

M R S. M A R Y J. J O N E S

Interviewed by Dr. Louis Silveri  
June 17, 1976

S O U T H E R N H I G H L A N D S R E S E A R C H C E N T E R

The University of North Carolina at Asheville

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Interview with Mary J. Jones (Mrs. G. T. Jones). Interviewed by  
Dr. Louis D. Silveri, June 17, 1976.

Dr. Louis Silveri: I would like to begin with your ancestors.

Mrs. Mary Jones: I was born in Clifton in Ashe County, North Carolina in January of 1910. My ancestors on my mother's side, I can go back to my grandfather who was Scottish. His name was Brewer, and I knew him and one sister, but that's about as much as I know about them.

Dr. Louis Silveri: Did he come over here from the old country?

Mrs. Mary Jones: No. He was born in the United States. I know very little about his family. I know he had a stepmother, and apparently from the time she entered the family, he was beginning to grow up and left.

Dr. Louis Silveri: Was he in Ashe County?

Mrs. Mary Jones: Yes. He always worked in Ashe County.

Dr. Louis Silveri: That was your mother's side.

Mrs. Mary Jones: On my mother's side.

Dr. Louis Silveri: How about your father's side?

Mrs. Mary Jones: Well, this same thing is true about my father's side, except I never even saw my grandmother or my grandfather. I saw my step-grandmother, but my grandmother died when Dad was about two years old. His father died after he went into the army while he was stationed in the Philippines.

Dr. Louis Silveri: Were they Scotch-Irish?

Mrs. Mary Jones: No. I think all the Johnsons were of German descent.

Mrs. Jones: (continued) In my mother's family, I think my mother's mother was also a Johnson before she was married.

Silveri: That conforms to what we know about the national origin of mountain people. They were usually Scotch-Irish, English, or German.

Mrs. Jones: Yes. There are a few who are real Irish. I think Gwynn's mother must come from a family that emigrated from Ireland. I've never been able to find out for sure.

Silveri: Do you know when your father was born?

Mrs. Jones: I've got the records. I can find out.

Silveri: Just approximately.

Mrs. Jones: He was born about 1878 or there about.

Silveri: I was trying to see whether the biggest event in the mountains was the Civil War. Do you know of any of your ancestors that fought in the Civil War?

Mrs. Jones: Oh, yes. My paternal grandfather fought in the Civil War, and he always carried a scar in the middle of his forehead. There was a spent just bullet that penetrated deep enough for a scar. I've heard my father talk of that. On my mother's side, my great-uncles / and my great-grandfather were in the Civil War. I think most of the young men then were.

Silveri: Were they all on the same side?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. Ours were all on the same side!

Silveri: Which side was that?

Mrs. Jones: They were all Confederates.

Silveri: You know how much the mountains were divided in the Civil War?

Mrs. Jones: Oh, yes. Yes. They still are pretty much along the same lines.

Silveri: Your father was born about 1878, in Ashe County?

Mrs. Jones: No. He was born in Alleghany County, I think. I'm pretty sure he was.

Silveri: Right next door.

Mrs. Jones: Right next door, yes.

Silveri: How about your mother? Where was she born?

Mrs. Jones: She was born in Ashe County.

Silveri: You do remember your grandparents, right?

Mrs. Jones: My mother's parents, yes. I remember them. I never saw the others. And some great aunts, two great aunts, I remember very vividly. One of them was alive during the Civil War, a young woman. The story they told about her was she became romantically inclined, let's say, with a Union soldier. Her father wouldn't stand for the marriage, so she remained an old maid all her life. She 's the one who told me stories about what happened during the Civil War, the way they lived.

Silveri: Well, let's go back to your father. I want to talk about when your father was growing up, and things he told you about the years in which he was growing up. How did his father make his living in Alleghany County?

Mrs. Jones: This was in Alleghany County where he lived. I think like they were all small farmers. They were all very self-sufficient. Everything that

Mrs. Jones: (continued) was needed on the farm was done there. Iron work, carpentry, the food was all preserved on the farm. Some of it was done, it seems to me, in rather odd ways. People might have bought a little coffee, a little sugar, some rice. Other than that, they just didn't buy anything.

Silveri: Did your father have a large family? A lot of brothers and sisters?

Mrs. Jones: There were about six of them, I think. I'd have to stop and count. There were three boys and four girls, I think, to the best of my recollection.

Silveri: That was usual in the mountain area, a lot of children in the family.

Mrs. Jones: Yes. Well, in fact my grandmother, his mother, died in childbirth.

Silveri: So, your father was brought up on a farm in Alleghany County.

When did they move to Ashe County?

Mrs. Jones: He never really moved to Ashe County. He was brought up there, and he taught school when he was in his teens in Alleghany County. Then he left home at a very early age. He must have been on his own, I guess, from about the age of fourteen on. In fact he was less than sixteen when he was teaching school. Then he worked over in Tennessee at the iron mines at Cranberry. As I told you yesterday, he wound up somewhat under the age of eighteen here in Asheville looking for a job, and that's how he got into the army.

Silveri: ...inaudible

Mrs. Jones: Well, there were no jobs available. This was supposed to be the "land of promise" because Vanderbilt was here and was paying the munificent sum of a dollar a day for all his help. So, Dad and a friend walked from Cranberry, Tennessee to Asheville. That was the accepted mode of transportation. It's quite a little distance. I don't know exactly how far, but somewhere close to a hundred miles, I guess. They came down, and there were no jobs available, but the army was here recruiting men. This was before the Spanish-American War. So, Dad and his friend walked across the railroad track bridge. They had no money for a hotel room or a bath, which I guess you got in barbershops in those days, mostly. They walked across the railroad track to West Asheville, took a bath in the creek so they would be clean for a physical, came back and joined the army and were put in a hotel room by the army.

Silveri: He was less than eighteen years old?

Mrs. Jones: He was under eighteen. He had to add a year to his age because you had to be eighteen to enlist without your parents' consent.

Silveri: That was just before the Spanish-American War broke out?

Mrs. Jones: Yes, somewhere before then. He served during the time of the Spanish-American War, but I think he was in the Philippines at that time.

Silveri: Back home, I was interested in the kind of education that was available to somebody like your father in those days.

Mrs. Jones: Very little. There were one-room schools that held from six weeks

Mrs. Jones: (continued) to three months, but in Alleghany County (you may apparently have run into his name in some of your investigations) there was a Professor Brown who had an excellent school. It was never was a large school, but I do know among the things he taught was Greek, advanced algebra, advanced mathematics, Latin, and things of that sort.

Silveri: Was it a private school?

Mrs. Jones: Well, I guess it may have been a private school, but I have heard Dad and my uncle say that the boys around there who went to Professor Brown's school got an excellent education, including some of the classics, that wasn't offered anywhere else.

Silveri: Do you recall how long the Brown school lasted? How many grades?

Mrs. Jones: I don't think it really was graded. You just went in, and you bought your books and studied what you wanted to. I know Dad said he made a mistake because he bought an Advanced College Algebra and had to study that. He really wasn't quite ready for it. It was hard for him!

Silveri: You were born in 1910. Is there anything else you can remember about what your father told you about going to school? Are there any other stories about that?

Mrs. Jones: No. Well, of course, there were very few requirements for a teacher then. You didn't have to be certified or pass an examination. He could not have had--he always claimed that his education amounted to about the fourth grade education that I got.

Silveri: Then he went out and taught children how to read and write?



Mrs. Jones: He was a school teacher for one year or maybe two. That's all I know. I don't even know what school.

Silveri: At least by 1897, he was a private in the United States Army?

Mrs. Jones: Yes.

Silveri: Did he ever say anything about what the reaction of his parents was on him joining the army?

Mrs. Jones: Well, I think his stepmother was just happy to have him out from underfoot, except she missed the help because evidently the children did work hard in those days. He has told me about when they put up things for the winter. They made sauerkraut, for instance, in a barrel.

They didn't shred the cabbage or anything of that sort.

They just had a real sharp spade, and dropped the heads of cabbage in and chopped with the spade 'til they filled the barrel. Put in salt every-so-often. He said it was such hard work! Of course, everything was hard work on the farms in those days.

Silveri: He was in the Spanish-American War. You say he served in the Philippines?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. He was never in combat. He joined in the Cavalry and was sent to the Philippines about the time of the Philippine Insurrection. Then he came back and went to Puerto Rico. I don't know too much about that period of his life.

Silveri: I think you would have to say he was a very unusual mountain boy to have gone out on his own like that and joined up. Once he got in the

Silveri: (Cont'd.) service, then, his horizons were unlimited. He would travel all over the world and would never be the same again, I suppose.

Mrs. Jones: That's right. There were a great many things he had to learn. Everything was strange. For instance, he said the first time he ever ate oysters he had no idea what he was eating until one of the men in the mess said, "These are good oysters."

He was in part of the West at the time shortly after, I guess, the Indian uprisings. He had interesting stories to tell about some of the Indians who would hang around the army, and the army protected them from other tribes who were warring against them.

Silveri: Well, somewhere along the line he got a commission as an officer, didn't he?

Mrs. Jones: He was commissioned during the First World War. About half the time when I grew up, he was an officer, and about half the time he was an enlisted man. That also made a lot of difference; talk about segregation.

Silveri: As you said, you were born in January, 1910, and you told me before the story of your birth. You were born in Ashe County, even though your father. . .

Mrs. Jones: My father was stationed in Rhode Island at the time. My mother came back to Ashe County sometime in the early winter and stayed there until I was born, and then for about three months afterward, until Dad could get leave and come after us.

Silveri: Your father must have known your mother before he went off to the

Silveri: (continued) army?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. His grandmother lived up in Ashe County; and when he was a child he visited up there, so that's how they became acquainted

Silveri: When were they married? Do you recall?

Mrs. Jones: They were married in December of 1908.

Silveri: He came back home to marry her?

Mrs. Jones: That's right.

Silveri: I guess they immediately went off to a military post somewhere.  
and

Mrs. Jones: Yes. That's right. They eloped/were married on horseback!

