

REMINISCENCES

Introduction

This document has focused on the memories of many residents from videotaped interviews (converted to disks) north and south of U.S. Route 460 in eastern Roanoke County and southern Botetourt County to the Bedford County line, and west on Alternate 220 toward Read Mountain. There are certainly other families of significance that do not occur on the list that follows this page. To those families, apologies are in order. Those residents who agreed when approached are the ones that appear.

Families with the surnames of Callahan (Callaghan), Davis, Dent, Donald, Gordon, Hall, Leonard, Martin, Smith, Swartzel, Tyler, Whitt, and Witt have been important contributing members of the southern Botetourt communities of Coyner Springs, Webster, Blue Ridge, and Laymantown.

The family members who have been interviewed will have their disks put on file in the Bonsack Baptist and Bonsack Methodist church libraries, in addition to the Fincastle Library. The entire interview can be viewed if desired. I have attempted to review all the disks and bullet the information conveyed.

Words cannot express how many residents have opened their doors. To them, I am most grateful. Their oral history has been an invaluable contribution, in addition to pictures that have augmented their words. My hope is that residents connected to this area will enjoy finding some of the vignettes that have been shared.

Enjoy!

Sincerely,

Deedie Dent Kagey, Ed.D.

INTERVIEWS – 460 EAST CORRIDOR
Bonsack to Blue Ridge

| NAME | INTERVIEW DATE | RESIDENTIAL COMMUNITY |
|---|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Amos, Henry Junior and Hearn, Sherry Meadows | June 24, 2013 | Bonsack |
| Ayers, Naomi Martin | October 9, 2012 | Laymantown |
| Bolt, Vivian Zimmerman and Danny | February 4, 2014 | Blue Ridge |
| Brown, Curtis and Judy | September 23, 2013 | Blue Ridge |
| Brown, Jim and June | March 5, 2012 | Laymantown |
| Cook, Albert Watson Jr. | October 2, 2012 | Bonsack |
| Cox, Freddie and Frye, Debbie Cox | November 4, 2012 | Bonsack |
| Crumpacker, Helen and James M. Jr. (Jim) | July 15, 2011 | Bonsack |
| Fluke, Margaret | February 25, 2012 | Blue Ridge |
| Foster, Sam | September 16, 2013 | Blue Ridge |
| Hagan, Alice Trout | October 29, 2013 | Roanoke City, Hollins Farm |
| Hale, William David | October 2, 2013 | Bonsack |
| Huffine, Joan Robinson | June 20, 2013 | Bonsack |
| Jayne, Alvin G. | October 23, 2012 | Blue Ridge |
| Jeter, Ned | December 3, 2012 | Bonsack/Coyners |
| Kessler, Carl | November 2, 2012 | WV and Laymantown |
| Lee, Annie Laura Jeter and Wagner, Anne Marie Lee | September 21, 2012 | Bonsack/Coyners |
| Lunsford, Ray W. | September 12, 2013 | Blue Ridge |
| McCabe, Jim | September 30, 2013 | Thaxton/Bonsack |
| Meador, Vernon | October 28, 2013 | Grubb Hollow, Blue Ridge |
| Metz, Reba Spickard | October 13, 2013 | Laymantown/Blue Ridge |
| Miller, Wanda and Barnes, Rebecca (Becky) | January 13, 2014 | Hollins |
| Moyer, Joann Blake | May 13, 2013 | Bonsack |
| Murray, Howard Forest and Pejie | January 27, 2012 | Laymantown |
| Murray, Joe | April 16, 2012 | N. Bonsack |
| Myers, Ken and Carole Porter | June 18, 2014 | Blue Ridge |
| Radcliff, Richard | July 25, 2013 | Bonsack and Blue Ridge |
| Robertson, Andrew Jennings | September 26, 2013 | Bonsack |
| Shaver, Betty Bonsack | March 23, 2012 | Bonsack |
| Smith, Jeanette Ayers | July 9, 2011 | Bonsack |
| St. Clair, Barry | April 23, 2012 | Laymantown |
| Stanley, Mollie Gish | November 15, 2012 | Bonsack |
| Trent, Elsie Booth and Richardson, Dorris Cox (Sis) | February 24, 2012 | Bonsack |
| Wall, Gay Harper | July 17, 2013 | Blue Ridge |
| Wheeling, Ray | February 3, 2014 | Bonsack/Blue Ridge |

Amos, Henry Junior and Hearn, Sherry Meadows Interview - June 24, 2013

- Sherry Meadows was born during WWII. In 1929, her parents moved to Bonsack and were tenant farmers for the Mason Cook farm. They lived in a house next to the old Methodist church (now Greater Hope Temple Ministries). There were four children born and several years later Sherry was born. After her dad died at age 61 years of age, she and her mom moved to Vinton in 1966. She stated, "The Bonsack community was a wonderful place-- one not found in many places."
- There were many families and lots of children. "We were poor and didn't know it." Her dad worked on Mason Cook's dairy farm until he was no longer able to work. They grew corn and wheat for the cows they were going to milk. The cows never liked me and neither did the dogs. Sherry was bitten three times.
- Bonsack Baptist Church, where they were members, was the center of church and spiritual life. Both the Methodist and Baptist churches were on the old road and she attended Sunday School and Bible school in both churches, stating there was little else to do. The Baptists met in the morning and the Methodists met in the evening for Bible school. It was a close-knit community in that everyone knew everyone and also what they were doing.
- There were hard times and problems too. In June 1957, her dad was combining wheat where the Walmart is today and got his leg caught in the combine, which almost severed his foot. He had to spend four to five months healing. He went back to work and turned the tractor over, lying on the ground for a couple of hours until her mother found him. He was hospitalized and died at 61 as a result of all his injuries.
- Sherry's mother cleaned the old Bonsack Baptist Church, which she stated had one room and a pot bellied stove. The children had to help her clean also. She remembered the addition being added, which enlarged the size of the old church. Later in 1972, the new church was built on old VA 604 (now Alt. 220). State Route 604 (which used to meet Bonsack Road) had a 90 degree curve and a large oak tree. Cars would often run into the creek trying to negotiate that curve. "Since my bedroom was on the top floor and windows usually open, I could observe an accident nearly every week. Cars were driving fast and drag racing." Cars would wind up in the Meadows' yard. Their house and one other were between Mason Cook's home and the old Methodist church. The family eventually moved to Mama Cook's house on the corner of Cook Creek Drive.
- Henry Junior Amos: his mother lost his birth certificate and he thought his name was Junior Henry Amos, until his birth certificate was eventually found, which reversed the first and second name; however, he answers to both. His family was originally from Franklin County, but his dad started working in Murray's orchards. Henry was 13 years

old when he started to work in the orchard, which occurred from 1942-1948. Someone told him about the N&W. He went to work for the railroad from 1948-1984. He was moonlighting by painting houses. A step ladder threw him about 30 ft. to the ground, which hurt his back pretty badly. He hasn't worked since the back injuries, but has managed to get around fairly well. Junior married Sherry's oldest sister in Dec. 1950.

- Sherry went to town on Saturday mornings by riding a Greyhound bus by waving it down to stop. Her mother would give her a quarter to spend and it took her three hours to figure out how to spend it. One time, when she was 13 years old, she went to the bus terminal, bought her ticket, and the agent kept calling other stops, but not Bonsack. I got stuck at the terminal and the agent called her mom, who came to pick her up.
- She remembers making "mud pies" with her mother's chicken feed, but never got a whipping.
- Everyone always worked, finding any kind of job that would provide a little extra money. Her mother and women in the community would go to the Laymans' farm and pick strawberries. When peaches and apples came in, they would pick those. Her mother also worked at Murray's orchard, where she would wrap the apples with a triangular dark blue tissue paper which were shipped overseas. The women received 10¢ a bushel for wrapping the apples.
- In the summer, the children would also pick peaches and apples. Sherry worked one summer picking peaches at Crumpacker Orchards and made enough money to buy her high school ring, which was \$20.00. Jean Crumpacker, daughter of Morris and Helen, was a good friend and had a horse. We would ride all over what is now the LaBellevue subdivision area.
- In 1962, the Crumpackers had two lakes and there was a major rain, causing both dams to break, flooding all of Bonsack. The old Methodist church and the house the Meadows used to live in before moving to Mama Cook's house flooded. The piano floated and many cars were stalled due to water. A tractor trailer with a chain hooked to the back pulled the cars out one by one.
- There were two stores: Mr. Tesh's store was across the street and Mr. Teel's was down the road, near Glade Creek Road. Dad got paid once a month and I went to Mr. Teel's store every day, mostly to get what mom needed, but often could spend 5¢ to buy a popsicle. The newspapers were dropped off in a stack on the back stoop of the store because there was no delivery. Residents were trusted to pick up their paper if they had a subscription. Mr. Teel would always write down in a ledger what was bought and the price. He also drove a school bus. Mr. Tesh's store was a gathering spot at night—always men laughing and chatting until midnight

- Church life was very important to Sherry. She went there ever since the doors were open. Bonsack Baptist was a major influence. She always went to Sunday School to get recognized for 100% attendance, only missing one time.
- There was little traffic on the road. Often, almost no cars were visible during the day. Young people could walk anywhere and play in anyone's yards. She often played where the Foutz's farm was located off Layman Road. They ran the sausage plant. She played there on the hill until called for dinner. Bobby Moyer and Richard Radcliff ran the store at that time, followed by a Mr. Hall. Everyone got what they needed for their meals.
- Bonsack Baptist Church always had a live nativity scene near Little Tree Nursery. The youth who participated did half hour shifts, get warm at the store, and then walk back to continue in cold weather. The church sponsored GAs and RAs. As counselors, the youth had mentors.
- Mason and Wilmer Cook were cousins and shared their workers with the Laymans and the Weeks farms. Boys would often play pranks on Wilmer. They took a manure spread and put it on top of the barn, taking it apart and leaving the pieces there. None of the youth liked Wilmer Cook, so he was "fair game" for pranks.
- Bobby Cook drove a Model T downhill very fast, which was a little scary. Les Foutz, who lived on the hill near the old Baptist church, watched everything. One time he said that Sherry threw rocks on the church steps (but was actually her brother). Les told Sherry's mom that Sherry did and she lost her driving privileges for about a week. Everyone would also swim in Glade Creek, even though it was definitely not the cleanest.
- Miranda and Paul Burger lived next door to Tesh's store; O. T. Rader's house was moved when the new road came through. O. T. Rader, Mr. Tick Horn, John and Sylvia Seibel, and Mr. Teel drove school buses. At that time, the family could choose whether they could go to Vinton or Colonial. Mr. Teel would stop if the children became unruly until they calmed down. Tick Horn was a stern driver and, if they misbehaved, he would put them right off the bus.
- She remembers several teachers she had at Roland E. Cook Elementary, later attending William Byrd. She later substituted at R. E. Cook when it was an alternative school. Lula Scott was the principal at Cook. Her mother went to the principal and asked that Sherry not have a certain teacher, who everyone had heard was mean. Miss Scott told her, "Too bad." Sherry got that teacher and said she was probably the best teacher she ever had. She claimed she was shy in the early grades, but more outgoing later. She noted that the Vinton History Museum had all the principals' pictures, and many student groups.

- Coyner Springs Nursing Home was a ministry of Sherry's church. She and Russell Foutz would visit the elderly in the home and take them magazines.
- Sherry's mother didn't drive, so if she wanted to go into Roanoke to shop, her brother-in-law (lived in Webster) and worked for Blue Ridge Buick, would often pick her and her mom up so they could go to town.
- Many residents worked for the following: Old Dominion Candy Company (her mom wrapped candies), Viscose plant, N&W, and Shenandoah Life Insurance Company. Sherry remembered when Mr. Layman would bring his truck down the road and both children and adults got in the truck and went back to the farm to peel tomatoes for 10¢ a bucket. When finished, he brought them back to the main road near both churches. Junior Amos noted he had a special tomato peeler that made the peeling go faster.
- Johnnie St. Clair lived next door to the old Bonsack Baptist Church and had the best hill to roll down. Before it got dark at night, many children rolled down that hill. Johnnie's mom had a crow and walked it around on a string, claiming she taught it how to say "words." I wasn't sure that was true, but I imagined it was.
- An elderly bedridden man, Mr. Greer, lived only two houses away from the old church. We visited him often. After I was baptized, he gave me a zippered white Bible, which was very special. He told her that he wanted her to read a chapter a night before bed. That didn't always happen, but she tried. Mr. Greer had a son, Jim, and daughter, Bess, who lived with him.
- She had to sell 10 bags of a particular kind of flour one time and her mother told her not to go to Wilmer Cook's house. It was known that he put kerosene on apples that dropped to deter the neighborhood children from eating them. No one cared for him and many pranks were played on him because of his demeanor.
- Sherry said the family had one cow with a foot-long tail. Mason Cook took Sherry with him and a burlap sack on which to lie. He told Sherry if the cows went toward the clover to chase them out. She tried and the cow would chase her, causing her to jump a fence. One time a cow was chasing her toward the creek and her brother twisted the cow's tail, which stopped the chase. This same cow had a calf in the barn—biggest one on record in Roanoke County. Mason couldn't get the cow up, who then sent for Sherry. When she entered the barn, the cow got up. Mason's wife, Lillian, didn't let Mason smoke or drink. If he did smoke and drink, which he enjoyed, he had to go to the barn to do it. Raymond, Keith and all the boys would smoke corn silks; Junior said he smoked rabbit tobacco, which came from a fuzzy leaf acquired from Franklin County. He said they got caught, but it didn't stop them.

- We played with dolls when we were young, but were inventive, engaging in a lot of creative play. There was a smokehouse, where hams were hung, and a chicken house. When her mother took curtains down and hung them on a fence, the children would play under the curtains.
- Hobos came by her house on the main road and her mom would always feed them. Junior would eat there on Sunday. The men were seated first, women second, and children third, which didn't always work well for the children. Potatoes were grown on the farm and when the horse went down the line, the children picked up the potatoes and kept them in the basement.
- German prisoners that remained after the war worked on the road, in addition to Mason Cook's and Elmer Layman's farms. Her mother would also feed them and they enjoyed her meals.
- Sherry learned to sing at the church. Rev. Adams told her to sing alto, but when she was part of a duet, she forgot how to sing her part. She quilted a quilt that was made for missions in the 1930s, which for only 10¢ could bear each family's name.
- The community has changed for the better economically, but no one is close to their neighbors, as they were in the past. There is not the same sense of community. In the past, residents would always take care of each other—bringing meals when someone was sick, taking care of the sick and young children. Sherry lives in Stewartsville today. After her husband's death, she married a high school classmate.

Ayers, Naomi Martin

Interview - October 9, 2012

- Naomi Martin Ayers lives in the subdivision known as Lake Forest, off Mountain Pass Road in Laymantown, Troutville District. She lives at the end of Lakeview Road, past the lake. This land had been her family's land for many years. Her grandfather was Tyree Weeks, who also had many acres and a large farm. She was born in 1926 and had family all around her. She went to school at the Laymantown School until 1939, and then Colonial High School, which opened when she was entering seventh grade. Her father also went to Laymantown School, which opened in 1908. It was located on a hillside called Possum Trot on Welches Run. Naomi remembers that there were three rooms (she called them little, medium, and big): Primer 1 and 2 were in the little room; grades 3 and 4 in the middle-sized room; and grades 5, 6, and 7 in the big room. There was a pot-bellied stove, which used coal, to keep the room warm. The boys had to bring in the coal and buckets of water pumped out from the building. There was an outhouse behind the school.
- Her father was Cline Martin and there were eight children. Cline Martin was the son of John and Mattie Weeks Martin. Mattie was the daughter of Tyree and Elizabeth Layman Weeks. This family was also large. Her grandparents had a dairy farm and cannery. In the fall, they canned tomatoes, while in the summer they engaged in truck farming on the Roanoke City market. She went with them when she was old enough. Her family originally traveled to the market by horse and wagon.
- Her dad built a little house in what is now the Lake Forest subdivision, which now includes eight generations from Tyree Weeks forward. Naomi understood there were 500 acres going up the mountain on the Martin side of Mountain Pass Road. Grandfather Tyree Weeks had a lot of land on the other side of Mountain Pass, but Naomi was not sure how much. Her sister restored the old Tyree Weeks house, finding furniture and artifacts in outbuildings, which she had refinished and used.
- Naomi shared an interesting story about how her other grandparents got the property. The story goes that her grandmother gave the property to a sister. The sister had one child and her husband died of tuberculosis. She had no more children. Apparently she gave the property back to her sister (Naomi's grandmother) because she had eight children. Due to the size of the family, her grandparents ended up with the big house. They may have acquired their acreage for as little as \$1.00 an acre. They are all buried at Laymantown Cemetery, where there are a couple of 1600s graves (very unusual). The cemetery is in perpetual care. Her aunt left \$10,000 to keep it up. Naomi said she took care of it for twenty-five years.
- After Naomi's marriage to Boyd Ayers, her first home was in Troutville near the fire house. Her sister-in-law had just purchased land in Lake Forest near the lake. After

seeing it, she and her husband fell in love with it and bought a lot, which was a treasure to her because it was Tyree Weeks' land. She felt as though she was home again.

- They sold their home in Troutville and two men built their new home in 1967. The men, Joe Spencer and Simon Long, worked for the railroad at night and built houses during the day. Someone told them about these men and, after a talk with them, they found that it would cost little more than what they got out of the sale of the Troutville house. Her husband said if they would give them a good job and deal, then he would see that they could build the first part of Rainbow Forest Baptist Church. Boyd was on the board there. In 1968, Long and Spencer completed the beginning of that church. Boyd and Naomi originally went to Troutville Baptist Church, then Rainbow Forest, and have returned to Troutville Baptist Church. Her husband, who is related to the Ayers in Bonsack, went to the old Bonsack Baptist Church while living there as a youngster.
- When going to school in those days there were no snow days. The school bus was driven by Mel Spickard, who lived across the road. The roads were just dirt paths until she was about 10 years old. A few times, the bus got stuck on the dirt paths and she had to walk from a certain point of drop off in rain or any bad weather. Mr. Spickard would put chains on the bus so he could get everyone to school. The curriculum was reading, writing, and arithmetic. Handwriting was emphasized and she remembered doing push/pulls and other exercises.
- Occupations were focused on farming, always growing enough to live off the land. Her grandparents had dairy cattle as long as her grandparents lived. Her dad and a brother-in-law got up at 4:00 a.m. to milk the cows and then her dad would go to work for the WPA. Living through the Depression was not as difficult as one might imagine. We had plenty to eat and some hand-me-down clothes. When she was twelve she got pretty printed feed sacks, making gathered and broom skirts. Her family made their own butter and she still has a butter churn at her home.
- When asked about blacks who may have helped on the farm or lived nearby, she responded that the only black family she knew lived up on the hill near Pejie and Forest Murray's house. It consisted of a lady and her daughter. Lilly came to help iron, clean, etc. for Forest's mom. She knew when the Martins killed hogs and came to their place in a buggy. She only wanted the chitlins, which we gave her.
- She remembers Audrey Foster, who went to the church at the top of Porters Mountain (also called Fosters Knob). Naomi saw her about 15 years ago at the old home place. Audrey was always interested in education and went to Troutville High School. Her brother, Ralph, who was the youngest, went to school with Naomi. Coming down that mountain was not easy, but Miss Foster had relatives that lived in Grubb Hollow and could stay with them if the weather was bad. Naomi mentioned that Blue Ridge had a

school called Piney Woods, while her husband was picked up from Chocklett Hollow (on East Ruritan Road) to go to the Bonsack School.

- Naomi's mom was a Crawford, and lived up the mountain from the Weeks. Her mother and a sister (who later taught at Laymantown School) went to Daleville Academy. The boys would tell her older sister to bring Ruth a boyfriend. Ruth was somewhat shy, but met her husband there. Both girls married in a double wedding ceremony.
- There was a little church near the Knollwood subdivision, which had Sunday School, but there was also one at Rainbow Forest. Before cars, the Martins and Weeks went to the Lutheran church, which was a union church that served different denominations, alternating Sundays.
- Social activities included people always coming to the Martins. They also played croquet on the lawns at Coyner Springs and Blue Ridge Springs. Regarding funerals—her first memory was of her Grandfather Martin, who died when she was six years old. When he died, he was taken to the funeral home and then back to the house to lie in state. Her Grandmother Martin died when Naomi was ten years old and remembers cousins coming down the stairs with bouquets of flowers to adorn her casket.
- Some of her uncles and neighbors worked for the railroad. Harry Weeks had a large dairy farm. Naomi was a clerk at Rainbow Forest church and a committee was instated that had to pass on the charter in order to get the land for the church. At that time, there were 50 people in the church. Harry Gamble, Calvary's minister from the city, came to the meeting. Bill Day became the pastor, but didn't go to seminary. Gamble stated that "Day was a real called by God" man, whom Naomi expressed was probably better than all the book learning for which seminaries are famous.
- Community change—some changes are good. One can live in the country, but have the conveniences of a town. There are more stores and other amenities. Many subdivisions have taken up the farmland.
- Naomi's Grandfather Martin had a Model T Ford, but still used a horse and buggy, while her father liked to use a horse. She is trying to write a story about her life growing up, with the intention to give it to her children and grandchildren. One story she shared was called "The Blacksmith Shop." Her dad would take her to the blacksmith shop at the old house. He would make horseshoes and wagon wheel rims. Her job was to turn the grindstone, which made the fan move to cause the forge to heat. There were no boys big enough to help, so she was "the boy." She also milked cows, got wood for the house, and took water up the hill.

- When her husband was about 13 years old, his family bought a bungalow style house across from the Jeter farm. Annie Laura told her family there were two boys there, a 13-yr. old and a 4-yr. old. She said the 13-yr. old was really cute. Their home bordered both Roanoke and Botetourt counties. She had been a freshman at Colonial and Boyd started attending Colonial. They became interested in each other and a teacher didn't like them going together, and calling him "a lover boy." He said later that he fell in love with Naomi the first time he saw her. They have been married for 65 years.
- Pranks—her husband ran around with the Cook boys, Jim Brown and Corky Rader. At Halloween they took Wilmer Cook's wagon apart and put it on top of the barn. Of course, it had to be put back together when retrieved from the barn. It sat there until the next Halloween. Her husband knew Mason, Keith, and Alf Cook; also Alf's son, Bobby.
- Nellie Spickard was almost 104 years old when she died. She and her dad were first cousins. There would be a reunion at the lake near Rainbow Forest church. If there was rain, they would use the building as a shelter.

Bolt, Vivian Zimmerman and Danny Interview – February 4, 2014

- Vivian Zimmerman Bolt was born December 14, 1936. She lived with her family at Webster until she was eight or nine years old. There were nine children in her family and many other Zimmermans in Webster, but her next door neighbors were the Corrells. She would walk to school and her Aunt Effie and Uncle Jim had a store. She would get a Dr. Pepper and put a package of peanuts in it. She went to Colonial in grades 1-12. When living on Webster Road, she walked to Colonial school. Later, when living in Coyner Springs, the bus picked her up and took her there. Mr. Bishop was the driver. On Sunday afternoons, her family would go to Grandfather Zimmerman's. (Vivian didn't know her Grandmother Zimmerman.) They would make ice cream, which was a huge event because all of her cousins were there. It seemed like a party.

- Her family left Webster and moved to Coyner Springs. The reason for the move was that her family needed a bigger place for her dad, T. D. Zimmerman, to raise cattle and more tomatoes for a canning factory. Her dad traded houses with Mr. Chattin. Vivian had a piano and pianos were also traded in that move. In addition, she got a Victrola from the Chattins. Acquiring the farm in Coyner Springs came with many chores. Three of the nine children died. (One brother died at age 19 in an automobile accident and two died in infancy.) Many of her sisters were already married, which left Vivian, her brother, Roger, and brother, Elwood, to help. Her dad built Elwood and his wife, Nancy, a little house behind the house. Others would also help, such as Bobby and Charlie Leonard's family. Everyone helped everyone else and frequently bartered.

- Vivian's husband, Danny Bolt, was born in April 1936. He moved to Coyner Springs with his family from Baltimore, where they lived near the wharf. He went to Colonial in second, third, and fourth grades. His family then moved to Troutville, off U.S. Route 11 and ran a farm with horses, cattle, balers and all the farm equipment necessary. He remembers the Powhatan Arrow train and people lining up and down U.S. Route 460 to see the train go through. "It was like a bullet compared to others. It was a big highlight in the 1940s." He also remembers his hands being switched in school, but overall, it was peaceful. This feeling was perhaps because the community was isolated from wars and problems occurring in larger cities. Students were attentive in school, stating, "If there was misbehavior, they knew the consequences at school, which was doubly compounded at home when they got there. Vivian stated that everyone was close, even with the teachers. She thought she was kin to everyone who lived in Webster. Danny's dad owned and operated a store for a short time in Bonsack. Richard Radcliff and Bobby Moyer also were owners at one point. Vivian also helped when she came home from college terms. Danny's dad, who was in construction, also worked on the Parkway, helping to complete it from North Carolina to Virginia.

- Danny's family also attended Glade Creek Lutheran Church, even after moving to Troutville. This church was also the Zimmerman's church, so that was always a connection. Danny always thought that Vivian was older than he, but she had skipped a grade. Vivian stated that he had the nerve to ask her brother her age, which enlightened him to the fact that she was born in the same year.
- Vivian stated that her granddad was a farmer and her father had a canning factory. Consequently, they canned everything, especially tomatoes and shipped it on the train. Her memory is that her grandfather only had tomatoes to sell.
- While her father farmed much of the time, he later became a Botetourt County deputy sheriff and was involved in the Blue Ridge Springs scandal involving a trip to Pennsylvania and the capture of Robert Kent, who murdered Mrs. Hastings. He returned to the N&W and became a blacksmith, which would assure him that he would not be laid off. He was also skilled in carpentry and liked to work in the shop. Vivian stated that being a deputy wasn't really what he had a passion to do.
- Vivian's brother, Roger, and the Bolts were friends and visited each other. One time when they were visiting (and Vivian wasn't present), his uncle told Danny that Vivian was a really nice girl. That was the beginning of their relationship. They began dating in high school and while he was at University of Virginia in a five-year architecture program. At the same time, Vivian was at Bridgewater College, and they would see each other on weekends. Vivian's mother became ill and she had to leave Bridgewater and return home. She began working at Appalachian Power Company in Roanoke. When there was one snow event, her dad took her to work in a cattle truck. There were female employees from West Virginia and living at the YWCA, which was right across the street from Appalachian and they didn't make it across the street. Her bosses always appreciated that she got there.
- Vivian and Danny got married on January 31, 1960 at 3:00 p.m. They had problems getting their invitations done because Danny didn't have a middle name, which the printer insisted they needed. It turned out that by word of mouth people came. Jean Witt was her maid of honor. David Tate was the organist. A reception was held at the church. At one event in Bonsack, Jean played organ and Vivian played piano.
- After graduation from college, Danny went into the Air Force as a Second Lieutenant. Vivian went with him. In June of 1960, Danny went to flight school and trained to fly C123 aircraft. By 1962, he went to Viet Nam and she returned to her parents' home. There were mountains in Viet Nam and no one knew the terrain. At night, the crew would turn all the lights off and take the plane out on classified missions to drop special

forces and returning later. They would land on dirt strips in a valley in the middle of nowhere. A Vietnamese gentleman took him into a hut and gave him something to drink out of a small teacup. When he asked him where the Vietnamese were, the man replied, "All around us." The mission was very secretive. When he returned from Viet Nam, he was an instructor for two and a half years.

- They remember the garage/store on U.S. Route 460 that Mel Spickard owned and operated. In addition, many residents and others who lived as far as Covington worked at Webster Brick or Blue Ridge Stone Corporation (later Boxley Materials Company). Other people worked in the City of Roanoke.
- Vivian's friend, Jean Witt, was a Baptist, as were the Leonards. Jean went to Bonsack Baptist, but there was a spinoff church known as Colonial Baptist (the mother church being Glade Creek Baptist) that took several members to that church when it formed. Miss Fluke always put flowers on the altar at the Lutheran church. Her Aunt Ruth was also very active. Many of Vivian's kin are buried in the Glade Creek Cemetery.
- Social activities were many. When Vivian was young, her brothers and sisters had lawn parties. Many good looking boys and girls attended, even some of the Crumpackers. On Sunday evenings, the Lutheran church sponsored Luther League. The adults who were in charge of that group sponsored hay rides, ice cream suppers, parties, oyster fests and trips. There were a lot of sports, where the boys would play ball in the fields. Vivian also noted that there were chores to do on the farm, but she and her brother would play outside by turning the lights on in order see when it was getting dark.
- The old Zimmerman house on Webster Road is now owned by Harry and Roblyn Brand and it is now referred to as Pigapoo.
- Vivian stated that her family always had cars for transportation. Her brother, Elwood, wrecked a couple of cars, so her dad was always acquiring more. Danny stated that he was never into cars, as many boys were.
- There were some black workers on the Zimmerman farm. One was Willie Hampton and he would bring some of his friends to help cut the wheat. She and her brother later cut the wheat. When returning to Roanoke after Danny's service term, she went into town to Woolworths when she saw Willie. Willie ran up to her and gave her a hug with her toddler daughter, Marnie, hanging on her leg. People were shocked, but it was normal for her. At Bridgewater, she went to chapel at the same time with a black student. He had a surname of Whitlow. They sat together because his last name started with a W and her last name started with a Z. He became a teacher.

- Danny stated that the worst things he and other boys would do when they were young was smoke cigarettes. He graduated in 1955 and remembers a wagon being put on top of the school in Troutville. Several of Vivian's sisters went to Troutville High School before Colonial was built. A lot of basketball was played at Colonial. Danny couldn't have soft drinks while playing ball at Troutville High School. If he did, he would never get away with it because everyone would know and tell.
- Community changes: There has been a consolidation of neighborhood schools. Everyone used to know each other. Today many do not know the history or their neighbors. More family chores were done together in the early days. Today the children are more conscious of clothing and trends, rather than wearing whatever was there. It has definitely changed, but all communities change with time.
- Vivian is the only Zimmerman sibling living today. Roger passed away and a memorial service was held in Waynesboro, Virginia, October 3, 2015. Roger died September 14, 2015.
- After Danny got out of the Air Force in June 1965, Vivian and their daughter, Marnie, moved to Salem, Virginia, where they have lived ever since. Danny worked as an architect. Marnie was born in Fort Walton Beach, Florida on June 3, 1964. She now lives in Salem with her husband, Jay Beningo.

Brown, Curtis and Judy Interview - September 23, 2013

- Curtis was born September 8, 1953, having resided 22 years in Fincastle, Virginia.
- Met Judy Hobson from Blue Ridge and he moved to that area in 1976.
- His parents were Isom Brown and Ellen Wiley Brown. Curtis and Isom Brown Jr. were the children. His father was a mechanic for Lee Obenchain and Childress Bros. They lived on Springwood Road in Fincastle.
- His paternal grandparents were George Brown, who died in 1955, and Minnie Douglas Brown, who died at a young age.
- His maternal grandparents were Robert Wiley and Ellen Wiley and there were five children. Robert Wiley married Mamie Barnett next and they had seven or eight children, making a total of 13 children from the two marriages.
- Curtis went to Central Academy, which opened in 1959, for seven years; grades 8-12 were at Lord Botetourt, where he graduated in 1971. Integration occurred in 1966, but a few students went to Lord Botetourt in 1965.
- Judy Brown was born July 1, 1956 to Harry Hobson and Carolyn Sonatha Williams Hobson. She had two brothers, Greg and Harry.
- Judy and Curtis have two children—Sheree Teal, who has three children and lives in Northern Virginia; Allen Brown, who lives in Salem, has one child. Judy has always lived in Blue Ridge.
- Her schooling was grades 1-3 in Fincastle at Central Academy (a black school); grades 4-6 at Colonial Elementary; grades 7-8 in Fincastle at Botetourt Intermediate; grades 9-12 at Lord Botetourt in Daleville. She also went to St. Paul's Academy in Lawrenceville, Virginia and Virginia Western College. She has worked at Shenandoah Life for 36 years.
- Father, Harry Hobson, drove school buses during the day for Bedford County, Salem, and Roanoke County. He worked full time at Norfolk Southern, first in janitorial work, followed by being a mail clerk, which were night time jobs. He retired from Norfolk Southern with a disability and died in 2002.
- Judy's mother was a domestic worker, followed by being a teacher's aide at Cloverdale Elementary.

- Church life has been ongoing for both Curtis and Judy. Judy is a member of Blue Ridge Baptist on Colonial Road, where she plays the piano four times a month. She is also a deaconess and on the financial committee.
- Curtis is a member of Lily of the Valley Baptist Church in Fincastle, where he attends two Sundays a month. She tries to get to his church and vice versa.
- Judy does not remember many stores except for Robert Patterson's convenience store, George Dooley's on U.S. Route 460, near the old post office. There was also a third store on 460.
- Major families in the black Blue Ridge community were the Ragsdales, who were instrumental in starting the church. Other families were the Williams, Saunders, Redds, Pattersons, Jordans, Hamptons, Hobsons, Prestons, Wilsons. All of these families remained in Blue Ridge.
- Judy's maternal grandmother (Williams) did some work for Margaret Fluke. She remembered that they made apple butter.
- Most of the men went into the city and worked for the Bridge Works and Norfolk Southern. Leon Saunders had a TV repair shop on the Market.
- Many families grew their own vegetables and slaughtered hogs and chickens.
- A few citizens formed a coalition and had a countywide meeting. This group helped Central Academy with fundraisers. However, some people on the school board wanted to get rid of Botetourt Intermediate and rename Central Academy. William Clark married a woman from Fincastle and some members desired that name to replace Central Academy.
- Some school board members didn't know the history; therefore, this coalition petitioned all black people to come before the school board. The first meeting had 13 people; second meeting totaled 25. This went on from 1995-2001. Eventually 70 plus people (white and black) kept attending, praying and putting it in the Lord's hands. They changed two school board members' minds and two resigned. The final vote was 4 to 1. A strong white supporter was Joe Johnson.
- This group is still in existence. They provide a scholarship to Lord Botetourt and James River high schools. They also give some money to elementary schools. Their fundraiser is an annual one on a May Day—free day from school, with food, auctions, gift baskets, snow cones, ice cream, etc. Approximately 80-100 people attend.

