

RICE-CORNELL-BROWN PROPERTY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

INTERVIEW SIX

NARRATOR: HUGH C. BROWN, JR. INTERVIEWER: REBECCA SEARS

DATE: AUGUST 8, 1998

I: ...your name on the tape.

HB: Hugh C. Brown, Jr. I'm one of four children of Lelia and Hugh Brown who moved to Rice Branch in 1929. They were going to build a house out of rock that...you probably saw the rock pile over there across by the cabin. And all those rock were gathered from the surrounding mountainsides. Maybe you've heard that before about Mr. Scarborough, who brought them down. And we children certainly remember, you know, that as a focal point in our young birthright and living there in the area. We used to play on those rock piles and at that time Mr. Scarborough, who lived next door, had some stalls for cattle down there near the rock pile. He used to range his cattle over the surrounding property. And of course my early remembrances of the area really geared a lot around the Scarborough family and what Mr. Scarborough was doing in the way of farming and so forth. I spent a lot of my time out there. I would help him to plant sweet potatoes in his garden by punching a hole with my finger down the row. And he would come along and put the plants in. Of course he had barns and he raised...and he had stalls for horses and he had cows—he had a big pasture there. He had his own garden. He raised fields of corn and fields of wheat. And he would harvest the wheat with a big scythe, a hand scythe, and gather it up and then come along and build shocks out of the wheat. And when he had all the field shocked up then they would call in the combine who would visit the various farms during harvest time. And all the men from the area would gather and help to combine his wheat. And the women would have a big picnic down in the pasture by the house for all of the workers. And I remember riding in the wagon pulled by two of Mr. Scarborough's horses up to a gristmill that was at the head of Lynn Cove. You come out Beaverdam, you can go Webb Cove or you can go Lynn Cove. There are two different directions. And we would put sacks of wheat and sacks of corn in there and come back with cornmeal or flour. So you can see that, you know, they didn't buy flour in the grocery store. I mean, they made their own. Ms. Scarborough was a wonderful cook and she would prepare these meals on a big iron stove with wood that they had chopped from the area and I used to go out there and eat with them lots of times. She would make me a

0008

*Mr.
Scarborough
brings rocks
down for the
Brown house
(which was
never built)*

0071

*Helping Mr.
Scarborough
plant sweet
potatoes and
information
about the
major
components
of the farm*

0194

*Harvesting
the wheat and
taking it to
the gristmill
up Lynn Cove*

0369

*Fishing at
Beaverdam
Creek with
the men*

great big caramel cake for my birthday every year and she made a beautiful coverlet—one of these bedspreads—for me as a young child, which I still have. Mr. Scarborough had two sons and a daughter. Jane, that you met. And we used to go fishing down Beaverdam Creek at nighttime. Bull line. You'd take a gig and gig the fish and I was only a young boy but I would tail along with them.

I: Did a lot of people fish in that area?

HB: Well no, not so much. I mean, it wasn't a trout stream or anything like that. But that was just one means of recreation for the men to do at nighttime. And catch frogs down through there and things like that. And I was just a little kid going along with the adults in those days. I can remember during pig-killing time, I guess you'd say. Mr. Scarborough had a pig-pen over in the pasture across the creek from his house and he'd raise pigs and then in the wintertime when it got cold they would slaughter the pigs. It was interesting that they would use a wooden barrel and put it on its side and frame it up with field rock around in the field and build a big fire and put those rock in the fire and get them hot, hot, hot. And then water from the creek, they would fill the barrel on a slant and then take a shovel and pick the rock up and put it in the barrel to heat the water. And then they would kill the pig and stick the pig in there and twist him around, you know, good and get that boiling water all over him and then string him up and then they would scrape him first on the table—scrape all the hair off of him—and string him up and slaughter the pig. And eventually in the afternoon they would be down to the hams and the bacon slabs and that would go into his smokehouse right there at the foot of his steps. You may have heard all of this but those are things that I remember, you know, attending, because those stick out in my mind. Apples. I can remember apples on great big wooden tables out in the yard drying in the sun. They would dry the apples and what, Ms. Scarborough would have cans of, you know, beans and sausage and everything in jars—in mason jars—down underneath her house. And they would put the potatoes down there and cover them up with earth and keep them cool and preserve them.

0426

*Slaughtering
and
preparing the
hogs with
detailed
information
about process*

0534

*Drying and
storing
foodstuffs at
the
Scarboroughs*

I: Now was that...different from how your... That was the Scarborough's house and lifestyle.

HB: That was the Scarboroughs but Mr. Scarborough had a cow that he would milk for us and he would come over every evening bringing two buckets of milk, raw milk. It was just skimmed to get the flecks of dirt out of it and we were all raised on raw milk. But it was fresh milk from our own cow.