Silveri: Your father must have been a real interesting person!

Mrs. Jones: Oh. I always thought he was! They said I was very much like him, and we had a great deal in common.

Silveri: Were you the first born?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. I'm the oldest.

Silveri: You came back home to Ashe County. You were born there, and then you went back to Rhode Island with your mother, shortly after your birth?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. We went to Rhode Island. He was stationed there for a while. I don't know exactly when he moved. Then my next sister was born at Fort Totten, New York in 1912.

Silveri: I want to get back to what you told me is the reason why your father wanted your mother to go back to Ashe County.

Mrs. Jones: Well, because of the general state of medicine at that time, for

Mrs. Jones: (continued) one thing, I imagine. The doctors really didn't know very much, and then the only other place for her to go was an army hospital. At that time they were staffed with male nurses, and apparently, he just didn't like the idea at all. It was safer in those days for a baby to be born at home .

Silveri: She was attended by a midwife?

Mrs. Jones: No. There was a doctor, but there was an old colored woman there. My husband's mother was attended by a midwife when he was born.

Silveri: When were your first recollections of Ashe County? Did you come back as a child frequently to visit?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. Almost every summer. The first time when things began to hold together would have been the summer of about 1915. We had been stationed in Alaska, came out of Alaska, and came back to my grandmother's just then, that summer. After that we were there practically every summer.

Silveri: All summer long?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. If it was possible to arrange it. My mother and us children and came and spent the summer.

Silveri: What's your first recollection of traveling there? How did you travel?

Mrs. Jones: Well, the first recollection--we always traveled by train. The first recollection is the trip across the continent from San Francisco that summer of 1915 when we came out of Alaska.

Silveri: The train came to, where? Tennessee somewhere?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. Well, for quite a few years we had to go over into Tennessee; sometimes we would get off the train at Bristol. Then a little later the train went on to Mountain City. We could get off at Mountain City, Tennessee and come across the mountain down to Clifton.

Silveri: How did you get from the railroad depot in Tennessee?

Mrs. Jones: Usually a wagon, a buggy, or some sort of surrey. Whatever conveyance could be rented.

Silveri: Oh, you rented. Like the oldtime taxi, I guess.

Mrs. Jones: Well, yes. Go to a livery stable.

Silveri: How many miles would that be to that farm?

Mrs. Jones: Oh, my. It was an overnight trip. Two nights as a rule, I think, we had to spend on the way. It would be a rough guess, but I expect close to it was thirty or forty miles.

Silveri: You had to stay overnight somewhere!

Mrs. Jones: Yes. You had to spend the night. That was taken for granted!

Silveri: Where did you spend the night? In some wayside--

Mrs. Jones: Well, we always spent one night at my great-aunt's, I remember that, but that was only about seven miles from my grandfather's home. The other places, I really can't remember. Sometimes I guess it would have been at a private home because a lot of them took in travelers, or sometimes what they called a hotel, which wasn't so different from a private home that a child would notice the difference.

Silveri: I think probably here I should say economic activity in Ashe County

Silveri: (continued) was almost exclusively farming, right?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. Stock raising.

Silveri: In your early memory of Ashe County, the roads (what roads there were) were very hard to travel?

Mrs. Jones: They were actually impassible at times of the year. After we lived up there, one of my cousins said that for several years after they bought / <sup>their</sup> car--it was a Model-T Ford. That was practically the only thing that would travel those roads. They didn't even buy a license for it until April, or sometimes even June, because until that time the roads were impassible, and there was no sense in paying out extra money for a license; you got for part of the year, if you bought it later.

Silveri: When you came back to visit, what relatives were there?

Mrs. Jones: My grandfather and grandmother, and I had an uncle who lived down at Jefferson. Two great-aunts who lived up at Creston. Now, there were great-uncles that we visited occasionally, but those five were the ones that we were in closest contact with.

Silveri: How about children of your age relatives?

Mrs. Jones: There were none except my uncle had some, but he had no children my age. Two sons by his first wife were considerably older than I. Then by his second wife, the children started about the age of my next sister and went on down, so I was very much left alone. There was a second cousin who lived a mile and a half or so away who was about my age, and I became very fond of her. But children were scattered and few

Mrs. Jones: (continued) and far between up there.

Silveri: You were probably doted upon by the grandparents.

Mrs. Jones: Well, yes. They spent more time with you and treated you more like a grown person. There wasn't much playing to be done, so you kind of learned to do some of the work.

Silveri: That's the question I was going to ask you. Did you look forward with great anticipation and pleasure at spending the summer there? Or the opposite?

Mrs. Jones: Neither one. It was just taken for granted. You went home and went to school in the wintertime, and in the summertime, you went to Granny's and spent the summer. It was just two different things entirely! Then when you grew up in the army, you didn't worry about whether you liked a place or not. You were there, and you better like it because there wasn't anything to do to change it.

Silveri: What effect did that war have on your father's career?

Mrs. Jones: It brought him back from Alaska. I guess the army must have started picking up then because he was stationed at Fort Howard, Maryland. He received his first commission at Fort Howard, and after that then he was at one training camp or another throughout the war.

Silveri: Oh, O.K. Training the troops that were coming in--

Mrs. Jones: By that time he was in the Quartermaster Department.

made

Mrs. Jones: (continued) I think it was probably the Quartermaster Corps about that time. The cavalry was being disbanded, so he was camp quartermaster most of the time during the war at one place or another.

Silveri: You continued to come back to Ashe during that time throughout the war each summer pretty much until you grew up?

Mrs. Jones: We came every summer, but there was one thing especially: in the winter of 1918 or 1919, my father was expecting to go overseas, and my mother felt she could not travel with all three of us children, so they sent me back that winter. They sent me back with my uncle to my grandparents, and I spent six or eight months there with them, but I was the only child. That was the bad winter of 1918, when we were snowbound a lot, so I really got to know something about the place then.

Silveri: You were about eight years old then?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. Eight or nine. I'm not too sure which.

Silveri: That's pretty well bound in as it is, and to have a terrific snowstorm makes it worse.

Mrs. Jones: Oh, yes. Yes.

Silveri: When was the last time you spent more than a week or so at Ashe County?

Mrs. Jones: Well, that would have been the first part of 1936, because we moved to Asheville in March of 1936. We moved back from Delaware and spent from around the first of the year to March.

Silveri: I want to ask you some questions that would fit in to your memory



Silveri: (Cont'd.) about those years and your visits there and some of the changes that took place. Do you remember them ever having a Sears and Roebuck catalogue?

Mrs. Jones: Yes, certainly.

Silveri: How early do you recall that?

Mrs. Jones: As far back as I can remember, there was a Sears and Roebuck catalogue everywhere we ever lived. I learned to read before I was four, so I can go back quite a ways for Sears and Roebuck.

Silveri: Do you remember them calling it anything else besides the Sears and Roebuck catalogue?

Mrs. Jones: After we moved back there I heard it called the "wish book," but it was never called that around our place. It was always just the Sears and Roebuck.

Silveri: How about other books that you recall using?

Mrs. Jones: My grandmother had an assortment of magazines. My mother would buy magazines, or subscribe to them. My grandmother subscribed to some, and she never threw anything away. Then my mother would pass hers on to my grandmother and bring them back to her. Granddad subscribed to a newspaper. It was only three times a week, but still that was a little unusual.

Silveri: From the county?

Mrs. Jones: No. This was the Kansas City Star that he subscribed to.

Silveri: Why?

Mrs. Jones: Well, he liked it. That's all.

Silveri: You know it's strange, because I was just reading a recollection of Madison County, and the woman says there were two newspapers in their household when she was growing up. One was the local weekly, and the other one was the Toledo Blade (Toledo, Ohio Blade). I just don't understand how that happened, and now you say the Kansas City Star in Ashe County?

Mrs. Jones: That's right. Granddad subscribed to the Kansas City Star, and it came three times a week. He was always sure to be the one to go after the mail that day when the Star was due in because he wanted to see it. Of course, there was the local weekly, which varied in name and make-up and so on from year to year. Then there were a good many books. A lot of them were the paperback type of books. When I say a good many, I'd say probably fifty, maybe as many as a hundred books there. I ought to know. I read them all two or three times.

Silveri: You mentioned the Bible. Did they have a Bible?

Mrs. Jones: Oh, yes. Of course. That was taken for granted. A big family Bible, and then usually each person had his or her own Bible.

Silveri: They made entries in the family Bible, births, deaths, and so on?

Mrs. Jones: Oh yes. Yes.

Silveri: What did the house look like?

Mrs. Jones: Granddad's house was the gingerbread type. It was frame. It had been built when my mother was about, I guess, eight or ten years

Mrs. Jones: (continued) old. Before that he had been a clerk in a store and had rented a house, or had been provided one as part of his payment, I guess, for clerking in the store.

Then he built the house. It was the usual, I think, the standard mountain house, two rooms at the front with a hallway between. Then that hall led into a room which they used as a dining room, and then that opened into the kitchen. Upstairs there were two rooms over the front rooms.

Silveri: Was your father born in that house?

Mrs. Jones: No. This is my maternal grandparents. My mother was not born there. No. She was born in another house on the same farm, or two houses, rather. They used two houses from the time they owned the farm until they built this one, and they were more or less connected. It wasn't even a covered way. It was more or less connected by a dogtrot. They were both of squared-off log construction. One house had a plank floor, and the other one had a dirt floor.

Silveri: They were still standing when you--

Mrs. Jones: Yes. They were still standing and still in use up until the time that the farm was sold after my grandparents' death.

Silveri: Did she cook over the fireplace? Or did she have a cookstove?

Mrs. Jones: Well, she had a cookstove, that I first remember, and later a range, but she did a lot of cooking on the fireplace for two reasons. Granddad preferred it, and then in the summertime she said that she could

Mrs. Jones: (Cont'd.) keep her kitchen a lot cooler with a small fire in the fireplace over which a pot was swung, than she could by building a fire in the range because the range just radiated heat in all directions.

Silveri: In the winter time, there was only really one warm room?

