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James G. Matthews

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RN: Ah, this is an interview taking place at the home of James G. Matthews. Ah, the address is East Lynn, West Virginia. Date of birth for this person is May 30, 1902. Date of interview is August 7, 1974. The name of the interviewer is Richard Napier. Okay.

IM: (Inaudible)

RN: I just did. Okay, Grandpa, you want to, now, you start out with, ah, you said you want to start when you were born
[JM: Yeah.] and, ah, well.

JM: Well, I was, ah, I was born on, ah, fifty, over on Route 52 in 1902, and left there and moved to, ah, East Lynn, ah, in 1904. And, ah, grew up to, ah, school age, and, ah, when I went, my mother died when I was, ah, ah, six years old. And, I couldn't get to go to school very much, and, ah, when I did go, I had to get by the first recess and leave the last recess on account of, ah, feedin' cattle and hogs and milkin' and so forth, just work. Back in these days we had to go in the hills and, ah, cut down wood and haul it in and burn it. So, ah, I grewed on up and, ah, worked for Logan then and commenced workin' in the coal mines.

RN: About when was that?

JM: That was in 1923. [RN: Yeah.] And, ah, I worked there fer till, ah, '26, and I got married. So, I worked, you know, in the mines fer, ah, ah, six years then I moved to a farm and went farming for a period of time. And, then, I went to Huntington. Went to work for United Fuel Gas Company and fer, ah, four or five years. And, left there and went to the Nickel Plant, and when I left there, I come back to East Lynn and, ah, come back to East Lynn and, ah, commenced working for James C. (inaudible) Coal Company. And, I worked for them ten years, and, and, ah, and, when I quit, when I quit there, why, in 1953 I commenced, ah, carrying United States Mail. And, my wife had been carrying that for ever since '41 up till '53, and I've been a carrying it ever since. And, ah, farmin' and, ah, can't think of anything.

RN: Ah, how did Grandma carry the mail?

JM: Oh, carried it on a horse.

RN: Grandma, how many days a week did you carry mail?

IM: Two days at first, the first few years at three days ...

RN: And, you carried from, ah, about how many miles a day did you have to ride?

JM: Travelled, ah, ah, sixteen miles a day.

RN: So, you had to ride in the winter and summer?

IM: I ride winter and summer.

JM: Yeah, rain and snow.

IM: Sometimes the horse fell down with me.

RN: Did you ever get hurt?

IM: No, I've been lucky (laughs). I was a good rider.

RN: Yeah. Ah.

JM: So, in the time of it, I, ah, I attended singing school in 1927 or 8, and then when I moved to Wayne County, why, I, ah, I went ahead attending singing school, then finally went into singing in a quartet. I sung in one quartet five years, and, ah, then went to singing in another, and I been singing with them fer, ah, about 12 years and sing with them. And, ah.

RN: Ah, I remember you used to talk about, ah, your dad how he used to throw rocks at, ah ...

JM: Oh, yeah, yeah, he, when he was a boy, he, he learned to, ah, throw rocks. He was, ah, he was a good hand to throw rocks. And, when we, ah, would, ah, tree a squirrel, why, to have a little fun, why, he'd knock it out with a rock.

RN: Could he get it pretty often that way?

JM: Yeah, when he was old, he could, he could do better then I could [RN: Huh.] when he was old.

IM: And, your dad raised four children and eight grandchildren.

RN: Uh huh. Ah, when you were in Logan, were, where did you, ah, live in Logan?

JM: Why, I lived on Whitman's Creek until we, and then when I first went there, I stayed with my sisters [RN: Yeah.] before I married. I stayed with my sisters, and, ah, worked in the mines.

RN: And, ah, you worked there how long before you got married?

JM: I worked there from '23 off and on till, ah, till, ah, '26, '26.

RN: Was you working there maybe to make some money to get married or ...

JM: Well (laughs), well, yeah, I reckon.

IM: Not exactly.

RN: Not exactly.

IM: No (laughs).

RN: Well, how did you meet Grandma anyway? How, how did you two get together?

JM: Well, I, I went to church and seen her, and I wanted, and I found, and, ah, I wanted to know who she was. [RN: Yeah.] Well, then later on I wrote her a letter, and we wrote for a spell and then quit. The next time I seen her, why, I wrote her another letter and went to dating her again. So, in '26 we got married [RN: Yeah, ah.], and we had four children, three a livin' now.

RN: Ah, what was, ah, farming like when, when you were growing up?

JM: Growing up, well, we, ah, we raised, ah, corn, and wheat, oats, and hay.

RN: Had a lot of livestock?

JM: Yeah, we kept cattle and, and several hogs. Back in them days we had, ah, we had, ah, old rail fences for fence back when I was a boy and lots of chestnut trees and acorns. And, these hogs would run out in there, and they'd get fat enough to kill.

∟RN: Yeah.∟ Then, we'd drive them in and put them up and feed them for a spell before we killed them, feed them corn for a spell before we killed them.