- Judy remembers that the girls played ball, jumped rope, hopscotch, and only got toys at Christmas. Curtis remembers playing ball at Central Academy, fishing, shooting marbles, shooting basketballs through a hoop across the field from his house, riding bikes, sleigh riding—one mile downhill, and baseball. His cousin played baseball well, went to North Carolina, but then was inducted into the service. He was more like a brother.
- Other activities included picnics, ice cream socials, and riding on the back of trucks to different areas for these events. They also rode on trucks or in cars to Lakeside Amusement Park.
- The church sponsored homecoming or rallies. Weddings were usually performed in the minister's home; only occasionally at church.
- Halloween pranks included toilet tissue in yards and eggs. If caught by someone, they got punished by them and got it again when they got home. When someone died, it was usually held in the home. A wreath of flowers on the door would signify a death.
- Judy remembers that she went to town with her grandmother by riding a bus. They would shop and then return on a bus. They only had to walk about a half mile from 460 to get home. Her grandmother also worked at Blue Ridge Springs resort.
- The community has changed—grown; more residents; black and white used to be separate, but now mingled. Colonial Road was a dirt road, and now paved. Joint Thanksgiving services are held with another church.

Brown, Jim and June

Interview - March 5, 2012

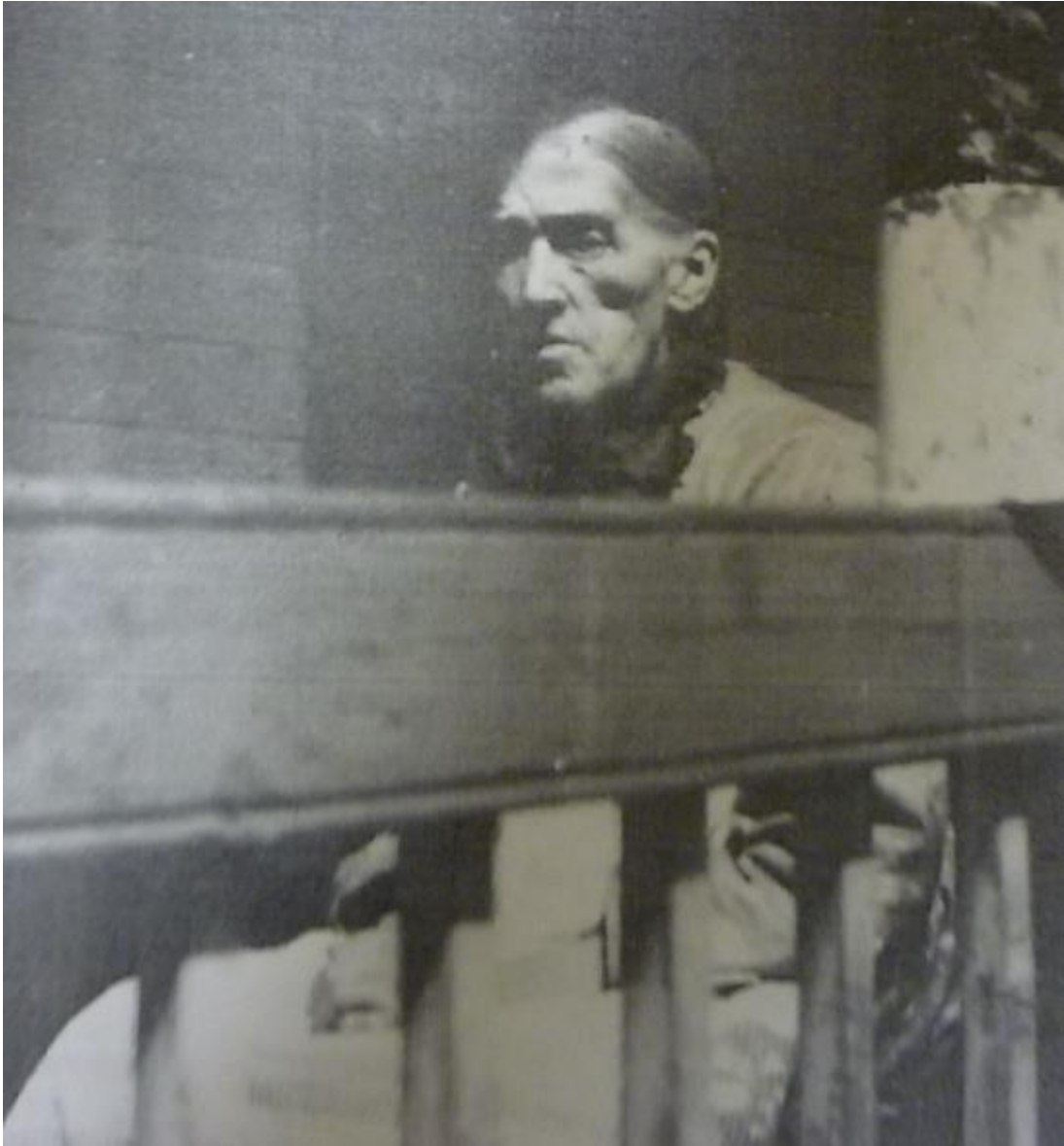
- Jim and June Brown live in the Laymantown area of southern Botetourt. Jim originally lived with his family in the old Bethel church in Bonsack as a young person.
- Jim's father had an orchard and he had to pick peaches, which was not his favorite task because of the fuzz. His dad didn't believe in credit, just cash.
- His mom, Flossie Virginia Kelly, bought two diamond rings on lay-away. Her husband used to give her cash to run the household. Due to her frugality and desire, she purchased these two rings on lay-away, which no one in the family knew until her death. At that point, the family found them and each of the daughters now has one. Mom Flossie also hid money in the house. They recently found \$3,000 in insulation. They lived in the old schoolhouse in Bonsack (where Keith and Doris Cook's residence is today). Grandfather Kelly walked for 52 years to Blue Ridge to the railroad depot and helped fill the water tank, which had to be pumped.
- Jim milked 24 cows for Mason Cook when the electricity would cease. Tom Cook, Mason's father had 15-20 cows, which were herded and taken up to the top of Porter's Mountain. They would often be driven back down the mountain the same day.
- Wilmer Cook also had a dairy farm. He wanted to carry his own milk to the dairy because he was "too tight" to have it picked up. One time, some boys jumped on his El Camino and blew his tires out, which meant he couldn't carry his milk out. Wilmer would bring black youth in from the city to work on the farm and paid them almost nothing. They had to buy lunch for 50¢ out of hourly wage, which took most of their money.
- During World War II, sugar and butter were rationed. They had cows, chickens, and hogs. June, Jim's wife, stated that her grandfather slaughtered pigs, usually on a cold day in November. Her mother would put up the meat (sausage). German prisoners worked on the farm. They picked apples and peaches in Laymantown. Also, in Rainbow Forest, Mr. Weeks had a farm. He was related to A. T. Weeks, who had the 1908 house and 350-acre farm across the tracks from the Bonsack depot.
- The marriage of Jim and June Baldwin Brown occurred on Jim's birthday in the old Bonsack Baptist Church (now Lutheran) by the Rev. Harry Gamble. Her sister was maid-of-honor.
- Jim Brown spent most of his life in the food business, but worked in household finances for Sears for ten years; he then worked at Brown's Market at Coyner Springs on Blue Ridge Blvd. He also worked with Bob Miley at the Garden Basket, after which he took

over eight stores as a supervisor. He was paid good money. He ran the store in Vinton until 1986 and then sold the store.

Cook, Albert Watson Jr.
Interview – October 2, 2012

- Albert Watson Cook, Jr. was born in 1941 to his father, Albert Watson Cook, Sr. and Virginia Lee Martin Cook. He was the only son. His grandfather Wilmer Cook, lived in the house in Bonsack originally built by the Stoners, but became his grandfather's house about 1920. His great grandfather, George Cook and his wife, Mary Gross Cook acquired the Bonsack farm.
- Al remembers visiting from time to time, beginning about four years of age. He played outside a lot and there was an English shepherd named Jane. Jane was a sweetheart except that she didn't like to be touched on the head, which would cause her to snap. The old slave quarters were located where the chicken house was and the carport/garage is today. The quarters were only about 5'x 5' buildings. He was not sure when they came down, but he must have been young.
- Visiting his grandparents began after his father came home from the war in October 1945, when he would spend a few hours with his grandparents on Sundays, often for dinner at midday. When they all came together to eat, there were often three or four conversations going on. His grandfather, Wilmer, and grandmother, Ida, had three girls and his father. Ruby Marshall Cook was born in 1906 and married Norton C. Layman (b. in 1900) in 1928. They had no children. Dorothy Lillard Cook, b. in 1910 and the second daughter, was married to John Muriel Wilkerson from Farmville. He was a pharmacist for People's Drug on Franklin and Jefferson. In 1950, he bought the Medical Arts Pharmacy on Franklin Road. Al worked for him distilling water for the doctors to use and delivering prescriptions. Mary Ellen Cook was the third daughter and married Benjamin Chapman from Salem. He was a lawyer and served in the House of Delegates from 1936-1943. She died in 2013 in Cincinnati near the home of her son, Benjamin, Jr., at the age of 101 years.
- Deedie Kagey met Annie Gladys Cook Williams when she was 98 years old. She lived to be 103 years old and had a sharp mind. George Cook was her grandfather. George Cook married Mary Gross Cook in 1851 and acquired the house and 639-acre farm in Bonsack in 1872, having moved from Blue Ridge. There is a family legend that Mary Gross was partly Native American, originating from the Tuckahoe tribe. George and his brother, Jacob Griffin Cook (b. 1825) married sisters. She was Catherine and married Jacob in 1867. Al tried to research this origin and gathered that the Tuckahoe tribe was a sub-clan of the Cherokees (meaning food gatherers). More research evolved on the Gross, McCoy, and Paine families. The McCoy's moved to Kentucky, but there could have been a connection. The Grosses lived in Montvale (just east of the tanks) and the Campbell family eventually acquired this property. They tore down the old Gross home and built a barn on the spot. However, on a hill behind the house was a twenty-foot high burial mound with a graveyard on top of it. Al talked to Mr. Campbell, who had

once done some dirt digging around this spot, and claimed the dirt was different there than the rest of the farm. Many of the Gross family, including Mary, and Catherine's parents, George Bottie, and Joanna McCoy Gross were buried on top of this mound in the graveyard.



Catherine Miller Gross Cook, c. 1909. She was married to Jacob Griffin Cook
And sister to Mary Gross Cook.
(Courtesy of Pam Cook Graham)

- The Cook Cemetery, which is on Al's grandfather's farm, stated that some graves were moved to Evergreen Burial Park in Roanoke or the Old Glade Creek Cemetery. George Thomas Cook, father to Mason Cook, had two wives—Ida Nininger, who died in 1894, and they had a child named Oscar, who died in 1896. They are buried at Evergreen.

George Thomas Cook married a second time—to Mary Villie Black Cook. Mary Villie Black Cook was Mason's and Alf's mother.

- William Marshall Cook (brother to George Thomas Cook) married Mollie Alice Nininger (sister to Ida), and did tomato canning. Mollie's dad lived in Cloverdale, where the Nininger family originated in Botetourt County. Marshall was killed crossing Bonsack Road (main road then) in 1940. His wife became a recluse after his death and died in 1954. They lived in a house where the Methodist church is today that some people remember. It was a large house with verandas all around it. After his mother died, Wilmer sold the house and several acres of pasture land to his cousin, Alf Cook.



William Mashall Cook's Home
(Cook Genealogy by Albert Watson Cook, Jr.)

- Ruby, Wilmer Cook's daughter, made shirts out of cotton flour sacks. Al remembered one made with three heads (Hitler, Mussolini, and Tojo) in a frying pan on it during WWII. Grandmother Cook fixed fried chicken and ham every day. With regard to the chickens—she would pick out one, hold in over a stump, and with a hatchet, chop its head off. Anything she ever threw out provided the dog and other animals with food. The family had a large hand bell, which they rang for dinner. The people in the field would come to eat. Ida would put the food on top of the stove and leave it there until supper, which was the evening meal. In the morning, Wilmer would get up early to milk the cows, come into the house for a prepared breakfast, and then return to other chores.

- Mary Gross Cook had eleven children and died at 95 years old. It seems that there are several Cook descendants that have lived long lives for that era. Al used to swing on the front porch and Ruby or Dorothy would scratch his back and tell him a story. He also remembers an ashtray shaped like a frog with an open mouth, which would hold the cigarette.
- According to Al and other Bonsack residents, Wilmer Cook had nothing to do with any of his kin, not even for funerals. One time Wilmer's cows got loose and started mixing with Mason's cows. Wilmer went outside with a shotgun, which Al couldn't understand. Al commented, "I don't know who he was going to shoot." He was also a justice of the peace. Al later met a man, Mr. Funk, who had been a Roanoke County deputy sheriff, who patrolled the eastern part of the county, and knew his grandfather. Supposedly, Wilmer would put people in jail for going over 20 miles per hour until officials could transport them to the county jail. Another story emerges that once they paid Wilmer a certain amount, he let them out of the "jail." Wilmer also had a 1935 Chevy coupe, which he sold in 1952.
- The origin of the Cook (Koch) family began with Jacob Koch, who arrived in Philadelphia from London in 1738, and was indentured in Philadelphia County (now Montgomery) in Pennsylvania. Jacob completed his indenture in 1743. His son, Jacob, who anglicized his surname to Cook, wife Maria Barbara Ziegel Cook, and sons Jacob, George, and Charles (nee Carl) came to Botetourt County—Buchanan/Mill Creek area in 1787 and bought two 100-acre parcels in 1793 from Joseph Paxton.
- He sold them in 1796, at which time he bought 238 acres in Glade Creek from Jeremiah Dishman to build a mill. It is surmised that he may have gained some skills from the Waskeys of Waskey's Mill. He gradually acquired more property and had six sons (Jacob, George, Charles, Samuel, Joseph, and Zachariah) and two daughters (Sarah and Elizabeth).
- Samuel died at age 21, and George, Charles, and the daughters remained in Virginia, but others moved to new lands, such as Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. Movement was common to many of these families, but farming in the valley remained an appeal to many of the immigrants, who made Botetourt or Roanoke County their home.

Cox, Freddie and Frye, Debbie Cox (Brother and Sister)
Interview – November 4, 2012

- Debbie and Freddie Cox were both born in Roanoke, Virginia and spent their entire lives in Bonsack. Freddie worked for a couple of years in Washington, D. C.
- Freddie's mom insisted he go to Roanoke College. He did so and received a B.S. there; Debbie went to Radford and majored in Sociology. There she met Mark Frye. They married at Thrasher Memorial United Methodist Church in Vinton and lived in Bonsack, eventually building a home near the Blue Ridge Parkway that was a part of Cox property.
- Debbie's husband, Mark, owns a business named Creative Occasions, which provides flower arrangements for weddings, etc.
- Freddie met Lynn, his wife, at Roanoke College. They got married in Pennsylvania, where Lynn grew up.
- They both believed the Cox family came from Bedford County to the Bonsack community in the mid-1920s. They first lived in a house on Alt. 220 that they were remodeling. It was actually a mill house and was located across from the graveyard.
- Freddie's and Debbie's father, Emory, began sharecropping on the Layman farm in Bonsack. Their mother's maiden name was Blevins. They also rented Gish property near Springtree Rehabilitation, off King Street; the Trents on West Ruritan Road also leased him a lot; likewise, the old Cook property across what is now the main road for access to water. He mostly grew alfalfa and wheat on those properties. However, he worked on the farm on which Debbie and Freddie helped. Freddie had allergies as a young person. They had cows, tomatoes, and strawberries primarily. They helped sell some of these products (mostly tomatoes) if there was more than they needed. Freddie set up a stand near what is now Lewis-Gale Family Practice on Huntridge Road and sold tomatoes. The family also grew corn near Lake Back O' Beyond.
- They both went to school, primarily in Vinton: R. E. Cook, William Byrd Middle School, one grade at Herman L. Horn, and grade 8 was in the old Vinton High School Building, now vacant. Grades 9-12 were located at William Byrd High School near the Parkway on Route 24.
- Lula P. Layman taught at the old school (where store is), and she taught Freddie's and Debbie's mom. She was strict and was always collecting money for the Methodist Church; Lula P. belonged to the Methodist church and her husband, Elmer, belonged to the Baptist Church. He gave \$90,000 to the Baptist church and she gave the same amount to the Methodist church. They had no children, but were very generous people.

- There was a Bonsack School where Freddie's Country Corner Store is today. It closed in 1940 and the students then were transported by school bus into Vinton. The oldest school (mid-1840s) was torn down and a ranch-style house remains today, facing the Walmart across U.S. Route 460. It belonged to Keith and Doris Lee Cook.
- Debbie and Freddie attended church primarily at Bonsack United Methodist, but Debbie went to Bonsack Baptist (old building) for four-five years with her mom. Apparently, Rev. Unrue mistreated Debbie, so the hiatus from the Methodist Church was due to that experience.
- Freddie remembers an old well house with a big concrete structure behind Bonsack Methodist Church. Both of them remember an old house with a veranda where the current Methodist church is today. This may have been Marshall Cook's home. It was abandoned when Debbie and Freddie remember it as children.
- Some of Freddie's and Debbie's cousins worked for Wilmer Cook. The cousins' told them he was extremely tight. If they ate an apple, he would take 10¢ off their pay.
- There was a Barnyard Committee, similar to a fraternity induction. It happened after a marriage of a Bonsack male to a female. The first inductee was Corky Rader; the last, Barry Trent. Louis Cox, a cousin, was chased by Keith Cook for days. The Cox's picked him up and put him in the trunk of a car and took him to the house. Prior to that event, he jumped from a moving car and rolled down a hill. He finally gave up.
- Freddie's Country Corner store began when he was selling produce from the back of his Pinto station wagon where the Hardees on Gus Nick's Boulevard and U.S. Route 460 is today. Eventually, he bought a lot from Mr. Ridpath, on which he had to do a lot of filling in with dirt to transform it into something workable.
- The Coxes sell bedding plants, which they start in greenhouses in January; poinsettias are planted around July 20 in a two-day period. Many are sold to churches. When they first opened the store, Aunt Mildred Cox ran a kitchen, making pies. One hundred apple pies sold a day. The kitchen was a lot of work, which faded with time. Now some Amish people make some baked goods, which are available.
- The busiest time for the store is Thanksgiving through Christmas; produce wanes in August and September.
- Debbie's children are Jerod and Joanna, now adults; Freddie's children are Neal and Emily, who helped their dad run the store. Other Bonsack residents who helped are Dana England and Bob Pack. Debbie used to grow tomatoes along with her children; however, the deer were getting them even with a wire fence. They finally gave up that endeavor.

- Debbie remembers riding the bus downtown, spending the day, shopping, and returning home on the bus with her mom or grandmother. The family would also go to Clover Creamery to get ice cream. Freddie liked the orange-pineapple flavor.
- Major families were the Cooks, Seibels, Coxes, and the Trents. Occupations were centered around farming.
- Pranks that Freddie and Buddy pulled in LaBellevue. They would put down trees to stop the buses and then run through the woods. A neighbor would pick them up in an old Plymouth and get them home.
- Freddie remembers part of the old Stoner mill on Glade Creek. Some of the mill race (dam) is still there with wood that came from timbers out of Elmer Layman's barn.
- Mason Cook made brew in the barn. Bob Cooper, a black man, actually made it. Bob Cooper knew the Gishes and the Shorts' families.
- The community has changed--both said it was busier and tough to see some of changes. They used to know everyone. They always waved to everyone. There are so many newcomers now that a wave isn't returned. Many residents today do not have the connection of long ago. It used to be a small, close-knit community that changed.

Crumpacker, Helen and James M. Jr. (Jim)
Interview - July 15 2011

- The land that became Crumpacker Orchards was purchased by Benjamin Franklin Moomaw of Troutville. He married Mollie Crumpacker in the 19th century and left the farmland to the Crumpackers. Beginning in 1914, apple and peach trees became the primary fruit grown.
- Helen Kinzie Crumpacker was born in Troutville, Virginia in 1919, and remained in this area through her younger years. She went to Troutville Grade School, followed by Troutville High School, a brick building on U.S. Route 11, where she met Morris Crumpacker. She attended Bridgewater College for two years, where she studied to be a secretary.
- Her father had a homeplace about two miles from the center of Troutville off Stoney Battery Road and the railroad tracks. Helen had two sisters and four brothers. In 2011, James Kinzie was still living. The Kinzie family grew apples and peaches. Her father had two brothers—Charles and Tommy. They both built large homes on U.S. Route 11—one brick and one frame. Cline Kinzie, an uncle, had a large home near Tinker Mountain.
- Helen and her brother Raymond were playing in the barn when she was about seven years of age. There was a hay chopper and Helen was running it with her left hand, got tired and switched to her right hand, which left a couple of fingers under the chopper. Two fingers were affected, one of which was cut to the bone. Surgery was done in her home, where the doctor cut the bone to make it more even with the other one. She had a bandage on her arm for a long time. When Camp Bethel opened up, the bandage came off. Her brother taught her how to drive, but her dad took her to Fincastle to get a license driving a new Buick, which she hadn't driven. She had been driving a Dodge. It made her a little nervous, but she passed.
- Helen indicated that she learned how to milk cows on her Troutville farm, which at one time she was eager to learn; however, she later regretted it. She also picked berries and would get chiggers. Salt water was used to wash off the bites, but it never did much good. Helen also grew up cooking. An older sister had cooked initially but, when she left, Helen took it over.
- Helen moved to the house in the area near Bonsack Elementary School in Roanoke County when she married Morris in 1938. Today the home is owned by the Sam Snow family. Helen indicated the "happiest days of her life" were when she married Morris

and didn't have to work on her family's farm anymore. She never remembered having any dolls or toys, but rather farm work from age six.

- Morris and Helen had been dating for four years before he indicated he wanted to marry her on her front porch. He said that Edgar was going to be a doctor and he had to run the orchard. She told him she would have to talk to someone and she went to a camp counselor at Camp Bethel and laid out all the details. The counselor felt it would be fine for her to marry Morris, so she went back and told him "yes."
- Edgar hated selling peaches on the market and wasn't cut out for selling. He later became a doctor at Greenbrier Medical.
- Helen indicated that a German prisoner worked on the farm during the war. She maintained letter writing after he returned to Germany. She and Morris visited Germany, where they stayed for a week. The German friend gave her a painting and again visited their farm in Virginia. The painting is a prized possession.
- Morris and his first cousin, Raymond ran the orchards together. Morris had about 400 acres and Raymond had about the same number. The land was used by Emory Crumpacker, who had some acreage, for general farming. His brother, John Samuel Crumpacker owned an adjoining acreage. Morris and Raymond ran the orchards until their sons finished college. When their education was complete, they joined their fathers in the business.
- In one year, 250 acres of apples were planted and 150 acres of peaches, which produced 100,000 bushels of apples and 50,000 bushels of peaches. They often took the apples and peaches to Bonsack Station and loaded them on the train for shipment.
- Son Jim worked from 1960-1973 in the orchards until the land was being sold. He was primarily overseeing the pruning, while his father, Morris, and Uncle Raymond ran the orchard. The packing house was behind Morris's house, and when a trailer backed up to load the apples, it was a difficult task near a hedge. Jim II has a son, Jimmy III, but goes by Jay.
- About six months after the land was sold to Fralin and Waldron, the Crumpackers leased it to a man named Fellers, who lived in a trailer on the property and took care of the remaining apple and peach crops. He leased the property from 1973 to 1983. He would often receive cash for the produce, which he would put in glass jars and bury in the ground near the house and the trailer. He apparently couldn't take time to get it to the

bank very often. Some years later, some boys were on the property and shot a BB gun at the ground and exposed two half-filled milk jars with money inside. The boys counted it, which totaled about \$2,000.00 and one check was dated 1978. The boys decided to give it back to Fellers and he was so inspired by their honesty that he gave them \$100 each. The Roanoke County Board of Supervisors passed and presented a resolution, which honored the boys at their monthly meeting.

- At one point the Crumpacker family, and those who were related through marriage, lived on both the east and west sides of Alt. Route 220. On the East Park Commerce side all the way to Bonsack Baptist Church lived the Murrays, Floras, and Samuel Crumpacker. On the west side lived Morris Crumpacker, Ruth Crumpacker Wine and husband, Lowell Wine, and Orval and Mary Garber.
- Son Jim got a job with Colonial American National Bank and John remained in orchard work, running some orchards in Timberville, as a life's work. There is a cemetery that Morris used to maintain, but it is now under perpetual care and is gated in the Botetourt South subdivision. Since the Stoner family had much of this acreage originally, there are Stoners, Moomaws and Crumpackers interred in this plot. (A side note: on the south side of U.S. Route 460 is an old Bonsack Cemetery plot where Daniel and Samuel Stoner are buried.)
- Helen related that her brother went to a Daleville pond to swim, but the family didn't believe the girls should go. However, in later years, Helen and Morris traveled to Florida, especially when they could get away in the winter. When Jim was in first grade, they traveled to Sebring, Florida. Later, when Jim II was in fifth grade, his family went to Florida and stayed for six weeks due to a relative being sick. Jim went to school for that time period in Ft. Pierce.
- Jim II went to Summerdean Church of the Brethren. His daughter goes to Covenant Presbyterian Church in South Roanoke. Helen has also attended church with her.
- Jim mentioned knowing Sherry Meadows Hearn, who lived in Bonsack, when he was growing up. The Murrays, who married into the Crumpacker family, ran a cider mill on the east side of Alt. 220.
- Jim II loved sports and played baseball. His father built a big field beside the house and put up a screen tall enough to keep balls from flying somewhere else. Ron Horn and other boys came to play. Men that worked on the farm as tenants had children (many sons) who also liked to play. Some of the tenants were named Underwood, Trussler, and Brown.

- Jim took up golf at age fifteen. He played one year in high school and then played some at Bridgewater. Jim was a sophomore at Bridgewater and his future wife, Nancy, was a high school senior when they met. The date to the May Dance was arranged by a relative of Nancy. After they got married, they traveled to Florida and stopped at a hotel in a little town, where they got to stay the night for \$7.50.
- Jim used to walk a mile to Mr. Teel's store in Bonsack. Mr. Teel also drove a bus and he would wait for the bus there. It was at this store where he bought his baseball cards, most of which he still has. His mother had to write a letter to the Board (School) to let them know that there was a load of children on their farm that needed picking up, which they finally approved, sending the bus to the entry of the orchard entry off Alt. 220.
- Pranks were often pulled by boys in the neighborhood, especially on Halloween. He remembers a wagon being put on top of a barn and boys getting pumpkins and rolling them toward the grocery store where they broke up on the grounds. He was part of a group (not necessarily engaging in pranks), that was called "The Bonsack Boys." This group included Ron Horn, Ronnie Cox, Paul Brown, Bobby McGuffin, Jimmy Hensley, and Jim.
- When Walmart property became available, nobody wanted it because they thought it would make their property depreciate. Two hundred acres belonged to Raymond Crumpacker, 200 acres to Morris Crumpacker, and 100 was M. Keith Cook's acreage, which was zoned commercial. Many homeowners were unaware of the commercial zoning. It all worked out eventually, but caused quite a lot of distress among residents.
- Helen and Jim both remembered a rickety old, unused tower on top of their Read Mountain property. It was an airplane beacon. Jim said the family was concerned because if anyone tried to climb it, they could get hurt and the family would be liable. Helen talked to Elmer Hodge, the county administrator at the time, and expressed the family's concerns. Elmer Hodge contacted Gov. John Warner. Warner contacted the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration), who took responsibility for taking it down in sections and paying the removal cost.
- Read Mountain Alliance had also formed, which was a group that wanted to preserve the mountain. The Crumpackers sold two hundred and four acres to Fralin and Waldron. These developers placed 150 acres in conservation easement, where some houses would eventually be built. Fralin and Waldron took some of the preserve acreage to construct an access to Read Mountain hiking trails, which is located in

Samuel's Gate, off Crumpacker Drive. In total 800 acres were purchased by Fralin and Waldron.

- Morris and Helen Crumpacker were married just shy of sixty years and she is still living and residing in Brandon Oaks. This family contributed greatly to the agricultural tradition of eastern Roanoke County.

Fluke, Margaret

Interview - February 25, 2012

- Margaret Fluke , born June 12, 1918—lived all her life in Blue Ridge.
- She was one of three girls born to Peter Matthias Fluke and Mary Hogan Fluke. Mary was the oldest, Margaret was the middle child, and Katherine was the youngest. She felt that being in the middle had no special place. She wasn't first or last. She revealed that she was the "boy." She became very connected to her dad and she learned much of the trappings of the farm. Her dad was a hard worker. Through the Depression, she revealed that the family had what they needed, but not necessarily wants.
- When her sister became ill at one point, she wrote a letter to Margaret revealing that she felt their dad always favored her. Perhaps some jealousy, but it was a surprise.
- People in her neighborhood grew wheat. She rode with her dad in a horse-drawn wagon to Vinton to have the grain ground into flour.
- She did not know her paternal grandparents; grandmother died in 1913 and grandfather died in 1916. She only knew her maternal grandmother, who had five children to raise.
- Margaret went to National Business College two years, as did both of her sisters. She claimed she was a poor speller, but took bookkeeping, penmanship, and calculations, after which she had to take a test. After passing the test, she focused on secretarial skills, which included typing, shorthand, and formatting of letter types. If a person missed one word, it had to be re-typed five times. She did write almost perfect shorthand, which a substitute for her related to her boss, Mr. Clements, because it was easy to transcribe.
- Margaret had two jobs, which totaled forty-one years of working. Her first job was with Jefferson Standard Life Insurance Company. Her boss left to go to Shenandoah Life and took Margaret with him. She stayed there until her retirement in 1980.
- After retirement she came back home, where the property was left to Margaret. Since her sisters were married, she took over the loan on the house (acquired during the Depression) and paid it off. She stated she wasn't making a big salary then either.
- The Fluke family first lived in a rough-hewn log house (sheathed over with weatherboard) near the current 1928 home her father built. When they tore the log house down, the family had to live in the woodshed and the granary. Margaret said jokingly, "I haven't wanted to camp out since. Well, I guess it was fun as a kid—the woodshed had a cook stove and we slept in the granary, where we were as comfortable

as could be expected. We put hay shocks in the barn, which had to be forked and lifted up to provide a high stack.”

- Dad had a farm where we had cornfields, cattle, horses, a milk cow, feed, vegetables. Dad also ran a tomato cannery. It was off territory to the children because of a steam boiler. “We’d go down as far as an old oak tree and watch from there.” Cans were housed in wooden boxes, which her dad used to make her a doll cradle. When the cans cooled, she took him the labels and helped to put them on the cans. Other people had tomato canneries—Roy Cook, the Kyles, and a couple of others. Roy Cook ran his the longest and acquired some of the Fluke equipment after her dad stopped canning. “I can still smell those old tomato peels. They certainly stank.”
- There was a grade school on the top of the hill, which had four rooms, grades 1-6. She started school early, entering grade two at age six. “I took a book to “read” it (by pictures) to the principal. She came by the house with a list of books for Margaret to read. She finished the sixth grade and then went to Troutville High School. When arriving at Troutville, the principal wanted her to repeat and her father refused. To get to Troutville High School, she took a school bus. Her dad took her out to the road to meet the bus. The bus was driven by Mel Spickard, was not heated, and “we sat on a board.” The bus had to pick up children in Bonsack, Cloverdale, and U.S. Route 11 before it got to school. It would take an hour and a half to get there, leaving at 7:30 a.m. and arriving at 9:00 a.m. Ruth Spickard heated some bricks which were kept up front on the bus, so Margaret liked to secure a seat near the heated bricks.
- Margaret’s father was a staunch Lutheran and helped to establish Glade Creek Lutheran Church in 1828. It started as a Union church and continued through the 1940s in the following way: Lutherans worshipped on the first and third Sundays; the Baptists on the second Sunday; Sunday School for all on the fourth Sunday; Lutherans on the fifth Sunday. The Baptists had closed communion. “It was a peaceful bunch, and now some people can’t get along.” She stated that she hopes her church holds up because she was planning on her church to bury her. Only one other person, who graduated with her, is alive and her mind is gone. Twenty to forty attend every Sunday. Some have left and gone to St. Phillips Lutheran, but haven’t removed their names from the roll.
- On May 1828, Peter Fluke was the first postmaster, serving in that position for 15 years. The stage would also stop at his store and tavern and he kept a ledger that was donated to the Botetourt County History Museum. The post office and area was named Flukes until 1874, when the name changed due to the Blue Ridge Springs resort in its heyday. At that point, the community’s name became Blue Ridge Springs. In 1920, the springs dropped and it became Blue Ridge. There were only 43 postmasters who served this community until 1996. There was a general merchandise store by J. P. Carroll. In 1895 there was a picture that Gerald Calvert had acquired of the store, which he gave to her.

- Margaret has the family Bible and the lineage begins with Jacob Fluck, who arrived in 1798 from Germany. He had many sons, having migrated to Frederick County, Maryland (Middletown). He died in 1872 in Summers, West Virginia. Peter Fluke, a son, came to the Blue Ridge area and the last name changed about 1830 to Fluke. (See the family write up in Chapter Eighteen.)
- During the Civil War, Margaret had an Uncle Bob who was at Appomattox Courthouse when Lee surrendered to Grant. The Yankees offered him a horse to ride home and he refused saying “I will walk.” I am sure he was hurt and his brother was injured and died in the final battle. They never knew where he was buried.
- Margaret learned to cane chairs after she paid \$80.00 for one. She decided she could do as well or better and ordered a kit with directions. She caned the rest of the chairs and a footstool. She related that a black man across the road put a chair in his junk pile, intending to throw it away. She asked about it and he said she could have it. She took it to a stripping facility to clean the wood. It had a woven seat, which she replaced by using her skills.
- When completing her tax papers, she uses addition (and no calculators). She always casts out the nines and it works every time she has to turn in her tax information.
- Margaret, in her 90s, continues to do a lot of farm work—attaches a bush hog to the tractor and bush hogs, cuts her grass, plants a garden, trims grape vines, and many other tasks.
- She made clothes for Phyllis Coffey, a niece. She also made clothes for another niece and two sets of boys’ clothes. In addition, she did needlework for a cross at the front of the altar at the church. She conveyed at one time there was a woman minister at the church, but she left. An Episcopal priest served the church at one time also.
- After finishing high school, Margaret was somewhat isolated from the rest of her classmates. Church provided the social life. Luther League met on Sunday nights, but has since been disbanded. She only attended two weddings, which were for both of her sisters. One got married in North Carolina, so she drove there for that event.
- Blue Ridge Springs Hotel—the Fluke family took food there, such as milk, butter, eggs, and fruit. There was no electricity at the resort at first; Japanese lanterns were used. Glade Creek also ran under the resort. She remembers a lot of porches and cottages. Richmond Cottage was the nearest cottage to the Fluke property. While the mineral water was held up as a cure-all, her dad told her not to drink it.