Mrs. Jones: Most of the time; unless you built fires in the other rooms.

Silveri: Oh, the other rooms had fireplaces?

Mrs. Jones: Yes, the two downstairs ones did; the ones upstairs in Granddad's house did not have.

Silveri: What kind of outbuilding did they have?

Mrs. Jones: Oh, there were the usual ones: the smokehouse, the chicken house, the wood shed, the privy, hogpens; and they used these two original buildings as storehouses. There was a corn crib, a granary; just lots of houses all around in every direction.

Silveri: On the farm there was about a hundred acres?

Mrs. Jones: Yes, Granddad's farm ran in the neighborhood of a hundred to a hundred and ten acres, I think. Something like that.

Silveri: How much of it was bottom land, if any?

Mrs. Jones: Very little of his; his was a mountain farm. He had a few fields that were sloping and could be tilled, but the lot of it was still in woodland. He had a chestnut orchard, as I told you yesterday.

Silveri: Yes. As far as the crops, he raised the kind of crops that the family and stock consumed?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. Principally corn.

Silveri: Right. You said as far as tobacco was concerned he raised only enough for his own needs.

Mrs. Jones: Just a little bit for his own needs.

Silveri: I want to ask you where he got his cash income.

Mrs. Jones: Well, that was principally from the chestnuts because he had a chestnut orchard that was as large as a good-sized apple orchard. The chestnuts would start coming in early, and of course, they were the ones that brought the premium prices. He'd get as much as two dollars a bushel for his chestnuts. That was quite a price in those days, but then his taxes ran about ten dollars a year!

Silveri: But that was a natural chestnut orchard?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. But he liked the chestnuts. He recognized its value, and he kept it when they cleared the land for building.

Silveri: But then the blight came later on and wiped it out.

Mrs. Jones: The blight came much later. As long as Granddad was alive he had his chestnuts.

Silveri: They must have been magnificent trees, too.

Mrs. Jones: They were. They were beautiful trees. They were all really through the mountains. Unless you have eaten them, you don't know what chestnuts are like.

Silveri: Did you used to help them gather the chestnuts ?

Mrs. Jones: I never was there much. Usually we were back at school.

Mrs. Jones: (Cont'd.) There's an interesting thing about the chestnuts: this colored woman who worked so much for my grandparents had a way of preserving them so that they would keep all winter long. They wouldn't dry out; they wouldn't get wormy. It was some way in which she used hot water, but she was never able to teach it to her children. She was the only one who ever could do it.

We'd come back in the summer time, and they would have kept chestnuts for us. Of course, they would send us chestnuts through the winter to eat. The chestnuts that were kept until summer time were still sweet and moist and good; kept all year long.

Silveri: What about fruit orchards? Did they usually have apple trees, and so on?

Mrs. Jones: They would have a few apple trees. I guess he probably had a dozen, and they started coming in in early June on up into the fall. He sort of specialized and liked the Virginia Beauty apples best because they are sort of special for this area, and they kept well.

Silveri: As far as stock is concerned, did he own any sheep?

Mrs. Jones: He kept sheep during the war, the First World War, when they weren't able to buy wool, because he liked to wear wool socks. Then Granny liked to have a certain amount of wool in some of the cloth that was woven. She carded and spun wool. I remember her doing that. She never wove any there, but I think they had some done, perhaps.

Silveri: They would take the wool down to be woven?

Mrs. Jones: Yes.

Silveri: What kind of stock did they have in addition to the sheep?

Mrs. Jones: Other than that, all/<sup>he</sup>kept were cows and chickens, just the stock that would be used. He didn't try to keep horses or mules.

Silveri: He had hogs, also?

Mrs. Jones: Oh, yes. Of course, hogs. That was the mainstay of the meat crop.

Silveri: Right. After the first frost, heavy frost, the butchering would begin?

Mrs. Jones: Not until it was going to stay cold a while, because your meat would spoil if you didn't have it stay chilled long enough until it began to cure out.

Silveri: You said he had a smoke house. Did he have a particular way of preserving the meat?

Mrs. Jones: I don't/<sup>know</sup>much about that. I saw my great-aunt do some smoking.

I don't believe Granddad did much smoking. His was mostly the sugar cured, just  
^ the natural cure, where you rub--

Silveri: Salt.

Mrs. Jones: Salt and pepper, and sugar and stuff on the outside, and just hang it up and let it air cure.

Silveri: Do you remember it being delicious ham?

Mrs. Jones: Frankly, I don't care much for country ham! Now ~~my~~ husband will. He likes it!

Silveri: You mentioned your grandmother doing some carding and some spinning, but not weaving. I've always been told that life was kind of hard for the woman of the family in the mountains.

Mrs. Jones: Well, it was. They worked hard, but on the other hand, I always remember Grammy sat down and rested in the afternoons. I've never been able to arrange my life to do that yet with all the modern conveniences! You worked hard, but then there was time for leisure. There was time for reading, a lot of time for needlework, various kinds of fancy work, and visiting. You didn't have so much to take care of. You didn't have all the responsibilities that you have now.

Silveri: Incidentally, how many children were in your mother's family?

Mrs. Jones: She had a half sister. My grandmother was my grandfather's third wife. He had two wives to die in childbirth, and my grandmother almost <sup>mother</sup> did, so my/ was the only child. You might be interested in how they fed babies.

Silveri: Yes.

Mrs. Jones: Because my grandmother was sick for quite a long time, and wasn't able to nurse my mother, they fed her coffee with lots of cream in it, and mashed pumpkin! It's a wonder she lived!

Silveri: My goodness. As a small baby!

Mrs. Jones: As a small baby! She was born in September, so she had to be fed through the winter.

Silveri: What was that combination again?



Mrs. Jones: They gave her coffee with a lot of cream in it, and mashed pumpkin, she said. She always claimed it gave her a yellow complexion!

Silveri: That was a mainstay until the baby was able to chew ?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. I think so. Of course, they fed babies cream gravy. That was, I think, pretty standard through all the mountains. When they were little, if they could survive it, they ate it.

Silveri: Now in those years we're talking about, 1915 to about 1936, there was no electricity in the mountains at all, then?

Mrs. Jones: No. No electricity.

Silveri: What kind of lamps did they have? What would they burn in them?

Mrs. Jones: They burned kerosene almost entirely. My great-aunt had one that went a way back that was a real antique. It didn't even use a chimney, but mostly they used the chimney-type kerosene lamps.

Silveri: Well, that's another thing. That was one of the few things they had then, to buy, was kerosene for the lamps?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. Yes. They could burn tallow with a wick. I've seen Aunt Nan, my great-aunt, do that. She had a lot of these ways that went a way back, I think, to during the Civil War. If she ran low on kerosene, or sometimes you couldn't get it during the war, she would put a wick in a saucer with some tallow and burn it like that. Of course, they made tallow candles, I guess. I never saw any made, but the farmhouse that we moved to after we moved back there in 1925, had candle molds out in one of the outbuildings.

Silveri: You mentioned your great-aunt. Were you old enough to remember stories that she told?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. I spent a good deal of time with her during that six-months period in 1918 or 1919, which ever it was. That's when she told me stories about what happened during the time of the Civil War. The house that they lived in is still standing. She said that it started as a log cabin, and then they later expanded it and put the siding on the outside, so it's a frame house. I've never had any proof that that log cabin is still inside there, but as far as I know it is.

She said that during the time of the Civil War, they had to hid their stock. All horses and cattle and everything had to be hidden out up in the woods. The soldiers weren't the problem. It was the bushwhackers. The deserters from the Confederate and Union armies, but the Confederates principally, and the ones who were hiding out trying to keep from being drafted into the army. They would come by in droves. She said it was very seldom they could get a cake of cornbread baked. They would come by and take it hot right out from the fire and eat it, and take anything you happened to have in the way of food!

Young ladies wore hoopskirts in those days, and she did, too. You couldn't get wire to make the hoops, so they used greenbriars and took the thorns off of them. You couldn't get pins or metal for pins or buttons or anything, so they got the long greenbriars and fastened their clothes with them.

Silveri: Did she recall any of the troops coming through at all? The Northern or Southern troops?

Mrs. Jones: From the story I heard that she was emotionally involved with a young Union officer, they must have come through, but she never said anything about that. They had a hard time making ends meet. Our family had owned some slaves, not a <sup>lot,</sup> but some slaves. Most of them stayed on. You had a lot of responsibility in trying to keep the colored people fed. It was hard when there was no food for anybody.

Silveri: What was the attitude? Well, as you said the family had some slaves. There were very few slaves in the mountains.

Mrs. Jones: Well, the story that goes down through our family is that there were three Johnson brothers. One of them took his share of the family fortune, whatever it may have been, in gold. Another one took his in Confederate money. Our immediate ancestor took his in slaves! I have a deed to a slave, a photostatic copy. It was found in my great-aunt's house after she died.

Silveri: I would like to see that later on.

Mrs. Jones: All right. Remind me.

Silveri: How long did that great-aunt live?

Mrs. Jones: We don't know for sure, but we think that probably she was up in her nineties when she died.

Silveri: Oh, is this the one you told me before that her father said she couldn't marry that Union man?

Mrs. Jones: That's right. That's right. So she was always an old maid. She always lived on the place there.

Silveri: I was going to ask if she was an unreconstructed Confederate, but obviously not.

Mrs. Jones: We didn't hear much about it in our family one way or the other. Her brothers and her father fought for the Confederates, and I guess that was the reason for his feelings about the Union man.

Silveri: You know often times, even right today, the Civil War has quite an effect upon the way people vote here in the mountains. What about politics in your family?

Mrs. Jones: My grandfather was a strong Democrat. Other than that, I never heard politics discussed much in our family. Of course, Dad being in the army, he had very little if anything to do with it. My uncle was also a Democrat. He was Clerk of the Court for a few years in Ashe County. But politics was not discussed in our family. Now my husband's family, they were strong!

Silveri: I'll just ask you one question about politics here. You visited often during the Depression years back home. Did they mention anything about Roosevelt in any way, F. D. R. ?

