

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

CCC in Parsons, West Virginia

Personal Experience

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ARTHUR AND DOVIE FANSLER

Interviewed

by

Hugh Earnhart and Rebecca Rogers

on

June 10, 1989

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INTERVIEWEE: ARTHUR AND DOVIE FANSLER

INTERVIEWER: Hugh Earnhart and Rebecca Rogers

SUBJECT: Civilian Conservation Corps, Parsons, West  
West Virginia, look out towers, Cheat  
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Northeastern Forest Experiment Station,  
planting trees, fire fighting, rangers

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E: This is an interview with Dick Fansler and Dovie Fansler for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program in conjunction with the National Forest Service, on CCC, Civilian Conservation Corps, and other related matters in Parsons, West Virginia, by Hugh Earnhart and Rebecca Rogers, at Elkins, on June 10, 1989.

We will start with you Arthur. Tell me a little bit about growing up as a kid, where you were born, something about your parents, number of people in the family.

AF: I was born at a little community about three miles out of Hambleton in the country called Mackeyville. It was right at the base of Backbone Mountain. I grew up there on the farm. I think in 1935 I left the farm and I went into the CCC camps. Pickens, that was between Valley Head and Pickens on Point Mountain, I was in there for thirty-eight months. When I came out, I was out three years, and I went into the Army. I was in there for four and a half years. When I came out September 4, 1945 I went to work for the forest service. That is the way it happened.

E: How many members are in your family?

AF: There are seven of us all together.

E: How big of a farm did you live on?

AF: 132 acres, it was right at the base of Backbone Mountain. Go up the mountain and just across the top of it to the old Backbone lookout tower. That was built there in 1921 and 1922. There is huckleberry plains right in below it there. Fire burned that you know. Of course the huckleberries came up after the fire. I used to go up there as a kid and pick huckleberries. I would look up that old tower and just marvel at it, just stand there and watch and just wish that I could be in there, not thinking that years after I would be in it. I was in it for twenty-two years.

E: What type of schooling did you go to? Did you go to one room school house?

AF: I went to one room school house there at Mackeyville. I started when I was six. I had to walk about three miles. That was in 1921. We walked out to the schoolhouse, little one room school out in the country. I can remember one time . . . We were barefooted, you know. Huge chestnut trees grew along the roads you know, just all along. Those old burrs would fall in the Fall. You would go across there barefooted and you would run these old burrs into your feet. You would have to be awful careful. I remember going there one morning, it was pretty frosty, and while I was there it came a snow about two inches. I thought I was going to have to go home barefooted in the snow. My dad came on a horse and took me home on horseback.

E: Was there any one teacher that stands out?

AF: Yes, Virgie Stalnaker.

E: What made that so special?

AF: I don't know. She was my first teacher for one thing, and I thought she was one of the prettiest, as a kid, one of the prettiest women I ever looked at. She was awful sweet to me. I used to do anything I wanted to, just lie down and take a nap. We would have to carry our water for the school, oh maybe half a mile, and she would always let me go with the bigger boys who carried the water. Of course I always got a thrill out of that, go out there and carry the water back.

E: What kind of games did you play?

AF: Prisoner's base, hide and seek, and tag, and ball, baseball. Didn't play any volleyball but a little baseball. In the wintertime we played, in the snow,

fox and geese.

E: What is prisoner's base?

AF: Well you would line up on each side, divide your group, and mark the base off. Two would go out and go through the motions of what they were supposed to represent and the other one is supposed to guess what it is. If they would guess and catch one of them before they would get back to base, they would put them on the base there. One of the other side would have to work around to get them off. It has been so long since I played that. You never hear of it anymore.

E: Dovie, tell me about your going, your family, and where you went to school, and things you did as a youngster.

DF: I was born in Hendricks, West Virginia. I am the only one in the family. There were two of us children but my sister died five years before I was born. She died in infancy. I went to a four room school in Hendricks. There were eight grades. We went from the primer, in those days, through the eighth grade in there. Then we had to go to Parsons, which was three miles from Hendricks, to high school. I went to four years through high school. We lived in a small town and after I was out of high school I went to work. I wasn't old enough to go in public works yet so I did housework for people. Then as soon as I was of age, well before I was of lawful age, they sneaked me in the store for a "going-out-of-business sale." I continued on working there as a clerk and also doing their office work; their typing. Then I worked part-time for a county superintendent under a government youth program. Then Dick came home from the service and we got married. I stayed at home. We had two children and when our youngest one was eight years old I went to work for the forest service two days a week.

E: Something we don't often think a whole lot about, with him away in the service during the Second World War and you are at home, was there a lot of correspondence back and forth?

DF: Yes, everyday. Sometimes I wouldn't get mail for a week, maybe two weeks, then the letters would all come at once. Of course a lot of them were censored. I didn't even know what he had left out. In one he tried to tell me where he was by directions and certain codes but I couldn't tell where he was. He was in the Aleutian Islands. I couldn't tell where he was and he was not allowed to say where he was. The letters, some of them would be so cut up it was pitiful.

R: How did they censor them? Did they put little pieces

of tape over it?

DF: No, they cut the piece out.

R: So if he wrote on the back, whatever was on the back was gone too?

E: You lost that too.

DF: Right.

E: Some places they used to have indelible ink. That was just so penetrating into the material. If they didn't do it heavy enough you could hold it up to the light and make out.

AF: They just took the scissors and took this out.

DF: Any pictures that he would send to me they were censored. They would stamp them on the back that they were censored. It is hard to tell how many pictures he tried to send to me that I never got. Of course he has no way of knowing.

E: The background was cut out?

DF: No, the pictures when they were censored, they were just stamped on the back that they had been censored. In other words that told the center where the mail went through that that picture could go on through, that it had been censored and approved. In fact I think the stamp said, "Censored and Approved," on the back.

E: I have an uncle who was in the Pacific. If he took a picture in front of anything that could be identified they just cut it out. There would be a picture of Uncle Dennis standing there in the middle of nowhere.

DF: None of these pictures were cut but I have often wondered how many he might have tried to send through that didn't come through. I imagine different centers worked differently. I don't know.

E: Let's talk about the CCC camps. Can you describe . . . If I blindfolded you and took you up to the front gate and said, "Okay now, what can I expect to see in here," could you describe that to me?

AF: Oh yes! As you look straight ahead the mess hall was across there, facing the mess hall on the left side were five barracks. I think each one accommodated forty men, up on the left, and it was all built the same way, identical in every way. Then on the right side going down, first was the forestry officers' quarters, like the superintendent, and the Army offi-

cer. We had a captain . . . It was the Army when I was in there, the captain and the lieutenant. Then the next one was a PX, a rec room. The next one was our supply room, and then the infirmary there, or dispensary on the side. Then the next building was the forestry, the supervisors, you know, the bosses. Then on the end was the office for the camp, you know, the day room.

R: Were CCC camps pretty similar?

AF: It was all pretty well the same. They were all built alike but they weren't set up alike. It just depended on the terrain where they were at. They couldn't put five barracks you know in a row there in a lot of places. Ours apparently was.

R: You know whether Parsons was similar to that?

AF: Yes, it was similar to that. The barracks were sitting on the left, then the rest of them were on the right up through the bottom there.

R: Where was it in relation to the . . . It is at the upstream end of the bottom but it was real close to that sort of marshy area.

AF: Yes, slew was down there. See, the road has changed now. It used to come across that old bridge right at the edge there.

R: Did you come in closer to the CCC camps than you do now?

AF: Yes, yes, you know where the old ranger station is . . . You were down there in the bottom weren't you?

R: Yes, I have been there.

AF: Do you know where the old ranger's residence was? It was just straight out toward the slew from there.

R: So when you came in the main road you went this way, and that way, with the nursery on one side and the Fernow buildings on the other side?

AF: When you came down around the hill there and across the railroad track there was a little bridge. When you came to the end of the bridge on the nursery side you turned left, go up to CCC camp; or you could go from the CCC camp through to the ranger's house, or go straight ahead out to the ranger station or the nursery office.

DF: The entrance was different from what it is now.

R: I know and it is hard for me to understand exactly where we are.

AF: It was a blessing when the changes in the road down there. You couldn't get up around there in the winter-time. It would get so slippery, you know. You couldn't get a start at the bottom. You had to go across the railroad tracks and a curve there, up the hill.

R: Lose anybody ever over there?

AF: Lose them?

R: Did they slide in the ditch or anything?

AF: Oh yes, they would slide in the ditch! I came down there one time, missed the bridge there. I don't know what happened to me. My brakes froze up or something. When I hit the brakes I started sliding. Boy, if it hadn't been for the railroad rails there, you know off where they hadn't filled up the roadway, I would have went into that slew, I didn't.

E: What color were these barracks?

AF: They had tar paper on them, regular roofing paper.

E: Just black roofing paper?

AF: Black roofing paper.

E: Nothing over the top of that?

AF: No, it was sheeted underneath the paper. It had the paper over it, then it had two inch strips down each seam. Then they had . . . I have a lot of pictures of them.

E: What kind of windows were in those buildings?

AF: Just little hatch window and they were up above the, I guess they called it wanes coating then. It opened up, and dropped down from the top about that far. A chain held it, it wouldn't come any farther. Then the screen behind it.

E: Was ventilation pretty bad in there?

AF: No, it was good. Up in the roof there were three vents in there. All the still air would go out there.

R: Ventilators you mean? Like a ventilator?

AF: Like a . . .

R: Like on a sugar shack?

AF: What do we call them, Dovie, that we put up in the house there on the roof?

DF: Louvers.

AF: Louvers.

E: Sitting on the foundation?

AF: Up on posts, wooden posts.

E: In other words there is a crawl space underneath?

AF: Oh yes, the floor end of it you could almost stand up. Well, it was about five feet off the ground. The upper end was just enough off the ground that they weren't touching.

E: In the wintertime a lot of air went through there, didn't it?

AF: In the winter of 1935 there were ninety days that we didn't come out of the barracks, only to go to the mess hall. Snow was right up even with the barracks.

E: That is three months!

AF: I know.

E: What did you do for three months? I mean you could tell war stories for a week but what did you do the rest of the time?

AF: We could play poker. Play poker and play tricks on each other, go up to the rec hall and shoot pool. Beer was only \$.10 a bottle then you know, pop \$.05.

R: Did they sell beer in the camp?

AF: No, they didn't sell it.

R: You had to go in to town?

AF: You had to go in to town to get it. Pop was only \$.05 a bottle. Hot dogs were \$.05. Hamburgers were \$.10. We got along pretty good, we didn't mind it. A lot of times we volunteered to go out and work. We would go out on the mountain there and dig cars out of the snow drifts you know, like that.