- One time she told her dentist that she wanted to take three things with her when she leaves this world. He asked her what she could take. She replied, “My teeth, eyes, and brain.”
- The key families she remembered in the community had the surnames of Spickard, Zimmerman, Foster, Cook, McCleary, Murray, Gillespie. Ben Murray was an N&W man, who lived near the quarry.
- There was iron ore mining at Grubb Hollow (now White Oak Estates). A dinky and an engine hauled iron ore to the N&W. Thirteen Meador family children lived in the old mining commissary at Grubb Hollow. Mr. Harper had a saw mill. If repairs were needed connected to the mines, he would do it. Sometimes Margaret would ride up the high trestle with her father—the tracks came back and crossed U.S. Route 460 at that trestle. Boxley had a little cart to haul his rock over a tram road to the crusher.
- Margaret would always get up early to milk a cow before she went to work, which provided fresh milk for the day.
- The community has changed in that we all dressed up and went to church on Sunday. The young folks are not going today as they once did.
- Margaret’s mom had R. R. Lunsford as a teacher and said he was very strict.
- All three girls had piano lessons. A school teacher would come to the house. Katherine (youngest) did best. Mary (oldest) would play the same thing over and over and her interest was not there. Phyllis Coffey would come over and play all afternoon. Margaret even took piano lessons and paid for it for ten years after she started work; however, she never felt she was that good.
- A cabinetmaker made a grandfather clock and a chest of drawers. The clock had the front part of the house painted on the front and the back of the house painted on the back.
- Electricity was put in the house in the late 1930s (1937-1940). Mr. Foster had the line on the road and told us not to pay for a line, but rather to wait until General Electric put in a line, which happened about a year later.
- A cousin, named Cline Fluke, gave Margaret a school bell from 1878. Her sisters died in 1990 and 1997 (Mary; then Katherine). Daddy’s sister, Cora, never married and lived with the family.

- When Margaret was little she played Uncle Wiggly (board game), Old Maid, Chinese checkers, Ouiji Board, puzzles (map of the United States), the latter of which she said was very beneficial.
- She traveled in her work with Jefferson Standard. She was in Norfolk for two years and left her car at home for her family to use. While in Norfolk, she lived with her dad's sister. She would often take a train and arrive the next day in Blue Ridge. She described the seats on the train as few, often sitting on a suitcase for the duration of the trip. Other assignments included Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; Lexington, Virginia; Knoxville, Tennessee; Florence, South Carolina; and Gatlinburg, Tennessee (she took the Parkway one way).
- She took one big trip with two friends—drove to Bar Harbor, Maine, Niagara Falls, and other stops on the way back home.
- Her first car she got in 1939, which was a 1936 Chevrolet and drove it ten years. She also got a Plymouth from Fulton Motors. The car she liked best was a Chevy Super Sport, which was black with red leather interior. She also had a couple of Fords in between the ones mentioned.
- Reba Spickard Metz worked at Shenandoah Life also. A friend, Johnnie Thompson, got a job through Margaret. He left Appalachian and Margaret trained him at Shenandoah. He opened an insurance agency in San Diego and would always visit her and express appreciation for the opportunity she gave him.
- Acquiring the Chevy in 1939 made her one of the only ones to have a car in her area. She was the bus for anyone who needed a ride, which seemed like half of Blue Ridge. Rick and Red Price rode with her often.
- Both of Margaret's sisters had jobs, but always grumbled about them. To the contrary, Margaret loved her job.
- Margaret was not interested in men, some of whom called her in their 80s. She stated, "If I wasn't interest at age 25, I am certainly not interested now."

Foster, Sam
Interview - September 16, 2013

- Samuel Christian Foster was born in 1943 at Jefferson Hospital in Roanoke City. His mother and father lived in the house in which he resides when Sam was born. He has three children: Sam Foster II, who is the oldest. He is an educator in Craig County; two daughters (twins), who were born in Richmond, but live in the Bridgewater area—one is a chemistry teacher and one is a guidance counselor. His wife, Rita, is a retired RN from Hollins University, where she was a Director of Health and Counseling. They have seven grandchildren and the oldest one, Samuel C. Foster III, lives of the farm. His mother and father are Laurie Mason and Ruby Ellen Foster. They met at Daleville College, near Lord Botetourt, and married in 1927. They first lived in Salem. His father worked for Appalachian Power Company for 47 years. He and another gentleman purchased all the property for Smith Mountain Lake. Two years later his father retired.
- His grandfather purchased 100 acres in Blue Ridge in 1903; his father purchased 100 more acres in the 1930s; also 30+ acres were added on the other side of Blue Ridge Springs Road from the Buford family.
- His dad came to the farm because his grandfather lost money at Montvale Bank when the Stock Market crashed. His mom taught at Colonial and had him in fourth grade (only one class per level).
- The house in which the Fosters live was built in 1934; however, there was an earlier 1905 house built by S. T. Foster that was the original home place and is still occupied.
- Before Colonial School was built there were two elementary schools—Laymantown and Blue Ridge. They consolidated into one after a lot of disagreement—some members of the School Board wanted to keep the two elementary schools. The plan was for the Laymantown students to go to high school in Troutville, and the Blue Ridge students to go to Montvale. People from Richmond had to be involved to assess the need. Approximately 18 acres were purchased and only \$1,000 was provided for the new school to be built. The community had to raise the rest. Many citizens, mostly farmers, gave \$5, \$10, \$15, \$20, or \$25. Sam's father was the secretary/treasurer and kept records of contributions. Colonial High School was built. There was some controversy over the name, but Colonial seemed apt due to the name of the road. Audrey Foster, who lived on Fosters Knob (Porters Mountain), taught there the first year it opened and remained for 40 years. She was remembered as very strict.
- His brothers were Dale and Charles; Dale retired from the Salem school system and still resides there.

- His great-great-grandparents were William and Martha Wigginton Foster. Great-grandparents were Joel and Martha Foster, born in 1823, and Louis and Mary Pollard, born in 1835 and 1840, respectively. Grandfather was Samuel Thomas Foster, born 1855, and Mary Pollard Foster, born 1861. His granddad spoke briefly about the Civil War—being about 9 years old when the Yankees came through pillaging farms. They took him on a horse for about a mile and then let him go. All of the Fosters were born in Bedford County, but close to the Botetourt line. Audrey Foster, who went to Radford College, lived with them for a while rather than trying to manage getting up the mountain when weather wasn't cooperating.
- His grandparents had six children: Johnnie (1886-1888); Frank, 1887-1928 (died at 41 of cancer); Annie, 1889, who also taught school; Hallie, 1894, who remained on the farm (neither Annie nor Hallie married); Lewis Earl, 1898, had two children—Paul and Katharine. Paul married Janet, who was instrumental in getting some history of Colonial and Blue Ridge together in a scrapbook. The last child, Roy, 1902, had three children—Dale, Charles, and Sam. In 1903, his granddad was still living on the mountain. He sold produce and pork and sheep to Blue Ridge Springs Hotel. He would keep the baby lambs warm by using wood stoves to thaw them out. He continued this practice until the 1930s.
- His mother's side of the family, the Ellers, had a large orchard on Sugarloaf Mountain in the Oak Grove area. They primarily grew peaches, but also apples. His dad put in 20+ acres of peaches in Blue Ridge, where there was also a packing house and would take them to the Bonsack Depot to put on the train. They gave up peaches, but had 10 milk cows, from which they processed cream and took it to Clover Creamery.
- They added beef cattle and had about 30 cows. Presently there are about 14 calves. Sam grew up immersed in farming. When he was five years old, his brother, Charles, put him on a hay loader seat with him and he worked the clutch. They put an electric drying system in the barn. The family is still working with beef cattle—some calves go to the stockyard and some are sold to individuals.
- Church life has always been a continual presence. The Foster and Rieley families were instrumental in starting the Blue Ridge Church of the Brethren (formerly Bethesda). His dad was involved in a lot of district work, traveling across the state. He took the Pocahontas train to Richmond and back and walked home from the Blue Ridge Depot. His father was the first lay moderator in the district. His mother's side also had many Brethren ministers.
- Sam met Rita in high school and they married after she completed her nursing program and he was in his senior year. Her home church was Cloverdale Church of the Brethren, which is where they are active now. Church on Sunday varies in number from 90-110 congregants. Blue Ridge Church of the Brethren was near the farm, so there is also a

connection to that church. A baptismal was added in 1954 and Sam was the first child to be baptized using the baptismal. Sam's grandson goes to Summerdean Church of the Brethren.

- Most of Sam's close friends were from church, some of which included the Crumpackers. Richard Radcliff was the youth director and they went bowling, on picnics, played ball, and other activities.
- Oldest churches in the community are Glade Creek Lutheran and Glade Creek Baptist.
- The oldest cemetery is Glade Creek—the old part had to be cleaned up. If someone wants to secure a plot in the new part, Shelby Leonard has the maps with available spaces. Some of the Leonard family fills up gas pumps.
- Sam can remember all of his teachers' names. While at Colonial, the teachers would take the students on walking field trips—one such trip was to the old Blue Ridge Springs site. There were always Fall Festivals and ball games. Mrs. Spickard, his first grade teacher, would often walk home. In grades 5, 6, and 7, students would get there early and play football before school, at lunch, and after school. They would also play marbles and jump rope.
- Marvin Foster, Sam's second cousin, had a Jeep to get down the mountain. Audrey Foster would drive down the mountain every day. All twelve grades were in one building and when on the school buses, the older ones were protective of the younger ones. When Sam's mom started teaching, she also rode the bus. Mr. Bishop was the driver and the school custodian. He had to stoke a coal furnace. There was no cafeteria at first, so packing a lunch was a necessity. When Sam was in first grade, a cafeteria was put in place.
- Basketball, football and baseball were the main sports. On Sunday after church, everyone would go to watch at the Boxley field.
- Jobs in this community were mainly Webster Brick, Weblite, iron ore, Blue Ridge Stone (now Boxley), and tomato canneries. Roy Cook canned tomatoes and made tomato juice. His farm was under the Arch and to the right. Sam's family raised tomatoes and he rode on the trailer to take tomatoes to Mr. Cook. They also raised sweet corn, which they sold to Kroger.
- There were a lot of traveling lay ministers. I. N. H. Beahm would often stay at the Fosters when they were passing through. The Beahm descendants live in Cloverdale.
- Regarding the iron ore from the mines—it had to be washed so that mud wasn't coming down the creek. In order to clean the iron ore, a well was constructed and a steam

engine ran the pump to wash it. Furthermore, two mud dams were created to filter the mud out of the water. There was an area that was perfectly flat, where the boys played ball.

- Sam's dad played baseball; mother was a center in basketball. Orval Garber was a teacher and coach at Daleville College, where his dad and mother attended. His dad broke his finger one Sunday. Since Sunday was reserved for church, he couldn't tell his family.
- Primary occupations were farming, N&W, Roanoke Bridge Works. Sometimes employees would be laid off, but could work on the farms.
- Stores—there were three grocery stores: Dooley's Store on north side of U.S. Route 460; Dooley's Store on the south side of U.S. Route 460, and one that was torn down when U.S. 460 was changed. His family often went to Thomas' Market near Tinker Creek in Roanoke City. There was also a tannery near Tinker Creek. His father took cattle to the market (downtown) to get them weighed and then had to bring them back to the tannery.
- Most residents raised beef cattle. Produce rarely got to market, but went into nearby stores. Vernon Crumpacker sold peaches on the market for the Ellers. Sam had to sell peaches for 2½ weeks in the summer, which he loved because he could go to the Roanoke Weiner stand.
- Some of the "black" boys would give Sam money after Sunday church and he would buy them ice cream because they weren't allowed in the store.
- Two weddings were held on the farm—his daughter, Stephanie and oldest grandson, Sam III. They also had family reunions there every other year. If boys were courting a girl, they usually went to Roanoke to a theatre or to a drive-in, such as Trail, Lee-Hi, or North 11. They might also go to Dandy's on Williamson Road. Transportation was mostly buses and cars. A boy could be 15 years old in Botetourt County to drive and 16 years old in the city.
- Pranks usually occurred at Halloween. Boys took shocks of corn into Colonial and a cow was let in on the weekend. The same thing happened at the Troutville school. He remembers that Wilmer Cook's wagon was put on the top of a barn by Jim Brown and Corky Rader. They dismantled it. In addition, they almost slid off the barn because the dew was settling on the roof. Sam also said they went to Colonial on the weekend, opened the window, and played basketball.
- His community has changed from quite rural to large subdivisions such as Rainbow Forest being built, which made an impact on Colonial. There was an option for a new

school to be built on the Laymantown side of U.S. Route 460. The caveat was that it had to be built in ten years or go back to the family. Eventually, Bill Griffin bought this property and built the Wyndemere subdivision on this property. No long-term ties of new residents to the community. Many don't even know who their representatives are. The older families are dwindling with many new residents arriving.

- Sam is a member of Botetourt County Schools, in charge of Budget and Policy. He is also a member of the Botetourt Planning Commission, which had an involved discussion and eventual ordinance with regard to digital signage.
- Roy Foster also had chickens after the peaches. When they had chickens, the Firestone family provided the chickens and feed and gave them shots, providing the Fosters did the labor. The Firestones had a hatchery and a certain amount was paid for each egg.

Hagan, Alice Trout

Interview - October 29, 2013

- Alice Trout Hagan was the daughter of Dr. Hugh Trout and Alice Green Trout (second wife). She had three half-siblings from his first marriage. She married Dr. H. J. Hagan, Jr. There were four children—Hugh Hagan, orthopedic surgeon, who was the oldest, and three daughters.
- She walked to Highland Park Elementary, grades 1-7. She lived in the city on Franklin Road in a house attached to Jefferson Hospital, except for summers and Sundays on the farm in Hollins (Summerdean area). Grades 8-12 were spent at Stuart Hall (boarding school) in Staunton, where her father was born and raised. She went to Sweet Briar College and graduated from there.
- Her mother, Alice Green, was from Philadelphia and married Dr. Trout. Being from Philadelphia, she thought Roanoke must be a “cow town.”
- Her father established Jefferson Hospital. Today his picture hangs on the wall in the Jefferson Health Sciences College in the main level. There were quite a few blacks, many from Bedford County, who worked at the hospital and Dr. Trout really took care of them. James Patterson was his surgical assistant and his father commented, “If I ever need my appendix removed, I would want James to do it.” The relationship with blacks was always symbiotic and they were like family.
- Alice’s father had a farm on which everything was grown, which was handled by tenant farmers. Milk cows always provided the milk, which was brought into town for the hospital in order that good milk was available to patients (not pasteurized at that time). There were hogs and also fruits and vegetables available on the farm. There were also nut trees, especially chestnuts. Her father built a pool on the farm. She and others often played in the Oldfields of Hollins (just beyond the college, but not in the black section). After playing there, she would go to the farm and swim or participate in other activities. At Hollins College she especially enjoyed a head waiter, who looked like her father, the only difference being that he was black.
- Many blacks (especially from Bedford County in Goode) helped Dr. Trout establish the hospital, providing a lot of help in many ways. Often they were called Aunt or Grandma, even though they were unrelated. One story surfaced about a visit to Hollins College by a special speaker, George Washington Carver. Dr. Trout wanted to be sure he ate with everyone in the dining room; however, being astute, he said it is a nice day and I see a tree under which I can eat. Dr. Trout said, “I would like to eat with you outside under the tree.” (Not exact words.) One friend of the Trouts, who frequently visited the farm found out that they felt blacks were on the same plane, and being a Confederate from

the South, he refused to ride to the farm in Dr. Trout's car after he bought a Lincoln Zephyr.

- Dr. Trout knew the Mayo Brothers and other important contemporary surgeons stayed at their home in Roanoke when in the area for meetings of the Southern Surgical Association.
- Alice Hagan traveled a lot—several times to Europe, met Pope Pius, but didn't curtsy, just shook his hand. His assistant gave her several medals that she brought back home and gave to friends. One time a friend needed a way home to Toronto. She drove her home and stayed three to four months, where she worked as a hospital lab technician. Her mother eventually went to Toronto and asked her to come home, so they drove back.
- Alice was very lucky and led a privileged life. She had wonderful memories and experiences. Her religion was Episcopal—married in Christ Church, but mostly attended St. John's Episcopal Church.
- A beautiful portrait of her as a girl hangs on her wall, painted by a New York artist, Dorothy Hart Drew, who went across the United States painting portraits. She was born in Ethel, Macon County, Missouri on January 30, 1910. The railroad president, Racehouse Smith, also had her do a portrait of everyone in his family. She was a teacher of piano and niece of a famous sculptor.
- Alice married Dr. Hugh J. Hagan, Jr. May 16, 1953. He died on September 12, 1980 from cancer.
- Hugh J. Hagan III's great grandmother, Sarah Cobb Johnson Hagan Cocke, was born in a hotel lobby fleeing Atlanta when it burned. Mrs. Cocke, a somewhat flamboyant woman, was influential in putting modern sanitation infrastructure into Roanoke in the early 1900s. She was a personal friend of author Margaret Mitchell, who, according to family lore, based characters in "Gone With the Wind," on Sarah's family members.
- Side notes: Alice's father, Dr. Trout, came to Roanoke because of his asthma, believing the mountains would help him.

Hale, William David

Interview - October 2, 2013

- David Hale was born in August, 1942. He lived in Roanoke except for time in the military. His family lived off Williamson Road on Hillcrest. They moved to Bonsack when David was six years old. The old Wood property at the road was available. In 1948, his dad bought a small farm. There were chickens, turkeys, horses, and a garden. U.S. Route 460 was three-laned at that time.
- When he was 12, he had a paper route and delivered 13 papers on East Ruritan Road—all the houses that were there. He got paid \$.55 a week. He would ride a bike, a horse, or sometimes walk. This was his first work experience, and with the money he made, he probably cost his dad a lot of the money due to whatever it took to get those papers delivered.
- He lived in Bonsack until he went into the military. His dad, Herbert William Hale, sold the farm and moved to a plot of adjoining land. His dad was a shop superintendent at Shepherds Auto Supply for 44 years. David said, “It was a hard job, but we had a good life.”
- When first moving to Bonsack, he became good friends with Marshall Murray, Ed and Blanche’s son. They have been longtime friends, even though separated by distance today. He was also friends with the Cooper boys (black). They would play ball. His mom fixed lunch for all of the boys. The Cooper boys asked, “Is all of this for me?” David said that statement was certainly an eye opener. The Coopers lived on the Woods farm and their dad was a tenant farmer. The three boys were Pete, Russell, and Bobby.
- David’s family went the old Bonsack Baptist Church, where there were two pot-bellied stoves in the winter with benches on each side, which seemed to keep everyone warm enough. The old church sanctuary was used until the new church was built on Alt. 220. There were many wonderful people—Laymans, Cooks, Catrons, Ralph and Eleanor Foster, and Murrays. Mr. and Mrs. Layman were staunch supporters—she at the Methodist church; he at the Baptist. They would park between them and each would go to his/her church, which weren’t far apart. It was a Sunday ritual for a long time. She played the organ at the Methodist church and he was the treasurer at the Baptist church. There were times when the bills couldn’t be met at the church—Elmer Layman would put his money in the coffers to pay the bills. Lula P. Layman taught sixth grade at William Byrd Junior High in Vinton and was assuredly her own person. Elmer was a quiet person, but what he didn’t say spoke volumes. He enjoyed going out and delivering vegetables to people in the neighborhood.
- Bonsack had a special reputation. The young people were called “The Bonsack Kids” and people thought nothing good came out of Bonsack. All of the families and children

were the butt of a lot of jokes. The students attended school in Vinton and were the first to arrive there 1½ hours early, coupled with the last to leave in the afternoon. Being on the bottom of the list was okay according to David because no one thought a lot about it. Since “The Bonsack Kids” were early at school, they had to be sure they stayed out of trouble. There were no school football or basketball stars. Everyone worked and had many chores to do at home, particularly on the farms.

- When David was a teenager, he did not like a lot of things he had to do. His dad would leave a list of tasks that had to be done before he got home. He learned a lot of things that he has taken throughout life, particularly a work ethic.
- In 1955, Bonsack Baptist Church was going to build an addition to the old church, which was going to cost about \$55,000. When it was just about completed and the congregants realized there was no forethought about money for furniture. He and his dad went to Sears and bought some power equipment, such as a bench saw and joiner. There was a shop at the Hale place and David, his dad, Stanley, and Lloyd Chittum built 121 pieces of furniture—tables, chairs, and cribs for that building. Some is still being used today. It taught David how to work hard to perhaps become more successful in life.
- David’s mom was born in Bedford County, living in Evington. She went to New London Academy, where there were 19 students in her graduating class. She moved to Roanoke to work in the Viscose plant, as many others did also. Her maiden name was Witt and grandparents’ surname was Little. His mom and dad married when they were 20 years old, about 1930. She had distant Witt kin that lived in Blue Ridge.
- Pranks were distinctly remembered. His older brother, Ronnie was born in 1935. He, Jim Brown, Corky Rader, the Gibson boys, Chockletts, and perhaps some others. One year a wagon went up on top of the barn and another year a manure spreader. The equipment had to be partly taken apart. The barn was eventually torn down, but not by the youth. David knew who took the barn down, but wouldn’t reveal the source.
- There was a WROV disc jockey who was called, “The Ding Dong Daddy of Bonsack.” This person preceded Freddie Freelance. This attention and jokes put Bonsack on the map.
- When his parents went to prayer meetings on Wednesday night, David would stay with Jake Bonsack at the Bonsack train station, and he taught him a lot about dispatch on the railroad. He was also a good woodworker and had a shop where he did carpentry work.
- There was once a strange animal in Bonsack. Several people saw it and talked about it often. Dogs would tree it, but would come back with their tails between their legs. It was assumed it looked something like a cougar. However, David never heard of anything bad happening connected to this animal.

- David never saw a deer or wild turkey when hunting until he returned from the military. Apparently, they were non-existent prior to his exit. However, there is a plethora of deer and other animals today.
- School bus 33 was the transportation into Vinton. It was the oldest bus in Roanoke County and driven by Mr. Teel, who had Parkinson's disease, but we always got home safely. Bonsack was the last group to get anything new. Mr. Tesh had the other store, also run by Moyer and Radcliff. Mr. Teel ran a store near Glade Creek Road and built a pond at the base of the store. The boys would swim in that moss-filled pond and we were lucky we never contracted anything. The Foutzes lived nearby and owned the sausage plant.
- Occupations included the N&W, Viscose, and farming. Juanita Kessler lived near our home and she had a daughter named Ivy. The Horn property was called Pole Cat Hollow. Families that lived in that vicinity on East Ruritan Road were the Bohons, Horns, Chockletts, and Rumbleys. Some still own some land. On West Ruritan were the Trents and Pollards, who owned most of that land.
- In discussing Audrey Foster, who taught 40 years at Colonial, she had mentioned working at a one-room school in Bedford County called Mountain View. David said there were approximately 100 one-room schools in Bedford County and 11 high schools. Many of these schools consolidated. Most children were involved in church activities, which provided a lot of fun socially. The Baptist youth were involved in a live nativity scene. Alf Cook let them use his property, where a lean-to was built. Everyone worked in shifts and then went to the church for hot chocolate, and then returned to complete another shift. Mr. Quinn let the youth use his sheep. David and Junior Amos went to get the yews and butt sheep. Junior tried to get the butt sheep, but was soon yelling, "Get me out." The butt sheep were more than a challenge.
- Old house with verandas discussed. Al Cook, genealogist, stated that house belonged to Thomas Marshall Cook, who got hit in the road and died. His wife grieved for years and became reclusive. Her surname was Nininger. David stated the house he lived in was a 1910 house built by Arthur Wood. It was a nice house, but deteriorated over time. Marshall and Frances Thrasher owned the home at the corner of Carson Road and Challenger (460). The Davises and Swartzels lived near the CVS Pharmacy and Bonsack Square.
- Community change—in the old days Bonsack was considered not the place to be. When 460 was upgraded, it changed everything. It was slow to develop, particularly commercially. Subdivisions began developing. David developed Plantation Grove in the old Crumpacker orchard area. The Corps of Engineers connected the two parts of Ruritan Road—the Ruritan Club was responsible, which accounts for the name. Little

Tree Acres on the south side of Challenger (460) was begun by Alf Cook. Cliff Hammer was situated in that area to sell lots, but thought they wouldn't sell, particularly the ones not far from the railroad tracks. He sold twelve lots that day, which was a surprise. People wanted to be near the railroad. No steam engines tooted by anymore—just diesel.

- Huntridge subdivision was the rest of the Cook farm (about 100 acres) and homes were supposed to be around \$100,000. He built one for \$81,000, which sat for 19 months. Many more homes were built and it was a very hard time for sales. David was at McClungs Lumber and ran into Muriel Wilkerson, husband of Dorothy Cook Wilkerson. Muriel encouraged him to look at the Cook land (now on the north side of Challenger (460), and he told him he didn't think he could buy it, having little money. He did go to look at it and convinced Charles Simpson to partner with him. There was a recession and 23.5% interest rates—horrendous. David was building small hospital-type clinics, so he made it, but it was hard.
- Farmland being turned into subdivisions—Fralin and Waldron bought all of Crumpacker Orchards, building one section at a time. Lake Back O' Beyond is also a farm off Carson, but they never wanted anyone in their acreage, even when Marshall Murray lived nearby.
- David's development, known as Plantation Grove, built the first house in that subdivision for \$200,000; another was constructed for \$600,000.
- Transportation—David's mom didn't drive until 1954. "I was driving illegally to church." His mom would take a Greyhound bus to town for a quarter. Some of the boys would go to town to see a movie. David rode his bike at times to school and got a car in high school. When he got out of school in the afternoon, he worked the late shift at the Weaving Mill in Vinton. During the war, the railroad was an avenue of transportation between places. I can remember riding horses near Read Mountain, which is now being kept in a conservation preserve. It is an attempt to protect the mountain from obtrusive incursions that take away from its beauty.

Huffine, Joan Robinson
Interview - June 20, 2013

- Joan lived in Roanoke until she was four years old. Her dad, Emory H. Robinson, was looking for a house. He liked the Bonsack area because it was quiet and peaceful. He found the present house and said he was going to buy it, whatever it took.
- He worked at the N&W for 47 years. He was a good dad, but strict. When moving to Bonsack, we planted a garden and canned everything we grew. In addition, we had a grape arbor and a cow and pig. Her dad acquired 15 beagles and went rabbit hunting with them.
- Her mother was a city person and she left when Joan was six years old. "I was passed between Grandma Robinson and some aunts."
- When she became more independent, she became her dad's helper.
- When the war came along, he took Joan into the kitchen and laid a gun on the table, telling her at length how to clean the gun and gun safety.
- Emory had a shop and had clocks, made what-nots and things for Christmas. It was a real journey, but Joan appreciates those items that were made.
- Grandmother Robinson (Nancy) and Grandfather Robinson (Clay) had a horse in Mount Pleasant. The horse would lie down and she could get on him and ride around the pasture. Joan had polio, but at four years old she could walk the fence, her dad in tears. Some of her relatives wanted to put her in a home, but her dad refused. Grandmother Robinson stayed on the farm, growing all kinds of vegetables, until she became feeble. She stayed at the house for a little while.
- Emory had a lot of brothers and sisters, and when there was a reunion at the Bonsack home, there were about 50 people. Everyone brought something to eat. At Christmas time, they set off firecrackers on the porch, which no one can do today.
- Joan's dad loved family. His brothers were Henry, Aubrey, John, and another brother that died, in addition to several sisters.
- Emory met Libby, who was from Brookneal and grew up in the country. She canned, got a dog to go hunting with Emory, fished, and was eager to plant a garden, just as he was. This match seemed to be a good one. They were married eleven years and she got cancer, dying a horrible death. He had a hard time getting over it.

- He met Virginia and married for a third time. They were married for forty years. However, when he made out his will, he stated that he wanted to be buried by Libby rather than Virginia. Virginia never had any children and it appeared she didn't like them. Joan's children would come to see their grandfather and wanted to be near him. It seemed to make Virginia somewhat jealous. The grandchildren and a great-granddaughter stayed away as much as possible due to the unwelcome feeling. Apparently, the grandchildren tried to send letters and cards, but he never received them. Virginia went to the mailbox and got the mail, but kept the correspondence from Emory. Joan wrote to her dad for eleven years when she was away, but he never got her mail. When Joan would call and Virginia answered, she would say, "He is not available." This distant attitude really hurt Joan. Later on, if she came or her children came, they couldn't meet in the house, but rather had to congregate outside.
- He took up an interesting hobby, which provided an outlet and a way to spend his time. He began making thigmotropic canes, which utilized nature in order to make walking canes with snakes that he had whittled, sanded, and stained. He would go to craft shows and everyone admired them and he loved to show them to the children. He made 3,000 canes and sold them everywhere. Joan still gets calls from people who are interested in purchasing them. One time when he went to Morocco, he had a cane as he began to board a plane. A large black lady thought the carved snake was real and didn't want him to board the plane. He did anyway, stating he could buy the plane if anything happened to it, but agreed to place it in the luggage compartment if it was protected.
- Families in the community included the Catrons, Teels, Graybills, Pearsalls, Bonsacks, Coxes, Lemons, Staffords, George Seibel, and the Seibels, who ran the old Gish ordinary on 460. Mrs. Catron lived next door and worked at Old Dominion Candy Company on the assembly line. If the candy was less than perfect, she would bring some home to give to Joan. She had pleurisy. When her husband died, she stayed in the house. Eventually the house was put up for auction; she went to a nursing home in Vinton. She was a very kind, religious lady, who was very nice to Joan.
- Since Joan's father worked for the N&W, she had a pass to get on the train and would meet him at the General Office. They would often go out to dinner, eating something simple, such as hot dogs. She mentioned that her dad liked to dress up, perhaps because of his job at the N&W.
- Joan attended Bonsack Methodist Church and was baptized there. She has a church plate with a picture on it. When she married Frank Ayers, she had to become a Baptist and lived in the Ayers house just across the railroad tracks.

- Mrs. Covington had a house on East Ruritan Road near the Parks house. There was no water in the house. Mr. Teel let the Robinsons have boxes and they made wallpaper for her from them so she could keep the snow and rain out.
- Joan remembers that boys in the neighborhood pulled several pranks, one of which was a manure spreader being taken and placed near Alf Cook's nursery at the western end of the street. When the boys started aggravating Mr. Teel, he came out and shot Corky Rader in the leg. Corky ended up with a good woman, Lou Seibel. Mr. Teel had to correct a boy one time. He was going to kiss Joan and told him not to put his hands on her. He did and Joan knocked him off the porch. Mr. Teel reiterated, "I told him not to touch you." It never happened again.
- The Seibel girls were raised just like boys—ran the tractor and did farm work. Her dad liked George Seibel, who would come to the house if he would need anything. The Jeters would give people pumpkins and spray the bank on the Bonsack hill. Ned Jeter takes care of the Bonsack cemetery.
- Wilmer Cook was a hard man, but if left alone, he was all right. His wife fixed me a jelly sandwich one time.
- Joan married Carl Huffine, which has been a good marriage of 38 years (in 2013). They lived in north Roanoke across from Friendship Manor. He was a Navy Seal. One time he rescued a boy at Lakeside, with whom he has kept contact and they eat together once a month. While living in north Roanoke, she had to go to the hospital, where two clots were discovered. She couldn't speak at first, but was treated and survived. She had been a nurse for 18 years and was aware of the kind of treatment.
- There was a two-room schoolhouse nearby—Mrs. Layman and Mrs. Morton were the teachers for grades one and two. Mrs. Layman never had children and could get frustrated at times. One of the children put a dead mouse in her drawer. This discovery created a loud scream. The result was that the entire class was punished. Mrs. Layman wore her glasses way down on her nose, and the children quietly made fun of her which, of course, was inappropriate.
- After Joan attended grades 1 and 2 in Bonsack, she went to R. E. Cook in Vinton. I had Mrs. Deanna Gordon, who was tough. Her dad had given her a watch and a boy wanted to see it on the playground. He proceeded to put it on the ground and stomp on it. Joan punched him in the nose and was sent to the principal's office. The principal said, "You know little girls don't fight." She said, "I thought I was a boy. When I get home and tell my dad what this little boy did, I will probably get another whipping." The principal promised her that she wouldn't spank her hard. She went through fifth grade at Cook and then to the lower building for sixth and seventh grade. "They were a lot tougher then, often getting our hand smacked."

- Joan's dad gave her a nurse's uniform at one time. When she lived in Missouri, caring for some children with a staff of nine or ten workers, drugs were discovered by staff. When this discovery was found by staff, they would tell Joan and she would report it to the police chief. He was grateful to her and wanted her to stay when she indicated she may move back home.
- Occupations by Bonsack residents included farming, the N&W, Vinton Weaving Mill, and Kenrose Manufacturing. The farms usually had a milk cow and a lot of apple and peach orchards. Joan worked at Crumpacker Orchards putting labels on baskets. The Germans were there at that time picking apples and peaches.
- Joan's aunt made her some clothes, didn't like them, but wore them anyway. "I couldn't wait to learn how to sew. There were attractive feed sacks, so dresses, pillow cases, and other items were made from them."
- A black man used to plow the garden for her dad by using a mule. When the garden produced, there was a cooker in the yard and canning would take place there. They also had a smokehouse, where hams were hung.
- A gentleman named Mr. Black lived nearby. He played a banjo and drank a beer on his porch in the evening.
- Paul Pearsall was using the old woolen factory as a warehouse. When the Army troops passed through, a canteen was available there. When the troop train stopped, the neighbors gave the men cupcakes, cookies, and lemonade.
- Courtship usually occurred at ice cream suppers, Easter egg hunts, and singing in the choir. Joan attended Vinton Wesleyan Church, but joined Bonsack United Methodist Church with her husband and belonged to the Seekers class.
- Joan makes jewelry and her daughter has been selling her jewelry at the antique mall. Free beads are also acquired at yard sales or auctions. She also likes to paint with oils.
- Her dad had a fish pond in the front yard, which she couldn't continue to keep up. Her son-in-law brought two loads of dirt and filled it in. An angel now sits atop that spot.
- Community changes—neighbors nearby have changed. Some have problems with health or combined families, children who live in other states. The Peaks live in the white house; he does piano repair and is a choir director, and she is a teacher at a church school on King Street. Joan never feels threatened, but has a gun if she needs it. She taught both of her daughters how to use one. Both girls have two daughters of their own.

