big money that, a fourteen.

PC: Big money then, ha, ha.

WTA: That was for ten hours work, twenty five cents an hour. And, uh, all my work all the way up through till they stopped me from workin' back around '62, they was low wages. All this big wage stuff has come, I's born too soon I reckon.

PC: (Laughs) tell me something about your home, as far back as you can remember. How many children were there?

WTA: Well bout as far back as I can remember when we're all at home, there was six in the family besides my father and mother. They lived in a little two room log cabin back there in what they called the Galon Mountain. And, uh, moved in it in times of a strike, 1902 strike. So we lived in that cabin, I's two years old when they moved in it, but uh, I don't no how long we lived in it, but I can remember livin' in that cabin. And the cabin is still there. I'd like to go out there someday with you and show ya.

PC: I'd like to see that.

WTA: They've moved it across the road from where it was when we lived in it, but they rebuilt it's still there.

PC: I'll bet that's something.

WTA: And I was out there, I suppose must, uh, been thirty five, forty years after we lived there and stopped down to look at that little old cabin and this fellow come along. I knowed after I'd talked to him a little bit but we didn't know each other then. And I said that old cabin certainly stood the weather good. He said, "Yes," he said, "them glass in that cabin was put in there by the old man Arnold when he lived there," he said, "the glass was mostly all good yet."

PC: That was your dad?

WTA: Yes, well. . .

PC: How about that.

WTA: He said that glass had been in it all that time.

PC: Uh, huh. Did you go to school when you lived in that cabin or were you too far away from a school?

WTA: No, no I's didn't go to school when I lived there. Wasn't quite old enough.

PC: Oh.

WTA: At a, we lived in that cabin my dad raised hogs and we had a right smart acreage there that we farmed.

PC: All you kids worked on the farm?

WTA: Yeah, all that was big enough 'cept me. I didn't work, I . . .

PC: You were too little?

WTA: Yeah, I went though and got in the way of course.

PC: (Laughs).

WTA: Uh, I can remember when, uh, everybody had the woods full'a hogs. Just turned them out and let them nibble on the mass. They'd go out when one of the sows'd have a bunch of pigs, they'd go out, uh, catch 'em up

and mark everyone of 'em, put their mark on 'em so they'd know 'em. Had marks that was registered in the county court. They's a certain way that they cut marks in their ears, for to mark them. Then they'd casterate all the male pigs when they's little and provided they hadn't lost everything, well they had a big hog presently. Then about when hog killen' time would come they had some big dogs, we had a big Masters dog. All the neighbors had big dogs. And they'd get together and take the big dogs and they'd go out to catch these hogs, show the dogs which ones they wanted, get wild you know runnin' in the woods. And they catch these hogs they'd want to butcher, take 'em in and put 'em in the pen and feed 'um on corn about two weeks and butcher them. Uh, claimed that, uh, feed 'em corn a couple, uh, weeks made the meat more solid. And we didn't want for anything to eat them days. We always had plenty to eat. Uh, uh, my mother's took me and my sister, the one next to older than me, when we was small and walked four or five miles and picked blackberries and carry 'em in. And she would get more blackberries than we'd use and the next year she'd throw 'em out and wash the jars and go and pick fresh ones. And all such junk as that. And we got lots of wild meat out of the woods. My oldest brother killed five coons up in one tree when we was livin' in that cabin one time.

PC: What kind of transportation did you have back then?

WTA: Nothing but horses.

PC: You rode into town on your horses?

WTA: Some had horses, some had mules, and some had oxen.

PC: How often would you go into town to pick up flour and other supplies?

WTA: Oh generally about twice a month.

PC: Was that a big day, a big event all the kids were, uh . . .

WTA: Uh we didn't have anything to spend only just for

groceries. Kind of managed generally to get a little five or ten cent bag of candy.

PC: (Laughs).

WTA: But you'd get more candy for a nickel back then than you'd get for four dollars now.

PC: Oh I can imagine.

