

\*Definitely transcribe this one. Mr. Noland tells lots of stories, give details, reads excerpts from the diary he kept while working on the Parkway, <sup>Jan.</sup> 1935-  
 There is another tape that Mr. Noland narrated which is also of value - Sept. 1936  
 it details about the sections he worked on the Parkway, refers to this tape  
Tape Index Sheet several times during the interview.

General Topic of Interview: Work in a survey crew on the Blue Ridge Parkway

Date: July 24, 1996  
 Place: Martinsville, VA  
 Length: ~~105~~ minutes  
 110

- Scanned
- returned from interviewee
- corrected
- final copy to interviewee

Personal Data:

Narrator  
 Name Thomas Noland  
 Address 560 King's Way Rd.  
Martinsville, VA 24112  
540-634-1325  
 Birthplace Haywood Co., North Carolina  
 Birthdate May 12, 1915  
 Occupations (s) worked on a survey party on the Blue Ridge Parkway

Interviewer  
 Name Alicia Gallant  
 Address 610 Clement St.  
Radford, VA 24141  
 Title: Research Assistant  
 What was the occasion of the interview?  
Oral history interview for Blue Ridge Parkway Project

Interview Data:

Side 1

Side 2

Estimated time on tape:

Subjects covered, in approximate order (please spell out names of persons & places mentioned)

00  
02  
04  
07  
14  
 side 2 00  
02  
15  
18  
22

Mr. Noland discusses photos taken on the Parkway as he shows the interviewee  
History of getting a job on a survey crew on the Parkway / Family  
Discussion of Photos continues  
Aspects of work on the survey party - hazards, <sup>conditions,</sup> & more photos  
Discussion of places worked on the Parkway / jobs done / details of the work  
Leisure activities - swimming Details of survey work / experiences  
Mr. Noland kept a diary beginning Jan. 1, 1935, reads excerpts  
Co-workers (stories)  
Experiences on the Parkway  
Leisure activities

Use back of sheet if necessary

Names / Places / Dates on page 2 (back)

Tape Index Sheet

General Topic of Interview: Work in a survey crew on the Blue Ridge Parkway -  
Thomas Noland, continued

Date: July 24, 1996

Place: Martinsville, VA

Length: ~~105~~ minutes  
110

Personal Data:

Narrator

Name Thomas Noland  
Address 560 King's Way Rd.  
Martinsville, VA 24112

Interviewer

Name Alicia Gallant  
Address 610 F. Clement St.  
Radford, VA 24111

Birthplace \_\_\_\_\_

Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_

Occupations(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Title: Research Assistant

What was the occasion of the interview?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Interview Data:

Side 1

Side 2

Estimated time on tape:

Subjects covered, in approximate order (please spell out names of persons & places mentioned)

Side 4

00

Post-Parkway Employment experiences

02

Discusses the NPS Blue Ridge Parkway project / potential informants

03

Truck accident on the Parkway - Laurel Springs

07

Favorite camp on the Parkway - Daughton Park

08

National Park Service

10

Experiences on the Parkway - Spruce Pine (recent experiences on the

15

Military service Parkway

Use back of sheet if necessary

INTERVIEW LOG SHEET

Thomas Nolan

Depositor: Alicia Gallant

Permanent address: 7206 Caulking Pl., Burke, VA 22015

Field Work Locations (state and town) Martinsville, VA

Description of Interviews: Oral history interview for Blue Ridge Parkway Project. Thomas Nolan work on a survey party on the Parkway.

Tapes (number): 2

Accession number:

Other material donated (specify): -

Interviewer Agreement signed: yes

Release obtained: yes

Special restrictions: -

Catalog prepared:

Catalog number:

Remarks:

ARCHIVES WORK

Donor folder prepared:

Donor card prepared:

Tape copied:

Transcription completed:

Interview with Mr. Thomas Noland 7/24/96 Martinsville, VA Interviewed by Alicia Gallant

TN: That's perhaps the most descriptive photo. That's taken in what was called Camp Bradley, that's where construction camp for Mount Mitchell surveyors. It's one of those, I'm pretty sure, I can safely say, we produced.

AG: So was this the building where they had like the kitchen?

TN: Yes, you can see the tar paper, it's sort of weatherized, so to speak. It was just an old shop building or something.

AG: Where were your tents?

TN: I can show you that. There must be a picture somewhere, show it to you. Don't know where I set that one. We had about six army pyramidal tents.

AG: So were all of these men on the survey crews?

TN: M-hm. And I'm standing here. And this is Lee Medford who lives at Altapass, and where the others are on Low Mont. And this man, he lived in Waynesville. He's been dead a number of years.

AG: Who was the supervisor?

TN: Let's see. This is the party chief, and this is another head too. Two full parties. And this, this was the party chief and this man here is...

AG: Do you remember their names?

TN: Yes, I can identify nearly everybody in the picture. His name is Hugh Hancock. And this is T.W. Starbuck. S-T-A-R-B-U-C-K. Later, we went to Costa Rica, my wife and I, where I worked on the Inter-American Highway. And this man was, I worked for him down there. They transferred a bunch of us, so to speak. When the money was cut off for the Blue Ridge Parkway, they put money in this defense project, the Inter-American Highway, to build a road between San Jose, Costa Rica and the Panama Canal. So I was contacted after I finished school, and went to Costa Rica to work. So I worked with that man again there.

AG: How did you originally get involved with the survey work on the Parkway?

TN: Well my brother was already working with them, he had worked with them on the Skyline Drive Project. He made the contacts, when I got out a high school, and uh, in a sense, my brother got me the job. And another brother worked for about six months. So it was a short while that, in 1934, that three brothers were on three different survey parties on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Beginning at Mile Post One. Workin' South.

AG: So how old were you when you started?

TN: Let me see, thirty four, subtract fifteen from thirty four. Nineteen. It was in June of 1934. As I said I know the names of most everybody one there. This one man is from Galax. Wadsworth is somewhere in New England, I think. Young man. And I could say that he was much older than I. And my brother who had known him also, saw him in a nursing home a few years before he died, in Maryland. And two brothers, Hilton brothers, somewhere around Lawrenceville, Virginia.

AG: When were you born?

TN: In 1915. May 12, 1915.

AG: Where?

TN: In Haywood County, North Carolina. My family moved from Waynesville, North Carolina to Waynesboro, Virginia in 1928. And I went to high school in Waynesboro, and that's how I ended up on the Parkway up there. Now that figure on the Parkway, I'm standing by the, we had a box on the side. That's Peewee Burns, that's Mike Hannigan. This is a man that died in a nursing home. This man is from Luray, name of Burner.

AG: Do you remember his last name?

Interview with Mr. Thomas Noland 7/24/96 Martinsville, VA Interviewed by  
Alicia Gallant

TN: His name is Burner, B-U-R-N-E-R. Thomas W. Eckles. E-C-K-L-E-S. That's Burner over there. We were sawin' wood. That's just pictures of the Survey party. That man is from Waynesboro, he's been dead a long time. And let's see. That's Eckles and myself there. And that's Gibbs.  
AG: So where is this site, right here?

TN: Uh, somewhere in Allegheny County. This is Starbuck again. A lot of these shots were taken in Doughton Park. That's taken in Doughton Park. This is how we dressed. Everybody wore boots. And riding britches.

AG: Were those in, is this like in a boarding house, or something?

TN: Yeah, we lived in a boarding house. This is my wife's home.

AG: What was that like?

TN: We met at her home. She was about— five or six of us stayed at her house. In Sparta. There was several survey parties workin' in Sparta, Out of Sparta, at the same time. And there was a tent in the background there. Issued us army tents. Yes, that's Hancock, the party chief. And that's workin' on the steep hillside.

AG: You're hauling— is that rope just to help you up, or were you pulling something?

TN: No, that's the measuring tape. That's the measuring tape.

AG: Oh.

TN: Same in this picture. I explained in the tape I think, it was called a chain, that comes from the days when engineers used wires, with eyes in it, and each one was a foot long. And old deeds are written in rods, rather than in feet. There are sixteen or sixteen and a half feet in a rod. And that's, that's not a good picture. That's a survey party.

AG: Were you in this one?

TN: Yes, I'm right here. With a lumberjack shirt. That's an Allegheny County shot. We were takin' bridge soundings which means we had to go out and see how far it was from the ground surface to solid rock. So that we could design a bridge and design the abutments and get the foundation on solid rock. Those were called soundings. Get the distance from the surface of the ground, solid ground, to the rocks. And we'd just cut a tree down, across the stream, and measure across there. And you'd have a rod, and you'd hold the rod, that would keep you from fallin' in, it would be sort of a support so you could walk gingerly across that log from side to side, and take measurements as you go. But the most dangerous of all was laying the tape. Sort of being on the Ice Rock.

AG: So what was that like when you were out there on the Ice Rock? That must have been pretty scary.

TN: It was, we didn't realize how dangerous it was, at the time I guess. It was very precarious and tiring, because of having to clamp that one-inch rope in the flex of the knee, so as you'd have your both hands free to take measurements. Now I don't know where, there were some I couldn't find. And I'm not sure which of these I sent, and which were reproduced. Down at the office in Asheville. Are you taping that, or just—

AG: Yeah.

TN: OK. Oh this is a wintertime shot. We had winter clothes on. We wore what was called Duck Pants. It's a real heavy waterproof canvas pants. We'd be in rough brush, and things like that a lot, up to our legs. That's a guitar player from Marion, North Carolina, Fred Hyatt. This looks like Mount Mitchell when the snows came. I had a

big picture somewhere showin' tents. I'm sorry I can't, didn't find that. It began to freeze, and we'd have to go out, gear our tents. There was a waterfall, you just go out and stick your toothbrush under the ice water. Brush your teeth. (Laughs) Brush our teeth under a waterfall.

AG: It must have been awfully cold trying to sleep at night.

TN: We had um, as I said, there were army tents. And we had five cots in each tent, just like the army. And we had a little stove, wood burning stove in the middle. It was nothing but a cone, a sheet metal cone, sittin' in a sandbox, and a four inch smokestack. We cut the—it had a damper, which we'd fire up good and go to bed, and uh, the wood would soon burn out, it didn't have enough to pass, for sustaining a fire. And we had canvas cots, and no mattresses. We just put cardboard and newspapers, put 'em under the blankets, to serve as insulation. We had, all we had was blankets, and no mattresses on our canvas army cots. So as I said on

the tape, if we'd had thermometers, and realized how cold it was, we'd have probably frozen to death. But uh, it had the name of Camp Bradley, originally that's what it was called.

AG: Was that the only place where you were in tents?

TN: No, one other place, was near Asheville. We moved, leap frogged to Asheville eventually. And then, let's see...we moved from Spruce Pine to Burnsville on October 14, 1935. Ground started freezing on October the 25th. And then we were workin' out of Burnsville. Up on the Mount Mitchell area. Where there had been a logging railroad. A narrow gauge railroad was haulin' logs off the mountain. All those mountains were once logged by rail. And when they started buying up the land, and they weren't gonna log anymore, so they took the tracks up, and took up the cross-ties. But they still had those narrow roads, and the switch-backs, you know what a switch-back is? Go up and back up, the train goes forward, and backs up, no curves. So, the road would be at very sharp curves, and the trucks sometimes had to back up to maneuver around these curves which took the place of the switchback. And because of the distance, and one-way traffic, and there was other traffic, you'd go up two hours and down two hours, back and forth. So because of the traffic pattern, which we shared with other entities, we couldn't get much work done. Cause otherwise, we had to make the right schedule going up and in the afternoon, coming down. So we ended up working productively on the survey line only three or four hours a day. So they completed it moving us to this camp up there. Some of the equipment, the tents and so forth, were acquired on loan. From some military agency, or federal supply house. And this was before the days of army field ranges, which burned gasoline fuel. It's a type which is still used in the military. But we didn't have that yet. Again, all we had were pieces of sheet metal. Which are like two by four feet. And they had eyes cut out of the sheet metal. And that was just inverted, like you'd put a big pot down over something. And an opening for the, we'd put wood in there. And it was where our cooking, it was an old-style army field range. Which we used, it had a lot of cooking surface, and obviously with wood, you would get it really, really hot. Well we didn't have the fuel-burning, gasoline, that type, stoves. And we had of course, no lighting. We had Coleman lanterns to light our tents.

AG: Did you have cooks then?

TN: We had a cook and a cook's helper, because there were over twenty of us in the camp. You can count I think more than twenty people in that picture. And usually there was supplies that come up every few

days. And usually there was at least one quarter of beef hangin' in one end of this building. And they'd just go cut off what they wanted to cook. (Laughs) Steaks, or roasts, or whatever. So we ate pretty well. 'Course we ate potatoes, things like that in a situation such as that. We had plenty to eat. But that was the way our beef was stored, because we had no refrigeration except for weather. And uh... I didn't leave the camp for the whole time I was there, for about six weeks. So, the fifth of December, of '35, we broke camp, we left Mount Mitchell and went to Weaverville. The sixth of December, and the twenty ninth (we went off to the Christmas holidays) and when we came back on the twenty ninth, we left Weaverville, and went up in the mountains. North of Weaverville. Again in tents. But in that camp, we were, they rented a farmhouse, which served as an office, and our kitchen in this farmhouse. It had enough space for us to eat, and a little recreation area. Table to play cards on and write letters. So we were at that camp, north of Asheville, between the twenty ninth of December and the twenty eighth of January. Almost a full month. And we worked as far north as we could, economically. They had other survey parties where we were. We were not the only party. They hired a number of survey parties fast as they could be trained and recruited.