E: Did someone pay you for doing that?



AF: No, that came in our monthly wages.

E: In other words when you went out to dig someone out of the snowdrift you just got bored in the barracks and went out to do something.

AF: Yes, that is right. One time we had to go to Pickens to get the payroll. We had to go down in a bulldozer, took the bulldozer down to get the payroll.

E: Was that a decision not to work, usually the crew chiefs, or the commanding officer was usually a first lieutenant or something?

AF: Now the Forest Supervisor, the superintendent of the camp, he was over the men about it in the forest. The Army officer was over him while I was in camp. The doctor had the biggest say. If he would say it was too cold, or the snow too deep, not to go out, we wouldn't go. Plain to see we couldn't do anything if we did go out; the snow was up even with the barracks.

E: Was this doctor an individual who was there on a regular basis, or was he a local doctor who was just . . .

AF: He was sent in there by the Army. He was an Army doctor. I forget his name. He was sent in there. We had two or three of them. He was sent in there by the Army. Then if anybody got sick because he didn't know who could take care of him, they brought him into Elkins there to the doctor.

E: What kind of things were in that rec room?

AF: We had a pool table, books to read and that was it. Books and that is all. Two pool tables, that was it. Rack of books, magazines and so on, that was just about all we had.

R: How often did you get to go home?

AF: Once a week if you wanted to. I would stay two or three weeks and maybe on the fourth one go home. The general rule about every week you would get . . . Friday nights you could take off, hitchhike home, you know, and back. Sometimes I would stay two or three weeks before going home.

R: I'm sorry I forgot, when did you guys get married? Before the war?

DF: No.

E: No, after.

R: Oh okay, but you knew Dovie before, along all this time?

AF: She and I went to school together when in the primer. There wasn't a girl in that school that I hated any worse than her.

E: Why was that?

AF: She was too smart. She was always smarter than I was. She went so neat, and she acted prissy I thought, smart alec. She had big, long curls that came down here, you know. Just might like to catch her going home, you know. She lived up the road a little way; I would have to follow her out. I would get a hold of her hair and would jerk it like that.

E: If you went to a psychologist today do you know what he would say?

AF: I was crazy.

E: You were crazy about her and you just didn't want to admit it for fear the rest of the boys were going to make fun of you.

AF: I didn't have any use for her at all.

E: I don't believe that for a second.

DF: He was jealous because I made better grades.

E: That's right, that's right.

AF: She would get promoted two times a year and I would only get promoted once. I was lucky to get promoted that time.

E: I thought you got along good with that teacher.

AF: That was the first teacher. This was after I graduated from up there in Mackeyville.

E: What kind of a medical examination did you get in these camps when you went out and qualified?

AF: They would take us before a doctor and he would just give us a regular examination, when I went in, but I never got any when I came out.

E: Did you consider it a thorough examination for that particular point and time? Obviously you didn't have the same checks and stuff that we had today. Was it one of those things: walk across the room, you pass.

AF: That was just about it. Your eyes, ears, and mouth. If you could walk up you could pass.

E: Just like one of those early Army examinations, you know.

AF: If you could walk to the door, you could walk until you joked with him. I'm telling you, you would laugh from now on, but I wouldn't dare tell it to you.

E: Were you able to save any money?

AF: Oh boy, I was an assistant leader when I was in there. I made \$36 a month. Yes, I did save \$100.

E: In how long a time?

AF: Three years, thirty eight months.

E: You were sending home what, \$25?

AF: \$25, I was getting \$11 up at camp.

E: You had \$11 which means you had about \$132 a year that you could save out of. You save roughly a third.

R: That is pretty good.

E: That isn't too bad.

AF: It took me thirty-eight months to save \$100.

E: Your hamburger is only \$.10.

AF: Yes, I know.

E: Hamburgers now are \$2.96 and it is extra if you want something on it.

DF: They had cigarettes.

AF: Well, cigarettes were . . . You could get some of them for \$.05.

R: I am sure you could.

AF: Chesterfields, I think there were six in a pack, they were \$.05 and then you would get them wings for \$.10 and Avalons were \$.10.

E: Did they supply a radio in that camp?

AF: No.

E: Did anybody have one?

AF: Oh, yes. We all had a radio--well, anybody that wanted it.

E: Yes.

AF: The boys went through with the punchboards. This is an awful place for punchboards.

E: Oh, yes. Those were big things and that was big gambling at the time.

AF: Yes, and you know I won a radio on one of them. I was just tickled to death I won that radio. I won it and I also won a little pocket watch one time on a punchboard.

E: Let me ask something about that DC Delco?

AF: Yes.

E: Who maintained that?

AF: The Army did. They had a man assigned to it, you know, a night guard they called him. He would start the generator up. They had two generators sitting side by side so if one wouldn't start he could always go to the other; if there was something that was wrong with one then he had the other or fixing one, he would have the other to go on. He would start it up and they had it fixed that they could turn the barrack's lights off and leave the other lights burn, you know. At 10:00 they would go through and would turn all the lights out in the barracks. You had to be quiet from then on.

E: They left like a camp light. . .

AF: Yes, in the mess hall the cooks, a lot of people there and the officers' quarters and the canteen all the time and the dispensary; the forestry men, the bosses, they left their lights on. Lots of times they would leave ours on a little longer too.

E: What type of work did you do? Now were you working out in the field?

AF: Yes. I worked out in the field. I was a telephone lineman. They built all their telephone lines, you know. We built from Point Mountain to Webster Springs and from Point Mountain down to Elkwater there where we built that new road, Valley Head up and down Hacker Valley. We had several miles of telephone lines to build and that's what I did in the CCC. When I went in the Army, I got into the communication company, you know, it was practically the same thing. Then when I came out, the forest service had their own telephone

system, you know, had 150 miles of telephone line and they had no one to work on it. Well, that just fell right in my lap, you know. So I got on like that and I put all the telephone lines back in shape and everything. Then I went on to commercial.

E: What time did you go to work in the morning?

AF: CCC?

E: Yes.

AF: About, around, between 7:30 and 8:00, I think.

E: Now, did you take the days, the lunch with you and your tools or did you come back in?

AF: Well, if it wasn't too far out we would come back in and if it was too far out, well, we would take our lunch; they would pack us a lunch, you know, for the crew. We generally would build a fire and make our own coffee out of a big can there and make our own coffee.

E: And then what time would you come in in the evening?

AF: We would have to be in by 5:00 at camp.

E: Then you had your supper.

AF: Yes. Reveille, a retreat.

E: Yes. Was everybody expected to fall out and participate in lowering the flag and. . .

AF: Yes sir. I was a barracks leader, you know.

E: Was that your job to make sure they all fell out?

AF: They all fell out. In the morning when I had roll call they would either answer for roll call and if they didn't well, I would just turn their name into the first sergeant; he's really a, well, I guess you would call him first sergeant and then they would take it up from there.

E: Was there much discipline problem?

AF: Oh, we had very strict discipline. That's the trouble right now, if they would have discipline in the Army like we had, we wouldn't have the deadbeats now in the Army.

E: Did many people get in trouble?

AF: No. No, very, very few.

E: They knew what they respected; they knew what they were required to do and did it.

AF: Now, when them boys came in there, we would get a big bunch in, you would bring them into town on a truck. Well, they would just holler and scream, you know, at the women when they would see them and this and that. Just one talking to from the old captain, they could come in there and you would never hear a word out of them boys. They were very disciplined.

E: What's the most severe punishment you can think of that has taken place there?

AF: Getting a dishonorable discharge.

E: In other words, throwing them out.

AF: Throwing them out.

E: What kind of stigma did that . . . Did they send home to the newspaper that so-and-so was being discharged dishonorably or anything?

AF: No, no they wouldn't do that. It was just between him and the commanding officer.

E: Did you have to stand any guard duty of any sort?

AF: Not really no, but in the winter when it was real cold up there, they would appoint one boy to go around and start all the vehicles up at a certain period of the night to keep them from freezing up, you know. That's the only thing. Now, the crazy boys . . . We, would get a bunch of new guys in there; well, they would initiate them, you know, they would send them out on guard duty. I had one colored boy that guarded a well up there for all night.

R: That was as a joke?

AF: Yes. Just a joke. That's all it was.

E: What other kinds of tricks were played on people? Obviously, short sheeting the beds.

AF: Oh yes. Bending, you know these steel bunks they would bend the legs back under a little bit at each end, and then when you sat down, kerflop, she would go. Or take the springs out around where it holds the bottom end, put cord in there--a tiny string just enough to hold the mattress up--he sits down on it, right through he goes. That was fun. Then, stick a match under there and put another match to it there and give him the hot foot. Did you ever have the hot foot?

E: Yes.

AF: Boy, you don't know what you are missing if you don't have that.

E: Oh yes, I know what I missing.

AF: Put a little shoe polish under there, you know. Man oh man I'm telling you if you don't . . . Or the pants they give us, the overall pants, are always too big for you. You would have to run one of these loops here through this one. The pockets stick out back here just like a saddlebag and boy you would see one go along, just take a cigarette and throw it in that pocket. I threw one in a boys pocket who had a comb in there. I didn't know he had the comb and boy, you couldn't see that boy through the smoke. I'm telling you that is the funniest thing I ever saw.

R: I think you were the prankster of the group myself.

E: I think he's the one that Slim talked about pouring the molasses in somebody's bed.

R: Okey Smith?

AF: Cutting the trail out one time for a road we were building, I was standing there and the boys were along. I was their leader you know, I was a boss out there. They ran into a yellow jackets nest. They would stand back, five of them. One boy was standing there and we knew he didn't have any shirts on or anything. His arms were folded and I was standing beside him. I looked over and there was a big hair there in his arm. I just reached over and got a hold of it and gave it a jerk. Boy he started hitting his arm, "He got me, he got me."

E: Oh he thought he had been bitten by the yellow jacket.

AF: Yes, he was hollering. I caught a ground snake about that long. I just cut his head off with the axe, you know, laid him on a log and cut it off, picked him up and dropped him in this boys pocket. He felt the jerking in there you know. He looked back and saw that and he took out through the woods there screaming and hollering. I had to go and catch him and take that snake's head out of his pocket.

E: Yes, because he's just about ready to die!

AF: I know it.

E: He had a cardiac arrest.

AF: I didn't know he was afraid of the snake.

E: Tell me something about working for this ranger.

AF: Ranger Rowland?

E: Yes, what do you remember about him?

