

Nicole Musgrave: So, we're recording now. I will introduce us. This is Nicole Musgrave and I am with Charles Feller Frazier, goes by Feller. We are at the home of Debbie Holcomb, Feller's sister. We're here in Knott County, Kentucky, and this is for the Carr Creek Oral History Project, and it is February 6th, 2023. So, I guess just to start, Feller, can you tell me your name and just tell me a little bit about who you are?

Charles Frazier: Well, my name is Charles Frazier, better known as Feller. I grew up in Cody, Kentucky, prior to the lake being built. We moved to Red Fox, Kentucky, in, I believe it was 1972. We've lived here all of our life. Of course, I was born in New York City. My father and mother was up there working, and I was born in New York City. So, then we moved back here and they started their business and I've been here ever since.

NM: Nice. Tell me a little bit more about your people and where you are from.

CF: Well, I guess my dad's people were originally from Letcher County, Kentucky and lived in a community called Hot Spot. My mother family was from Jackson County, Kentucky, near Annville. So, her parents moved to Vicco when she was young. I guess that's where they met in Vicco. They were married and then again, they worked out on the road for a while and then moved back home and started their business. We have a small family, just my sister and I. We just grew up in Cody, went to school at Carr Creek Elementary. I went two years to Carr Creek High School and then graduated from high school at Knott County Central High School. So, then just lived here after high school, I got a job and went to work and married my wife in, I guess 1985 and [19]86. Okay, close enough. But anyway, I married Michelle Sparkman and she lived in Letcher County. So, anyway, we have two children, Molly and Rachel.

NM: Yes. I guess I should say, Michelle's here sitting next to me on the couch. So, she is a fact checking Feller on some of those facts. [laughter]

CF: Yes. I need fact checked, yes.

NM: Well, you said that your parents owned a business. What was their business?

CF: Well, mum and dad had a grocery store and a service station, and then dad had a truck garage. We worked on heavy duty trucks. He did that. Hauled the coal from all the coal mines around. Then mum had the grocery store and kind of like one end of the grocery store was a little restaurant that she made home cooked meals. Started out with beans and cornbread, I believe is what she really started out on. Well, probably started out making cold sandwiches and then went on from there, and to show to the people that worked in the around the mines and everything before the dam, before they started working on the Carr Fork Lake. Yes.

NM: What was the name of their business?

CF: Frazier's Gulf. Yes. Frazier's Gulf.

NM: And what were your parents' names?

CF: Elwood and Alma. Elwood was like myself. He had a nickname that was geared Frazier, that no one hardly knew his real name. Gid was a nickname, and he got it as a young boy.

NM: What is the story behind that?

CF: Well, actually, my dad was born in 1925. So, growing up, I guess that would have been closer to around the early [19]30s. They lived in a coal camp and there was a dentist that come around named Gid Whitaker, and he was a dentist. He would come into the coal camps and take care of the people's teeth and so forth. As he done that, everyone knows Gid Whitaker as the dentist. Well, my dad and my Aunt Bee, I think it was Aunt Bee that they were playing, and they had tied a string around her teeth and they were running through the yard and dad stepped on the string, pulled the teeth out. They started calling him Gid Whitaker. Then they dropped the Whitaker and called him GID. So, it was a lifelong nickname. Yes.

NM: Nice. I know there is the bridge, (Gid Frazier?). Is that after him?

CF: Yes, yes. That's named after my dad. He lived in the community forever. I don't know, I guess we moved there in [19]62, [19]63 somewhere around there. So, dad was I guess, an instrument of the community living there and working, having people work for him and stuff at the service station and the garage. Then my dad was a World War II veteran and a Korean War veteran. I think he was very well thought of in the community.

NM: Yes. How old were you when you all moved to Knott County?

CF: Oh, Jeez. I probably would have been five years old, four years old. I guess my sister helped me there. I was four years old and we moved to Knott County. Actually, we didn't move to the location where we had the service station first. We lived at another place, and I vaguely can remember that. But then not long after that, we moved up there to where the grocery store and the service station was, and I lived there until 1972, and we moved to Red Fox.

NM: So, your home by the service station, was it like on the same plot of land?

CF: Yes. Actually, [laughter] the funny story about that. It was actually the same building that the store was in. We had a store in the front part of the building, and living quarters in the rear of the building, and we lived in the rear part of it. There was a really good house in our back yard, but my dad chose to rent that house for extra income. It was a better house than probably we lived in but, under the financial circumstances, that's what he chose to do. We kept it, that house rented for many, many years.

NM: How was it that your parents came to run the business?

