

Nicole Musgrave: So, we are recording, and I'll introduce us on the tape. This is Nicole Musgrave. I'm here with Joe Hall, and we're in his brother Jimmy's house up in Knock County in Sassafras, right by the Marina. It is February 9th, 2023. This is for the Carr Creek Oral History Project. So, I guess, just to start, can you say your name and tell me a little bit about who you are?

Joe Hall: My name is Joe Hall. A lot of people called me Joey, my friends. I was born and lived here in Knock County. I was born May 31st, 1960, and I've lived in two different places in Letcher and in Redbox. I went to the old grade school on the old 160 Road. It was good times back then, before the lake went in, because my best memory I had was my father taking me and my brother Jimmy fishing on the creek banks down through there. We just drive and we'd find a place where we'd get off the road and we'd go up there and fish. Me and Jimmy would take our fishing poles, and our daddy would go break a stick off and make him one, because he didn't have fishing license. He'd go up there and drop it down by a stump, and he's pulling up big old catfish out, and all he's doing is catching little bluegills. It was fun back then. It sure was. I went to school at Carr Creek Elementary. At the time, the place was called Cody, all through there. I went there four years of school before they moved us up in [19]72 to the new Carr Creek School on the hill, we call it. But the one memory I had at that school, I don't know if it was a year before they moved us or the year that they moved. They were doing that construction work and they a pan, a thing that they pushed with a dozer to fill up with dirt. We was at lunch break. What time was it? Lunch break. That pan had rolled off that mountain down into the playground, and we was told not to go out near where to stay back a certain distance the teachers and staff lined up like a wall of them standing there. We couldn't go past them, so we had to play back in while they tried to turn that back over and stuff, get it back up on the hill.

NM: Wow. How old were you?

JH: Then?

NM: Yes.

JH: Twelve, eleven or twelve years old, then. Somewhere in that neighborhood. Because they moved us up there in [19]70, the new school. I was in the fifth grade then, and they went to grade one through six there because they hadn't finished the building. They sent seventh and eighth graders to Hammond Middle School till they finished the building. They finally about two years of construction, they finally brought those two grades back. When they built that new school, this dam went in. They moved the Neeley school that was in Yellow Creek down here at Sassafras, and then they took – what do I want to say, Yellow Creek?

NM: You said Neely.

JH: Neely. That was up on Carr. The Yellow Creek School was in Sassafras. They combined the Carr Creek and those three schools together. Back then we had like three fifth grades, three fourth grades. I'm remembering forty-five students to a classroom with big classrooms at that time filled up. But now the law says it's, what, twenty-four, twenty-five students? All can be in a classroom in grade school.

NM: The class is a forty-five. That was at the new school once they combined?

JH: Yes. When they combined them two schools with the Carr Creek, the old Carr Creek School, they was forty-five to a room. Everything from the first grade all the way up to the fifth grade when they moved to it. Seventh and eighth grade back down there, it was the same way. They used a lot of kids back then. Going to school a lot.

NM: What was the name of the school that you went to? The old school.

JH: Carr Creek.

NM: It was just called Carr Creek Elementary?

JH: Yes. Carr Creek Elementary hit. When you go up by the caution lights on 15, where it joins 160 Goldenheim, when you pass that little cliff at that straight down over the hill there, where it where it was at. They tore it down. But they're just slab of concrete there if they would ever steel there that housed the building, and that was where – across from that was they called the old Johnson Farm. There are old log cabins. They moved most of them cabins to Leatherwood.

NM: You said the old Junction Farm?

JH: Junction Farm? Yes. They moved it to Leatherwood.

NM: Is that is the old Junction Farm? Is that the same thing as Pioneer Village?

JH: Pioneer village. That was a cabins up.

NM: That's different.

JH: Yes, well, their cabin was moved there. They had a cabin there. Somebody bought that out and moving it over to Leatherwood Kingdom come and whatever and make them like a history thing over there of that. The Stamper Farm. They had a cabin though Stamper Log Home was up there, I'm pretty sure that Stamper Farm hit set for the Carr Creek campgrounds that that's where the Stamper Farm was, that he had an old big swinging bridge went across up. Beautiful place. Beautiful. One of the most beautiful places in Lake Carr area. Then we come to the cemeteries. That was the Ball Point cemetery. Then you had the Hilton Cemetery and the Smith Cemetery, where Carr Creek, new grade school. That was a Smith Cemetery. All of them was moved to – and the Hilton and Ball Point was moved to Carr Fork Cemetery. Ball Point was across from the Stamper Farm. It comes down like if you go up there to go over to the campground, you come straight down to where this picnic area and playground is at, that was a whole cemetery there, a big cemetery. Then when you come around that curve on the old road, you come down, there was a bottom here on the left where the Carr Creek ramp is at.

NM: The Carr Creek ramp?

JH: Yes. Well, Lake Carr ramp that I called Carr Creek and they had a field there and they played Little League baseball there.

NM: When you say ramp, you mean a boat ramp?

JH: Yes, that's a big old flat place, and they had ball games and baseball games there all the time. Let's see. Then they shangle a branch, not shingle but shangle spelt with an A. Me and Jimmy was just babies when we were up in there. But I don't think we lived up there about a year, something or another. Then we moved out and went to Kodak. My daddy had a place down at Kodak, lived down there for three or four years or something, or maybe longer than that. He sold it to a Colonel Mullins, and we moved back up and let a place called Reynolds Branch, a barn lived there twenty, or some years before we moved out down to her grandpa on the main road. You come on down through there and there's a place called Kelly Port, not Kelly Port crossing a Yellow Creek, but Kelly Port called that's straight across from the high school, and there was a hump bar on that old road. You still see that road there? You all right?