Jayne, Alvin G.
Interview - October 23, 2012

- Alvin (Al) G. Jayne was born in 1937 in the Webster area on the farm of his grandfather, Daniel Sutton Witt. His farm was located next to Jacob Griffin Cook's farm, who was the father of Nora Mary Cook Witt, his grandmother. His grandfather worked on the railroad as a foreman on the Ridge Line and he would come home on the weekends. When he died in 1927, the family consisted of Al, his brother, Emory, his mother, Mamie, and grandmother. They grew crops with the help of an uncle and that is how his family survived. His mother did not get a pension. Pensions on the railroad were not in effect until 1937. It was not retroactive, even though his dad worked there until 65 years of age. His brother was five years older. (Note: When Daniel died, Emory, b. 1930, and Al weren't alive.)



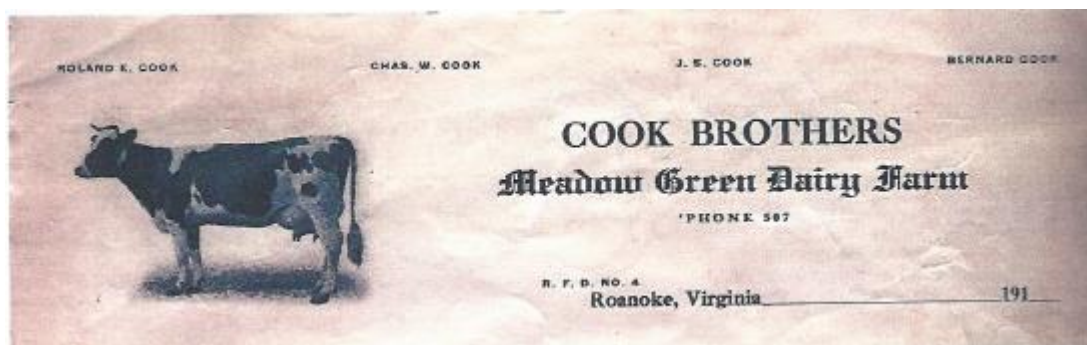
Nora Mary Cook, c. 1890

- Al's father and mother separated, followed by his uncle accidentally shooting his brother's finger off. His dad went to southwest Virginia and married again, so Al has some half-brothers and half-sisters. They lived in Carter Family Fold near Hiltons,

Virginia, where country and bluegrass music began. A niece lives there since inheriting the farm. Al and his wife have visited over the years.

- Blue Ridge—Al worked at two canning factories—his mother’s and Roy James Cook’s. He also worked in the field putting up hay and shocking the wheat while waiting for the threshing machine. It was a big work day. Everyone would come to help in the fields with the hands until lunch time. The women prepared the meal. Al finally got a job at Webster brick in the cinder block portion. W. W. Hobbie owned it at that time, purchasing it from a man named Rieley and one other person. He worked there for 19 years. When he was young, he used to watch the trains when he had to go out to the stores nearby. He said he was fascinated and wanted to have a job with the railroad when he became an adult. He did get a job with the railroad in 1956. He was running trains, and piloting the 611 steam train. “Steam trains worked one to death until diesels came into being.” When diesels replaced the steam trains, there was a great layoff. The Virginian line was added and they could run two trains with what used to be needed to climb the mountain with pushers.
- Al decided to do something else for a living and get his education. After he got married, he started going to school. His wife stayed home with the children, but also worked at Piedmont College, putting her girls in day care at that time. He went to school in Roanoke for three and a half years, followed by three years at Piedmont International Baptist Bible College. Al finished in North Carolina and moved to Stanleytown, establishing Stanleytown Baptist Church next to the Stanleytown mansion. The church is still in existence. He returned to the Roanoke area and started working for the railroad again—running trains. He worked in several divisions, such as Bluefield, Shenandoah, and Winston-Salem. Another layoff occurred; however, he did retire in 1987 from the railroad because of a back injury. One disc was ruined, and two others were ruptured. The railroad helped him acquire disability.
- He didn’t get a haircut until he was six years old, when he was starting school. His mom wanted a girl and got a boy. There is a picture with long blond curls, which he didn’t reveal. He walked a mile to school across the tracks to Colonial School, built in 1939 as a high school. In 1959 he went to Lord Botetourt in Daleville. He had to get up at 5:30 a.m. He had set 8-10 rabbit traps, went into the pines and retrieved them, brought them back to the house, and skinned them. He fed the cows twice a day, fed the hogs and was usually late to school because of all his chores. He went to school at Colonial. His first principal was Mr. L. D. Frantz, who also taught some of the first high school subjects. He played basketball and baseball in the cow pastures with Gerald Calvert.
- His uncle was Costella Sutton Witt who lived to be 88 years old. He worked with Al and his brother doing farm chores. His uncle had horses at first and Al plowed corn with a horse. The stables would need to be cleaned out and the horse manure put on the land. They grew their own wheat and took it Vinton and got a 200-lb. bag of flour. His mom made biscuits two times a day, and some others would make biscuits three times a day.

- Mr. Neeley was the next principals and “he had a big stick,” which was a paddle with holes in it. He didn’t have to use it too often, because students did not want to be the recipients of the board. Sometimes the boys in the class would point the finger at him and he had to bend over. “He would burn you up.” Al dropped out of high school and had to pass a GED test to get a diploma. He worked on that task a couple of years. He drove a Roanoke City bus for three years at night and went to school during the day. He moved to several houses after he got married, the first place being in Fincastle.
- Al went to Glade Creek Lutheran Church, which he explained was a union church serving other denominations. It served as a Civil War hospital. There is an old cemetery near the church called the Old Glade Creek Cemetery. There is also a newer section. He also attended Glade Creek Baptist for Sunday school. He met his wife, Jo Ann Heck, there. Her family had eight children and she also lived on a farm. Many of her family are buried at the Colonial Baptist Church Cemetery on Hillcrest. Al also mentioned that he had been to the Laymantown Cemetery and noticed several rocks below the upright markers. He believed these were probably slave burial.
- He knew of the Cooks—Caroline Cook Hutchins, Jacob Griffin, George William (married Mary Gross from Bedford County), Charles Cook, and the Spickards (all deceased by 1924). He noted that Jacob Griffin Cook had three families of blacks as slaves. He built three houses for them and allowed them to be sharecroppers, which was the way they survived after the Civil War. Walter Cook, Will Gordon, Nora Mary Cook (his grandmother), Fred Cook, and Marsh Cook made 35 gallons of apple cider, took it to the distillery, and turned it into 35 gallons of apple brandy. People lined up to get the brandy.



Blue Ridge Cook Dairy Farm, c. 1912
 Roland E. Cook, Chas. W. Cook, J. S. Cook, Bernard Cook
 (Courtesy of Pam Cook Graham)

- A two-volume set of the Kessler genealogy is called *Out from the Blue Ridge* by Morris Kessler. There is a lot of Spickard information in these volumes. Dale Spickard, father of Rodney, is in a veterans’ group with Al. Al was chaplain for 12 years and Dale subsequently assumed the position.

- The Webster Road area had four stores—Whittachers, Gross (became Kincer), Lawhorn, and Booze, which was called Jot ‘Em Down stores. The Booze store had some hot dogs, but later butchered meat and Bill Gross was the butcher. If they wanted to go to the market to sell produce, they would take a train in Webster, sell farm products, and return to the store in Blue Ridge to buy their meat. Al would sell rabbits, squirrels, and possums to the men and houses near the brick plant. In mid-November, his family would feed and kill hogs, dress them, cut them up, salted them down, and took them to the people. Estelle Cummings, a black lady that worked for them was given the chitlins (sic) and pig’s feet. Sometimes, they would put the undesirable parts in a sinkhole behind the cannery, saving the liver, heart, and skins. These would be put into a 50-gallon black iron pot and cooked to make the liver taste good. Al would manually grind the hog meat and thought his arm would fall off. Al’s family would sell a calf or hog if they had too much—anything to earn more money. There was also an artesian spring, which is still there. His grandfather built a cement structure to try to pipe it, but it wouldn’t quite reach. The Cooks sold some of their land to Mr. Womack and the water would reach his property.
- Occupations other than farming included Norfolk and Western Railway East End Shops (his first cousin, Don Cook, also worked there), the brick yard, and the quarry.
- He remembered that his grandmother talked about how many people she had to feed, grinding apples (which she didn’t love); picking pears from the pear trees; and canning everything, after which it was stored in the root cellars. Many ladies worked in canneries and at Crumpacker orchards. The Crumpackers bought the land from John Ross Cook, son of George William Cook.
- He recalled a prank that was pulled in Bonsack—a wagon was taken apart and put back together top of Wilmer Cook’s barn near the present day Bonsack Methodist Church and located near the highway. Bob (real name Alfred Jr.) was using a bullbozer from the time he was little. Al helped a gentleman that worked for Bob trimming trees at his father’s business, Little Tree Nursery. He also recalled a prank at Colonial school. The boys put a cow in the building and, since a window was usually left open, they dropped items through the window. They had to clean everything up afterward.
- He remembers when Dale Spickard’s mother died. He thought it to be very tragic and couldn’t imagine losing his mother. He also knew Iris and Nancy Spickard. Some of the Spickards go to the Brethren church on Hollins Road.
- Lloyd James, and his brother, built Al’s house and the one across the street in North Roanoke County. Jimmy Dooley of Blue Ridge helped make an electric connection for a stove, because the house was built with only natural gas options.

- Social activities: every fall at Colonial there would be an ice cream supper and cake walks, called a Fall Festival. The Lutheran church would play music, and Susie Tyler would dance for us. Her dad ran a store at the Coyner Springs Texaco. Mel Spickard also ran a store at Coyner Springs. He always had a big wad of money in his hand. There was a swimming hole that was created in Webster by damming up the creek and throwing rocks behind it. It backed up to Mr. Womack's land. Mr. Womack built a swing and rope so everyone could enjoy it. He remembers Dave Witt's marriage, which occurred in the old Baptist church. David Witt's dad, Carl, was a hard worker and he showed him how to work, shocking wheat.
- There was a rocking chair brigade at Coyner Springs. The sulphur water and mountain air were supposed to give the guests a long life. This proposition was also disseminated at Blue Ridge Springs, where orchestras and dancing were offered nearly every weekend. The Cook land went up to the property of Peter Matthias Fluke, who owned a lot of land in the area.
- He had a school teacher named Ollie McAllister for fourth, fifth, and sixth grades at Colonial. She would keep him in and say, "I know you can do it if you keep at it." Sometimes, she kept him after school and would walk him home. She helped him a lot with math and geography. Audrey Foster was his second grade teacher. He had been to her house on the mountain, where Audrey's mother lived. She died at the age of 102 years. Al preached in Glade Creek Baptist Church a few times. Mrs. McAllister came to hear him preach, would fill up the chalkboards with questions, and he would have to answer all of them on paper.
- Changes: He used to think he knew all the people in the Webster/Blue Ridge area, but today he hardly knows anyone. Transportation used to be by train, Greyhound bus, or his uncle's truck, where he stayed in the back heading to town. He does remember fixing wagons to keep them running. When he went to town, his family might go to the A&P, Kress, Woolworth, McClellan, Roanoke Weiner Stand, and Parker Seafood. He would stop at the weenie stand when he was driving a bus and eat a meal while driving.
- Al works on violins. He met Roy Acuff on a Saturday night in Roanoke. Roy drank a lot, so Al took him back to the barn to sleep. When he woke up, he had a great dinner with Al's family and said it was the best food he had ever had. Roy gave Al a fiddle, which needed some work. Al went to Melody Haven, spending very little and fixed the fiddle. He also has a player piano that is an antique. He began playing the fiddle and loaned it to a Swanson boy, who died tragically. This family lived in Coyner Springs and could never get the fiddle back. He quit playing for 30 years, and picked it back up, which was an avenue for meeting others, one of whom played the banjo. He started playing guitar with him and together they sang at functions. He has 25 fiddles that he has fixed in his home.

Jeter, Ned

Interview - December 3, 2012

- Ned farmed all of his life. His daddy, Richard, farmed all his life. Today his two sons, Ned II and Darrell, are farming with him. They have been on this property since 1853. Dr. Benjamin Elliott Jeter moved from Bedford to Bonsack in 1850 because the community needed a doctor in the area. The old house of Dr. Benjamin Elliott Jeter and Susan Bonsack Jeter was built in approximately 1854. The farm in Bonsack was about 350 acres when his ancestors came here, but has expanded to 500 acres, buying a little here and there since 1980s. Ned's daddy, Richard, Ned, and Ben bought 120 acres between the Blue Ridge Fire Department and the quarry. Fred, a brother who has been in Germany for 15 years with the USO, is now in the process of building a house on that property that his daddy, Richard, gave to him at his death. Fred is now the full owner and is really looking forward to returning. He received his Masters degree in a university in Rotterdam, Holland and speaks German well.
- There were six children in our family—Gail, Betty Jo, Richard Benjamin (called Ben), Ned, Sue Ann (called Penny), and Fred. Daddy built the brick house (seen from the road) in 1965-66 when U.S. Route 460 was four-laned. It took the old 1850s house, which they had to move and put on blocks. It is now used for storage. The red barn had an addition Ned's daddy built in 1960. He had to remove it in 1965 because of the new road being laid out in its path.
- Ned's daddy was born in Bonsack in 1917; his mama came from Franklin County and she was a Saul. Her family lived off 10th street in the Rugby section of Roanoke City. The two parents died within 45 days of each other in 2007; his mama, June 30, and his daddy, August 15. His daddy was being shown the work going on at the farm, supervising some of the tasks. He died at 4:00 a.m. the next morning.
- Ned's daughter, Jessica, is in the Air Force, which she joined after graduating from high school. She is stationed at Nellis Air Force base in Las Vegas. She has been to Afghanistan once and Africa twice. She has a four-year old daughter, Natalie, who stays at Ned's house and is entering preschool at Bonsack Baptist Church.
- Bonsack has changed. His daddy used to say that when you went to the top of the mountain, only three houses were visible—today it is probably 300 or more. Cookie Seibel said to Ned that she wished she had the view the Jeters have. On the Seibels' Glade Creek Road farm, she looks at a big box catalog order store and Ned looks at the mountains and the Parkway.
- The farm raises beef cattle, hay for horses, wheat, and vegetables. The vegetables are sold to Kroger but go through Horton Produce. The other vendors used are Virginia Produce

(Hillsville), Produce Source (Bova family), Roanoke Fruit and Produce (Najuums), and U. S. Foods. The U. S. Foods Company comes to the farm and picks up the produce on their trucks. Vegetables grown include zucchini, yellow squash, acorn, and butternut squash. Wheat is still raised, sowing about 100-130 acres of wheat. The grain is sold as a cash crop. Ned and his two sons work the farm full time. In the spring, they would hire seasonal workers, which often included high school boys; however, the high school boys weren't as reliable. For the last four years, the Nepalese work on the farm, do a great job, get paid minimum wage, and work many hours. "We are very happy with their work ethic." His daddy used to drive cattle to the slaughterhouse on 460 to Tinker Creek. One could never do this today, as there is as much 460 traffic as I-81. George Seibel was hit on a tractor one time by the old Trail Drive-In.

- In 2007, Botetourt County lost five full time farmers—Richard Jeter, George Seibel, Beahm (Cloverdale), Timer (Fincastle), and Kent Murray with the cider company on Alt. 220.
- Ned's mother never had a drivers' license. Annie Laura drove her everywhere she needed to go. Occasionally she would go to the bottom of the road and get a Greyhound bus into town. They only had one car and all six children and both parents would pile in the car to go eat or see his maternal grandmother in the city.
- Ned went to school at Colonial Elementary; Botetourt Intermediate for grades 7 and 8; then on to Lord Botetourt High School; Virginia Western Community College for two years; Virginia Tech for the final two years. He would drive back and forth to Blacksburg to Virginia Tech, leaving early in the morning and coming back in the afternoon, when he went to work on the farm.
- At Colonial Elementary, Ned had Lois Spickard for first and third grades and she was a great teacher. His sister, Betty, had her also. Betty finished college, receiving a teaching certificate, went back to Colonial and taught with Miss Spickard for a couple of years. Audrey Foster taught second grade at Colonial, but he didn't have her. Two of her brothers passed away—Carey and later Ralph.
- The school bus ride was a long one going to Fincastle, but he never got kicked off. He was a patrol boy at Colonial and would take the erasers outside to clean them by beating them against a tree. A girl came out and Ned wanted to show off. He threw the erasers up and they lodged in the tree. His daddy had to bring a ladder and fish them out.
- Major families include the Murrays, Seibels, Davises, and Crumpackers. Most of these farms were big enough to raise beef, dairy, produce, or cider as a business. There used to be many canneries, located wherever there was a spring and a few acres. The Laymans, Witts, Zimmermans, and Cooks were canners.

- The family had a black man, Vernon Fisher, who worked for years and years, mostly as a hard worker. He used to work for Sam Vinyard, whose farm adjoined his daddy's. His daddy worked with Sam Vinyard a lot. Sam helped Richard learn a great deal about the coordination of farming and business.
- The community is going to change and everyone just needs to change with it. It used to be open fields and now subdivisions. Some of the best neighbors live in the homes nearby. Peachtree Valley joins the farm. The residents look out for the cattle, land, and call when people are doing something they shouldn't.
- Jack C. Smith Industrial Park is part of the old Sam Vinyard farm. At one point, Sam's wife wanted it to be a gas terminal. Several people were against its placement there. Because of much concern for the farm and the Bonsack community, Richard went to Joe Holland, the minister of Bonsack Baptist Church at that time. The dedication that Mr. Holland had to the community and the Jeter farm was evident when he spoke at a Botetourt County meeting. Ned's daddy had offered Mrs. Vinyard the same amount of money she would have gotten from the gas tanks and she didn't accept it. In the end, the gas tanks were located in Montvale. Different people owned the Vinyard land after that time and the industrial park finally took up that property. The library also was constructed nearby, but it wasn't Jeter property. However, the Jetters continued to farm it.
- When the industrial park opened with a large catalog order store (Tweeds), it was unattractive because it resembled a big box. Today it is HSN, another catalog order store that is planning a move. David Hale leases a building that is used by USDA. Fifteen acres of Jeter property were worked out between Roanoke County and Botetourt County to possibly build a new elementary school. Ned believes it is not a good spot—only one entry, many trucks and heavy traffic, swampy. Teachers from Colonial think it will never happen. Everyone feels it should be farther down 460, more central to the community.



Jeter Farm – Fall Festival.
 Little pumpkin train made out of barrels in which small children can ride.



Jeters' Home-grown Pumpkins

Kessler, Carl

Interview - November 2, 2012

- Carl Kessler is the son of Carl Kessler, Sr. He was born and raised in Mt. Hope, West Virginia. He came to Virginia in 1966, living in two different places in the Roanoke area before moving in 1989 to Blue Ridge (Rainbow Forest section). His paternal grandfather came to West Virginia from Giles County. The Kessler immigrant to America was Johannes Kessler, from Germany. He lived a long life, 1728-1823 (95 years old). He arrived in Philadelphia in 1751 and served an indenture for four years. He moved to Frederick County, Maryland and married a young lady with the surname Layman in 1755. Johannes had seven sons. The Kesslers received some land grants in what is now the Blue Ridge/Laymantown area. Benjamin Kessler had 867 acres in Laymantown and is buried in the old Laymantown Cemetery across from Rainbow Forest Baptist Church. Carl noted that during the Civil War, the Union troops came through from Lynchburg on the main route and pillaged farms, taking everything they could. Those in Roanoke refer to this skirmish as the Battle of Hanging Rock.
- Carl's memories of Mt. Hope, West Virginia. It was a town of 3,000 people. Coal was king. His grandfather opened a small grocery store. His father later took over the store. His father was originally a car mechanic and had a terrible accident in his early 20s. He went to assist a car on the side of the road that had had trouble. He was standing behind the car when another car came around a curve and didn't see him. The second car pinned his legs between the bumpers of the two cars. He was in the hospital for nine months trying to save his legs. Gangrene set in and his legs had to be amputated. Carl Kessler, Jr. was born in 1941 and never knew his father with legs. Since his father could no longer be a mechanic, he took over running the store. He was a very hard worker—not a lazy bone in his body. Everyone loved him and he loved the store business, being very successful.
- His dad married Gladys Watkins. Carl's maternal grandmother's maiden name was Walton. She came from Summers County, West Virginia. Carl had two sisters and he was the only boy. However, his father had several brothers: Billy, who lived behind the home, had four boys, who were like brothers; Robbie lived very nearby; James, lived in Oak Hill, a few miles away.
- Carl attended Mt. Hope Elementary School and Mt. Hope High School. His wife also went to the same two schools. They were small schools, but had football, basketball and track teams. He remembers two elementary school teachers. Their names were Miss Jones and Miss Thrasher. His wife's name was Beverly Kimright and her family came from Nannycoat, Pennsylvania, which was a coal area. Her father was a mine inspector. They got married in 1964 and had three boys—the first one, Jason, was adopted and he married a full-blooded Native American; the second son, born 10 years later was Matthew; the third son, Christopher, was born three and a half years after

Matthew. He hadn't dated his wife in high school, but went into the Air Force and was stationed in England. While in the service, he got to see other places, such as France and Libya.

- Occupations in Mt. Hope were the coal mines and miners—about 80%. There were a few grocery stores, gas stations, and a Murphy's. No one really farmed except for his dad's brother, Dewey. He raised vegetables in a garden plot, which he probably gained from his wife's family, that were from Eggleston.
- When he returned home from the service, his future wife had not been away from Mt. Hope and had worked for rural mines. They started dating, marrying in 1964, and leaving for the Roanoke area in 1966 to find a job. He went to work for General Electric and after living in two other Valley addresses, moved to Laymantown/Rainbow Forest area, where his original ancestors once lived. He stated that some of Johannes' sons fought in the Revolutionary War. His wife started working for the Veterans Administration, Regional Compliance Office, in downtown Roanoke. She now works at the Blue Ridge Library.
- His church life in Mt. Hope was Christian. The name of the church was Pilgrim Holiness Church, which was somewhat evangelical. The church is now called Wesleyan and it was built in the late nineteenth century. His mother was a very devout Christian and dedicated to attending the church.
- Family names in Laymantown that he knows are Zimmermans, Spickards, Laymans, Flukes, and Cooks. He believes all of these families left Germany because of religious oppression.
- Transportation in Mt. Hope consisted of old trucks, cars, walking, a Greyhound bus (on the way to Beckley or Charleston). He remembers 1950s and 1960s cars. His dad liked Buicks.
- There were black families in Mt. Hope. About 50-60% of the store's business was from its black customers. They were nice people and most lived in a section called Kessler Hollow. There was a black man named Kessler, for whom the section was named. Carl's mother was a homemaker and a colored lady, Irene, did her ironing and a little cleaning. Carl would take a basket of ironing over to Irene's house, followed by retrieving the ironed clothes.
- Carl's dad dropped out of school in fifth grade and went to work. The maternal grandparents Walton had ten children, and he fondly remembers her as a great lady. When television came about, and she saw it for the first time, she said, "I wonder if they can see me." Grandfather Walton fell and broke his hip when Carl was five or six years old.

- Social life—His cousins were like brothers. There were about eight or nine of us that were close. We would play Cops and Robbers, build things, had model trains, and later a BB gun. He said he had to work in the store on Saturdays bagging groceries and earned \$3 or \$4 a day.
- His dad would try to take a vacation every year. In 1954, he took us to California, then went north in a 1954 Buick, coming back on the southern route. We were gone a whole month. The speed limit was 45 mph on two lane highways. The gas was 14 or 15 cents a gallon.
- Mt. Hope community changes: It is much worse today because of the decline of the mines and mining. Everyone left to find work elsewhere. These changes made a great impact on what was a bustling little place when he grew up. There were five or six grocery stores and now only one convenience store. The houses are deteriorating because of lack of employment in or around Mt. Hope.

Lee, Annie Laura Jeter and Wagner, Anne Marie Lee
Interview - September 21, 2012

- Anne noted that she had lived all her life on the Jeter farm except for a few years away at college, after which she returned to the farm. Her mother is Annie Laura Lee and father was Jack Lee. He had a career in the Air Force. Anne has two children, who were both raised on the farm: the youngest is Jacob, who lives in Roanoke, and often comes out to the farm to see what is happening. Her daughter, Paula, lives in Richmond, which makes it harder for her to get back to the Bonsack area.
- Annie Laura was born in her daddy's house in Bonsack and has lived on the farm all of her life. Annie's father was Jacob Bonsack Jeter and her mother was Hattie Brugh from Nace. Richard, Ned's daddy, was Annie's brother. Richard ran the farm until his death in 2007. Ned, his son, took over that job and continues farming with his two boys, Ned and Darrell.
- Anne went to William Byrd High School and she was considered way out in the country. She would go to Bonsack, Mr. Teel's store, to catch the school bus. Many of her classmates would go to each other's houses, but the Jeter farm was too far. She often went to Vinton to play with her peers. She had a sister, Judy, and her Uncle Richard had six children, so she wasn't lacking for playmates.
- When harvest time occurred, Richard would go to Vinton to find help. He was always able to get Vinton boys to come to work on the farm, never having any trouble getting enough help. The boys may play ball in the afternoon before going home, but always wanted to come back to work on the Jeter farm. They were paid minimum wage and were often Anne's classmates.
- Annie would order baby chicks in the spring, and would eventually get eggs from the chickens, noting they never had to buy eggs. Anne shared that her mom got upset one time because of us wanting to get quills and bringing ink home from school. We got the quills from the chickens. Her mom dared any of the children to ever touch her chickens again. Annie Laura used to like to work with the chickens, but one time a weasel got into the chicken house and killed them all. They were such little things and, at first, she thought her brother, Richard, was playing a trick on her, hiding them somewhere, but he hadn't. After that experience, she didn't have any more chickens.
- Hogs were kept on the farm, butchered, and worked up into meat. They grew squash, green beans, potatoes, other bean types, watermelon, cantaloupe, and peaches (orchard). People would call wanting to know when certain peaches would come in and they scheduled their vacations around that time. Richard would always tell his patrons a specific day. If they were arriving at three, the peaches would be picked at two so that they were fresh. Annie Laura would have a shed taken to the road and sell produce

from there. She canned peaches in Troutville, which was a lot of work, but enjoyed being with the other women.

- The old house was moved from U.S. Route 460 when the road was widened. An addition to the barn from 1960 had to be removed also. The family was able to retain Dr. B. E. Jeter's medical bag and tools. Annie Laura and Anne have a table from Dr. Jeter on which bones were set. When the old house was going to be auctioned because of road expansion, people came on a rainy day to view it. The Jeter family was glad because they were able to bid back the home. They started placing the beams under the house to move the top part, which caused the beams to begin to bend. The moving company had to go to Northern Virginia to get some heavier beams. The rest of the house was stone and homemade brick. The stones were 24 inches in size.
- Annie walked to the Bonsack School in all kinds of weather. There were no snow days. She went to a half-day first grade and Max, Annie's brother, would walk her to Teel's store. She got the name "Lock" from Max teaching her the phrase, "Lucy Locket lost her pocket," and she would repeat it never completing it, causing her to be called "Lock." The school was located where Country Corner is today.
- Annie's brother, Richard, didn't like school and would rather farm. He was always late to school, hiding his shoes and hoping that would delay his getting there. Eventually, school staff would ask him why he was late and he would say, "I would take one step forward and three backward, and it took a long time to get to school. The curriculum was mostly the three R's. Annie Laura said that Mrs. Ola Bonsack was the teacher and she really liked her.
- About Blue Ridge Springs, Annie indicated there was a very large hotel there and many well-to-do people would arrive from New York and the south on the train. She noted that "the water smelled like rotten eggs."
- Most everyone was farming. Some worked for the N&W. When it was time to thresh wheat, everyone helped. There were usually 15-20 people. The family cooked lots of vegetables and everyone ate. They had cows for milk and made their own butter. Annie made bread every meal. They made their own ice cream with the cream from the milk.
- At one point, Ned got his hand caught in the corn picker and couldn't work. People from both churches came to help Richard. Years later Ned became sick and had to go to the hospital. Medical personnel thought it was the flu. He went to Lewis Gale hospital in Roanoke and was tested and medical staff thought he had Gilliam Barre syndrome. He was given three bags of medicine, which did nothing. He was sensitive in the hospital to smell, hearing, and light. Actually, he ended up with the West Nile virus, but no one knew about the mosquito that causes this phenomenon. Judy worked in D. C.

and knew about the mosquito. They got Ned to a specific place in Mississippi where a doctor was working with this disease. His limbs were atrophying (mostly legs). Many church prayers and prayer chains were occurring. The doctor didn't know how much he could help him because he didn't get him right away, but Ned got through it and returned to the farm.

- Annie likes to quilt, but learned how later in life. When Anne was small, she made Anne's dresses from feed sacks. Ladies would go to the mill and pick out the feed sacks with special designs that they preferred.
- Annie said they all loved to hear the steam engines go by from Blue Ridge heading to Bonsack. In addition, they would try to count the coal cars. The train would stop to get water from the water tank near the tracks. Hobos would occasionally stop and were fed by the Jeter family.
- One of the pranks that Annie remembered was boys letting air out of everyone's tires at the old Bonsack Baptist Church, but didn't let the air out of Richard's. Eventually the boys were found and directed to put air back in the tires. The other prank she heard about was Wilmer Cook's manure spreader put on top of the barn, possibly by Jim Brown, Corky Rader, and another boy. Keith Cook would let the boys know when Wilmer went to bed because he could see the light go out at his house. Then he would let the boys know, so they could carry out their prank.
- Ned Jeter has a son Ned II, and Darrell, who both help run the farm. He has a daughter Jessie, who is in the Air Force. Ned is keeping his granddaughter, Natalie.
- Important families who gave Bonsack Baptist Church its start were the Bonsacks, Silers, Jeters, Covingtons, Elmer Layman, and Mrs. Creasy, who led the singing. Max, Richard, Josephine, and Annie had Elmer Layman's wife, Lula P. Layman, as a teacher.
- Though Annie and Richard stayed on the farm, their brother, Max, had a Navy career. Even though the career took him to faraway places, he still loved the farm and visited as often as possible, especially before being shipped out. Josephine, their sister, worked in the City of Roanoke in the billing section of the water company. She would return home to the farm after work and help, doing anything that needed to be done. She stood on a box at twelve years old and help cook, which was a big help to her daddy because her mother had died. She was a mother to her brothers and sister, as well as her nieces and nephews.

Lunsford, Ray W.
Interview - September 12, 2013

- Ray W. Lunsford was born in Richmond, Virginia in 1931. His dad lost his job during the Depression, which caused the family to move to the farm. He spent the first year of his life on the farm, located between Bonsack and Webster. His dad found work in Roanoke, but the farm remained a functioning entity, providing chickens and goods through the remainder of the Depression.
- Ray has researched his genealogical roots. It started with Moses Lunsford in the Northern Neck. This era was pre-Revolutionary War. Moses' son, Rhodam, served in the Revolutionary War as a corporal in the Union army. Rhodam, in turn, had a son, Merryman, who moved to southwest part of Virginia. He married Susan Mills and was a Baptist minister. Merryman and Susan had a son, Robert Rhodam (referred often as R. R. Lunsford). Merryman served 40 years as a minister at Blue Ridge Baptist on State Route 24 in Vinton. Both Merryman and R. R. were also farmers and had to barter to receive merchandise they needed.
- Robert Rhodam married Sarah Ann Lemon. They had three sons—Griffin, Christian, and Marshall. It is possible that they had two daughters, but Ray has been unable to prove that possibility. Griffin Gabriel was Ray's grandfather and married Mattie Buckman from Bedford County. They had Ernest, Ray's father, and he married Betty Gilbert of Botetourt County.
- Merryman also founded Glade Creek Baptist Church. Merryman's son, Robert Rhodam, was pastor at Glade Creek Baptist for 40 years. Griffin Gabriel did not follow the same path and went to work for the railroad. However, he soon returned to farming. He and his wife, Mattie, had seven children. When Griffin worked for the railroad, he was stationed on the other side of Radford. He would send his laundry home on the train for his grandmother to do, which is similar to college students today.
- The Lunsford farm was seventy-seven acres. His grandfather, Griffin, died in 1947. In 1949, the farm was sold to the Cutshall family. It was a truck farm, raising many varieties of food and meat. They had two cows and three work horses. They had a smokehouse, where meat was put up. The produce was sold on the Roanoke City market, first transported by horse and buggy until the Model T car came along.
- Beechwood was the name of the farm, so named because it appeared that a spring supplied all the water from under a beech tree. The water actually flowed to a springhouse and into a cleaning trough, where the vegetables were washed outside the springhouse. From the springhouse, it flowed into a pond, 100' x 100'. After flowing into the pond, it flowed under a canning factory. The factory sat over the top of the

spring branch and the branch flowed into Glade Creek. The family had to carry water from the springhouse to the house.