WTA: Uh, I, uh, used to, after my dad died we'd, they had these little mountain places with big gardens maybe more than an acre or more to them, belonged to the, some of them belonged to the coal companies. We'd rent one of them and move out on the mountain in spring. That was long after we left the cabin. My dad died a short time after we left it. Then we moved down where the mines was down in New River Canyon. I think the first place we moved to when we moved off the mountain was Gaymont. Then we lived at Gaymont, we lived at Old Sunnyside, them old forgotton people that used to live there, and uh, Newland that was on up the river further. We lived at Fayette Station, lived there two or three times. Lived over at old Kaymore, over on the otherside of the river. Uh, when, uh, spring time would come we'd rent one of them little places out on the mountain that had a little garden to it. There wasn't any gardens down in the Canyon there. And we'd move out there and raise alot of stuff and can it up. Then when winter'd come well most places had apples and fruit on it. We'd get that too.

PC: Just had a cabin?

WTA: Uh, some of them were four room houses.

PC: Oh.

WTA: We'd move out there and raise what we could and gather all the berries, and everything we could and can it up. Of course we burnt wood out there, you couldn't get coal out there, and when winter set in we'd rent a house back down in the Canyon and move everything down there where we could get coal through the winter. Then live through

the winter and next spring we would be back on the mountain somewhere again.

PC: How old were you when you got married? You didn't get married too early, did you?

WTA: Thirty three.

PC: And how old was Susie?

WTA: Well, uh, she was, uh, I think about six years older. That would, uh, made six, uh, five, uh, thirty nine.

PC: You said she had real long hair. I guess most of the women wore their hair long.

WTA: Oh, I'll tell you where you can see 'er hair. If it doesn't matter I'll get it and I'll show it to you. She had a little round basket with a lid. And uh, when she had her hair cut she put it all in that basket and kept it.

PC: How long was her hair?

WTA: Her hair hung down below her knees to the calf of her legs. First time I ever seen her hair it was down about there.

PC: That's what attracted you to her, the first time you saw her wasn't it?

WTA: That, yeah, purty woman inside that hair too, ha. She wasn't no slouch when it come to looks anyway. Of course you didn't see her till she was old and you probably wasn't big enough to notice much anyhow. She used to be a mighty attractive woman.

PC: Did she put her hair up in a bun and use the comb?

WTA: Now let's see, I've a picture of her in here, 'er picture. Yeah she always put her hair up. I don't know whether she had it up here, yes she's got her hair up in this picture.

PC: Oh yes, I've seen that picture.

WTA: I let that picture fall in the river when we was movin' across the river from Gauley Mountain. When we were movin' on our place on Kirkville Mountain in Nicholas County. We had, uh, to ferry our stuff across the river in small boats, everything except our organ and a big range stove and they took them on a railroad across a railroad bridge and got them across. And while we was ferryin' that stuff across in them two small boats, had this picture layin' on a bunch of that stuff and one of them old boys rocked the boat and that picture slid off and went into the river and went under the water and I had to dive in there and get it. And they got some water on it and they left spots.

PC: Oh, that's too bad.

WTA: And, uh, she's got a big spot on her face there where the water messed up the picture.

PC: These chairs, and I noticed you had some out on the porch that have the wicker type seats. Did you make those?

WTA: Well I made the seat in that big chair out a hickory bark and the other chair I wove it in there out of, uh, nylon fabric stuff. Brought it up here and I had to unravel and, uh, had it all over the place here. I took someof that and did the back in it.

PC: How did you do the chair that is made from the bark? Is it braided or . . .

WTA: Yeah, it's wove together. I done that with my hands.

PC: How did you strip the bark from the tree?

WTA: Cut, uh, I cut pieces in about six foot lengths, you see and, and I just split the piece of timber four ways. Then you can just roll the bark right off of it, simple as that.

PC: I'm changing the subject here alot but I know women

didn't go to the hospitals to have their babies when you were young.

WTA: No, they had, uh, had their neighborhood. There's an old woman in that neighborhood, some of them called her a granny woman, some called her a midwife and, and they generally took care of things like that.

PC: Did you ever watch a birth?

WTA: Nothing only in, real except livestock. I've took care of alot of livestock myself. Calves, colts, pigs, and the like. Whenever they couldn't birth I went to work and took 'em. Saved 'em too, I tell you it's an awful tough job.