NM: Yes.

JH: Yes, there's a hump there. They used to be a Alonzo Watts had a grocery store there. One evening we come up through there on a school bus, and I looked off to the right, everybody they are going on, I said, "Look, look, look," there was a milk truck, Chappell's milk truck. The whole body of it was took off and the frame was way down in the bottom there. That was excitement then to see that.

NM: How did that happen?

JH: I don't have no idea what on the bus I just come up there and them kids, other kids were hollering, look, look, look, and we look, everybody's looking over car, you know, like that. I see you come on down through there. They was placed at the Cody bridge. The bridge where the new bridges are that goes up by the castle under there where it's further out in the middle of the white part of the lake called Cody Bridge. There was a man had a store there, learned watch. My daddy would buy his – my daddy played banjo and he would buy his banjo, string banjo, banjo strings at large. Lots if you need anything furniture, any kind of hard work, fitting joints for pipes, all that stuff, he had it at that store. Then when you went through the bridge, you had the Hilton sawmill get braziers garage, and then you had a restaurant there. I don't know who the restaurant owner that I can't remember who owned that. But my daddy and his best friend [inaudible]. They were coming from [inaudible] at the time. At that time, [inaudible] was – well, it was before the lakes and I'm getting a knot. But I was going to tell you this anyway, they had been to [inaudible] to the theater watching movie with their girlfriend and they were coming back that night and the county got after them. Back then the county couldn't afford decent cars, and Bern had nearly a new mercury and it would get V8. So, they out run long when they were telling us, I thought they was a poor man Jimmy's leg and talked to a man that was at the restaurant. Because when they turned up to go up 160 and come home, the laws were like further behind them. This man named Glenn Honeycutt was over there on the porch of the restaurant and said, "Did you see a car and describe the car?" He said, "Yes," he pointed towards Letcher County. He said, they throw something out there at that bridge before they said, "Oh,

they did." So, the deputies get out and they over there and waiting that creek trying to find a gun or something till daylight. I thought they was pulling my leg till I talked to Glenn. Glenn on the store up on 160, and he told me and verified that and I about died that that went on like that stuff. But then you probably need another location. Where the campground is at the beach, down here at the mountain, there is curve in with that beach and that campgrounds out in the cliff. That's where the Irishman intersection went up right there and then right above it there. Donald Toliver had a garage there, and my uncle and his best friend, the creek was up at that time. They were flooding. They stuck an old 50, some model Buick in the creek drive, and they were drunk and they just out goofing off and stuck it in that high water. I reckon that way some of them said that Donald was the one pulled them out of the vehicle and just trying to think what else was down through there. But you can drive at the old 160 road there. You go down there and go up the mountain to the dam. When you get up to the old part of the road that goes up to the church, that's part of that old 160 road right there it hit, went around that and come down on the other side. It was almost a 90-degree curve, come back down through that valley and went up through that right there.

NM: What is the name of the church that it is by?

JH: I don't know if it's – I'm sure it's on the left. When you go up to the top of the bank, it's right there on the left. It's on the only church there on the hill. It's an old regular Baptist church and everything there. All right. I'm still trying to think of other stuff. I guess I've gone too far.

NM: No, that is all right. I am trying to keep up. You have just got – yes. It is so neat the visual that you are painting. Just kind of going along the road, naming all the landmarks is really neat to sort of try and visualize it all. I guess I just want to clarify. So, just so it is straight in my head, you said that, you know, about the schools. There was the old Carr Creek Elementary, there was Yellow Creek.

JH: Yellow Creek, and Neely.

NM: So those were the three, and they all went into the new Carr Creek High School that's up on the hill.

JH: The new great school.

NM: Yes, I'm sorry. The new great school.

JH: Yes. The Navy School was up on Pine Top, the 582 route, and the Neely was a place up in Yellow. You can see it because if you go up through there, there's an old stone building here. They use it for a church now. That was the Yellow Creek School. The Neely School, same way. You go up in there before you get to the top to go across Building Mountain, it's set on a bottom across from Roosevelt Honeycut store Roosevelt. That's the only Roosevelt I know around here named that. But nowadays, a lot of houses, I mean, I can I could probably show you three houses that I know of that was moved in preparation that dam. One of them, they call it the old movie theater. Another one was an old grocery store, Jim Adams old grocery store, then another Jim Adams. His gym was across from Glen Honeycut store. I tell you about the man that told

that on daddy and them. Yes, that's all up. Most of that stuff that there's a lot of homes up there that was moved by truck. I can remember on them little boys coming up through there. The old 160 road where my daddy was raised at. They hand drilled that and shot that the cupboard they put in under the road was 1932 the holler my wife lived in about a mile above there was dated 1934. So, it took them two years to go a mile hand drilling Cliff Brock up through there to make it work, because it was just a sled road. They take corn sleds, go to the store through the creek. Glen Powell, he had oxen. That's what he used to pull. He logged women and everything. He used them to build the old Carr Creek School to pull stone there, because they – I heard somebody tell me one time that those workers that built that old Carr Creek High School, they paid them twelve cents a day to build that school, the workers. That the stonemasons, the one that moved the rock, hauled the rock people that made the mud to stick the blocks together, all that stuff. Now, there's a lot of history there now.

NM: Yes. What was your father's name?

JH: Joe Hall Junior. Named after him. Named after my grandfather.

NM: So you are the third?

JH: I'm the third. Yes, ma'am.

NM: What was the holler that he grew up in?

JH: My daddy?

