

* William Pruitt is not a storyteller. There is a lot of info in the interview, but he doesn't spend long talking about any one thing. His wife also speaks on the tape. She is hard to hear.

☒ scanned

☐ returned from interviewee

☐ corrected

Tape Index Sheet

General Topic of Interview: Experiences of a caretaker on the Blue Ridge Parkway

Date: June 14, 1996

Place: Glade Valley, NC

Length: 50 minutes

☐ final copy sent to interviewee

Personal Data:

Narrator

Name William Pruitt

Address

Glade Valley, NC 28627

Birthplace Allegheny, NC

Birthdate 1923

Occupation(s) Truck Driver,
Caretaker on Parkway

Interviewer

Name Alicia Gallant

Address 610 F. 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:

00

01

02

03

06

08

11

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

Born 1923

CC Camp at Bluff Mountain Area -

Drove a truck, hauled the work crews out

Enrolled twice in CC

Camp lodgings, kitchen

Work done in CC - Typical Day

Wages - \$30/month, sent home to parents

The Army officers in the CC Camp

Drove dump truck in CC camp, Express good feeling for CCC

Leisure activities

Use back of sheet if necessary

Time on
Tape:

Subjects

13

Experiences in the Navy

15

Went to Medicine School in Asheville w/CCC

16

The Navy - In WWII

17

Talks about his children

22

History of his enrollments in the CCC

24

Job w/NPS - maintenance Man @ Cumberland Knob =
Caretaker - 21 years in this job

25

Responsibilities as caretaker

27

Plowing the Parkway in the winter - had ears frost bitten

29

Liked working for NPS - liked retirement benefits - retired after 36 years

Side 2

00

Locals don't frequent the Parkway as much - people visiting on
the Parkway - asking all kinds of questions - annoying to him!

04

Types of ~~other~~ employees - mostly seasonal

05

Things he didn't like about the job = all the questions ^{tourists} ~~that~~ asked

10

Discuss Sparta, NC, a neighboring town

12

Doesn't go on the Parkway anymore very often anymore; diff. groups
on the grounds at Cumberland Knob.

~~14~~

16

Activities on days off

18

Talks about his Lase, knee, medical problems

INTERVIEW LOG SHEET

William Pruitt

Depositor: Alicia Gallant

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

Field Work Locations (state and town) Glade Valley, NC

Description of Interviews: Oral history interview for Blue Ridge Parkway project.
William Pruitt was a caretaker for the Parkway.

Tapes (number): 1

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:

SIDE ONE

AG: OK, so you were born in 1923?

WP: M-hm.

AG: And, where were you born?

MP (William's wife Maria): Alleghany.

AG: Alleghany?

MP: M-hm.

AG: How did you find out about working on the Parkway, and the CC, Civilian Conservation Corps?

WP: I was at the CC camp first. Then I started on the Parkway through there, and then I got a job there. Then I stayed there. (Laughs)

AG: (Laughs) How did you um, well, when you were in the CC, where were you?

WP: Right there at the, where the maintenance area is. Bluff Maintenance Area.

AG: Bluff Maintenance Area?

WP: Yeah.

AG: And, what were you doing, when you were on the Parkway? What was your job, in the CC?

WP: I drove a truck and hauled the crew out.

AG: And, did your job change at all, while you were there, in the CC?

WP: I don't understand.

AG: Did your job change at all? Did you do anything besides driving a truck there?

WP: Well, no, not really. 'Course I was a regular enrollee. Just like the rest of 'em. Now the first time I went up there, I wasn't a truck driver. I was just a regular CC. Enrollee. And the next time I went back, I got to be driving a truck. That was my (indistinguishable).

AG: What did you do the first time?

WP: I worked on what they called the outlying (?) crew.

AG: The what?

WP: That were a work crew.

AG: Right.

WP: We worked on this Parkway through here, sloped the banks and all the stuff like that.

AG: Oh, OK. So you were enrolled twice?

WP: Yeah. Yeah. Fact, them days was hard times, you know. You couldn't hardly live. My family, I lived, I was raised up there on that mountain, at that Brenner place, right back across the fill there.

MP: And that old house is still there.

WP: That's my grandma's place.

AG: Oh really? I've never been back there before.