Mrs. Jones: When we visited-- they were all for him.

[End of Side I, Tape I]

[Side II, Tape I]

Mrs. Jones: (continued) ... You see the things he was trying to do, particularly the programs that Eleanor Roosevelt instituted, were helpful to the farmers. It was the first time people up in there had ever had any help. Other than that, they were just completely on their own, so they were very pleased. They bought the chemicals--I've forgotten what they were--to put on your land and help improve that. They were very much in favor of all of these things that Roosevelt put in.

Silveri: I wanted to ask you also again about the household and the kind of food that was eaten. ...

Mrs. Jones: Yes. Particularly during the time of the First World War when I was there as a child, you couldn't get wheat flour. You couldn't get sugar. Those things were rationed, or at least not available. Coffee was hard to come by, so my grandmother roasted rye to make coffee. I was allowed to drink that, and I still like Postum to this day. It tastes very much like the rye that she roasted and made into coffee. She had rye ground into flour, and she made biscuits with the rye flour. Especially her dried apple pies with the rye pastry were really good! They just taste different. Once in a while I buy some rye flour now just to try to duplicate it.

Silveri: But not like the good ole days, right?

Mrs. Jones: ... Let me see what else.

Silveri: Do you remember very big breakfasts and lunches and small suppers?

Mrs. Jones: They didn't run so much in our family. That again was in some of the other families around there. Now, breakfasts were hearty enough. Usually, as I recall, Granny would have something like biscuits, great-big, four-inch diameter biscuits; some kind of meat or eggs, or maybe both. Of course, there were always jellies and jams, an assortment of them. Maybe some kind of fruit, usually cooked apples or something of the sort, and drink. That was a pretty standard breakfast for my grandparents.

My great-aunt, since she lived alone, she developed some more peculiar ways. Occasionally, there were buckwheat cakes. They were one of my favorites, and things of that sort.

Then dinner was a full meal at noon. It was not a lunch. It was a full meal at noon. In the summertime, they would try to have a cold supper, what was left from dinner. That would be leftover cornbread, meat beans, and whatever had been on the table at dinner. By summertime it was generally some kind of fried meat. In the wintertime they cooked the fresh pork more.

Silveri: They had a milk cow?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. Granddad never kept but two cows, but he did try to have one fresh at all times, so he always had milk. A lot of the people didn't. Now, that's one of the things I'd like to tell you about: to put up butter for the winter when the cows were fresh in the summer, and you were getting lots of milk. I've never seen this mentioned anywhere, but I've seen it done, and it gave good results.

Mrs. Jones: (continued) Granny would churn her butter and be very careful that it was firm and yellow, and not put any / <sup>hot</sup> water with it much. Then she would wash it, and wash it, and wash it until every trace of the milk was gone from it. She would salt it <sup>perhaps</sup> a little heavier than she'd salt it ordinarily. Then she'd pack that down in a crock and put a piece of cheesecloth across that the top of it, and about an inch of salt on top of that and be sure <sup>that</sup> the salt was sealed against the edges of the crock. Then she would put that down in her spring run, which was a real mountain spring, and it was very cold. But that butter would keep all winter long, and it was good butter.

The winter we moved back, we hadn't put up any food for the winter, of course. We lived like city people did, and do, and Granny had put up extra butter so she could supply us. Well, now we were used to eating good quality creamery butter. We used the butter that she put up summer before. It had kept that long, and it was good butter. We wouldn't have eaten it if it hadn't been. They also packed eggs down in salt and kept them that way.

Silveri: Oh. Fresh eggs?

Mrs. Jones: Fresh eggs would keep through the winter that way. You kept them in the spring run also, packed down in salt.

Silveri: While you are speaking about the spring run, is that a springhouse over a spring or a run?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. The spring came up out of the ground, and a sort of open shed was built over that. All of your water came from that. Then the overflow from the spring went down through a run. It had boards that stood

Mrs. Jones: (Cont'd.) about four inches high on each side. Granddad's wasn't a real bold spring, so that was deep enough. The water generally stood about two inches deep in it, and that was the only refrigeration you had. You just put your milk, butter, and buttermilk in there all summer long.

Silveri: Right in the water?

Mrs. Jones: In the crock. Then you set it down in the water. They had wooden covers to go over the top, and sometimes you would use a cloth with a wooden cover. Sometimes you didn't need the cloth.

Silveri: That was open? It wasn't in the little house at all?

Mrs. Jones: It was in a house then, too. Yes. It was protected because otherwise dogs and cats and wild animals would get in there.

Silveri: That's where you put your fresh milk to be cooled and all?

Mrs. Jones: That's right.

Silveri: That's very interesting. you mentioned the meat. Did they raise any cattle for beef?

Mrs. Jones: Granddad didn't. If one was killed in the neighborhood, it was sold out immediately, right away. They never aged their beef; it was sold right away. When Dad hung a beef for it to age, when we killed one, they thought he was crazy; they thought it was going to spoil. They had never seen aged meat.

Silveri: How many hogs would he butcher?

Mrs. Jones: Granddad usually killed two.

Silveri: That would last him?

Mrs. Jones: That would last; that would be enough for them. That would



Mrs. Jones: (continued) make the lard that lasted them throughout the year and provided them with meat. In fact they sold (bartered) a good deal of meat. Granny would use it to pay her colored woman who came to wash and helped clean. Mountain people would come down and buy some of the fat meat along, so they really had more than they needed. We tried to kill one a month, so that we'd have the fresh meat to last a little longer.

Silveri: What about drying food?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. Granny and Aunt Nan told me they used to dry a lot of things that they didn't in later years, but they dried apples, beans (the leatherbritches beans that are spoken of so frequently). They dried pumpkin; they dried corn. I was told about them drying cherries and blackberries. I didn't do any of that myself or see it done. They used to dry peaches to make the peach leather that's still spoken of and still sold through the South, for that matter.

I think I said pumpkins. Just most anything that would dry. Then they would pickle things. They called it pickles. They made sour kraut and what was called pickle beans, but it made the same as sour kraut. It was fermented the same way. You cooked the beans a little bit, and then put them down with salt. Sometimes corn was put in there. I've heard of pickled turnips, but I never saw them.

Silveri: In drying those leatherbritches, as you say, all they did was string up the beans, and just hang them up and let them dry? Was that all?

Mrs. Jones: Well, that was one way. You could run a needle and thread through the whole beans and hang up strings of them to dry. Sometimes you broke them in about inch-long sections and spread them out on some sort of a cloth or something like a screen, and dried them that way. If the weather was very uncooperative and damp, you could put them in a very slow oven and help them along some. You had to use what was available. If the sun didn't shine, you did the best you could. The ones that were strung could be hung around the fireplace and dried in the heat from the fireplace.

Silveri: You mentioned drying pumpkins. I thought pumpkin would last through the winter.

Mrs. Jones: No. It begins to rot. It doesn't store too well, so they dried a lot of it. Of course, later on they canned a lot.

Silveri: To dry apples you just cut them up and put them out in the sun to dry?

Mrs. Jones: That's the way we did it. There is a method of doing it with sulfur that makes them beautifully white, but I don't know the method. We didn't use it. They dried pears, peaches (when they could get them). There used to be a good many peaches that grew up in the mountains, but I don't know what killed them out. They don't have many. They didn't grow large like in South Carolina, but they were good peaches.

Silveri: There, always wild berries, of course?

Mrs. Jones: Oh, yes. Raspberries, blackberries, dew berries, straw-

Mrs. Jones: (continued) berries, wild grapes. My mother was especially fond of fox grapes. I don't remember. There were so many of them. You could live off the land!

Silveri: Yes. You really could. There was one other drink that I've heard mountain people made a lot, and I wondered if you ever came across it up in Ashe County. It was called moonshine!

Mrs. Jones: Oh, yes! My first job as a secretary was when Herbert Hoover was President. I was secretary to the only Republican lawyer in Ashe County. The United States Commissioner, naturally, was a Republican being Federally appointed. If a man came up before him, and most of the cases were for the moonshining cases, he got ten dollars if he bound them over to Federal Court. He didn't get anything if he turned them loose, so you know which way it went. That's how I learned to do court reporting. My boss would put me in at the Commissioner's hearing, because the government had to put on its evidence, and he would say, "Get as much out of it as you can. Don't worry if you don't get it all." Then he would have the government's case when he appeared in Federal Court to represent his client. It was good training.

Silveri: How about your family, did anybody in the family make moonshine?

Mrs. Jones: No. No. Later on after Roosevelt was in, Gwynn's father  
Unit,  
worked with the Alcoholic Tax / and he worked over in Wilkes County.

I think they kept him pretty busy over there!

Silveri: I want to go back. You mentioned something about colored people in the county. In this volume of statistics in this book I have of 1931, there

Silveri: (Cont'd.) was a mention of. . . it did mention how many blacks.

Mrs. Jones: There was enough for a fairly good-sized school.

Silveri: There were just over five hundred.

Mrs. Jones: Well, in the upper end up around Creston, which was where I knew most about them, there was enough so that they had a fairly good-sized school and hired a teacher. There were not many blacks down around Clifton. Two or three families were about all there were. Now, down in the lower end of the county, I can't answer about that.

Silveri: Do you suppose most of those traced ancestry back to slavery?

Mrs. Jones: Yes, I think they probably all did. One old man who was a neighbor of ours had been a slave. In fact, after we moved back, there was a colored woman who lived with us. There was somebody going up the road one day, and she told my little sister, "There goes some of your colored kinfolks."

They considered themselves kin to the white families from which they came, and the white families were obligated to them. The last woman to whom we owed a home for her lifetime only died about four years ago. If she had come to my house, I would have kept her for the rest of her life.

Silveri: That's interesting. Even though the abolition of slavery came up, these people decided to stay with the family after the . . .

Mrs. Jones: They just stayed on. They were free, and life was hard for them. Nobody was paid very much and, of course, the most menial type labor was all they could do, but they sort of took it for granted. We took it for granted. It's hard for me to believe now that these colored people--I'm at a loss for a word--were always so antagonistic toward the whites.