PC: I can imagine.

WTA: But I always figured if the hog was worth weighin' it was worth takin' care of. That girl that was up here the other day and was talking about them pigs I had out there. Said one day they was pigs and the next day they was big hogs.

PC: (Laughs) you fatten them up, don't you?

WTA: I've always been lucky at things like that. The, I can grow 'em just as big as you want him growed, uh, it don't take too long.

PC: Do you butcher the hog yourself?

WTA: I killed two out here one time. I suppose you seen 'em but maybe you eat some of them too, for I give 'em all some meat. One of 'em was so big we could, we got it's head hung in, uh, one of these big steel drums trying to scald it. We couldn't get the hog in it. We cooked it's nose trying to dip it in that boiling water there to scald it.

PC: Now why do you scald it?

WTA: Take the hair off.

PC: Oh.

WTA: And that hog was only eleven months old.

PC: How much would you say they weighed?

WTA: We figured that one weighed better'n five hundred pounds. We didn't weigh it.

PC: Now when you were little and you were butchering hogs how did you keep that meat without refrigeration?

WTA: Well winters was colder back then than they are now. And often times back up where we used to live when we lived up the river when winter come and it come a freeze uh, the ground would stay froze just about all winter. And I can remember when we used to kill pork and beef, of course we always salted our pork down, you know, it will keep that way. And the beef we'd just hang it up in quarters in the smokehouse. We didn't smoke it. We smoked the hog meat all the time. Beef we just hang it up in the quarters with the bone in it and everything, in the smokehouse and hang it that way with the part that had the bone in it for hanging. All this juice from around that bone before it gets froze would work out, would drip out. And then they would freeze and as long as you keep it froze it is allright. And when you wanted a mess of beef you just went out there with a saw and sawed a piece of it off. It would be froze so hard you couldn't cut it with a knife. And you just saw a piece of it off.

PC: What about chickens, did you just kill those as you needed then?

WTA: Yeah, just kept them all time for meat and eggs. And another thing back them days people didn't know how to get hens to lay too. They had a big flock of chickens and just about get enough eggs for their own use. But, uh, anymore you don't have to have so many. You can buy things to feed them. Actually crowd them to make them lay everyday as long as they live. Do you want some chickens?

PC: No.

WTA: I got a bunch of good hens a setten'.

PC: No I don't think I would like to raise them, they are too much trouble.

WTA: Well they are worth it, if you like to fool with them. I'm going to buy some more, but I'm going to buy them, uh, chickens I think originated in Japan. Can't remember the name of them now. But I seen a catalogue last year that had 'um in it. And they lay colored eggs, like Easter eggs.

PC: Well!

WTA: Green, bright green, dark green, and red ones, real dark or pale red, pink, color you can think of they lay 'em. But each one lays his own color. And they are the purtiest eggs you ever seen. And the chickens they favor a pheasant more 'an they do our kind of chickens. And they claim that them eggs is completely closteral free, that if anybody has to be careful 'bout eating egg yoke, can eat all them eggs he wants and won't effect them. That's the kind I need, cause I ain't allowed to eat egg yokes anymore.

WTA: (Dog barks) that's my baby.

PC: She gets attention when we come up here.

WTA: Oh yes, she likes me. That mail route business I had that time. Patty, I lost out on that. That was the winter of 1918, they claimed it was the coldest winter that had been recorded since the time of the Civil War. New River froze over and nobody is old enough on New River to ever remember of it freezen over before that or since, I don't think. But it froze over solid. And, uh, there at Nutall where I carried mail this fellow went out on the ice there and drilled a hole in the center where the ice was probably thinner than anywhere else and it was fifty two inches thick.

PC: In the middle?

WTA: Uh, huh.

PC: Uh, we never see anything like that now.