0600

*How the
Scarboroughs
and Browns
were linked
by mutual
assistance*

Of course, daddy had his business downtown. He would come home in the evening and of course mother would shop for groceries and share groceries with the Scarboroughs. She would get a lot of fresh vegetables and things like that from the Scarboroughs but she would bring out oranges and meat and things of that nature, you know, beef meat and all for them. So we were closely tied together out there and are still

0642

*Boyhood
activities,
including
building huts,
smoking
rabbit
tobacco and
swinging on
grapevines*

so. I... As a boy, I did recreation. I knew all of the hilltops around there intimately. We'd go up and swing on the grapevines or I would maybe build a hut up there out of small pine trees and get down in it and sneak smokin' cigarettes and things like that as a child. You know, every young kid would learn how to smoke by gathering rabbit tobacco which grew around and rolling it up in a *Good Housekeeping* magazine and make smoke with it! Well, that was just some of the things that we would do. Of course, as a young child we would 'course play in that creek that ran by the cabin.

I: What do you remember from playing in the creek?

HB: Well, make dams. Take those rock and make a dam and make a puddle of water.

0711

BREAK

(BREAK)

0724

*Gathering
garnets and
making dams
in Rice
Branch Creek*

I: Let's see. Where were we? Oh, you were talking about the creek. You were talking about playing in the creek, I think.

HB: Oh yes, well.

I: Or in the mountains.

HB: I guess Edwin told you about gathering garnets, you know.

I: He didn't, actually.

HB: You know, you can scrape up a handful of that gravel and put it on the deck of the bridge—footbridge that goes across there—and let it dry a little bit and you can come up with some remarkable sized garnets. It's, you know, a form of mineral. Oh, and when I got a little bit bigger we'd get out there with some boys and we'd challenge each other to catch minnows and see who would swallow a minnow, you know. So we practiced that. They had crawfish in there. Nothing like the crawfish in Louisiana. Similar, but you don't eat 'em. The creek would flood at times and it has flooded lately. It gives Eleanor problems with the cabin there. And it's changed over the years. It used to be much shallower than it is now. It's rutted out and it gets more flow and there's more building that's going on in Rice Branch or all around so there's more runoff. So you get a heavier... heavier volume down that creek.

0762

*Catching
minnows and
crawfish and
recent
problems
with flooding*

0822

*Flooding,
contd.*

I: Did you have problems with flooding at the cabin, you know, earlier?

HB: We don't remember earlier like it is now. Of course, when Eleanor and Jim lived out there for a long period of time they put a kind of a rock barrier behind the cabin along the creek to kind of ward that off. But it has overflowed and come down under the cabin and still is a problem. And I suppose the more that it developed—all of that Valley—the more runoff you're going to get. But I used to hike a good bit. I belonged to the Carolina Mountain Hiking Club that was in existence in those days. We would go up Lynn Cove to Mr. Jerome Dykeman's house. He was a friend of the young boys in the area and he would take us hiking all around the mountains up through that way. And we would hike up to Rice's Knob. There's a place called Rice's Knob up there.

0862

*Hiking in the
Valley as a
child and
teenager with
the Carolina
Mountain
Hiking Club
and Mr.
Jerome
Dykeman*

I: And so you did that with a bunch of other boys from Beaverdam Valley?

HB: Well, I mean, not that. I did that all with the hiking club and that's mostly adults but I would go up there with them. That's one of the trips we went. We went to Hickory Nut Gap and hiked one time. But with boys in the area we used to hike all the way up to where the road—the Webb Cove road—meets the Parkway behind up on the back. And that's a pretty good hike. I remember one Sunday afternoon mother and daddy took us four children for a ride. That was what you would do sometimes on Sunday afternoon. And we went up there and I asked daddy to borrow his pocket knife, as young boys do, and when he asked me for it when I got back home I didn't have it. So the next day I got a couple of the Stradley boys to accompany me and we walked... hiked up there and there it was right under the tree that I left it and brought it back. He was kind of surprised when I gave it to him that night when he came home. Then I used to, you know, just go up and wander all around the mountains. Mother had a great big bell—plantation bell. You probably saw it beside the cabin there. Well, when we were children it was in behind our house across the street. And that's the way she would ring us in from wherever we were. Just go out and that bell would sound all over the whole valley and through there. When that bell rang, we knew it was time to come home! Well...

0970

*The
plantation
bell, currently
at the cabin*

I: Did you do any camping, ever?