So then, on the twenty eighth of January, my party, the party I was in was transferred back to Sparta, and at this time we began making property surveys, for Doughton Park. So timewise, that was pretty much-- we (laughs) on the twenty first of November, the Forest Service had made us put screens over the top of our smokestacks, to keep us from spreading forest fire. So it started snowing, and the snow was going on the ground, and we said, boy, nobody, we couldn't start a fire here if you wanted to. So somebody had a shotgun, and we shot the screens out. (Laughs) So our stoves could draw better. I made a note of the twenty first of November, we uh, it started snowin' on the sixteenth, and on the twenty first we shot holes in the screens. So that the stoves would work better. We just had—in fact we had to sleep in our clothes, 'cause it was too cold. It wasn't a very happy camp, to say the least. But it was a job. A lot of people had harder jobs than we had. We had some interesting experiences.

AG: So, after Doughton Park, did you then go to Cumberland Knob?

TN: Yes. M-hm. We had surveys, Parkway surveys there.

AG: And then, was that the last place you were?

TN: Yes, until, I left there to attend the University of Virginia, which incidentally was the day construction started. Started work on that sixteenth of September, whatever the day was, and that's the day I left, to go to the University of Virginia, in '36. And the following summer, I worked again, that was my last time, on the Parkway, the following summer. And that's when I went to Floyd, and we lived in Floyd, officially it was called a hotel, it was a two-story building with about six or eight rooms I guess on the second floor. A kitchen and dining room on the main floor. Anyway, uh, we went up there and worked all that summer. And the final estimate, as I explained on the other tape, that the contractor had gone in and moved the dirt he had graded, in that section of the Parkway, so we had to do what was known as the final estimate. Which is when they calculate the amount, the volume of earthwork the contractor had moved. And all the contractors were paid on the unit basis, so much per cubic yard. Of excavation. They got an extra compensation for rock. They got one price for dirt, and another price for rock.

So we were, we had to measure the road accurate, it was graded before it was paved. It was the basis for determining how much the contractor was paid. And that was terribly hard work because it involved climbing a steep bank, or a rocky bank on the other side, and a one and a half foot to one foot slope on the lower side. So then, goin' down the bank, you'd hit loose dirt, to negotiate on the uphill side. It was rocky soil, usually some dirt, and a lot of jagged rocks, you had to climb over. Depending on— ordinarily you'd take a measurement every fifty feet. And they would calculate the volume in that cross-section, of point A, and fifty feet further was point B. And they used what is known as the Average End Area Method to determine the volume in that fifty foot area. You can see the drawn X, so to speak, in the fifty foot box. And that was, where those lines crossed, was the average end area volume. That was the basis for payin'. However, if it was extremely rough ground, we maybe had to go twenty or twenty five feet, as opposed to fifty feet. If the terrain was uneven, we had to have stations of intervals greater than fifty feet. Are you followin'? We had to, always takin' cross section measurements. And that was the basis for determination of the yardage.

AG: So you started out working in Galax, right, originally?

TN: No, I started at Mile Post Zero, in Rockfish Gap. And we worked— well it was, let's see, June, might've been June, I didn't start my diary till the first of January of '35. About the middle of June until up in, oh October or November. Then we got too far to economically try— we worked as far as Raphine. Commuted from Waynesboro as far as Rapine, right where Crabtree Falls is, near the Parkway. And then it got too far to commute. And then they transferred us to Galax. Other parties had already been assigned to work in other areas, from Raphine South.

AG: And, at the first place, were you commuting from your home? Or was there a camp?

TN: I was living at home. The only two camps, one at Mount Mitchell the other, North of Weaverville, as far as I was concerned. I don't know whether any other units worked in camps or not. I doubt it. And uh, one of the reasons, that made it so difficult about Mount Mitchell, was, the opposite side from our camp was the watershed in the city of Asheville. They wouldn't let anybody, couldn't camp over there, 'cause it was, they said it might pollute the water supply. And there was a ranger along with us every day we were in the Asheville watershed. There was an Asheville warden along to make sure we didn't create pollution. In other words we had to carry a shovel, let me put it that way. To bury all the waste. In the river watershed. It was a long way down the mountain to where the actual water was. And because of that, our camp was about halfway between Gap A and Gap B. So we had to sometimes, we had to climb straight up the mountain, cross over and go down the other side to the survey line. That was difficult walking because they didn't cut any trees. It had been years since they had logged any, in the Asheville watershed, but a lot of trees had fallen on the ground, such as in a virgin forest. And we had to climb over all those logs. So it was very strenuous walking. 'Cause we had to negotiate those horizontal logs in so many places. And a lot of 'em, the large logs, you'd have to cut around them, or detour around 'em, or climb over 'em. Especially when your re carryin' an instrument, or stakes, survey equipment you had to carry in and out. Interestingly enough, these steel tapes, you used a leather thong, a shoestring affair at each end, and you hold it, and

perspiration would end up with salt on the leather. And you could go out, if we knew today we were goin' back to work at the same place tomorrow, we would leave our equipment except for our transit, didn't leave the expensive equipment like measuring tapes, and things like that, and we had to take the leather thongs out because if we left them, the next morning they would've been chewed up by squirrels, or groundhogs, or animals would eat the leather to get the salt from our hands. So it was just a precaution we had to take. See, I'm holding that leather in my hand there, I'm measuring, this a picture when I was a front rodman. There's the man back at the back, the rear chainman, holding the back end of the tape. And we're putting a stake here, on which we put a tack. And we write the distance on each of those stakes. And this man who drove the stake would write what is called the station number on there. And you can look at any stake along the survey line and it'd tell you exactly the number of miles, feet, and tenths of inches, tenths of feet, from the last part. You look at any of those stakes, it could tell you exactly how far we were, from the point of beginning. It was an accumulated total at each fifty feet, or whatever the distance. That was the technique for surveying in those days.

AG: What other jobs did you do?

TN: Well I started out, number one you'd cut brush, and what with the training period, everybody started out cutting brush, and carryin' their lunches, and the extra stakes. (Laughs) You were sort of the survey party mule, if you will. And then, you learned to do that, and then you start working over the rear chain, toward the rear end, and then you graduate to the front of the chain. And in between you might be the person driving the stakes and so forth, and marking stations. So when I started, I learned to run the level instrument as well as the transit. When I went to Costa Rica I did transit, instrument work. They were called instrument men, instrument men. There was brush cutter, rodman, instrument man, recorder, and Party Chief. Recorder is the person who made the calculations to calculate the curvature. In other words to calculate the curves, each time you set a stake on a curve it's a deflection so many degrees. A deflection off the tangent. When you go fifty feet, the recorder would make all those calculations. And he would give the front chainman a slip of paper

on which all these deflections are shown. He was called deflection analyst. So to the time a person got to be front chainman, he was considered skilled in that, because there was a lot— part of the skill was knowing where to drop the plumb-bob, the weight, so as not to waste time, when you can get three or four feet at a time. So I got skilled in that, so he'd give me the degree of curvature—  
- (TAPE END)

## SIDE TWO

TN: ...how the survey was done. It's important because nowadays it's all done in- absentia, from aerial photographs and laser surveys and all that. Especially you have no hazards at all, doing the Ice Rock surveys, because people who do it now would never even draw on the ground, in place of the rock. But we had to carry, we had our army pistol belts. We had to carry those pins, which were plumb-bobs, and a snake bite kit, we had to carry a first aid kit, 'cause in the mountains were rattlesnakes. And we had to carry

anti-venom. Each person had to carry anti-venom. In case he was snake-bit.

AG: Was anyone bitten while you were there?

TN: No, my boot was bitten once. But no more than the skin of it.

AG: What did you like about the job?

TN: Well, it was a job. You know, at the end of the depression, anyone who had a job was lucky. I think I said on the tape, this Mr. Hancock there, he was a college graduate, and he was makin' three dollars a day, at first, compared to my two fifty. That was beginning wages, two dollars and a half a day. But it wasn't before long that our wages increased somewhat. And we were paid twice a month with federal government checks. It was called the United States Bureau of Public Roads, which was the Department, a department of the Department of the Interior at the time. Or the Department of Commerce, I've forgotten which. But it was the Bureau of Public Roads... That's a good picture. A rodman, transit man... This man is a recorder, he's sittin' here making the calculations. The recorder on the survey.

AG: What didn't you like about the job?

TN: Weather. Cold, hot, chiggers. Chiggers, especially. 'Course then we didn't have insulated clothing. We just had to layer everything. And lotta times you wore leather, and eventually, we spent a lot of time nights puttin' saddle soap on our leather boots, tryin' to keep them from leakin'. If you preserved them, put preservative on 'em, they would keep your feet reasonably dry. Even in the snow. It was a job keepin' your feet dry enough to survive. And I tell you, those mountains, we worked in cold weather, I recorded here in my diary.

AG: Were you all sick a lot, working out there?

TN: No, amazingly not. I can't remember anyone ever— we had colds or somethin', but I don't remember anybody having any sick leave per se. Except after I went to Costa Rica I had to have a tonsillectomy. Had three weeks, but we were almost all— very few were over thirty. And many were about my age. Recently out of high school. A few were working, working part time and going to college part time. Most of us were just out of high school. Already these local people we would pick up, such as at Mount Mitchell, a lot of them had limited educations, so they were the people who did a lot of brush cutting. 'Cause in those cross sections, each fifty feet, you had to cut enough brush, perpendicularly, to see up and down, through those woods. And cut enough so the tape could go through unobstructed, the measuring tape. So that was called cutting cross-sections. And the people who hired locally were given a brush axe, and they could soon be trained. To cut a reasonably straight line up and down the mountainside. So they could make way, to get through, 'cause the tape had to be, you couldn't run it through trees, 'cause the measuring tape had to be unobstructed, 'cause it was on an angle. You had to calculate, make a calculation to reduce vertical measurements to horizontal. You had to figure the calculation. One of the most

interesting things we ran into in the surveying was, over near West Jefferson, we came to an old fashioned farmhouse. And as a survey, a lot of these were exploratory lines. And they would decide, is this, is Route A good, and survey Route A, and then go back to the gap or mountain, and go around the other side, and that would be survey Route B. And then they would analyze A and B and see which was the logical one to do. And uh, we didn't cut anything we didn't have to for measurement access, and so forth. But this one place was an old

fashioned house which had a breezeway between the kitchen and dining room in the main house. And it so happened that the line, the visual line, went through that house. So we just drug the chain while the people sat there and laughed at us. You know. We drug the chain and measured right through this house. And sometimes there were obstacles around which we had to triangulate. Which meant that you'd go to a point here, and digress over here to the base of the triangle, and come into one of the legs, and put in the base of the triangle and come back. And calculate the distance to, if it was a rock cliff or something like that, then the recorder could calculate a distance, on the basis of triangulation. But uh, 'course those mountains were infested somewhat, if you will, with moonshine stills. And we were told not to, if you come up on a still, ignore it. Don't report it. Because, there was a practical reason in there, if we were going to have to buy a right-away. And we didn't want to have somebody, some moonshiner mad, and increase the cost of his property. So we were warned not to report, if we happened to stumble on a moonshine still. Not to report it to the authorities, so as not to stir up the waters, so to speak, mash might be a better word. One day, I thought I smelled mash, and I walked down around and around a mountain hollow maybe a hundred feet, and I found a still. I smelled it. I remember one time a few months later, the sherrif and I got to be good friends, and I went on a raid or two with him in this area. And I finally told him, I think he had already found that one.

AG: Um, what was it like when you went on a raid with him?

TN: Just as I remember, nothing unusual, nothing to it, as there was nobody at the still. Just beat it up. You know, break it up. It'd be a lot of trouble to rebuild it. I never wanted to make an arrest at a still, 'course the ones I went with him on, they were gone, had seen him plannin' it.

AG: Did you have any interaction with the people that lived out there at all?

TN: Just casually. I don't remember any— no-one had a shotgun and ran us off, so to speak. Lot of people were smart enough to realize, it was gonna be an economic boost. Because you go down and see what an economic boost the Parkway has been to that whole area. Logging it, in those mountain ridges, eventually, many people realized, incidentally, it was called the Scenic, he worked on the Scenic Highway. And my father-in-law, who was a doctor, said he'd been out on the Scenic, knew the Scenic, things like that, which was a synonym for an area, where there were roads. The Scenic.

AG: What's your favorite story from that time, from working on the Parkway?

TN: Well, see some of the characters, if you will, Fred Hyatt was a character, I have his picture here somewhere. That's my wife's brother, and here I am here. Anyway, this guy was a comic. He was a truckdriver and, sort of a handyman, a rear rodman, he'd carry everything, and he could sing, he could imitate horses, he could whinny like a horse, to get their attention. My favorite character, was a fellow Davis, who was a transit man. He would uh, he had quaint expressions. When he would look to his right, he would say, "Move over toward Roanoke," instead of— he said, "Move over toward Roanoke, or West Jefferson," or something. He had a lot of, he'd break the monotony, by his directions, sometimes. He used to come up with a— (interrupted by his wife) This fellow Eckles, the one I mentioned in the tape, who was a super expert axeman. He could cut a tree off that looked like it had been sawed. And the party chief, Hancock, was a very

interesting fellow. He was easygoing. He was wonderful, brainwise, but he was awkward physically. He almost cut his own head off with a bush axe. He was cold, or something, he started swingin' his axe, and he hung that bush axe in a tree, when it came down, so help him, he just barely brought the blood on the back of his neck. Almost cut his own head off. With a bush axe. And this guy Starbuck, I'm sure he's dead now, so he can't hardly care, but he had no sense of direction. And one day in my diary I wrote, said, "Starbuck got lost today." (Laughs) And there was a clearing. And we were gettin' ready to leave, it was a big clearing surrounded by brush all around. And we could hear somebody thrashing around, and we said, "That's Starbuck, he's lost." So we made it up not to yell, you know, we weren't gonna yell and give away our positions. Just let him find his own way. So he's bangin' around with his machete, tryin' to cut his way out of the dense jungle in there. (Laughs) If we had yelled at him, he of course coulda gotten his bearings. But he had no sense of direction. But he was good on paper. He had been married, he married, his wife was named Opal. They had been married, they had divorced, and remarried. So that's one of the things I remember about T.W. Starbuck. But again, he went to Costa Rica, and he was a party chief down there. He was good on paper, but he could get lost in the woods.