NM: [affirmative].

JH: He was on the main lake Carr Road there. My grandpa bought the property for a double barrel shotgun. He owned the side across from what they call big Y Mark. He owned all that all the way up to the Torbert Ridge. They had a lot of property there. On the other side, his brother Corbett owned then, and you go on up and then there was not – let's see. Yes. Big Corbett on all the way up. Both sides past my grandpa. Then when you get up, my grandpa, Norway Reynolds, on my grandmother's side. Daddy's mommy. They owned what they called Reynolds Branch. They owned that whole holler then the Nichols and just married into the hall. Family owned it all the way up to Brinkley, top of Brinkley Hill, before he turned to go to Hammond. At one time, that was all the Hall family, generations that had owned that up through there.

NM: What was the name of the holler your daddy grew up in? Did it have a name?

JH: It don't. Just up the 160 there, Letcher. Just main Letcher.

NM: Oh, the main Letcher. Got it.

JH: Because he would tell me that when he was a kid that Creek would be six to eight feet deep growing up. But now you go up through there and it's probably eight inches deep. At the time, over the years' time, the creek has filled up. They won't let you dip the creek because of certain

species of animals. That's like a law that blood that went on this place above me down there called boiling you can look out across the road and it ain't looked down. There's a creek, and if they would dip it and build barriers, some of this flooding that happened last time wouldn't have happened because they're not county. There was not ten people lost their life and some of them were small children and whole family children. But I guess I have to preserve the animals and stuff. I mean, preserve human life as well. I look at it. Are there anything else?

NM: Yes. Yes. What was the name of the creek that you were saying ran through that used to be six to eight feet deep?

JH: But the main creek that runs down 160 into Carr Creek Lake. It comes down through and joins Carr Creek. I mean, not the hit car, upper Carr Creek that runs down 160 then you hit meet Burgess Creek and then the creek that runs out of Stillhouse Holler. It meets it still, and it's got its name for a purpose. Yes, that's a true Main Creek story because a lot of people don't understand it. Carr Creek Lake is the only water sources that feed that are creeks in Knott County. There's no lecture, no prairie water stream runs into that lake. It's strictly Knott County for that lake and built it up, and that's where because we've had discussion about that later we sit down, we start saying, well, here, here, here. Yes. Because anything below the dam is still in Knott County, so Perry County can't run in it Letcher County River, the river were the black River is on the other side of the mountain from where it lived in. Shoot the Beaty Creek in Redbox. That's my last place. I lived before I moved to hazard, me and my wife because she was pretty sick. We moved down there to get closer to the hospital. Yes.

NM: Yes. So, you said that your daddy played banjo?

JH: He played banjo. He played in the bars when he was younger, him and his brother, the Hall Brothers Band. Then daddy played with some bands that played in Cincinnati, Ohio, Baltimore, Maryland, places like that, and then I had a couple sisters that sang for a while. We played gospel music and stuff, and we played the churches around. Every once in a while, we'd play at a little festival, like up here. Because they have a mayday festival and we played that, I think a couple times, I am not for sure. Can't remember. But yes, I liked the music.

NM: How did your daddy learn to play banjo?

JH: His mommy taught him how to tune it, and he learned to knock down first, two fingers down, and there's a man by the name of Betty Bolan. Lived in Dead Man's branch, and he taught daddy the picking pattern. But daddy didn't learn the full three banger road till he got with Ford Dyer, and he showed him a forward row with three fingers and what they call a backwards roll. That's when daddy's banjo player really improved.

NM: What was your daddy's mom's name?

JH: Martha Reynolds.

NM: Martha Reynolds. So, did she play?

JH: She played knockdown at banger. She could tune instrument. They said she's very talented, and his daddy played knockdown. But the thing about it is they was a bleeding old regular Baptist religion and they don't allow music. So, my daddy and his brother would have to build what they called a shiny house or a little room out from the house, and they would go out there and play their music and practice so it wouldn't be offensive to them. So, yes, they was people would prank when they had an old dog named Sam. I think it was Sam. He's telling me they would throw rocks at the top and hit the thing while they were playing, and they'd turn Old Sam loose and you could hear them, whoever it was, screaming, and he cut. He peeled the meat on their legs.

NM: Oh, trouble there?

JH: Yes, I mean, that it was something they rabbit hunted. They fished up down that creek. Then I heard my daddy always talking about catching perch in that creek.

NM: Really?

JH: Yes. It was a black and yellow striped fish. The perch was about fifteen or twenty years ago, I was fishing in that creek that he they grew up a fishing and I caught one about, oh, probably about a foot long.

NM: A Perch.

JH: A perch. I took the hook up and I put it back in the water. I said, "You'll live to another day, maybe make more purchase." But in that up to there. Yes. They up in there, we call them mudpuppies. They're like a water dog, but they're about that long till now, you pull them in and they vicious. They'll hiss and everything till you get them off that hook. I just cut the line, turn them back. I have had them headed my feet and they would try to bite my shoes.

NM: And that is a mudpuppy?

JH: I call him a mudpuppy. I don't know what their name is. But we call them mudpuppies, me and my buddies, when we catch them because they're two foot long. I mean, they were a lizard looking creature. They resemble a small water dog.

NM: What is a water dog?

JH: It's just a little lizard, lives in water. About that long, about six inches long. The water dog. But they are big and they are slimy. Yes, they real nasty. But we call them Mudpuppies. We nickname them mudpuppies. We had fish look like a man who had horns on their heads, and they had a pink belly. We nicknamed them horny heads because of the horns on the fish's head.

NM: These are all that you'd get in the Creek?