HB: Well, I didn't do... See, we left Beaverdam and moved into Asheville in 1939, I guess it was. And I went back out there and did camping as a Boy Scout. When my troop

1008

*Camping at
the cabin with
a Boy Scout
troop*

needed a camping site. Well, up there where Eleanor's built the cabin on the hill, all that was young pine trees and kind of sage broom. Open area. And we took the troop out there to camp and would go down in Mr. Scarborough's field to gather sage broom brush and come back up and make a...and weave a mattress. You know, one of these weaving mattresses and stack it in? We had to do that to pass a certain project and camping. And would cook out up there and I remember there was a great big—on that hill right where she has her cabin—there was a giant chestnut tree up there.

1070

*American
chestnuts and
chinquapins
on the
property and
the effects of
the blight*

American chestnut tree. And some chinquapin trees around on the side. Chinquapins are...a nut that grows in a burr. A chestnut...I don't know whether you know anything about it. A blight killed the chestnut, the American chestnut tree. Started in the mid-thirties and, you know, by the fifties all the chestnut trees were... You could look up in the woods and just see these giant gray limbs. Snags of the trees. The American chestnut is a beautiful wood, is a major wood, but that chestnut blight has wiped them all out. And it wiped the chinquapins out, too. We used to love to gather chestnuts and chinquapins right up there. Of course, you could gather the wild mountain strawberries in that area. And Jane

1121

*Gathering
wild
mountain
strawberries
on the
property*

Scarborough can make some of the finest—and Ms. Scarborough could make some of the finest—strawberry preserves out of those little: they're about this size. As small as the tips of your finger. Takes a lot of time to pick those compared to these big things that you get in the store today! I don't remember right wild grapes. They had a lot of grapevines but I don't remember wild grapes up there.

I: Do you remember anything else, like gathering anything else?

1154

*Gathering
and selling
galax leaves,
hemlock and
mistletoe at
Christmas*

HB: In the wintertime we would go up on the mountainside behind Mr. Scarborough's property and gather galax leaves. Now galax leaf is a small, flat leaf about, you know, three times as big as a silver dollar. And people would sell them...use it for decorations, you know, and would sell bunches of galax leaves at Christmastime on the street corners. They could also sell mistletoe and things like that that you can gather in the hardwoods out there. But galax leaves was a particular kind of a choice plant to go and gather at Christmastime. You could make wreaths out of them, you know, and weave them in with hemlock or other material that you were making a wreath with. They used to make wreaths. There was a lady up at the head of Rice Branch that would make wreaths, beautiful wreaths, at Christmastime. And that's the way a lot of the people made extra cash money, you

know, was doing things like that.

I: Do you remember cherry trees that you had?

HB: Oh, yes!

I: Do you remember selling cherries with... Edwin mentioned something. You want to talk about that a little?

HB: Well, we had three beautiful black-heart cherry trees. Two of them were behind the cabin by the rock pile. And, I mean, we used to just climb those trees in June and pick those black-heart cherries. There was another one at the base of the driveway, circle driveway, across... on our house across the street. And then behind our house was a gigantic big cherry tree that was not a common cherry tree. I think it was... I don't remember. Queen Anne or something like that. But they were great big delicious cherries. They were yellow and had a red splotch on the side of them. They weren't all one color. Ms. Scarborough had a red tart cherry tree right behind her house and she used to make some wonderful cherry pies with that. But black-heart cherry trees, we gathered a lot of those. I mean, I don't remember selling them that much, but you know, we'd give buckets of them to the different people and so-forth. 'Course we were always getting into things and doing things. I remember Mr. Scarborough used to burn off some sagebrush on his pastureland to bring the new grass in but he knew how to control a grass fire, you know. I thought I was gonna do that in the field behind our house and I got it started and cut down a bough—when it started getting away—of a pine tree to try to get it put out and mother remembers me hollering, "The whole world'll burn down and nobody'll come help me!" Finally Mr. Scarborough did come out and he had some of his other people help and put that out. But I mean to tell you, I thought the whole world was gonna burn up. When the fire gets in the sagebrush and starts goin'... But it was goin' away from the house, luckily. Daddy had built a cabin behind the house where we had lived for Edwin and myself to play in and keep our own toys. And he had built a dollhouse for Mary Ida and Eleanor. It was a walk-in, kind of. You know, it had a rock chimney. I don't know whether you went over there...

I: I think it's still there.