RN: Did you mark the hogs any way or just knew they was yours?

JM: Well, yeah, we, ah, I always cut an ear off I believe.

RN: Yeah. Any other people have different marks or something?

RM: Yeah, we lived in our farm joins then stock law. In our district they was stock law, and then in the other district there was no stock law. They all run loose. And, they ever, they had, ah, different marks in the ear and so on. So, I used to, I used to, my dad made me a big (inaudible) to hunt cattle with. I'd shoot snakes, lizards, and everything that come on, on while I was a huntin' cattle. Drive the cows into the (inaudible) to be milked.

IM: Sling shot.

RN: You did a lot of huntin' back then?

JM: Yeah, done a lot of huntin'. All I, ah, all I had back when I was a small boy was a ax and a good squirrel dog and rabbit dog. I'd take all the squirrels and the rabbits I could wanted ∟RN: How did you do it?∟ in a day's time then. It's not like it is today. Wouldn't have to hunt a mile for you'd jumped a rabbit or treed a squirrel.

RN: How did you hunt back then if you didn't have a gun to hunt with?

JM: Well, I believe I just had a ax.

RN: You mean you treed them or run them in a hole?

JM: Yeah, dog treed them, and I pounded on the tree. If they jump out, the dog would catch them, you see, and if they go in a hole in the tree, I'd cut a hole in there and get them out. One time I had, ah, had one in a hole and cut in there and put my cap in there to keep from jumping out and stuck my finger in there, and he bit a hole through my fingernail.

RN: Well, you used to hunt a pretty lot, didn't you, fox hunt a lot?

JM: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, after I growed up I, ah [IM: Well, he went deer hunting a few times.] , yeah, I, ah, I begin fox huntin'. But, my wife didn't like dogs, didn't like me to hunt.

RN: What was fox huntin' like back [JM: Well.] did you, did you hunt any in the twenties or anything like that? [JM: Any what?] Did you hunt during the twenties, ah, fox hunt any?

JM: Yeah, yeah.

RN: What was it like back then?

JM: Well, it, it wasn't as bad as it is today. The, the woods wasn't growed up. [RN: Yeah.] Didn't hurt the dogs to run back in there like it does today. The, the woods is growed up now. They cut the timber, and briars are growed up and grapevines. It didn't, ah, it didn't, ah, ah, hurt the dogs to run back then like it does today.

IM: Tell them about your son-in-law, you and your son-in-law, wasn't it, ah, went deer hunting up in what country?

JM: Oh, Pocahontas County.

IM: You made two trips up there.

JM: Yeah. Killed one deer.

RN: Well, let's see, ah, I've about run out of questions I think. Oh, what was East Lynn like, say, in when you all were down there?

JM: When I was a boy, what East Lynn was like?

RN: Yeah.

JM: Oh, a lot different than it is today. The, the wagons was a rolling everywhere, and, ah, in wintertime the mud was about ankle deep or, or six or eight inches deep in the wintertime. And, the wagons was a hauling coal backwards and forwards and

cross and taking it in there to be loaded on the train, shipped wherever they wanted them. And, the train would come in once a day back at that time.

RN: What was, what did you do, what could you do in East Lynn besides work back then?

JM: Ah, there wasn't nothing. /RN: You mean that, ah./ Two or three grocery stores, and a barber shop or two, couple of blacksmith shops back then, and they're banished away now. They're beer gardens.

RN: Did they have beer gardens back then?

JM: No, uh uh.

RN: No beer gardens.

JM: They drunk pure liquor. /RN: Liquor./ Yeah. Go to Catlettsburg take, ah, ah, ah, raft of ties in there and be gone three or four days, and come back with their liquor.

RN: They, they take the, could they take ties down Twelve Pole?

JM: Yeah, they'd, ah, they'd, ah, latch them together, you know /RN: Yeah./, lay them, nail strips along on top of them. When the water got up, why, they'd put in plenty and come out Four Pole. Yeah. /RN: Huh./ On (inaudible) some Twelve Pole comin' through and round them curves, knocking the bark off of the (inaudible).

RN: Huh. I didn't know they came through here.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

RN: Make, ah, moonshine or anything?

JM: Plenty, plenty of moonshine.

RN: Wasn't hard to find.

JM: No, wasn't hard to find if you wanted it.

RN: Yeah.

JM: But, they was a few fellers had, ah, interfered with a liquor making and had to leave their homes. But, me and my dad, we never bothered them, and they never bothered us.

RN: Yeah.

IM: (Inaudible)

RN: Then you must have found some stills or something?

JM: Yeah, I seen where they made, but when I, when I was huntin' and go through and find where the pipe, ah, ah, water was piped down to where the still was, I turned back. I didn't go no further.

RN: And, you say there used to be some people get in trouble with them?

JM: Yeah, yeah, they'd turn them in fer, ah, making liquor on their place. Sometimes the moonshine still, er, ah, turned their mash barrels over.

IM: (Inaudible)

RN: Well, I tell you, I'm just going to wait for you to say something you want to say just say it.