WP: You've never been up there?

AG: No.

WP: You oughtta go up there some time.

MP: You have to be careful of the rattlesnakes.

AG: Oh, I've heard a lot of stories about rattlesnakes.

WP: There's not that many of 'em in this country.

MP: You ever seen a copperhead?

AG: Oh, I've seen 'em. I have. (Laughs) When you were at the camps, were you staying in barracks? Or were there like tents?

- WP: No, we had barracks. Regular barracks, like the army. Chow hall and everything. We had cooks, CC cooks. I drove a truck, hauled crews out, back and forth to work. I rode in it. We done a lot of work on this Parkway. Gradin' banks and sowin' grass seed. Stuff like that.
- AG: Can you remember what a typical day would've been like for you?
- WP: Well, if you drove a truck, you got your truck out of the shed that morning, pretty early. Pulled out in front of the office, with the crew loaded on the back of it. They had a tarp over it (indistinguishable) thing. Took 'em out on the job, we had a foreman, he worked on it. Either that, or go back and get the chow for dinner. Take it out to 'em. They'd eat. Just a regular routine. Now, I drove a dump truck up there, and a shovel, one time.
- MP: He had 36, 37 years doing that.
- AG: Wow. That's a long time.
- MP: He made his, he makes his living. He retired. And while most people live on Social Security, he lives on the government, you know, he gets his pension.
- WP: Annuity. They call it annuity. Annuity.
- AG: Now, when you were at the camps, the second time you were enrolled, would you get to-- did you have any control over what you were doing? Did they ask, you know, did you get to change your position because you wanted to? Or did they just say, "Well, now you're gonna drive a truck." ?
- WP: Well, now, they didn't change around much up there like that. We had a job, a certain job. We had to line up the crew every morning, and they got lined up over there at the office. Each man had a crew of boys. You know, they had foremans, over these boys. Stayed with 'em all day. Then they had a chow man, brought you the chow to you at dinnertime. I usually got the chow. But they was good over there. I drove 'em back there.
- AG: What was your favorite thing, about being in the camp?
- WP: Well, I liked it because I used to be a sports man a lot, you know. We used to box, and wrestle, and (indistinguishable). And I hauled the crew out there every day, and then I'd go back and get the chow. Stuff like that.
- MP: Back then there weren't many jobs.
- WP: No, you couldn't buy a job back then. About 30 dollars a month. And I had the money sent home to my dad and mother. They furnished your clothes, you didn't have to bother with that.
- MP: It was like a little army, wasn't it? They had a uniform.
- WP: Yeah, we had a uniform. Yes, siree. Had to (indistinguishable) every morning. After we'd eat breakfast. We had a leave. It was like being in the army, same thing.
- AG: Were there any army officers there?
- WP: Yes sir, we had a captain, and two or three liutenants.
- AG: How much contact did you all have with them?
- WP: Well, they didn't mess with us out on the road. They had foremans, you know. People like, oh, (indistinguishable) up here, there used to be a whole lot of 'em, like Bob Hill, and two or three more. They had regular foremans, that worked you out on the road. And they rode the truck that you drove to haul the crew out there. I used to ride one of 'em too. He went in the cab with me. If you made one mistake, they turned you in. (Laughs)
- MP: It was a big thing back then, when there wasn't no jobs or nothing--
- WP: Well, people weren't up on drivin' back then, like they are now. I drove a dump truck with a shovel up front. It had a big old shovel, to bring them banks down. And I drove a dump truck for that. Then I finally got to haul a crew up. To work. And come back and get your chow, and bring it out to 'em at dinner time, and stuff like that. There was a foreman, when you

WP: (Continued) had the crew, he was in the cab with you all the time. He didn't go on the back of the truck.

MP: Be good if they had somethin' like that now, for young people, you know. Give 'em something to do, you know. But they don't. (Indistinguishable).

WP: Oh, that there was kind of a community thing. Not like the CC camp. I--

AG: What did you do when-- oh, I'm sorry. Go ahead.

WP: Go ahead.

AG: What did you all do in your leisure time?

WP: Well, we boxed and wrestled a fair amount. (Laughs) We had a swimming pool up there. Ice cold water. (Laughs) About so big.

AG: Would they teach any classes or anything?