HB: Oh, it's still there in good shape and all! Both of the buildings are still there. But I remember them well. When I was a kid I would raise bantam chickens and I had some bantam chickens on the hill up there and I had a couple of dogs. First dog I had was a little Scottie... Scotch terrier. He was a mix Scotch terrier but we called him Scottie. And he

1223

*Memories of
climbing
cherry trees
and gathering
cherries*

1305

*As a child,
Hugh Brown
attempts to
perform a
controlled
sagebrush
burn*

1358

*The
childrens'
playhouses*

1431

*Hugh
Brown's
bantam
chickens and
the
Scarborough
animals*

got—I think it was probably distemper, I don't know—sick and he bit Mary Ida on the finger and in those days they didn't know whether... Daddy didn't want to take the chance on rabies and all so she went through that series of twenty-one shots in the stomach. I remember that well.

I: So you raised chickens?

HB: So I raised the bantam chickens up there and it was my job to go feed them. That's the only thing that I raised, I guess, there.

I: Now did Mr. Scarborough tend to other animals that you had?

HB: Oh, he had chickens and he had guineas, he had cows that he would milk and he would sell some of the milk and he would sell some of the eggs. He had a pair of horses. One favorite one named Bess we remember so well. She was a black horse with a white foot and a white stripe down her nose. And Eleanor's cow that he milked was called Dolly Varden, I think.

I: That's right. That's what Eleanor told me about.

1502

*Helping Mr.
Scarborough
shuck the
corn after the
drying
process*

HB: Mr. Scarborough didn't have any goats, I don't believe, but cows and horses. 'Course I used to go out there with him and watch the milking of the cows and, you know, he had a corn crib that he'd bring the corn in. And I would shuck corn with him and he made me one of these little wooden sticks that was pointed on the end and you had a leather strap that you would put your fingers through and it would stick out like that. And that's what you would dig into the ear of corn—the corn was dry, you know. It dried off. They would go along in the field and break them over and let them hang and dry and cure. And then they would break them off and bring them in and then we had to shuck it all and put it in the corn crib and then he would later feed it to his horses and feed it to the chickens, you know, and things like that. He would gather leaves up in the woods behind his house to bring down and put in the stalls for the horses to keep warm with it in the wintertime. He would make his own sleds, you know, out of... he would make the runners of the sled out a persimmon tree that had a crook in it like that. So he found two of them like this and then it would just... he would put a couple of cross-pieces and a bed on it and hook his horse to it and that's the way he transported things around. He didn't have a truck or a tractor or anything on the farm. It was all done by hand, so to speak. And that was an interesting part of growing up on and being associated with a farm that was done under those conditions, you know. We went to school at Grace School. We would ride the bus. It would meet us down

1549

*Making and
using a sled
in place of a
tractor*

1586

*Attending
Grace School*

at Beaverdam at the end of Beaverdam at the end of Rice Branch Road. Grace School is in at Grace community about two-and-a-half, three miles, I guess, from where we lived. When I got bigger I would ride my bicycle to school. And sometimes I would ride another boy that lived up Rice Branch—Pete Lakey. And I would ride him on my bicycle. And he had a trombone and I had a coronet to carry besides our books! And we'd ride... I tell you, you know, it was something to do and we liked to do that.

1632

*Neighboring
families in
Beaverdam
Valley*

I: Do you remember other children or neighbors in the area that you, you know, played with or did things like that at the school with?

HB: Well, Pete Lakey and there was Joe and Bo Stradley who lived down below on Beaverdam Creek across Beaverdam. There was the Bagwells that lived across on the other side of Beaverdam. I used to play with a fella named Whiteside who lived down on Chunns Cove which is another road that goes up from Beaverdam into a heading. And there was a Garret boy that we used to go hiking with Mr. Dykeman. Then Mr. Scarborough raised another family. A fella named... now I'm trying to think about it and I can't think of the name. But the two boys were Reid and Billy and Jack and they would come out to visit the Scarborougs and I would play with them a good bit. You know, neighbors were not right next door. We lived a good ways but we would go a good ways to visit with them and do different things.

1707

*The natural
history of the
area and
interactions
with wildlife*

I: Do you have any memories of animals that were in the area? Do you remember seeing anything?

HB: Well, rabbits and coons and squirrels. There weren't any bears or deer or any of that around there. And I don't remember any muskrat or any of that because you didn't have much marsh area around that area. But you had chipmunks and you had squirrels and you had rabbits and coons—raccoons and possums. I remember killing a possum down at the cabin one time by the rock pile and I think I hit him in the head or something, you know. That was a masculine thing to do, I suppose, to kill that. And I was proud of it and I walked all the way up to Mr. Scarborough's barn where he was and I said, "Come see what I've got down here!" And by the time we got back the coon... I mean, the possum had come alive and it was gone! I thought I'd killed him but he was playin' possum with me! Mr. Scarborough had a laugh about that, I'm sure. But I remember that.

I: What about wildflowers in the area?