AG: So did everyone get along pretty well?

TN: Oh yes. We had a couple rum heads. They had rough weekends, and then come in Monday morning still a little bit hung over. And everyone had an army canteen of water. And this guy who was hung over, he would empty his canteen by ten o'clock, and he's beggin' everybody for water, you know, after ten o'clock. And a lot of places, you know, we learned, a lot of those mountain hollows, there's underground streams. And sometimes, you could hear water. And you'd go down on your knees, and dig and throw rocks, and pretty soon you go down twelve or eighteen inches, and there's a little flowing stream. And you can soon get enough to, get a little place and get enough water to fill the canteen. And I know one time, at Humpback Rock, somebody, me, or someone else, was sent out with three or four cans to find water. So we went to one of these hollows, and dug, and find unearh the underground stream, and get enough water to fill your canteens. Once or twice that was an official project, just to find drinking water. We learned a lot of ways of the woods, if you will. 'Course you had no refrigeration. Didn't carry any food that might spoil in four or five hours. Ate a lot of cheese sandwiches, and some sort of a pickled spread. You'd spread that on, which would be the base of a sandwich now, but that was, two pieces of bread, with some of that smeared between them, and that was a sandwich. And cheese, usually. Ham, ham wouldn't spoil. Little jam sandwiches. Two pieces of bread. Lot of times we'd build up a little fire, take a forked stick and toast our cheese sandwiches. Except one day I was out in the park, somewhere there, we ended up, we were foolish enough to build a fire where there was some moss, on a rock. And the fire started spreading, and we had to get our jackets off, and we had to beat the ground for an hour, until we get that fire to keep from spreading through the mountains. That taught us a lesson about where to build a fire to toast a sandwich. And that was somewhere either in or near Doughton Park, I can't remember exactly where. Am I boring you?

AG: No, not at all. This is great. It sounds like it was a pretty big adventure out there working.

TN: It was. We had a lot of jostling among us. And makin' fun of each other. Davis, the instrument man, he was a real prank. See this man right here, he'd move it over an inch or two, or a foot, depending on the size of how far away the city was, and take it a quarter of an inch. And signals, hand signals and everything. This was to the Right, to the Left, and that was, Correct, that's Good. If they're too far, they, say Good, crossed arms, semaphore fashion like that, meant, that's good. And then the front transit, the rear rodman, in some cases would be a

quarter a mile away, depending if there was open terrain or not. He had to wait back there on a pivotal point, and he'd get a hand signal, to tell you move ahead.

AG: There was a lot of joking around sometimes?

TN: Oh yes. There was. Too cold or too hot, in Doughton Park, the most pristine place we worked, that beautiful basin with tumbling little cataracts and everything, in the summertime, and there's that tape. That's Gordon Knipe, and that's Fred Hine, I believe. 1935. (Indistinguishable mumbling) I'm not sure. That's all the survey pictures that I have. I've got some somewhere, but I just couldn't find them, I'm sorry. Some that I sent to Asheville to be reproduced. Including one or two tent pictures. I think just across the road from that building. An enlarged picture of the old railroad shop. (Coughs) Can you think of anything you want me to cover?

AG: Um, what was the best thing that happened to you while you were on the Parkway?

TN: Found her (referring to his wife).

AG: How did uh--

TN: And I eventually got to work over, see I was born in Haywood County, and weekends I'd go visit relatives, had relatives in Asheville. It was a nice feature. And I was sensitive to realize that I was gettin' a good engineering education, on the job. 'Cause I didn't study engineering. I studied business administration. As I said, I realized I was getting some good experience. I had grown up on a farm, and I knew farm work. And I knew what hard work was. See this tape would cause a callus, along this part of the hand, that's where all the pressure was on that shoe string. And that callus was an eighth of an inch thick all along there. See the strain of this tape wrapped around your finger, and that's where the pressure, the pressure point, that's where the callus grew. And 'course we had callus deposits on our hands from the use of axes and things like that.

AG: Um, how did you end up at the boarding house where you met your wife?

TN: Well we were just transferred. There weren't many boarding houses, only two or three in Sparta, and there were perhaps fifteen of us there. We had to spread out over the community. And there was a sign up there, and there was a tailor where some stayed. And Olive's brother, they lived next door, and some of 'em stayed at Aunt Myrtle's, next door to where I stayed. And you just get to be fixtures in the community, so to speak. 'Cause most of us couldn't go anywhere on weekends. We had time to kill on weekends, and we'd go to churches, and dances and things like that. 'Cause that was the natural thing to do.

AG: What other activities did you take part in during your spare time? After you were done working, and on weekends?

TN: We had radios, and newspaperaers. And books we wanted to read. Only a few of us had cars. I never had a car. Tom Eckles had a car. He was

a rambunctious guy. He was, a tough mountaineer. And I mentioned in the other tape a surveyor, who lived in the Doughton Park area, a gifted man, an agile fella, who led our party. It would've taken a lot lot longer, to make these surveys, had he not been along, knowin' the territory, knowin' the mountains. And he had made the basic research, on the property, the property under the deed, the register of deeds in North Carolina. Anyway, he was the one who helped us, and kept his saddle horse with him. And at the end of the work he would take a run and bound over the horse's rump into the saddle, "See you folks tomorrow," you know. And he'd get to the place the next morning on his horse. (Laughs) With the necessary information we'd need to do the work that day. I have no idea what his name was. But he was a land surveyor in Wilkes County. (END OF TAPE #1)

TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE

TN: Most of our state parks in Virginia were in that program. The summer I was in Floyd, we came down at least once, maybe twice, to Fairy Stone Lake, from Floyd, to go swimming. It was a new lake that was finished in '36, I think. And we came down the summer of '36.

AG: You mentioned on the other tape that your supervisors would sometimes let you all leave early and go swimming, is that where that was?

TN: In Doughton Park. In Doughton Park, yes. Go skinny-dippin'. There was beautiful trees, (indistinguishable.) There was a waterfall there, near the Parkway, a very hard climb. A hundred yards or so, almost vertically down. A place in Allegheny County, Cumberland Knob, is the site of a waterfall in the bounds of that park. There's a sign at the visitor's center for a trail leadin' to the waterfall. Lots of waterfalls of various sizes in the mountains. You can walk up and see that sheer rock face, and you knew you had to survey that. I'm not sure, there might've been some engineers doin' construction, but I don't know. I think somebody's already talked with Lee Medford at Alta Pass. 'Cause he stayed, worked on the construction phase several years. But these other people, I have no idea. 'Cause most of them are a lot older than I am, and long since gone, I'm pretty sure. The local people might be a source of information.

AG: Did you all experience any other big events while you were there, like maybe forest fires, or search and rescue, or anything like that?

TN: No, none of that that I can remember. Would've been in my diary, if such had been the case. See this five year diary, this is five years, for each day, I wrote five lines.

AG: That must be fascinating to look through that now. When did you start keeping the diary?

TN: January 1, '35.

AG: And you wrote in it every day?

TN: M-hm. March the twelve, rained so hard all day and we could not go out. Snowed a little tonight. Worked, next day we worked in snow. The following year, checked angles all day. I drove the truck that day. Went to a dance, in Ted s car. That's Ted Starbuck, the man who couldn't find his way out of the woods. March fifteen, that's '35,

Worked in the open all day, started a new project. Went to see a Western movie tonight. March fourteen. Cold as the devil. Paid my board and bed and had two dollars left. March twenty five. Been in Sparta two months today. January twenty. Nothing happened today except everybody froze. Everbody still frozen on January twenty one. Started to Independence at night, but hit a rock, and fell back down. The rock had fallen off the side of the mountain, and the car climbed over and it broke the oil pan. 1942, I went in the army. Saturday: Nothin' to do all day. Missed my ride home so I have to stay in this place. Went to see Wings at the Dove. It was the first picture at the Sparta theater. How 'bout that. Wings of the Dove, I always thought it was a John Wayne picture. February first. First picture at the Sparta theater. Hm. And here, February the fourth. My friend wrote, "This is the first time I met Tom Nolan." (Indistinguishable) This is the next year I'm readin', '35, and then '36. Chased all over Wilkes County. Lookin' for a starting place. Slushy today. The truck slid out of the road. (Laughs) That's where, this is in Doughton Park. (Laughs) We'd have to take the fence rails from the farmer's haystack, and jack up and gradually rig up the side of the truck so we could right it. Nearly blew us away. Got a radio on February the sixth. Walked in a near way today, then we changed, we progressed along the line and then come back a different way to shorten the travel time... Am I boring you?

AG: No, not at all.

TN: Oh, bad news today. They tell us we won't get paid for rainy days. We'll have to change our (indistinguishable). March of '35. '36, ten inches of snow today.

AG: You even worked in ten inches of snow. Wow.

TN: February eighth, '35, had a good week. Ran over two miles of line that week. We're working ourselves out of a job. Tom Eckles wrote in here, "Took my boots, size fourteen, to Galax, to have 'em fixed." (Laughs) Took 'em to Galax. Following, Tom Eckles messed up, the opposite page to be (indistinguishable). February eleven, we all got zero today, but we worked just the same. Oh this is interesting. February the twelve, today was the end of the payperiod. Twenty five iron men for the landlady who says thay all eat too much. (Laughs) Are you recording this?

AG: M-hm.

TN: We laid the hubs, in '36. The hubs are, you cut locust, and locust is the most durable wood there is. Long lines, they were just about six inches long, and sharpened by hand, you drive those into the ground and put a tack in it for the actual pole. Those are called hubs. Went into Sparta today, went to a movie tonight, and saw Bachelor of Arts. Fred Crawford was in it. Fred Crawford was a neighbor from Waynesville, North Carolina. He played football at Duke, and then he's a professional football player, and obviously he was a big part in the movie. Monday, eighteenth of February, '35. Still cold today. Curves are not checked. Next year: spent a lot of time by the fire today, it snowed. About to go to jail for possum-huntin'. Well out of season possum-huntin'. February nine, very windy. About to get blown off the mountain. Looks like March is ahead of time. February 26, a lot of snow. Next year: new snowfall today. Hare, that was a community, it was an area of Allegheny County. Ever heard of it, Hare, H- A-R-E? Allegheny, somewhere up near Saddle Mountain. Our division, that meant, we'd go on one side of the mountain and then try the other side. Next year: worked on,

this was in Doughton Park, worked on a ridge today and had a long walk. Too tired to write. Didn't want to go out of the house. Some days we'd park, where the Parkway is now, we had to go down those ridges, down the hollows, and some days we had an awful long walk.

AG: Were you working six-hour days, or eight-hour days?

TN: Eight hours, usually. It was at least eight hours, including travel time. Sometimes it was ten hours. (Indistinguishable) that was a new pair of boots, field boots, that was in '36, February. Leap year, '36. They'd give you two kinds of beans for supper. (Laughs) October of '36. Spent the day tryin' to find a mistake, (indistinguishable). March ten, 1936, drove a truck and patched my pants tonight. Seagull Ridge. Out in Doughton Park somewhere. March seventeen, rained all mornin' and turned into a blizzard. When it snowed we did not even go out. No lights. Broken power line.

AG: What did you all do on days like that? When the weather was too bad to even go out?

TN: We worked on notes, or makin' stakes. Hubs, I've often wondered (indistinguishable), those locust hubs. 'Course out of the tents we had to cut wood. Even on Saturdays and Sundays. March nineteen, got stuck in the mud tryin' to work and it took several days. Must've been a real blizzard. (Pause) Worked over the tunnel today, that's the tunnel over in Asheville. (Indistinguishable) Beaucatcher Tunnel.

AG: What did you say on your last day of work?

TN: It was in September. (Pause) September the eleventh. '36. It says: Sections A and B to do. This was the tenth. Cumberland Knob, got my seat warmed tonight. Apparently must have run a line or somethin' like that. September the eleven, our last day Back to Ashe Rock. (Indistinguishable) So September the eleven was my last day, which incidentally was the same day they started work, the contractor started work at the state line. (Long pause) This is in Doughton Park: we sort of pulled the car through the creek. (Pause) And this is Jefferson: in '35.

AG: Was that in, was that a leisure thing?

TN: Pardon?

AG: Was that at your leisure, or was that work related?

TN: That was when we were transferred. We leap-frogged over there, the next town over from Sparta. Worked on Bluff Ridge in '36. The transit was called the gun.

AG: Oh really?

TN: M-hm. It's too bad they didn't have more space, (indistinguishable) four corners. A long history there.

AG: Yeah, it's really interesting.

TN: Now are we doing?

AG: Um, let me see. (END OF SIDE ONE)

## SIDE TWO, TAPE TWO

TN: I didn't work for the Parkway, but I worked for the U.S. Geological Survey. In Southside, Virginia at their business office. Reported down there, and the party chief said, "You folks're going to be staying at a boarding house, you're roomin' with somebody, I don't remember his name," and I went over there, and it was the same guy I had roomed with the previous summer. Again, a coincidence. We ended up by coincidence, two summers in succession. And we saw each other, each of the two parties at Cumberland Knob, on the fiftieth anniversary. And I believe, I'm not sure, that two or three years later, don't believe I made that one. I was on Asheville TV, I had made a montage of pictures I took up there from

Cumberland Knob, and some TV person spotted that. My sister saw the program, my sister who lives in Waynesville. But I never did see it. That would sound like an interesting project for you. What sort of— is there anyone else, have you talked to anyone else in the survey category?