AF: He was one of the best men I ever worked for. He was strict, he was honest, and he was thorough. When he told you to do something you did it the way he wanted it. You did it the way he prescribed for you to do it and that's it. As long as you did that you got along fine with him. I could always tell when he was displeased. If something didn't go right he would say, "Judas, Judas, Judas." If he got a little mad he would say, "Christopher Columbus." Then when he was real mad, and you had better be on the way to go, he would say, "Horrible Hell." You had better be out in place to go.

E: In other words he gave you a warning?

AF: Yes.

E: What was a typical day like when you were a fire ranger?

AF: A typical day?

E: What was it like? What were your duties, what did you do to keep from being bored? It certainly had to get to you every once in awhile.

AF: Well sir, I am telling you I was up in that old mountain there. I saw the sun come up many times and I saw it set. I don't know, it didn't seem to me like I got lonesome or anything. I must be a freak of nature or something but I could always find something to get my mind off of just being by myself there and all of that. There is always something new happening, always a bird going over, a deer, a bear, something down there on the ground to keep you busy.

One time I was in that old tower and came up a windstorm you know. It had one of these corrugated tin roofs on. It was a seven by seven up in there, steel. The wind caught that corner and darn near brought that whole roof up over and down, knocked nine of my windows out. There I was just standing there looking up at the sky. That was kind of a thrill.

E: Was there any precaution about when you were supposed to leave that tower and get the hell out of there?



AF: No, now they built another tower to replace this and the trees grew up. You couldn't see out of this one. It was only forty feet. It was up on rock. Well, it is forty feet above the rock. They built one just 300 feet from this out on a point that is 100 feet tall. I was up in there in a windstorm and couldn't get out. It jerked the fire finder loose from the floor, it was on there with legs screwed, jerked my radio out of the fire finder. You couldn't keep anything in there. I just stood there holding the fire finder to keep from falling over. I tried to get out but it was just like stepping in swift water. There is a trapdoor you raised up to step down on the steps. You step down in there and that old wind would hit you there, just about take your feet out from under you. That was about the worst I ever was.

E: Did anyone ever come visit you on your shift?

AF: Oh yes, I had a lot of visitors up there.

E: They were allowed to come up the seventy foot tower?

AF: Yes, they could come right up. A lot of them couldn't make it though.

E: Today there would be 1,000 reasons for insurance and safety and everything else. They wouldn't allow someone to do that type of thing.

AF: Yes, but it still stands up there, the old 100 foot one. I guess they go up there and climb it. They put wire on the steps going up, you know, so they can't fall. The old tower on the rock, the electric company put a big angle bar across the corner, put the radio equipment on it--great big, looked to me like radio tubes, you know that used to be in these old radios, a lot of big stuff--to register the lightening strikes you know.

I am telling you, one morning I went up there after an electric storm. There wasn't enough left of that stuff to tell what it was. It had burned all up.

E: It would seem to me that tower would be like a magnet for electricity.

AF: Oh, it was grounded. You could see the lightening come down and go out through there and up off of those rocks out from you there. The only danger up there was the side flash. It hit the tower and came in on your fire finder, you know, and your fire finder wouldn't be grounded, and jump over onto the side of the tower to go down and you would be standing between that, then it would get you. But if your fire finder was grounded

it wouldn't be no side flash.

R: Were you in there during storms?

AF: Oh yes.

R: I'm not sure where the tower was. I have climbed up there. Is it behind Canaan lodge?

AF: No, it's between Parsons.

R: It is farther down from Parsons. It is not that big rock chimney that is on the end by the Flanagan Hill?

AF: No.

R: Okay, that is where somehow I . . .

AF: I was in one up in Canaan Mountain there first, Bearden they called it. The Army built it. It took the place of the old Canaan tower. It was made out of wood and I really liked it. It was a nice tower.

E: If you saw a fire did you communicate by telephone?

AF: Telephone only. Back then we didn't have any radio, we didn't have anything. The tower man had to pinpoint the fire, tell them how big it was, how fast it was burning, and what kind of fuel it was burning in. They would send a smokechaser out. The smokechaser would go out, he would take generally a man with him, a messenger, and depended on the tower man to tell him when he had the fire under control or had it slowed down or anything. He would send a messenger back into the ranger station and he would give the tower man what to expect, whether they need more men, whether he could handle it, or so on. If it was real black smoke it was either burning in Laurel or Hemlock. Well of course Buckwheat stubbles wouldn't be up there. If it was real thin and light, it was light fuel, and it was going to burn fast. If it was just old, big rolls coming up, it was burning heavy fuel and it was hot.

DF: Do you remember when you first got radios?

AF: I can remember when we first got a radio. I have one of them at home now. They gave it to me, an SX set, I had one. That was over here back in Elkins.

E: What year was that?

AF: That was 1940 something. Anyhow, there was this big cloud between you and him and you couldn't get communication. It took fifteen, I think, telephone batteries, two B batteries, and one A, to operate it. Then the

forest service got us these, got electric up the tower and it was dandy.

E: Once you reported the fire what was then your next responsibility?

AF: I had to follow up on it. I had to keep the ranger informed whether it was spreading more or whether it was dying down or so on. I could set the fire finder. I would take a reading at this side of it to begin with and over at this side. It has been so long I forget how to do it. The degrees between the two points showed you the size of the fire. I would keep it at that. Then maybe half hour or so I would take a sight and if it spread I knew it spread a little more and I could tell him.

E: Did they respond with volunteer type fire equipment or did the forest service have their own crews around?

AF: They had their own initial crew, then they got the volunteers. See the first line of attack was the nursery men there, then the high school boys and the volunteer fire department. Then we had wardens out in the country. They had men lined up. We could call them anytime. There is one there at Saint George. If I would get a fire in his area I would just call him and he would take care of it himself. He would get his men, have his men ready. They just were all picked out. One night we had six fires.

E: Were most of these nature, lightening, or were careless citizens at work?

AF: This was a careless citizen.

R: The six fires were careless citizens?

AF: Yes, he got mad because they had closed hunting season. It was during fire season and the woods had become very dry and reached the point that the State closed the hunting season. This was the first year they had opened doe season for deer. He became angry and set out fires. He started down Rt. 219, went out the tower road, out the Canyon Rim Road and threw fuzees every which way. He threw them over into the Blackwater Canyon. They caught him though. Boy that kept you busy.

R: How did you shift yourself? I mean the times of day. Did you get up in the middle of the night and check for fire?

AF: If it was a class five fire day I would. I would get up in the night, set the clock for every hour. I had

an alarm you know. That was when I had to sleep down in the ground in a cabin down there. Those who had their quarters up in the tower well you just stayed up there. There wasn't any problem at all.

E: In other words on this small tower, which was what, forty feet?

AF: Yes.

E: You had a little cabin on the ground?

AF: Yes.

E: Then you just kept going up and down during the night?

AF: Yes.

R: Every hour you went up?

AF: Every hour. If it was real dry I would go up every hour. I spent seventeen days and nights up there one time, never came out.

R: You get a day off a week or something?

AF: No.

R: What did you do while he was up in the tower?

DF: I stayed at home. I would take the children and go up. We had to haul water to him. The water up there wasn't good to drink. I would have to take water and food up to him and they had put a chain across the road and they locked it. No one but a forest service key could get through it. I would have to take food and water up to him. Of course I would take the children up to visit with their father.

R: So you have a picnic or something when you got up, in the summertime?

AF: Yes.

DF: It wasn't too much of a picnic because he would be up in the tower most of the time. But the children were not afraid to go up. He would carry the little girl and the boy was big enough to walk.

E: Did you go up there?

AF: She never went up in the big tower. She went up in the small one.

DF: I made it to the first landing on the big tower. The small one I would go up in, take the children up.

AF: This new one they built, I was the first man that manned it. I was the last official man who manned it. The one over at Bearden there, Canaan Mountain I was the last man that ever manned it.

E: I see today we would have to put an elevator in this. We would! We would say, "This is inhumane work environment."

DF: I don't doubt it.

R: Did you get days off a month or something? When did you ever get time out of the tower? Or was it slow periods that you got to . . .

AF: You see we started to work on Tuesday. We would work Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. There are five days. Our first of our week would start on Sunday. We would work five more days and then you would get two days off. That worked out ten days.

E: You said you were up there one time seventeen, how did that work out?

AF: I had to put in twenty-four hours to get eight was how it worked out. That was it. Then toward the last there, I don't know what year it was. When Floyd Wiles was there they started paying them a little overtime. One time I was making more money on overtime than I was on regular time and they cut that out on me.

E: By the way what were they paying you for this?

AF: I think I was making \$1.10 an hour, wasn't it?

DF: \$52 every two weeks, you were paid.

R: This was in 1952?

DF: 1952, yes. And if he didn't work he didn't get paid. He drew no annual or sick leave.

AF: It was WAE when it started out. That is when actually employed. The WAE didn't draw any benefits at all. Then after you got off of that WAE when you got employed permanently . . . I worked about two years before I got under civil service. After I got into civil service I would draw sick leave and annual leave. We had trails, and recreation, and fire, and maintenance improvement. If you earned any leave on either one of them, like if you were on trails and the leave you earned on trails, you had to take it off while you were still on the trail money or you wouldn't get it. If you were in recreation you had to take it off in

recreation, while you had that recreation money. So you had to take your leave on the job you earned it on.

R: So you couldn't pool it all together.

AF: You can now but you couldn't then.

E: Let me back up and get everybody up here to the 1950's. You worked on a research staff?

DF: I started out with the Cheat District in January of 1960 working two and a half days a week. I went WAE also until, I guess, in April I went on . . . Now wait I was under civil service all the time. I was hired and fired and rehired with the forest service. They were setting up this new filing system and they called me one day at noon and asked me if I wanted to go to work. This was at noon and I was supposed to be there at 1:00. So I made it and I worked five days and when my papers hit headquarters office--I was not under civil service--They didn't take the time to write back, they called, and said, "She does not work now." So I was fired. I took my civil service test in September of 1959 and I got my grade in October of 1959. Between Cheat District personnel officer and the personnel officer in headquarters office in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania fueding they held up my papers and wouldn't process them until in January. I went to work January 6, 1960, two days a week. My service computation date did not begin until April 28, due to the fact that I was WAE. Also they had fouled up my papers and had me under Social Security rather than retirement. I worked there four years, then I went to Northeastern Forest Experiment Station.

E: What type of work did you do?

DF: Office work, clerical.

R: Were you at the nursery bottom then, office in the nursery bottom?

DF: Yes, and it still stands there.

R: Is that the shingle building, you were in there?

DF: Yes. The last shingle building on the right as you are going towards the river, that was our building. It was a pretty building at that time. In the summertime I worked in the front office. You opened both those doors and a nice breeze would go through there. When they would be sprinkling the seedlings in the nursery it would make it so cool. That cold water out there from the river came, and air would come off of that in through there. It would be so cool and nice.