HB: Well, mother had a flower garden across the street. Being as young as I was, I suppose, I don't have particular

1777

*Rhododendrons
and laurel
bushes*

memory of the wildflowers but, you know, Eleanor has... I remember there was some rhododendron that grew around there, you know, and laurel bushes—mountain laurel that would bloom up on the hillside. But I don't remember too much about the wildflowers. We all went to church down at Asbury Methodist Church. And Jane Scarborough was my Sunday school teacher down there. We would ride the bus sometimes and then mother and daddy would come down later on to church and then we would all go home together. As I say, on Sunday afternoon, for recreation, we would go take a ride and, you know, go to Recreation Park or go out to Malvern Hills where they had a fountain and a sulfur spring out there. It was supposed to give you rejuvenation to drink that sulfur water. Or we would ride up on the Parkway or go visit some friends in Asheville and so forth. Mother had a big four-door Hudson in the early days. Daddy had a beautiful little 1932 Buick coupe. It had a rumble seat in the back. And we loved to go for a ride in that rumble seat! Of course, Beaverdam was paved but Rice Branch was a rock road. And we had a... we had a driveway that came up to the house but it was kind of rough. Mostly for traction I think. The stone in it were kind of left exposed so we couldn't do much roller-skating or anything like that. I think Eleanor and the rest of them have gone down on Beaverdam to do roller-skating. But, you know, play cowboys and Indians and things like that, I can remember with some other friends that would come out there. A lot of it was geared around, you know, the creek and the cabin when we would have friends come out and have a picnic and things like that. Everybody liked to get in there and play in that creek. 'Course wintertime we would... we had snows in Asheville, you know, and build snowmen like any of the rest and slide on the hills up there behind the house. Go sleigh-riding.

I: Now I know that the cabin has kind of been used as a place for friends and family to stay. It wasn't somewhere that your family ever really lived.

HB: No.

I: Do you remember any of the gatherings that were held there? Do you have any memories...

HB: Well...

I: Even more recent...?

HB: Yes. When...when we were still living out there I can remember when the family came and they would have a big picnic over there. I can remember my Aunt Mary making hot biscuits. My Aunt Mary was my daddy's sister. She was...lived down in Shelby. And she had three boys, all of

1830

*Recreational
activities
done on
Sunday*

1911

*Leisure
activities of
the Brown
children*

1972

*Family
gatherings at
the cabin*

2001

*Gatherings,
contd.*

them... Two of them were Methodist ministers as well as her husband was a Methodist minister. She would make biscuits and I can remember she putting them out on the back porch and Furman, one of her sons, came around and reached through a hole in the screen and reached and got one of those biscuits! Now I suppose this was about when I was six or seven years old in the 19...middle 1930s. And I remember her fussin' at him.

2372

END SIDE ONE

(END SIDE ONE)

I: Okay. Sorry about that. Go ahead.

2906

*Childhood
memories of
the cabin,
including get-
togethers,
napping in
the back
room and
climbing in
the loft*

HB: Well, I can remember some of our friends that would, after we moved into Asheville, and we would always use the cabin for places to go and have a picnic and gathering and do things and it has a nice fireplace in it and a great big table and all. And, you know, we would get in there and sing songs and things like that. I used to go over there and take a nap in the afternoon. Mother would send me over there to sleep in the end bedroom and you could, you know, raise the window and listen to the creek rumble by and count the water streaks on the boards in the room. If you've ever walked in that back bedroom in there, Eleanor says she'll never change that. But I mean, I can just remember the designs of the water streaks. The roof had leaked and made those on the pine ceiling up there. But I...I remember that cabin. I used to go up in the loft and climb up in that loft that had a hole up there. The back kitchen was kind of a drop-shed kitchen. Had a kerosene stove in it and we had running water there at the cabin and a bathroom at the cabin all the time that I remember, of course. It's changed over the years. I can remember when it had wooden shingles on it, you know, and had a grape arbor that had grapes growing up around the end of the...end window on the outside. Mrs. Maude Whitmore King who was an artist that taught us children art classes when we were small, she came out there and painted a picture—oil painting—of the cabin. And I think Edwin may have that nowadays. Or maybe Eleanor does. I don't know which. Oh, we used to sit on the front porch and that big rock pile over there is just a major memory for me. I used to wander across the top of it. We had a big pile of flint rock that was there, too. I guess daddy was gonna use those in some place for in the house. It's a shame they never got to build that house. Lots of beautiful rock piled up there in that place right there. The bridge and the road up through there is still the same. Down in that field where...in front of the barn

3127

*Apple trees,
grape arbors,
hickory nuts
and the
snowball tree*

used to have apple trees and they had some grape arbors that had grapes that we would gather down there and apples. Had a big snowball tree. Big flowers that...it was a bush that grew at the end of the cabin, I can remember. Big white snowballs; individual little flowerets all on it and would cover that tree. And then they had some plum trees out there on the end that were planted there at the cabin. And we would eat the plums. And of course those cherry trees were predominant. And hickory nuts, you know, was up in that little cove where the road goes up now to Eleanor's cabin. There were a couple of hickory nut trees up there. In later years I used to go up and hunt squirrels up there in that area. But...