WTA: I had that old mail route there and thirteen hundred and some dollars a year, uh, for carryin' that mail. And it was twelve and a half miles one way so I had to make twenty five miles a day, with a mule team. And when I took the route, the mail could be carried on a horse. Well the war started and these boys a goin' to Camp Lee, Virginia from around up in there into the army they raised the parcel post weight from forty pounds and allowed them to send seventy pounds. And everybody that had friends in the service was a sendin' them packages and they was a sendin' the limit, seventy pounds! Then I had a, one of them oil field rigs, a heavy sorta buggy, or some people might call them a buckboard, I used with two big mules. And it got where it wouldn't carry the load and I had to put a road wagon on. Sometimes when I'd leave Devide headin' for Nutall wouldn't have so awful much on there, but by the time I got to Nutall that thing would be stacked up with mail sachs, till it looked like a covered wagon.

PC: Huh.

WTA: And, uh, the mail was heavy both ways. And I was buyin' cracked corn for a dollar and I believe a dollar and eighty five cents a hundred when I took the route. And I was gettin' hay for two dollars a bale but the bales were big them days, they weighed around two hundred pounds. And, uh, they raised cracked corn to four dollars a sack and hay doubled and the first thing I knowed it was takin' all I made to feed the mules. And I had to get 'shet' of it, I couldn't afford that.

PC: That was in 1918, during World War I?

WTA: Durin' World War I.

PC: You weren't able to fight in the war. Was this after your back had been broken?

WTA: I went and tried to enlist when I was eighteen, see I didn't come eighteen till in June 1918.

PC: Oh.

WTA: And I got this mail route the fall before that. When I got shut of thismail route I tried to enlist in the army and they turned me down on the account of, one of them legs I'd had broke a piece, uh, bone workin' out of it. And I couldn't get past the examination. They was takin' them from eighteen to forty five at that time. That was in the fall of 1918. A short time after that then the war ended.

PC: How much was a postage stamp then?

WTA: Two cents for a letter, one cent for a postcard.

PC: Gone are those days.

WTA: Well it's like everything else, is raised about, I don't know, I guess postage on a letter is about five times as much as then.

PC: It's ten cents now.

WTA: Yeah. Well I went out and was lookin' at the stream and they was places where the water like it run through a shoot real fast, and I could see them trout in that swift water. What they called brook trout. They are red speckled. Oh, they grow six inches long. And I had an old stopper out of an old stone whiskey jug for a float and a line about twenty feet long. And I slid that stopper down the line about six inches of where the hook was and broke me off a old dead shoemake bush that was there, aimed to break it off and it come out by root. Had a big root wad as big as my two fists on it before I took it out. Couldn't break it off. I tied my line on that so I could flip it away up above me upstream. And I put a bait on that and throwed that upstream as far as I could. By the time it would float past me in that swift water one of them trout'd have it. And, and I took a piece of hay wire with me for to string my fish on. Made ma a big ring to hook 'em and tied a

string to it. I kept catching them things out a there and puttin' them on there and directly I had it full. I heard my brother down below me, and he was fishin' in a place where the water was still, I could hear his real a whizzin' ever once in a while and I thoughthe was a beatin' me. And I drug up my ring full of fish and counted them. I had twenty two, and all of 'em trout. Went down to see how he was gettin' along. He had six. He didn't have 'nary trout. (Laughs) he had some of these old horny heads and sun fish. Said, how are you gettin' along? Said, "I got a half a dozen. I's carryin' mine behind me." And I said I did too. He said, "Them ain't like mine. " I said no, yours is horny heads and sun fish and mine's trout. We took them back to the bordin' house. I asked the woman that was workin' there if she wanted to cook 'em. She said yes, she wanted to cook 'em. And I said well I'll take 'em down to the river and clean 'em. She said, "You won't do no such thing, just lay 'em down there and I'll clean 'em." And she got them things cleaned, she hollered for me to come in there. I went into the kitchen. She had a great big pan, you know, like you bake light bread in. She had them fish all cleaned and split open on their backs in that pan. Said, "I want to show you how to fix trout so they won't be no bones in them when you cook 'em." Said, that I'd like to see. She just picked up a gallon jug of vinegar and she poured vinegar in them trout. She said, "I'll let 'em soak in that vinegar a little while and then I'll shake all that vinegar off and rince 'em." "Then I'll cook 'em and when you eat 'em they'll be no bones." And if they ever had a bone in them when we's eatin' um you couldn't tell it. And I think that was the best mess of fish I ever eat in my life.