IM: Well, after he married his stepmother ...

JM: (Whispers) You can't put that on there. Don't you put that in there.

RN: (Inaudible)

IM: Well, she's old now. She's, ah, 84 years old and still a living, and your father, and your father had been dead how many years?

JM: Died in '51.

RN: Your father must have been a lot older than, than she was.

JM: Yeah. He was 35 when he met her; she was 20.

RN: And, your mother. [JM: My stepmother.] And, your mother died after.

JM: My mother died in 1908.

RN: And, you were six years old.

JM: Uh huh. Yeah.

IM: She had seven children at that time. And, he married his second wife.

RN: Women didn't seem to live quite as long back then did they?

JM: No, no.

RN: Not as much as they do today.

JM: Huh uh.

RN: I was just thinking here about, ah, I know you talked about, ah, some of the guys you used to hunt with, and the shotguns you used to have, and things that you used to do when you were young you know.

JM: Yeah, yeah, we had, we had an old single barrel shotgun and, ah, and, ah, old mountain rifle back them days all the guns we had.

RN: Yeah.

JM: And, ah, when I got big enough I commenced huntin' with, ah, shotgun. And, rabbits was plentious then, and I'd find one a sittin' there, and I'd get up close to him as I could and shoot his head off.

RN: Yeah. Did you have, ah, ah, good, ah, shotgun that, ah, ah, somebody offered you trade a farm to or something like that?

JM: Well, I yeah, had, ah, I had a shotgun, and, and I let my uncle have it. And, I, there was a feller he said he had a farm he'd give to for, for that gun. When I was in the teens, I'd take my dogs and go to my uncle's in the wintertime and, ah, fox hunt with him for a week at a time. And, ah, so on.

RN: How did you fox hunt? What did you do just go up on the ridge?

JM: Yeah, and, ah, get after, get up before day, daylight, and get after them, and try to kill them.

RN: Oh, you're trying to kill them.

JM: Yeah. Try to kill 'em.

RN: There was a lot of people that didn't like to have foxes killed. Did you ever get in any trouble with any of them?

JM: No, never did get in no trouble with them. I never did kill but two red foxes in my life.

RN: But, you did kill gray foxes?

JM: Yeah, yeah, killed gray'ens.

RN: Well, why would you kill a gray fox and not a red fox?

JM: Well, they, ah, they would run. Besides, you'd get after them they'd go straight to a hole, and they'd take every rabbit in the country that they could catch.

RN: Well, how would you know it was a gray fox? Maybe it was a red fox.

JM: Well, I, I could tell. I could tell how they run. In the snow, why, I could see a track I'd know a gray fox track from a red fox track.

RN: Well, what's the difference?

JM: Well, they, ah, a gray fox is a more rounder track, more like a cat, and a red fox is a longer track, toe sticks out further like that.

RN: Any difference in the size?

JM: Huh?

RN: Any difference in the size?

JM: Well, yeah, red fox got the biggest track.

RN: It does?

JM: Yeah. So, I used to, ah, night hunt a lot. Catch, ah, 'coons, 'possums, and mink hunt some.

RN: You hunt them the same way?

JM: Yeah. Catch them in, ah, track them up in snow and catch them. And, I learnt when I was young everything that made a track in the snow I could tell what it was. Seen about all kind of track but a bear track. I never did see one of them in the snow.

RN: Did you ever see any, ah, bobcat or panther tracks or anything?

JM: I've seen bobcat tracks in the snow.

RN: Have you seen any lately? I mean.

JM: No, not lately I have nothing.

RN: Ah, when you, when you were young on the farm, didn't you say you had sheep?

JM: Yeah, had, we had sheep.

RN: How, well, how did you take care of them ...

JM: Well, we, ah, we had, ah, look after them to keep dogs from killing them. And, get them up every spring, run them in, and put them in a place and shear them one by one. Cut toes off the lambs, cut the, cut the lambs tails off, and, ah, shear the old sheep, and take the wool to market.

IM: And (inaudible), out mutton. Huh.

RN: Well, where did, ah, where did you take the, the wool to market? Where did you go to?

JM: Well, they'd, ah, ah, I think they shipped it about that time.

RN: Oh, they'd shipped it from East Lynn.

JM: Yeah, East Lynn train, down at the train, East Lynn at that time.

RN: I guess East Lynn was about the closest place to a train around here, wasn't it?

JM: Yeah, yeah, that was the closest, ah, place to the train, East Lynn.

RN: How the roads run out of Lick Creek?

JM: Huh? Roads?

RN: Did they go about the way they are now?

JM: No, no, they just ziz-zag across and go across a creek and, and down through another place and cross again and like that. Sometimes have to go for hundred yards through the creek
/RN: Yeah./, and it would be rough sailing in the wintertime.

RN: Ah, did, did you go across any hills or anything that the roads don't go across now like maybe Mud, Mud Lick down here?

JM: Yeah, and Low Gap /RN: Yeah./ and cross there to the, go across them hills back all of them back then.