JH: Yes, and all that runs down through there and everything, to the to the dam and that water. All that stuff. They got some good holds of water to fish up through there. Now, that's what I

miss about because the lake it's so hard to catch. You just about have to figure out what the big fish are feeding on. If you want to catch a big catfish or a turtle, you have to catch a small bluegill and cut them spurs off the back of it and gut it and just let everything hang out and toss it out there. It takes some time, but "Oh, yes. I pretty much eat everything in that lake except those mudpuppies. They aren't eating them. No. I eat turtles. Turtle's good eating."

NM: What kind?

JH: Soft shell mud turtle. The one we had was big and round. There's a number three wash tub like that. Took two of us to pack it.

NM: No. Really?

JH: Yes.

JH: We'd pack it up a bank to the truck. We thought we had killed it. We got to our neighbors. Wanted to clean it. If we'd give him some of the meat and his wife would fix it we got it up there, and he reached to get it, and it just about ripped his hand off. Yes, because they can take bangers.

NM: Did that come out of the creek or the lake?

JH: Creek. Yes. Now the lake's got them. But they will be things like that. They'll swim up, top the water and look at you, then back down they go. But no turtle meat's good. I mean, they say it's what, about nine different players? They ain't nothing to it. It just turtle.

NM: Well, how do you all fix it?

JH: Cut it up in chunks and fat and stuff. So, they said then they it tasted different than the legs. The tail. That ain't nothing to that hit a reptile meat like people eating alligator. A lot of people eat turtle around here.

NM: Always.

NM: The soft shell?

JH: Hard and soft shell, hard shell like a tarp. It's got a big hump on it. But the soft shell is a flat.

NM: But people will eat either kind?

JH: Yes, they eat either kind and both of them to them's turtle. There's a specific way you got to clean them, get them out of the hull, and I never seen that done.

NM: You just catch them and eat them?



JH: Yes. The squirrel hunt. I mean, the rabbit hunt. Grass hunt. If we've seen a grass weed, if it wouldn't season and we wanted to eat, we eat because our daddy got hurt in the coal mines in 1962. He was a baby. His birthday is the 10th.

NM: Jimmy you are talking?

JH: Yes. He was hurt when – Jimmy was a baby. My daddy, he signed up on disappeared, and they was a fighting hit. You know how compensation people are. They just fighting that in court, and then he signed up at the time on food stamps, and they was denying him that. So, he had to go work as a janitor at Carr Creek grade school.

NM: The old one or new one?

JH: The old one. Because I remember him. We get a Carr with him. I was on one in school then, and he would take me to school, and they had a big trampoline down there and our sister principal him. My daddy was best friends growing up. They rode bicycles together as boys I get in there and play on that trampoline to them. Buses start coming in. I had to get down and they would just sit there. Daddy talked about old memories and stuff and everything, but my daddy worked with a man named Gaither McKinney. He was an Irishman that moved here from North Carolina. He married a melton girl. They had five children, one girl and four boys. The only boy left living is George McKinney and my mother-in-law, Sue. Hattie Sue Mullins. But I married her daughter, Sara Elizabeth Adams. Her daddy was Adams, from Letcher County, and she had a brother that was eighty. He went over to the first Gulf War, which he was at the same group that Jimmy was with support group for the seventh Corps in southern Iraq. Well, they do all that fighting and stuff, and he's a demolition expert. He basically blow stuff up. That was his job. He comes back on a furlough. Now, his grandpa looked at my daddy when they was putting this lake in and he said, junior, he said they going to build a lot of people drown and lose her life when this is put in. He had passed away and his grandson come home. He was home. My son was born in [19]91. He went a few weeks old or days old, and I got pictures of him holding him that night. It went about a week or something. I worked at Save-A-Lot up making got a phone call and my mother wouldn't tell me, she wouldn't come home. I said, is it my babies? She said, "No, no." I said, "It's Eddie, he's drowned." That's Gaither's grandson. At that time, he had no idea that his own grandson would die in this lake, and he predicted it before his death. Yes, and they'd been locked to die in there.

NM: Why did he predict that people would drown in the lake?

JH: I don't know. Tim and Dave were talking about a large body of water. Because it would be consistent with somebody drowning because they'd be a lot of people boating, fishing, swimming, doing all that stuff there. Like me and Jim and our sister, we like kayaking. We have kayaks and we like to get there, but we put a life vest on when we go. But like the first young man that drowned at the beach, he was a brown. His last name is Brown. I didn't know his first name. He laid in there, teeth come up bloated, finally come up, and they got his body. Then the next thing that I can remember was a man by the name of Jerry Bailey. He and my mother was a baby, and she had a brother named Jerry. It was out from the cricket place we call the Rock dam that comes out of the holler there at the Beaver Creek. He drowned right there.

He had my mother tore all to pieces, and he was like, maybe two days or something there, laid in the water there. But now my brother-in-law, Eddie, he laid in the water for sixteen hours, and he was faced down. When they brought him up, they had to hook him. Have you ever seen anything like that? Because them hooks just hooks anywhere in the body. When they brought him up and we had him at home, the director King, King Gayheart at funeral home come up to me because he knew all of us. He told me, he said, "Don't let him touch his nose or his chin." He said, it's wax. He didn't have no nose or chin wearing. His body rubbed back and forth on that water down there.

NM: Gosh. Awful.