WP: No. Well, we had classes at night sometimes.

AG: What kinds of classes?

WP: Well, mostly just regular, like they have in school. Yeah.

AG: Like, reading and math...

WP: Yeah, right. Yeah. (Indistinguishable). And each crew had a foreman, in charge of 'em. I mean, in the daytime, not in the night. In the night-time, they'd be under the army. And we took Reville in the morning, just like you was in the army. That was the best thing we've had in this country, was the CC camp. Straighten some of these boys up.

AG: What were the other people generally like?

WP: Well, we had a lieutenant. Two or three of them. They had private quarters where they got to stay. There was four of 'em. They went out-- they rode them trucks out in the morning, and foremen over the crew, you see, and they used to ride in the truck. Then I would go back and get the chow. And bring it up at dinnertime. I would set that big pan of cookies up to see where I could eat it. (Laughs) Yeah. We had some times up there. We used to work. Clean up. We'd get out there and wrestle. Play around. That pond is, well, I don't know if that pond is still there or not. It was ice cold, but we'd go and swim in it anyway.

MP: He stayed four years in the Navy.

AG: Oh, really?

MP It was pretty rough.

WP: Naw, it wasn't too bad.

MP: It would've been for me.

WP: I love the ocean. But I did get to go across the sea.

AG: Oh, you did?

WP: I was all over the world.

AG: Um, when you were in the Navy, was that soon after the CC camp?

WP: Well, that's a different CC camp. In the Navy, we'd take all our drill, and training, and it took you about six, seven, eight weeks to get through the boot camp.

AG: So they didn't have any training like out in the CCs? In the CC camps?

WP: No, just (indistinguishable). They would march us, and (indistinguishable). Stuff like that. 'Course you'd have to when you went in the Service. I'd do all that trainin', all that martial stuff. Military.

AG: Did you ever go to any of the other camps, in the area?

WP: Uh, yeah, I used to be up in Asheville. Just for a little while.

AG: How did that compare? To the one you were at, before.

WP: Well, they all were about the same thing. They all had a commander, and they all had chiefs, and stuff like that, you know. Yeah, I was up there at CC camp, it was a mechanic school up there. At Biltmore. Up at Biltmore.

AG: How much interaction did you all have with the community, outside of the camps?

WP: Well, them boys would go to town at night, and get drunk and get in trouble.

WP: (Continued) (Laughs) Stuff like that, you know. But there wasn't too much of that.

AG: What did the people in the town thing, or the community, think of them?

WP: Well, they had a pretty good reputation up there at Asheville. They was pretty well-behaved, in that town. 'Cause they'll take what they'll call liberty (?) and let you go for a while.

AG: What kinds of regulations were there?

WP: CC camp?

AG: Yeah.

WP: ABout like the army. The same thing. They'd drill you, all that stuff. Slept in barracks. But I been around a little bit in my day, went into the Navy about four years. In World War Two. I learned a whole lot from that, too.

AG: Did it help you, um, being in the camps first?

WP: It sure did. Helped me with (indistinguishable). 'Cause I'd had all that drill, see.

AG: Right.

WP: Yeah, and I was lucky enough so I traveled a whole lot. I was on two or three different ships. We'd leave here and go across the North Atlantic. To the Mediterranean. Down across South Africa, come back up in South America.

AG: Wow. (Laughs) Sounds like an adventure.

WP: You get to meet all kinds of people. From different countries. And they're all (indistinguishable). 'Course, back then, in World War Two, there was famine just about everywhere. You know, they're starvin' to death, children...

MP: They still are.

WP: Yeah, I been in a lot of countries. I been in countries where you had to rent a jackass to ride. (Indistinguishable) South African coast over there. On the right hand side of the Mediterranean Sea, I was all over that country to the North.

AG: When did you go into the, um, working for the National Park Service?

WP: When did I go with the Park Service, Marie?

MP: '47, I guess?

WP: Somethin' like that. I don't remember exactly.

MP: He retired in what, '62? I don't know how old you were when you retired. You had how many years with the Park Service?

WP: I had about 30 years. 31.

AG: Did you, um, OK. Did you leave the CC camps to go into the Navy?

WP: I volunteered for the Navy.