R: That was the office that is on the right side?

DF: Yes, the last building on the right side.

R: No, I mean when you go in the front door you went on the right side?

DF: Yes.

R: Then the big room with the fireplace was?

DF: That was the ranger's office and the Assistant Ranger.

R: And the assistant were in there both.

DF: I worked there until June of 1964 and then I went with the Northeast.

R: When you were working there what was happening in the washhouse for instance, that building that's next to you? Was that part of the nursery?

DF: That was a part of the nursery. The left side going towards the rivers was for the ladies and the right side was for the men. When they would have their breaks they would go in there and rest. That is where they ate their lunch. That is the reason they always called it the washhouse.

R: Did they actually have uniforms and change clothes and stuff?

DF: No.

R: They didn't wear uniforms?

DF: No, not the field people. Now the crew leaders wore uniforms.

R: Department of Natural Resource uniforms.

DF: Yes, but not the field people.

R: What kind of clothes did they wear? What would a woman wear?

AF: Overalls.

R: They all wore overalls?

DF: Yes.

R: Bandana?

DF: Some wore bandanas, some wore hats, some wore nothing. They would just get good and sunburned.

E: Were these bib overalls?

AF: Yes, a lot of them back years ago wore those. Then they wore . . . A lot of them wore just pants and shirts.

DF: When D.A. Oliver was superintendent there, at first, he wouldn't let the women bend over, stoop or anything, they had to crawl on their knees. I have seen the women with blood running out of their knees.

R: He didn't give them pads for their knees?

DF: The women, no; if you wore pads you had to make them. A lot of women did make pads for their knees but some of them didn't.

R: That picture that is in the Fernow office they are all wearing dresses. So they all wore dresses.

DF: That was way back--way, way, way back.

R: We are talking to Londa Bennett tomorrow. She is in one of those pictures.

DF: Londa Bennett?

R: She lives in Davis, she planted trees.

E: Started in 1929.

R: 1928. She came right after Mr. Oliver.

DF: I was just a child.

R: You were a sprout back then.

DF: I was a youngster.

R: Tell me more about the sort of life between . . . Did you interact at all with the people at the nursery?

DF: Oh yes! The washhouse was between the ranger's office and the nursery office and the girl who was clerk there, she and I were good friends. When I first went there I was just, I guess I was just tense and scared and I wouldn't take a break. I would start getting tired and nervous. Ernest Olson, we always called him Pete--no one knew he was Ernest. He came up one day and he said, "What the hell is the matter with you?" I said, "Well I can't type this"--whatever it was I was typing--"I am making to many mistakes." "Get the hell



out of here and go take a break, take a walk, or do something," he said, "Settle yourself down. You don't have to stay in this office every minute. Go over and talk to Sue." So I went over and visited with Sue.

The superintendent then of the nursery was Dave Denham and the county forester was Herb Harman. He would come over there and visit an awful lot. You get the four of us together and it was hilarious. It was four clowns. I would go over and visit with Sue. Sometimes we had something we wanted to talk about and we would go outside. First thing we knew here would come Dave around one side of the building and Herb around the other side of the building. We had a real good relationship there.

He told a while ago how the crews were for fires. When I went to work there, you see I didn't go until 1960, and of course he went to work in 1945, at the time I went to work, the nursery was the second crew to call. Our crew was first, of course, and then the nursery, then the Fernow or Northeast, and then after that the firemen, and after that the high school boys or anybody you could pick up off the street; but now you have to take step tests. You have to take a test and pass it before you can fight fire. But then you just go out, "Come on Joe, let's go fight fire."

E: When there was a fire and it became common knowledge that there was a fire, did those steps just get bypassed and everybody in the community started showing up to help out?

AF: Not all the time. Used to be we had a fire, the smoke-chaser, and I would go up to Hendricks--that was a good place to get boys, they were always in a big store there. We got smart. When we would go in the front door they would run out the back. Later on we would go out to get a bunch of boys. The smoke-chaser would go around the back door and I would go in the front and they would run out the back and he would catch them.

E: They didn't have to go unless they wanted to, did they?

AF: Either go or pay a fine.

E: Run that by me again.

AF: They would either have to go or pay a fine unless they were physically unfit.

E: In other words if you came up to them and said, "I need you to help go fight a fire," and they refused to do it . . .

AF: You could fine them. Arrest them, fined.

DF: Those were the rules of the forest service.

AF: You didn't baby them then like you do know. We used to have to keep a diary everyday of our work. I have a stack of my diaries over there. I don't know how many. My old buddy and I worked together, I got his too. He retired years and years before I did. I liked him so well I got his. They were going to through them away.

E: Do you still have them?

AF: I still have them.

R: Don't throw them away, please.

AF: Time I started out to work in the morning, where I went, how much I worked, and when I got back into the ranger's station, I got all that. We used to have to travel on our own time all the way.

E: Don't throw those away.

AF: I got them all.

E: Go through there, it is like some of the questions I've asked today: "What is a typical day like?"

AF: I was looking at them the other day and there are things in there that I don't even remember doing.

R: You should give them to something like that West Virginia collection. I was at the University of West Virginia the day before yesterday and they don't have much of anything on the forest.

AF: Oh dear, they ought to have a lot.

R: No, because the papers go to Washington or something. So much stuff gets lost in doing that and when they change headquarters a whole bunch of stuff gets moved and some of it gets lost. So West Virginia doesn't have very much of anything. They have no interviews with anybody who worked in the forest.

DF: You asked about the relation between the nursery and the forest service. They worked together, cooperated together really well. The nursery had a tractor with a snowplow on it. They would keep the roads in the nursery bottom open in the wintertime. We used to have big snows. If they didn't have any men out or had their men all busy and couldn't do it, some of our men would go out and run the tractor. Dick has run their tractor and opened the roads. They just cooperated

like that because we worked together as almost the same as one unit.

R: Even though it was the Department of Natural Resources?

DF: Even though one was state and one was federal.

AF: You see it was all government there at one time. When D.A. Oliver was there it was a forest service nursery. In 1911 when it started under, they called him Ed Long, but his name was Charles, he was the first ranger there.

R: He was in Gladwin, wasn't he?

AF: He was in Gladwin, he started out in a nursery up there in Gladwin. Then he came down here.

R: When you were growing up was it a place that you would go or did you sort of see it over there and not participate? Like if you went into Parsons with your family from Hendricks, either of you, did you ever know much about the nursery or visit it or see it?

AF: I worked there one summer at the nursery picking up trees. I swear I can not remember when it was. It was just one summer I worked. I absolutely can not remember when it was.

R: What did you do? Do you remember how you did it?

AF: Transplanted, they called it. They raised these little trees in beds, great big beds. Well they took them up out of the beds after they got so high.

R: Four inches?

AF: Four inches. They took them out in the field and they had a big board, it was a double board with springs on it some way. They laid them on the board and then closed the boards. I forget how many it held. They took it out and put it in the furrow that they made in the field. Then opened up the board and there your trees would be planted.

R: What did you do?

AF: I was pulling up trees.

R: You pulled up the little babies?

AF: No, they would go through it with a tractor with some kind of a scoop under its behind that would go down under the roots. The dirt and the trees would come out over this like that and fall back down the way it was,

but they would be loose. All you had to do was just pick them up out of there. It wouldn't hurt the roots on any of them.

R: Was it real sandy soil?

AF: Real sandy.

R: But rich soil?

AF: It was rich, yes.

R: It wasn't like clay, they weren't all sticky and gloppy when you moved them?

AF: No, it was sand. They hauled sand in there to put in there a few times. That used to be a farm there. Floyd Harman, he used to live there, had a farm up the . . . Do you know where the packing house is there?

R: Yes.

AF: Well it was just right in there where he had his home.

R: In my mind I thought there had been a sawmill somewhere near.

AF: No, John Minear owned part of it up there.

R: The upstream end, Minear?

AF: Yes. I don't know how big a track Floyd Harman owned, but he owned a farm and so did John Minear. I don't know how big either one of them was.

R: Did you ever work in the packing house or any of those?

AF: Never worked in the packing house. I got a lot of trees out of the packing house to plant out in the forest. I never worked in it.

R: Did you ever plant trees in the forest?

AF: Oh my goodness! I planted trees until . . .

R: Tell us.

AF: The strip job up on Backbone where they strip coal, why, I had a crew of men and went up there and I planted all that strip where . . .

R: You mean outside of Davis?

AF: It was between Davis and Thomas I planted some, over on Dauber number two there above Douglass. Then on Back-

bone I had a crew, I forget how many men I had. We planted all those strip jobs with pine. Some of them we planted locust.

R: Tell us how you plant a tree.

AF: Well we have these planting hoes you know. Head them down in the ground and then bear it down like that. Put your tree down in and let the pick go up. There you have it. Then take your foot stomp around it.

E: Take your heel and push it down.

AF: Yes.

R: How far apart do you set these trees?

AF: Well, it depends on what kind of tree you were planting. Some you plant six foot, eight, and ten, twelve.

R: Did you do it in rows?

AF: Yes. Well, in the woods . . .

R: You eyeballed the row?

AF: Yes, sometimes you hit a rock. You couldn't plant it there. You would have to offset somewhere or another. It wouldn't be exactly in rows but pretty close.

E: How many trees could an average person plant a day?

AF: If you planted 500 you did a very good days work. There aren't very many who can plant 500.

R: How did you carry the trees?

AF: In a tray. Oh, they hauled them out in a truck to a healing bed--healed them in and laid them on the ground, covered them over with dirt, you know the roots. Then we would carry them from there in a tray. We had a tin tray about that long, like a berry picker.

R: You mean with a handle on it?

AF: Yes. Carry it. You could get 500 in it. Generally you had boys to furnish the bin trees. He would carry from . . . Pick the one that couldn't plant trees very good, slow one. Have him to carry from . . .

E: Back and forth, the go-for.

AF: Yes.

R: Did you water them after you planted them?

AF: No, not after you planted them you didn't. When they were in the healing beds you watered them.

R: This is back in the nursery. Oh, you brought them up there, healed them in, and watered them.

E: The roots, they had been given a good soaking before you put them in the ground.

AF: Yes, you kept them watered really well.

E: Then they were on there own once they got in the ground.

AF: You could set them out but you can't make them grow. They were on their own. When I started to work up there in Canaan Mountain those little trees just about that high and almost red, the soil was bad; the fire burned over there, it was so bad. Now, gosh, they are thirty, forty foot high.

E: Were there trees there that you can remember planting?

AF: Yes, oh yes.

E: You look at that son of a gun and say . . .

AF: "Boy you little rascal you. I put you out there."