Silveri: You mean today?

Mrs. Jones: I mean that they always were, back to days of slavery. There were places where they were mistreated, I'm sure. I may have done some of it myself, unintentionally, but still your white folks were obligated to your colored folks. If they borrowed money they never dreamed of paying it back; it was never even considered. If you paid a bill for one, that was just a gift. In fact, you were more or less not allowed to give something away to somebody else, because it was their due. There were obligations back and forth.

Silveri: But the society in Ashe County in the periods that you knew it best, 1915 to 1936, was most definitely a segregated society?

Mrs. Jones: Oh, yes; everything through the South was then, although, now at my grandmother's, these mountain people would come down, and because they were white she'd have to seat them at the first table. Well, frequently I couldn't stand to eat with them and I would wait and eat with the colored woman when she ate at the second table. I knew her better. She was much cleaner. I liked her better, and she was more intelligent. So you had your segregated society. It's hard to explain unless you lived with it.

We had this woman who stayed with us. She was the daughter of the woman who worked for my grandmother. She took a job one time. Well, she was working for my great-aunt, and her little girl bothered the old lady, so we kept the little girl down there. She had her own room, but it was right next door to my room. I bathed her; I made her clothes; I packed her lunch

Mrs. Jones: (continued) and sent her off to school. I was the oldest girl at home, and it sort of was my job. I took care of her as much as I did my little sisters.

Silveri: Generally, they lived in this particular part of the county. They had their own schools and churches.

Mrs. Jones: They lived fairly close to the white people that they belonged to. That's true all through the South. The servants lived close to the people they worked for, so you really didn't have colored settlements, except as a family would grow up and settle around itself. There would be a family in an area, and then another family in another area.

Silveri: I wanted to ask you next about churches. What church did the family belong to?

Mrs. Jones: Our family was principally Methodist, all Methodist, I guess, as far as I can remember. The Methodists and Baptists were about evenly divided in Ashe County at the time we lived there. There were a few Episcopalians, and I think a Presbyterian church, but I couldn't tell you the location of the Presbyterians. I do know where the Episcopalian church was.

Silveri: How much of a role did the church play in the life of the family?

From the

Mrs. Jones: / time I first knew Ashe County, it was a very large role.

It was the social center. Practically all gatherings were held there. Sometimes schools were held in the churches. They served a double purpose, weekdays and Sundays. Any gathering of any size was held in a church.

Mrs. Jones: (continued) The first high school was church-operated. When I moved back, I had to go to a Methodist high school because there were no public high schools in the county. The church played a large part. It was where you went on the Sundays / <sup>when</sup> there was preaching. Maybe if you had a very active church there would be Sunday School. Then usually a Wednesday prayer meeting of some sort.

Silveri: I think you said before the families wouldn't go every Sunday because there wasn't a minister there.

Mrs. Jones: That's right. The ministers were all circuit riders. Our minister was at Warrensville, and he had, I think, four or five churches. Now, up at Creston there was a retired minister who <sup>was a</sup> supply, and I think he only had two churches. He was able to hold services oftener. Once a month, or sometimes even on fifth Sundays, was the only time that they had services.

Silveri: Did you attend church often when you were down there with the family?

Mrs. Jones: Well, yes. We went pretty regularly.

Silveri: What kind of services were there?

Mrs. Jones: Very informal. There was no set--I'm at a loss for a term right here.

Silveri: No set liturgy?

Mrs. Jones: No. No liturgy or anything of that sort. In fact, I think it would have been objected to if anything had been put down in a formal way. The Lord's Prayer was about the only thing that was said. I never heard the Apostles' Creed recited in our church until maybe later years. Anything

Mrs. Jones: (continued) that smacked of Catholicism or anything related to it was frowned upon. They still don't like for the choir to wear robes!

Silveri: The main part of the service was the preaching?

Mrs. Jones: The preaching.

Silveri: That went on for quite a long time.

Mrs. Jones: Yes. That varied according to the preacher. Some of them preached short sermons, and some longer ones. Then there a big deal, a quarterly meeting, when the--they were called the elders of the church then. Now, they are the superintendents, I think. They have been called different things through the years. They would be there, and the business of the church would be taken up.

Silveri: The church was owned by the community?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. It was usually a privately owned building that had just been given to the church.

Silveri: What kind of music was played during the service?

Mrs. Jones: As a rule, none, until later years, when sometimes they would have a piano or an organ in there. But they had people who could sing and would lead the singing, and sometimes the singing was done according to the shaped notes. I never understood that very much, didn't know much about it. Gwynn knows more about that. His grandfather was a noted singing teacher in Ashe County. There wasn't much music.

Silveri: Did they line up the hymns, too? Did they ever do that?

Mrs. Jones: No. They didn't do that. They mostly had enough hymnals or



Mrs. Jones: (Cont'd.) else sang the well-known hymns that everybody knew.

Silveri: Before, I asked you about the kind of music played in the house, and you said very little?

Mrs. Jones: There was very little. My mother played a pump organ, and she did play a few songs of the time, not very many, mostly hymns. She also picked a banjo a little. In most of the places that I went, anything other than hymns was considered to be, if not sinful, at least very undesirable.

Silveri: No one would ever think of bringing a fiddle or a banjo to the services?

Mrs. Jones: No. No. The people who played the fiddles and the banjos were more or less outside the realm of the church, and, of course, a dance was very, very sinful.

Silveri: If you played the fiddle, you stood the chance of being thrown out of the church? Is that what you're saying?

Mrs. Jones: Well, I think you would be very suspect at any rate. You might not be unchurched for that reason, but you would certainly be well watched by the neighborhood.

Silveri: They would probably want to ask you some questions. Dances now, of course, were out of it?

Mrs. Jones: Absolutely out! The closest thing to that was what they called a cake walk, and even that wasn't done to music until later years when a piano would be played. That was just a walk.

Silveri: You mentioned about being a secretary. You came back--you must have certainly come back to Ashe County. You said you went to school there?

Mrs. Jones: My last year of high school was in Ashe County. Then I took care of one of my great-aunts one summer when she was in very bad shape with what they call Bright's Disease. There was no cure for it then and no help except just diet. She would not stay on the diet, so my job was to help look after her and keep her on her diet as much as I could. I didn't do it for pay, but I wanted to be a schoolteacher. Schoolteachers were so involved in politics that my father didn't want me to get into that, so he wouldn't let me to go to (it's now Appalachian State). It was just a normal school then, so Aunt Alie said if I'd go away and take a secretarial course, she would pay my tuition for it. So, I did.

Silveri: That year, your last year of high school, was in 1917-18? No.

Mrs. Jones: 1926, I graduated.

Silveri: 1926, the last year--what was the name of that high school?

Mrs. Jones: It was Jefferson High School, but it was a Methodist church school.

Silveri: A private Methodist school?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. Yes.

Silveri: O. K. 1926. Then you went off to secretarial school?

Mrs. Jones: I went in 1929. See, I had to stay home a couple of years. My mother was an invalid. I had to stay home and take care of things on the farm. In 1928 I started a secretarial course with Draughan's of Winston Salem. I took part of it by correspondence, and then finished it up in 1929.

Silveri: Finished it in 1929, and you were still in Ashe County in 1929?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. I came back home and got a job in early 1930 with the attorney in Jefferson.

Silveri: Had the name Berea College been pretty well known in that area?

Mrs. Jones: It wasn't known at all, to my knowledge. It's well known now, and I have three nephews who went there, but it wasn't known than that I ever heard of.

Silveri: What schools were known? You mentioned the Appalachian. . .

Mrs. Jones: I've forgotten what it was called, but you just went to Boone. That's all. It had recently changed its teacher training. This first cousin I spoke of when there and got her training in a summer school course; just a six-weeks' course. That's all the teacher training she had. Then they increased that. I believe at the time I was talking about going, which was along in the 1920's, I'd say, about 1926, it had gone to a year course, or maybe as much as two years, for your teacher training. It was just a normal school over there at Boone, and I don't really know the name of it.

Silveri: In 1930 you got your first job as secretary?

Mrs. Jones: Yes.

Silveri: With. . . Did you say he was the only Republican?

Mrs. Jones: The only Republican attorney in the county.

Silveri: How long did you work for him?

Mrs. Jones: Well, I worked for him until late 1931 or early 1932, and he died.

Silveri: Did you get an interesting insight into the legal side of life in Ashe County?

Mrs. Jones: Yes, and into politics.

Silveri: Politics, also.

Mrs. Jones: Watergate is nothing new! This is true! He was so sure that his files would be gone through that anything of a confidential nature he would not put in writing. After he died, his brother came into the office, and some of the cases were never able to be straightened out!

Silveri: And you think it was mainly because of his politics?

Mrs. Jones: Entirely because he was a Republican!

Silveri: Ashe is a strong Democratic county?

Mrs. Jones: By that time it was. Up until the time when my uncle was supposed to have been elected by one of the largest majorities when he was elected Clerk of the Court. I think his majority or his--maybe majority is not the word I want. But anyway, he was elected by a vote of about twelve, or something like that. It was just about fifty-fifty. Then it became Democratic, and the Democrats saw <sup>it</sup> that they stayed in power. In fact, when I went to register to vote, I had been working for a couple of years, and I had been a secretary. They made me read and write because they were sure I was going to be a Republican! You didn't register by party then!

Silveri: Did you ever sit in the courtroom when he was trying the cases?

Mrs. Jones: Not very much, except in the Commissioner's hearings, as I said.

Silveri: But in those approximately two years, do you recall any very interesting cases that your boss handled?

Mrs. Jones: No. Really the most interesting ones to me, because I did more work with them, were the land titles. The surveying had been very inaccurate, if at all, and that was when they were doing land titles for the government agency that was in effect then. Not the Federal Home Administration, not the FHA; it goes back before that, and I can't even remember now. But you had to do a complete title search all the way back to the original land grants.