- The farm was not large enough to send goods on the train. However, we would come from town on the train, get off at Webster, walk to the farm, go back to Webster, and flag a train to go back to town.
- Ray found some old Lunsford letters in a roll top desk. They were written in the 1880s. R. R. wrote many of them to his son, Griffin, but Chris, another son, wrote some to Griffin. Chris was an attorney in Fincastle. Some of the letters spoke of farm life. When Griffin was working for the railroad, his dad talked of what was being grown on the farm. He mentioned tomatoes, potatoes, beans, snaps, apples, cukes, and melons to take to the city market. Another letter, written from Chris to Griffin, outlined a program for Griffin's marriage, such as providing a carriage for the women and hotel accommodations in Liberty. He explained the pay for certain items, noting arrangements for train stops, or possibly drivers of conveyances from Blue Ridge Springs. R. R. Lunsford also addressed a letter to his son from Coyner Springs. Furthermore, he mentioned that he loaned George P. Luck some money at 6% interest. (Luck became a Baptist minister.)
- When reflecting on the farm today, Ray noted that the old barn is still there. The Meador family now owns it and operates a trucking and excavating business. Occupations in Ray's younger years were farming, some who worked at the brick plant and some who worked at the Bonsack Woolen Mill.
- Merryman Lunsford had some slaves and set forth certain provisions for them in his will. Ray believes there was a balcony in both Blue Ridge and Glade Creek Baptist churches for blacks, who were to attend church. His great grandfather was a teacher in the public schools, teaching at the Laymantown School. Ray had the school attendance book, which he took to the Fincastle library. There were some members of the Davis family in a picture of the school with teacher Simmons and his father about 1908. (See Appendix H.)
- Ray carried papers during WWII. He was supposed to be in the Korean Conflict; however, his mother refused to let him go into the Marine reserves. His mother lost family in previous conflicts and felt he may not return if he joined. He went to Jefferson High School and there were over 500 in his class. He concentrated on taking business classes. He met his wife in his senior year and they dated on a city bus (transportation) for a year. After high school, he worked for First National Exchange Bank, followed by enrolling in the Air Force. He was stationed in Texas and then Florida (Orlando). He went to Rollins College near Orlando for a few months and then returned home and went to Virginia Southern for four years, where he studied business law and accounting. He went to work at Double Envelope, starting at night and remained there 37 years.

McCabe, Jim
Interview - September 30, 2013

- Jim McCabe grew up in Thaxton, Virginia. He remembers as a young boy visiting Bonsack on weekends to see his grandmother, Theodosia, and grandfather, A. T. Weeks. He had a huge apple orchard and made lots of cider; also had a very large farm and raised cattle.
- Grandfather Weeks loved Bonsack Methodist Church. Jim will never forget one Sunday when he was six or seven years old. Jim noticed that his grandfather disappeared and shortly thereafter returned with a suit on and his watch on a chain and he said, “Jim, I want you to go to church with me today.” In a few minutes one of the Smelsers that worked on the farm brought a horse and buggy and his big dog, Fritz. The two of them and Fritz rode to church. A deacon in the church came up and asked his grandfather, “What do you think about losing your preacher? It is time for him to move on. (Methodist ministers used to move approximately every four years.) His grandfather responded, “You know, I am not that disappointed, because if he hasn’t told you what he knows in four years, it is time to go.” Jim is still a Methodist, as was his mother, Lola. His father, Dr. McCabe, was a Baptist. They didn’t have a bit of trouble going to different churches.
- Lola Weeks lived in the Weeks house at the tracks, built in 1908. His father, W. L. McCabe, Sr., was a N&W country doctor and twenty years older than Lola. Somehow the word got out that Mrs. Theodosia Weeks was ill. Dr. McCabe got on the train in Thaxton and got off in Bonsack to make a house call. While tending to Lola’s mother, he met Lola.
- Lola Weeks and Dr. McCabe married and moved to Thaxton in 1929. Jim had one brother, W. L. McCabe, Jr., also a doctor, who passed away in 2012. He was stricken with a malignant tumor.
- The old Thaxton homeplace was bought by Jim’s father in 1895 from William Thaxton. He paid \$6,000 for the house and 395 acres of land. He never had a lot of money because house calls didn’t bring much money. Somehow he managed it.
- More about the Weeks’ family: Lola had two brothers—Harry and Howard. After Grandfather Weeks passed away, Harry continued farming and was very successful as an orchardist. The Smelsers, who had come from Bedford County, worked on Harry’s farm and for the Cooks also. He and his wife, Mary, lived there for a number of years. Grandmother and Grandfather Weeks are buried in the Laymantown Cemetery, where there are a number of Weeks interred. Tyree Weeks was some relationship, but unsure of the exact connection. Tyree was once in charge of elections in his community (found by the writer in the *Fincastle Herald*).

- The second brother, Howard, married Myrtle Foutz. She was a school teacher for a number of years. One daughter, Nancy, married a VMI colonel. After his retirement, he bought a beautiful house and farm in Botetourt County called Stonelea. Howard's occupation was a salesman for the N&W.
- Jim remembers Elmer Layman, who was a good Bonsack farmer, but was sick for several months before he died. Weeks' reunions were held yearly in Rainbow Forest until Jim graduated from high school. He headed off to Tech and his brother went to Randolph Macon.
- The Weeks and the Cooks worked together as farmers. Richard Jeter used to say he wished he could be half the farmer that Mr. Weeks was. He noted that Mason ran a dairy farm and Alf ran a nursery. Alf's daughter, Phyllis, and son, Bob, were opposites and didn't always get along.
- Jim's mom, Lola, was a hard worker. She raised two boys because her husband died when both boys were young. When Jim retired, he and his brother bought the Thaxton homeplace. Eventually, Jim bought his brother's part. His brother was a physician at Lynchburg General Hospital and owned a lot of other property. Jim's daughter lives with him and is a dean at Lynchburg College. She got her doctorate at Tech. Her son graduated from Tech and is a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army, based in Colorado. He plans to remain in Colorado one more year, hoping to attain the rank of colonel before retiring at 44 years old. He was a helicopter pilot. His daughter, Kim McCabe (kept her maiden name), also has a son, Matt, and a daughter. Her husband works for BMW in Lynchburg.
- Jim remembers that a store owner at the Bonsack store (across from the old Methodist church) moved to Bedford and ran a successful sheet metal company. (This person might have been Mr. Tesh).
- He also knew Jake Bonsack with the N&W. He had one daughter, Betty. Harry Week's daughter was Virginia Dare and they were good friends. Doris Murray was also a friend with Betty and Virginia Dare. Virginia Dare Weeks and her husband lived all over the world because of her husband's military service. When he retired, they moved to Johnson City, Tennessee because he went to work for the TVA (Tennessee Valley Authority).
- Harry Weeks also owned a second farm, located in Laymantown. His children were Virginia Dare, Francis, John, and Shirley. His wife, Mary, wasn't happy to be between two farms and would rather stay in Laymantown. He eventually did a rent-purchase of the farm in Laymantown and stayed in the old Weeks house south of the tracks and the station in Bonsack.

- Thaxton Elementary had two rooms—one housed grades 1, 2, and 3 and the other housed grades 4, 5, 6, 7. Mrs. Falls was a teacher and a principal. Following the elementary school, he went to Montvale school for grades 8-11; no grade 12 until 1953 or 1954. He played baseball and basketball. Smoking was not allowed at Montvale.
- The Baptist and Methodist churches had a lot of youth at that time. Everyone always returned to church on Sunday night for punch and cookies. The ladies of the church always had activities planned. We played badminton, horseshoes, Spin the Bottle, and other games. There was an equal number of girls and boys.
- Jim's dad, Dr. McCabe, had a pass as the N&W physician and could travel all along the tracks. In Thaxton, there was pulpwood, cattle, and baby chickens that were transported by train. A ride on the train and going to the Lyric Theater cost 10¢. Trains came to Thaxton daily until about the late 1960s. Black residents had to go farther than the Thaxton depot to ride the train. Thaxton was central to Bedford and Montvale.
- He remembers that young boys would come by to help mow grass at their home with a push mower. His mom was alive and would treat the boys like her own. She never remarried, but had the opportunity. She always said she didn't want someone else to tell her how to raise her boys. The opportunity was a brother to his father, named Jim. Apparently son Jim was named for him. He was living in Martinsville and owned a lot of land in Martinsville and Axton. Sometime after he lost his wife, he made a proposal to Lola, but she turned it down.
- Community changes: the Thaxton community has changed a lot. Everyone used to help one another, but not as much today. A lot of people who reside there worked for the government and have retired. There is a Methodist and Baptist church, in addition to a post office. Not many people would probably want to live in Thaxton today. There is a road close to the Thaxton home that takes one eleven miles to the Peaks of Otter. There is very little to do for young people today.
- Courtship: Jim went with a girl in Germany for five years when he was stationed there twice. It fell through because she didn't want to have to move from Germany to America. He met Shirley, to whom he has been married 51 years (1962). Shirley had taught in Poquoson on the coast and additional schools near Thaxton. He met her at a drive-in and was with a friend. He saw her and she was with a boy. When the boy got out of the car, he asked his friend to keep him busy. He went over to the car, introduced himself and asked her if she was busy on Saturday. That was a brave move on his part. That beginning started a relationship that ended in his marriage to her.

Meador, Vernon
Interview - October 28, 2013

- Vernon Meador was born at home in Blue Ridge and he is one of thirteen children. His mother and father raised all of the children in Grubb Hollow (now called White Oak Estates). Grubb Hollow was mining area, in which the iron ore was excavated from the mountain by a man named Grubb who owned the mines. He is the eleventh of thirteen children and said his family had a good life.
- They had pigs, cows, and a garden, which the whole family participated in handling. Some children would get to play ball after school, but his family had to work the garden or perform other chores. Other children may have had more materialistically, but he had things money couldn't buy.
- His father was William Meador and mother was Evelyn St. Clair Meador. He knew his maternal grandmother and her siblings; his maternal grandfather died when he was two years of age, so he didn't know him. His paternal grandparents lived in the same house with 15, which included his mom and dad. His paternal grandparents' names were Arthur Jackson Meador and Lola Elizabeth Meador.
- Glade Creek Baptist Church as always been their church and church life has always been important. He can remember revivals there when he was younger and many people would attend. Other churches were Glade Creek Lutheran, Colonial Baptist, and Blue Ridge Baptist.
- Vernon went to Colonial for school. The second year he was there was the last time it was a high school, so he finished at Lord Botetourt High School in Daleville. He went on to attend National Business College (now called the American National College). It was located on Melrose Avenue near Route 419 and Lakeside Amusement Park. He noted that teachers had more control of the students then than they do now. If a child got a spanking in school, a note went home and the child would get another one at home. The curriculum was mainly reading, handwriting, and arithmetic. Janet Foster was one of his teachers.
- Major families in the area were the Dooleys, Leonards, Spickards, Zimmermans, and Tylers. He remembers when U.S. Route 460 was a three-lane road and the middle lane was used for passing.
- A lot of the old homes are gone, but the George Layman home on the way into Blue Ridge Park is owned by Dale Wilkinson. It is old, but it doesn't appear much is being done to it.

- Many residents, if not farmers, worked at Webster Brick. There were no organized sports programs then. However, Webster Brick would sponsor the kids and get them uniforms. Some of the men that worked there became their coaches.
- Vernon was a member of the Recreation Authority for six years, which had the ability to purchase land. Later it was called the Recreation Commission and he served for 24 years in that group. Between the two recreation entities, it totaled 31 years. The Recreation Commission actually started recreation clubs. Joe Spickard can tell you when the booster clubs started. Ken Myers, Carole Porter Myers' husband, and Ronnie Davis helped start the Blue Ridge booster club. Booster clubs were set up in magisterial districts, such as Cloverdale, Buchanan, Troutville, and Blue Ridge (at Colonial school).
- The Commission began with about a \$6,500, primarily to be spent on recreation. A lot of donations were needed in order to put up fencing, acquire a building, upkeep of the grounds, etc. He and other interested residents performed these tasks. The county was not very forthcoming with money, noting they said it was not there. A lot of farmers didn't want it to come out of their tax money, so many were opposed. He remembers one member of the Board of Supervisors saying, "The kids should be working in the cornfields." That supervisor had a farm and that was his opinion. At a later time, some of the farmers would be attending the games to see their children and grandchildren play, which began a slow conversion to its acceptance. The adults attending would approach Vernon and ask how everything was going.
- Some farmers grew food for their families and canned it, while others did some truck farming and took their produce to the market. They didn't have Kroger and Walmart stores, only a convenience store at the end of Route 738—Webster Road. In those days, his dad and grandparents grew a large garden. They had cows for milk and his grandma would churn butter. His grandpa would bring in a sack of flour and put it in a barrel. A few people had apple orchards.
- His family played ball with the black youth that played on Boxley field. He and his siblings would walk from Grubb Hollow to the field to play with them. They were like kin. He would get upset sometimes because he could play ball with them, but couldn't go to school with them.
- Social activities mostly centered around picnics every Sunday—some people in the community were there, but mostly his family of thirteen and his dad's family of fifteen would get together and play Red Rover and Hide and Seek.
- Courtship—he met Geraldine Dickerson from Bedford County at a basketball game, dated for three years and have been married for 44 years. They have two children—a daughter, 43, with two children, both girls; and a son, 40, with two children, both boys. The two sets of grandchildren are about the same ages. Weddings were usually held in

church and about 30 attended his wedding. Some people chose to elope. Funerals usually occurred at the church, after the body had been taken to a funeral home and returned to the church.

- Harvest time—he remembers having apples to peel with a peeler that went around and around the apple (perhaps to make apple butter). His family would feed the scraps or apple pumice to the hogs.
- There was not a lot of transportation when he was growing up. Grubb Hollow was a gravel road and one had to cross a creek. Not many people had cars.
- Boxley and General Shale were generous companies, helping to supply whatever was needed for sports. Ab Boxley was always good to give whatever they needed. Boxley should get an award for helping the recreation program in a large way.
- At one time, there would be a monetary allotment to each magisterial district. This year, the county allotted \$65,000, alternating districts. He was the treasurer of the New Vision Century Council and the county officials, such as John Williamson et al, knew some land in the Blue Ridge area was for sale and acquired 34 acres for Blue Ridge Park. The back of the park borders AmRheins vineyards.
- Boxley fields were always available but, in 1985, there was a meeting in Fincastle. Ab Boxley was attending and Vernon went also. He addressed the Board of Supervisors with a eulogy for the Boxley family always being generous to the Blue Ridge community's sports program. After that meeting, Boxley asked him if he needed anything and he replied that a building was needed at the park. Boxley asked him if he could get any donations toward the building, which he and others did. Beyond the donations, Boxley set up an account at Lowe's and whatever was needed to build it could be charged at Lowe's. Roger Arthur and Mike Callahan helped build the building. John Griffin, a builder, contributed a septic tank. The building ended up being two levels, which was needed for uniforms, and area to change, and showers.
- The School Board was supposed to build a school on 17 acres in Rainbow Forest near the lake but, at a public meeting, the recreation group had opposition to using some of the acreage for athletics from the residents, so it was fortunate when the land in Blue Ridge became available. There were some scrimmages held in Rainbow Forest, but there was no parking, so the use was very limited.
- Vernon also was responsible for a nature trail that was built in the Blue Ridge area, another feature that is attractive to those who love the outdoors.



Girls' Basketball



Baseball



Soccer



Football

Metz, Reba Spickard
Interview - October 13, 2013

- Reba's mother came to the Webster area to work in Bessie Davis's canning factory; Daniel and Geneva Kinzie did peach canning in Laymantown.
- As a young person activities included croquet, bowling, movies, roller skating, and the Luther League each Sunday.
- Farmers took items to market in some cases; truck farmers also came into the community.
- Reba's mother kept every obituary of people in the Blue Ridge area in a scrapbook, which is quite invaluable as you look through it and glean information from the obituaries one might not find someplace else.
- Black Aunt Jo, or someone in her family, nursed a Spickard child when her mom couldn't.
- Old homes: Clement home near Lake Forest Subdivision, built in 1865, was the old Tyree Weeks' home. It has been renovated and remodeled. The Bessie and Theodore Zimmerman home was on State Route 738 (Webster Road). It was initially a home to the Gross family. Tom Gross was a builder. It is now somewhat eclectic in appearance and called Pig-A-Poo.

A sad note: Reba S. Metz passed away in 2015.



Mel Spickard at His Store

Miller, Wanda and Barnes, Rebecca (Becky)
Interview - January 13 2014

- Wanda Miller was born in Martinsville, Virginia, while her dad and mother were living in Madison, North Carolina. Her mother did not want Wanda to be born in North Carolina, thus the birth near the North Carolina line. Her parents were Warner Williams and Lucy Murray Williams. The couple and Wanda were in North Carolina for one year because Warner was an assistant station manager for the N&W. Her mother was not a happy camper and was homesick for Hollins and Virginia. Consequently, her father quit his job and they returned to Hollins when Wanda was a year old. They lived in a house across U.S. Route 11 from the old home place.
- Wanda married Ronald Miller, who grew up in the Hollins area of Roanoke County, but was originally from the city. They had three children: Brian, who lives in Lynchburg, Virginia; Lindsay, who lives in Indiana; and Ross, who lives in Mechanicsville, Virginia. She has six grandchildren and two step grandchildren. None of them are in Hollins.
- Becky Barnes, cousin to Wanda, was born in Roanoke to Floella Murray Dove and Charles Stafford Dove. She was an only child. Her father was in WWII and became a disabled veteran. Her mother was a bookkeeper for Roanoke Orchard Company. She used to share some stories, one of which was about the German prisoners who helped in the orchards. She married John Durham Barnes, Jr. and had three children. Becky and Wanda lived in the same house when Wanda returned from North Carolina at one year old. Wanda shared that gypsies would come and camp behind the house toward the back of the mountain. "We were told not to go outside because the gypsies might carry us away."
- Soon Wanda's family moved across Route 11 beside Granddaddy Murray's garden. Becky later moved to a house behind Murrays store and across a garden from Wanda's house.
- Wanda remembers when U.S. Route 11 was two-laned. It ran by the post office and Gordon Price Murray's store (which he had sold). Murray came to Hollins from Laymantown, one of five brothers of O. H. and Selina Murray. He came to cut wheat. Grandmother Floella Harshbarger Patterson lived in the home place where the Pepsi-Cola plant is today. Granddad Murray married Floella and had a total of nine children. Fifteen years after Floella's death in 1939, he married her sister, Mary Elizabeth Patterson. An interesting note regarding his burial came from Floella, which indicated that if he ever remarried, the second wife was not to be buried next to him, but only her. The Patterson cemetery is on this property and this placement was a reality.

- As a young man Granddaddy Murray worked for the Express Company, a precursor of the federal post offices. He used to deliver mail on his bicycle or motor cycle all the way to Cove Alum Springs. He was a Democrat and became the postmaster, a position he retained if there was a Democratic president. His brother-in-law, Mr. Rowland, had married the fourth daughter and was a Republican. If there was a Republican president, Mr. Rowland would be the postmaster. When Roosevelt was president for three terms, Murray kept his position for 12 years running. When he retired, Truman was president and Wanda's mother took over as postmaster. The post office was a tiny one-room building next to the store. Following Truman's tenure as president, Eisenhower was elected. Eisenhower eliminated a certain party controlling these positions, which allowed her mother to keep this position until her retirement.
- Both ladies live in sight of Granddaddy Murray's land. The house was at the bottom of the hill, south side of U.S. Route 11. He gave each of his children five acres of land on which to live. He wanted to keep his family close. Only one child didn't remain on the property. Ola married Dr. Hurt in Vinton and her property was in a section near Murray's quarry (Shadwell Drive area). She sold it and remained in Vinton. The third daughter married William S. Murray (Uncle Bud). They lived on land between Gordon Murray and the Rowlands. Their land was from Murray's pond to the railroad tracks. Aunt Ruby had a mushroom company. Mr. Rowland's and Auntie's (Loula) land went up toward the mountain across from Ingersoll-Rand.
- In addition to being the postmaster, Murray was also a farmer. He also did some magistrate work for Botetourt County, such as death and marriage certificates that he performed, particularly since Fincastle, county seat, was a good distance away. He also ran a cannery behind the big house and garden area. He grew a lot of vegetables and put his children to work to help him. One time he received a summons from an official which stated he was violating labor laws by having his children working in the cannery operation.
- Becky remembers working with chickens. Each of the children had a specific job, which included cutting off the chickens' heads, putting them in hot water, and pulling off the feathers. Wanda stated, "They would flop around all over the place." There was a big kettle with many chickens in it.
- Wanda stated that her mother shared that during the Depression people would stop and want to sleep in the barn. Granddad Murray would take a mattress, give them something to eat, and let them spend the night. He had some concern that if sleeping on the hay, a fire could easily begin. Both grandparents would sit on their porch and could see the homeless people, expressing concern.

- Becky's mom went to William Fleming High School and Wanda's mom went to Jefferson High School. Of course, they had to get to downtown, which was no easy feat. Lawrence, Ruby, Lucy, and Ola would pile into the family car and Lawrence drove (1910-1920) downtown. Elementary School was on Hollins Road, near the Brethren church today.
- Wanda's mother would have house parties, which included their friends to spend the night. Lawrence met his wife, Della, because she came out to a house party with the girls. Ola met John Hurt because he went to Jefferson and that is how that union began. Lucy, her mom, met her dad because his father, Robert Williams, was the station agent, following Uncle Bud's (W. S. Murray) tenure.
- Raymond Floyd was the last of the station agents at Hollins. The mail would be extended on a hook attached to a bag and dropped by the train. Becky remembers going with her mom to pick it up and take it to the Hollins post office. The Hollins train station ceased to exist in the late 1960s. The house is still there that housed Mr. Floyd. Wanda's Williams grandparents lived in a house on Route 11 while he served as station agent. It was later that this house was the home of Dr. Charles Peterson's family. This house was recently sold.
- Gordon Murray was very active in Enon Baptist Church across from Hollins University. While many were Brethren at first, only Uncle Bud remained Brethren. During the Battle of Hanging Rock in the Civil War, the enemy entered the church and slept in the pews.
- In the Patterson Cemetery are buried Jacob Harshbarger, Henry Harshbarger, and Patterson grandparents. Jacob's and Henry's graves are in an old unmarked section. The cemetery is still visible from Wanda's and Becky's homes.
- School experiences—Wanda went to Burlington Elementary, which served grades 1-7. She was in a picture in third grade when the first school lunch was served at Burlington. From Burlington, she went into Vinton to William Byrd High School (grades 8-12). Becky was in the first group of students to attend Mountain View Elementary, followed by being the first group to enter Northside, which offered grades 8-10. It later added grades 11 and 12. Wanda's mom went to Jefferson and Lee Junior, now in the city.
- Wanda went to Greensboro College in North Carolina. She began teaching in Roanoke County from 1964-1973. At that point, her first son was born. She took a break and then taught at Colonial, Trouville, and Cloverdale in Botetourt County for 27 years. Wanda also worked on a committee formed to go into the basement of old schools in order to acquire old records. This task was probably only just finished in recent years. Since retiring, she worked for Botetourt County Registrar's Office and served as Chief in the Cloverdale precinct. She is now fully retired.

- Becky graduated from Virginia Southern. She would walk into town to go to Woolworths and have a banana split. She remembers protestors walking around Woolworths about 1968, which cut off her trip to have a banana split after that episode. Wanda marched with the North Carolina blacks from Bennett College when they protested in the 1960s in Greensboro, North Carolina.
- Becky married John Barnes after she graduated and he had a job with N&W, moving to St. Louis, then Texas, and finally England when John was in the service. She worked in Texas for the State Police. She and her husband eventually returned to Roanoke and she worked for Sears, followed by Botetourt County Schools as an aide in Wanda's fifth grade classroom. She worked with a special needs' child for ten years, following the child to Lord Botetourt, and retired from Lord Botetourt. She became interested in history and, as a result of her research, found relatives that were in the DAR and UDC. She is presently regent of Botetourt County's DAR chapter.
- Rev. George Braxton Taylor married Wanda's parents at Enon Baptist Church. The college (Hollins) gave the land with the stipulation that the land has to remain a church or it would return to Hollins College (now university) property. Wanda and her daughter, Lindsay, were also married at Enon.
- There was a very fond connection to the black Oldfields community near Hollins. Florence ironed for Wanda's mom and sat with the family in church at Wanda's wedding. Some of them would go to the post office and get her mom's help in filling out certain papers, such as income tax. Pete Johnson liked a lady in town and asked Becky's mother to write a love letter to her for him, which just shows that education wasn't quite up to par yet. Her mom made Pete a pair of pants, probably by hand, and may have split the first time he wore them.
- Granddaddy Murray built Wanda's house after moving from the home place. Wanda's mother and father bought the house, and Wanda and Ronnie built an addition on the back side of the house. By this time, Becky and John left England and moved into a house behind Wanda and Ronnie. This land was actually Jacob and Henry Harshbarger's land originally.
- Occupations were mostly farming and Hollins College. The college had professors, black domestics, laundresses, mail room help, cooks, etc. The northern girls came and brought black servants with them, which is how the community of Oldfields began. Wanda's mother took piano from Miss Mary Pleasants, who would stomp on her feet if she made a mistake. Floella also went to Hollins College. Other occupations of note include Uncle Kyle (from Pennsylvania) and Aunt Ruby's mushroom farm. They had about six houses of mushrooms that were grown in the dark. If entering one of the houses, you had to wear a miner's hat with a light. He also grew tomatoes, with a label entitled Star City Tomatoes. Becky used to put labels on the cans. Uncle Lawrence

graduated from VPI and worked for the N&W. Other uncles worked for the Veterans Administration Hospital.

- The Murrays and Rowlands are connected to the Harshbargers. There are also PaitSELLS in the cemetery and some tenants that lived in houses and worked for Kyle's and Ruby's mushroom farm. Neighbors farther down U.S. Route 11 were the Hinmans and the Waldronds.
- The house parties and Virginia Tech dances that Della would attend were the main social activities. She would want to dance with any gentleman that attended, but it would have embarrassed her husband, Lawrence. It was a long trip by train.
- Wanda and Becky live in Botetourt County, but on the Roanoke County line also. Wanda went to Byrd, but had more connection to Lord Botetourt students. The lines were re-drawn in her area and the Bonsack area also. Wanda's house is located in Botetourt County and Becky's is in Roanoke County. Officials told Becky that if she added a bedroom onto her house and slept in it, she would be in Botetourt.
- The city bus came as far as Murray's store as a form of transportation. They boarded the bus and rode it to town—Wanda's family shopped at the A&P grocery store on the market; Becky's family shopped at the Kroger on Williamson Road. Wanda's family had one car and her mom had a half-day off on Saturday, so after the bus ride downtown and shopping was complete, her dad brought them back home.
- One time Wanda moved to the back of the bus when a young child. While it was reserved for blacks, she wanted to sit next to Florence. Her mom told her that she needed to come back to the front and she replied, "Florence can sit there, so I can too." She was probably only seven or eight years old. She thought the ride to downtown was only 10¢. At special times, they would go to Kresses or Woolworths to eat. In high school, she was able to eat in the Miller and Rhoads tearoom, which was very special. Becky noted that Woolworths had a water fountain for whites and a different one for blacks (before integration).
- Community changes—not as connected. The Industrial Park made a big change to an area that was apple orchards. They used to look out on country farms and gardens, but today there is a lot of industry up and down U.S. Route 11. Becky noted that there used to be a lot of cousins, who would go through the graveyard and apple orchard. One time a car was there. When everyone got close, there was a man in it, who had committed suicide from the exhaust. It was very scary. They ran home and told Granny and it seems like it was yesterday. Granny called the police and they came. The man had been dead for a couple of days. They did know the man because he lived at the bottom of the hill. Wanda works part-time for the election office in Fincastle. Going to Fincastle only takes fifteen minutes, but it was an all-day trip when she was small.

family would also go to a grandmother's house in Wasena and that was a half-day trip. Transportation has changed dramatically.

- Pranks, tricks, or shenanigans—Granddaddy and his brothers put a wagon on the top of a church or school. At that time, all of them were Brethren. The Murrays live in the area still, but Wanda's and Becky's family don't get together as much as they used to. Jenny Murray on Cloverdale Road used to have reunions at the cider mill property, but stopped a long time ago. They have many close kin, but are not as connected. The UDC held a ceremony in Laymantown and so many Murrays, including Becky, came to his grave and surrounded it for the celebration of Oliver, who served in the Confederate Army. That was more Murrays than Becky has seen in a very long time.

Moyer, Joann Blake
Interview - May 13, 2013

- Joann was born in Bonsack across from the old Bonsack Baptist Church on November 23, 1929. Her mom and dad had two boys and two girls. They lived on a hill near Mason Cook's house.
- She attend the old school in Bonsack (where Country Corner is today), grades 1-4, after which she went to Roland E. Cook in Vinton, beginning the 5th grade in 1940. Her teachers at the Bonsack school included the following: Ms. Freda Shields (1st), Ms. Martin (2nd), Ms. Manning (3rd), and Lula Layman (4th). Later, when her family bought the Bonsack Store with Richard Radcliff, Mrs. Layman would come into the store after school each day and say, "What are we going to have for supper?" She would always buy something and the return home to cook dinner. Joann would walk to the old Bonsack school and then took the bus into Vinton. "We could ride the train from Bonsack Station (in high school) and pay 25¢ if we missed the bus. If we wanted to stay after school, we could take the train back, which returned at 6:00 p.m. While attending Roland E. Cook Elementary, Miss Scott was principal. She went to the Junior building (now demolished), again riding the bus from Bonsack, which was always full. The St. Clairs and Bishops had several children that were also on the bus. Sylvia Seibel and John Seibel used to be bus drivers and Mrs. Seibel would stop the bus and make children walk the rest of the way home if they wouldn't behave. Corky Rader was also riding the bus and was sweet on Joann at one point.
- The old school started with grades 1-7 first, followed by grades 1-4. After 1940, the old school was turned into two apartments—Jake and Blanche Murray lived there for a while, followed by Phyllis Cook Howell and her husband.
- Mrs. Lula Layman was a Methodist, and her husband, Elmer, was a Baptist. Joann had observed Mrs. Layman taking her purse and turning it upside down to dump all the change into the offering plate.
- Mr. Elmer Layman had a tomato cannery. "My mother would peel tomatoes and Opal Cox could peel them faster than anyone. I don't know how she did that." One day an inspector came by and Mr. Layman said, "Run quick to the johnnie house," which we did. My husband, Bobby Moyer, worked for 7¢ an hour in the Cook cannery in Blue Ridge.
- Joann was married more than 40 years to her husband, but he had been dead 20 years in 2013.
- Our neighbors were Mamie and Wiley Catron. When Mamie passed away, Mr. Wiley married Dora. Her mom and Dora were best friends.

- Before Joann was in school, the family that lived on the hill west of the old Baptist Church were the McClures; the east side, the Newmans. Her grandfather ran a store back of the hill going up toward those houses. She cited that Mr. Graham ran it, followed by the Sniders. In addition, the Foutzes had a sausage plant nearby. Another store that was nearer to Glade Creek Road and Bonsack Road (today) was built in 1924 and run by Mr. Custer, Mr. Bointnott, Mr. Teel, and Charlie Morton.
- The woolen mill had been a major factory, where at one point, the boys in the neighborhood would get a smoke from varying sizes thrown out the window. It then became a mattress factory, followed by a warehouse run by Paul Pearsall. The Graybill family lived next door. Joann remembers playing a player piano there.
- The bottom of the warehouse was like a community center. Earl Clifton ran it. He lived across the street beside the Meadows' house.
- Joann used to go to Bonsack Methodist Church on Sunday nights as a teenager. It was called the Epworth League on Sunday night and Mabel Walker was in charge; Mr. Lowry led the music. The Methodists and the Baptists alternated services with Pastor Broyles.
- Jake Bonsack was superintendent at the Baptist church, and Mr. Smiley, who invented the tomato knife, also attended. Jake Bonsack said to her, "When we reach 100 congregants, Joann and I are going to do a duet. She had led the music in Sunday School, so when that number was reached, they sang a duet.
- The Cooks: Mason and Alf were brothers. Mason ran a dairy farm and Alf's business was Little Tree Nursery. The white house at the end of Cook Creek Lane was Mama Cook's. She had a sweet-smelling bush and Joann loved the smell (similar to bananas). Mama Cook would let her take one piece and she would carry it all day long in order to smell it.
- Jim Brown lived nearby and would play at the house beside the church. If not playing outside, we would often play Monopoly on the porch. That land was called Red Dog Lane (now Kingsmen near the new church). His daddy drove for C. C. Bowen. The Browns would take me driving and we went to a warehouse, where they stored bananas. Jim would tell Joann, "There are tarantula spiders there," which scared her to death.
- Jack Catron and my brother would come over to the top of the hill and they would sleigh ride downhill to the Hudgins' house near Glade Creek, before the tracks. The Hudgins placed a big piece of tin and we would slide on a sled, rolling off before sliding into the creek. The grownups would come and build a bonfire. Jack would also play in the barnyard a lot. It is where Joann learned to ride a bike. While Jack was holding onto her bike, he turned loose and she was riding solo. One time he put five packs of chewing

gum in his mouth to chew. He built a ramp on which he would take his bike and come down quickly.

- Mason Cook was a dairy farmer who had a barn in which was a large cement box. After the cows were milked, the milk was put into huge cans and put down in water to keep it cold until the milk trucks would come. Cucumbers and watermelons were also placed in the box to keep them cold.
- In one of the barns, there was a big rock with a pulley attached. Joann would ride on it, turning loose in order to fall into the haystacks. Another fun activity was building dams in the creek, where they could go swimming. Real often, when the creek would rise, it would always flood the basement of the old Methodist church, on the north side of Bonsack Road near the creek.
- Most of the residents were farming—usually growing vegetables, having a cow, and perhaps a pig. Her family had to carry water uphill so their cow could drink it.
- Joann's grandparents, on both the maternal and paternal side, lived in Christiansburg. There was a black family that lived in Bonsack. "We called him Ole John Dean, and his family was nice-looking." Her father would work him and mamma would feed him his meals.
- Social activities mostly involved going to church for Bible School, which was shared between the Methodist and Baptist churches. At the Sunday evening Epworth League, I met my husband. I had gone there with a boyfriend when I met Bobby. A lady came out and was related to Bobby. She was dating "Marsh" Thrasher.
- Pranks were often a part of our lives. Jack Catron and my brother, Jay (Johnson), would put a billfold on the road and tie a string onto it. Drivers would stop to pick up the billfold and the boys would pull the string (Cook Creek Lane). They picked on the Clifton boys. One time they put a dead skunk on their front porch. Another time a man named R. H. Quinn, who was in a long building, put a buggy on top of the building one Halloween. Halloween seemed to be the key time for pranks. The boys also picked on Wilmer Cook a lot. One resident referred to him as "the meanest man in Bonsack." R. H. Quinn was sweet on Betty Bonsack.
- Betty Bonsack's grandmother lived in the house where the Brethren church was and tore it down. Joann's son would mow the steep bank on Glade Creek Road, where Jake and Myrtle Bonsack lived and Myrtle would pay him 50¢.
- Jeannette Smith and her mother and dad were friends of the Moyers. Her mother was president of the WMU (Women's Methodist Union) and her dad was president of the

Baptist Brotherhood. A lot of sharing between the two churches occurred. This union is still true today.