JH: Yes. But think about stuff like that. Had another man and Boogie man hit the Christmas. That's been a long time. He come a bad snow storm and he was going back to wherever he lived. He'd been up on car to see his family at Christmas time. Or he might have been coming see me. I can't remember which way he's going, but he come down by Carr Creek school and that snow, the high school, that snow had ramped up on the guardrail and he just, like, disappeared. Nobody knows where he was at for five years and the Cody Bridges coal truck driver come up and way the son was hitting, he could see the glare coming off something in the water. So, when he gets up here, he pulls off and he goes over and looks and there's a car. When they pull the he calls the law, they come, they hit that boogie man. His body is preserved and the Christmas present is still in the Carr. Yes. Everything's still in tact with him. For five years, nobody knows where he was at. It's sunk because I've seen heard people tell two different people, tell tales, which they're very religious people just up in the S-curve. When you go into war time on that lake road there, past Carr Creek, they've been going up through there at the same time, at 2:00 in the morning, they've seen a man in sandals wearing white walking that road, two different people. One was my wife's uncle and the other one was my cousin. I guess it's ghost, whatever you want to call it, which I believe in spiritual stuff, I do. I believe they're ghosts because the Bible says that Jesus and Lazarus gave up the ghost. But you can ask most preachers, where does the ghost go? They can't tell you. You know God? He's after your soul and your spirit. You don't worry about no ghost. Actually, he go on wherever it goes.

NM: You have such a vivid memory. These are such vivid stories. I am curious. I know that the lake, now there is, like, a few spots around the lake where, there is strip mines there. I am curious, were those hills mined before the lake was there, or did that strip mining happen after?

JH: They strip mined them. I can remember strip mines up in the head of rental branch where I was a kid growing up, from the age of oh, five or four years old, up till twenty something years living there. They were deep mines and they predicted in that one holler that they was twenty-five years of mining in that holler.

NM: Which holler was that?

JH: Railroad branch in Letcher where my grandmother, her family used to own the whole holler up in there. Yes. That's the strip mines been around for a long time.

NM: So, the strip mines that are around the lake were there before the lake was built?

JH: Yes, yes. Because you can go in there and look where they augured. You can get in there. She'll auger holes that they aren't stripped off. It's still there that they take an auger and drill into the seam. They pull that coal out, and then you got about that much seam between the holes, which is the number seven hole or number nine. They're dry. So, a lot of wild animals takes that up for a den. They get in there and den which is a strip jump right up here above him on top of the mountain. But most of that up here runs back into the feeder creek quietly hitch cow pasture. They sold it back and put cattle on it. Big black and beautiful cattle. Have you ever been over to Yellow Mountain where they had the horse trail, right?

NM: Yes, I have been there. It's been a few years.

JH: Yes, I've been over there one time. I don't make a habit going over there, but you know that the drunker people don't like being around when they're drinking because they bombed me. But stuff like that. She's back here. They supposed to put a golf course in.

NM: Up on the strip mine?

JH: Right up here. Yes. It was going to be Letcher involved in it, Knott County and Perkins, which was going to be on most of Knott County, a little bit of Perry County, but they couldn't agree on it. So, we didn't get no funding for a golf course because the county couldn't agree. That'd been another great thing right there.

NM: That cow pasture did that. Was it a cow pasture before the lake came in?

JH: It just all mountain, all mountain. I like to see and stuff like that, because there aren't much for people here. I mean, if you can get into cattle raising, yes, it's good because it produces meat for the grocery stores and let people make a living, and especially if they use any strip job for tourism, like horses, ATV rides, anything like, well, for the Sportsplex is built at his strip job. That's abandoned strip job right there. Now it's sitting on a thick salt melt.

NM: Are they still raising cattle over there today?

JH: Yes, they still got cattle. They over towards him and they got horses and stuff. Pasture their horses on them back there. They just go up and build a barn and there it is, and they haul hay up there and big rolls of hay. I mean, I really like it, but like down here hit by controversy because the strip mine, the water goes into it. But if you go there and look at the ponds and stuff that back there to water the deer, the elk, the bobcat, the coyote bar gets water out the cattle, that's our horses, gets water out of it, and they got bars to catch silt coming down off that after they sold grass. I mean, there were big rock dams just led. The water has come down filter through that rock, go to another filter and it does that all the way down, I mean, but not to me. A strip job is not as nasty as a deep mines. Deep mines, you got grease and stuff in there from the machinery inside there, and you got some stuff that's left old grease cans or oil cans, hydraulic cans that they don't pull out when they pull them pillars. It sits down and crushes that water hit filters out through that rock, and that group, that chemical, you won't get that out.

NM: Yes. So, I wanted to know when they filled in the lake, did the lake fill in any old deep mines?

JH: Get back down towards the main down there. You got sawmill. Holler down through there. That was down low block for rider. They got four rider lengths to a riders got sulfur. They outlawed the minor of that because of the sulfur that then it caused a lot of times you see that old yellow discharge of water, that sulfur coming out of them old mines. That's the strip job is nowhere near as nasty as a deep mine. Nowhere.

NM: So, could you theoretically scuba dive into a deep mine from the lake?

JH: I wouldn't, because after over a period of time them wasn't posted in there. It's called a black damp. It's a gas and it will kill you. It just you breathe that in and if you don't get out for a shower, you're dead. I wouldn't do that. No. Just, like up in the creek or what they put a slope mine in there. It went down and hit sixty feet below this lake bed. They mined all the way to Cumberland and stay still. I think they still run coal going towards London, Manchester way.

NM: It's underneath the lake?

JH: Yes. The Apple resources had it first and then they don't know who they sold it out to. But you go up there at the feeder creek where the mines is, it's just like that very cut it with a continuous mine which straight down like that and it's sixty feet below the creek bed. Well, the well that we had up on the property was 242 feet deep or drilled well, and it was right in the same seam of coal that they was mining.