RN: And, people used that a lot?

JM: Yeah, wagon roads /RN: Yeah./, ox, ox teams. My grandfather, he was, he was a, he timbered. And, he had, ah, eight or ten yoke oxes. And, I got up close to one one day, and he kicked at me. If he would have hit me, he'd a killed me.

RN: How, how he kick?

JM: They kick hard. They kick, they don't kick like a mule hardly, but they, they kick hard.

RN: They kick behind them or out to their side?

JM: Yeah, yeah straight back like that. Kinda go a little bit sideways.

RN: How did you go about training ox? I never did know how they

trained them.

JM: Well, they, you could, ah, take them as calves sometimes. Sometimes, ah, two year olds start breaking them. [RN: Yeah.] Some was easy broke and some wasn't. Some would stall on ye, and them that would stall or lay down wasn't no good. Have to let them go. But, I broke one one time, a three year old. he made a dandy.

RN: How big were the ox? Do they get pretty good size?

JM: Yeah, they get, ah, some of them, ah, 1400, 1500 pound on like that.

RN: Were they any special breed or anything?

JM: No, we had, ah, back then they didn't have this here, ah, beef-type cattle. [RN: Yeah.] It was, ah, Red Pole, and, and Aschar, and, ah, and Roan Durham back in that day, that day scrub cattle. Some Jersey's you know. [RN: Yeah.] But, they wouldn't hardly fool with Jersey cattle. They didn't make good work steers.

RN: What did they need Jersey's for, milk?

JM: Yeah, Jersey's for milk back then.

IM: (Inaudible)

RN: She said she wanted to hear about that, ah, yoke of cattle you sold.

IM: ... who come here from another country, another country, county.

JM: Oh.

IM: (Inaudible)

JM: Yeah. Sold them.

RN: How much you get out of them?

JM: Thirty dollars.

RN: When was that?

JM: Huh? That was back in, ah, thirty, thirty six, I believe it was.

RN: Wasn't that quite a bit of money back in '36?

JM: Well, according to the times that was pretty good back then. Cattle had been higher. [RN: Yeah.] They'd been paying beforehand they had been paying \$200 a yoke, they had been at times for broke cattle. But, these back then cattle had got down cheap. [RN: Yeah.] At that time they got pretty cheap.

RN: Ah, did you let anything else go with them?

JM: Just yoke.

RN: Yoke.

JM: Yeah, yeah.

RN: Ah, first, Grandpa, on this side let's, ah, let you trace your, ah, family for as far back as far as you can remember ...

JM: Yeah, well, ah, my father's father was, ah, come from Virginia and settled over there and, ah, 'bout three or four miles from Dunlow, West Virginia. And, ah, his father was in the war and was killed at the mouth of the McComas on the way back from Virginia on a furlough. And, my other grandfather, he was, ah, they come, he father come from Virginia just before the Civil War and settled in there near East Lynn.

RN: What was the name of your mother's people?

JM: Ah, (inaudible).

RN: And, your father's people?

JM: Matthews.

RN: Matthews.

JM: Yeah, my grand--my father's father was Matthews.

RN: What was his first name do you remember?

JM: Ah, Harve was my grandfather, and his grandfather was Dan, the one that got killed at the mouth McComas in, ah, time of the war.

RN: How did he get killed? Was he in the war?

JM: Yeah, they, ah, they tell me that they, ah, that they, ah, stold his cattle while he was away, gone. And, they hired a feller to, ah, lay watch for him to come back and shoot him. So, they did. They shot him off his horse late one night at, ah, about four miles from home.

RN: That was after the war was over?

JM: No, the war hadn't quit yet. He was coming home for a few days on furlough.

RN: Yeah. And, then when did you move over close to Lick Creek?

JM: Well, we, ah, I was borned over there about three and a half miles from Dunlow, and, ah, we moved there, and my father had bought that farm in, ah, and moved there in 1904.

RN: You remember him talking about they moved or anything?

JM: Well, moved on a wagon. They drove the cattle and hauled the hogs on the wagon.

RN: About how long would it take to move something like that?

JM: Well, about 12 miles one way the trip was.

RN: Could they move in a day then?

JM: Well, you make one trip in a day.

RN: How about the, the clothes back then?

JM: Well, they was, ah, when I first knowed about shoes, why, they, ah, made a shoe with a they called them brogans. Some had, ah, a brass piece across the end, the toe, and some didn't. And, ah, they cost from a \$1.25 to a \$1.50 a piece. And, the bibbed

overalls, I guess, they was about a half a dollar. In the wintertime, we'd, ah, take (inaudible) and put on these shoes. When you, when you get in the snow just like a duck going through the water. The snow, the water would just shed off them shoes. But, they wasn't very high; they wasn't over six inches high. If they would have been high, it would have been much better.
[RN: Yeah.] Some had boots, and they had boot jacks take them shoes off, boots off with.

RN: Were they lace-up boots?