- I rode in the 1948 Dogwood Festival Parade. Four girls sat atop the cars—Jean Scott, Dot Irerlie, Betty Jo Gray, and Joann.
- At harvest time, Mrs. Adkins would can green beans out in the open. I would build fires, and mama and several neighbors would help snap beans on that big church porch before canning. My mama and Mrs. Mose made apple butter at the back of the Blake house.
- “My brother was five years younger and would help put wood in the stove inside the house. He put my shoe in the stove and ruined it, so I couldn’t go to church.”
- We had wooden floors in the house and would always wax them. Then we would mop the floors by putting a cloth around the mop, placed my brother on top and continued to mop. He had a lot of fun.”
- “When I was older, my sister, who was five years older, liked to wash dishes and I liked to dry them. We got along well due to this arrangement.”
- “One time my older brother had a date with Evelyn Moore. He came in the house and put a quarter on the table and said, ‘Milk for me, and he left.’ I would grab that quarter and the milk and off I would go.” Churning butter would also take a long time and I would keep thinking it was over and Joann’s mother would keep telling her to churn.” I still have a butter churner and a butter printer.”
- The Crumpackers had Mexicans to pick the orchards. The migrants built a lean-to on the back of the Blake land. They weren’t supposed to build, so Joann’s family tore it down. Joann’s first job was with Mr. Emmet Crumpacker in the peach orchard.
- Changes in the community included the following—family life changed from doing a lot together to being more distant and not working together as a family as much. When going to school, other students made fun of the Bonsack kids. We were rural kids that they called “hicks.” The view is reversed now. Families were generally large and the families worked the farms.
- Vernon Crumpacker saw Joann at the packing shed one time to buy peaches and asked why she didn’t come under the fence. She stated that she was afraid she might get shot. Her dad and mom would often buy peaches from Richard Jeter because they liked Georgia Belles, which were sweeter but not as long lasting.

- Joann's dad removed the doors of the old Springs hotel (Coyners) and put them in the white house in Bonsack. Bonsack Baptist Church (old one) bought the Newman property and built Sunday School rooms. Mag Newman had a goat and it kept the grass down.
- Miscellaneous items: Mr. Penock worked at the station as station master. The Bohons lived on East Ruritan Road and had a little store near the Horn property. Bobby and Joann bought their property from the Chockletts. A small section was called "Chocklett Hollow." The Graybills looked after the woolen mill. Mr. Horn also drove a school bus. Mr. Smiley invented the tomato peeler. The tomatoes would be scalded and the peeler put in the core to peel the skin all the way around the tomato. Mr. Smiley was tight, but was a good man, according to Joann.

A sad note: Joann Moyer passed away in 2015.

Murray, Howard Forest, and Murray, Pejie Harper

Interview - January 27, 2012

- Pejie Harper Murray is married to Forest Murray and they have three children—Charlotte, Lisa, and Allen. Charlotte’s daughter, Theresa Pugh, is a physician in Austin, Texas. Lisa has two children and four grandchildren. Allen has one son and lives outside of Richmond.
- Pejie was born in Blue Ridge while Forest was born in a hospital in Roanoke. Forest grew up in Laymantown on farm property owned by several generations of Murrays. Forest constructed the home they have lived in for 64 years, and they lived with his parents while building their house.
- Forest walked to Laymantown School, located on Laymantown Road, for elementary school. For high school he attended Colonial School in Blue Ridge and was in the first class to matriculate. He graduated in 1943. As an adult, he took a class in Fincastle where they inquired about his education. He stated, “I graduated from Colonial.” No one, including the teacher, was aware of that school even though it had been around for years.
- Pejie shared that there were two elementary schools in the area—Blue Ridge Elementary and Laymantown Elementary. They merged when Colonial was built. The Laymantown school, which was close to the present day Food Lion, has been torn down and replaced by a day care. The school had three rooms and two coat closets with shelves to put lunches on because there was no cafeteria. Forest remembers a teacher who kept a supply of switches for discipline. If she needed to replenish her supply, she sent some of the boys into the woods to cut them. One boy in the 7th grade was supposed to get switched. He claimed to be innocent, which angered the teacher. She grabbed him by the arm, lifted up the switch and it hooked on a cord from the overhead light which wrapped around the branch. The boy got loose and bolted to the door. He ran all the way to Bedford where his uncle lived. His family had to go there to pick him up. Each school had a stove for heat. If you sat at the front of the room, you got too hot, but if you sat at the back, you were too cold. Some students only owned one shirt with no buttons. They were sewed into the shirt and wore it all week. They took it off on the weekend and washed it and then sewed it back on. Children had to walk to school and sometimes they were so cold when they got to school, they would be in tears.
- Blue Ridge Elementary sat high on a hill. It had four rooms, two on each side of a hall. In the hall, there was a large jar with a spigot. It was filled each day with water from the well in the yard. The boys would pump buckets of water and pour in the jar. That was the drinking water. At the end of the hall there was a rope hanging down from the bell. The bell was rung for school to start and finish, but also for recess and lunch. It was

quite an honor to be chosen to ring the bell. Pejie was so excited the day she was chosen to ring the bell. They had a woman in the neighborhood that made a pot of soup for the students on top of the pot-bellied stove and everyone brought ingredients to add to the pot. They also brought their own bowls. After awhile, they got tired of the soup and started bringing their own lunches.

- The principal of the Blue Ridge Colonial School was Mr. Frantz. Across the street (off the school property) was Miss Emma's tearoom. She didn't serve tea, but sold candy and soft drinks. It had bistro tables and chairs. Everyone went over at lunch to buy treats. Mr. Frantz decided to not allow the students to go off of school property. If he saw anyone sneaking over, he would go after them and bring them back. Miss Emma would hide the boys in her living room when they saw him coming. Some of the boys and two girls would go to smoke in her woodshed or coal house.
- Two generations of the Murray family are buried in Laymantown Cemetery, two more in Evergreen in Roanoke, and one in the old Bonsack Cemetery. Laymantown Cemetery is maintained by the community. Over the years different people have mowed or provided funding, including Forest and Jim and June Brown. Charlotte Jones presently keeps track of the funds and provides someone to mow.
- Doris Lee Murray Cook was Forest's first cousin. Her parents built a house on Laymantown Road with two bathrooms, rare at the time. Her parents kept boarders, which would explain the need for an extra bathroom. When Forest built his house, it never occurred to him to have more than one bath.
- Forest was an only child. His dad farmed approximately 200 acres and also leased other land from time to time. Their land extended from Blue Ridge Boulevard to the Parkway entrance to Laymantown Road. The Forest Service wanted to take more and more land and hardly pay anything for it. At one point, his dad said, "I've given you all I can give you and no more." They did eventually come back with a slightly better offer. The present day Knollwood subdivision was part of the Murray farm. They had 100 acres in orchards and many acres in pasture for cattle. They also had a sawmill in a wooded area where Forest cut the logs himself and milled them for his home. His father was going to help him with the project, but died shortly after it was begun. Forest has only lived in three houses his entire life.
- Pejie's father Bud, died at age 58 because of Lou Gehrig's disease (ALS). Only two people were diagnosed at that time with ALS, Lou Gehrig and Bud. He was wheelchair bound for a long time and lost the use of his muscles and faculties. He was a veteran and worked his whole life at Viscose. He was laid off when he started falling at work, and they were afraid he might fall into the machinery. Since he was a veteran, her family took him to many places, even as far as Tennessee, trying to find out what was wrong with him. Her dad owned the first car in Blue Ridge and Forest's dad owned the first car in Laymantown. Bud sold the car when he started having health problems

because he was afraid he might have a wreck. He then rode the bus back and forth to the hospital because the medical staff was having a hard time with a diagnosis. The Harpers lived in a house on U.S. Route 460. Bud would sit on the porch and talk with everyone that went by. In those years, 460 was a two-lane road. When it was widened in 1965 to three lanes, the Harper family home was moved. He died in the Veterans Administration Hospital in Roanoke. Even though he was alive when Pejie and Forest married, he was unable to attend the wedding because he was not mobile. The wedding was performed at Colonial Baptist Church.

- Forest related that the family was always Baptist, jesting that the Murray Baptists lived on their side of the mountain and Murrays on Alt. 220 were Brethren (originally Dunkard). Pejie grew up going to old Glade Creek Baptist Church. Due to Glade Creek being a union church, where one Sunday the Lutherans worshipped and the other Sunday the Baptists worshipped, some Baptists moved out and built their own church on the hill overlooking Route 460 forming Colonial Baptist. The Harpers went with the Baptists.
- Forest's family attended Bonsack Baptist Church. At that time, Bonsack had a minister two to three times a month. Forest went to Sunday School at the Laymantown Church located on Laymantown Road, which only provided Sunday School.
- Forest's grandfather, who lived in the old family home on Laymantown Road, had four brothers. Walter lived on Alt. 220 and started Murray's cider mill, still in operation today. Two additional brothers, William and Gordon, lived in Hollins, where Gordon owned a store and post office. Charlie lived in Tennessee. At one time, Forest's dad and granddad traveled to Tennessee for a visit, which took a couple of days.
- Pejie and Forest attended Colonial together. Forest was one year ahead of her and Pejie's sister, Gay, was in the same class as Forest. One time when they were dating, it snowed a very deep snow. Not being foiled by this event, Forest drove the tractor to see her. They used to go to the airport to watch the planes. They decided to take an excursion flight but had to wait in line for a long time. By the time they returned home, the families were very worried because they were so late getting home. They dated for 4½ years and got married a month before she was 20 years old. Even though her dad was disabled, he had to sign permission. Forest drove Pejie and her parents to Fincastle to get the license. Her mom went in but they would not let her sign for them, so an official went to the car to get her dad's signature. Pejie's great aunt made her wedding dress. She was a seamstress and sewed for a lot of people. She still has her dress. After the wedding, the reception was held at Forest's home given by his mom. It was quite a nice affair. Some of the hired help from the farm tied cans beneath the car, wrote on the car, and put gravels in the hub caps. They were going to Natural Bridge the first night, so when they drove the mountain, their car made quite a racket. The dogs in the neighbors' yards had a fit from all the noise. They stopped at a gas station in Troutville

and the employees cleaned off the writing and removed the cans. The employees were then kind enough to remove the hub caps and didn't charge them a cent.

- They had a 1939 Plymouth at the time of their marriage. Even though the war was over, there were not a lot of products to purchase. They had to put down a deposit to get on a list to purchase a new car. They got a red Studebaker, which Forest still has today.
- Because they owned a farm, they had fuel stamps to purchase gas. Because this fuel could not be used for recreation, they still had to walk everywhere. Everyone had a garden, pigs, chickens, and a cow to make ends meet. People had jobs as well. There was an orchard and a dairy farm across the road that belonged to Harry Weeks. The property has now been developed as Rainbow Forest subdivision.
- Pejie remembers when she was a child that the Blue Ridge Springs Hotel burned. Her family drove there to watch and even the bridge caved in from the fire. The bridge went from the railroad tracks to the hotel. The train would stop and people would get off and walk over to the hotel. The grounds were beautiful with lots of magnolia trees. The hotel was known for wild parties and even a mysterious murder occurred. It was thought that it was deliberately set on fire, but it could never be proven.
- Forest remembers people talking about the Coyner Springs hotel, with the memory of the sulphur water having special qualities. The hotel was demolished at the end of WWI.
- There were at least six canneries in the neighborhood. The Zimmermans and Cooks had canneries practically across the road from each other. Forest was tearing down an old cannery building and found a WWI stencil in the flooring that had been used to make labels for the cans.
- Pejie and Forest remember the Fluke family. There were three girls and their dad would sit on the end of a pew, the three girls in the middle, and their mother on the other end, like bookends. Their dad educated all three girls at National Business College, driving them back and forth. When Pejie's sister graduated from high school, she got a job downtown and rode with the Fluke girls from Blue Ridge.
- There were church picnics, ice cream suppers, and cake walks. Pejie's family visited back and forth with the Fosters. Forest said that his family had visitors that came stayed at their home. Forest's dad went to Daleville College and met John Sanderson. He had two daughters and his daughter, Irene, married Charles Beahm. Charles and Irene, along with Forest and Pejie, were lifelong friends and spent every New Year's Eve together. Even continuing the celebration after Charles died, the Murrays would take Irene out for breakfast. Another tradition was taking the members of the Laymantown Church to visit Lakeside in Salem.

- Forest eventually went to work as a carpenter and worked on many buildings in the Roanoke area, including the Berglund Center as well as the Salem jail.
- Pejie took a genealogy course at the Blue Ridge library and wrote a history/genealogy of her family and made copies for all the children. A neighbor, Gerald Calvert, has a large collection of pictures and artifacts of the community.

Murray, Joe

Interview - April 16, 2012

- Joseph Kent Murray was born in the Bonsack area of Botetourt County in 1945. His father was Walter Kent Murray, Jr. and his grandfather was Walter Kent Murray, Sr. His great grandfather was Oliver Henry Murray, who served for the Confederacy in the Civil War. His great-great grandfather was John Murray, and his great-great-great grandfather was Frederick Murray, who resided in Lancaster, Pennsylvania prior to his move to Botetourt County. His first land acquisition occurred in 1804, but he may have arrived and been living in Botetourt County by 1795.
- The Murrays married into families who were Brethren (Dunkard at first). Joe's grandmother Murray inherited the land. However, his grandfather was involved in food processing and had a canning factory. He also had some land in Marion, where he would go to get cabbage, make sauerkraut, and can it.
- His dad, Walter Kent Murray, was on the Bonsack area farm and it became apple producing primarily, but also cattle. He made some apple juice and took a small quantity to the City market. People who bought it came out to the farm and beg him for more cider. His dad gradually made a little bit more, getting a hand grinder, which made it easier.
- By the time Joe was a toddler, the dairy building was converted to a packing house, which contained a larger cider press. A hail storm in the 1940s exacerbated the need to produce cider because of the damaged apples. The business grew and his dad would make a little for Christmas for the family. In 1955, when Joe was ten, he was helping the family. He was holding onto a jar and it slipped out of his hands and broke. His family assured him it was okay.
- Murray Cider Company became commercial and had many markets. Today, however, Joe said the markets are shrinking. Residents can still find Murray's cider in the stores, but competition is making it harder today. The apples the Murrays used at one time came from Crumpacker Orchards. However, when subdivisions started developing on that land, they have acquired them from various places.
- The Murray family has been active in Cloverdale Church of the Brethren. There was a strong social life at the church, but also on the farm, with many children from the Crumpackers, Murrays, and neighbors playing there. They loved to play in the hay and play football on the Crumpacker land. Mark, his younger brother, would make parachutes for cats and drop them off of the top of the silo. He never killed a cat, but as soon as the cat would hit the ground, it was off and running dragging the parachute.

- Major families in the area were Garbers and Floras (land closer to the Presbyterian church today). The Murrays used to keep horses where the Farm Credit building is today and once owned land where the Jack C. Smith Industrial Park is located. Older houses were the 1903 Victorian house of Raymond and Vela Crumpacker, the 1911 house near the cider mill that belongs to Joe Murray; the 1847 Woodson/Garber house near Botetourt East; the 1847-48 Moomaw/Crumpacker house, now for sale across from the cider mill; the Morris Crumpacker house (possibly earlier than 1920) near Bonsack Elementary on Crumpacker Drive. Joe has a picture painted by a traveling artist relative the Cloverdale Road Crumpacker house and the Salem-Lynchburg Turnpike coming down beside it on the other side from U.S. Route 460 today. It was a little damaged, but he had it restored. It hangs in his house today.
- After his dad retired, he had a trailer and went Florida a couple of times, but would travel all over the country. He also visited Europe and China.
- The church congregation is smaller—approximately eighty members. The building, however, is bigger. As far as school, Joe went to the old Cloverdale school at first, followed by the one that was built after. It served grades 1-7. He completed his public school education at Lord Botetourt High School in Daleville shortly after it opened. From high school he became an itinerant student at Dabney Lancaster Community College, Virginia Western Community College, and Bridgewater College. At that point, the U. S. was engaged in the Viet Nam war, and Joe went into the Brethren Volunteer Service, connected to the Brethren faith.
- The Murrays kept some sheep and cattle, eventually switching to cattle completely. There was a pack of wild dogs behind the Murray home toward the mountain that would run the cattle, grabbing their tails, pulling them down, and killing them. They had to call the game warden to help with the wild dogs. In recent years, coyotes killed a couple of their cows. There have also been vultures, who wait for the birth of calves and, while the mothers are protective, they can't contend with many buzzards that attack. Of course, there are always a lot of deer.
- As far as food for the family, everyone grew what they needed. There were many workers that worked on the Murray farm and the Crumpacker farm. Even though there were small children, the workers were respectful of them. At times, some black residents were employed in the cider mill. In addition, Morris Crumpacker employed some who worked in the orchards. There was a black foreman at one point.
- Everyone helped each other out on the farms. Apples and peaches were packed and transported to the Bonsack depot by the Crumpackers to be put on the train to eastern markets. Eventually the Murrays purchased some Flora land and it had a bigger packing house. Uncle Max Murray ran it, and Joe's father ran the cider mill. Max and Joe's dad also helped get the apples and peaches to the Bonsack depot. Joe used to go there to

get glass bottles for the cider. There were two sets of tracks. Joe almost got too close to another train coming from the opposite direction. The conductor realized it and motioned to him and his brother, Mark, to get off the tracks. He only had 15-20 seconds to avoid being hit by the train. Joe's brother, Mark, was a part of this encounter. Walter Kent Murray, Jr. nearly lost two sons.

- Sam Reid married Anne Murray. He had worked for the CIA for a few years, when in a cold war with Russia. He traveled across the Berlin wall. In later years, he helped with the cider operation on the farm.
- Joe's first car was a 1961 Volkswagon, which he drove for four or five years. He had an accident, ending up near a bank on a slippery curve.
- Joe was married to Ann, who played the organ at the Methodist church. Their daughter, Jennifer, got married at Bonsack United Methodist Church and Ronnie Brooks provided a tractor for the couple to ride to the farm on Cloverdale Road. There was a nice reception at the farm with outside tents. His daughter teaches about an hour's drive from where she lives near Fredericksburg.
- Community changes: Joe hates to see all the land that he and his family used to farm filled with houses. There is a Moomaw Cemetery located in Botetourt South with a fence around it. It is under perpetual care. He said that they used all of that area to pasture that land. Developers had to work around the fenced-in cemetery plot. However, they ran cable all around the cemetery, which had to be changed because it would have caused a problem for using the cemetery. Joe wanted to build a landing strip for a small plane, but Fralin and Waldron, Inc. were fairly fast getting their subdivisions approved. However, Joe did get the landing strip approved, which is lined up to a two-story house across Cloverdale Road in Botetourt South. He has also taken off from that strip. He had to restore the airplane, but was happy when he got the money back after selling it. By that time, Joe needed the money rather than the airplane to be able to sustain his two children's college education. Joe has a son, Clay, who is also in the Fredericksburg area. Both of Joe's children learned to play violin when younger.
- Jim Crumpacker's sister, Jean, owns some of the land near the top of Read Mountain. Joe played on the mountain when he was young. He stated that there was a railroad bed from the Civil War era there, which his father had also seen when he was young. Several of the children from both families played in a cave behind the Murray property.
- Joe collects bottles and a treasure in his home is a kettle that belonged to Benjamin Franklin Moomaw. The house that became Crumpackers, built in 1847-48 was the Moomaw home. During the Civil War, it served as a hospital. A group of Civil War veterans were camped near what is now the Industrial Park in order to guard the pass

so that Hunter's troops couldn't get through. There was an epidemic and the Moomaw family managed to get the veterans back to health, never contracting the disease themselves. Benjamin Franklin Moomaw was a lay preacher in the Brethren church. He is known to have preached at Cloverdale, Trinity, and Jeters Chapel. Lay ministers have been recurring in nearly every generation.

(Photographs courtesy of Joe Murray)



Walter Kent Murray, Sr. as a Young Man



Selina Lemon Murray
(Oliver Henry Murray's Wife)
Lived until the 1930s, into her 90s.



Jenny Crumpacker Murray
(Perhaps in her 30s)

Myers, Ken and Carole Porter Interview - June 18, 2014

- Carole Porter Myers grew up on the Webster Road (State Route 738) and has remained most of her seventy years in the Blue Ridge community. She lived at the corner of Webster Road and Archway (old Zimmerman home place.) The road was a two-lane route that enters and leaves U.S. Route 460 (Blue Ridge Blvd.) on the east and west ends. The only transportation at that time was a Greyhound bus, which families took into Roanoke. Getting to town and back was practically an all-day affair. Carole's father had a real estate office at 1180 W. Church Street in Roanoke. There were times when Carole and her mother would drive into Roanoke with him, but many people in Blue Ridge took the Greyhound bus. Some residents would ride home with her dad and others with cars would be transporters also. Her family's property went up to the top of Porters Mountain. Pete Donald bought some of the bottom land, which extends to Webster Heights Road and then to the mountain.
- Carole was a little unsure of how the mountain was dubbed Porters Mountain, but her mother married Edward Craig Porter, who was not from Blue Ridge, but lived there most of his life. The home at the corner of Webster Road and Archway was an old Zimmerman home. Porter gave all the neighbors that passed their house some fresh spring water from their spring, in addition to other help that his neighbors might need. Carole's father passed away when Carole was 27 years old and was an invalid when she was 18 years old. It is the primary reasons why the Porter side of the family wasn't carried as oral history through the family.
- Carole's husband is Ken Myers. Ken was originally from Hillsville in Carroll County. He left that area in 1959 to enlist in the service. He was discharged from the Army in 1962, married Carole, and moved to Roanoke in 1963. They lived in Roanoke County near Oakland Blvd., but moved to Botetourt County in 1972 to be near Carole's family and start their son, Greg, in school. Their son went to Colonial Elementary, followed by Botetourt Intermediate, and finished at Lord Botetourt. Ken became rooted in Botetourt County life. He has been involved in sports all of his life. He played ball in the Army, coached for 25-26 years, at one point in Roanoke County.
- Carole and Ken, with many other families, started a sports club which was the Blue Ridge Youth Boosters Club. He was coaching in Botetourt County and was appointed to the Botetourt County Recreational Authority Board. The Board had a part-time person that handled the board's business, primarily paying specific bills. The entire program just grew and grew and is still growing. He took a break from the Recreational Authority, followed by being approached to take over the recreational program for the county. At that time, several people were interested in interviewing. John Williamson was the county administrator, and Bonnie Newlon was in charge of public works, under which recreation was a subheading. Interviews were conducted and soon Ken received

a call from Ms. Newlon stating that he had the job, and was the first person to acquire that full time position. However, he was not the first one. A gentleman had been hired that was an athletic director in Virginia, but it didn't last long because Botetourt County couldn't afford him. Ken was hired, and he was the only employee other than a secretary. He was hired December 1, 1987 and retired December 1, 2007. At the time of his retirement, the number of employees had grown to 17. The biggest accomplishments included the acquisition by the county of 1,000+ acres of Greenfield, from which 125 acres were dedicated as recreational. A maintenance facility was established and the beginning of a large Sports Complex was begun. In October 2007, the championship field at Greenfield Sports Complex was named in honor of Ken Myers during ceremonies. Jerry Burgess made the announcement, as Board of Supervisors members, Recreation Commission members, and his family joined them on the field. The Sports Complex was Myers' crowning achievement. This complex is now known all over the East Coast. There are often 1,500 people on the weekend at the complex. The ASA named it the Field of the Year for the Amateur Softball Association in the Atlantic Region.

- Blue Ridge Park got its start by the purchase of twenty acres from L. L. Jonas. There was a grant by the state of \$125,000, which the county matched with the same amount. There is a separate level soccer field, two baseball fields (one large and one small), lighted tennis and basketball courts, and a central building with concessions and restrooms. A small picnic area was built initially, but a large picnic area was constructed later on. A walking track was originally established as one-fifth of a mile, which has been extended all the way around the acreage, and partly borders AmRheins vineyards.
- Boxley Field was always available to use, which is near the Bedford County line. The elder Ab Boxley let them use the land and play area. The family was a good steward in the community, donating what the sports program needed, such as uniforms and a lease which was only a dollar a year. Webster Brick was also a good neighbor, helping the sports teams with needs. However, when it changed to General Shale, as with Boxley, over time their goodwill dwindled. However, the county came up with a matching grant program. When Ken Myers was at a meeting in Eagle Rock, a farmer complained about southern Botetourt getting all the money for recreation. Ken responded with an appropriate farming comparison and, eventually, Eagle Rock got a library (largest in the county) and sports fields.
- Living in Rainbow Forest, Ken and Carole and many other families tried to give the youth an outlet, conducting bake sales, yard sales, and anything that would raise money. The Blue Ridge Minute Mart allowed them to sell items there. It began slowly, but groups like the Ruritans, Jaycees, and other civic groups gave financial help to buy uniforms.
- Carole is somewhat kin to the Falls, Caulters, Cooks, Kesslers, and Murrays. Colonial School was grades 1-12, and primitive compared to what is in existence today. Everyone knew everyone—a close-knit group. When moving to Lord Botetourt, the

feeling was overwhelming at first. It was a giant institution. Carole began at Colonial in 1951. Prior to Colonial as a high school, residents went to Troutville High School. There were small graduating classes at Colonial, which allowed everyone to be close. There seemed to be no separation between sophomores, juniors, and seniors. There were friends across all three grades.

- Mountain Pass Road was the road taken by Mel Spickard to get students to school. The “bus” was a cold, open bed old truck on a two-lane hard road. Some of the road was not paved all the way to Troutville, which Carole’s mother remembered well, since she had to attend that high school. The Laymantown School was also part of Mr. Spickard’s route. Many thanks are due to Mr. Foster and Mr. Correll who were instrumental in getting Colonial “off the ground.” Carol was in the graduating class of 1962, the third class to matriculate through Colonial.
- Carole’s mother was a housewife and her dad was in real estate. In later years, he was located in an office in Vinton he shared with Ott Goode and Bill Silver. Her mother was a gourmet cook, kept the house neat and clean, and all clothes were pressed. Their home had five bedrooms and two and a half baths. Carole would always have her friends over to her house. Her mother always welcomed her friends, regardless of how many Carole brought home after school. Carole’s home became her friends’ home. Everyone in the community helped others. Her mother made food for two widow ladies. Before Carole could eat, she would often take food to them. They were both Zimmermans.
- The Witt store was located at the entry to State Route 738. There were many girls in this family, but were shy and didn’t often feel comfortable talking to others, but were dearly loved. Mabel Cook Booze married Tommy Booze and worked in Booze’s store at the eastern end of State Route 738. Sue Sink, a good friend, also worked there. The store was in actuality Elmer Booze’s store. Mrs. Smith took over that store later. There were three Booze boys and only Bill Booze is living. There was also the Kincer Store near the brick plant and Miss Emma Swartzel’s tearoom across from Colonial school.
- Carole recalls that the worst thing the girls ever did at an early age was try to smoke cigarettes. The girls teased Carole, claiming she didn’t inhale. Carole held fast to her statement that she didn’t like it and never did smoke the rest of her life. One girl brought a beer can from home and each girl had one sip, which was the first experience with alcohol. The boys in neighborhood made dandelion wine and stored it behind the schoolhouse. They later became deathly ill trying to drink their homemade brew.
- Dating was always double dating (or three couples sometimes) and a trip to the Trail Drive-In (or skating) was the primary activity. The Lutheran church had Luther League. The recreation events were badminton, croquet, horseshoes, jack rocks, and bike riding with friends.

- In Carole's mother's day, she would ride the train into town, but it would take a long time to get there, whether by train or later by car.
- Roy Cook canned tomato juice, while others in the community canned various produce. Women often worked in canneries because they liked having their own money. Her grandmother worked in one also.
- There was a trauma as a child. Roy Cook's grandson, Ronnie, was present. Ronnie was tragically killed in a car wreck at age nineteen on Webster Road near Colonial School. Connie Cook, Carole's good friend, Carole and other neighborhood girls and several boys went to the canning factory. The regulators/inspectors were coming, and we were told to run and hide so Roy wouldn't lose his license. We hid in the barn among the hay. Suddenly smoke was smelled and a fire occurred at Roy's barn. The girls were scared to death. One boy was smoking (possibly a silkweed) which caused the fire. The barn burned to the ground.
- Many of the men worked in town for the N&W, Roanoke Bridge and Iron, or the Viscose plant (Carole's dad worked as a foreman there first). In Blue Ridge, many were truck farmers, or worked at the Webster Brick or the quarry. These two businesses attracted employees from as far as Covington and Bedford County. Many blacks worked at the brickyard, where houses across the tracks were built for them.
- Carole stated that her parents tried to shield her from funerals. She lost one grandmother when she was eight and her Grandmother Zimmerman when she was thirteen. She remembered attending the Downey's wedding. They got married in the church and it was beautiful. Her dress came from Lazarus. However, most weddings weren't held in the church. There was a gift shop near the Parkway (at that time called Skyline Drive) named Roadside Stand, run by the Murray family. They sold all kinds of candy, jewelry, apples, gifts from Virginia, and several unusual items for the tourists getting off the Parkway. On a nice autumn day, several of us walked there to purchase something special and to walk on the Parkway.
- The Brookfield subdivision is the farthest east that was able to hook into the water and sewer coming across U.S. Route 460. There was a water and sewer debacle in Blue Ridge and everyone had to have their own septic system installed. Carole was part of the Save the Lake Committee in Rainbow Forest. Her father started the Rainbow Forest subdivision, acquiring the Adkins note. Moe Howell and Henry Shirley were instrumental in its growth. Carole used to go to the lake as a high school student and, with a dress on, go across the lake, which was great fun.
- The old house on Colonial Road near the cemetery is the old Ruth Spickard place. Joe Spickard owns it today. It is in poor condition, but could be rehabbed. Rodney Spickard is Commissioner of the Revenue in Botetourt County and his dad, Dale, delivers Meals

on Wheels with Larry Perdue, a retired IT from Norfolk Southern. Dale also plays in a bluegrass band. Dale and Norman Spickard have property near the Blue Ridge Post Office. There are only two Davis's remaining: Earl, who is married to Shelby, and Barbara Davis, who married Wayne L. Cook. Earl's parents were Bessie and John Davis, who used to live on Davis Road, now the road to Deer Ridge subdivision off State Route 738. Barbara was the daughter of John and Odell Davis, and she grew up on Davis Road.

- Halloween was a big prank occasion. Her family always put her in a costume from Kresses with a noisemaker. Her grandmother, Mary Falls Zimmerman, had cows. In 1952-53, ten to twelve boys got cows from the Lawhorns, Leonards, and Zimmermans. They put them in Colonial High School. They had painted them red and were lodged in the cafeteria. They made a horrible mess breaking dishes and messing on the floor. Needless to say, since the cows did their job at the school, there was no school the next day. A man, who lived at the corner of Archway and Webster Road, Alfred Chattin, also pulled a major scare to Carole's sister and friend, Sarah Minton. He got some sheets and cut holes in them. The girls were walking down the road and he rose from a ditch and started following them as a ghost. They screamed, tore some clothes as they began running, and he followed them all the way to the Zimmerman home.

Radcliff, Richard

Interview - July 25, 2013

- Richard Radcliff has lived all his life in Blue Ridge except for one year in Lexington as a superintendent of a stone quarry there. He came out of the service in 1946 and immediately went into business at what is known as Smith's Store at Colonial Road and Blue Ridge Boulevard. It was a joint endeavor with his father-in-law. Due to his father-in-law's arthritis and the fact that he pulled out in a few months, Richard did also because he had no money to sustain that business. Richard, however, started four businesses within a mile of his home. He was always in business for himself.
- He went to Bonsack and worked at what was Mr. Tesh's store for several years. This business was a partnership between him and Bobby Moyer. Richard worked during the day and Bobby got off his N&W shift at 3:00, relieved Richard for a while, then Richard returned, and they worked together until 9:00 p.m.
- Following his job at the Bonsack store, he retired and opened a Minute Mart near his home. Someone offered him more than what he mistakenly thought it was worth, which was \$50,000. It recently sold for one million dollars. "I apparently would always buy high and sell low."
- The next job involved a nephew, Terry Lunsford, who was a laborer in the fencing business with Carl Walker. Richard told his nephew that he would buy the business and they could work for him. They often did fencing for Sears. He owned it for several years and left this enterprise and opened up Tastee Freeze, which was the best business he ever had. His customers were always happy, because if they had any extra money, they would come into the store, usually for soft ice cream, but he sold some food items also, such as hot dogs and french fries. He was selling ice cream for 15¢, 25¢, and 35¢. His 15¢ cones/cups were bigger than most other vendors selling the same size for 35¢. He carried over fifty flavors of shakes and his business flourished by word of mouth. A man that lived near Tinker Creek in Roanoke would drive his family all the way out to Richard's store to get his french fries, which were thick (unlike McDonalds).
- Throughout all his business ventures he worked ten hours and sometimes 14-16 hours on his feet. He stated he should have gotten a manager for the Tastee Freeze, but was afraid to turn the store over to someone else. Often he would have to clean up all the equipment and the store after closing, which would make it 9:00 when he got home. He finally hired a couple of boys to clean up, which helped.
- He sold the Tastee Freeze, stating he was always in debt. He stated that went he first began working in 1946, his dad loaned him \$4,000 to start, which he repaid, but had to take out a loan three or four times to stay afloat. When he was selling gas, he was

always trying to get to the bank to get the money deposited, which was important because small mom and pop businesses could be robbed.