NM: Well, I am curious, Joe. You have told me quite a lot about before the lake was built. I guess I am curious to know more about your memories of when the construction was going on. When did you learn that they were going to put in a lake there?

JH: You could tell when they started cutting the timber around 160 because they went around. Some of the timber was left lock up in this hollow here. You still see remnants of timber still standing down through here. then when you instead of coming up Jimmy's way, when to go back on, get on fifteen. You can go that way called boat dock car. This big Smith bank, and they still stand in stumps. The water aren't filled up right now, but most of it, they went around where they going to be shooting the road out for the road through here. The fifteen. They went up there and cut that timber and all because my father said that they were a – I forget what that man's name was, driving a log truck down here where the Campground is and beach. He was taking a load of logs towards hurricane and they were cutting in a log, got in and out of control and fell into a slick rock collar. That's just a rock collar that there's nothing in it but a rock. Water wet rock ditch. It come down, and it hit that truck and went through that cab of that truck where that man was at.

NM: Where is slick rock holler?

JH: If you go back out this way, it's actually with all that sand come off that sand. Gravel pours off of fifteen going back towards Prairie County on the left.

NM: Like where the beach is?

JH: Yes, right in that. From there to the restaurant there was a holler come down and went all the way down, which you all hollers around here. But this one was specific because that man got killed in that truck.

NM: Is that holler covered up by the lake now?

JH: There's timber growing up. You probably get over there. You probably see drain concrete drains has been put in.

NM: Could you see slick rock holler still?

JH: No, no, everything's changed now. When they started blasting. Shooting like I told you about that plan of turning over into the – that was right before they start building it up with water because they moved. The year of [19]69, when school got out, they started building it up. I'm pretty sure [19]69, and [19]70, that's when I went to the new Carr Creek School up on the Hill.

NM: [19]69 was when they started filling the lake up with water?

JH: Yes. Well, because you can go up through there if you get out of your vehicle and go look for culverts is – a cupboard is dated what year, a lot of them up through your [19]69, [19]70, [19]68, and [19]67. You just got to know where did they start and where did they finish it. Because they started right in this area. First here making fifteen right here.

NM: What do people call this area?

JH: This used to be called, really? Irishman buggy. All this right here was called Amburgey, Kentucky because you got your mail at Amburgey. But now they changed and cut down the post office. He has to go sassafras, which he could go to Redbox. It's about the same distance either way and get his mail, and then trying to think here.

NM: So, the first sort of phase of the them building the lake was – yes. Like what you started saying that like the timber was one phase. Walk me through what the different phases of them building the lake were.

JH: The tree removal and then the drilling and blasting and then them hauling the rocks and putting them in low valley places to connect. Because if you go back that way, it's all basically shut out a cliff. So, that rock was hauled back going towards fifteen. Pass this bridge out here. That is all sloped on that, right all the way up. That's fill from the rock that they shot back down this way they brought up here to fill. They built that road, then they go up for another cliff, and they cut their out blacks out. They'd be like a valley between two cliffs. Then it would go over and fill so they could get two lane and all that. They'd been taught that they going to make a four lane through here eventually. I can't see that happening because that'd be a great big road.

NM: So, the blasting had to do with building the road, not constructing the lake.

JH: No, no, the lake. Some of that blasting the rock and dirt that was used to make the dam because they had a mountain do this way, then they had to like the top of the dam like level here. But it had to be sloped for the water to lay on the dirt so it wouldn't blow. You have seen a lot of places, big old round like Colorado, that big round concrete dam. A lot of them, sometimes they'll crack and they'll just blow out but this is made down here. It's what they call earth dam. It's what it is. It does a pretty good deal holding water, it does. We've talked about building that road up where the caution lights said before the caution lights was in there. My wife, I didn't know at the time my daddy mother was going down church or somewhere. I can't remember where they was going one day, and they was a wreck up there in that bridge where the lights is at now. Mommy was third vehicle back and he run down there, five people was killed. A truck had hit the side of the building and there was two small children crawled out the back window and daddy went up there and it said that he looked. Those people said it looked like he just asleep, that truck hit them at the intersection and drove them almost all the way through the bridge, coming back this way. But later on, when I murdered my wife, I found out that that was five of her kin people. First cousin.

NM: Gosh, what a tragedy.

JH: Yes, that may hit a base. There's a lot of death on this new road because they drive it. That road just speeds on it. Then you got the drownings and all that stuff going on, but I guess it comes with life, new things in life that you have to deal with.

NM: Yes, and I guess one phase we did not really, I guess before they could cut down the trees, there was another phase too where they had to move people out of the area.

JH: First thing started moving the houses.

NM: What do you remember about that? What was talk around the community about having people having to move?

JH: Some of them didn't make it hardly a bit because of the state. They come in, they buy your property or government whatever, and they pay you what it values to them on record. No matter how much money you put into that property. You aren't going to get what they going to give you. Then some of them, they had purchased some new property to move it. From what I heard, they if they didn't want to pay them the price they purchased property, the government did and move that house to it. Or either they purchased a house, tore it down, burn it down, whatever they had to do to get move it, bulldoze it, and then people might leave to another state or another county and lived, but there's many different means to get it cleared out no matter what it was. My cousin, Morg Reynolds, was a guard Equipment that they parked. Right down here where this boat, Marina, a matter of fact, was at, and he was murdered by the boss of the construction company over a woman, a female they used to fuss about Morgan Tucker out. He was taking her out. He walked up more, sitting on the shot and blowed him away. My daddy tried to get his cousin say, to take him down there, and he would deal with that boss. My daddy, he was that tight. Moore was a well liked man. Morgan's buried above the rental cemetery and Reynolds,

banks and hits about a football field above the cemetery up a ridge. His wife passed away and we had to pack her up, what we call a gash rolled up in the head of the holler and she was too old that most of her family, her children, couldn't make it. They was up in their seventies, too, and [19]60s and [19]70a, and we had go around. We asked people on the holler to help pack her and get her buried, and they come and help. We take turns with the undertakers or pack and players Aflaj McGregor. We swap out to rest one another till we got that casket up on the hill and that gave them two graves is buried. The grass won't grow there. It's slate. The ground on top of the ground is slate. They buried down in a in a slate rock. Him and her is.