E: "I put you there and God made you grow."

AF: Yes, that is right. Did you ever hear of Albert Crossland?

R: No.

AF: He lived up Flanagan Hill there. He was a real old man, and he had a beard about this long, and his hair was about that long too. He was the first man I ever saw with long hair, you know, in my life. He was a good old fellow. I don't know why he didn't get his hair cut. He came up there one time. I was working on Canaan Mountain. We got to talking--always a real nice fellow to talk to. He was talking about the fire that burned over there. I said, "Albert, can you remember that fire?" He said, "Oh yes, son, I remember! It burned holes in heaven." I guess it did. It was old hemlock slashing and the turf was dry. It hadn't rained for so long. The rocks, it even just burned the soil away from the rocks. It was something.

R: Someone was telling me about the red spruce and that after it burned that it would burn so much--they called it duff-- that the tree stumps would be eight or ten feet up in the air. Did you ever see that?

AF: Yes, I've seen that up there in the swamps.

R: This was on Canaan Mountain?

AF: Yes.

R: Was it that kind of a fire there?

AF: Oh yes, that was a terrible fire back in there.

R: That was before your day that it burned?

AF: Yes, before my day. I just remember the old timers talking about it.

E: What is the worst fire you remember?

AF: Williams River, down at the . . . Where is that?

R: I don't know.

AF: Down beyond . . . Well anyhow I was in the CCC camps. They took us down there on a farm. It was the biggest farm in West Virginia. They took us up from the three rivers there and they had a sub camp, loaded us on a log train and took us on there to a camp. They fed us our dinner and took us on a log train clear back up on the mountain--way back there where white man had never trod I guess. They put us on the fire line there.

That night came up one of the awfulest hail storms that ever I saw. You know this fox fire . . . Did you ever see a fox fire? Don't you know what a fox fire is? It is a root, different lengths, old rotten stub, or anything. It just looks like a fire when it gets wet. It just glows. It was raining so bad and things were getting so dull there and it was cold. I thought I would have a little fun. I got an old root and threw it over on a fellow. He thought it was a fire you know. He started slapping his legs, and hollering, and giving me a cussing for throwing fire on him.

E: It is the color of the root, right?

AF: No, it glows. They call it fox fire.

E: What is it?

AF: I don't know. Fox fire is all I know. That is all I ever heard going. It is a fungus of some kind.

E: You ever head of it, Rebecca?

R: Yes, I read about it but I can't remember much about it.

E: Let's get back to the nursery. Can you tell us about the workers, types of people who worked there? Were they locals looking for a second job? They were all women I understand.

DF: Not all of them. I don't know what it was before 1960 because I just wasn't around the bottom. I think it must have been mostly women in early years from the picture that Rebecca was talking is in the Fernow office. From 1960, when I went to work there, it was men and women worked there.

They would plant the seeds in the fall. People would sell them acorns and walnuts and they would save them, or they would plant them. I don't know where they got their other seed of course. Then the next year when they came up they would have to go around and keep these weeded. When it became dry, no rain, they had a pumper that they put in the river. They had pipes run the length of the field between the beds. They would turn this pump on and the water would spray over the beds and dampen them. They kept them weeded all summer. Then in the spring, early spring about February or March depending upon the weather, they would start lifting the trees and shipping them. So they would ship some of them and the forest service . . . The trucks from all over the different districts would come in and take them out in bundles. Fernow bought trees from there also.

E: What was the biggest variety of trees they raised, do you recall?

DF: Well, they raised pine, Chinese chesnuts, and larch. Wasn't there larch?

AF: No. Spruce, red pine, white pine, and . . .

DF: There is a tree I am trying to think of the name of it.

R: They raised some oak. I only know what Oliver carried.

DF: They did raise oak but there is a tree that has such an unusual name that I was trying to think of. I can't remember it.

R: In Oliver's period they raised some . . . I was surprised to see they raised cucumber; that is a kind of magnolia.

DF: They used it mostly for reforestation. Where they had mined or where there had been a fire.

E: How much of a geographical area did the nursery serve? Was it eastern United States or larger?



DF: I don't know how far they would ship out. They would get orders and they would ship the trees. Of course they serviced the whole Monongahela National Forest locally. Then as far as their shipping I don't know how far they shipped out.

E: Do you recall who they shipped with?

DF: Well when the trains ran it was with Western Maryland.

E: Did you? You put them on trains?

DF: Yes.

AF: At one time the Parsons nursery was the largest nursery east of the Mississippi.

DF: They tried to hold it here because they say this is a better location weatherwise; soil just every element is better for a nursery than the one that they have in Clemens. I think what happened was it was politics is why it went to Clemens rather than here. They had been trying to close it for years before the flood. The people of West Virginia, and our senators and legislators, some of them were fighting it. We had one in there that he wanted to take it to Clemens. Of course after the flood, well they had no choice that year. There isn't any reason why that nursery couldn't have been cleaned up and continued on.

E: Do you recall hearing or maybe know why it was ever established there to start with?

AF: The nursery?

E: Yes.

AF: No. All I know is when Ed Long abandoned that nursery at Gladwin he came down here to start this nursery. I guess it was handier. I suppose the Dry Fork Railroad went up there then, didn't it?

DF: Yes.

R: Did the Dry Fork Railroad run . . . Did you guys ever go on that?

AF: Oh I did!

R: Did you! Did you go all the way up to Jenningsston?

AF: I went as far as it went.

R: You went all the way to Job and Whitmer and way up through there?

AF: Yes.

R: Could the common man just hop on and go? You didn't have to be involved in . . .

AF: I had to buy a ticket.

R: I know that. But it took passengers?

AF: Oh yes.

DF: You asked about the class of people that worked there at the nursery. It was usually, the men especially, were men who couldn't get jobs at other places due to their education. In fact they had several men work there that were more or less retarded. The women were, none of them that I know of were retarded, but they just wanted work or needed work.

E: Second job in the family.

AF: No, their only job.

DF: They were not educated enough to hold down an office job or something like that. Of course, there was only one factory there in Parsons that employed women. At that time it was Dorman Mills and the tannery was there. That was all men except for the clerk. She was a lady.

E: Was the morale pretty high there?

DF: Seemed to be. They seemed to have a lot of fun in the fields. At the time that I said Dave Denham was there you could hear them out in the field talking and laughing. The morale seemed really good.

E: How many would be in the field group at one time? Just round figures, 100?

AF: It would be about 575.

DF: I imagine somewhere in there.

R: Did it slow off in the winter? Were they seasonal?

DF: Yes, it was seasonal work. In the wintertime they did not have work except they did keep the crew leaders to keep the roads clean, and maintain equipment, and clean the buildings, and things like that. Field workers, they were laid off.

R: So when you saw stuff going out of there it would go both in trucks and they would also take it over to Western Maryland and load it on there, ship it.

DF: Yes.

R: I wonder if Western Maryland going out had something to do with it?

DF: I don't think so because they would come in there with trucks afterwards. That didn't seem to have any effect.

E: Now when you sent out an order of trees were there special instructions?

DF: Now, I didn't work with trees. I didn't work there.

R: She worked nearby.

E: I thought that you knew someone over there who.

DF: As I said I was friends with a lady that worked there but I just never questioned her about how they did it. I know that they would get the . . . Like when I worked for the forest service I would write a purchase order and I would mail it. It had to go through Charleston, their headquarters, then back to them. There was a form that had to be filled out. From there on I just don't know how they did it. It never entered my mind to question it. You can look back now and see questions you should have asked and things that you should have done. I was trying to think today when some of the men came to work there at the Cheat when I worked there. I told Dick, "I am so sorry that I didn't keep just a brief diary of when people came and when they left."

AF: At one time three men did the work that takes fifteen to do now.

R: You mean in the nursery?

AF: In the forest service.

R: Times have changed.

AF: In 1962 the forest service, to me, started going to pot. I don't think it has ever gotten back on its feet since.

DF: When I started to work there, there were only three of us. No, when Dick first started to work there, there were only three: the ranger, the fire control officer, Dick, and there were more than three.

AF: There were two tower men--three tower men.

DF: Three tower men and the ranger and the fire control officer.

AF: The dispatcher. The dispatcher and the smokechaser. The tower men only worked in the summer, and fall, and spring, and were off in the winter, two or three months.

R: Didn't they have a road crew and maintenance and equipment and all that stuff?

AF: Yes.

R: That was never at Parsons nursery bottom?

AF: Yes, that was operated there at Parsons at one time. Then they transferred it to Elkins under the engineer there at Elkins office.

R: So what went into where the oil house and all of those other . . . Weren't those the forest service buildings?

AF: Yes.

R: What was in there?

AF: Oil house?

R: Isn't there an oil house, maintenance shop, and a couple of things?

AF: Yes, it is still there.

R: No, I know, but what was kept in there after they moved to Elkins?

AF: Well, the district kept it. The road crew was operated by the ranger, you know. They took that away from the ranger and gave it to the engineer here at Elkins. The gas pumps, and oil, and everything still stayed there. The road outfit kept their trucks there yet but their headquarters are in Elkins. They were under the supervisor there at Elkins. The ranger was relieved of that.

E: When you worked in the tower were you off during the winter months?

AF: No, well there for awhile I was, when it was WAE. When I went on permanent I had to work the year round.

E: What did you do when you weren't up in the tower?

AF: Well, I took care of recreation areas, twelve years over at Stuart, five or six down at Horseshoe. After the recreation season we would work in the woods, called TSI, Timber Stand Improvement, and SAB, Sales Area Betterment where they made a timber sale and

killed a lot of trees, broke them up and mashed them up. We would go through there and kind of dress it up a little bit.

R: Did you ever get down to the Parsons nursery bottom much as part of your business day? You didn't have to go in there and check in?

AF: No.

R: They came to see you.

AF: You mean the forest service headquarters?

R: Yes.

AF: I checked in every morning. Every morning and every evening I would have to check in and out. See I would go to work down there; at 7:30, generally I was there. If we had a job going, I knew what I had to do but if I finished a job and didn't know what to do I would have to wait until the ranger came. He would send us out then to whatever he had in mind. Every dang morning, why . . .

R: But then when you were in the fire tower you didn't go down to Parsons much.

AF: No, I would go from home right to work. You had to stay up in the tower until it rained half an inch. Then if it rained half an inch . . . A lot of times I would be up in the tower; it would rain, they would say, "Come home." I would get home and the morning I got home I would have to go back up. You had to furnish your own transportation, they didn't furnish it. They would take you up the first day of the year.

E: Who told you to come home?

AF: Ranger, or the fire control officer.

E: Because if it rained enough there wasn't any sense in staying up there?

AF: Yes.