AG: Is that why you left the camps? And then, after you came back from the Navy, then you went into the, working for the Park Service?

WP: Yeah. Not right after, but shortly after.

MP: How many years did you work for the Park Service?

WP: Must've been about 30-some years.

AG: Where were you?

WP: You mean, where I lived?

AG: Yeah.

WP: Right here. I bought this place, right here, and got married. We lived here ever since. We haven't got much here, but we got a home.

MP: We have (indistinguishable) of White Pine. (Indistinguishable) here to stay. (Laughs)

WP: Yeah, I got a stand of White Pine, too. But I'm not gonna sell it.

MP: (Indistinguishable)

WP: Well, it ain't that rough. You can get over it, but they had kind of a scenery in mind. I'm not gonna sell the Pine.

MP: I've been trying to get him to sell, but he doesn't want another house. I'm not gonna run along much extra anyway (indistinguishable). Little things have changed (indistinguishable) and I'm out here in the country. Our kids they come, but they don't stay.

WP: I got a boy lives right here, at (?) Creek school down here.

AG: Oh, really?

WP: That brick house on the left there, you go down the right-of-way.

MP: Then you pass a road--

WP: You pass a road at this side of it. Then I got another that lives up there in Sparta.

MP: You probably know Caroline Caldwell. Are you from Sparta?

AG: No, I'm from Virginia. I'm from Radford.

MP: Radford?

AG: M-hm.

MP: (Indistinguishable) My daughter-in-law- works there now. Daughter-in-law works there. She works at uh, the glass factory. (Indistinguishable) She's been there for years. (Long stretch of indistinguishable words.)

WP: Where you from, Virginia?

AG: M-hm, Virginia, yeah.

WP: I guess you know all about that glass business down there.

MP: (Indistinguishable).

AG: Um, do you have a favorite story, at all, from back when you were in the CC camps?

WP: Well, I was in there two different times.

AG: Right.

WP: The first time, I stayed about six or eight months. Or a year. Got out, there wasn't no work back then, you couldn't buy a job. I went back in. I was going to go around to the mechanic school in Asheville. Go to mechanic school. So I took it. I stayed about five or six months. The course at mechanic school. And then I got out. And I was in the Navy in World War Two.

AG: Did anybody, um, famous visit while you were there? Any, like, Senators, or--

WP: No.

AG: Were there any big events, like disasters, or fires?

WP: I was in an aircraft (indistinguishable) in the military.

AG: Oh.

WP: When I was (indistinguishable) we shot down airplanes.

AG: (Laughs) What about when you were at the camps? Did they have any big things happen at the camps?

WP: Not really. No. No.

AG: What was your job when you were working with the Park Service?

WP: Well, I was maintenance man. At Cumberland Knob.

AG: Cumberland Knob?

WP: M-hm. They called 'em caretakers. But I did maintenance work.

AG: Uh-huh. What kinds of things did you do?

WP: At the Park Service?

AG: Yeah. When you were um, working as a maintenance--

WP: Well, I would repair stuff, and repair buildings, and stuff like that, you know. And kept everything goin'. Did a lot of paintin' and stuff.

MP: Mostly he was a caretaker.

WP: Yeah, that was my reign, was caretaker. In Sparta.

MP: You ever been out here toward Sparta?

AG: Yes.

WP: Everybody's been to see Sparta.

MP: You stayed down there 20-- how many years?

WP: I guess about 28 years.

AG: Wow. Did your job change at all while you were out there? Or did you do the same thing?

WP: 'Bout the same thing, I would think.

AG: Uh, what ways did you kind of explore the surrounding areas? Did you get out there a lot?

WP: Well, I had to-- I was (indistinguishable) Creek Trail. You been on that. Looked after that the best I could. Didn't know if I helped much, but I did the best job I could. Mowed, and stuff like that, you know.

AG: Right. When did you first see the Blue Ridge Parkway?

WP: Pardon?

AG: When did you first see the Parkway?

WP: I don't remember. I went to work for the Park Service right after I come home from the Navy, after World War Two. That's when I went to work for them up at the Bluff. We built that coffeeshop, I helped build that, and that gas station. And then, they fired the man who was down here, at Cumberland Knob. He always messed up, he (indistinguishable) and they just fired him. And I got his job. It was right here at home. And I was caretaker. Maintenance man.