NM: Gosh. Well, that reminds me. I know a lot of thing that folks have talked about, too, is that that they had to relocate all these graves and all these cemeteries. What do you remember about that and what people were saying about it?

JH: Up here at the cost of lots? Those are Pine Grove on the right there. Before you get on the bridge right down in there. They was Hilton Cemetery down in there, and me and my cousin Konrad was his name. He's passed on since then. We was all the time going fishing. Every time you want to go fishing, he hollered at me and daddy and whoever else. Well, me and him struck out one day and he said, "I've never fished off that." He said, "I ain't even fished on my boat." He said, "Let's go down through there then, Pike." Well, pans over the years, no torch for brass. You know what a Saul bra is?

NM: No.

JH: It's just a big long, like a band grows up trees. It got big brass on it. When you get in, it will cut, hit, basically saws when you get in it, hit it. Well, like, that's what it does. It makes a salt cut like that. Well we got in there was walking down towards the water and Konrad, he had fell in, we all covered with leaves and pine needles in there and he had dropped down two foot. Well, it was a grave that they removed a body that had sunk back down where they'd had filled it. The dirt settle back down and it was two foot. We got to looking everywhere there country. This is an old cemetery. I asked my daddy about it. He said, "That's the old Hilton cemetery there," then you look like the ball point curve cemetery up there. I had a schoolteacher help move some of them bodies. They was Revolutionary War soldiers buried in that Civil War. Soldiers buried in that they was bodies that they would the modern ones that was buried in there. They had to open the casket up to identify the number and who that was by the headstone to make sure they put them where the headstone match that body. He said some of them, and he's an honest man. This man was. I don't want to give his name because he's patient and gone. But he said they were some of them that they opened up. They want a woman petrified with where she had poured her heart. She was alive, still alive in that when they buried her, she's like, I guess you'd say a coma. They didn't know it at the time because now they come to your house, they put meat or stuff on you, and they look at you. They're gone, no function in the body or the brain. They was another one that a woman and her baby had died. They opened it up, they said the baby back then they would put them in the arms of the woman. That baby's body was at the bottom of the casket. It just weird things that when they moved them, they had to open them up and then see that, but I believe that what he was telling was true. No. Because they back then person could be in a coma and they well, they didn't know they didn't have the qualification or the machines at the time to say, yes, there's no brain function, no heart function, no nothing.

They declared them dead and they come out of their coma and they in the ground. I know that man. But that cemetery, the Smith Cemetery, I can tell you a cemetery they didn't move was the Bentley Cemetery. You heard me telling you about Stillhouse Hollow. Straight across, there's a gold pants on 160 Stillhouse is on the left. They still haul coal weather from Scripture straight across them. Pines is bent Cemetery, and only people's God is state workers. The families got a key to drive down that old Carr road. They call it the old Carr road. That's like this used to be amburgey up at the crossing. Like that was called Cody up bar. Then you got up into Redbox and Redbox, you got Hill Branch, Beattie Creek, all that up through there.

NM: So, the Helton Cemetery that your cousin sort of stumbled into, had they moved the bodies? It was just the gravestones?

JH: Yes. They took the bodies out. When they put the dirt to fill the hole back in over the years, it settled. You can take a body, I don't know if you've been to a cemetery with graves is something, watch them fill them back up. You know that wording that they buried like in rock? It won't sink. My wife's bodies buried. You go down eighteen inches and you hit rock. They'd have to jackhammer graves there. So, they jackhammer that rock out and they haul all the dirt in. So, they put her in there and they put dirt back out, because that is probably one of the awfulest sounds you ever hear when they're throwing dirt on a vault? It's a haunting sound. I can't stand it. I can't be around when they do that. Because when my wife – they packed her up on the hill, got around the hill where I couldn't hear that. But the men that done it, they were really nice about it. The dirt slides down in the sides. They just didn't toss it like some people does and let it hit that ball. It's a real rough sound. Next time you go to a funeral, listen when you hear that.

NM: Yes, I sure will. Yes. Well, just maybe wrapping up with a few more questions. Joe, I am curious, you were a young person at the time that the lake was being built, but do you remember what you thought of it all, what you felt about it happening?