JM: No, had two little straps on each side so they could pull them off, and they would put them in this thing and shake them off. Called a boot jack. And, how you, ah, fixed them, we had, ah, old, had an old iron, we called it an iron lash set up on the floor in, ah, different sizes things would fit on that, different size shoes, you know, and we'd, we'd, ah, buy the leather, and the leather half sole them, and these other shoes I wore we put big-headed nails in them and when you'd get on the ice, you'd go sailing.

RN: Did you, ah, wear those, you say bibbed overalls mostly. What about on Sunday's and when you went places?

JM: Well, ah, after I got up so big got a suit. They, ah, they, ah, well, knee, knee pants with a strap around them and, ah, buckle on there. You could buckle them about your knees, and they bloused down over your knees till you got up, and you thought you was a man then you got long britches.

RN: When did you think you was a man?

JM: Well, I guess, 16 or 18 years old.

RN: You wore them till then?

JM: Yeah.

RN: Ah, did, did they make all their clothes back then?

JM: Yeah, they did, they did beforehand, but, ah, we, ah, we used some of this wool off these sheep that we mentioned there before. And, we had an old, ah, we had, ah, what we called pods and had little fine piece in them, and you put that wool

in there and keep workin' it and make, ah, roll out of it about so long. And, then you'd, ah, you'd take that old spinning wheel and put them on that thing, and, and I'd turn the wheel, and they'd, ah, make a big long make it roll it up in yarn, make a ball of yarn out of it, and they'd knit socks out of it, gloves.

RN: Was that wool good in, ah, wet weather?

JM: Well, yeah, it'd hold a lot of water. And, socks would hold a whole lot of water.

RN: Yeah, was wool the only thing you used to make, ah, your clothes out of back then?

JM: Yeah, all we had, all in my time, and all we had then. But, my dad, they used, ah, ah, linen he called it. Some of them wore big shirts come way down below their knees, boys, you know. Great big boys back then wore great big shirts.

RN: Was it a shirt and nothing else?

JM: Yeah, nothing else. Just a big shirt.

RN: How long did they wear them?

JM: Well, I don't know (laughter). They last a long time I tell ye, and they made out of thick stuff.

RN: Yeah. I mean, did they wear them until they was six or seven or how old?

JM: Yeah, or eight.

RN: Ah, can you remember any of the trips that you've made to East Lynn or Wayne [JM: Well.] some of the first trips you made?

JM: Yeah, I can remember, ah, ah, going with my dad one time taking a load of ties and, and, ah, hogs, dress hogs to some man down there about the first trip or two that I'd.

RN: Was that to East Lynn?

JM: East Lynn, yeah.

RN: How about to Wayne?

JM: Well, I'd, ah, my uncle moved from up where we lived down to mouth of One Mile above Wayne, three miles out of Wayne. /RN: Uh huh./ And, I'd go down there and stay a few days at a time when I was small. After that then, after I get, got big enough to drive a wagon I'd go to flour mill. I'd get my wheat and go down to the Lucas Ferguson Flour Mill and, and unload my wheat and go up to my uncle's to stay all night and go back down the next morning and get my flour and come home.

RN: But, it would take you two days to make it?

JM: Two days to make a trip, yeah.

RN: Well, did you, how often, about how often did you get to East Lynn?

JM: Well, ah, back then I wouldn't get there maybe but once a month. After I growed up, I got me a horse of my own I'd go in about every other Saturday evening /RN: Yeah./ after work on Saturday morning. Go in every Saturday evening watch them trade horses and knives and first one thing and another like that.

RN: I don't imagine you got to Wayne very much, did you?

JM: No, no, Wayne was too many miles.

RN: Ah, you bought most of your supplies and stuff in East Lynn?

JM: East Lynn, yeah, East Lynn and Branchland, West Virginia. Branchland, that's in Lincoln County.

RN: Yeah. Ah, can you remember the first time you went to Huntington?

JM: Well, yeah, I, I believe I can. I think I was about 16 or 17 years old before I ever went into Huntington.

RN: What, can you remember anything you thought about it when you got there?

JM: No, not very much. I got lost.

RN: What down there on the street?

JM: Yeah, trying to find a place and went around the block and come back where I was (laughter).

RN: How long did it take you to go to Huntington and back?

JM: Well, an old car, my, ah, my cousin, his sister went to Morris Harvey College and, and his younger brother and me took them over there in an old, ah, '16 Model Ford car. And, we run out of gas on the way back and couldn't stop nobody for two, three hours, and we finally got somebody we knowed to stop and give us a little gas to go on in.

RN: I heard those old cars, you had to back them up the hill sometimes.

JM: Yeah, yeah ...

RN: Ah, how about the farm equipment that you had back then?

JM: Well, we had, ah, all we had back then was, ah, when I was a boy, we had, ah, ah, turn plow, a hillside turn plow. One, when you got out to the end you'd turn it over and go back the same way, turn it over, and turn the ground the same way. And, we had an old, ah, ah, (inaudible). We'd made a drag toothed (inaudible) we called it, and a root-cutter plow, and another kind that wasn't a root cutter, and then a plow that had, ah, two plows on it called a double-shover plow corn with back when I was growing up.