E: Didn't you have a rain gauge up there?

AF: Yes. I had a rain gauge and a wind gauge too.

DF: Lots of times it would rain down here and not up there.

AF: It wouldn't rain up there, and vice versa.

E: Yes, that is right.

AF: Lots of times he would call me up and say, "Well, it is a little damp down here, you got a couple hours leave. Go on down the ridge there and kill yourself a couple of squirrels. Come back up when it starts getting dry."

DF: The reason I asked him a while ago if he remembered when they first got radios, now I didn't realize that he didn't have a radio all the time. I didn't know a whole lot about the forest service until, well we were married in 1945 and then, of course, in 1960 when I went to work I really got involved. When I went to work we had two way radios. I had to use one. They kept a base there in the office and I would have to use one, and contact the men, by radio, lots of times out in the fields. Then I was surprised when he said that they did not have radios all along. That is why I asked that question. That is something that I learned new. I love to use those.

AF: Backbone was the hub of the communication. White Sulphur Springs, Marlinton, Greenbrier, and all of them, would send their message up to Backbone. I would call from there into the rangers station on the phone.

DF: It was interesting talking with the men in the field. They would be out on fires, they would be calling in things to me, and I would have to call back the instructions to them. One day I sent the fire control officer to the tower. He cussed me for that. He was out, and a fire had been reported. This was in February. Dick had taught me how to use the fire finder. Everybody was out, well the ranger was out and fire control officer was out. So I called the ranger's wife and asked her if she knew where he was working, because he hadn't told me that morning. He usually did but he hadn't. She said, "No, what in the world are we going to do?" I said, "Well, if they don't come pretty soon," I didn't have any transportation, I said, "If you will take me to the tower I will go up in the tower and spot the fire." "Alright." In a few minutes before we got a chance to leave, the fire control officer came. I said, "Pete, get yourself up to the tower." "What the hell are you talking about?" I said, "We have a fire." He flew into cussing, he thought that I was just kidding. I said, "Pete, we have a fire! Get yourself to the tower!" "Are you serious?" "Yes, I'm serious." And he started cussing again, and he got a radio. They brought the radios in in the fall. He took a radio and to the tower he went. When he got up there he called back that he was there. He cussed me, I guess, until the day he died because I had sent him to the tower.

R: But there was a fire? He sighted the fire?

DF: Yes, there was a fire. He went and spotted the fire.

E: Why was he angry?

DF: He wasn't angry, that was just his way. If he would be sitting here talking to you, he would be cussing your head off just talking to you as I am. It was just his way. You had to know Pete to understand him. No, he wasn't angry at all. He would just be kidding me because I had sent him to the fire tower. I was the first clerk on the Cheat district. They had never had a clerk until me in 1960. I really enjoyed it, and I probably would have retired from there had it not been for the ranger that was there at the time I transferred. I just could not stand him. He was just too nasty.

R: So you went to work for Fernow?

DF: In 1964 I went to work up at the Fernow.

R: That was once they moved into the new building?

DF: Yes. I transferred there in June, and they moved into the building in October. I had to go in July for emergency surgery, and I was not able to go back to work until January. They had moved in October. My office was ready and waiting for me when I got there. I retired December 2 of this year.

R: Oh you just left?

DF: Yes.

E: What type of work did you do there?

DF: Administrative assistant.

R: Is that what Marlene is now?

DF: Yes, only she is with the Cheat.

R: Oh she is?

DF: She moved in with us; when they . . .

R: I knew they were in there but I just thought that she was . . .

DF: When they left the nursery bottom they went over to the post office building.

R: That is where Harry Mahoney. . .

DF: They were there a year before the flood, the flood was 1985. I think they moved in . . . I think it was either 1983 or 1984 they moved in with us.

AF: The forest service ranger station used to be over in town there up on the Tucker County Bank. Ranger Gaudineer was the ranger. His house caught fire, and he and a couple of his little kids were burned up. Then Ranger Smoot took his place, I think, the next day.

R: Smoot was the first guy who lived over at Parsons. I wanted to interview him but it turns out he died two months ago or something.

AF: He passed away, yes.

R: Just recently.

AF: Yes, Smoot.

DF: The Cheat moved in with us in 1984.

R: When Fernow moved into that building what did they do with the other little buildings that . . . How were the other buildings, the original Fernow buildings, how did they . . . Can you tell us what all the little buildings were used for and stuff like that?

DF: The old office building was used as a storage building after they moved to the new building. The logging crew, that's four men that worked in the woods cutting timber, they have their office there and the remainder of it is used for storage. After the flood, they took over the ranger's residence and the assistant ranger's residence and the Fernow also had a dwelling that Bill Wendel lived in. They took it over and those are all storage buildings now, but those homes could be repaired and people live in them. There isn't any reason in the world why they couldn't. I have been in all of them but the ranger's home and it was locked. I couldn't get in it.

R: Yes. I was in it yesterday.

AF: The ceiling was chestnut, Chestnut lumber--the ceiling.

DF: But I was in Bill Wendels and it wouldn't have taken much work to have repaired it and they could have lived in the bigger building.

R: Well, but it was lived in by somebody. Back in 1964 or 1965 or whenever when you were there, was it a residence? Was it the head of the Fernow who lived there?



AF: Who was last ranger?

DF: I was trying to think who was the last one who lived there.

AF: Bill Mahoney.

DF: No, Bill Mahoney never lived there last.

AF: Oh, he did.

DF: Bill Mahoney never lived there after Peg, after Trimbles.

R: So Trimbles lived there.

DF: Trimbles lived there. Mitchels? Mitchel. Wilber Mitchel.

AF: Talking about the ranger's residence.

DF: I'm talking about. . .

R: No, we're talking about the Fernow.

AF: Who was there after Mitchel? I guess Bill Wendel moved in there after Mitchel's and he stayed there until after the flood and, of course, they had to move out when the flood was. That was the end of it. They cleaned it up and took it as a storage building, but I think it is a shame that those residences aren't rented.

R: Me too. So the office was. . . When you said it was a logging crew, it's the logging crew that works in the Fernow?

DF: Yes.

R: Okay. And then, did you ever go in the pump house? You don't know what the pump house had to do with the residents, right?

DF: The pump house they would. . .

AF: They used to get the water from there.

DF: Yes. They used to use that for their water supply, but they didn't use it anymore.

R: Was that for the nursery water supply or for the. . .

AF: Just the residents.

DF: Just the. . .

R: Okay.

DF: And then they were put on city water and it wasn't used anymore. There is a vault down there that they used to keep, to store permanent records in and now it is being used for radioactive material.

R: When you were there, when you went to work for the Fernow what was it being used for? Was it a . . .

DF: To store permanent records in.

R: They weren't stored in the new office?

DF: No. But now most of the records are put on computers on the tapes and, of course, the tapes are moved to Elkins. Well there are two sets of tapes of permanent records kept, and in case of a flood or a fire if they're destroyed in one place they would have them at another place. We used to send permanent records a lot of them to Washington to the library there, but there is none sent there anymore, because since they have the computers there isn't any point in it and, in fact, I don't think that Washington will except the records anymore. What they had they were destroying the older tapes. They sent us notice that if we wanted them to notify them and they would return them.

E: Were they microfilming them?

R: Probably.

DF: No, they were stored just as we packed them and sent to them--the actual records that were made there in the office, typed records, handwritten like scale sheets that they took in the woods. It was just paperwork. Box after box after box after box I sent out of there. They have destroyed an awful number of them; of course, most of them were timber records. There were two projects there: timber and watershed. Well, there are three now: EPA. Unless I notified them, they would go ahead and destroy them. I talked to timber and they didn't want them because they were too old and outdated, so I didn't notify them and they have been destroyed.

R: A little more about how the Fernow worked. When you went there, was it tied into the Southeast Experimental Forest in Nashville?

DF: No, no.

R: Is it separated from that, right?

AF: You know when they started the Fernow, why, it only

operated for a few years and it fell through with it. The Cheat ranger station took it over and they operated it, not as an experimental forest, but they took care of the trails and the roads and so forth. Then, the Fernow reopened again. . .

DF: After the war.

AF: Yes, a big. . . Well, no, during the war sometime-- before the war, even. When did it, the Fernow, start to operate the second time?

DF: I don't know.

AF: Tom Clark was there I think.

DF: When I first started to work for the Fernow in 1964, and we were in the new building; well, we were in the old building and we moved in the new building, but they also had an office in Elkins. The chief of laboratory and his secretary worked in Elkins. Then, they moved over, finally moved to Parsons in with us, and also the administrative assistant they had hired for them, and he came then. He was my supervisor; then he transferred to Princeton.

R: Princeton, West Virginia.

DF: Yes. Ben Backus.

R: Well, I read that George Trimble history . . .

AF: Did you?

R: . . . out of that thing and it seemed to me that there didn't seem to be a whole lot of record for the earlier period before when you said it closed from 1935. . .

AF: Yes.

R: . . . or 1936 when they started it. Right around the time of the war they closed.

AF: Yes, they closed and I guess the ranger was responsible for it for a while and reopened and then bigger than ever, you know.

R: Yes, and that's about when Trimble came.

AF: Yes.

R: So he had a fairly good record then after that, but those people spent a certain amount of time out in the forest, right?

DF: Yes.

R: Did they go through them daily over to check on things or did they have a staff that checked on things?

DF: Well the logging crew, of course, worked in the woods everyday and then they had the foresters and forestry technicians. They went in the woods and they marked trees and they had different types of studies going. They would go to check on them and take care of their studies. We would usually, we used to take a field trip, the ladies, once a year, but they hadn't had us up there for two or three years now. I guess everybody was just too busy. The work load had become tremendous. I was the only one in administration there and it was. . . Well, they went one time, I know, that I didn't go. It was just too hard for me to get away from my work. It was just getting heavier and heavier.

R: Did they have graduate students and people like that who came too?

DF: They used to have summer programs. Well, in fact, they did this last year and they had two high school students working there, but they worked with the projects. They worked in the field helping with the studies in the field. They used to have summer programs and every year I would have a different girl. They could only work one year. I would have to train a different girl every year. I was so glad when they stopped that program I didn't know what to do. I got so tired of training a young girl every year when I knew she wasn't going to be there. She wouldn't, the majority of them did not take any interest because they knew it was just a silly job.

R: Were they high school students?

DF: Yes.

R: So you didn't have many people, but you didn't have people who came in forestry who would be there for the summer or might come back and work later?

DF: No, not with me.

R: During your experience, did they ever house other people on the nursery bottom other than those people who lived there permanently?

DF: Cooperators would come in there and stay in the bunk-house, maybe for one or two nights, and sometimes a week or two weeks.