JH: The way I was worried, it's like, I guess Jimmy told you about you going down there, young man, and fishing, and the law would run you out? Yes, that's true. Because about eight, ten years ago, me and my son and my nephew, we were fishing. We fishing right below shingle bunch up, down on that side of that playground picnic area where the water purification plant is. A state trooper pulled up, spotlighted us. He said, "Y'all going to have to leave." I said, "Why?" He said, "You're making noise. You're disturbing the campground," and what was going on, they had called on a bunch at the ramp that was busting them trash cans, teenage boys. My nephew Tom said, "Turn your car off," and left. I turned my car. He said, "Turn your car off and listen," and then Boy George, because he didn't throw no blue lights or nothing on, and you could hear him busting them cans of giggling life. He pulled out and went over not one time did he apologize for his actions, how he acted with it goes on all the time. If you want to go down here at night and fish from a bank, you can guarantee you if you run that campground. But nobody calls a law about how noisy they are, but they call on you and that it goes on all the time. I mean, that's a place to enjoy yourself. But if you got laws breathing down your neck, and if you're a fisherman that time's the best time to fish or you can catch some big, there won't be catfish. You'll come up in back waters or the fights on in at night. But that's probably one right there. Spurs of the dam going in. I was probably too young for it to even affect me. You know



what? I really thought about it. But when I grow up, we never seen a deer. Never seen a deer. Never. Then after I got around seventeen, eighteen-year-old, I started seeing deers. I thought that were that. What is that? I know it was a deer, but I never seen one, and then when I got my 20s, I started hunting deer. But I wouldn't hunt around here. I'd go, like down to Marion County, down in our Lawrence County, Carter County, Morgan County, place away from here. Now, let that herd build up. But there's a lot of men hunting around here and would kill them because the only time you can kill a doe is ball or black powder here. Because rifle season buck only, but that's basically what it is right there. They put elk in here. Animal had been extinct from this state for 150, 200 years. They brought them in and put them in here. I've seen as high as twenty-two of them in a herd up at my mother in laws. I went back in there hunting one day with my son at youth hunt deer season, and he would go. He wouldn't be seven-year-old and big animal sitting there looking at us, and he pulled on the back of the tree. He said, "Daddy, I'm scared. Let's go. Let's get out of here." I said, "No," I said, "We're hunting. They're going to be leaving here in a little bit," and they did. You're talking 1500 pounds animal run up a mountain. I've done twenty mile an hour. I packing that weight hit just amazing. But yes, the lake has a whole lot there to offer. We got beaver. I never seen beaver, no beavers. Now you see beavers around this lake up in the back waters. I've seen minks. Mink is a beautiful animal, beautiful big animal. What else have I seen? Bobcat and more. Bobcat ram. People have seen mountain lions. My daddy seen a mountain lion had defeated creek and some coal miners up there in the Butte Creek scene. Probably the same mountain lion. The game wardens argued. No, we ain't set them out. You don't have to shut them out. They travel. That's like the bear. They hear. I slept three days, but I've seen it on security camera and I went out on the porch. He's holding me. Don't do that. Don't do that. I scolded him, went around the hill and it stopped and looked back and said, "Oh, boy, you better be going." It went up the bank, but she had one. She had four or five on her, turned her garbage up. That don't part. I hate about the animals, stuff like that the couch there were. Well, there's a man had a fenced in lot, a Gibson man, and he had couch in it. Couch and boxes was in that. He let people take their dogs and hunt them. But now it's perfect, I don't have a problem with it. I mean, a lot of people's lives changed because of the dislocation of their farms and all that that they had. But in a way, it's better for the community because it brings a lot of money into this county wise, putting your boat in there and you're keeping it seasoned and all that stuff.

NM: Well, Joe, I feel like I could just talk to you all afternoon. You just have such vibrant stories to share. But I want to be respectful of your time. So, I think I will maybe take thirty seconds just to record some sounds of the room. So, we will just sit here quietly for about thirty seconds. After that, I will just ask you if there is anything else that is still on your mind either about the lake or what life was like before or after the lake. So, we will just sit for thirty seconds and yes, you can think if there is anything else that is still on your mind. All right, well, we hear Jimmy is working away down there in the shop. Well, Joe, is there anything else I did not ask you about you think would be important for folks to know?

JH: No, I guess that's about it. Unless I had two or three days to think. I just remember them big long rides on that school bus, that winding road that was up where I live at. The bus driver used to have to pick what they called Lord Betty Troublesome Upper Betty Troublesome. I lived on Lord Betty Troublesome and he would pick all of us up first. Then he'd go up to turn it the Bethlehem Church at Brinkley, top of Brinkley Hill, and he'd come back down, picking up the

upper one those kids are sitting in people's laps, standing up. I mean, here's a bus going, and they put them up, finally put another bus up. But, I mean, you're talking about a lot of kids and very few bus drivers. Back then to drive a bus, you didn't have to have CDLs, you just jump on one. If you could handle it, you could drive it. Because I used to be a bus driver. I had to go get training, get my CDLs to drive one. I drove a log truck too. You were talking about strip mine. I'll do it this way. Before that, the Forester Division had to make rule changes for logging. That was probably one of the most nasty and ridiculous slaps ever was when they logged, because now they had to show the grass back. They had to put curbs in and stuff when they're logging so it won't mess the stream up and you can get in trouble for that. But now it's not as nice as it used to, but they cut that timber, that mountain to slip out. Nothing there to hold it, hold the earth no more. So, yes, there's a lot of environmental things that goes on here. But I'd say that by far to me, the underground mining and the old logging jobs, the way they were performed, because you have logging jobs that's still in the mountains. You can look in a mountain, back in a mountain, you see slips when you're traveling a road way back in, and there's no road to that. They've logged. They went in somewhere and logged. They cut that timber in there. So, yes, it happened to the best, I guess. But that's about it. That's all I can think about right now.

NM: Okay. Well, yes. I have so enjoyed talking with you, Joe. I will go ahead and just sign us off here and end the recording. So, this is Nicole Musgrave, and I have been talking with Joe Hall. Joe Hall as he goes by, and we're at his brother Jimmy's house in Knott County, Kentucky, up by the Carr Creek Marina. This is February 9th, 2023. This is for the Carr Creek Oral History Project.

[end of transcript]