RN: What was a root-cutter plow?

JM: Well, that was, ah, a plow that you, ah, when you furrowed new ground, you had a big steel thing, sharp on, on the front, and you'd put that down in there in a place fixed there with steel on both sides of the beams, and you'd put wedges in there and wedge that in there and cut them roots when you had new ground like that.

RN: Yeah.

JM: You couldn't hardly do much good without them in a new ground.

RN: And, ah, you said you raised some wheat, too.

JM: Yeah, yeah, raised the wheat. And, one time it was awful hot day. We had, ah, three men a cuttin' with cradles, had about four or five fingers on them kinda curled a little bit, and then a blade down here to cut the root off, and they'd, they'd lay them straight up the hill. And, had three men, ah, had three men, ah, binding this wheat up and throwing it in piles, and I was the water boy. And, a bunch of wheat took, ah, 16 barrels in, ah, in, ah, 16 barrels in a place and set up 14 of them and take the other ones and break them down and make traps on there to keep water from getting on in the wheat. Stay there about dry a little bit, and then we'd go and with a sled and load this wheat on and stack it. Ready for the thrashing machines to come. And, after while thrashing machine would come and had, ah, a big thrash box, put the wheat down in. And, another thing that they had eight big mules hooked in them beams and going around and a shaft running over to the thrash box, and they'd start them horses out going out going around like going around cane mill. And, they'd, ah, they would, ah, one man throw up wheat on a platform, and one man would stand there with a knife, cut the bands into, and another man feeding her down in there. And, over here then was a feller measuring up wheat, and they'd take it up. We had two big wheat bins in this big log barn in the mountains. And, they'd, ah, go up there, and we had two kinds of wheat. We had a one that we called smooth-hedge wheat, and one we called bearded wheat. And, we'd put them in different boxes.

RN: How come that you grew two kinds?

JM: Well, they, ah, yield, yield better probably than, than the other did, the bearded, what I called a bearded wheat.

RN: Yeah. You use the straw for anything after you thrashed?

[JM: Huh?/] You use the straw?

JM: Yeah, we had, ah, we had a big place fixed right close when that straw come out and had men there and fixed, and they'd, ah, put that wheat, ah, straw in there and tamp it down good, and, and, ah, ah, wintertime then the cattle go there and eat in that straw, and the hogs lay in it when it was cold. And, they could, the hogs could get in the, in, in the stall along with these here wheat bins, and they went there one time, and,

ah, the hogs had been a rootin' around in there and found that somebody had, ah, this, ah, bins made out of, ah, yellow poplar way back before, before 1900, back, way back. And, it was all yellow poplar, and they had took a knife and whittled them a hole out so that they could get the wheat in sacks, and they'd put the, and they'd dropped some down here. And, they'd whittled out a plug and put in the hole, keep it all from pouring out.

RN: Ah, how about, ah, medicine back then. Did you use anything out of the hills for medicine?

JM: Well, they, ah, my dad would, ah, get, ah, medicine, ah, he digged some stuff he called red cocoon, and he would dry them roots, and dried it up, whittled it up fine, and put it in the horses feed, so they, ah, make them shed off good in the spring he said. [RN: Uh huh.] Then we'd use mullen tea and spruce pine.

IM: Ginger.

RN: Did you say ginger tea?

JM: Yeah.

RN: You remember what any of those other things were used for like you used sassafras tea, didn't you?

JM: Oh, yeah, yeah, we'd make, ah, ah, sassafras tea fer build your blood up back then they thought.

RN: And, didn't you tell me that the May Apple was good for a laxative?

JM: Well, yeah, it was good for several things (laughter).

RN: Ah, what part of the May Apple did you use? Did you use the fruit or the roots?

JM: The roots.

RN: What did you do grind them up dry or?

JM: No, I just boil them.

RN: Boil them.

JM: Boil them, yeah.

RN: Well, what would you do drink that then?

JM: Drink her down, yeah, if you could (laughter).

RN: Did it taste pretty bad?

JM: Pretty bitter.

RN: You was talking some about, ah, the timber that was sold off when the roads come in up there.

JM: Oh, yeah, the roads was bad till, ah, till, ah, until, ah, a feller named of (inaudible) moved from Ohio in there and bought up a lot of timbers, and, ah, he, ah, was worked this timber in about 19, and my dad sold his big timber, virgin timber, never been cut. A big timber, white oak, black, and chestnut, oak, and black, and poplar. And, that left the hickory, and, ah, chestnut, beech, and all of that stuff. [RN: Uh huh.] And, the small ones, he never cut no small timber. And, he [RN: When. Go ahead.] and they sawed this, ah, they cut this timber down and saw it up, and, ah, wagon it to East Lynn, loaded it on train. And, I was big enough to carry strips from the mill and throw them for stove wood, pile them up for stove wood then at that time.