We got into records for the State of Franklin, and he took me with him sometimes to some of the other counties. We would go back into these old handwritten records; they were hard to decipher and beautifully written. That really was the most interesting for me; the other was just a complaint or an answer, and it then came up for hearing in court, and the subpoena, or whatever, issued in that. Then he took a large part in politics, too.

Silveri: Always losing?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. I trust this won't be heard up in Ashe County, but I can tell you. I was a notary public, and the only one available for the Republicans. There was a lot of work done in those days with absentee ballots. We were very, very careful to observe every letter of the law when we got out absentee ballots, and I notarized them. The night before the election, the election committee met and changed the rules so that all of the Republican absentee ballots were thrown out.

Silveri: That's called dirty politics.

Mrs. Jones: That's why I say Watergate is nothing new!

Silveri: Was there one particular family that controlled politics in Ashe County?

Mrs. Jones: At various times I would say at the time that I knew it (when I was working down there), the lawyer they called Tam Bowie, Thomas Bowie, was the main political man there. Now, how much he controlled, I don't know. The sheriff always had a lot of control.

Silveri: In 1932, what did you do then in your off times?

Mrs. Jones: Well, in 1932, the Depression hadn't really made much impact on Ashe County, except the price of cattle had gone down. My husband thought he had a job, a seasonal job, with a nursery that he had worked for some years up in Pennsylvania. So, we went to Pennsylvania and found out that there was only a caretaker in the nursery. They weren't even trying to get orders. We came back. There were no jobs. There was no nothing. If he hadn't had friends, I don't really know how we would have gotten back. We arrived back in Ashe County after some car trouble with seventeen cents between us! Now that was all we had in the world! That wasn't seventeen cents in our pockets! That's seventeen cents! So we stayed on the farm for a couple of years.

Silveri: Was that the beginning of 1933?

Mrs. Jones: No. This would have been early 1932, I guess. We stayed there --now here I get confused as to dates because he was called to work back in Delaware the fall before Franklin Roosevelt was elected.

Silveri: The first election?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. The first time. Hoover was still in.

Silveri: That was 1932 then.

Mrs. Jones: Then it was late 1932. It seems that we were out on the farm for a long time. We lived on our farm and his father's farm. There was always food. There was always something to be done. The help was welcome. It didn't cost anybody anything for us to live there.

Silveri: What year were you married?

Mrs. Jones: We were married in 1931.

Silveri: Your husband was a native of Ashe County?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. He was born there.

Silveri: I'm going to get his story later on, too. You stayed there until 1932; then you moved on to Delaware. How long were you there?

Mrs. Jones: We were up there until we moved back at the beginning of 1936.

Silveri: Moved back where?

Mrs. Jones: To Ashe County.

Silveri: O. K. Why did you come back to Ashe County?

Mrs. Jones: During that time, the family had decided to move to Asheville. My sister's husband was a schoolteacher, and the schools were hard to get, and the pay was very low. They were talking about going to Ohio to get a job, and we were already in Delaware. Dad didn't want the family all split

Mrs. Jones: (continued) up, living in different places. So, we sort of had a family conference, tried to pick a place that was close enough to have the good climate and the good water, where Carl and Gwynn could visit their families, where we could all find jobs, and we sort of thought Asheville was large enough, especially since American Enka had started in here just a few years before, things were beginning to build again after the break, the bankruptcy here.

Silveri: So, in 1936 you moved to Asheville?

Mrs. Jones: Yes.

Silveri: O. K. I think earlier on the tape you said you moved to Ashe County or Ashe. In 1936, you did not move back to Ashe County?

Mrs. Jones: We did. We came from Delaware to Ashe County, stayed there for about three months, then moved with the family down here in March.

Silveri: There were no close relatives left back in Ashe County?

Mrs. Jones: One great-aunt was the only one left living up there for me. Of course, Gwynn's family lived up there.

Silveri: They must have felt kind of sad leaving the home county, though. There must have been some remorse.

Mrs. Jones: I don't recall it, as I say. It's customary through the mountains for young men to go away and work, and then generally come back home. That had happened. Gwynn's father did that. It seems to be sort of a trend through the mountains to go away and make their money some-



Mrs. Jones: (continued) where on what they call public works, and then come back home and pick up life on a farm, buy a farm, and live there the rest of their lives.

Silveri: I would like to ask you some more general questions about the people in Ashe. I have often heard of people living in mountain cabins that papered their walls with newspapers.

Mrs. Jones: This colored woman who worked for my grandmother did that. It was fascinating to go to her house, and of course, Granny saved all of her newspapers for her because she used them for that.

Silveri: Did she read / <sup>off</sup> them? Did she read the papers?

Mrs. Jones: No. She couldn't read. In fact, a lot of the white people couldn't read. There was a lot of signing with an "X." Especially after I became a notary public, I noticed that.

Silveri: That would mean then that if you went into a mountain cabin and saw the walls covered with newspapers, it would not necessarily mean that the people could read the newspapers.

Mrs. Jones: No. No. Usually they had gotten them from neighbors and papered the cabin with them.

Silveri: I talked with one woman who was a Red Cross nurse from Kentucky around 1917. She said she saw a mountain cabin covered with the Congressional Record.

Mrs. Jones: I don't doubt it. The Health Bulletin; Congressional Record, Comfort, any newspaper they could get a hold of. Anything they

Mrs. Jones: (Cont'd.) could get hold of, they used. Of course, when you run across one now (I think out here at this Pioneer Village, the entrance to Smoky Mountain Park, they have got a wall that is still covered with them), they are fascinating.

Silveri: Covered with what?

Mrs. Jones: Newspapers; old papers.

Silveri: I would assume that somebody found it easy to get, say, government documents.

Mrs. Jones: I think you always could be put on the mailing list of the Congressional Record if you just asked for it.

Silveri: It used to be that. I think now they charge you.

Mrs. Jones: Well, I didn't know.

Silveri: How about mountain speech?

Mrs. Jones: That was very fascinating for a child who had learned the speech of another section of the country. There were words that were used and, as I told you, in the last few years I realized they were pronouncing all the letters. When they would say "gwyng," they were saying "going," only it was pronounced "gowying." My grandmother never pronounced "Louisa"; it was always "Lou Iza" like Snuffy Smith's wife. That was where the "bowyls" came from. If you watched it carefully, you would hear the b-o-i-l with the long "i," and you can think of a snake "cwyled," but there is much more of the Elizabethan speech that I've lost. I wish I could remember it, because one woman used to come visit

Mrs. Jones: (continued) Granny, and it was really hard to understand what she was saying. Her speech was so Elizabethan.

Silveri: It would have been interesting to record her!

Mrs. Jones: I would love to have a tape of hers!

Silveri: You mentioned before that there was a doctor that attended your birth. Was a doctor readily available all these years in Ashe County?

Mrs. Jones: Yes. They worked themselves to death, but they really were readily available. The doctors made house calls. The doctor who lived closest to us traveled all the way over into Tennessee! He got no rest at all, except (and everybody made allowances for this) if he had no patients who were dangerously ill, he would get on a drunk. He would not dispense medicine when he was drinking, and he would not go on a drunk if any patients were in any danger or if anybody was expecting a baby right away, or anything of that sort. But it was the only relaxation that the doctor could get.

If you needed him, if you were seriously ill, he would come as much as three times a day to see you, by horseback, automobile, or whatever means of transportation he had.

Silveri: Where was the nearest hospital?

Mrs. Jones: The nearest hospital, at the time we're talking about in the early 1930's, was over about Bristol. When I had appendicitis, they kept me at home because Dr. Robinson told them the risk would be about equal.

Mrs. Jones: (continued) He said I had a choice of being deeply sedated with morphine and put in the backseat of a car (there was no ambulance in the county) and taken over the rough roads to Bristol. He said that the chances that my appendix would rupture were about fifty-fifty, whether I stayed at home or went to the hospital, so I stayed home. It did rupture.

Silveri: It did?

Mrs. Jones: I didn't find it out until thirty years later when I had a gall-bladder operation! But I was sick a long time, very sick, and that's when Dr. Robinson would show up three times a day at the house to see you.

Silveri: How many miles are we talking about to Bristol? Approximately?

Mrs. Jones: Approximately. I would say at least forty miles, maybe more.

Silveri: Up and down miles!

Mrs. Jones: Up and down miles! In those days, at the time we are talking about, Gwynn's sister was my best friend, and she lived about a mile from me up a country creek road, Copeland Creek. We visited each other. She'd come to my house one Sunday, and I would go to her house the next Sunday. We walked. We'd go up Copeland. I had a pair of galoshes that buckled up to my knees. Not all the time, but frequently, when I would get to her house, my stockings would be so muddy above the tops of those galoshes that I would have to take them off and wash them! That's the type of roads we had. The mud was more than knee-deep.

Silveri: How about home remedies for sicknesses or any ills?

Mrs. Jones: I wish Dad could have told you about that. He said his step-mother always dosed them with boneset.

[End of Tape I]

[Side I, Tape II]

Mrs. Jones: They used to think that was the greatest stuff in the world! Aunt Alie, at the time I was taking care of her when she had Bright's Disease, tried some slippery elm tea. To make the swelling go down, you stripped the bark down on the trunk! Aunt Nan was a firm believer in such things as: if you took the potato bugs off the potatoes and dropped them in the river, they'd go down the river and leave your potatoes. But still a lot of it was good. Now, mint tea, cool water with mint in it, my grandmother would give me for an upset stomach in the summer, and it was delicious. It helped.

We came home one time, my sister and I, with diphtheria, and we didn't know it. My baby sister had come down with an illness. We lived in Washington then. It wasn't discovered until <sup>after</sup> we came back that my middle sister's sore throat was diphtheria. She had that when we came, and then I took it later. My grandmother never did anything for us except blow soot down our throats, but we got over it!

Silveri: Soot?

Mrs. Jones: Soot! Fireplace soot. She blew that down our throats, and we got over it! We were pretty sick, and of course, we scared her to death

Mrs. Jones: (Cont'd.) because you know in her day children died so from diphtheria. My baby sister got the antitoxin, or vaccine, or whatever it was, but that was not available back in Ashe County.