- Before he started working, he was called into the service and was being deployed to Camp Pickett from Roanoke in 1945. He had been dating Doris Lee Murray and took her on a drive to Mill Mountain the night before he left. We parked up there and two policemen came up to them. He explained that he was going into the service the next morning. They asked him if he had his papers and they were in the glove box, so he showed them the papers. The policemen then told him to have a good time. He was so glad he had those papers.
- While in the service, he got a “Dear John” letter from Doris Lee. She had met Keith Cook, who was an extension agent, and he was taking her to choir practice at Bonsack Methodist Church. Mr. and Mrs. Earl Murray were her parents and lived in Laymantown. When he returned from the service, he heard Doris Lee needed someone to trim her shrubbery. He called her and told her he would do it, which he did. However, she was already becoming committed to Keith and they got married.
- Richard married Margaret Moyer from Webster. They were going to go on a honeymoon to Raleigh, North Carolina. At that time, Richard was going to Roanoke College on a GI Bill. His father-in-law said he would fund a trip to Niagara Falls taking both sides of the family and Margaret and Richard. The end result was they all went to Niagara Falls and spent about five days away.
- Richard and Margaret had two boys—one who had committed suicide in 2010 and one named Carlton Radcliff, who is a minister. He stated that he had a good family, which included parents, grandparents on both sides, and good neighbors. However, one never knows what happens that would lead a young man to take his life. Richard’s wife never worked because he wanted her to be able to be at home with the boys.
- He became interested in camping and bought a camper. He would take his family on camping trips to the Peaks of Otter, Myrtle Beach, Washington, D. C., and Florida (two times). When he went to Myrtle Beach one time, he only had \$42.00, but came back with change. When he went to D. C., his parents were in a car behind the camper and he had erected a tent outside. A storm came and took the whole tent down and his parents got wet in the car. His parents were Dorsey and Elsie Riley Radcliff, noting that his dad was from Floyd County. They all went to Blue Ridge Church of the Brethren and Richard has taught Sunday School there since he was 21 years old, using an international lesson. His mother grew up in the orchards and vineyards and took him to the city market to sell the fruit.
- When Richard went to school in the early years, he said it was to have fun. He would play “baseball” with a bat he got from the railroad equipment and made his own ball

out of twine, wrapped and secured with some tape. He attended Blue Ridge Elementary School first, followed by Colonial in grade seven. When he arrived at Colonial, he saw a basketball net in the gym hanging over the court from the stage. Charles Wade, who had gone to Troutville High School, approached Richard to play basketball. Richard had never seen a basketball game or a goal. Wade wanted him to come fifteen minutes early before school to play. Charles explained the game and convinced Richard to try it. He was a guard, but didn't try to shoot a basket for about seven games, relating he "was scared stiff." This team became the best one in Botetourt County and went to VPI for a tournament. They got stomped there, but the court was about twice the size they were accustomed to playing on. Richard also stated that he had Audrey Foster as a teacher and she was tough. Somehow, he became in charge of organizing a reunion about every three years.

- His community near the Bedford County line was very sparse with regard to very many families living in the immediate vicinity. However, he does remember Bobby Jones, Emory St. Clair, Herman Gray, Apple Gray, and a man named Sinclair (surname).
- More remembrances of the Bonsack Store: Ms. Covington was in charge of singing at the Methodist church. She would come into the store and asked Richard if he would sing bass for funerals. Funerals were usually during the day and men were working elsewhere. He told her he would do it if he could get someone to run the store. He said he was able to oblige three or four times. When he bought the store, he had gotten a \$4,000 loan from his dad, and Bobby Moyer did the same, which they both repaid. Bobby had a boat and the two of them went to Glasgow on the river and got stuck—later finding that the anchor's chain had gotten stuck on the motor. Bobby was an engineer at the N&W, but neither one could figure out a way to get loose. The rescue squad helped them get the boat out. The motor was ruined, which he was sure cost a lot to replace. In addition to the food items at the store, they sold gas. It cost them 21¢ a gallon and they sold it for 24¢ a gallon. They would give good customers a 2¢ break on the gallon. In addition, they checked brakes, changed oil, put air in tires, etc. There was a front room and a back room in the store. The back room stored the meat. They would have to bring the meat to the front and slice whatever people wanted. One time, Sid and Babe Hyatt, brothers who were Jewish and lived nearby, came into the store. Babe saw some pork chops and inquired about them. Richard told him it was the best beef he had, and Babe bought them, assuredly hoodwinking him. Babe's and Sid's business was shipping beef to New York. They would call the stockyard in Roanoke and inquire about the cost of beef. When they found out, they would ship it for considerably more to New York and became millionaires.
- Richard remembered Wilmer Cook—he was tight and no one said anything good about him. One time Wilmer put up a gate on the bridge to stop people, which deterred a straight shot down the main road. Richard came to work one morning and saw a wagon on top of the barn, which apparently is the one the neighborhood boys took apart and put there one Halloween evening.

- Families—Richard remembered Ben, Louis, Emory, and Martha Cox. Ben was born blind, but was absolutely amazing. He was a wrestler and so good that no one would try to wrestle him. Others he remembered were Elmer Layman—a good man; Paul Burger and Snitchem Smelser.
- Occupations—Barry Hudgins worked in the supply room at the N&W shops; the Foutzes ran a sausage plant and Bob Smelser worked there and delivered sausage; N&W was a major employer for several residents; many engaged in farming or worked on farms, such as Elmer Layman's. One time Richard worked at Blue Ridge Stone's supply room in the commissary for a year, where he sold a lot of hardware store items. He also picked peaches. These were short-term jobs when he was in between business ventures.
- Webster Brick and Blue Ridge Stone (later Boxley) built black houses. The blacks had a grade school between Richard's house and Blue Ridge Elementary. The way some whites treated them was terrible. His dad and mom knew a lot of them, whom they respected and vice versa. Some young white boys threw rocks at them.
- His dad had a car during the Depression. It couldn't be used for luxury rides but, if he drove to Fincastle, he would go to the mill and be given a 25-lb. bag of flour.
- Social events--the most enjoyable event was the cake walk on a Saturday night in July. You would pick out a girl and walk with her until your number was eliminated, at which time you could leave the immediate area with the girl. There was no hanky-panky going on. He also remembers a Callahan girl married a Carter in Piney Woods and they stayed at the house that night. They got serenaded and never came out. "I suspect a bomb could have gone off and they wouldn't have come out."

A sad note: Richard Radcliff passed away January 23, 2016.

Robertson, Andrew Jennings

Interview - September 26, 2013

- Andrew Jennings Robertson was born in 1922 in Bedford County. His parents had a farm, where he lived until he was eighteen years old. He went into the Army for two-three years during WWII. When he returned, he didn't really want to think about the experience. He went to work for First National Exchange Bank from 1947-1976, until he retired. He was then in charge of maintenance for Bonsack Baptist Church for ten years.
- In 1947, he built a white house on the corner of Carson Road and Apricot Drive (in Glade Hill Estates). He cut the timber from his parents' farm in Bedford County. He did everything but the plumbing and electrical work, which took about six months to complete. He even put in a septic tank, no easy task digging with a shovel and hitting shale rock on the top of the hill. He had two-three acres behind the house that extended to the railroad tracks. He also had sixteen head of cattle, growing alfalfa and hay. It was a small farm. He had two milk cows and would milk them in a little building that had a concrete foundation. The people who have it today have let the grass grow up and the milking building has been filled in.
- His parents in Bedford County farmed and had cattle, tobacco, hay, hogs, and vegetables. He had everything that was needed except items such as sugar and salt.
- He met his wife, Doris Kathreen Hackworth, when he lived in Moneta and she lived in Huddleston. She graduated from Huddleston High School. They dated for five years and married. Shortly after, he went into the Army and she had gotten a job with the telephone company in Lynchburg. When he returned from the Army, they moved to Roanoke (Bonsack area). She was able to be transferred with the phone company to Roanoke. The Robertsons had four sons, who are Andrew Jr., Ronald Wayne, James Noel, and Lynn David. They all live near except for Andrew Jr., who lives in Villamont and works for Carilion Hospital, and Lynn David, who lives in Greensboro, North Carolina.
- He and his wife had a good life together. It was hard when she went to the nursing home because it put a lot on one person doing housework, mowing the yard, and other chores. His son, Ronald Wayne, has a big garden and ten bee hives and checks on his father often.
- From 1985-1997, he moved to Bedford County because his parents were getting old and needed help with the farm, but were still farming. He had bought a house near the old house, but had to sell it. He had a heart attack and had a pacemaker put in. He has had three more since that time. His parents passed away during that time. Not long after, he saw his present home on Autumn Lane for sale and moved to Bonsack once again.

- Robertson was instrumental in helping get Carson Road built. He and Elbert Martin contacted VDOT. Everyone gave their land for the road, except for Mr. G. Gish, who lived on U.S. Route 460 and owned a lot of land toward Belle Avenue. He also owned the land where Parkway Wesleyan Church is situated on top of the hill. There were six additional feet that was needed to widen the road, but it never occurred. More houses were built over time, from Autumn Lane to King Street, thereby keeping it narrow. In the old days, VDOT did not buy land, depending on the residents to donate it. Originally it was a dirt road that was finally graveled. A school bus wouldn't travel the road, requiring young people to go to U.S. Route 460 to catch the bus.
- Mr. Robertson mentioned the St. Clair-McClung Cemetery. Nugent St. Clair thought Mr. Robertson's driveway was partly on his old road bed, mistakenly taking out a couple of trees because he believed he had the right-of-way. The St. Clairs drove cattle at one time and apparently the graveyard is located behind a house on a cul-de-sac at the end of Apricot Drive. This property borders Mr. Elmer Layman's farm. He had picked strawberries on Layman's farm, as did many others.
- In Bedford County, he went to Quaker Baptist Church for twelve years. When he returned to Bonsack, he attended Bonsack Baptist Church. He had the R. A. boys and would take them to Cook's Mountain (Porters Mountain) and go to the top and they would camp on an open field at the top. He also took the church youth to Virginia Beach in a 1952 Chevrolet. David Hale and Marshall Murray were two of the boys that were in that group. He also was treasurer for Bonsack Baptist Church for ten years before Ralph Foster assumed the role.
- The Ralph and Ruby Hale home has an interesting history. The 1840 house, in which it appears no one resides, is near to Carson Road and was built by Albert G. Read from Halifax County. At some point, Elbert Martin owned the house prior to the Hales. Ralph and Ruby Hale both died and it now belongs to a son, Lance, who is a Roanoke attorney. Ruby had also worked at the bank, but died because of a snake bite. She was an extremely hard worker, picking strawberries and cracking and shelling walnuts to sell. Horses are still on that property and James Robertson, son of Andrew, owns property that borders it.
- There was a spring on the Hale property that Mr. Martin let Robertson use for nothing. When Mr. Hale got the property, he started charging Mr. Robertson \$20.00 a month for the water. After a short time, he told him that he would have to drill his own well and didn't want Robertson's name associated with his land. Mr. Robertson did drill a well. Hale was working day and night cleaning the property. Mr. Robertson grew watermelons and went to give Ralph and Ruby Hale some watermelons. While there, Robertson noticed they were burning a pile, followed by observing a pistol on Hale's hip. Hale shot three times at the burning pile. He said, "I bet I scared you." In response to that statement, Robertson said, "You didn't scare me." At one time, Mr. Robertson asked Ruby and Ralph Hale to church. When they came out of the church, Mr. Hale said,

“I am doing this just for you.” Mr. Robertson said, “I am doing this for you too,” hoping that perhaps something would rub off from the church experience. However, it was for naught. The Hales have a second son that lives out of state.

- Albert G. Read bought the original property from McClanahan. Mr. Hale told a St. Clair relative from California that he had removed many slave quarters. There is a house over the hill from the 1840 brick house, obtained from Martin and sold to Gibbling. The Hales had a lot of growth along the fence line. Someone wanted to buy the property that bordered it, but wouldn't initially because of the growth. The interested buyers eventually got the property for much less because of the growth. Robertson's youngest son, James, lives on an adjoining property, left to him by his father. Hale fixed up a deed to acquire the rest of the land that Mr. Robertson owned, and that of his son, James. The offer was low and the property wasn't sold at that time.
- The cemetery, known as St. Clair-McClung was connected to Nugent and Bill St. Clair, whose right-of-way went across the field from Cundiff property, which would be an awkward way to take a hearse in and out of the cemetery. Eventually, the right-of-way disappeared.
- Robertson's son, Ronnie, shared his school experiences since his father grew up in Bedford County. He went to Roland E. Cook Elementary. His father took his sons into Vinton and let them off at Huddleston's store and Clover Creamery. They would walk to Cook, only a couple of blocks away. One morning, when Ronnie was about six years old, a collie grabbed him by the arm and ripped his jacket. His older brother beat him off him. Ronnie stated that he wasn't ready to start school. Mrs. Worley was his first grade teacher and he didn't pass. Of course, he loved the play period. He had Mrs. Sanderson who told him he was in High First. His second grade teacher read to the class about bears, so he was interested. By the time he got into third grade, he had a teacher named Mrs. Coats, who also used to read to the class a lot, which he enjoyed. His fourth grade teacher collected hummingbird nests and was inspiring. He left Cook and went to the Junior building, which housed fifth, sixth, and seventh grades, and changing classes was common. He had Lula P. Layman for grade seven English. She emphasized vocabulary. The remaining subjects were reading, writing, math, social studies, and science. He went up the hill to the old William Byrd High School for grades nine-twelve. He had Mrs. Ahalt in grade 9 and Teeny Vinyard in English for twelfth grade. There was a lady from Cleveland, Ohio who was young with short dark hair that was his eleventh grade English teacher.
- Mr. Teel drove a school bus and he had some tremors. A car ran into the side of the bus. We stopped and the car was shifted and the bus continued on to school. Mr. Rader, his dad (for a short time), and Mr. and Mrs. Seibel also drove. When Mr. Rader had a boy that was aggravating a girl, he removed the boy from the bus and the boy didn't ride the bus again.

- Occupations in the community consisted mostly of truck farming and work at the N&W and Bridge Works. There wasn't much time for social activities, but Mr. Robertson remembers a wedding of Ralph Foster and Jim Brown. Both were very basic and not very fancy.
- Ronnie commented that he went to school with Mac, Tobie, and Leslie Chambers, who lived with their parents to the left at the curve in a block house. Mrs. Chambers had many cats and a pet skunk. That property was recently sold. Moving toward U.S. Route 460 on Carson Road were the Argabrights, Thurmans, and Gasinks, who live near Lake Back 'O Beyond. As a child, Ronnie rode his bike into the lake area. Marshall and Mabel Cook lived there, in addition to Blanche and Ed Murray. Mabel used to try to be a matchmaker on the school bus. Marshall Cook got into fast cars. Ronnie met Alf Cook when he did nursery inspections for the state. Ed Murray worked for Little Tree Nursery. Digging and balling a tree was a tremendous job. A large trench was dug around the trees in order to get all the roots and then wrapped in burlap to sell. Ed Murray, at a later point, did yard work the rest of his life. When Ed died, Blanche moved to Rich Creek, on the other side of Narrows, and remarried. He noted that the Foutzes had a lot of rental property and Roger Foutz lived right above the Murrays.
- Community changes: Mr. Robertson stated that the community has changed—better in some ways and worse in others. The amenities of stores and services have added to what the community has to offer, but there are many new people, who have moved to the area that are somewhat disconnected.

A sad note: Mr. A. J. Robertson passed away February 24, 2016.

Shaver, Betty Bonsack

Interview - March 23, 2012

- Betty grew up on Bonsack, which was a small place, and never thought much about the name being Bonsack. She thought there may have been no more than 100 people. Her parents never emphasized it, but “Look at it today!”
- When Betty was born, her father was 49 and mother was 26. Her grandmother told her that her father was going to wait for her mother. They were married six years before she was born. Her father died in 1955 at 74 years of age. She was 25 years old.
- At an early age, Betty was on a log across the creek and her dog, Fritzie, saved her from falling off the log.
- Jack Shaver, Betty’s husband, was in the service for four years and only came home once. He was dating a girl named Emily, who happened to be the youngest sister of her best friend in high school; in addition, Betty had a good friend in Vinton and Emily was her first cousin. After Jack had been corresponding with Emily for a long period, she sent him a Dear John letter while he was overseas.
- Jack knew he was getting older and a friend suggested a high school classmate that wasn’t yet married. He called her and asked her to dinner. She replied, “That would be nice, but I am getting married tonight.” Jack was getting older and he said, “I guess I was getting desperate.”
- When he was in school in downtown Roanoke in 1955, he saw Betty walking down the street wearing a fur coat and was blonde-haired and blue-eyed. They met and he kept calling her for a date. On June 1st of that year they had their date, her father died in August, and she and Jack got married at home November 10. She said she asked her father earlier what he would give her if she got married. He said he would give her 50¢ for her gentleman to take her away from Bonsack. They honeymooned in Richmond in a 1955 new Ford. After their marriage, Jack’s mother was a little distant and curious. After about three years of marriage, his mother asked, “Is Betty taking good care of you?” He told her “yes” and that seemed to make everything all right.
- Betty’s dad, the last Bonsack (Jacob) to live in the community, worked for the N&W as a telegrapher at the Bonsack depot. The depot was open 24 hours a day; however, her father’s hours were 4-12. If no train was coming, her dad would come home for supper, eat hurriedly, and go back to the station. Since he was home during the day and many fathers worked, she felt fortunate that he was there.
- The Bonsack family got milk from Mason Cook’s dairy barn about twice a week. They had two metal cans and would take one back for a refill and take one back home. It was

placed in a spring. They kept chickens and her dad would buy 100 lbs. of feed. Her mother washed the sacks when they were empty. One day he put her in a sack, threw her over his shoulder, and went to Mason's barn for milk with the sack over his shoulder. Being a big tease, Mason asked, "What do you have in the sack?" Dad told him a man owed him some money and he gave him a pig. "I don't know what I am going to do with this pig." Mason replied, "Really, let me see?" Jake Bonsack put the sack on the ground and Mason opened and said, "That is not a pig—that is Betty Winn." That story carried on for a long time through Sunday School and church.

- Her dad loved spoonbread and her mother made it. Betty took it out of the oven and broke it, feeling badly. He said, "I thought we were going to have spoonbread." Stories such as these were part of his nature.
- Betty's mother, Myrtle, played piano for years at Bonsack Methodist Church. When Betty was old enough, she left her alone at the house but, as a young child, took her with her often. She volunteered for many church-related activities and took care of all the household chores. One day her mother had made a coconut cake for the Ladies Aid Society meeting. Betty had a little electric stove and her mother put some of the batter in it for her to cook. Betty apparently kept picking at her mother's cake and she would smell coconut. When she got ready to serve it, she realized the icing had been removed from the first layer. I didn't get a spanking because the ladies were there and thought it was funny.
- After Jake Bonsack died, Jack was going to school. Therefore, we stayed at the house in Bonsack for two years. In 1957, we moved to an apartment. By 1962, we were in Rocky Mount, followed by a move to Charleston, West Virginia for 30 years. Jack worked for American Electric Power. In 1996, when Jack retired, we came back to Roanoke.
- My mother remarried in 1966 to Ed Stanley.
- Dad did not go to church when I was young, but when I was a teen he became active and was actually Baptist. We alternated between the Methodist church and Baptist church because of being part of a charge (circuit). Dad became superintendent of the Baptist church. Today Jack and I are members of Second Presbyterian Church downtown.
- I started to school at the old school where Country Corner is today. It housed grades 1 and 2 in one section, 3 and 4 in another, and 4 and 5 in another. Before the war, we were bused to a school (in Vinton—Bonsack school had closed) and were picked up early in the morning and brought back home late in the afternoon. "I missed the bus one time and walked from Vinton through Berkley's Bottom, down the tracks into Bonsack. After the War, we were picked up first and came home first. I also took the train to Vinton to William Byrd Junior High. Since my father worked for the railroad and

my family gave the right-of-way for the depot, there was no cost—I had an annual pass.” The train could also be taken into Roanoke and wouldn’t return until five or six o’clock at night. Betty attended Virginia Intermont (in Bristol) and could take the train back home to Bonsack, which was a four-hour trip.

- Families remembered were Mary Bishop, who had three girls; the Wrights, who had three girls; the St. Clairs, whose daughter had three children. “Dr. St. Clair never practiced medicine; Mary Palmer lived in the St. Clair house, but had no children. Palmer St. Clair worked for the State Employment Commission. My mother’s older sister married a St. Clair.” The Cooks were also a primary family, all of whom were farmers. Mr. Wright was a section foreman for the railroad and had also worked at the Viscose plant.
- Transportation was usually tied to a car Betty’s dad had, even though it was an old one. He taught her and her mother to drive. Betty had to be careful when backing out of the driveway not to hit a ditch on either side, which she accomplished.
- Her dad’s work at the depot involved a lot of paper that was thin and he had to generate lots of copies. He started with N&W at age 19 in 1900 and worked there for 47 years.
- Gifts at Christmas were few and birthdays considered very important. She never received dolls, but remembers a statement her mom made conveying the idea that some families don’t have a father with a job, so our family should not have any more than they have.
- I occasionally stayed with the Cooks, who had three daughters—Dorothy, Ruby, and Mary Ellen. Even after Dorothy and Ruby were married, they were able to be transported to the house to visit their mother daily.
- Betty and her cousin, Jake Jeter, were related because her father and Jake’s father were first cousins. They would sometimes go to the Jeter home place on Sundays. They lived in the downstairs, where the kitchen was, but slept upstairs. The family consisted of Richard, Josephine, Max (Navy career), Anna Laura, who was born in 1924. Anna Laura was the baby, whose mother died when she was two years old. Due to such a young age, Anna Laura stayed with Betty’s mom during the day. On the Jeter farm, they put sunbonnets on the girls and put them on horses at an early age.
- Anna Laura got married, but never divorced. She stayed on the farm, where she remains today, with a daughter, Anne Marie Lee Wagner. Anne’s daughter works for Dominion Power in Richmond. Jacob finished at Virginia Western and works for National College.

- Social activities—two weddings are remembered: the first was Mary Ellen Cook Chapman, who got married in the living room in front of a fireplace in the 1836 house of her father and mother; Frances Cook got married in the Bonsack Methodist Church. The old pump organ was moved into an alcove, which was hot. No children were invited to this wedding. When building another church, Sunday School was held in the old woolen mill building that had become a storage warehouse and was not in good shape.
- Betty remembers a store (1924) on the main road (now Bonsack Road) that was first run by Mr. Custer, followed by Mr. Teel. She would walk to the store and buy ice cream or a popsicle for 5¢. She would always have to pay, but others could charge. Her father was a strong believer in always paying, not charging. When she wanted, at age 20, to get a Smartwear Irving Saks charge card, it was nixed.
- Her father bought Grandmother Bonsack's property. She and Jack received some furniture from the old house. Her mother still owned the Bonsack house, but had married Ed Stanley.
- Most residents in Bonsack had big gardens; Mrs. Bishop had a cow; Jake and Myrtle Bonsack had a lot of chickens. Harry Weeks' mother lived in the McGuffin house about ½ mile down Pioneer Trail from the Bonsack house. Snitchem and Popeye Smelser worked for the Weeks. Prisoners also worked for the Weeks' farm in Laymantown. Mason Cook had several houses; Betty remembered the Meadows and the Cliftons lived in those houses near the old Methodist church.

Smith, Jeannette Ayers **Interview - July 9, 2011**

- Jeannette Ayers Smith was born in Bonsack. Her dad, Frank Ayers, was also. Her mother, Ruth Catron, came to Bonsack from Smyth County at seven years old because her father was a section foreman on the railroad.
- Frank Ayers was ready to go overseas when armistice was signed. He worked in the Newport News shipyard for awhile. He and Ruth married during the Depression and moved into town so he could work in Villa Heights. He lost that job and the couple returned to his parents' house on Glade Creek Road, where they were supplied a house in which to live. Their house burned on Glade Creek Road, probably due to a flue fire (heated with wood). They moved to the house on East Ruritan Road, where Jeannette continues to live. After her dad lost his Villa Heights job, he worked on A. T. Weeks' farm. Then he got a job with N&W in maintenance until retirement. She had three uncles who also worked for the N&W in the shops. They lived in Southeast and walked to work.
- Her growing up years were centered on church and school. She went to the old Bonsack School (Country Corner store today), where there were three rooms. She completed all five grades at this school, having Lula Layman as her teacher the last year. The boys had to stoke the pot-bellied stoves with wood to keep everyone warm. I walked to this school daily unless there was a blizzard. A lady who worked at the old school made us hot soup and hot chocolate in the winter. The farmers provided the vegetables for the soup. It was a normal school year, but finished at the end of May. I traveled by school bus in 1940 to go to junior high school in Vinton. Everyone had to go to the highway (present Bonsack Road) to catch the bus at the store. "When the new road, U.S. Route 460 was built (1965-66), the old school was burned. We might have wished that could happen when we attended school there, but it was a sad experience to see it burned down."
- When Jeannette became a junior in high school, a trip was planned for her senior year. It cost \$75.00. She worked for Mr. Layman in the cannery, but explained she wasn't very good at it. She worked at other odd jobs, but the class also sold magazines. She had been the editor for the school newspaper. The N&W put a coach together for the trip. She estimated about 70 classmates went to New York for four days and one day in Washington, D. C. The group changed trains in Pennsylvania. She graduated from high school in 1946.
- My brother and I were baptized at Garden City Baptist Church by the minister (didn't have to use the creek). Ice cream suppers were held at the old Baptist church on Bonsack Road in the summer. The children would also be transported to Lakeside Amusement Park for recreation and fun. The old church was white frame and had an

entry at the front, facing the road. However, when this road was widened, it affected its entry into the church and side entries were added in 1941.

- There were three stores at one time: Mr. Custer ran the one near the entry to Glade Creek Road. We grew our own vegetables and fruit, but would go to the store to get flour, sugar, and salt. The second store belonged to Charlie Bointnott, on the west side of the old church. Jeannette assumed this store was taken by the widening of the road, because it disappeared. Mr. Bointnott took over Mr. Custer's store. The third store is located today on the west side of the big warehouse known as Big Lick Cross Fit. Richard Radcliff and Bobby Moyer ran this store, but she remembers the Sniders also helped run the store. Daughter Kate was a teacher at Colonial, but helped at various times following the school day. All of these stores were on the south side of Bonsack Road. Kate Snider later married a minister, Dr. Beckham, who was widowed.
- The Ayers family didn't have a car and many other families didn't also. There was the train at Bonsack Station during the week. Her mom would ride the train to town. It would come about 8:00 a.m. and return about 12:30. In later years when there was a little money, she would go to town in the city by train to buy things that couldn't be obtained where we lived.
- The old woolen mill was set up by the WPA as a recreation room in the basement of the warehouse. The activities were led by a person from Roanoke County. In addition, there was music and square dances.
- Regarding toys she remembered the following: if receiving a doll, it was a secondhand one. There were spinning tops made out of metal or wood. "We had balls and played with those outside most of the summer. People were trying to make a living. I never saw any overweight people-just one lady, who had a health problem. We walked everywhere and had no electricity until after the war. We had an icebox, where we kept things cold because an ice delivery man came three times a week to deliver ice. In the summer, he left ice on Sunday and we could make ice cream."
- "We played croquet, listened to the radio, and sang to the Victrola (wind-up)."
- There were always revivals at church, usually lasting two weeks. We always went and the program was Biblical in nature rather than evangelical. Bible School would usually be held for 10 days to two weeks, alternating between the Methodist and Baptist churches. Church services also alternated because the ministers were on a charge. The Baptist church would hold services on the first and third Sundays and the Methodist church on the second and fourth Sundays. There was a flower club at the Baptist church and a flower would be given to those who had birthdays, followed by a song. Her family would also attend Villa Heights Baptist Church. Her parents were married in that church and a connection remained.

- Jeannette's mother attended a private school that was housed in the old St. Clair home place, which has since burned during a renovation. She had a teacher named Mollie Kennedy, who used to smack her hands with a ruler, especially while playing piano.
- Elmer Layman was remembered as an avid farmer who helped so many people. He gave a lot of young men a job. Her brother also worked on weekends on his farm.
- We had one cow and one horse on our property. Grandmother did most of the milking; sometimes her dad would milk. Her grandmother also worked in the garden and was a quilter. Her grandfather would graft fruit trees and might be called a horticulturalist today. There were twelve children in this family and they all lived to adulthood.
- She remembers taking the train to town with her mom, where they would go to the five and ten cent stores, such as Woolworths. There would be money for a treat and she saw the first electric toaster going up and down, which was fascinating.
- Her mother, Ruth, was originally a Methodist and remembers that Mrs. Cook was a teacher. However, her mother later became a Baptist and was baptized in Glade Creek.
- Jeannette's family had the first telephone on the Glade Creek Road near the Weeks' house at the tracks. It was a crank-type.
- Jeannette married in 1948. Her husband had been in the service for 46 months and was a little older. He knew her aunt and got to know Jeannette. Eventually, he and Jeanette started dating. Their first date was a double date to Natural Bridge, and they saw the lights illuminated. They went bowling, attended Easter sunrise service, and became engaged in 1946. When they got married, they had no money, but went to Natural Bridge and a few other places in the Valley for three days. He had a new 1948 Plymouth.
- Her husband taught her how to drive. He drove her to the airport and then asked her to drive, which she did well.
- Jeannette's husband was a brakeman on the railroad (Radford Division). He traveled a lot—was on the Tennessean to Lynchburg and on the Powhatan Arrow that ran to West Virginia. He moved into freight work next, followed by being a conductor. She remembered the telegraph operators would put orders on a clipboard and handed it to the conductor as the train moved slowly through the depot. Her husband retired from N&W in 1980.
- Jeannette had five sons: Paul (Viet Nam vet), Terry, Bob, David (minister in Road Island), and Ralph.

- Jeannette sang in the church choir, but also played piano. Her mother also played, but had little time to teach her. She had some lessons from a piano teacher, but then tried to pick up some on her own. They bought music from the five and ten cents store and later from Hobbie Brothers.
- Names in the community were Rader, Foutz, Richardson, Cook, and Cox. Corky Rader's grandfather was Jim Foutz. Grace and Les Foutz, husband and wife, ran the sausage plant.
- She remembers occasionally going to see an aunt in Bedford, but didn't travel a lot because her husband was always traveling with N&W.
- At Christmas time she remembers that everyone came, cut a cedar tree, had lots of food, and no lights. Icicles for the tree were made from foil and paper chains adorned the tree. There was a program at church for the children. My mother was making fruit cakes, which were possible because the cow was giving milk and the chickens were laying eggs.
- She remembers a Halloween prank in which the boys in the neighborhood took a wagon and put it on top of a barn where the Methodist church is today.
- Her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren live in different places. Some in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Marion, Virginia.
- Her brother, F. L. Ayers did not have great health, but we played well together. He had allergies and problems with his eyes, which may have been related. He went into the Army at age 18 and fought in Germany. He returned to Roanoke and worked in the N&W shops. He married Joanne Robinson and they had two daughters. That marriage ended and he married Eula. He liked music and played guitar. Since she played piano, they often played together.
- Jeannette's mother sewed a lot and made her dresses using a foot pedal. Feed sacks were also attractive with prints or borders. They were cotton (not stiff) and she made dresses, dish towels, pillow cases, etc. Later we would receive the sacks sewed up right through the colored border, so it became difficult to use those as effectively.
- When the Viscose plant (silk mill) closed, it was difficult for people to find work. Most people, including her aunt, lived in Southeast and they would walk to work.
- She also remembers the big refrigerated cars on the trains at Bonsack Station, where apples and peaches were loaded to go to eastern markets. A big water tank near the station provided the water for the steam-operated trains.



Jeanette Ayers and Janie Witt, c. 1945



Home of Daniel Clay and Mary Frances Ayers, Bonsack, Virginia
Built c. 1900, Burned January 1948

St. Clair, Barry

Interview - April 23, 2012

- Barry St. Clair was born April 24, 1950 in the old Lewis-Gale Hospital in Roanoke. Has lived in Blue Ridge all his life, as did his grandparents and great grandparents. His father was Julius Eugene (Gene) St. Clair and his mother was Mamie Secrist St. Clair. His father died in 1990 at 75 years of age; his mother died in 2005 at 85 years of age. He had two brothers, but they are also deceased. He is the last one of his family, except for an uncle on his mother's side and his wife and two boys, Josh and Jake. Josh and Jake are both car salesmen at Magic City Ford.
- His great grandfather came from Bedford County originally. He thinks there may be two different sets of St. Clair kin, separated by a mountain. He believes his origin began in 1698 with a St. Clair that was an indentured servant to the ships' captain. This ancestor moved to Bedford County about 1720 or 1740. A relative is George St. Clair, who was in the Revolutionary War with George Washington. His great-great grandfather fought in the Civil War, firing the canon's in Pickett's Charge at Saylor's Creek and was part of Lee's army. He was captured by Custer's Calvary and spent six months in a prison camp. He died in 1888. His opinion is that Lee and Jackson were the greatest generals in history.
- Many relatives worked at Webster Brick in Blue Ridge. He worked there summers and through his college years. He was an assistant superintendent at one point. It was a great place to work, but often could be dirty. There was a store—Mrs. Whittachers and Kincers, near the plant. He also worked at age 13 at Crumpacker Orchards. In those days, he could hitchhike and not worry about the driver. He often got to the orchards in that way; he would occasionally walk.
- Family surnames he remembers are Fluke, Downeys, Zimmerman, Spickards. His grade school teacher was Miss Spickard. He went to Colonial through grade eight, followed by Lord Botetourt in 9-12. He went to Virginia Western and got an associate's degree (two years) in electrical engineering. His first work experience was at General Electric, followed by Webster Brick, then the cement plant, where he hurt his back. He stopped in 1984 and received disability.
- He has always been interested in archeology, as has his brother. Belonging to the Archeological Society, he engaged in some archeological digs. In a twenty-mile radius, there are about 50-80 Native American campsites. In Montvale, some sites indicated that tribes lived there 200-300 years ago to 7,000 years ago. There is also a slave graveyard in the Montvale area. In 1852, when the railroad laid the tracks, mastodon bones were found east of Blue Ridge Station. At the Peaks of Otter, there is a Cherokee Indian campsite. In addition, the mountain above Montvale has an area 4-5 miles long with a spring on top of a Native American site. He also discovered some sites along the James River. Mountain Pass Road was a stagecoach road from Fincastle to Blue Ridge.