RN: Ah, since you used to hunt a lot, ah, did you use all the game that you caught?

JM: No, I couldn't. I killed too much. Couldn't use it all.

RN: They say they was a lot of game back then.

JM: Oh, it was a site. I cleaned up clearing new ground one time, and my dog, ah, down in where I was a clearing a little dogwood there with a little round hole in it, and he barked up that, and I cut it down. Cut it down and cut me, ah, put my cap in the hole, and cut me a block out, and took up on top of the hill, and aimed to have me some fun. When I chopped in there was two squirrels in it. [RN: Huh.] And, I had a time gettin' both of them (laughter).

RN: You said you had some trouble with squirrels back then with your corn.

JM: Oh, yeah, law, you couldn't hardly, couldn't hardly get a strand of corn in the spring for squirrels. I went out around field one time, one fall see about eatin' the corn up, and I had two shotgun shells. I seen, counted 24 squirrels. So, two squirrels all I got.

RN: Ah, there's a place up there on Lick Creek that's got kind of an interesting name, Murder Holler. How did it get it's name?

JM: Well, they was, ah, three men killed there in, during the war. And, the man, the man that lived at the old home place, an old home place my father moved there in 1904. He lived there; he stayed with these men that night. And, they came down, they come down the creek from Beech Fork, and there's a big rock hung over the creek up the holler a little bit, and they camped in there that night. So, the next morning their outfit, the men had, they, they thought it was somebody else and, ah, another bunch, and they, they shot three of these men, killed them. [RN: Huh.] Well, they killed two of them dead there, and they come with, ah, from Bornes Creek with ox team, and got one of them, and he died later. So, there's one there yet. They come and took one of the other men up, and there's one grave there yet in Murder Holler.

RN: Well, does anybody know where it's at?

JM: Yeah, I can find it. I took them men when they, ah, was checking, ah, graves, cemeterys for the, for the dam, you know, the (inaudible) out. They pick up people and rebury them. Why, they, ah, ah, I took them to this place, but they never took them up. They never took no cemeterys up up there.

RN: Yeah. They used to be a lot of cemeterys up through there. Wasn't they one over there in the holler close where you used to live?

JM: Yeah, there's one there.

RN: You know how far back that that would go?

JM: No, I, ah, only since I can remember, why they ain't but, they

ain't been but three buried there since I remember, since 1904.

RN: That one's pretty hard to find now, isn't it?

JM: Well, yeah, it's pretty hard to find.

RN: There must be a lot of cemeterys around in here.

JM: There's, ah, the old man that owned that farm, ah, was buried there in 1910. And, his boy died in 1918 of the flu and buried there, and that's the last grave been put there, 1918.

RN: Ah, you remember how any of the churches got started around here? What they believed in or where they originated from?

JM: Well, I couldn't tell you too much about them. I know one thing they had a lot of, of fussers in the church.

RN: Is that what usually started a new church?

JM: Yeah, they, yeah, they, ah, disagreed, and the other feller started him on another one, got out and started him another, went on with it.

RN: I imagine they've always been a lot of churches around here since you can remember.

JM: Yeah, yeah, a lot of them since I can remember.

RN: How about these, ah, meetings at the graveyards? Do you remember when they started?

JM: Well, no sir, they was going on when I got a young man, and I wouldn't be able to tell ye. I used to ride, I used to ride a horse to all them cemeterys. Now, with the dam it's took away, you know. [RN: Yeah.] Back when I was a young man had horse races, first one thing, and then another.

RN: Then they didn't just go to meeting at cemeterys; they went for other things.

JM: Well, a lot of them went to the meeting, preaching, but you know young men like that they, ah, wasn't interested much in the preaching back there. They was seeing if they could find

them a pretty girl (laughter).

RN: Yeah, I guess so. That was about the only time you got to see a lot of the people.

JM: Yeah, yeah. You have to work all week, you know, on the farm, and you wouldn't get to see nobody till Sunday.

RN: Didn't you tell me about one time, ah, a church or something, somebody locked the door on them or?

JM: Oh, yeah.

RN: Where was that anyway? I can't remember too good.

JM: They was, ah, Holiness people was having, ah, a church over there in a schoolhouse.

RN: Where was that?

JM: That's on the right fork of Lick Creek. [RN: Yeah.] And, my brother he was kind of, ah, mischievous feller, and he, he went over there, and he rode over there, and he waited till they got in the house, all of them at, at the last of the meetin', and he locked the door on the outside, put a thing in, ah, where they lock, put the lock in. [RN: Uh huh.] He put a stick down in there, and they couldn't get out. So, he locked the constable up in there (laughter), got on that mule, and rode home.

RN: How long did them people have to stay in there?

JM: Well, they too, ah, you know, these old schoolhouses had, ah, a wire screen on the outside. [RN: Yeah.] Remember, maybe you've seen that. Had an old wire, ah, screen on the outside of the window to keep the balls from knocking the window out, and now they took that off and went around and, ah, opened the door.