AF: Then some of the people who worked there stayed in the

bunk house like a little colored boy and a bunch of them.

DF: Well, those were summer students, and they would stay there through the summer. In Parsons it is hard to get someplace for a colored person to stay. They would let them stay in the bunk house and charge them \$1.25 a night for staying there.

R: Then where did they eat?

DF: They either had to do their own cooking or eat out. It is just like a home.

R: Oh, I haven't been in it yet. It has a kitchen?

DF: It has a kitchen and it is all equipped with silverware, dishes, pots and pans, tea towels, Linens, you name it and it is there.

R: Now, that is all filling you.

DF: A complete kitchen, and then they had like a living room; it had a fireplace. Before the flood they had the davenport, and a chair, and one wall over here with all kinds of books in it. It had like a big picnic table in there. You could take your radio in there. We even had some that stayed in there that were in there all summer. They had television cable brought in there, and they had their own television. Then it had a bedroom with four bunk beds in there, and a curtain that you drew through the middle, or drapes. We put it on wire and divided the two bunk beds on one side and two on the other side. Bathrooms, and there was a linen closet in it, just like your house.

R: But they are still using that?

DF: Yes.

AF: When the forest service's Cheat ranger district took over the Fernow I got so tickled one time. They decided to go up on the forest there and show the people just what a raging wildfire would do, you know. So they went up against the side of the mountain there, and they built a big fire trail around an area. I think it was about ten acres around it there. They put water pumps, fire pumps, and they hauled their water up there. They had fire pumps, and put thermometers on the trees along at different heights, so they could see how hot the fire got. They had everything that was imaginable there; had men lined up around there so it wouldn't get out. They went down, they said, "Okay, set her on fire." They set her on fire and it wouldn't burn. All that was wasted.

DF: They have a weather station outside, out back of the present office. The weather is taken each morning and recorded, and this is kept as a permanent record. Now they have a building out to the left of the main office, and that has to do with Environmental Protection Agency, it is EPA. I can't tell you how that is run, I don't know enough about it, and it hadn't been in there but just about a year before I left. It wasn't fully operating that long. I know there is one line on our telephones that when it would ring we were not to answer it because that was another office somewhere calling in to this building to take data off of a computer for their use. So we were not to answer that line. I just don't know enough about it, if you would take to Fredrica Wood there at the office she is the one who can tell you about that.

R: I don't need to know about that.

E: Was that weather information taken to report to the weather service, or for your own internal use?

DF: For our use: for one thing in case of fires, and another thing, in it was set to call into Asheville, North Carolina; I believe it was the place it was called into.

R: Then, do you know, did they have a weather station before they moved into the new building?

DF: No, the weather station was at my home.

R: Oh, tell us about that.

DF: I had to take the weather morning. Well, when it was normal weather. . . What hours did I take that? I had to take it three times a day.

AF: 10:00, 2:00, and 4:00.

DF: Yes.

R: What all did you take?

E: That sounds like a Dr. Pepper commercial. (Laughter)

AF: Fuel moisture.

DF: The fuel moisture and the wind and the temperature, that was it.

AF: And you had a chart there if you were taking fuel moisture.

R: What's fuel moisture?

AF: That's the dampness in the fuel in the. . .

R: Ground?

AF: Ground, yes. The fuel in the ground--top of the ground.

R: What was it? Was it like a little thing that stuck on the ground?

AF: No. It's three basswood strips about that long and about that wide and about a tenth of an inch thick.

DF: I didn't have to do that.

AF: It is laid across a little frame there about eight inches from the ground and you left it there. When you went to check the fuel moisture you would put them on a little set of scales there that they had and weigh them. It wasn't ounces it was. . .

R: Grams.

AF: I don't know.

R: Grams?

AF: Anyhow, then you would take that and you had a chart the fuel moisture and the wind and it would give you the class of fire you had.

R: And you did this?

AF: I did this.

R: Did you do this when you were in the tower?

AF: Yes. Right. If you had a two, three or four . . . When it got to three and four, mister, you better be getting your men lined up. Get your ducks in a row for she just might go into a flame anywhere. Alert your firemen that your--well, fire warnings you know. Find out where they're going to be that day and just precaution, you know, so if you needed them you would have them.

DF: Now I measured the water if we had rain. I took the temperature and I took the wind velocity.

R: But you didn't something with dew point or any of that sort of stuff?

DF: No. I didn't do that.

E: And you did this how many times a day?

DF: Three.

E: Did they compensate you for it, an actual number?

DF: I think it was \$25 a month.

R: And you did this from when you went to work for Fernow? You did it over in Hendricks. You didn't do it down at the nursery bottom.

DF: No. I was. . . Well, I quit it after I went to the Fernow because I was working full-time. I only worked part-time, well, I was working four days a week when I quit the Cheat. But my mother would go out and take it.

AF: Then they finally did away with it, did away with it altogether.

DF: And then they finally did away with it and now they get their weather from the Greenbrier. After I went to work for the Fernow, I just gave it up. That's when they started to move the weather station to the Fernow there. And they still take it there for their own use and to go into, I'm pretty sure it is Ashville, North Carolina. That's where the records are kept.

AF: Tear a little piece of paper up and throw it out the window to see which way the wind is blowing. (Laughter)

DF: I had an anemometer for wind velocity.

E: I usually spit on my finger and stick it out. (Laughter)

AF: Trees would sway, you know, and you could tell how strong it was. I have dipped water out of the Black Fork River and out of the Cheat River both in my shirt pockets there, that old tire swaying looking at it. You would go over to Black Fork one time and clear over to Cheat the next time.

R: Where was your anemometer? Was it up on top of the house?

DF: No. It was on a big pole out in the corner of the yard. It had to be in certain areas. They had tried out a lot of areas in Hendricks for this weather station and ours proved to be the best place for it because of the wind and they put up this big pole.

AF: It's still there holding the thing that it was on.

DF: The anemometers. They put it there and, of course, it was interesting and I enjoyed it until I went to work



and then it was a little headache after that because I would have to run my mother out there to do it.

R: Were your kids ever interested in the forest?

AF: That old hot-rodder, that's what his interest was in.

E: What's the attraction of working in the forest? There are other jobs around, you could have done something else.

AF: It's just you're out in the open. Well, mostly I'm my own boss all the time. You're out in the open, you're in the fresh air. You can get something done that you're proud of. They would give you a job to do. You would do it and you would be proud that, "I did that job. Look at that there, boy, I did that. I'm proud of that." It was a thrill. You couldn't hardly wait to get out to do your job in the morning. It was just. . . Well, I worked, I was outside in the open all my life and that was just a part of my job, part of my life. The old man that I started out working with, he was a wonderful man, wonderful worker, knew a lot; he told me one time, I'll never forget it, he said, "Life is an education." He said, "By the time you get old enough to learn something, you die." You know, that is just about right. I never forgot that.

E: Let me finish up by asking to run down a list. I'll start with you. Name the rangers you served under.

AF: I can do that my good man with pleasure.

DF: Thanks to your wife.

E: Yes.

AF: No.

E: I figured that. Make a comment on each one of them.

AF: Well sir, the one I started under was Ralph Rowland. He was there from 1938 to 1952 and he was a strict, honest, reliable man and he was a real man that you could depend on. What he told you, he meant. You didn't have, there was no foolishness with him.

The next one was John Ballantyne. He was there from 1952 to 1957. He was just one of the boys. He was a good, honest fellow and he wouldn't ask you to do anything that he wouldn't do himself. He was a wonderful man to work for. He would give you all the breaks he could and anything that he could.

The next one was William D. Johns. He was there from

1957 to 1958. I didn't know too much about him. He was kind of a shy fellow. He never was out much in the field. I didn't know him too well.

E: He was there a short time too.

AF: Yes, he was there a very short time.

The next one was Jack Godden and there was a prince if there ever was one. He was a good man. He would take up for his men. He would go to bat for them and anything that you would do, he would help you do it. Anything he told you to do, why, you could depend on him and he wouldn't cross you up or anyway at all. He was just a wonderful person and a man to work for.

E: Now what years was he there?

AF: He was there from 1958 to 1960.

The next one was Floyd Wiles and he was a good man. He was a good man to work for. I only had one fault in him, he did me an awful bad wrong one time. That time when I was up in the tower, you know, I was up there for a long day just running out of food, running out of grub. I called in to Dove to send me up some food. I was getting hungry. She said, "Floyd will bring it up to you." Here he came that evening with it, a case of dog food.

R: Is this a joke?

AF: No. He absolutely did. I don't know how they got the mix-up. Then he went back and he got on the air and he said, "Well, if you hear old Dick barking over the radio," he said, "don't pay any attention to it. I just took him up some dog food." I kind of forgive him for it though.

E: What years was he there? Was he there a short time after that? (Laughter)

AF: He was there from 1960 to 1963.

Then Paul Natale. I just don't want to comment on him from 1963 to 1967.

E: Well, what's the problem there?

AF: I just didn't like him.

E: Okay. You're entitled to that.

AF: And he didn't like me, I know. So. . . The next one

was Harry Mahoney and he was a pretty good old boy, Harry was. He would give you a job to do and he would expect you to do it and he would stay away from you and let you go ahead and do it. John Ballantyne told me . . . He gave me a job one time. I didn't know whether to do it or not and I kind of hesitated, you know. He said, "Listen, you do that job. If you run it in the ground, I'll help you pull it out." And do you know, I went and did that with no trouble at all. He was a wonderful guy to work for. Then that's the last one I worked for, Harry Mahoney. He was there from 1967 to 1978.

E: When you retired did they have a party and give you a gold watch routine?

AF: No. They didn't give me a gold watch. They gave me a Cadillac. Got a saddle. Yes sir, they gave me a saddle, we are talking 1973. I had me a little party down at Horse Shoe recreation area, you know. There's where I was working when I retired and had a little get-together down there one night. They did give my a saddle.

DF: And a bridle.

AF: And a bridle from all of them. I had a horse, a riding horse. And I still got it, but I haven't got my horse. She died, but I got my saddle. It's a good saddle nice, pretty thing.

E: What did you ever do with the damn dog food?

AF: What did I do with that?

R: Tell him. Dovie wants to tell about the dog food.

E: Did you. . .

AF: I never ate it. I'll tell you that.

E: Did he bring it up the tower or leave it at the bottom?

AF: He left it down at the cabin.

E: Oh. Too bad he didn't carry it all the way up because you could have thrown it at him on the way as he was going back down the ladder. (Laughter)

AF: I'll give it to him.

DF: It wasn't his fault.

E: Bouncing cans off of his head.

AF: Ah, dear.