AG: What's your favorite story, from when you were working there?

WP: Huh?

AG: What's your favorite story, from when you were working there?

WP: Well, I've seen a lot of things down there.

MP: Tell her about the snowstorm where you froze to death.

WP: Yeah, I used to run a snow plow up there.

AG: Oh, you did?

WP: Night and day, when it snowed. We used to run it out in the country.

AG: That must have been an experience.

WP: And I froze my ears, and my face. Got stuck one night, and the snow was about knee-deep, and it was still snowing. Couldn't get out, and I had to walk about so many miles, I about froze to death.

AG: Oh, my gosh.

WP: My ears froze, and (indistinguishable) I was glad when I stopped that snow-plowin' up there.

MP: He headed home, and started walkin', (indistinguishable).

WP: We did walk. And then, there was a man from Maryland, starting down the Parkway. He was drivin' a Pontiac. (Indistinguishable) and he was going (indistinguishable) And we met him. We started walking. Got up here, about two miles south of (?) Park, and I just kept gettin' colder and colder. Slower and slower. It got so cold, you can't walk. And then up the road, here come a big old Pontiac down here. And boy, we piled in it. And I froze my ears out there.

AG: What happened?

WP: I just didn't have no cap on. Me and the other guy used to plow that Parkway when it started snowing. We had to go down there to 89, (indistinguishable) and from 89 it's supposed to be Airbellows Gap. (Indistinguishable) We didn't know whether we was gonna make it or not. That time. He was (indistinguishable). I was on that snow-plow for a long time. And I did freeze my ears. I used to keep that Parkway real clear in the snow. 'Course there were drifts up there across the mountain, you couldn't do anything with.

MP: You ever go out there (indistinguishable)?

AG: M-hm.

WP: But that was my job. Caretaker.

AG: What other kinds of things did you see while you were out there?

WP: Pardon?

AG: What other kinds of things happened while you were out there?

WP: Well, I was maintenance man, I done everything. Repaired stuff. Painted stuff. Keep the bathrooms up, the best I could. You could always find a job out there if you wanted to do it.

MP: You had to do the mowin' too.

WP: Yeah, I done the mowin' up there on that big lawn. And down at the maintenance area.

AG: What things did you like about your job?

WP: I liked that job.

AG: You did? What did you like about it?

WP: Well, I (indistinguishable) about gettin' paid for that. I got tired of that.

MP: And you got benefits.

WP: Well, I had good retirement funds, stuff like that. You know. Which I did.

MP: He retired after 30 years.

WP: 31 years. In the Service.

AG: You must've seen a lot of people come through here.

WP: I've seen (indistinguishable). All kinds of 'em. (Laughs)

AG: (Laughs) Did you have any interesting experiences with that?

WP: No, not really. They all were about alike, really, when you're up there talkin' to 'em. I've met all kinds of people.

MP: One lady went for a walk and got lost out there.

WP: Well, she went around that Meadow Creek Trail.

AG: Oh my goodness.

WP: And she just went the wrong way. (END OF SIDE ONE)

SIDE TWO

WP: You can see nearly anything you want to see, comin' on the Parkway. Stay out there, see for ever.

MP: Lot of the people come from far away. People out of Virginia appreciate it more than the people around here. Nobody around here, or out in the country--

WP: Oh, some of 'em go have their own picnic on the weekends. Right there at Galax and everything.

MP: But not many people out in here (indistinguishable).

WP: Oh, there's lots of groups go out there. Christians--

MP: Not many go out there and have a picnic--

WP: That's a hard job, gettin' out there. You meet a lot of people on a Saturday or Sunday. They ask you all kinds of crazy questions. Just like that, you know.

AG: What were they asking you about?

WP: Oh, 'How far is it to Asheville?' 'How far is it to Blowin' Rock?' 'How far is it to--' all kinds of things. Just anything. 'Where can I turn off and go down in the woods?' All kinds of stuff.

MP: They didn't know trees, bushes, and things.

WP: Oh, they asked me a lotta stuff about that shrubbery. There's always somebody gonna ask me a crazy question. And I was right there in that part most of the time, since I (indistinguishable).