AG: Um, I talked to a couple of people who were doing survey work.

TN: Do you remember their names?

AG: I can't remember off the top of my head, but I can look them up.

TN: It would be another coincidence if it had been someone that I knew... There was a man named Agee who lived in Floyd, who worked with us in 1937. Agee is a common name. (Pause) (Indistinguishable) Can't think of anything else that you might be interested in. Or anything you might want to cover.

AG: What was your, what was the worst experience that you had when you were working on the Parkway?

TN: I can't pinpoint any one incident. Potentially one was, the truck turned over at Laurel Springs. In the picture, it was not a panel truck, it was a ton and a half truck. We'd put chains on it and go through heavy snow and ice. It had cyclone fencing on the side, and it had boxes on each side of it, stakes and things like that. And for the cold weather there was a curtain, you could drop down on it and cover it. Otherwise, it was open to the elements. But the curtain could be up in good weather. But you'd let the curtain stand in cold weather. My favorite place was sitting on the tailgate in good weather, with your feet dangling there. 'Cause it was a cool place to ride. But anyway, there was a sharp curve here in Laurel Springs, and the driver met somebody around it, and the truck just turned over gently. The two guys that were tailgatin' it were thrown over across the fence to a farmer's field. It just turned the truck over on its side, it did not upset it, it was just on its side, so to speak. And those metal shiners, about the size of a fifty cent piece, we had a bucket there, where we'd put down a shiner, and drive a tack through that, and that was to make it, to find it easily. It was about the size of a bottle top. Anyway those things shattered out, and everybody thought that was glass, broken glass. (Laughs) He was bleeding, but no-one was hurt. But I guess that's the narrowest escape, when that truck turned over. We set, there were longitudinal benches on the inside, and we just locked our feet. Sitting in there, nearly eight of us, sitting right there. At least eight, most of the time. We couldn't see out because the sides were too low to see out. (Indistinguishable) horizontal from side A to side B. And I can't think of any— no tree fell, no rock. Or anything of that nature.

AG: Which, um...

TN: The tents, the snow caved the tents in, we used to go in there to sleep, you had to crawl under like an Eskimo. And stand up and shake the snow off the canvas, and drive the stakes in the frozen ground. And fix the tents again. I can't remember any serious injuries. Nobody seriously cut or anything like that.

AG: Which location did you like working at the best?

TN: I guess Doughton Park was the most interesting, because it was open, bluegrass hills, beautiful streams, and those hollows. The scenery was just— have you

TN: (continued) been there? Spectacular scenery. (Pause) Geographically, that was the highlight. Did you hit anyone else with survey experience, I know you talked with one or two?

AG: M-hm.

TN: More with construction, or not?

AG: Yes, more. Yes. Then one or two, well I interviewed one Park Ranger also. His name was Dean Richardson.

TN: I didn't know him.

AG: Um, aside from, when you were on the Asheville Watershed, did you have any contact with the National Park Service staff, while you were at the other place?

TN: No, it was still, you see, the government had not bought the land. It was still, the Park Service was not involved. It had not been turned over to the Park Service at that time. It was still an engineering project, with the United States Bureau of Public Works. I don't know just when the Park Service took command, so to speak. Jurisdiction. But I'm pretty sure that it was not the Park Service at that time. I don't know when it was changed over. Reassigned, if you will.

AG: Can you think of any other interesting experiences that you had when you were working over there?

TN: One of the years in Spruce Pine we had to survey through an apple orchard. They wouldn't let us cut anything. And we had to crawl on our hands and knees under the apple trees. And lay the transit on the ground. You could shorten the legs that had collapsible legs. And they wouldn't let us trim the tree branch to see through. So short measurements, and short distances and so forth. It was just a nuisance, no real harm except it was a nuisance to protect those tree limbs. We never carried a cross-cut saw, we just carried axes. When the tree was too big to see through, we'd try and go around it. 'Cause we couldn't saw anything down. We couldn't cut it down with an axe, so we'd work around it. It was a rule, we never carried a cross-cut saw. (Pause) (Indecipherable) You can see all the highlights in the newspaper articles. And on the tape, it's just a personal opinion, of the Parkway, and so forth, in my diary. I've always been sorry I didn't manage with the same (indistinguishable). But it's not my decision.

AG: Um, have you been up on the Parkway recently?

TN: Yes, last week we traveled from Peaks of Otter to Rock Creek Road, that was the most recent time. We had our daughter and son-in-law with us and then we went and took a bus ride up to the Peaks. We had been there before. And my daughter had, forty years ago. So she enjoyed that. And we traveled, within the last two years, we traveled, last year, a good distance. And within the last two years we've traveled in the Baslam Mountain area, Fort Levy area. So we've been there a number of times since it was built. Most of it was in segments.

AG: So overall, would you say that your experience with the Parkway was a positive one?

TN: Yes. No doubt. Of course, as I said before, it was an education. Of educational value for me especially. Due to the line of work that I

ended up in, city administration, and I had that exposure to the engineering phase. Which has helped my career. Especially after I went to Costa Rica, and the Inter-American Highway for a year and a half. And I worked in a design office and I really got good training in that phase. In engineering. And in the Army engineers, I had two years, in military construction, overseas. Given my experience on the Parkway survey work helped my in my assignments in the military.

AG: Oh really?

TN: M-hm. They classified me as a surveyor, and military occupation's specialty M.O.S. number, and I was called a surveyor. My duties overseas involved using, supervising road construction and so forth. So all in all, it was a beneficial experience for me.

AG: Well, I think we've pretty much covered all of my questions, so...

TN: I hope so. Intelligently. (END OF INTERVIEW)

5/17/96

Mrs Holt:



Thomas B. Noland  
540 Kings Way Rd.  
Martinsville, VA 24112-6601

after your call today  
I found some enclosed  
copies which will help you  
locate various items, I think.

Look forward to a  
visit —

Thomas B. Noland

540 134 1325



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

RR 3, Box 39D

Vinton, Virginia 24179

RECEIVED  
BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY  
1985 MAY 21 AM 8:17  
HEADQUARTERS OFFICE  
ASHEVILLE, NC

IN REPLY REFER TO:

August 27, 1985

700 N.W. Bank Bldg  
Cumberland  
28801

Mr. Thomas B. Noland  
1267 Lanier Road  
Martinsville, VA 24112

plus related article, enclosed

Dear Mr. Noland:

I would like to express my appreciation for your letter and the copy of the newspaper article "Recollections of a Parkway Nomad". I have forwarded copies of these to Parkway Superintendent Gary Everhardt, and I am sure that he will find their reading as enjoyable as I have.

We are looking forward to your participation in the 50th Anniversary Program at Cumberland Knob. From all indications, there will be a good turnout of those, such as yourself, who were instrumental in the construction of this magnificent motor road.

I have enclosed some additional information on other events that will be taking place and hope that you will be able to attend some of these activities.

Again, thank you for your letter, and we look forward to seeing you on September 11.

Sincerely,

Hoyt C. Rath  
Management Assistant

HCR:ed





# MARS HILL COLLEGE

MARS HILL, NORTH CAROLINA 28754

4 September 1985

Mr. Thomas B. Noland  
1267 Lanier Road  
Martinsville, Virginia 24112

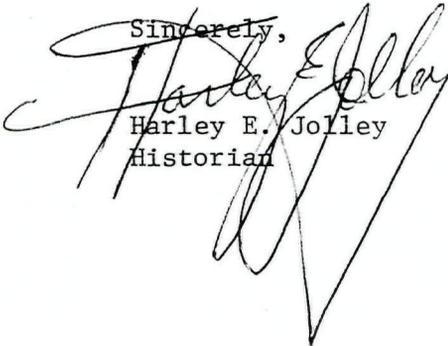
Dear Mr. Noland:

What a coincidence: The very day your letter arrived I was alerted by a Parkw\_ay ranger that he had talked with you and secured your address from him.

Thanks a million for the fine article. I am delighted to know that there are men like you who have a keen sensitivity to the value of history. I would especially like to sit down and chat with you about your Parkway experiences.

Thanks again for your gracious courtesy. I am looking forward to seeing you at Cumberland Knob on Wednesday, September 11, 1985.

Sincerely,



Harley E. Jolley  
Historian



# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY  
700 Northwestern Bank Building  
Asheville, North Carolina 28801

IN REPLY REFER TO:

N16

September 13, 1989

Mr. Thomas B. Noland  
1267 Lanier Road  
Martinsville, Virginia 24112

Dear Mr. Noland:

I received your letter with the articles you wrote. How fascinating and exciting it must have been to have directly participated in the construction of the Blue Ridge Parkway. You certainly endured some harsh conditions!

I would be interested in seeing the snapshots you mentioned. I will be sure to return them promptly.

Were you involved in the Craggy Gardens survey or construction? If so, can you tell me about your experiences, any significant circumstances, delays, events, etc. that occurred?

I, too, enjoyed talking with you and your wife. I certainly appreciate your continued interest in the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Sincerely,

*Sue Jennings*

Sue Jennings  
Park Ranger



IN REPLY REFER TO:

# United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY  
700 Northwestern Bank Building  
Asheville, North Carolina 28801

K30

December 4, 1989

Mr. Thomas Noland  
1267 Lanier Road  
Martinsville, Virginia 24112

Dear Mr. Noland:

↗ Please find enclosed 17 black and white original photographs which you kindly loaned the Blue Ridge Parkway.

I apologize for the delay in their return. The photography lab who performed the duplication work returned the prints to us just this afternoon.

Thank you again for the use of your pictures and your continued interest in the Blue Ridge Parkway. Happy Holidays.

Sincerely,

*Sue Jennings*

Sue Jennings  
Park Ranger

Enclosures



# United States Department of the Interior



## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY

200 BB&T Building

One Pack Square

Asheville, North Carolina 28801

IN REPLY REFER TO:

K22

April 26, 1991

Thomas B. Noland  
1267 Lanier Road  
Martinsville, Virginia 24112

Dear Mr. Noland:

Thank you for your donation of the postcard and the Souvenir Folder of Mount Mitchell. We are delighted to have the old scenes depicting the area and the Blue Ridge Parkway. As you are obviously aware, old postcards provide a visual, historical record that can be quite useful and enlightening. With this in mind, we are placing these items in our archives for protection and reference.

It was very thoughtful of you to make this donation, and we very much appreciate your thinking of us.

Sincerely,

Gary Everhardt  
Superintendent





IN REPLY REFER TO:

# United States Department of the Interior



NATIONAL PARK SERVICE  
Blue Ridge Parkway  
200 BB&T Building  
One Pack Square  
Asheville, North Carolina 28801

H20

October 29, 1991

Thomas B. Noland  
1267 Lanier Road  
Martinsville, Virginia 24112

Dear Mr. Noland:

We are sorry to have taken this long to let you know that we received your letter and cassette tape. As a partial explanation, we do not always keep a tape player on hand in the headquarters office here in Asheville, and that delayed us a bit. In any case, we want to tell you that we appreciate very much your narrative account of your experiences as one of the early surveyors of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

As you may know, there are some oral history interviews in our library, but most accounts deal with park construction and operations, so that your account has significant historical value. Besides that, your stories about enduring snow storms, contending with treacherous Ice Rock, and other experiences are informative and entertaining. Thank you for sharing them.

You mention that your narrative is based on a diary that you kept. We would be interested in obtaining a copy of your diary or, if there are portions that you would rather not make public, then selected pages. If you are willing to do this, please let me know or call Interpretive Specialist Phil Noblitt at (704) 259-0719. Mr. Noblitt is responsible for the Parkway archives and could coordinate details.

Again, we appreciate your thinking of us.

Sincerely,

James H. Parr  
Chief Ranger



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So on October 31st, we moved to a camp which my diary says was called Camp Bradley, B-R-A-D-L-E-Y, but I don't know why. I did not record the reason. But as I remember it, the camp was about two miles along the North side of Mount Mitchell, that is about two miles from the gap of the mountain where the road turns up to Mt. Mitchell peak. And some cross ties were still in, but the rails had been removed. So it was a rough ride from the gap of the mountain around there. We put up tents around an area which contained an old building, perhaps twenty feet by forty or fifty feet which we had to cover with tarpaper to keep the weather out. And this was our, it had apparently been a railroad shop, or something like that, in connection with the lumbering operation.

Anyway, in one end, we had our kitchen, and the other end, our table area and so forth, took considerable space because we had twenty or more people sometimes in camp there. So in the kitchen end, our stove was an army-type field range, which was nothing more than sheet metal boxes, or rather sheet metals without bottoms. Sheet metal boxes without bottoms, which were set in an elevated dirt box. So that type of cooking arrangement required a lot of wood, as did our tents, because it was fall of the year and already getting cold. But I can remember that we had, when we'd get provisions, fresh beef, a quarter of beef or a side of beef, would hang

in the end of the room opposite the stove, and the meat was carved as we used it. We got provisions from time to time. And even though the food was rough, it was adequate. So after October 31, we worked out of that camp, and we had a lot of work to do, to cut wood, for the kitchen, and for our own tents. We had very small sheet metal cones, actually, with a door cut in and a four inch stove pipe attached to the top of that, but they provided very little heat and a lot of smoke. After a few days we got better stoves which also smoked, but they had ash screens on the top of the smoke pipes. And one night we violated the regulations by takin' a shot gun and ventilating one of those screens, but we had less smoke in our tents after we did that.