Silveri: Did the big flu epidemic of 1918 come through Ashe County? Do you recall?

Mrs. Jones: I don't recall it there. It closed our school for six weeks. Dad was stationed then at what is now Fort Knox. They had just started to build it, and it was Camp Knox then. It closed our school for six weeks there. It must have come back to Ashe County, but I don't know much about it, or its results.

Silveri: One thing I forgot to ask you earlier on: you told me yesterday about due bills.

Mrs. Jones: Oh, yes. Everything was bartered, and there was very little money ever used. If you went to the store, you took eggs for what you wanted to buy, or a chicken, or took something that you had to sell, such as butter, or dried apples, or chestnuts. Anything you wanted to sell, you would take to the store.

Then you bought cloth, rice, coffee, sugar, anything of that sort, and if you didn't need anything else and you had a little change coming, the storekeeper would give you what was called a due bill. Generally, it was made from a little piece of paper torn off the margin of a newspaper or something. Paper wasn't wasted; it was very precious. It would run about an inch by two or three inches, and it would say (the ones I always saw were my grandfather's) and it would say: Due G. Brewer, the sum of seventeen cents," and it was signed by the storekeeper. Then that money could be taken back to the

Mrs. Jones: (Cont'd.) store and used as money (that due bill), or Granny would use some of them to pay her colored woman when she would come and work for her. They were just used as money. Sort of a home-made scrip, you might say.

Silveri: It was never made the other way, though? If you owed the store something, you wouldn't make out a due bill to him?

Mrs. Jones: Well, he would carry you on the books until you'd come in. He would just put that in the books there, but you never made out a due bill to him. I suppose if you got enough in debt, he might ask you to sign a note or something, but most storekeepers didn't let you get that deep in credit.

Silveri: It was called a due bill, right?

Mrs. Jones: It was a due bill. D-u-e, due bill.

Silveri: D-u-e, when somebody said due bill, everyone knew what they were talking about.

Mrs. Jones: Yes, that's what it was.

Silveri: How far away was the store?

Mrs. Jones: The post office, in one direction, was in a general store, and it was between a quarter and a half a mile. The general store, in the other direction, was closer to a mile. These two stores were the ones closest to my grandfather's.

Silveri: Was it pretty well stocked, the general store?

Mrs. Jones: Yes, yes.

Silveri: You could get or they would order, pretty nearly anything you wanted.

Mrs. Jones: Well, people's wants were simple.

Silveri: Anything you might need.

Mrs. Jones: Anything you might need they would usually have. Down in Jefferson, after I went to work, there was a man who had kept a general store years before, and he'd never done anything to clear it out. You wouldn't believe--that man could produce anything on earth that you wanted, if he looked long enough! It was like going through a museum to go down there and find things. He had bustles and corsets left over. There were these mother-of-pearl buckles that the women used when the belts came down in a point at the front.

Silveri: You said that the post office was the other way. The post office was in a separate building?

Mrs. Jones: No. The post office was part of a store.

Silveri: O. K. Another store.

Mrs. Jones: Yes. It was always a store.

Silveri: It was usually the gathering place for people.

Mrs. Jones: Yes. Yes. The front porch was known as "Loafer's Glory!" All the stores had to have a front porch.

Silveri: Did the general store have a nice pot belly stove that the people sat around in the winter?



Mrs. Jones: They had a pot belly stove. I don't know much about the winters; I wasn't there much in the winter time.

Silveri: The main way of getting around, though, would be on horseback or by carriage? Is that correct?

Mrs. Jones: Or by foot. My grandfather used to go visit his brother in Wilkes County, and he could walk it faster, because he could take short cuts, than he could go on a horse. So he nearly always walked.

Silveri: What kind of animals did they use for plowing?

Mrs. Jones: There were still a good many yokes of oxen up there at the time we were there. In fact, we sold a pair of calves because-- well, we'd never been able to have pets, so we petted all the animals. And we had to take them from the pasture, where the cows were, back and forth to the barn. So we just taught them to drive--we had two about the same age; they looked very much alike. We'd tie one end of the rope around each one's neck, and they got so they had a good time walking with it, and they were so well trained that we got an extra price for them; somebody bought them for a yoke of steers.

Silveri: How about mules?

Mrs. Jones: A few mules; not too many. There were still some around, though.

Silveri: Do you remember when the tractors came in?

Mrs. Jones: Well, they hadn't come in at the time we left, much. Of course the mules I remember from the Army; that's where you had the mules.

Silveri: I think we've really covered a lot of ground here.

Mrs. Jones: I didn't mean to talk so much.

Silveri: Can you think of anything else that comes to mind? You can take a look at your notes there.

[HERE THE TAPE IS FLAWED; THE WORDS ARE UNINTELLIGIBLE]

Silveri: . . . other ways of handling food?

Mrs. Jones: Well, yes. Of course the vinegar was originally made from cider, but if there was no cider press available, and my grandfather didn't have one, they just cut apples in chunks and added what was called "mother" -- the bacteria from the former jar of vinegar; it was a slimy, messy kind of stuff. But it forms the bacteria and then makes the vinegar, just from the apples and water, without the juice having to be pressed out. And they used homemade lye; it was only later that they started using the lye bought from the store. You had to burn a certain type of wood to make the proper ashes -- I think it was hardwood -- but of course Granddad knew, and when he was going to run off some lye he was very careful to save the ashes from that particular wood, only burn that in the fireplace for a while. And that was put in a vessel made of wood that came down to a point and had a small opening at the lower end, and water was poured over the ashes and that was left to drip. The lye that came might not be strong enough; the best I remember, Granny used to drop an egg in it, and if the egg floated it was strong enough. If it wasn't strong enough, they'd run it back through the ashes. Then that was used to make soap, and to make hominy.

To make the hominy, you took the dried corn and boiled it in the lye water, in a solution of lye water, until the hulls of the corn began

Mrs. Jones: (Cont'd.) to loosen. When you could rub them between your fingers and loosen the hulls, then you took it off, carefully drained off all the lye, and washed and washed and washed and washed, so that no trace of the lye was ever left. And as the washing went on, you rubbed it in your hands to get the corn hulls off and also remove the heart of the corn and make it pretty white hominy.

Silveri: Instead of grinding it?

Mrs. Jones: This was not grits; there was very little grits used up through the mountain section, but the lye hominy was a whole hominy. You can still buy it; it's called big hominy.

Silveri: That seemed to be a lot of work when they could use the corn as it was, boil the corn.

Mrs. Jones: Well, it's good, and when you are eating it, it's worth the work. Of course, they took all the heart out of the corn, the same way they bleached their flour and took all of the whole grain part out of that. That was part of our civilizing process, I guess. Then, after the corn was washed and all the hulls were off of it, you still had to boil it to get your hominy. Then it is cooked in different ways. A cousin of mine said they always fried theirs in bacon grease. We always cooked ours with cream and made sort of a cream sauce. A friend of mine said they always cooked theirs just with butter. But it is good, and you can buy it in cans now; it's still canned up there around Boone, I believe.

Then also, the lye was used with waste grease or left over fat, to make soap. And there's an interesting thing about the home made lye as it was used in the soap: mice and rats will eat the soap if it's made with home made lye; they will not eat it if it's made with lye

Mrs. Jones: (Cont'd.) bought from the store in a can; it's poisonous then. And Dad said that when he was a boy the homemade soap was used to spread on sore places or on boils, things of that sort, used more or less as an ointment. And he said it was very useful; it wouldn't burn the skin.

In 1925, at the time when we moved back there, there was no need for conservation of any sort, because there was no market for any farm products. The only thing at all for which there was a market was: there was a small cheese factory in the county, and you could sell milk for that. Now that has been expanded, and of course all this had changed since then. But there was no market for anything raised on the farm. Cattle were sold, but they were sold to feeders and sent out West for more feeding because they were just grass-fed. But as for apples, farm produce of any sort, chickens or poultry, there was no market at all for them except as you took a few to the store and sold them for your own use. So much went to waste; you'd see great big piles of apples under the trees that were never gathered, and people only cooked the very best of anything.

Silveri: I've heard of people feeding milk to the hogs.

Mrs. Jones: If you had a lot of milk you would feed the extra to the hogs; they also fed the whey from the cheese; my great aunt did. If you had a lot of milk, you might make cheese, and she would use the whey to feed the hogs. The cheese was home made; she had a press for it. The rennet was always saved if a beef was killed anywhere, because it was still later that they were able to buy rennet.

Silveri: The rennet was the inside of the stomach?

Mrs. Jones: Part of the inside of the stomach; I don't know just what part.

Silveri: I was going to ask you how they did that. So there was home made cheese on top of everything else?

Mrs. Jones: Yes; and they ate it fresh. They didn't age it. After we moved to Asheville, Dad used to talk about liking that home made cheese so much, and when the cheese shop first opened here I tried to get him some. Mr. Ference got it, all right, but it had to be aged thirty days; there's a law now that they have to age it, so it didn't taste right to Dad.

Silveri: It was nothing like farmer's cheese?

Mrs. Jones: It was sort of a cross between that and cheddar. Of course we always made cottage cheese, too; we called it clabber cheese. Yes, it was the cheddar cheese before it's aged. It didn't have any sharp taste at all to it; it was very, very mild.

Silveri: I want to ask you: Looking back on those times, do you regret the changes that have taken place?

Mrs. Jones: No. People lived hard. You remember that medicine was very primitive or non-existent; nobody called a doctor unless you got very sick. The people were uninformed; they did not want change; they did not accept change. This also I don't want told back there, but I nearly got thrown out of my father-in-law's house when my brother-in-law developed a bad case of appendicitis. The doctor was there and had done what he could. This was in the winter time, and my brother-in-law was to go to the hospital the next day. The hospital then was at Wilkesboro, about forty miles away. I suggested that they pack snow

Mrs. Jones: (Cont'd.) into a fruit jar and put on his side, and they really became angry at me. A hot water bottle would have been acceptable, something hot, but something cold. . . absolutely NO. You see, I was considered "queer," had queer ways like that. Nobody had ever mentioned putting an ice pack on a hot appendix or anything of that sort, and so it wasn't even considered; it was just thought of as one of my crazy ideas.