RN: Anybody ever find out he was the one?

JM: I guess they did, but they never done nothin' about it (laughter). And, I went to one, and they was going to quit. I went to one one of the meetings and, ah, few times, and they, they said,

"Well, we're going to quit tonight. We ain't, we will have, this, this will be the last night." And, I heard two mean boys say, "Let's go up, let's go up and give a hand so the meetin' go on." So, they went up. The other hands, and they prayed over them a while, and, "Well, the meetins' going on till Sunday."

RN: They just did it to keep the meetin' going.

JM: Yeah, they done that to keep the meetin' going. And, I went to one there not too long ago. I mean, after I was a man they was having trouble in the meetin'. A young feller in there, he had been drinking a little bit, and they, ah, went back on him. I though they was going to fight in the house, and I was sittin' in that big chair. And, I think, well, if they get into fighting, fight back around of me I was going to bust this chair over their head. But, they took him on outside and beat him up and took him to jail. [RN: Huh.] And, I went down the road the next morning and met him coming. Looked like his head was a big as two heads where they'd beat him up and went down and got him out of jail.

RN: Was there at that schoolhouse?

JM: Yeah, at Mud Lick.

RN: Yeah.

JM: Mud Lick.

RN: One of the (inaudible) boys?

JM: Yeah, Junior.

RN: Yeah. Ah, how about, ah, the workings that you used to have? Did you.

JM: Yeah, oh, yeah, we, ah, when I, ah, moved from to the farm from the river, why, ah, we started the house. Took us 20 years to get finished (laughter). I got it finished in 1950.

RN: Got it started when you moved. [JM: Yeah.] Did you start with the workings?

JM: Yeah, yeah. Used it all. I cut the trees and to make a round log house and just let, let them lay out all summer, and the bark peeled off of them, and I hewed them and started the house.

∕RN: You took.∕ Had several workings. We, ah, had one, ah, one workin' we had about 30 men, and I don't know the women and children. And, they quilted two quilts that day, and they cleared about two acres of ground.

RN: Huh. That's your working, I mean ...

JM: Yeah, and then we had another one, and I don't recall how many we had to it.

RN: At a workin' who was the boss?

JM: Well, I don't know.

RN: Who, you didn't tell them what to do?

JM: Well, yeah, told, told them what to, what to, you know cut, like that and ...

RN: Everybody just decided what they were going to do.

JM: Yeah.

IM: Everybody was having workings all around the country at that time.

RN: Did you have to pay them anything?

JM: No, didn't pay anything only give them their dinner. ∕RN: Yeah.∕ Then, in a little bit they would have a workin', and I'd have to go and help them a day, you see. That's the way they would work it. But, I had a house raisin' out of these logs. And, my dad used, always used, ah, ah, ah, for a (inaudible) he used, ah, chewed tobacco and spit (inaudible) down the, down the corner to see whether it was straight or not. ∕RN: Huh.∕ And, he didn't miss it but a mighty little.

RN: First time I heard of that. Ah, well, what kind of workins' did they have back then?

JM: Well, they had, ah, ah, clearins' and (inaudible) and nearly

every kind of working. Back then you could, ah, get a lot of men. Today you, you wouldn't get a man to work. [RN: Yeah.] If you had a workin' now you couldn't get a man unless you were sick.

RN: Well, did you, what, ah, how long did you work. Did you work all day?

JM: Worked all, we worked till, ah, twelve and went to dinner. Everybody got their dinner, eat, and rest a little while, and go back and work till late in the night. Some would stay for supper, and some wouldn't.

RN: Then everybody left after supper.

JM: Yeah, after supper.

RN: Ever had any trouble at any the workins' that you was at?

JM: No, never did, but had a few lazy fellers (laughs).

RN: Well, what did you do about the lazy ones?

JM: Well, just let them go. Let them go, go back when they had a workin' go back and help them.

RN: Yeah.

JM: Get a lot of work done back then. People would work. They wouldn't (inaudible) in the back now and say this and that and want another check. Wasn't no checks then. At the time work or not eat.

RN: Had to depend on each other.

JM: Absolutely. Yeah.

RN: How about when you got sick back then? Would people help you out or anything?

JM: Yeah, yeah, they'd go, ah, they'd go and help one another if you had corn to hoe out and stuff like that.

RN: Did they ask you to come?

JM: No, no, they, I don't think so, wouldn't ask nobody. They just, you know, help a man out. [RN: Yeah.] One man laid sick when I was a boy all summer. My dad went to help the, help the, work the crop out, but he passed away that fall when the leaves, when the leaves, when sap went down, he went, passed away.

RN: Ah, ah, a lot of people feel like, ah, when the sap goes down people were more likely to die then.

JM: Yeah, yeah, and when it's coming up.

RN: When it's going either way.

JM: Yeah, either way, yeah.

RN: Now, wonder what the reason for that is?

JM: Well, I wouldn't be able to tell ye.

RN: Ah, let's see.