It was rough doin' that survey work, 'cause, in the first place, we couldn't camp, we had to camp where we were because we were not permitted to camp or spend much time really in the City of Asheville Watershed. And there were many trees, there'd been no logging at that time, and there were many fallen trees over which we had to climb and crawl, as we moved along the centerline. And we were not permitted to cut anything more than absolutely necessary. And sometimes, as I remember, we even had to triangulate around certain clumps or groups, or groves, of prime timber. So it was hard work for surveying. And we did get to hear a lot of bear dogs running bears up there.

And, let's see, on November 11, 12 and 13, we had heavy constant rain, and November 16, our first real snow, although the ground had been frozen. And then on December 2nd, there was a very substantial four-inch snow. The day before we left camp to go to Weaverville. And as we left the camp, one place, the stream had already frozen over and built up a berm, so to speak, or a crossover of solid ice. And we had to take axes, and cut out a ditch, in the ice, for the upper wheels of our truck, our vehicles, to guarantee that we would not slide over the side of the mountain, from that ice flow.

So we went from that Camp Bradley, to Weaverville, on December 6, and we commuted to the Survey Line out of Weaverville for a little over a week, when we went into a camp on December 15, at the Head of the Hollow, below Beale's Gap. At this spot, we rented a large frame house, which served as kitchen and mess facilities, and as a field office. However, we had once more to live in those army pyramidal tents.

We had Christmas off, and when we got back, I got back to Asheville from Waynesboro after a night and day on the train, on New Year's eve. And we rendezvoused in Asheville, and when we got back to our camp, the heavy snow had pulled the pegs on our tents, so our canvas was draped around the center pole, and part of our bunks were exposed to the snow. But anyway, we had to crawl under that canvas, and find our snow-clothes, so to speak, and shake the snow off, and re-erect our tents in the darkness before we could get in to bed that night. A memorable way to start the New Year on a Survey Party.

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transferred back to Sparta, to work on property surveys, leading to acquisition of the land which was to comprise Doughton Park.

A couple of notes about that survey work in Doughton Park: There is still a cabin, which I believe is called the Caudill Cabin, which visitors are invited to see, down in a deep hollow, from the beautiful bluegrass meadows down at Doughton Park. And we had our cheese sandwiches one day, in the porch of that cabin, which had already been vacated, because of its impending, or in fact, acquisition by the government. Anyway, when I got back to Sparta, the doctor who was to become my father-in-law, told me an incident of interest. He had

finished medical school, and began his practice in Allegheny county in nineteen and eight, before he had an automobile. And when I told him about having lunch on that porch, he told me of having delivered several babies, I don't remember how many, at that cabin. And when I had remarked about the difficult climb it was from the cabin back up to the plateau, he said he had no trouble getting down there on a horse, and when it came time to climb the mountain, he would dismount, hold on to the horse's tail, and let the horse pull him, somewhat effortlessly on his part, up to where he could mount, and ride his horse in the usual fashion.

And a note about the location work on Ice Rock, in Doughton Park. It was a very, very difficult and unusual survey assignment. Because to take cross sections, we had to measure that rock with a level rod, and take readings with a hand level and a Jacob staff, but we had to add another man to our survey party, who might be called a Rope Man. Because we had acquired a length of one-inch rope, and this extra man, if you will, had to snug the rope around the appropriate tree, and make sure it didn't give way. And then the other man and myself, I was the front rodman, had to hold on to the rope, go down on the face of the rock. And when it came time to take a reading, we had to pinch that rope in the bend of one of our knees, squat down and take a reading from that position, under those dangerous conditions.

Perhaps to our surprise, we did survive, and no-one fell off that rock. And 'course, if we had fallen, there would've been no chance of survivin', 'cause it was a sheer drop.

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And I shall remember always Basin Creek, what a lovely place it was, because as we ran those surveys in that valley, in that hollow, in that drainage basin, if we had a good day, and got finished without having to rerun any of the lines because of lack

of closure, the party chief would let us leave early enough to get a good swim, in one of those many pools in Basin Creek. So that was a good reward for a good days work. We had yellow jackets and chiggers and all that which comes with mountain survey work.

After finishing the property line surveys in Doughton Park, my party moved to Cumberland Knob Park as it was to become. And we worked on the property surveys there. And I remember a spectacular waterfall not far below Cumberland Knob Peak, and the line goes back near several along the Parkway. Besides Basin Creek, there is one near Bull Mountain, in Allegheny County. A very hard climb down to the head of the fall. And then when I went to the head of the fall, on a Sunday, if you will, climb down there on an outing, then I had seen it from the bottom as well as the top.

So I finished, I resigned my survey Party work on September 8, 1936, and was back exactly fifty years later, for the celebration at the Cumberland

Knob Park, to Celebrate the beginning of construction in 1936. I left to enter the University of Virginia. I worked the following summer out of Floyd Courthouse, where we were workin' on final estimates, after the grading had been completed, North of Route 8 in that section of the Parkway.

So much for my diary entries with the fill-in I have attempted to make, and I hope they have been of interest to anyone who may have listened. This ends this narration on September 11, 1991.

May 13, 1999

Thomas Noland  
560 King's Way Road  
Martinsville, VA 24112

Dear Mr. Noland:

Enclosed is a copy of the 1996 interview about your experiences on the Blue Ridge Parkway. This copy is for you to keep. The original transcription and tapes are being inventoried and stored in the Blue Ridge Parkway archives collection where they can be used by park staff and the public for future research.

I want to thank you for your participation in the Parkway Oral History Project and helping us to preserve the history of the Blue Ridge Parkway.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (828) 271-4779, ext. 243.

Again, thank you for your contribution to this very important project.

Sincerely,

Jackie Holt  
Park Curator

enclosure

2/23/99

Alyssa Grossman

RECEIVED  
BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY  
1999 FEB 26 AM 11:21

Re: your letter of 2/11/99  
with enclosure

I have tried to clean up  
the subjects covered in the  
transcriptions, I hope to your  
satisfaction.

Note my revised house  
number, due to 911 charger, <sup>560</sup> King's way  
ed.

Thanks for letting me  
participate. I will be 84 in May,  
and I am proud to have  
had a part in the Parkway.

Thomas B. Ward

540 634 1325

Rough Draft

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- TN: That's perhaps the most descriptive photo. That's taken in what was called Camp Bradley, that's where construction camp for Mount Mitchell servers. It's one of those, I'm pretty sure, I can safely say, we produced.
- AG: So was this the building where they had like the kitchen?
- TN: Yes, you can see the tar paper, it's sort of weatherized, so to speak. It was just an old shop building or something.
- AG: Where were your tents?
- TN: I can show you that. There must be a picture <sup>pyramidal</sup> somewhere, show it to you. Don't know where I set that one. We had about six army ~~parameter~~ (?) tents.
- AG: So were all of these men on the survey crews?
- TN: M-hm. And I'm standing here. And this is Lee Medford who lives at Altapass, and where the others are on Low Mont. And this man, he lived in Waynesville. He's been dead a number of years.
- AG: Who was the supervisor?
- TN: Let's see. This is the party chief, and this is another head too. Two full parties. And this, this was the party chief and this man here is...
- AG: Do you remember their names?
- TN: Yes, I can identify nearly everybody in the picture. His name is Hugh Hancock. And this is T.W. Starbuck. S-T-A-R-B-U-C-K. Later, we went to Costa Rica, my wife and I, where I worked on the Inter-American Highway. And this man was, I worked for him down there. They transferred a bunch of us, so to speak. When the money was cut off for the Blue Ridge Parkway, they put money in this defense project, the Inter-American Highway, to build a road between San Jose, Costa Rica and the Panama Canal. So I was contacted after I finished school, and went to Costa Rica to work. So I worked with that man again there.
- AG: How did you originally get involved with the survey work on the Parkway?
- TN: Well my brother was already working with them, he had worked with them on the Skyline Drive Project. He made the contacts, when I got out a high school, and uh, in a sense, my brother got me the job. And another brother worked for about six months. So ~~it was~~ a short while ~~that~~ <sup>for</sup> 1934, that three brothers were on three different survey parties on the Blue Ridge Parkway. Beginning at Mile Post One. Workin' South.
- AG: So how old were you when you started?
- TN: Let me see, thirty four, subtract fifteen from thirty four. Nineteen. It was in June of 1934. As I said I know the names of most everybody one there. This one man is from Galax. Wadsworth is somewhere in New England, I think. Young man. And I could say that he was much older than I. And my brother who had known him also, saw him in a nursing home a few years before he died, in Maryland. And two brothers, Hilton brothers, somewhere around Lawrenceville, Virginia.
- AG: When were you born?
- TN: In 1915. May 12, 1915.
- AG: Where?
- TN: In Haywood County, North Carolina. My family moved from Waynesville, North Carolina to Waynesboro, Virginia in 1928. And I went to high school in Waynesboro, and that's how I ended up on the Parkway up there. Now that figure on the Parkway, I'm standing by the, we had a box on the side. That's Peewee Burns, that's Mike Hannigan. This is a man that died in a nursing home. This man is ~~Lou Ray~~, name of Burner. <sup>from Lynch, Va.</sup>
- AG: Do you remember his last name?
- TN: His name is Burner, B-U-R-N-E-R. Thomas W. Eckoes. E-C-K-O-E-S. That's Burner over there. We were sawin' wood. That's just pictures of the Survey party. That man is from Waynesboro, he's been dead a long time. And let's see. That's Eckoes and myself there. And that's Gibbs.
- AG: So where is this site, right here?

- TN: Uh, somewhere in Alleghany County. This is Starbuck again. A lot of these shots were taken in Doughton Park. That's taken in Doughton Park. This is how we dressed. Everybody wore boots. And riding britches.
- AG: Were those in, is this like in a boarding house, or something?
- TN: Yeah, we lived in a boarding house. This is my wife's ~~(?) her mother.~~ <sup>home</sup>
- AG: What was that like?
- TN: We met at her home. She was about-- five or six of us stayed at her house. In Sparta. There was several survey parties workin' in Sparta, out ~~in~~ <sup>of</sup> Sparta, at the same time. And there was a tent in the background there. Issued us army tents. Yes, that's Hancock, the party chief. And that's workin' on the steep hillside.
- AG: You're hauling-- is that rope just to help you up, or were you pulling something?
- TN: No, that's the measuring tape. That's the measuring tape.
- AG: Oh.
- TN: Same in this picture. I explained in the tape I think, it was called a chain, that comes from the days when engineers used wires, with eyes in it, and each one was a foot long. And old deeds are written in rods, rather than in feet. There are sixteen or sixteen and a half feet in a rod. And that's, that's not a good picture. That's a survey party.
- AG: Were you in this one?
- TN: Yes, I'm right here. With a lumberjack shirt. That's an Alleghany County shot. We were takin' bridge soundings ~~)~~ which means we had to go out and see how far it was from the ground surface to solid rock. So that we could design a bridge and design the abutments and get the foundation on solid rock. Those were called soundings. Get the distance from the surface of the ground, solid ground, to the rocks. And we'd just cut a tree down, <sup>held</sup> across the stream, and measure across there. And you'd have a rod, and you'd level the rod, that would keep you from fallin' in, it would be sort of a support so you could walk gingerly across that log from side to side, and take measurements as you go. But the most dangerous of all was laying the tape. Sort of being on the ice rock.
- AG: So what was that like when you were out there on the ice rock? That must have been pretty scary.
- TN: It was, we didn't realize how dangerous it was, at the time I guess. It was very precarious and tiring, because of having to clamp that one-inch rope in the flex of the knee, so as you'd have your both hands free to take measurements. Now I don't know where, there were some I couldn't find. And I'm not sure which of these I sent, and which were reproduced. Down at the office in Asheville. Are you taping that, or just--
- AG: Yeah.
- TN: OK. Oh this is a wintertime shot. We had winter clothes on. We wore what was called Duck Pants. It's a real heavy waterproof canvas pants. We'd be in rough brush, and things like that a lot, up to our legs. That's a guitar player from Marion, North Carolina. <sup>Fred Hyatt</sup> This looks like Mount Mitchell when the snows came. I had a big picture somewhere showin' tents. I'm sorry I can't, didn't find that. It began to freeze, and we'd have to go out, ~~gear our tents. There was a water-fall, you just go out~~ and stick your toothbrush under the ice water. Brush your teeth. (Laughs) Brush our teeth under a waterfall.
- AG: It must have been awfully cold trying to sleep at night.
- TN: We had ~~em~~, as I said, ~~they were~~ army tents. And we had five cots in each tent, just like the army. And we had a little stove, wood burning stove in the middle. It was nothing but a ~~comb~~ <sup>comb</sup> (?), a sheet metal ~~comb~~ <sup>comb</sup>, sittin' in a sandbox, and a four inch smokestack. ~~We cut the~~ it had a damper, ~~which~~ <sup>would</sup> we'd fire up good and go to bed, and uh, the wooden ~~it~~ <sup>it</sup> didn't have enough to pass, for sustaining a fire. And we had canvas cots, and no mattresses. We just put cardboard and newspapers, put 'em under the blankets, to serve as insulation. We had, all we had was blankets, and no mattresses on our canvas army cots. So as I said on

TN: (continued) the tape, if we'd had thermometers, and realized how cold it was, we'd have probably frozen to death. But uh, it had the name of Camp Bradley, originally that's what it was called.

AG: Was that the only place where you were in tents?