PC: Do you do that now, take the bones out?

WTA: If I catch any little fish I do. You don't take 'em out, the vinegar dissolves them. They just turn to dough in there and cook up with the fish.

PC: Oh.

WTA: You eat the bone and don't even know it. If you part the meat and search around to find the bone you will find a little string of soft dough where the bone used to be. But is is good, just as good as the rest of the fish.

PC: I never heard of that.

WTA: I'll bet there's lots of people that loves fish that don't even bake them in vinegar and dissolve the bone. You find a bone in one once in a while, I might not, uh, used enough vinegar.

PC: What kind of entertainment did you have when you were little?

WTA: Square dances.

PC: Did you have neighbors right up against you or were they miles away?

WTA: Oh, no, no, no, no sometimes within hollor'in distance.

PC: So you would have to travel somewhere to have your dances?

WTA: Yeah, somebody would have a dance at their house, you know, and the whole neighborhood would gang up. This old Mrs. Cameron, uh, I's tellin' you about she used to, they had a big family, had twenty kids.

PC: Oh my goodness.

WTA: And she use ta cook up alot a chicken, make ice cream, I've, I've cranked that old freezer there makin' ice cream till I'd be pert near dead. But it was worth it. She'd feed me cake and ice cream and fried chicken and one night the fiddler didn't come. And she's having this square dance to get a gang there, you know, and these fellows were dancing with the girls would have to treat their pardners, you know, every set. And, and as the set would say, "Pomenade to the ice cream stand," and uh, they would take their girls then and they would buy ice cream, fried chicken and cake, and pie and stuff. And the old woman was as excellent cook, you know, best

in the world. Great big woman, she would weigh about, better'n two hundred pounds, I guess, an the workingest old woman you ever seen.

PC: You bought the refreshments, huh?

WTA: And, uh, one night went down there they was having a dance and I figured they was wantin' me to help 'em crank their ice cream than you buy now. Uh, had fresh eggs in it and fresh eggs in it and fresh milk from the cows and everything was fresh. Whole, there's no artificial stuff about it. So, uh, my two sisters they would go and dance. And the next brother older'n me the one that was killed, he always went he's a little runt but he is full of life as he could be. And, uh, went down there one night and danced and the fiddler didn't come. And somebody went out somewhere and brought a fiddle and brought it in and put it in my hands, said, "You're playin' for the dance tonight." And I said, I can't play for that dance. "Aw, you can do the best you can." And one of Pauline's uncles, Oscar Neal, he played the guitar. And me and him played for the dance. And I'm tellin' you before a set would be over I'd be so tired I felt like fallin' on my face. Soon as the set would be over, the old Lady Cameron would bring me in something to eat, a dish of cream, or something you know. Time we got ready to get on the floor again I's ready too. I was ten years old, playin' for 'em.

PC: Ten years old, that was a big treat though to get to be there with all the grown ups, I'll bet.

WTA: Oh yes.

PC: And you have been playing the fiddle ver since?

WTA: Yeah, I's up through there I reckon two years ago, when me and Pauline was up through there. Place where the old Camerons'home was they's no house at all there now. Don't look like they's every been a house there. And they didn't go out. If they would, uh, went we, we could'a went half a mile out of our way and seen that little log cabin. I's talkin' about but I never thought about it when I come through there. And we could of just

went through there and looked at that. Uh, uh, Old man Neal, Pauline's Grandpa, he always had a little store, and back them days they'd when you got a bottle of pop it was in a big thick glass bottle with a big stubby thick neck on it. And they was a wire hook come up out a that thing and hooked over like this that locked down in the bottle and it had a rubber gasket on the end of it that sealed this pop on the underside of the neck. Pulled up like that to seal it, you see. And when you opened the bottle you hit this thing and knocked it down in there to open it. And I think that's where the name pop come from. And when you busted that thing open it popped. It'd go pfoof? And, uh, one of, uh, the neighbors' boys up there at Etman got a hold of some of them old pop bottles. . .

PC: They'd be worth something now.

WTA: I imagine they would. I don't know, uh, but I remember the kind they was, well enough.