Silveri: Even though your father was born there, and your mother was born there, were you looked upon as one of them?

Mrs. Jones: Oh, no; no; we were always "queer," always odd, very much so. We didn't know their ways, and were never considered as being part of the community. Well, when Dad would kill a hog or any meat, he would let it cool over night so the animal heat was gone before he would salt it (he knew about these things) and to this day my brother-in-law thinks that's very odd, and because his father salted the meat while it was warm, he salts meat while it's warm. Frequently gets it too salty! But change was not welcome; the old ways were the only ways that were right. They were not to be envied in any way. There were pleasant times, nice times, but it was not the life of leisure that people think it was.

Silveri: Mountain people have been looked upon by outsiders as hillbillies; I think they stereotype mountain people as largely ignorant, no-account mountain people. What do you say about that?

Mrs. Jones: There was a class that were ignorant and no-account. They never had much of a chance; you've got to say that for them.

Mrs. Jones: (Cont'd.) Once in a while, one of them would sort of pull himself up by his bootstraps and make something of himself. He'd work hard enough and not give everything to his no-account relatives. But there was a class, and they were the poor white trash -- well, up there above my grandmother's, the people who lived further up the mountain, they'd raise a garden, can the beans, then open the cans of beans instead of going out to the garden and picking them because it was easier.

They'd kill a hog, eat every bit of it right away, never try to keep any of it. They just wouldn't go to enough trouble to have anything, because you could have things if you'd go to the trouble to. And the thrifty colored people and the people who tried to help themselves could make a very good living, take care of things by themselves. But you had to conserve, you had to be thrifty, and you had to go to extra trouble. It just wasn't worth it for them, so they lived on the verge of starvation; they inbred -- they had all sorts of deformities due to the inbreeding -- and while they never had much of a chance -- it wasn't that they never had a chance, it was just that they weren't willing to take advantage of a chance when it was given to them. And they had all sorts of devious ways to try to get things from other people. One man, for several years, worked in different sections of the country on the fact that his wife had just died. She always died under very bad circumstances which left him in dire need. He made a lot of money that way. And they were always ready to sell their votes at election time -- and they did very well at selling their votes --

Mrs. Jones: (Cont'd.) they'd get cows, and sometimes they'd pay as high as a hundred dollars for a vote, I've heard.

Silveri: When the elections were that close, every vote counted.

Mrs. Jones: Yes, when it was close, every vote counted, and they would go down and hang around the polling places until the end of the day, and regardless of the fact that the vote was by secret ballot, it was pretty well known how it was running by the end of the day, and then they'd just get higher and higher in the bidding for the votes.

Silveri: Do you remember any of the Sheriffs of the county?

Mrs. Jones: Not now. Well, Dad bought his farm from a former Sheriff, Latham. It was put up for auction the year before Dad retired, and it adjoined my grandfather's farm, so he bid in a good portion of it for his farm. There were some who, if I could remember their names, I wouldn't -- the one who sent his constituents candy boxes with five dollar gold pieces under each piece of candy -- as I say, it's not new.

Silveri: I've about run out of questions. Do you have anything more to say about those days in Ashe County? You look back with a certain kind of nostalgia, but you say the change was welcome.

Mrs. Jones: It was, except in some ways it didn't help people. When they started getting industry in there; well, in fact, when the WPA started to work, it really hurt some families. There was one in particular, a next-door neighbor of my in-laws. They never had anything; in the spring she had to go out and gather greens because they would be out of food, and they lived on the verge of starvation most of the year. But she was a handsome woman; she was a beautiful woman,



Mrs. Jones: (Cont'd.) Junoesque almost, I'd say. And they had beautiful children. He was a small man; he had gone to work in the mines when he was young to start to make some money. But then they started to getting the public works, as they were known; there was work on the roads and the WPA was working there and he started making money, so there was no need to go out and gather greens and raise a garden or do any of the troublesome things. And she developed a fatal case of pellagra. Goiter was very prevalent up there; the iodine content of the food was so low and there was very little seafood available, so until iodized salt came out goiter was one of the big problems, and there was nothing that they could do for it that they knew then.

Silveri: You mentioned that he went to work in the mines; what mines?

Mrs. Jones: From that area, people would go up to West Virginia and work in the coal mines for a while, and build up a little stake and, as I say, come back, buy a place and settle down. It was pretty hard on the men, but it made money faster than any way that they could; usually in West Virginia they'd work.

Silveri: You mentioned the WPA. I forgot to bring up the various work projects of the 1930's. You certainly remember the WPA?

Mrs. Jones: Oh, certainly, certainly.

Silveri: And they recruited the unemployed mountain people?

Mrs. Jones: The unemployed everywhere.

Silveri: You say they were unemployed. They had their farms. Where did they get the people?

Mrs. Jones: All through here people had their farms and were self-supporting, but all industry got their help from the farms. Enka did that. At the time I was working at Enka there were several men out there -- a good many men, I was told -- who had really never cashed a pay check; never spent a pay check. They were still living off their farms and putting into the bank the money they were making from their jobs at Enka. All through this area it's the small farmer who's been the mainstay of industry as it has moved down here.

Silveri: You say the WPA would utilize small farmers on the WPA projects?

Mrs. Jones: Yes, because they had no income, no source of cash income at all.

Silveri: Were there any other programs, the CCC camps?

Mrs. Jones: They were later; they were around after we moved to Asheville. In the mountains here some of them are still in operation, I think, as youth camps, or something.

Silveri: Those are about the only ones you can remember in Ashe County?

Mrs. Jones: Yes, the WPA days are the only things, and most of that I know about by hearsay, because we were living in Delaware then. But they were very welcome, and brought in some money. It was small, but, well, seventy five cents was a pretty fair day's wage if you hadn't been making anything.

Silveri: Talking about change once again. You know what the TVA did to the mountains, positive and negative, however you look upon that.

Mrs. Jones: Well, it didn't bring power through this area much, so I can't say much about it from right in here. I think it was more active through Tennessee, although I do believe up through Ashe County when the electricity came it was from the TVA. I don't know what company it was that handled it.

Silveri: You know a lot of mountain people were displaced when TVA came in.

Mrs. Jones: Yes, out at these lakes there are whole villages under them. You go out fishing and see a church spire under you once in a while.

Silveri: About change in the mountains; well, there's danger on both sides. There's danger of being too romantic about those days.

Mrs. Jones: Oh yes, that's easy to do.

Silveri: And there's danger on the other side of saying it was destitute, and that it's better that kind of life has completely disappeared. Somewhere in between, I think the values of those people, the self-sufficiency, the reliance, the independence, the honesty, the dignity. . . . Do you think all those terms fit the people you knew in Ashe County?

Mrs. Jones: No. They are mountain traders; they can take you as fast as any Armenian merchant can, just in the spirit of good, clean fun. The people who settled the mountains, from what I've been able to find out, were the independent ones who didn't want anybody around them. And some of them were the ones who were running from the law, as they put it. And a lot of them came in with practically nothing. You read about people crossing the mountains, a man and a woman, with

Mrs. Jones: (Cont'd.) an axe and a skillet and of course a hunting knife, maybe a gun; usually they had a gun, I guess; and nothing more. And just think how they had to start from nothing at all. A lot of that spirit lasted; people still made their own buckets and churns and piggins, as they were called, wove their own baskets, made their own brooms from splints or raised broom corn. This was all in effect when I was a child living up in -- visiting up in Ashe County. You were more or less self-sufficient; you just didn't buy anything unless it was absolutely necessary, and even such things as coffee and rice and sugar were luxuries, more or less; you could do without them.

Silveri: Well, coffee. . . I've often read that mountain people dearly loved coffee.

Mrs. Jones: They used a lot of it, and the beans were brought in green and you roasted your own and then ground it. That was always my job as a child, to grind the coffee.

Silveri: Not much tea was used?

Mrs. Jones: No. Very little tea, although they used a lot of sassafras and spicewood tea and they were good, very good. Mint teas, and then the herbal teas for medicine.

Silveri: How about wild animals in the region when you were there?

Mrs. Jones: There weren't many. They were mostly hunted and killed by then. The wild animals, if they were around, were killed and used for food.

Silveri: No bears in the region, then?

Mrs. Jones: No.

Silveri: Any deer?

Mrs. Jones: No deer. There were no deer in that area, but there might have been, not too long before. My father said his grandmother was offered a whole mountain at twenty-five cents an acre, and you know it couldn't have been very well hunted out.

Silveri: How about snakes up there?

Mrs. Jones: They said there were some; I never saw many snakes in my life, but they said they were around.

Silveri: I wonder how long we could go on here. Things keep coming to my mind . . .

Mrs. Jones: I didn't think it was that interesting; I start remembering . . .

Silveri: I should say if you think of anything else; if not, perhaps we should stop.

Mrs. Jones: Well, right off-hand, I don't think of anything; I didn't think I'd talk this much. One item you might be interested in: my grandfather suffered from asthma all his life; he called it "tissick," which was spelled phthisic. As a school teacher he didn't teach spelling; he taught orthography. But anyway, it was very important that you learn to spell words properly. And he made his own medicine for the asthma; he tried the cigarettes and things that they sold to relieve the asthma, but he made a mixture that included (I don't know what else was in it) but it included dried jimson weed and saltpeter. He'd put that in a saucer and set it afire. I think there was a little gunpowder in it; I'm not sure. There was something that would make it burn; it was

Mrs. Jones: (Cont'd.) made similar to gunpowder, but the jimson weed was the effective ingredient. And he would set a cone over the top of the smoke that came from it and inhale that smoke. There was an asthma powder that was on the market, was sold, but he said it wasn't as effective as his jimson weed. Now, within the last year here in Asheville, they had almost a scandal in the schools when some of the students started using the jimson weed, for the drug effect of it. Of course, I was always warned never to touch it, never break a leaf, never go anywhere near it.