TN: No, one other place, was near Asheville. We moved, leap frogged to Asheville eventually. And then, let's see...we moved from Spruce Pine to Burnsville on October 14, 1935. Ground started freezing on October the 25th. And then we were workin' out of Burnsville. Up on the Mount Mitchell area. Where there had been a logging railroad. A narrow gauge railroad was haulin' logs off the mountain. All those mountains were once logged by rail. And when they started buying up the land, and they weren't gonna log anymore, so they took the tracks up, and took up the cross-ties. But they still had those narrow roads, and the switch-backs, you know what a switch-back is? Go up and back up, the train goes forward, and backs up, no curves. So, the road would be at very sharp curves, and the trucks sometimes had to back up to maneuver around these curves which took the place of the switchback. And because of the distance, and one-way traffic, and there was other traffic, you'd go up two hours and down two hours, back and forth. So because of the traffic pattern, which we shared with other entities, we couldn't get much work <sup>done</sup> to do. Cause otherwise, we had to make the right schedule going up and in the afternoon, coming down. So we ended up working productively on the survey line only three or four hours a day. So they completed it moving us to this camp up there. Some of the equipment, the tents and so forth, were acquired on loan. From some military agency, or federal supply house. And this was before the days of army field ranges, which burned gasoline fuel. It's a type which is still used in the military. But we didn't have that yet. Again, all we had were pieces of sheet metal. Which are like two by four feet. And they had eyes cut out of the sheet metal. And that was just inverted, like you'd put a big pot down over something. And an opening for the, we'd put wood in there. And it was where our cooking, it was an old-style army field range. Which we used, it had a lot of cooking surface, and obviously with wood, you would get it really really hot. Well we didn't have the fuel-burning, gasoline, that type, stoves. And we had of course, no lighting. We had Coleman lanterns lighters to light our tents.

AG: Did you have cooks then?

TN: We had a cook and a cook's helper, because there were over twenty of us in the camp. You can count I think more than twenty people in that picture. And usually there was supplies that come up every few days. And usually there was at least one quarter of beef hangin' in one end of this building. And they'd just go out off what they wanted to cook. (Laughs) Steaks, or roasts, or whatever. So we ate pretty well. 'Course we ate potatoes, things like that in a situation such as that. We had plenty to eat. But that was the way our beef was stored, because we had no refrigeration except for weather. And uh... I didn't leave the camp for the whole time I was there, for about six weeks. So, the fifth of December, of '35, we broke camp, we left Mount Mitchell and went to Weaverville. The sixth of December, and the twenty ninth (we went off to the Christmas holidays) and when we came back on the twenty ninth, we ~~left Weaverville, and~~ went up in the mountains. North of Weaverville. Again in tents. But in that camp, ~~we were,~~ they ~~lived~~ <sup>rented</sup> a farmhouse, which served as an office, and our kitchen-in this farmhouse. It had enough space for us to eat, and a little recreation area. Table to play cards on and write letters. So we were at that camp, north of Asheville, between the twenty ninth of December and the twenty eighth of January. Almost a full month. And we worked as far north as we could, economically. They had other survey parties where we were. We were not the only party. They hired a number of survey parties fast as they could be trained and recruited.

TN: (continued) So then, on the twenty eighth of January, my party, the party I was in was transferred back to Sparta, and at this time we began making <sup>property</sup> surveys, for the ~~Doughton~~ <sup>Doughton Park</sup>. So ~~timewise~~, that was pretty much-- we (laughs) on the twenty first of November, the Forest Service had made us put screens over the top of our smokestacks, to keep us from spreading forest fire. So it started snowing, and the snow was going on the ground, and we said, boy, nobody, we couldn't start a fire here if you wanted to. So somebody had a shotgun, and we shot the screens out. (Laughs) So our stoves could draw better. I made a note of the twenty first of November, we uh, it started snowin' on the sixteenth, and on the twenty first we shot holes in the screens. So that the stoves would work better. We just had-- in fact we had to sleep in our clothes, 'cause it was too cold. It wasn't a very happy camp, to say the least. But it was a job. A lot of people had harder jobs than we had. We had some interesting experiences.

AG: So, after Doughton ~~Forest~~ <sup>Park</sup> did you then go to Cumberland Mountain? Knob?

TN: Yes. M-hm. We had surveys, Parkway surveys there.

AG: And then, was that the last place you were? <sup>no attend</sup>

TN: Yes, until, I left there ~~the end of the~~ University of Virginia, which incidentally was the day construction started. Started work on that sixteenth of September, whatever the day was, and that's the day I left, to go to the University of Virginia, in '36. And the following summer, I worked again, that was my last time, on the Parkway, the following summer. And that's when I went to Floyd ~~and~~ and we lived in Floyd, officially it was called a hotel, it was a two-story building with about six or eight rooms I guess on the second floor. A kitchen and dining room on the main floor. Anyway, uh, we went up there and worked all that summer. And the final estimate, as I explained on the other tape, that the contractor had gone in and moved the dirt he had graded, in that section of the Parkway, so we had to do what was known as the final estimate. Which is when they calculate the amount, the volume of earthwork the contractor had moved. And all the contractors were paid on the unit basis, so much per cubic yard, of excavation. They got an extra compensation for rock. They got one price for dirt, and another price for rock. So we were, we had to measure the road accurate, it was graded before it was paved. It was the basis for determining how much the contractor was paid. And that was terribly hard work because it involved climbing a steep bank, or a rocky bank on the other side, and a one and a half foot to one foot slope on the <sup>lower</sup> ~~near~~ side. So then, goin' down the bank, you'd hit loose dirt, to negotiate on the uphill side. It was rocky soil, usually some dirt, and a lot of jagged rocks, you had to climb over. Depending on-- ordinarily you'd take a measurement every fifty feet. And they would calculate the volume in that cross-section, of point A, and fifty feet further was point B. And they used what is known as the Average End Area Method to determine the volume in that fifty foot area. You can see the drawn X, so to speak, in the fifty foot box. And that was, where those lines crossed, was the average end area volume. That was the basis for payin'. However, if it was extremely rough ground, we maybe had to go twenty or twenty five feet, as opposed to fifty feet. If the terrain was uneven, we had to have stations of intervals greater than fifty feet. Are you followin'? We had to, always takin' cross section measurements. And that was the basis for determination of the yardage.

AG: So you started out working in Galax, right, originally?

TN: No, I started out <sup>at Mile Post zero</sup> in Rockfish Gap. And we worked-- well it was, let's see, June, might've been June, I didn't start my diary till the first of January of '35. About the middle of June until up in, oh October or November. Then we got too far to economically try-- we worked as far as Radine. Commuted from Waynesburg as far as Radine, right where Crabtree Falls is, near the Parkway. And then it got too far to commute. And then they transferred us to Galax. Other parties had already been assigned to work in other areas, from Radine South.

AG: And, at the first place, were you commuting from your home? Or was there a camp?

TN: I was living at home. The only two camps, one at Mount Mitchell, the other, North of Weaverville, as far as I was concerned. I don't know whether any other units worked in camps or not. I doubt it. And uh, one of the reasons, that made it so difficult about Mount Mitchell, was, the opposite side ~~of~~<sup>from</sup> our camp was the watershed in the city of Asheville. They wouldn't let anybody, couldn't camp over there, 'cause it was, they said it might pollute <sup>the</sup> our water supply. And there was a ranger along with us every day we were in the Asheville watershed. There was an Asheville warden along to make sure we didn't create pollution. In other words we had to carry a shovel, let me put it that way. To bury all the waste. In the river watershed. It was a long way down the mountain to where the actual water was. And because of that, our camp was about halfway between Gap A and Gap B. So we had to sometimes, we had to climb straight up the mountain, cross over and go down the other side to the survey line. That was difficult walking because they didn't cut any trees. It had been years since they had logged any, in the Asheville watershed, but a lot of trees had fallen on the ground, such as in a virgin forest. And we had to climb over all those logs. So it was very strenuous walking. 'Cause we had to negotiate those horizontal logs in so many places. And a lot of 'em, the large logs, you'd have to cut around them, or detour around 'em, or climb over 'em. Especially when you're carryin' an instrument, or stakes, survey equipment you had to carry in and out. Interestingly <sup>of</sup> these steel tapes, you used a leather thong, a shoestring <sup>fair</sup> at each end, and you hold it, and perspiration would end up with salt on the leather. And you could go out, if we knew today we were goin' back to work at the same place tomorrow, we would leave our equipment except for our transit, didn't leave the expensive equipment like ~~stakes~~, measuring tapes, and things like that, and we had to take the leather thongs out because if we left them, the next morning they would've been chewed up by squirrels, or groundhogs, or animals would eat the leather to get the salt. <sup>from our hands.</sup> So it was just a precaution we had to take. See I'm holding that leather in my hand there, I'm measuring, <sup>this is a picture when I was a front rodman. There's the man back at the back, and we were chained,</sup> holding the back end of the tape. And we're putting a stake here, on which we put a tack. And we write the distance on each of those stakes. And this man who drove the stake would write what is called the station number on there. And you can look at any stake along the survey line and it'd tell you exactly the number of miles, feet, and tenths of inches, tenths of feet, from the last part. You look at any of those stakes, it could tell you exactly how far we were, from the point of beginning. It was an accumulated total at each fifty feet, or whatever the distance. That was the technique for surveying in those days.

AG: What other jobs did you do?

TN: Well I started out, number one you'd cut brush, and what with the training period, everybody started out cutting brush, and carryin' their lunches, and the extra stakes. (Laughs) You were sort of the survey party <sup>mule</sup> if you will. And then, you learned to do that, and then you start working over the rear chain, toward the rear end, and then you graduate to the front of the chain. And in between you might be the person driving the stakes and so forth, and marking stations. So when I started, I learned to run the level instrument as well as the transit. When I went to Costa Rica I did transit, instrument work. They were called instrument man, instrument men. There was brush cutter, rodman, instrument man, recorder. <sup>And party chief.</sup> A recorder is the person who made the calculations to calculate the curvature. In other words to calculate the curves, each time you set a stake on a curve it's a deflection so many degrees. A deflection off the tangent. When you go fifty feet, the recorder would make all those calculations. And he would give the front chainman a slip of paper

TN: (continued) on which all these deflections are shown. He was called deflection analyst. So to the time a person got to be front chainman, he was considered skilled in that, because there was a lot-- part of the skill was knowing where to drop the plumb-bob, the weight, so as not to waste time, when you can get three or four feet at a time. So I got skilled in that, so he'd give me the degree of curvature-- (TAPE END)

SIDE TWO

TN: ...how the survey was done. It's important because nowadays it's all done in-absentia, from aerial photographs and laser surveys and all that. Especially you have no hazards at all, doing the ice rock surveys, because people who do it now would never even draw on the ground, in place of the rock. But we had to carry, we had our army pistol belts. We had to carry those pins, which were plumb-bobs, and a snake bite kit, we had to carry a first aid kit, 'cause in the mountains were rattlesnakes. And we had to carry anti-venom. Each person had to carry anti-venom. In case he was snake-bit.

AG: Was anyone bitten while you were there?

TN: No, my boot was bitten once. But no more than the skin of it.

AG: What did you like about the job?

TN: Well, it was a job. You know, at the end of the depression, anyone who had a job was lucky. I think I said on the tape, this Mr. Hancock there, he was a college graduate, and he was makin' three dollars a day, at first, compared to my two fifty. That was beginning wages, two dollars and a half a day. But it wasn't before long that our wages increased somewhat. And we were paid twice a month with federal government checks. It was called the United States Bureau of Public Roads, which was the Department, a department of the Department of the Interior at the time. Or the Department of Commerce, I've forgotten which. But it was the Bureau of Public Roads... That's a good picture. A rodman, transit man... This man is a recorder, he's sittin' here making the calculations. The recorder on the survey.

AG: What didn't you like about the job?

TN: Weather. Cold, hot, chiggers. Chiggers, especially. 'Course then we didn't have insulated clothing. We just had to layer everything. And lotta times you wore leather, and eventually, you, we spent a lot of time nights puttin' saddle soap on our leather boots, tryin' to keep them from leakin'. If you preserved them, put preservative on 'em, they would keep your feet reasonably dry. Even in the snow. It was a job keepin' your feet dry enough to survive. And I tell you, those mountains, we worked in cold weather, I recorded here in my diary.

AG: Were you all sick a lot, working out there?

TN: No, amazingly not. I can't remember anyone ever-- we had colds or somethin', but I don't remember anybody having any sick leave per se. Except after I went to Costa Rica I had to have a tonsilectomy. Had three weeks, but we were almost all-- very few were over thirty. And many were about my age. Recently out of high school. A few were working, working part time and going to college part time. Most of us were just out of high school. Already these local people would pick up, such as Mount Mitchell, a lot of them had limited educations, so they were the people who did a lot of brush cutting. 'Cause in those cross sections, each fifty feet, you had to cut enough brush, perpendicularly, to see up and down, through those woods. And cut enough so the tape could go through un-obstructed, the measuring tape. So that was called cutting cross-sections. And the people who hired locally were given a brush axe, and they could soon be trained. To cut a reasonably straight line up and down the mountainside. So they could make way, to get through, 'cause the tape had to be, you couldn't run it through trees, 'cause the measuring tape had to be unobstructed, 'cause it was on an angle. You had to calculate, make a calculation to reduce vertical measurements to horizontal. You had to figure the calculation. One of the most

TN: (continued) interesting things we ran into in the surveying was, over near West Jefferson, we came to an old fashioned farmhouse. And as a survey, a lot of these were exploratory lines. And they would decide, is this, is Route A good, and survey Route A, and then go back to the gap or mountain, and go around the other side, and that would be survey Route B. And then they would analyze A and B and see which was the logical one to do. And uh, we didn't cut anything we didn't have to for measurement access, and so forth. But this one place was an old fashioned house which had a breezeway between the kitchen and dining room in the main house. And it so happened that the line, the visual line, went through that house. So we just drug the chain while the people sat there and laughed at us. You know. We drug the chain and measured right through this house. And sometimes there were obstacles around which we had to triangulate. Which meant that you'd go to a point here, and digress over here to the base of the triangle, and come into one of the legs, and put in the base of the triangle and come back. And calculate the distance to, if it was a rock cliff or something like that, then the recorder could calculate a distance, on the basis of triangulation. But uh, 'course those mountains were infested somewhat, if you will, with moonshine stills. And we were told not to, if you come up on a still, ignore it. Don't report it. Because, there was a practical reason in there, if we were going to have to buy a right-away. And we didn't want to have somebody, some moonshiner <sup>and</sup> increase the cost of his property. So we were warned not to report, if we happened to stumble on a moonshine still. Not to report it to the authorities, so as not to stir up the waters, so to speak, mash might be a better word. One day, I thought I smelled mash, and I walked down around and around a mountain hollow maybe a hundred feet, and I found a still. I smelled it. I remember one time a few months later, the sherrif and I got to be good friends, and I went on a raid or two with him in this area. And I finally told him, I think he ~~had already found that one~~ <sup>had already found that one</sup> ~~in the place in the tower~~

AG: Um, what was it like when you went on a raid with him?