I: You used to do that?

3202

*How to make
a whistle out
of sourwood
and a
slingshot*

HB: After...in later years. You know, after I would...after we moved into town and I was, you know, up in age. One of the things Mr. Scarborough or one of the people taught me as a child was how to make a whistle out of a piece of wood. You'd get a piece of sourwood and cut it about, you know, twelve, fourteen inches long and rub it with another piece of wood until you could break the bark loose from the wood and it would slide off. And then you would cut holes in the wood and holes in the bark and use it and come back in and out with it like that and make a flute! And I remember making those things in the old days. Slingshots we used to make, you know. I mean, I can remember hunting for a good forked slingshot and then getting a rubber inner-tube and cutting out the strips and the tongue out a shoe to make the pocket and string. And that's what you had—a fine slingshot. And those, you know, we kind of made our own toys and implements and all like that. This was in the thirties when the Depression was here.

I: Right. Do you have any memories from that...from that period?

HB: Well, yeah!

I: I don't know how old you were.

3285

*Christmas
during the
Great
Depression*

HB: I was, you see, from '29 until we moved away in 1939. So that was right through the Depression area. And, you know, we...things were hard to come by. And I can remember every Christmastime, you know, our Uncle Edwin or Mr....oh, good friend of ours who owned a hotel down on Broadway. I'm sorry but names just escape me right now. But he would come...he would have chiclets in his pocket and the children would all go up there and dig in his pockets. And he would bring chiclets out. We just didn't have candy bars or things like that, you know. And oranges and bananas were a real treat at Christmastime that you'd get oranges in

3368

The Great Depression's effect on family businesses

your stocking. I can remember some discussion between mother and daddy, I guess it was over money. Before he went to work one time and I said, "Daddy, you make a hundred dollars in a whole week? In one week?" And that was just as much as the business took in I guess in those days. But...he started over in 1932 with the business he started in the pit of the Depression.

I: Which business was that?

HB: That was the Three Mountaineers. And he had the Treasure Chest and the hardware store and all like that but those went under and so it was...it was tough sleddin' for everybody. I remember in 1934 all four children got the whooping cough at one time and daddy came home and saw what mother was going through and he said, "We're going to Florida." And so we packed up and took Cordelia—Cordelia was the cook and housekeeper and lived on the place there—and we packed all of us together and went in mother's 1934 Plymouth and went to Florida and stayed for three months, I guess, and came back. Daddy loved to go to Florida because he would get rejuvenated down there. He loved to go fishing and deep-sea fishing. And we all got into school. But I'd gone with him the year before, I think, as a very small...

3424

Going to Florida to be cured of the whooping cough

'Course in '34 I was seven. I would guess I was six years old when I went with him on a buying trip when he went down there by himself. But we didn't have too much serious sickness. I guess that four of us having whooping cough at one time was about as bad because we had the normal sicknesses. I remember I was playing football with my...with Mary Ida out in side yard and tackled her and broke her leg.

I: Oh no!

HB: And she was the only one of us that ever had a broken bone, I think, out there and I was the cause of that. That was...I can't remember. '38 or something like that.

I: Do you spend any time at the cabin now?

HB: Oh, yeah. I go back when I go out there. I stayed out there... Well, all the family got together about a year ago. My daughter and her—from Morgan City—and her husband and I flew up there on the 31st of July last year and we had that big panoramic picture taken out in the yard. Maybe you saw that.

3536

Visits to the cabin in recent years

I: I did see that.

HB: And the October before that I had gone up and spent about a week with Eleanor and we stayed out at the cabin and stayed in at her house and we'd go out to the cabin. And that's when I put that bell up. I know the bell had been around there when we cut down a locust tree and put the bell

3580

The importance of being able to go back to the cabin and property

up while I was there that time. And we walked the boundary lines and looked for some of the corners. And, you know, I love to go up there and stay. That's a good place to relax and visit.

I: Is it special for you to be able to go, you know, back to...?

HB: I guess it is! I guess it is! I mean, your roots are there. You're born and raised in the mountains and your home-place. That's where your home-place is. And it's so nice to be able to go back and visit with Jane and, of course, a lot of things have changed, of course. And all the area that's changing rapidly.