MP: The most aggravatin' thing is people who all come in there and turn around and want to know the direction, and how many miles down to (indistinguishable).

WP: Then there's a Ranger in that part, part-time, anyway.

MP: They had easy jobs, those Rangers. Made good money, too. But their job was mostly I guess--

WP: Law-enforcement. (Pause) Well, it oughtta be a pretty day for the garden outside. Do you have a garden?

AG: No, I live in an apartment.

WP: Oh, you couldn't have a garden.

AG: I don't have a yard. (Laughs)

MP: They're a lot of trouble, I can tell you that. (Indistinguishable)

WP: I got a good big of (indistinguishable) sittin' up there in the woods here, but I just can't ever use it.

MP: (Indistinguishable).

AG: When you started working with the Parkway, um, were you doing it, were you hired as a temporary worker? Or--

WP: I was hired as a permanent worker. Civil Service.

AG: What kinds of people were the other employees?

WP: Temporary employees. They just hired around here, in the summertime, for extra help.

AG: Uh-huh. Did you like them?

WP: Pardon?

AG: Did you like them?

WP: Some of 'em, yeah. Yeah, they was all right. Then they'd hire a bunch of school kids out there once in a while.

MP: (Indistinguishable) down in Virginia.

WP: They wasn't much into the work. But they done the best they could. 'Course it was my responsibility to keep up with all the maintenance, stuff like that. Never let (indistinguishable).

AG: Was there anything you didn't like about the job?

WP: Pardon?

AG: Was there anything you didn't like about the job?

WP: Well, you see all kinds of people. Foreign people, everybody. And they ask you some of the craziest questions you ever heard. (Laughs)

AG: What was the craziest question you ever heard?

WP: Oh, I can't just come up with one right now. But they'd ask you anything. Yeah.

MP: Mostly they'll work up something concerning which way is (indistinguishable).

WP: Well, some of 'em, some people do that. Yeah.

MP: (Indistinguishable) They'll give you a ticket, I guess, if they get you.

WP: Well, they can, but they never do that. We had all kinds. Never.

MP: And you know people, down here in the country, they all have that Park (indistinguishable) and they bring people (indistinguishable). They have reunions out there, once in a while. You know, or get together every two or three days (indistinguishable).

WP: Well, you know, when you go to a place like that, have them parties like that. And you go out there as many years as I've been out there, see... I once (indistinguishable) I had the job out there to keep that place up.

AG: Must've been a big job.

WP: Yeah. Keep everything going. You could always find somethin' to do.

AG: What was your typical day like there?

WP: Pardon?

AG: What was your typical day like there?

WP: Well. We had all kinds of people in the world down there at that Parkway. Some of 'em can't speak English. Some of 'em can, (indistinguishable) and they always want directions. I was around there most of the time, and they always asked me the directions, sometimes they'd see me lingering there.

WP: (Continued) On weekends, and whatever. You'll get a lot of strange questions brought to you, out there.

AG: I bet.

WP: "How far is it to Roanoke?" "How far is it to Asheville?" Things like that. (Pause) Then some people come through there, (indistinguishable) ain't ever seen a place like that. Everybody wants to live in this mountain when they come through.

MP: I think this area is quiet, and people don't live close together. We've lived here all these years. (Indistinguishable) live in town.

WP: I've been in enough towns in my life. I was in the Navy in World War Two, and I learned about all of 'em.

MP: (Indistinguishable) Sparta's not a big town, but still--

WP: You can say that again. (Laughs)

MP: But it's come a long way. You see it now, a lot of the businesses out there--

WP: They had more stuff on one street in New York City than there is on two or three places around Sparta.

MP: Yeah, but then--

WP: That was when I was out of Port.

MP: We have two nice grocery stores.

WP: I fought on two or three ships right out of New York.

MP: We have two drugstores. We have many stores to choose from. A lot of people go shopping (indistinguishable). But up here, SParta's a big place. You ever been there?

WP: Oh, Lord, you know she's been in Sparta. Couldn't miss it. (Laughs)

AG: What do you think of the way the Parkway is being operated by the Park Service today?

WP: I don't understand you.

AG: What do you think of the way the Park Service is operating the Parkway today?