TN: Just as I remember, nothing unusual, nothing to it, as there was nobody at the still. Just beat it up. You know, break it up. It'd be a lot of trouble to rebuild it. I never wanted to make an arrest at a still, <sup>because</sup> ~~because~~ the ones I went with him on, they were gone, had seen him plannin' it.

AG: Did you have any interaction with the people that lived out there at all?

TN: Just casually. I don't remember any-- no-one had a shotgun and ran us off, so to speak. Lot of people were smart enough to realize, it was gonna be an economic boost. Because you go down and see what an economic boost the Parkway has been to that whole area. Logging it, in those mountain ridges, eventually, many people realized, incidentally, it was called the Scenic, he worked on the Scenic Highway. And my father, <sup>in the</sup> who was a doctor, said he'd been out on the Scenic, knew the Scenic, things like that, which was a synonym for an area, where there were roads. The Scenic.

AG: What's your favorite story from that time, from working on the Parkway?

TN: Well, see some of the <sup>characters</sup> ~~characters~~, if you will, Fred Hyatt was a character, I have his picture here somewhere. That's my wife's brother, and here I am here. Anyway, this guy was a comic. He was a truckdriver and, sort of a handyman, a rear rodman, he'd carry everything, and he could sing, he could imitate horses, he could whinny like a horse, to get their attention. My favorite character, was a fellow Davis, who was a transit man. He would uh, he had quaint expressions. When he would look to his right, he would say, "Move over toward ~~Roanoke~~ <sup>Roanoke</sup> "Roanoke" instead of-- he said, "Move over toward ~~Roanoke~~, or West Jefferson," or something. He had a lot of, he'd break the monotony, by his directions, sometimes. He used to come up with a-- (interrupted by his wife) This fellow Eckoes, the one I mentioned in the tape, who was a super expert axeman. He could cut a tree off that looked like it had been sawed. And the party chief, Hancock, was a very

TN: (continued) interesting fellow. He was easygoing. He was wonderful, brainwise, but he was awkward physically. He almost cut his own head off with a bush axe. He was cold, or something, he started swingin' his axe, and he hung that bush axe in a tree, when it came down, so help him, he just barely brought the blood on the back of his neck. Almost cut his own head off. With a bush axe. And this guy Starbuck, I'm sure he's dead now, so he can't hardly ~~hear~~<sup>care</sup>, but he had no sense of direction. And one day in my diary I wrote, said, "Starbuck got lost today." (Laughs) And there was a clearing. And we were gettin' ready to leave, it was a big clearing surrounded by brush all around. And we could hear somebody thrashing around, and we said, "That's Starbuck, he's lost." So we made it up not to yell, you know, we weren't gonna yell and give away our positions. Just let him find his own way. So he's bangin' around with his machete, tryin' to cut his way out of the dense jungle in there. (Laughs) If we had yelled at him, he of course coulda gotten his bearings. But he had no sense of direction. But he was good on paper. He had been married, he married, his wife was named Opal. They had been married, they had divorced, and remarried. So that's one of the things I remember about T.W. Starbuck. But again, he went to Costa Rica, and he was a party chief down there. He was good on paper, but he could get lost in the woods.

AG: So did everyone get along pretty well?

TN: Oh yes. We had a couple a rum heads. They had rough weekends, and then come in Monday morning still a little bit hung over. And everyone had an army canteen of water. And this guy who was hung over, he would empty his canteen by ten o'clock, and he's beggin' everybody for water, you know, after ten o'clock. And a lot of places, you know, we learned, a lot of those mountain hollows, there's underground streams. And sometimes, you could hear water. And you'd go down on your knees, and dig and throw rocks, and pretty soon you go down twelve or eighteen inches, and there's a little flowing stream. And you can soon get enough to, get a little place and get enough water to fill the canteen. And I know one time, <sup>at Humboldt Park</sup> ~~somebody, me~~ or someone else was sent out with three or four cans to find water. So we went to one of these hollows, and dug, and find unearthen the underground stream, and get enough water to fill your canteens. Once or twice that was an official project, just to find drinking water. We learned a lot of ways of the woods, if you will. 'Course you had no refrigeration. Didn't carry any food that might spoil in four or five hours. Ate a lot of cheese sandwiches, and some sort of a pickled spread. You'd spread that on, which would be the base of a sandwich now, but that was, two pieces of bread, with some of that smeared between them, and that was a sandwich. And cheese, usually. Ham, ham wouldn't spoil. Little jam sandwiches. Two pieces of bread. Lot of times we'd build up a little fire, take a fork~~ed~~ stick and toast our cheese sandwiches. Except one day I was out in the park, somewhere there, we ended up, we were foolish enough to build a fire where there was some moss, on a rock. And the fire started spreading, and we had to get our jackets off, and we had to beat the ground for an hour, until we get that fire to keep from spreading through the mountains. That taught us a lesson about where to build a fire to toast a sandwich. And that was somewhere either in or near Doughton ~~Park~~ Park, I can't remember exactly where. Am I boring you?

AG: No, not at all. This is great. It sounds like it was a pretty big adventure out there working.

TN: It was. We had a lot of jostling among us. And makin' fun of each other. Davis, the instrument man, he was a real prank. See this man right here, he'd move it over an inch or two, or a foot, depending on the size of how far away the city was, and take it a quarter of an inch. And signals, hand signals and everything. This was to the Right, to the Left, and that was, Correct, that's Good. If they're too far, they say Good, crossed arms, semaphore fashion like that, meant, that's good. And then the front transit, the rear rodman, in some cases would be a

TN: (continued) quarter a mile away, depending if there was open terrain or not. He had to wait back there on a pivotal point, and he'd get a hand signal, to tell you move ahead.

AG: There was a lot of joking around sometimes?

TN: Oh yes. There was. Too cold or too hot, in Doughton Park, the most pristine place we worked, that beautiful basin with tumbling little cataracts and everything, in the summertime, and there's that tape. That's ~~Warden~~ <sup>Gordon</sup> ~~Conroe~~ <sup>Conroe</sup>, and that's ~~Red Hyle~~, I believe. 1935. (Indistinguishable mumbling) I'm not sure. That's all the survey pictures that I have. I've got some somewhere, but I just couldn't find them, I'm sorry. Some that I sent to Asheville to be reproduced. Including one or two tent pictures. I think just across the road from that building. An enlarged picture of the old railroad shop. (Coughs) Can you think of anything you want me to cover?

AG: Um... what was the best thing that happened to you while you were on the Parkway?

TN: Found her (referring to his wife)

AG: How did uh--

TN: And I eventually got to work over, see I was born in Haywood County, and weekends I'd go visit relatives, had relatives in Asheville. It was a nice feature. And I was sensitive to realize that I was gettin' a good engineering education, on the job. 'Cause I didn't study engineering. I studied business administration. As I said, I realized I was getting some good experience. I had grown up on a farm, and I knew farm work. And I knew what hard work was. See this tape would cause a callous, along this part of the hand, that's where all the pressure was on that shoe string. And that callous was an eighth of an inch thick all along there. See the strain of this tape wrapped around your finger, and that's where the pressure, the pressure point, that's where the callous grew. And 'course we had callous deposits on our hands from the use of axes and things like that.

AG: Um, how did you end up at the boarding house where you met your wife?

TN: Well we were just transfered. There weren't many boarding houses, only two or three in Sparta, and there were perhaps fifteen of us there. We had to spread out over the community. And there was a sign up there, and there was a tailor (?) where some stayed. And Olive's brother, they lived next door, and some of 'em stayed at Aunt Myrtle's, next door to where I stayed. And you just get to be fixtures in the community, so to speak. 'Cause most of us couldn't go anywhere on weekends. We had time to kill on weekends, and we'd go to churches, and dances and things like that. 'Cause that was the natural thing to do.

AG: What other activities did you take part in during your spare time? After you were done working, and on weekends?

TN: We had radios, and newspaperaers. And books we wanted to read. Only a few of us had cars. I never had a car. Tom Eck ~~is~~ had a car. He was so good to me, he'd take me to Waynesville, or up to my sister's, even dated a girl, one of my sister's good friends. ~~Went and here married one of (?)~~ But uh, you just made do. 'Course they had a pool hall. And most of the places, a lot of boarding houses didn't even have bathrooms. And barber shops in those days had, peoplego in there and pay fiftencentens or somethin', and get a towel, and get a shower in the back of the barbershop. And people in the barber shop paid and used the shower. Sort of a public bath affair. 'Cause very few homes had bathrooms. Had to go to the barber shop to clean up.

AG: Did you get together with the other people in your survey party and do things together outside of work?

TN: Yes. We'd go on outings on weekends. We'd meet people in Galax, went back over there from Sparta sometimes. And my brother, although we were never on the same survey party, my brother, once when I was in Sparta, he was working in Hillsville, so we'd get together sometimes on weekends. I'd go to his boarding house in Hillsville. Then I think he worked in ~~Shelby~~ <sup>Elroy</sup> (2) once. So we were within an hour or two of each other most of the time but we never worked in

TN: (continued) the same survey party. That is the brother who stayed and worked after I left to go to school. He was still workin' in Virginia with one of the survey parties. So it was a little bit different for most of them. And a lot of these people, they would take us home with them sometimes. Like the fellow who lived in Galax, might take somebody home with him for a Saturday night or something. In Spruce Pine we lived in a very small hotel. Extremely spartan, but, you know, always at least two in a room. Never had anybody in a private room. In Galax as a matter of fact, another guy and I had to sleep together in a boarding house. That was common, had to share a bed, with another person in the survey party. And my bed-mate from Galax turned out to be, he had a weakness, he would party on weekends, and he had a temper, ~~though~~, he'd get drunk and fight with someone. He went down to someplace, on a Saturday night, ~~he~~ <sup>he fought</sup> wrote to me, and the sherriff started to arrest <sup>him</sup> somebody and he resisted arrest, and he ended up getting ~~knifed at~~ <sup>a knife cut</sup> and cutting the deputy sherriff. He was ~~in~~ the North Carolina line. And he came back, still drunk, and got in bed with me, and I had no idea how he cut himself, so before we went to bed I took him just about a block and a half to a makeshift hospital, there was a clinic on the upstairs floor of a commercial building. ~~And~~ <sup>we</sup> went to the top of the steps, and I could see through the door, that the doctor was sewing somebody up on the operating table. And I heard some people say, "One a them engineers cut him, I wish we could find him." And I realized then, I was takin' this guy for first aid, and if these people found out who he was, they may've pounced on him. And no tellin' what would happen. So I drug him outta there, I says, "I'll let him bleed to death, I'm not gonna sit here and get caught up in this too." So I took him back and put him to bed, and in an hour or two, the flashlight of the deputy Sherriff woke me up. Said, "Which one a you is Shifflet?" So I jumped outta bed, and I said... (Laughs) So they took my room-mate outta the bed, and put him in jail. He stayed in jail two months. He came back white as a sheet. He did his jail time in North Carolina. This happened just across the line in North Carolina. His name was Roy Shifflet. Over near Charlottesville. Never saw him anymore after that. But about six years ago my brother died, and Roy Shifflet, ~~he~~ showed up at my brother's funeral. He'd known my brother too. He found out my brother died, and came from Charlottesville to Bedford but as I said, I didn't see him. He was a rambunctious guy. He was a tough mountaineer. And I mentioned in the other tape a surveyor, who ~~is~~ <sup>lived in the Mountain Park area</sup> a gifted man, an agile fella, who led our party. It would've taken a lot lot longer, to make these surveys, had he not been along, knowin' the territory, knowin' the mountains. And he had made the basic research, on the property, the property under the deed, the ~~register~~ <sup>register</sup> of deeds in North Carolina. Anyway, he was the one who helped us, and kept his saddle horse with him. And at the end of the work he would take a ~~ride~~ <sup>run</sup> and bound over the horse's rump into the saddle, "See you folks tomorrow," you know. And he'd get to the place the next morning on his horse. (Laughs) With the necessary information would need to do the work that day. I have no idea what his name was. But he was a land surveyor in Wilkes County. (END OF TAPE #1)

#### TAPE TWO, SIDE ONE

- TN: Most of our state parks in Virginia were in that program. ~~Some rides in Floyd,~~ we came down at least once, maybe twice, to Fairy Stone Lake, from Floyd, to go swimming. It was a new lake that was finished in '36, I think. And we came down the summer of '36.
- AG: You mentioned on the other tape that your supervisors would sometimes let you all leave early and go swimming, is that where that was?