E: Hand that list to Dovie and let her go down that list of the people she worked with.

DF: The story on this dog food. He had called down and said he needed groceries and water.

E: He called you?

DF: Yes. So I told him I would bring it up that evening. He had called me at the office. I was working and Floyd Wiles was ranger then, I was working under him. So Floyd said, "Well, I'll take it up for you this evening." That was the time the gate was locked. He said, "I'll take it up for you." I said, "Well, I'll have to go to the store and get some groceries for him." So I went to the store and we had a little, black dog and I had to get dog food for the dog. When I went home, I went to take my groceries out of the box, and I missed the dog food somehow and I sent it to the tower. Dick was taking his groceries out and putting them up in the cupboard at the tower and here was the dog food. Well Dick made some remark about it and, of course, Floyd picked it up and he went on. And this even came out in the Monongahela, newsletter, it went all over the whole Monongahela. So it wasn't Floyd's fault, but I guess he'll never live the dog food story down as long as Floyd Wiles lives. He lives in Morgantown now.

When I started to work I started under Jack Godden. I worked for him from January till he left in November and he was an excellent ranger. He gave me one of the best ratings. He had to evaluate me at the end of my probation period. He gave me one of the best evaluations that any human could get. I have always and I always will cherish it.

Then the next one was Floyd Wiles and he was an excellent ranger. I liked to work for him very much. We got along fine and anytime Floyd got worried, upset, or tired, you would see him come strolling into my office with a coffee cup and he would sit there and talk and talk. I wished many times, "I wish you would get out of here so I can get my work done." But I guess he had to have a shoulder to cry on at work and I was the only one there.

Then along comes Paul Natale and that's the reason why I left the Cheat. He was, if there was a ever a . . . Well, he was the first devil I worked for and the second one was up at the Fernow. As a result of him, I ended up in the hospital in 1983 with a heart attack. So they got rid of him. They shipped him out. I only worked under the three rangers at the Cheat.

Then I went to the Fernow and started out under Dick Trimble and Kathleen Hammack. Then, from them to Ben Backus, from Ben Backus to Merle Grant, from Merle Grant to Eddie Canterbury, from Eddie Canterbury to. . .

AF: Joe Maury.

DF: Joe Maury, and they shipped Joe out and I was my boss from, that was in 1983 and I was my own boss from 1983 till December 2, 1988.

E: Five years.

DF: My boss was, seventy miles from me. She was in Morgantown. I would see her sometimes. She was supposed to come every quarter, but lots of times it would be four and five and six months before I would ever see her. So the only contact that I had with her was with telephone and a lot of the time, I couldn't even get her by telephone. I got so disgusted with her that if I needed a question answered, I just bypassed her and called my headquarters office in Broomall, Pennsylvania. So, I put in almost twenty-nine years, but that's not very many bosses in twenty-nine years, actually.

R: That seems a fair number for the Fernow. Did they have a lot of change during the 1960's and 1970's?

DF: They had more of a turnover than what Cheat did I think.

R: The guys who worked at Fernow, like Trimble stayed there for a long time.

DF: Yes.

R: Then did they come into the office here? Or did they, where did you go in the Fernow, because they were really sort of technical specialists, weren't they, the people who worked at the Fernow?

DF: Up with Trimble?

R: No, Fernow. The guys who worked at Fernow, weren't they more doing research?

DF: Yes, but it was all out of our office in Parsons.

R: Yes. I know that, but I mean if they were moving up the ladder did they go out of West Virginia or did they go to Elkins or. . .

DF: Eddie came to Elkins. He was in Elkins, then he came to the Fernow then he went back to Elkins. Then Backus went to Princeton, then he went from Princeton to

Elkins. Harry Mahoney came from Parsons to Elkins.

R: But Harry Mahoney never worked for Fernow, did he?

DF: No, that's right. He was with the Cheat. But most of them went out of state. They went to other states when they moved up.

R: And they stayed in research or something like that.

DF: Majority of them did. Some of them went to national forests. There would be a lot of them go to our headquarters office in . . . At first it was Upper Darby and then they went to Broomall. There would be several of them go there and some of the others would go to other stations, experimental stations. They had been there for years, some of them, the stations that they went to whenever they left Parsons. They don't seem to be moving them around even in the experimental force quite as much as they did.

R: Those guys mostly live in Parsons?

DF: No, most of them live in Elkins, of the professionals. Now the technicians live in, most of them, in Parsons. There are two technicians that live in Elkins, but the others live in the Parsons area. But most of the professionals live in Elkins and then we have one technician that lives in Parsons and works in Elkins.

R: What's your maiden name?

DF: Gooden. G-o-o-d-e-n.

R: And is Dovie your given name?

DF: Yes.

R: Were you named for somebody?

DF: I don't know.

R: It's D-o-v-i-e, right?

DF: Yes.

E: See, I was afraid to ask. I thought it was something that he picked up somewhere in school and it sort of stuck.

R: If he knew her from second grade, she must have been Dovie all along.

E: Yes.

DF: Well, we have known each other for all of our lives.  
He lived. . .

R: You lived what, a little up the hill from Hendricks?

DF: He lived down from Hendricks.

R: Oh, he lived down from Hendricks.

AF: I lived in. . . Well, we had a home in town, Hambleton, and a farm in Mackeyville, you know. Then in the fall we would move back to town so I could go to school. I wouldn't have to go clear out to Mackeyville there and walk. I used to go to Hambleton to school and I didn't like it down there, it was a little farther. I started going up to Hendricks. It was just up the road a little ways from where I lived even though I lived in Hambleton. Old Dove lived up by the ways.

E: That's why you went to school up there.

AF: Yes. That is the reason I went up to Hendricks.

R: Yes. Loved her all of his life.

E: And he's telling us this, you know.

R: I want a copy of that Tucker County History. Is the Fansler who wrote it, I'm sure he's kin to you, but there. . .

AF: He's my first cousin.

R: Oh, he is?

DF: It's out of print.

R: Yes, I know. I asked in the bookstore here and they said it would be real hard to find one.

AF: I was reading it just the other day.

R: It's really well written, it's great.

AF: Last night. I thought maybe you would ask me a few questions that I didn't know that he had that was in there. He has about the forestry in there.

R: But not much.

AF: No, not too much.

R: And almost nothing about the nursery.

AF: That's right, nothing.

R: It's really good on the logging camps and all that. That's what I was reading and it's very well written.

E: Do you have a copy?

AF: Yes.

E: How many pages is it?

AF: Oh my goodness, 500 and something.

R: Yes. See Hugh, it's not . . .

AF: 500 or 600.

DF: She has said that if she can get, I think it's twenty-five orders, I believe it's twenty-five copies, that she will reprint.

R: Oh really, because my cousin. . . Well, we were talking about it on Thursday night, and she said that they went into the advocate office to ask about it, you know, ask the claims people. They said, well, they were interested in reprinting it, but she said then they didn't take their name or, you know. They were ready, they put their money down, you know, to pay for it ahead of time. They said that have requests all the time, but she wasn't keeping a list.

DF: Well, she should keep a list.

R: You bet.

DF: Because she said that if she could get as many as twenty-five she would reprint. Now, you and this other person is two, and I have one is three. My son wants one is four and I would like to get a copy for my daughter. Right there is five.

R: Right. Good. Well, let's all take each others name down. I have to go see her and send it to her.

AF: Yes. They have all the good information in it.

R: It's good. It's very well written. It really is.

DF: If you'll give me the names and addresses of these people, I'll add the ones to it that I know want it. She comes to our alumni meeting all the time.

R: Oh, she does.

DF: Yes.

R: Your high school.



DF: Yes. I'll just give it to her and I know she has others.

AF: Yes. I was up there when he not long ago tried to get one.

R: Yes. I wonder if my cousin, the railroad guy, I know he would want one. I don't know whether he ever bought one, he might have bought one in the 1960's.

E: One last question and then I'm going to. . . Plus the tape is going to run out. Being a ranger, hanging around eating dog food up there on a tower and you got three kids to raise down on the ground, or two rather, to raise down on the ground, that could be a pretty tough life.

DF: Well, it wasn't only being in the fire tower, he was in Staurt from 1952 to. . .

AF: 1962.

DF: 1962 and he was gone from May 1 until Labor Day.

AF: Labor Day.

DF: Labor Day it closed. Well, then they would go a week after.

AF: I worked ten days and off four.

DF: He would be gone for fourteen days.

AF: No, ten days.

DF: Yes, ten days and then he would be home four. I wouldn't see him at all unless I took the children and went over there. I practically raised our family because he just wasn't home, through no fault of his; he had to make a living for us. Fortunately, I drove and I would take the children and go over. At that time, we could stay there and it didn't cost us a cent. Now, if he was over there and I took the children and went, I would have to pay to stay there. I think that is a poor ruling on the forestry's part.

AF: Well, they started that before I left over there, you know.

DF: But John . . .

R: They did that at the campground you mean?

AF: No at the quarters in the quarters in the administra-

tion building.

DF: The headquarters where they live. John Ballantyne was ranger.

AF: I said, "Forget it." I said, "Don't pay anything."

DF: John Ballantyne was ranger at that point, and he encouraged me to take the children and go because he said that Dick needed his family with him and he says, "The children need their father." He says, "It's good for Dick's morale to have his family with him." He said, "You take the children and go over there and stay." He got after me time and time and again to over there and stay. Well, I, of course, Frances was just a baby and it was a little inconvenient because those days they didn't have Pampers. So they even rigged me up a clothesline over there and I would wash out the baby's things by hand and hang them up and dry them. I would go over there and stay for days at a time with him with the two children. And they loved it. They literally loved it. The only thing is I had to watch, Frances was the youngest, I had to watch her like a little old hawk to keep her out of the river. She had no fear of water. She almost drowned one Sunday and her dad went in; he had on his dress uniform and he went in up to his knees to get her out. I thought that's the end of her. The little dickens got out and wanted to go right back in.

AF: Shook her head a little bit and ran and jumped back in.

DF: Then there was no charge, but now you have to pay. I think that is . . . Of course, no one stays there at nights now.

AF: I think the summer people do, don't they?

DF: The summer students do, but the permanent employees don't.

AF: Oh, that was a miserable place.

DF: I was scared. . .

R: Was Horse Shoe nice? Horse Shoe is nice, isn't it?

AF: Horse Shoe?

R: Yes.

AF: Well, they had three cabins over across the creek up on the other side of the creek.

R: I've never been there. Is that a nice place? It's

nice, isn't it? We don't need it because we are going to . . .

AF: But they did away with it; they don't stay down there at all anymore at night.

R: Oh, they don't?

AF: No, they had three buildings there and they sold them.

END OF INTERVIEW