PC: How much was a bottle of pop then?

WTA: Nickel. This old man Neal had a couple of monkeys there. And, uh, back them days the woods was full of chestnuts. People would go out chestnut huntin' when the chestnuts would bust open, you know. They'd fall out of the hulls and, uh, I've seen it where you could, uh, you could just rake 'em up with your hands on the ground, you know, between the old burrs and, uh, they would go out and gather great loads of chestnuts. Build a big fire out doors and they would be a whole gang, all the chestnut hunters, you know, would gang up there with the chestnut and they'd be roastin' these chestnuts in the hot ashes, you know, and rake 'em out and let 'em cool a little bit, and roasted chestnuts eats perty good you know. And, uh, these monkeys was crasy bout these chestnuts. And, uh, whatever they seen a person do, they'd try to do it too. Boy some'a these fellows, you know, when they was a rakin' these chestnuts out, get 'em a stick and rake 'em out a the hot ashes after they was roasted. These monkeys was standing around there watchin' seein' what was going on. One of 'em decided he'd rake him out some. He burnt

PC: I don't know, have no idea.

WTA: Six loaves.

PC: Oh no!

WTA: And, uh, I'd generally bum her out'a extra dime to get'a loaf of that, uh, rye bread, was twisted up at the ends, great long thing. I liked that, I didn't want nothing else to eat if I had that, only that. And, uh, when they wrapped that bread up for you, when you got it in the store they didn't have paper bags for everything. And the wrapping paper came in old rotten brown paper, in sheets about so big square. And to wrap up a quarters worth of that bread it took two of them sheets put together to reach around it.

PC: How long was a loaf of bread?

WTA: Uh, they were almost as big as they are now, I think, well as I remember. Maybe not quite as long.

PC: They weren't sliced then?

WTA: No they wasn't sliced but it was hot yet. When it come up fresh on that train it would still be warm, come right from the bakery in Montgomery.

PC: Was there much difference in the taste from homemade bread?

WTA: As much difference in the taste of it, uh, and light bread we get now, uh, as there is between day and night. It's fresher, you know, just right fresh from the oven. This old bread you get now they say, uh, it come right from the bakery today and so on and they'll got out on the shelves and take the old bread up you see, take it on back and they take that someplace else, put it in there and take, take this to another'n. They ain't takin' that on back. Some places where bread has been on the shelves two or three days they will sell it alot cheaper. And I guess that's places where they don't pick it up and pretend to take it back.

PC: Did your mother bake lots of bread?

WTA: She used to bake light bread back before they went to sellin' it in the stores. Uh, people that was, uh, shantying up the New River Canyon and she'd bake their bread for 'em and they'd, they'd buy flour and stuff to make it and bring it there and she'd make the bread. And they paid her for makin' the bread.

PC: Did you eat cornbread and biscuits alot?

WTA: Oh yeah, yeah, we's crazy about her cornbread and biscuits.

PC: How much was pinto beans then?

WTA: I can't remember what they was then but since then I've bought as high as seven pounds for a quarter. And now they're seventy five cents a pound.

PC: Yes, they're expensive.

WTA: So is navy beans. I bought fifty cents worth of navy beans in a Kroger store in Charleston back in the '30's and the store manager just took one of them there flour sacks that held twenty four pounds of flour and filled it plumb full, for fifty cents. That was back when Krogers' clerks waited on you, you didn't weigh them yourself. Then the meat back then it was, I guess it was dirty. Better'n it is now, was cured better. They got some way of curin' it now. I think they just cure it in a day or two, unless it might be some kind of dope they pour on it. It ain't what it used to be.

PCL Oh, I wanted to ask you about the clothing you had when you were small, did your mother make everything?

WTA: Just about.

PC: Did she weave her own cloth?

WTA: She weaved some but, uh, not much after I was big enough to know much about it.

PC: Did she have a spinning wheel?

WTA: Well everybody used to have a spinning wheel and a thing

they called a carder, to put wool on to make yarn out of, make their own yarn with the spinning wheel. And, uh, then they'd, uh, weave it into cloth, some kind of loom to use for that.

PC: Did your mother have one?