TN: In <sup>Doughton</sup> ~~that~~ park. In <sup>Doughton</sup> ~~that~~ park, yes. Go skinny-dippin'. There was beautiful trees, (indistinguishable.) There was a waterfall there, near the Parkway, a very hard climb. A hundred yards or so, almost vertically down. A place in Alleghany County, Cumberland Knob, is the site of a waterfall in the bounds of that park. There's a sign at the visitor's center for a trail leadin' to the waterfall. Lots of waterfalls of various sizes in the mountains. You can walk up and see that sheer rock face, and you knew you had to survey that. I'm not sure, there might've been some ~~land~~ <sup>land</sup> doin' construction, but I don't know. I think somebody's already talked with Lee Medford at Alta Pass. 'Cause he stayed, worked on the construction phase several years. But these other people, I have no idea. 'Cause most of them are a lot older than I am, and long since gone, I'm pretty sure. The local people might be a source of information.

AG: Did you all experience any other big events while you were there, like maybe forest fires, or search and rescue, or anything like that?

TN: No, none of that that I can remember. Would've been in my diary, if such had been the case. See this five year diary, this is five years, for each day, I wrote five lines.

AG: That must be fascinating to look through that now. When did you start keeping the diary?

TN: January 1, '35.

AG: And you wrote in it every day?

TN: M-hm. March the twelve, rained so hard all day and we could not go out. Snowed a little tonight. Worked, next day we worked in snow. <sup>the following year</sup> Checked angles all day. I drove the truck that day. Went to a dance, in Ted's car. That's Ted Starbuck, the man who couldn't find his way out of the woods. March fifteen, that's '35, Worked in the open all day, started a new project. Went to see a Western movie tonight. March fourteen. Cold as the devil. Paid my board and bed and had two dollars left. March twenty five. Been in Sparta two months today. January twenty. Nothing happened today except everybody froze. Everbody still frozen on January twenty ~~one~~ <sup>one</sup>. Started to ~~(?)~~ but hit a rock, and fell back down. The rock had fallen off the side of the mountain, and the car climbed over and it broke the oil pan. 1942, I went in the army. Saturday: Nothin' to do all day. Missed my ride home so I have to stay in this place. Went to see Wings <sup>at</sup> the Dove. <sup>(?)</sup> It was the first picture at the Sparta theater. How 'bout that. Wings of the Dove, I always thought it was a John Wayne picture. February first. First picture at the Sparta theater. Hm. And here, February the fourth. <sup>My friend wrote</sup> "This is the first time I met Tom Nolan." (Indistinguishable) This is the next year I'm readin', '35, and then '36. Chased all over Wilkes County. Lookin' for a starting place. Slushy today. The truck slid <sup>out of</sup> ~~down~~ the road. (Laughs) That's where, this is in <sup>Doughton</sup> ~~Mountain~~ Park. (Laughs) We'd have to take the fence rails from the farmer's haystack, and jack up and gradually ~~lift~~ <sup>lift</sup> up the side of the truck so we could right it. Nearly blew us away. Got a radio on February the sixth. Walked in a near way today, then we changed, we progressed along the line and then come back a different way to shorten the travel time... Am I boring you?

AG: No, not at all.

TN: Oh, bad news today. They tell us we won't get paid for <sup>rainy</sup> ~~many~~ days. We'll have to change our (?) March of '35. '36, ten inches of snow today.

AG: You even worked in ten inches of snow. Wow.

TN: February eighth, '35, had a good week. Ran over two miles of line that week. We're working ourselves out of a job. <sup>Tom Eckels wrote in here</sup> Took my boots, size fourteen, to Galax, to have 'em fixed." (Laughs) Took 'em to Galax. Following, Tom Eckels messed up, the opposite page to be (indistinguishable). February eleven, we all got <sup>zero</sup> ~~kar~~ today, but we worked just the same. Oh this is interesting. February the twelve, today was the end of the <sup>(?)</sup> twenty five iron men for the landlady who <sup>(?)</sup> eat too much. (Laughs) Are you recording this?

AG: M-hm.

pay period

TN: We laid the hubs, on '36. The hubs are, you cut locust and locust is the most durable wood there is. Long lines, they were just about six inches long, and sharp <sup>ends by hand</sup> and, you drive those into the ground and put a tack in it for the actual pole. Those are called hubs. Went into Sparta today, went to a movie tonight, and saw Bachelor of Arts. Red Crawford was in it. Red Crawford was a neighbor from Waynesville, North Carolina. He played football at Duke, and then he's a professional football player, and obviously he was a big part in the movie. Monday, eighteenth of February, '35. Still cold today. Curves are not checked. Next year: spent a lot of time by the fire today, it snowed. About to go to jail for possum-huntin'. Well out of season possum-huntin'. February nine, very windy. About to get blown off the mountain. Looks like March is ahead of time. February 26, a lot of snow. Next year: <sup>new</sup> snowfall today. Hare, that was a community, it was an area of Alleghany County. Ever heard of it, Hare, H-A-R-E? Alleghany, somewhere up near Saddle Mountain. Our division, that meant, we'd go on one side of the mountain and then try the other side. Next year; worked on, this was in Doughton Park, worked on a ridge today and had a long walk. Too tired to write. Didn't want to go out of the house. Some days we'd park, where the Parkway is now, we had to go down those ridges, down the hollows, and some days we had an awful long walk.

AG: Were you working six-hour days, or eight-hour days?

TN: Eight hours, usually. It was at least eight hours, including travel time. Sometimes it was ten hours. (Indistinguishable) that was a new pair of boots, field boots, that was in '36, February. Leap year, '36. They'd give you two kinds of beans for supper. (Laughs) October of '36. Spent the day tryin' to find a mistake, (indistinguishable). March ten, 1936, drove a truck and patched my pants tonight. Seagull Ridge. Out in Doughton Park somewhere. March seventeen, rained all mornin' and turned into a blizzard. When it snowed we did not even go out. No lights. Broken power line.

AG: What did you all do on days like that? When the weather was too bad to even go out?

TN: We worked on <sup>notes</sup> meats, or makin' stakes. Hubs, I've often wondered (indistinguishable) those locust hubs. 'Course out of the tents we had to cut wood. Even on Saturdays and Sundays. March nineteen, got stuck in the mud tryin' to work and it took several days. <sup>Must've been a real blizzard.</sup> (Pause) Worked over the tunnel today, that's the tunnel over in Asheville. (Indistinguishable) <sup>Beaucatcher Tunnel,</sup>

AG: What did you say on your last day of work?

TN: It was in September. (Pause) September the eleventh. <sup>'36.</sup> It says: Sections A and B to do. This was the tenth. Cumberland Knob, got my seat warmed tonight. Apparently must have run a line or somethin' like that. September the eleven, our last day Back to Ashe Rock. (Indistinguishable) So September the eleven was my last day, which incidentally was the same day they started work, the contractor started work at the state line. (Long pause) This is in Doughton Park: we sort of pulled the car through the creek. (Pause) And this is Jefferson: in '35.

AG: Was that in, was that a leisure thing?

TN: Pardon?

AG: Was that at your leisure, or was that work related?

TN: That was when we were transferred. We leap-frogged over there, the next town over from Sparta. Worked on Bluff Ridge in '36. The transit was called the gun.

AG: Oh really?

TN: M-hm. It's too bad they didn't have more space, (indistinguishable) four corners. A long history there.

AG: Yeah, it's really interesting.

TN: Now are we doing?

AG: Um, let me see. (END OF SIDE ONE)

SIDE TWO, TAPE TWO

TN: I didn't work for the Parkway, but I worked for the U.S. Geological Survey. In Southside, Virginia at their business office. Reported down there, and the party chief said, "You folks're going to be staying at a boarding house, you're roomin' with somebody," I don't remember his name, and I went over there, and it was the same guy I had roomed with the previous summer. Again, a coincidence. We ended up by coincidence, two summers in succession. And we see each other, each of the two parties at Cumberland Knob, on the fiftieth anniversary. And I believe, I'm not sure, that two or three years later, don't believe I made that one. I was on Asheville TV, I had made a montage of pictures I took up there from Cumberland Knob, and some TV person spotted that. My sister saw the program, my sister who lives in Waynesville. But I never did see it. That would sound like an interesting project for you. What sort of-- is there anyone else, have you talked to anyone else in the survey category?

AG: Um, I talked to a couple of people who were doing survey work.

TN: Do you remember their names.

AG: I can't remember off the top of my head, but I can look them up.

TN: It would be another coincidence if it had been someone that I knew... There was a man named Agee who lived in Floyd, who worked with us in (?) Agee is a common name. (Pause) (Indistinguishable) Can't <sup>think of</sup> remember anything else that you might be interested in. *Or anything you might want to cover.*

AG: What was your, what was the worst experience that you had when you were working on the Parkway.

TN: I can't pinpoint any one incident. Potentially one was, the truck turned over at Laurel Springs. In the picture, it was not a panel truck, it was a <sup>ton and a half</sup> truck, we put chains on it and go through heavy snow and ice. It had cyclone fencing on the side, and it had boxes on each side of it, stakes and things like that. And for the cold weather there was a curtain, you could drop down on it and cover it. Otherwise, it was open to the elements. But the curtain could be up in good weather. But you'd let the curtain stand in cold weather. My favorite place was sitting on the tailgate in good weather, with your feet dangling there. 'Cause it was a cool place to ride. But anyway, there was a sharp curve here in Laurel Springs, and the driver met somebody around it, and the truck just turned over gently. The two guys that were tailgatin' it were thrown over across the fence to a farmer's field. It just turned the truck over on its side, it did not upset it, it was just on its side, so to speak. And those metal shiners, about the size of a fifty cent piece, we had a bucket there, where we'd put down a shiner, and drive a tack through that, and that was to make it, to find it easily. It was about the size of a bottle top. Anyway those things shattered out, and everybody thought that was glass, broken glass. (Laughs) He was bleeding, but noone was hurt. But I guess that's the narrowest escape, when that truck turned over. We set, there were longitudinal benches on the inside, and we just locked our feet. Sitting in there, nearly eight of us, sitting right there. At least eight, most of the time. We couldn't see out because the sides were too low to see out. (Indistinguishable) horizontal from side A to side B. And I can't think of any-- no tree fell, no rock. *Or anything of that nature.*

AG: Which, um...

TN: The tents, the snow caved the tents in, we used to go in there to sleep, you had to crawl under like an Eskimo. And stand up and shake the snow off the canvas, and drive the stakes in the frozen ground. And fix the tents again. I can't remember any serious injuries. Nobody seriously cut or anything like that.

AG: Which location did you like working at the best?

TN: I guess <sup>Doughton</sup> Mountain Park was the most interesting, because it was open, bluegrass hills, beautiful streams, and those hollows. The scenery was just-- have you

TN: (continued) been there? Spectacular scenery. (Pause) Geographically, that was the highlight. Did you hit anyone else with survey experience, I know you talked with one or two?

AG: M-hm.

TN: More with construction, or not?

AG: Yes, more. Yes. Then one or two, well I interviewed one Park Ranger also. His name was Dean Richardson.

TN: I didn't know him.

AG: Um, aside from, when you were on the Asheville Watershed, did you have any contact with the National Park Service staff, while you were at ~~the other place?~~

TN: No, it was still, you see, the government had not bought the land. It was still, the Park Service was not involved. It had not been turned over to the Park Service at that time. It was still an engineering project, with the United States Bureau of Public Works. I don't know just when the Park Service took command, so to speak. Jurisdiction. But I'm pretty sure that it was not the Park Service at that time. I don't know when it was changed over. Reassigned, if you will.

AG: Can you think of any other interesting experiences that you had when you were working over there?

TN: One of the years in Spruce Pine we had to survey through an apple orchard. They wouldn't let us cut anything. And we had to crawl on our hands and knees under the apple trees. And lay the transit on the ground. You could shorten the legs that had collapsable legs. And they wouldn't let us trim the tree branch to see through. So short measurements, and short distances and so forth. It was just a nuisance, no real harm except it was a nuisance to protect those tree limbs. We never carried a cross-cut saw, we just carried axes. When the tree was too big to see through, we'd try and go around it. 'Cause we couldn't saw anything down. We couldn't cut it down with an axe, so we'd work around it. It was a rule, we never carried a cross-cut saw. (Pause) (Indecipherable) You can see all the highlights in the newspaper articles. And on the tape, it's just a personal opinion, <sup>of the Parkway and its role</sup> in my diary. I've always been sorry I didn't manage with the same (?) But it's not my decision.

AG: Um, have you been up on the Parkway recently?

TN: Yes, last week we traveled from Peaks of Otter <sup>in-14</sup> to Rock Creek Road, that was the most recent time. We had our daughter and son with us and then we went and took a bus ride up to the Peaks. We had been there before. And my daughter had, forty years ago. So she enjoyed that. And we traveled, within the last two years, we traveled, last year, a good distance. And within the last two years we've traveled in the Baslam Mountain area, Fort Levy area. So we've been there a number of times since it was built. Most of it was in segments.

AG: So overall, would you say that your experience with the Parkway was a positive one?

TN: Yes. No doubt. Of course, as I said before, it was an education. Of educational value for me especially. Due to the line of work that I ended up in, city administration, and I had that exposure to the engineering phase. Which has helped my career. Especially after I went to Costa Rica, and the Inter-American Highway for a year and a half. And I worked in a design office and I really got good training in that phase. In engineering. And in the Army engineers, I had two years, in military construction, overseas. Given my experience on the Parkway survey work helped my in my assignments in the military.

AG: Oh really.

TN: M-hm. They classified me as a surveyor, and military occupation's specialty (indistinguishable) and I was called a surveyor. My duties overseas involved using, supervising road construction and so forth. So all in all, it was a beneficial experience for me.

AG: Well, I think we've pretty much covered all of my questions, so...

TN: I hope so. Intelligently.

TAPE END