I: What's changed? What strikes you?

HB: Well, I mean, people have moved in and places that were in fields and woods, you know, are all subdivisions now. And you've got condominiums and everything else going up all out there. But the only thing that's changed right in the immediate area of the cabin is, you know, owners of the house across the street. Doug has done wonderfully with keeping up that place to look like it used to look. Some of the trees are gone that were there when I was a child and all, but it looks pretty much exactly like it looked in those days. We haven't changed... Eleanor, when she came there with Jim and lived in 1950, they added the back kitchen on at that time. And of course in the last couple of years or more she's done a lot of interior work and shoring it up and stabilizing it and that's just her concern but it...overall it looks the same. And then she's built that cabin that they brought and put on the hill above it, you know. Otherwise, you know, the...the trees and the field down below has grown up and you've got big poplar trees that are in there now and the pine beetle blight caused a lot of damage to the surrounding woods area.

I: When did that...in what period did that happen?

HB: That was in...I would say in the mid-seventies. Something like that. Or maybe early eighties. It's recovering quite a bit now but that was pretty devastating and it killed all the pines out and some of the white pines it even took out. And then Eleanor and Jim had cut some timber on the place. They were going to build a house themselves but never did and they ended up using most of it for the adding onto the kitchen the cabin. But there hasn't been any timber removed since that time. But changes are—to that particular tract of property—is building the barn down there which they built in 1950s and then they added the cabin, I guess, in the middle seventies or something like that up on the hill. But most of the rest of the tract is just like it was when I knew it. The creek has changed, of course, as I said. I don't know what

3623

Changes and development at the cabin and in Beaverdam Valley

3696

Timber removal from the land and the pine blight

3805

*Square
dances and
apple butter-
making
parties held
at the cabin*

else... You might want to ask some questions.

I: Well, I was wondering what you remember if you've been to any of the, you know, the square-dances or apple butter-making parties that, you know, I think Eleanor especially has held.

HB: Yes, I have been there and Eleanor has a great big copper pot, you know, and the stirrer that Jim made and they used to make those. And she would have friends to come in and they would peel apples and have a glorious time. It was an all-day affair, you know. The fact is, I'm sure it started the night before, you know, getting things ready cause it was an all-day affair to make those great big buckets of apple butter. And then she's had square-dances. Let's see, one of the children were... I think... when one of them were married... Peter? I don't remember which, but they would lay out four big wooden platforms down in the pasture and then have a string band and a caller and people would square-dance down there behind the boxwoods, in front of the... And hang lanterns out, you know, at nighttime. But I was only a visitor. That was when I was livin' down here that those things occurred. I guess members of the family, when we were still living out there, might come in. Cousins from Washington would come down and stay at the cabin and enjoy it. But I've been, of course, away from Asheville since 1952 and before that I went away to school in 1940. We moved in from Beaverdam in 1939 and I may have gone one year more to Grace school in the sixth grade and then I went off to Christ School which is a boy's school in...

3904

*Schooling for
the Brown
children
(Hugh and
Edwin
particularly)*

I: In Arden?

HB: In Arden.

I: Right. Okay.

HB: And Edwin and I were in the same grade although Edwin is eighteen months younger than I am. When I got the whooping cough I repeated the second grade. So we both... Edwin went to Asheville School which is another boy's school there in Asheville and we both graduated on the same day. Mother was kind of... She didn't go to either one of them, I think. But I, you know, remember living there in Asheville. We would always... we still had the cabin. Mother sold the house across the street, I suppose, in 1940, I think it was.

3959

*Going out to
the cabin
after the
move into
town*

I: And during that period did you go back to the cabin? Did you spend time?

HB: Oh, yeah! I would go out there and stay and spend the night.

I: What'd you do?

HB: Sleep out there and, you know... Well, just on my own, so to speak. I would have some of my friends who were in Boy Scouts during the early forties, you know. And we would go out there and spend some time just moseying around in the woods and things like that. Kind of being on our own.

I: I know you were fairly young at the time, but do you remember what the community was like in the Beaverdam Valley? You know, how closely connected you were to your neighbors?