WTA: I think so.

PC: You probably made your own butter.

WTA: Well yeah, heck, yeah, we made our own butter.

PC: Have the little wooden molds?

WTA: Yeah, back them days we had, uh, round molds, molds was round and stamped a flower on a pound of butter.

PC: Uh, how did you make butter?

WTA: How did you make it? Well you save your cream back and whenever it gets thick put it in a churn and we had the old dasher church. Just set there dashin' that and some people could church it in just a few minutes and there was some people that couldn't. But there was a slight to the way you used that dash, you see, I think the upward jerk maybe had something to do with it. Anyhow they was some people that could churn in just a few minutes and they was other people who could churn a half a day and wouldn't produce as good a job. And they'd churn this stuff and the butter would all rise to the top and the milk out of this cream would be underneath. That would be good rich buttermilk. And, uh, stir this around in there after they got the butter to rise and it would gather in big globs around the stick on the dash. And, uh, they'd pull the dash out of there then with great big globs of butter hangin' on it, and rake that off in a dish and take, uh, one of these big spoons that has got holes in it and dip this butter right off the milk, and put it in the dish. Ordinarily it was a big bowl you used for that. They'd press that down in there with a spoon and this water would come up out of it and then they would tilt it up and pour

the water off, and work it some more and get some more water and pour it off and they'd get as much of the milk worked out that same way as they could and when they would put cold water on it and work it again and wash it. Got all the stain out of it then it was pure butter. After that then they salted it to suit their taste and that was it.

PC: In the summer how did you keep your milk and butter cold?

WTA: Well most people had a spring and most of them had a little house built over the spring, known as a spring house, and they'd set their milk and butter and stuff in this spring house, stay cool.

PC: Those that didn't have spring houses could they just put them in containers and set them down into the water?

WTA: Yeah, uh . . .

PC: Did they do that?

WTA: Well, uh, they generally used the spring water too you see for the house and, uh, they probably wouldn't put it in there where that, uh, any milk would get out of there to mess their spring up. Some of them had cellers dug in the hillsides where it was cool and they'd cool their stuff in these cellers.

PC: And you could store your fruit and potatoes about all year that way, couldn't you?

WTA: Yeah, you could put about anything in there and keep it from freezin'. This is an ideal place to make one in the hillside there. And that spring down there should have, uh, little concrete house built over it and fixed up nice for you to take the butter out there and let the spring cool it and see if it ain't a little different.

PC: Do you have any old churns?

WTA: I've got an old churn in there that belonged to my wife's mother.

PC: How old would it be?

WTA: Oh it would be older than my wife was. It would be way up in the seventy's now. Seventy five when she died. Uh, she would be eighty now. Well that churns older'n her. It's a three gallon churn. And her mother was one of them fuden McCoys. From over, over'n in that section around Tug River, in there some where. She used to take a mountain rifle and go to shootin' matches and win turkeys and chickens right along with the men.

PC: That was Susie's mother?

WTA: Uh, huh. Everybody called her old Aunt Belle.

PC: And she lived in the times of the Hatfields and McCoys?

WTA: You go up through, uh, uh, Blakely around up in there and Hughes Crick and any of the old people that you run on to they knowed old Aunt Belle. Seemed like everybody liked her. And, uh, along about that time Susie was born, Susie's daddy was drowned in Kanawha River before she was born. She was born after he was drowned. He was a Tucker. He had a farm on an island there near the mouth of Hughes Crick somewhere out in the river. Had alot of cattle out there. He said the river was raisin' and he was goin' over to see about his cattle and he come up missin'. And I don't know if they ever found his body or not. But they supposed that he drowned there. They found the boat I think. And, uh, then, uh, his wife married Oscel Proctor. Old Oscel used to come in and stay for a week at a time. But was he a crackerjack! I got a powder horn in there that he give me. It had been in their family for I don't know how many years. It's got a date marked on it where one of his son-in-laws had borrowed a powder horn and rifle from him to go huntin' and he cut his initials and date on the powder horn. And it was in 1910. Did you ever see a powder horn?

PC: Never did.

WTA: I'll get it and show it to you if you want me to.