WP: I'll just tell you the facts about it, I don't know that much about it. Because, you know, I'm hardly ever out there. On the Parkway. As far as I know, they're doing all right. But I stayed out here at Cumberland Knob 'bout 30-some years. In the summer-time. Worked on maintenance in the winter-time. So, I guess they're doin' all right. I don't know how they're keepin' it up this summer, I ain't been out there but once.

MP: Many people (indistinguishable).

WP: That's what you think.

MP: Most of 'em come down--

WP: You oughtta get out there some Sunday.

MP: They have loads of people (indistinguishable).

WP: That's the ones that goes, them Church groups. Now they come to that place-- they used to be out there Sunday morning, when I'd go to work, there'd be a picnic there. Yeah.

AG: They'd have family revivals, and things like that?

WP: Oh yeah.

MP: They have preaching out there, sometimes.

WP: Yeah, they'd have a lot of that, on Sundays.

MP: The colored people, they have church groups (indistinguishable).

AG: When were you out there last?

WP: I went out to CUMberland Knob, on the Parkway, I guess a month or two ago.

MP: I haven't been out there in a long time, since (indistinguishable).

WP: Oh, I been out there since then.

MP: (Indistinguishable).

AG: When you were working on the Parkway, what did you do on your days off? For entertainment?

WP: Worked around here. Mowed, or worked in the garden. Stuff like that, when there was time. Just anything you know. My mowin' needs doing now, I still have to do it.

MP: (Indistinguishable) after all these years, he was never sick, except on (long stretch of indistinguishable words).

WP: Yeah, I've got a new 12-horsepower 750 (?) settin' in the woods here, if I ever want to use it.

MP: (Indistinguishable) never did learn, but I should have. (Indistinguishable)

AG: No way! (Laughs)

WP: Sure is.

MP: Lotta people used to be here then. Dead and gone, these people. And then each year, Bill would see the millionaires tryin' to come in and buy a place, what they can find. They really had a time tryin' to get a place they had more money in there than we had down here, and if you don't own your own place you pay dear for it, in rent.

WP: We've got 23 acres here.

AG: Wow. That's a lot of land.

MP: Yeah, and all of it's in White Pine.

WP: Most of it is.

MP: When we come here, there wasn't, let's see (indistinguishable) He was in that business. (Indistinguishable).

WP: Oh, I've done a lot of that (indistinguishable).

MP: We've got a lot we need to do. I need to get some new wallpaper up, and get some paintin' done, and get some canning done-- but one thing about it, it used to be if the money was a problem, you'd find somebody to do it. Now, you can't get nobody to do it. I don't know when we're gonna do it. (Indistinguishable)

WP: Beats me.

MP: And my Daughter-in-law works at Galax, at the Glass factory. I worked there, I retired for (indistinguishable). She's got something wrong with her hands. (More indistinguishable).

WP: Well, I doubt if we'll get any rain today.

MP: This weather (indistinguishable).

AG: I'm gettin' tired of all this rain.

MP: Yes. (Indistinguishable talk for about five minutes. Following are some of the phrases that are identifiable): Haulin' out them trees out there... That's one thing, they don't do no good... Don't know what to do... ain't gonna do nothin'.... Can't do much anymore... We're both retired, that's a lot to be thankful for... I didn't go to work till I was pretty close to 50 and I didn't retire till I was 62. I worked at that plant.... four years and then I quit. I retired when I was 63. I didn't know.... Guess you got good health when you're 62 years old... You stay down there about a year of two years.... Would you like to have something to drink? Or to eat, or something?

AG: Sure, that would be great.

MP: I don't have any cake. Me and Bill have sugar problems, and I--

WP: You're the one that's got the sugar problem.

MP: Now, you have too. (Goes into other room). I got a 7-Up and a Pepsi.

AG: Oh, Pepsi sounds great.

MP: Bill, you want anything?

WP: I might take just a sip of one, or about half a glass. I don't drink much myself. What're you lookin' for?

AG: My bag. (Laughs) I forget which side I put it on. I have a form that I need to get your signiature on. It's a release form that says that it's OK for the National Park Service to use the information on your interview.

WP: All right. (Pause) Marie?

MP: Yes? WP: Bring my little glasses over here, I can't hardly see. (END OF TAPE)