- When he was young, his father raised vegetables. He would sell butter beans, mow grass, and pick blackberries, including a variety of other jobs in order to make a little money. He enjoyed baseball games. A highlight was when his father took him in the 1960s to see Mickey Mantle. He also like to hunt and fish, but gave up hunting later. A neighbor, Dan Meador, used to take him fishing when he had a day off.
- When he attended Lord Botetourt High School, it was small. However, their football team won 31 games in a row and won the state championship.
- His family would vacation in Gatlinburg and the Smoky Mountains often, riding the trains. His father was the last trainman when the last passenger train came through through Blue Ridge. He has old tickets and artifacts from that event. He gave some items to Explore Park, but retrieved them when it looked like Explore Park wasn't going to be a reality. He has considered giving them to the Taubman Museum.
- His great-great grandfather was Henry Terrell St. Clair. There is a picture of him in the Bedford County museum. According to Barry, the St. Clair name may have started as Clare and transformed through some marriages to St. Clair (perhaps French and English influences).
- Old churches—Glade Creek Lutheran is the oldest. Glade Creek Baptist was also old and used during the Civil War. He has been a member at Glade Creek Baptist for 33 years. At one point, there was dissention and another Baptist church formed. Regarding old homes, he noted an 1820s home of the Dooleys—a yellow house not far from the entry to the Lake Forest subdivision. The oldest graveyard (1700s) is near Colonial School. In addition, there are two sections (old and new) of Glade Creek Cemetery.
- Since Barry builds many items, he is interested in the silos and barn in Bonsack that belonged to Eddie Cook. He would be more than happy to take it down if it is not being used. His primary interest is the barn wood that is there.
- School life when he was young—teachers would use a paddle, learned to treat people with respect, said the Pledge of Allegiance each morning and Bible study occurred once a week.
- Some events that were work and play were killing hogs on Thanksgiving Day, making apple butter, providing neighbors with food if there was enough beyond family needs, participating in sunrise services with several churches near the Glade Creek cemetery.
- There was a group of approximately 50-75 blacks that lived near Blue Ridge Baptist Church. They were like brothers, often going camping and fishing together. When the petition to keep the name of the black school Central Academy, he signed the petition to keep that name intact. It would destroy the history of that school to change it. He

noted that about 85% of the Blue Ridge black community worked at Webster Brick. Some also worked at the bridge works.

- Barry had an Uncle Johnny that lived above Teel's store in Bonsack. After his death and during his burial, a rabbit dog ran through the cemetery. Uncle Johnny liked to hunt rabbits.
- Most people were about as poor as any slaves were after the Civil War. During the Depression, his dad worked for the CCC all day for a dime. He would kill rabbits and squirrels to eat. He only went to school through grade six, attending Laymantown School. He never spoke ill of anyone and would give you the shirt off his back. Our family had about a half-acre of garden, sharing what they grew when others needed food.
- Dad left the railroad in the early 1970s. He had two heart attacks on the job, continued working, and went to the doctor the next morning. Barry remembers a very bad train wreck in Montvale with overturned railroad cars.
- Funeral—he has a memory of Elmer Spickard wanting to be buried at the other church (an assumption it was Colonial Baptist, even though many Spickards were Lutheran). Upon his death, he was put in a buggy led by a horse and taken there.
- His uncle had a big still on the back of the mountain, which had a spring. Due to its location, the revenuers never caught him. The story goes that he buried \$186,000 somewhere, but no one has ever found it. While the intention was to share its whereabouts with a family member, he died of a heart attack in 1936 before that could be realized.
- Barry met his wife at Glade Creek Baptist Church, when she was 13 and he was 16. Her father was a supply pastor at the church. They did not want a big wedding, so the marriage occurred in the Glade Creek parsonage. She went to Jefferson High School, graduating in 1953. She is a bank manager at Sun Trust Bank, next to Sam's Wholesale Club. He and his wife moved to Lake Forest from Blue Ridge in 1974. They have been married 41 years.
- Community changes: the fire and police departments are great. Billy Martin is a good supervisor of the Blue Ridge district. Schools are not near as good as they used to be—“nothing is as good as a paddle.” If a child misbehaved at Colonial, school officials would place the child in the middle of the gym and let everyone else view the paddling. Neighbors don't seem to care as much about others as in the past.

Stanley, Mollie Gish

Interview - November 15, 2012

- Mollie Gish Stanley has lived 47 years in her present house. The brick house she grew up in, that was built in 1949, has since been torn down. She previously lived in a house behind the brick house, but it burned to the ground in February 1946 and nothing was saved. She grew up on U.S. Route 460 next to where Flowers and Things florist is now. Her grandfather was George G. Gish, who married Nannie Baldwin. There were four children—Rufus, Lula, George Gale, and Bessie Gish. Her father, George G. Gish, got part of the land that stretched from both sides of U.S. Route 460 to Belle Avenue and Carson Road. Her father's home place was built in 1904 and sat where Famous Anthony's Restaurant is today. Her great grandparents were David Howell Gish, who married his second cousin, Mary Gish, daughter of David Gish, Jr.
- A lot of the Gishes went west before 1900, mostly to Sterling, Kansas and Manhattan, Kansas. They all took sections in those two places. My grandmother Baldwin got homesick and wanted to return to Bonsack. It was at that time that her dad's home place was built on 460 near the current city line and south of the road. Many of those who traveled west remained in Kansas.
- The Gish family owned land on both sides of U.S. Route 460. Rufus Gish, an uncle, bought the land around Springtree Rehabilitation Center, the George Russell Gish property, which joined her dad's property and the home place. There is a Gish cemetery off King Street on top of the hill near Springtree. A granddaughter of George Russell Gish went there and it was cleaned up at one time. Now it is overgrown.
- Her uncle, Rufus Gish, ran a feed store on Nelson Street called Farmers Flour & Feed. He also had a warehouse across from where the Advance Store is now. He would buy a variety of seeds, flour, and sugar and resell the items at his Nelson Street store.
- Mollie's dad also farmed and drove a school bus. (He passed away in 1950.) She always rode the bus to school to Roland E. Cook in Vinton. Later on Mr. Teel drove the bus until he was unable. The two stores were country stores, carrying anything a person would want. These stores were the two main school bus stops in the area. There was a school in Bonsack where Country Corner is today. It was a wood frame building. Her sister started to school there. There were two houses next to the school—Spradlins lived in one. When the Bonsack students had to go to school in Vinton in 1940, the bus stopped at the Spradlin house.
- There is an interesting story surrounding Mollie's current house. It was a house that belonged to the Foutz family and Corky Rader lived in it at one time. Corky's grandfather Foutz built and owned the house until the highway department took it, and that is when Mollie's husband, Phillip Stanley, purchased it from the highway

department. This house sat on a truck from May until August 1965, because the road was too narrow to handle it. Therefore, it had to be moved through the wheat fields. The wheat had to be harvested first (August), after which the house could be moved. Her house is a wood structure, built in 1906. Several houses had to be moved, including Corky and Lou Rader's. Phillip Stanley, Mollie's husband, had to take down thirteen fences to get it where it is today on East Ruritan Road. They placed a bid on the house for \$5 because VDOT wanted to get rid of the houses that were intercepted by the highway.

- Phillip Stanley's family came from Calloway and his father's family moved to Bonsack around 1906, living in a large house with a veranda around it (present Bonsack United Methodist Church's location). Phillip worked at the Vinton post office for 33 years.
- Grandma Gish's home place was right where one would enter West Ruritan Road today. Originally, it belonged to the Baldwin family. Ruritan Road was disconnected—not one loop. The Ruritan Club made it happen. Before the road was connected, the bus stopped at her house, which was the end of the line.
- Tom Weeks' house sat on the hill near the present Denny's. It was moved further east on U.S. Route 460 by Mollie's mom, Evelyn Keister Gish, and is now Flowers and Things (florist). The move occurred when U.S. Route 460 was widened in 1965.
- On East Ruritan Road near Mollie's house lived the Pace family. Emma Wood married a Pace. It sat near where the primary Wood family home was, called Oakwood, with all the oak trees. That house was located behind the current CVS, and had a long driveway. This house originally belonged to Samuel Gilbert Wood. A grave marker beside the house indicated he was buried there. The Wood's property bordered the Gish property on the north side and stretched from there to Carson Road. Ed and Josephine Wood lived there when Mollie was growing up. Their two children were Edgar and Dorothy. All of this structure has been demolished. When Emma Wood married a Pace, the family took it down piece by piece and moved it near Mollie. Margaret Pace married a Rumbley and they ran a tree farm until selling the farm to Steven Strauss for a subdivision called Wedgwood.
- On the other side of Mollie was the Trent family. Sam Trent owned most of that land, but also the Pollards. Arthur Wood lived at the end of West Ruritan in a brick house near the cleaners and the Chick-Fil-A.
- Everyone farmed. The Trents and the Pollards did market gardening. My great-aunt, Emma Baldwin, helped pick strawberries there.
- The Broyles also lived nearby. Annie Mae was a missionary and her dad a minister. They lived on what is now named Broyles Lane off West Ruritan Road. Fannie Kessler

also lived close by and had two daughters, Clora and Eloise (Kessler Glasgow). Henry Kessler lived there and did the manual labor on the farm. Going toward the city of Roanoke were the Bowmans—Geraldine and her husband. Their land went toward Seibel Brothers Machinery (now McDonalds) on 460. Their house had a huge chimney that had two fireplaces that furnished heat for two separate rooms. The Gishes owned that land at one time.

- Mollie went to Roland E. Cook School through grade five; the junior building in grades six and seven, and the high school on the hill (now vacant). Transportation was by school bus.
- Mollie's home burned in February 1946. Due to this problem, which was probably due to newer wiring and no fire hydrant to put out the fire, she went to Forest Park in first grade and had Mrs. Wyatt as a teacher. She moved to Roland E. Cook in 2nd grade—teacher was Mrs. Woodridge; 3rd-grade—Mrs. Barnett; 4th grade—Mrs. Otey; 5th grade—Gladys Martin. At the junior building she had Josephine Wood for grade six and Mr. Steve Pugh for grade seven. The high school was on the hill and the students had to walk up and down the hill between the two locations, primarily because the auditorium was located in the junior building. Transportation was by school bus.
- Ron Horn grew up in the house on East Ruritan Road near the five-acre tract that belongs to Nancy Horn. The Stampers live in the home that Ron Horn's family had. The Bohons owned that land. Janet Bohon married Ron Horn's dad. The Bohons had a little wood frame store, in which there were just a few things to sell. They also had a barn, where Mollie's husband stored his hay. There was a Bohon house next to Nancy Horn's house, but the road was one-lane and narrow. The school bus couldn't initially get through. All the Bohons live in the area—Norma Jean, Janet, and Roy Jr. A daughter, Sandy, passed away at approximately age twelve.
- Near Mollie's house was a section called Chocklett Hollow. The white house across the road belonged to Jenny Chocklett. She lived there and her children lived in houses behind her. Jenny's daughter, Doris, married Charles Jordan. After both of them passed away, their son, Butch, tore down his mother's house and built a new one for himself.
- Everyone worked on the Elmer Layman farm in Bonsack. They were good people, generous, and good to their workers. Many residents relied on his farm for their livelihoods.
- Mollie's family raised wheat and had it ground at Roanoke City Mills.
- Her dad related a story his parents had told him about the Civil War. They had acquired work horses from the west, and were brought in by train to Hollins and then taken to the farm. They were trying to save them because there was no mechanization to do the

farm work—only the horses. They hid the horses in Read Mountain and managed to escape Hunter’s pillaging and retreat through the area, saving the horses.

- Bonsack Station was a busy place with many people arriving and continuing on to more distant places. Grandmother Baldwin wrote in her journal that she had to go to the station to meet a relative that was arriving on the train. She also heard that Jake Bonsack would board people overnight, if they needed a place to stay. He lived very near the station, so it makes sense.
- Everyone helped each other harvest wheat. Josephine Wood’s husband, Ed, needed help. He was paralyzed from the waist down. Bobby Cooper, a black man, tended to him, helping him get around, by car, and doing anything he needed. The whole Cooper family helped—girls washed, ironed and did any domestic work, while the boys helped on farm, especially the Cook and Seibel farms. Eventually the family moved to top of the hill above the current McDonalds and GCR Tire. It is believed they attended Mount Moriah Church nearby, which has a large cemetery behind it. It is now very close to 460, but is a national historic landmark.
- The Baldwins used to help keep up the old Bonsack Cemetery. Al Kagey cleaned it up more than once, and the Jeter family owns the property, which the Bonsacks left to them, and now continue to try to maintain that area.
- Social activities involved dances at a house next to Mollie’s. The church activities at the Bonsack Methodist and Bonsack Baptist churches were the center for social life. There were ice cream suppers and the dairy farmers provided the milk. Mollie’s dad used to have a milk and butter route to provide people with those items who didn’t have access.
- She still has a large butter churn that was used to churn the butter. During WWII, her dad had the German prisoners help cut the wheat, put it up, and build a foundation for a barn.
- Community change—she remembers when 460 was only a two-lane road. Her brother pulled a prank by taking a string and attaching it to a pocket book and stretching it across the road, startling drivers as they passed through. If anyone left in the 1940s and saw it today, they wouldn’t recognize the area.
- Part of her dad’s property was located on the hill where Parkway Wesleyan is. We picked cherries, had picnics, would watch the trains leave Bonsack Station, and would grow tomatoes on what we called “The Big Hill.” There were also two huge rock piles picked up by hand when the hill was cultivated for crops. When Parkway Wesleyan church was built, they lowered the hill twenty feet and it is still high enough (when at the top) to see over the entire Roanoke Valley.

- Other than cars, dad used horses. One was dapple gray and called Joe. He was used to pull machinery. He finally bought a tractor that had iron wheels. We had two other horses—May and Jack. A collie, named Dave, would go after the cows. Her dad was born in 1900 and had an older brother and sister, who were born in the west before the Gishes returned.



Mollie Gish Stanley's Home

Trent, Elsie Booth and Richardson, Dorris (Sis) Cox Interview - February 24, 2012

- Elsie Trent was born on June 26, 1926. She married Bill Trent, Sam Trent's son, in 1946. She has lived in Bonsack most of her life—66 years. She has three grown children, grandchildren and great-great grandchildren. She loves living in Bonsack—it is home.

- Dorris (Sis) Richardson was born in Bonsack August 25, 1926. There were seven children in her family and she was the youngest. Lewis Cox and Ida Moore Cox were her mom and dad. They lived right across the tracks on Layman Road. Her dad died when she was three years old, and her mother died when she was four. The older children tried to hold everything together, but it was difficult. Someone came to live in the house for a year to help. Sis had five brothers and one sister. Her sister got married young and the children were scattered among other families. One brother lived with Jake Foutz, another brother with a neighbor, and Sis with the Graybill family at first. Sis always wanted to be back in Bonsack, no matter what kind of home she lived in. She remembers that her mom had strawberries, cantaloupes chickens, pigs, and cows. Dad and the rest of the Cox family worked for Mr. Layman on his farm. It was noted that the Coxes came from Bedford County sometime in the 1920s. Sis attended ten different schools before graduating from the old William Byrd High School—several were in the city of Roanoke, Bedford County, and Little Otter School in Bedford. She lived with a cousin in Roanoke on Avenham Avenue in a beautiful home. He was one of the Martins in Martin Brothers Contracting. They were both older and had two sons—one in college and one still at home. She stated that “Mrs. Martin wanted to keep me because she enrolled me in school, when I was probably six years old. I cried being apart from my family and always wanted to go back home to Bonsack,” especially when visiting her brothers. She got through the continuing upheaval and married Cecil Richardson at 23 years of age. He was a southeast young man. We married in 1951 and had two children—Donna in 1952 and Steven in 1954. We would occasionally visit my middle brother, also noting that her mother's mom and dad (her grandparents) died when her mother was about 12 or 13. The past was laden with sorrow.

- Elsie Trent was a Brethren originally. When she married Bill, she became a member of Bonsack United Methodist. She was raised in Botetourt County in the Catawba Road section of the Troutville area. She didn't know about Bonsack when she was young. After marriage to Bill Trent, the road she lived on was Broyles Lane, but without that name at that time. She had to go to the highway (a mile or better) to get the mail and her children had to catch the school bus there. Bill would take them to Teel's store because Mr. Teel was the bus driver. The Snider family was running Mr. Tesh's store. However, Lou Rader noted that Mr. Teel's store was the voting precinct for many years. Mr. Teel lived in the big brick house that is near the deteriorating store today. Stores were the center of community life—everyone met there and would barter for goods in exchange for home-grown farm products.

- Mr. Teel drove the bus into R. E. Cook in Vinton, William Byrd Junior (at the bottom of the hill), and William Byrd High School at the top of the hill. Elsie's last two children graduated from the new William Byrd High School built in 1969.
- A ritual started in Bonsack called "The Barn." It was started when a Bonsack boy was going to get married. Corky Rader, Lou Rader's brother, John, and Keith Cook were the initiators. Apparently it was a kind of hazing ritual where they were blindfolded, walked down Bonsack Road with a rope around them and taken to Keith's barn. Barry Trent and Mark Frye were the last residents to be taken there. Some of the activities were never shared, but their hands were put into a mixed potion and gentian violet was used on their faces, which doesn't come off very easily. All of the instigators of this ritual have passed away, and with their passing, has ceased.
- Wilmer Cook—no one cared for him, stating he always complained about everything. Some of the youth took his wagon and varying stories about the wagon and the manure spreader have surfaced. The wagon was taken and put in the Vinton Christmas parade. Eventually it made its way back to the owner. He once stated that he wanted to be buried face down in Bonsack (one can assume the rest). Not much was ever mentioned about his wife.
- Elsie talked about her school life in Botetourt County at Glebe Mill School. This school was a two-room school, grades 1-3 in one room and 4-7 in the others. Teachers remembered were Blanche, Mattie, and Mary Brugh. More than one grade was taught in each room. A lot of memorization and reading, writing, and arithmetic were part of her recollection. Education has changed markedly since then with the advent of new technologies, block scheduling at the high school level, etc.
- As a young child, Elsie walked to the Jones Chapel, which was a Brethren church. She remembers many ice cream suppers there. Sis Richardson remembered that the old Baptist Church in Bonsack had a pot bellied stove and at Christmas she got a bag of candy with an orange in it, which was very special and treasured.
- Memories at Christmas—Elsie said one Christmas she wanted a red and black yo-yo and was so happy when she got it. Teachers would give girls a little tea set and she didn't want to break hers, so she didn't play with it. Dolls had china faces and hands.
- Occupations mostly centered on farming. When wheat was grown and needed to be threshed, everyone helped each other accomplish this task. Elsie remembers playing on the straw and haystacks by jumping into it. Elsie's dad grew vegetables—corn, turnips, potatoes. There was also a smokehouse and a chicken house. Her mother canned everything—fruit and vegetables. The family also made kraut and put it in a big stone crock, which was placed in the basement with other canned food. Elsie's mom would also cook three times a day on a wood stove. There was a store across from Glebe Mill

School and eggs could be taken and traded for pencils. Crackers were in a barrel and one relative said years later, "Thank goodness for the Giant store."

- The subdivision land called Meadows of Trent (today) belonged to Ellis and Jim Trent, brothers. They were the first ones to build homes. Jim Trent's land extended to the mountain, which now houses the LaBellevue subdivision.
- Sis remembers her mom picking strawberries and cantaloupes. Her dad and the family worked for Mr. Layman on his farm nearby. Even though Sis was very young when her parents died, she has some memory of the family working on the Layman farm. A neighbor brought Sis a basket with strawberries one time and she loved the basket. She has no idea what happened to it. Pigs would be shot and the meat was put up. Chickens had to have their heads cut off in order to be able to fix chicken for food.
- The Cox family came to Bonsack in the 1920s from Bedford County, becoming tenant farmers for more than one farm in the area. Sis remembers a fireplace in every room in the Cox home. Eventually a brother bought the house, followed by a niece, but finally was sold out of the family.
- Elsie's mom made dresses out of feed sacks and underwear and pillow cases out of the cotton. The feed sacks had beautiful prints and the material was soft. The women would always want to pick out the prints that were most desirable to make the dresses for their girls.
- Sis remembers an old brick house and a big barn where the current Bonsack United Methodist Church is today. It had a porch facing Layman Road. Sis once lived with the Graybill family nearby. Once Sis got mad while at the Graybills, put her clothes in a bag, and walked back to the Cox home. She also remembers when her mother died. In addition, at her dad's death, his body was placed in the parlor at Elmer Layman's house. She said, "He looks like he is asleep." There was a lot of typhoid fever in the family, which is believed came out of the water in a well. The well was close to the railroad tracks and level with the creek. Cows and other animals dumped their waste into the creek.
- Elsie remembers her house burned when she was four or five years old. Her mother had made her a brown velvet coat with brass buttons, which she loved. The coat burned up with the house and she cried and cried. There was also a log cabin on the property, with only two rooms. She had to stay with relatives until some additions were made. A house was eventually built, but it took awhile. One memory was of the girls sleeping in a long room.
- Both Sis and Elsie remember the Foutzes that ran the Foutz Sausage Plant—Mabel and Jake Foutz, Jim Foutz, Les Foutz. The Foutz and Cook families were the main families in

Bonsack. An old Foutz house is on the corner of Layman Road, which is in total disrepair. People have called the county officials, worrying that it could catch on fire easily.

- Freddie Cox's house is log inside, but added two rooms in the middle. The rest of the house was built around it.
- Elsie met her husband through mutual friends. They started dating in June and got married in September of 1946. They were married in the small brick Methodist church in Bonsack on the north side of Bonsack Road. There was a reception by the Trents that followed the ceremony. They went to Clifton Forge for the night and on to Mullins, West Virginia, where his aunt lived. When returning to the Bonsack area, they lived a little house on West Ruritan Road.
- Sis met her husband on a blind date August 1. At Christmas, she received a diamond and was married in January. She carried a white Bible with streamers and wore a corsage. They went to Waynesboro to an uncle's motel in a two-seater Ford. They were only gone from Saturday to Sunday because he had to return to Camp Pickett. She married at 23 years old.
- Elsie bought her wedding outfit and Sis had a pink suit. Each of them wore hats. Even though Bonsack Road was the main east-west route in those days, it wasn't that busy.
- Men always smoked cigarettes outside the church. One time, a group of blacks came by in a car and the men invited them into the church. This was the first memory of blacks in the neighborhood. Sis also remembered a black gentleman that came in a buggy from the city to work on the farm. Bobby Cooper and his family helped everyone.
- Bill Trent worked at an electric repair store on Salem Avenue. In 1949, he was put on disability. Elsie went to Roanoke County to work for the school system at the old and then new William Byrd high schools. She stayed at Byrd her whole career. She started out substituting and then it became full time. She was the cafeteria manager for many years.
- Sis started out at Double Envelope. She also kept about five children for 6-8 years. She went to work for Seibel Brothers for a number of years. She also worked for the school system for two years before Cecil retired, after 47 years, with a truck company on Shenandoah Avenue. Her husband taught her how to drive, but also taught the girl next door, Marcella.
- Elsie got her driver's license when her child, Steven, was entering first grade. She was 20 years old when she got married.

- Changes—neighborhood is still viable, but not like it used to be. Everyone used to sit on the porch and talk to the neighbors. Families and friends don't often visit each other today. Modern additions, such as TV, sports activities, and other school activities take up a lot of time. Sunday afternoon after church was often a play time, but it doesn't happen much anymore. In the old days, families were bigger and there has been a shift to smaller families.

Wall, Gay Harper

Interview - July 17, 2013

- Gay Harper Wall, older sister to Pejie Harper Murray, was part of a farm family that lived in the Blue Ridge area of southern Botetourt County. They grew everything that was needed for the family, having a cow for milk, and pigs. They put up the meat from the pigs and canned food, never going hungry.
- Going to town meant driving a car or catching a Greyhound bus that made frequent stops.
- She got married to Howard Wall from the Blacksburg area. She met him through one of her cousins, Virginia, who worked with Howard's sister. They married at Colonial Baptist Church after the Sunday service.
- WWII had begun and he was called into service and went for basic training before he went overseas in October. He was in the infantry, but drove a Jeep in the convoy. His twin brother was in the same company. Howard had Gay's nickname on the Jeep, which his brother observed, but didn't know where his brother was. He assumed he was captured, which at that time was the dead of winter. Those who were captured had to do a lot of walking. She was notified that he was missing in action. She never heard from her husband until he was liberated and had written a letter, which was on her birthday. He had frozen feet and they wanted to amputate his toes, but he wouldn't let them.
- Howard had several jobs with insurance companies, having a fall at one place in 1948. When Harold fell, he was working at Stanford and Inge Sign Company. He was in a body cast for six months and then a back brace. Following this event, he worked for an insurance company, followed by the postal service as a clerk and at the register. He retired from the post office.
- When asked about black families in the area, she noted that some lived near Margaret Fluke and the black Blue Ridge Baptist Church. The Ragsdales were successful, two of whom became successful as teachers.
- Gay noted that Colonial Baptist had a ladies group and they would have ice cream suppers, perhaps to raise money. As kids we always would swim in the creek. Her sister, Pejie, almost drowned, but Gay saved her.
- Community changes—the area has changed through growth of subdivisions, but admitted that she doesn't get out a lot. There is not as much closeness to neighbors nearby.

- Her maternal grandparents and husband are buried at Colonial Baptist Church Cemetery called Hillcrest. Her paternal grandparents Harper are also buried there. There are about ten children in that family—all born at home. Gay noted that she has a spot reserved there and that about half of the cemetery is kin.

A said note: Gay Harper Wall died November 28, 2015.

Wheeling, Ray

Interview - February 3, 2014

- Ray Wheeling was born November 2, 1946 and has lived in the Bonsack community all his life except for a few months when he moved to town after marriage. He soon returned to Bonsack. At one time, Ray knew all the people in the neighborhood because it was primarily populated by farmers. There were two stores and he knew the storekeepers well. One was Mr. Teel's store on Bonsack Road, near Glade Creek Road. The other store was closer to the bridge across Glade Creek on the main road. It was run by Bill Tesh, followed by Richard Radcliff and Bobby Moyer, Mr. Hall, and perhaps Ronnie Cox. Mr. Teel drove a school bus, putting chains on in the winter to get the area students to school. The only time students could leave school early was due to continuing snow that was going to accumulate during the day.
- Ray lived on Layman Road until he was nine years old. His family bought a five-acre plot about a mile down Glade Creek Road across the tracks, and his parents lived there until their death. For twenty-one years Ray, his wife, Brenda, and four daughters lived in the white house at the end of Cook Creek Road, facing U.S. Route 460. There wasn't too much traffic then, but it became busier and noisier as subdivisions started dotting the landscape and a light was put in at U.S. Route 460 and Cloverdale Road. He rented this house from Vivian Blake. He is now living on Glade Creek Road, where he has lived for 22 years.
- His dad was John W. Wheeling, who was born on Elmer Layman's farm. Born in 1917, he lived there until he was 19 years old. He married Lavader Mozelle St. Clair, having Ray as an only child ten years after their marriage. They lived with Ray's grandfather two years and then rented a house on Layman Road from Jim Foutz, who had given it to his daughter, Ruby Hudgins.
- Ray married Brenda Webb and they had four girls, all of whom are married. Star, Robin, Angie, and Christie each have two children, except for Angie, who has three. There are nine grandchildren and two great grandchildren, who are six years and six months.
- While growing up in Bonsack, he remembers it as a quiet community with friendly people who always spoke. There were many farms. A fond memory is Bob Cook, Alf's son, who did a lot of bulldozer work. If Bob caught Ray watching, he would ask him if he wanted a ride, which was fun for a young boy. Bob Cook demolished the old house with the verandas around it in 1950 or 1951. Bonsack United Methodist Church is on that site today. Ray's mother married in the old Bonsack Methodist Church that is on the opposite side of the road near Glade Creek.
- Ray worked on Mason Cook and Keith Cook's farms. He learned how to drive a tractor and would disc the dirt near the store. He also used to mow the yard of Wilmer Cook's

house, which took about four or five hours. In addition, he had about seven other yards that he kept mowed. He started working at nine years old and had no problem getting work. At times, he was so busy, he had to turn people down. During his teen years, he worked on many farms. O. T. Rader and his wife, Claudine, used to have several chicken houses. He had to de-beak the chickens and earned 35¢ an hour, saving \$300.00 that summer.

- He told his mom that he was going to town so that he could buy his own school clothes. About two or three weeks before school started, he would go to town a couple of times and buy a half dozen pairs of pants, shirts, sweaters, underwear, and socks from Fines Men's Store. He would keep four pairs of shoes—two for dress and two for work. He didn't have a closet in the old house they lived in, so he set up a rack, which allowed him to look at everything and decide what he wanted to wear.
- Mason Cook had a dairy farm. Ray explained that he was a fill-in guy. Roy Meador, who worked on the farm, got hurt a couple of times. Ray would get up at 4:00 a.m., go to milk Mason's cows, went home for breakfast and changed his clothes, and went to school. When he returned home, he worked again for a few hours and then went home for dinner.
- There was a lot going on in the summer. Grain, corn and barley were planted. Roy Meador showed him how to mow hay on the tractor. He would rake all the hay. If he got through raking, he would work with a crew that began baling. He got grain on the combine, and the barley especially made him itch. He would end up taking off his shirt and washing off in the pond. His favorite activity was working in the silo and cutting corn, which involved two V-trailers and one other trailer. Alf Cook would send a tractor down the road and Popeye would help cut the corn. Nelson Smelser also helped with the cutting. Ray was working in the large silo in the late 1950s. He loved to use the tractor and disc the ground into the dark hours. Richard Jeter of the Jeter farm on 460 also used to put up hay in the area of the Weeks farm.
- In 1979 he had an accident and was in a cast. Al Kagey, a neighbor who lived behind him, mowed his yard that summer. Ray would help him cut and split wood. Al owned a truck and told Ray to consider it theirs. He could use it any time.
- He used to mow hay for Alf Cook and drive one of his trucks. In addition, he worked for Elmer Layman, noting that he was a good man. Elmer's wife, Lula Padgett Layman, was his teacher in seventh grade at the lower building near the bridge in Vinton (now demolished). Sixth grade was also at the lower building. Prior to that building, he went to R. E. Cook Elementary in grades 1-5; Luella T. Scott was the principal. He would plant tomatoes at Mr. Layman's farm, and he was permitted to miss a couple of days of school in order to plant. A lot of women in the area would come to the strawberry patch near the creek and pick strawberries. Ray was also helping can the tomatoes at the cannery and got bitten by yellow jackets. He reacted by swelling severely.

Mr. Layman had beef cattle and cows, and several workers that helped him manage the farm, in addition to transporting all the vegetables to the City Market. Layman also used to cut wood at his sawmill, and Ray watched him build a building with the wood he obtained from the farm. Pete Bishop had a farm next to Elmer Layman's farm and employed several workers and a black man named John Dean.

- Harry Weeks had a farm beginning just past the railroad tracks and extended about a mile on Glade Creek Road, where Ray lives today. He had a huge farm. George Seibel's farm was part of the Weeks' farm. The Seibels bought another piece of land from the Davis family. The Weeks farm started across the tracks and extended a mile on Glade Creek Road, bordering the Wheeling property. Near the Weeks house, built in 1908, was a large barn and an apple packing house. A plot of land on the back side of the Weeks house was for sale, which a Chinese gentleman recently bought.
- Sid and Babe Louis Hyatt had some property off Glade Creek Road. They shipped cattle to New York, being able to get more money for the cattle than what was charged in Roanoke. Residents conveyed that they were millionaires. Babe Louis walked with a crutch and was often a customer, as was his brother, at Mr. Teel's store. This was the first experience some residents had with Jewish people.
- The Foutz family also had a lot of land. There were four brothers—Abe, Jim, Jake, and Les. Ruby Foutz Hudgins lived on Layman Road near the creek and the tracks. Jim Foutz had a house that was taken by the widening of U.S. Route 460. The Foutzes were active in the community and ran a sausage plant near Glade Creek.
- The Witt family on State Route 738 in Webster had many girls. Ray had also done some work for the Witt family--mostly carpentry and painting. He also did some painting and fixing equipment for Emory Robinson in the Bonsack community. In his late teens, he also worked for Crumpacker Orchards hauling fruit from the orchard to the packing house. A couple of times a week, Ray helped load fruit from the cooler to the refrigerated trucks until 1:00 a.m.
- Occupations in the community focused on farming, but others worked for American Bridge, N&W, Viscose, and Johnson-Carper furniture factory.
- Alf Cook had a black man who lived at his nursery, helping him with the trimming and maintenance of trees and shrubs. Sometimes, Alf would have to go to town to get more young black youth to help.
- There used to be a lane near Bonsack Baptist Church on Cloverdale Road that was called Red Dog Lane. It is now known as Kingsmen. U.S. Route 460 was widened near the road now across from Bonsack Square (Kroger), and he stated that there used to be more

bank below Villa Heights Baptist Church. Two Carney spinsters lived in an old house there.

- The Samuel G. Wood farm, called Oakwood, was located near CVS and Valley Gateway. It was a large farm that extended toward Carson Road. The home, which was demolished, was built in 1854. The Gale Gish farm bordered the Wood farm, extending to King Street and the Belle Avenue area. Gale Gish was a brother to Mollie Gish Stanley. He was a real worker, but always friendly.
- “Mason Cook was a great guy.” Ray called him granddaddy. He always had a cigar in his mouth, but had to go outdoors or to the barn to smoke it. Mason revealed that he would go through a box of matches trying to keep the cigar lit. Mason’s son, Keith, never met a stranger. He was an extension agent with a booming voice. In the 1960s, he would occasionally ask Ray to go to town to pick up some whiskey for him.
- Community changes: Ray said he has never been a playing around kind of guy. He always had to work. He believes the opposite is apparent today. He doesn’t know as many people today and families aren’t as close. In the old days, the blue laws required stopping work on Saturday and going through Sunday, which allowed everyone time to talk and visit. People were very protective of their children. It is not as safe today. The south side of U.S. Route 460 has had no major changes.