HB: Well, the next door neighbor up was the Scarboroughs and they're still in the same house. And then Mr. Scarborough had a long field that went further on up the road 'til you got to the Lakeys house. And the Lakeys built that house during the time that I remember in the early thirties. And the Lakey boy that I rode the bike with to go to school. And across Rice Branch on the north side, I guess you'd say, the northwest side, was Mr. Scarborough's fields. And there wasn't anybody that lived further on up except about ten families up there. The Stradleys had a great big house at the end and the Ferrences and the Peggs and the Lakeys and there were some others, of course. And there was a little grocery store down on Beaverdam. A little green grocery store. You turned... you turned left at Beaverdam at Rice Branch and go over the hill. It was just a short distance down that way. Then they had another little grocery store up at the Y at the end of Beaverdam. But those weren't there for very long but I remember they were there. There were not grocery stores where we would go. They would only keep kind of staples and they had a candy jar there and things of that nature. Tobacco and so forth. But the main grocery store that we shopped at was Grace Supply Company in the community of Grace.

I: Was it a mixed community in terms of having both people that were farming and then people that were more like your father, who worked in town and lived in the area?

HB: Well, most of the people farmed out there and so forth but they may work in town or at other places and live out there. And... there were no businesses out there. I mean, the Baptist Church was on down, halfway down the road down there. But everything else was residences. I don't remember any businesses that were... My father's brother, Edwin—whom my brother Edwin is named after—he and his wife had a house at the end of Beaverdam. You go up on the hill up there. And he died, of course, in 1932. So I don't remember too much about that. But I remember going up there and

4009

*Community
and
neighbors on
Rice Branch
and in*

4075

*Small green
grocers on
Beaverdam
Road*

4122

*A diverse,
mixed
community*

4211

*Shoeing the
horses on the
Scarborough
farm*

4235

*Raising one's
own livestock
and food*

4266

*A learned
appreciation
of gleaning a
living from
the land*

visiting with them. And so that had to be, you know, when I was only five years old. But I can remember that. I don't remember any businesses until you get all the way back to Grace. I mean, there was people lived, you know, and there was side roads off of Beaverdam to go up in a little cove here and a little cove there and there were houses around in there. But most of the grocery stores, as I say, I don't remember one between the little one that was right there at Beaverdam and on the upper end, over there. When Mr. Scarborough would need to shoe his horses, he would get the furrier, I think they call him. But he was a black man who would come up and I used to watch him shoe the horses and cut the hoof away. And that was fascinating to me to watch, shoeing a horse, you know, and fitting the shoe to the horse and shoeing the horses. And I can remember that as something that really stands out in my mind like I can remember killing the hogs and the way they went about it. And, you know, if you needed a chicken for the dinner table it was just go out and catch one in the yard and put the head on the chopping block and pick 'em and put him in the pot. There wasn't any, you know, going and buying a cut-up fryer chicken at the store! Some of the finest memories—sensory memories—are standing out in the backyard of their house and smelling those pork chops that she was cooking, you know, or bacon frying. They'd come out of that smokehouse.

I: Was it special for you to be able to grow up, you know, next to this...

HB: Oh, absolutely!

I: And how did it shape, you know, things differently...

HB: Well, it just gave me an appreciation, you know, of what it took to, you know, glean a living from the land. I mean, everything that they had and did came from the place. There was very little that, you know, coffee and salt and things like that but most of the rest of it... Things that... But that always made an impression with me. I didn't really learn how to milk because I didn't get that big enough to get started doing that. But I remember when the young calves were born and I'd just spend a lot of my time observing over there and then the rest of it, you know, was entertaining. We... my brother and I got into something, my mother would say, "Cordelia, go out there and get me a hickory limb." You know, we used to dread that. And mother didn't mince any words. If we needed switching, she'd give it to us. We'd dance around in circles.

I: Now have your children and grandchildren spent time at the cabin or on the land ever?

4341

*Taking children
and
grandchildren
to the cabin*

4376

*Jane
Scarborough,
the Three
Mountaineers
and Mr.
Brown's
death*

HB: Yes, well we've gone up there, Bell and I, when the children were smaller, you know. We would go up there and stay in there. Eva Claire, that went up there with me and stayed for a couple of three days last summer, went and enjoyed it a lot. They feel the attachment, I guess, that I have to it. And of course I never... There's just an association with that. We've all been... it's been a part of our lives all the way down, you know. Mother thought so much of the Scarboroughs and of Jane. And Jane worked for my daddy at the Three Mountaineers and I can remember the day he died. I was over at Mr. Scarborough's where I spent a lot of my time. And I remember about eleven o'clock in the morning seeing her little Dodge coupe pull up in front of the house and a minute or two later Ms. Scarborough came walking out the back steps and down and over and talkin' to Mr. Scarborough up at the barn and I was standing over on the side. But Jane worked down at the Three Mountaineers for a long period of time and she knew that business. She didn't work in the manufacturing, she worked up in the front where daddy had an antique store. And then when he died, mother kept on with the antique store for a number of years until they had a fire in 1951, I guess it was, and moved out to the plant in Biltmore.