CF: Well, actually, there was Clayton Hale and his wife, Bess Hale on the property. They had the garage leased out to a guy from Whitesburg, and I think I have the name right. Jerry Yinger, and he had a tire service, Jerry's Tire Service. Dad worked for Jerry, changing truck tires and working on truck tires. As he got to working there, he got to know Clayton and Bess really well. They were going to sell their property and retire. Dad worked out a deal with them. I think I'm

pretty accurate on that, that they bought that. Dad bought that property from Clayton and Bess Hale. Yes. So, it was quite a story, because if I'm not, I'm pretty sure about this too. I think they bought it on like a land contract. They went ahead and paid Clayton and Bess the payments instead of doing a traditional mortgage, I believe. I believe that's the way they bought the property, and then they opened up the grocery store, and we had a very good business back in those days. Yes.

NM: When the previous folks owned it, were they also selling food out of there like your mum?

CF: I can't remember for sure. I think they maybe just had a grocery store and gas pumps. I don't think they actually got into the food business as much as mum did. The truck garage was a separate building, and I think that the other gentleman had that leased. So, then when dad owned it, he run the whole thing. So, they had the grocery store, the little restaurant part, the gas pumps, the service station and the truck garage where they worked on trucks.

NM: You said that initially your mum started out with beans and cornbread?

CF: Yes, I think so. That was I think she initially probably made cold sandwiches for the employees. But then I think they got started making soup beans and cornbread and selling a bowl of beans and two pieces of cornbread and two slices of onions for lunch. That was pretty much the meal ticket at that time. She sold a lot of soup beans, I can tell you that. Yes.

NM: Did she ever get into anything else or was that the main thing.

CF: Oh, she got into a whole lot more. My dad was an early riser and my dad cooked a lot, too. So, he made breakfast every morning, and he fried eggs and meat and toast and sold to the people. Then when mom, she worked the later shift. She'd get up and do lunch and there was somebody there all the time at our house. We opened early and stayed late. There was people at our house just about all the time. I can't remember many times when they were not customers in and out. There was a lot of small truck, what we call truck mines back then. Small coal mines that dotted the community. So, those work hands would come in of a morning and then they'd come back that evening. They'd buy gas. They'd get their uniforms. They'd get some groceries or whatever they needed. They'd come back the next morning early, get lunch, get their breakfast and lunch and anything they was going to take to the job site with them. So, mom and dad were there. We worked pretty much. Mum and dad worked pretty much, I believe we closed Christmas Day when they first started. That was about the only day we had off, and mom and dad worked a lot. In later years they started closing a little bit more, but when we lived down at Cody, that was a pretty much routine thing.

NM: So, what was it like for you growing up in the back of the store?

CF: The greatest thing in the world. I'd just cry thinking about it. It was the greatest. We had the greatest community. There was a big coal company down there, and then Tillie Hilton had a beauty shop. Mum and dad had a grocery store and service station. Mainous Holcomb and Opal lived across the road. They had a grocery store and a service station. Then across the bridge, Larry Watts had a furniture store. That's where I bought my first bicycle, and I bought it myself.

Across the road, Sprout and Neil Johnson had a supermarket. We had a lots of stuff there. There was a lot of traffic. We were on the main road between Whitesburg and Hazard and not only the main road there, but then we were at the intersection where you turned and went north to Hyman. So, there was just always traffic there, and the coal mines were working pretty good back in those days, and there was good years and bad years, but overall, but growing up in that community, and it was a great community because, I probably ate dinner in most of those people's houses that lived in that community. I was the kid that wherever they'd open the screen door and say, "Hey, Feller, you want to eat supper?" Yes, I'll be right there. So, I was that kid. Yes. So, it was a great life.

NM: Yes. So, like about how many. Families or people lived in Cody at that time?

CF: Wow. It would be, I don't know. There was a hollow that was right beside of our house called Graffiti Creek. There was tons of people lived in that hollow. I'm going to say, man, I'm going to say forty or fifty families in that little general area. Back in those days, there wasn't many boundaries for a ten year old boy. I'd go to Red Fox or Smithboro or Litt Carr or Defeated Creek or Smith Branch. I could go about anywhere. Most places I wasn't supposed to go, but I usually ended up going. So, yes. I knew everybody. So, it was a great place to grow up.

NM: Was Defeated Creek considered part of Cody or just next to it?

CF: Yes, it was part of it because I remember everybody that lived in Defeated Creek would come out and a lot of times they would come out of the holler and catch the bus at our house, at the mouth of the holler. All those people traded with mom and dad, bought groceries and gas and had their car worked on. They were all good friends of ours. Not much bad to talk about, really. Just yes, Defeated Creek was a pretty big holler and they hauled a lot of coal out of there.

NM: Well, you mentioned some of the other stores around your parents business. Do you remember the names of some of them?

CF: Oh, mine is an Opal Holcomb. Had a store.

NM: The names of the store, yes.

CF: Holcomb's Grocery and Larry Watts had a furniture store across the bridge. That would have been Watts Furniture Store. Across the road, the Johnsons had a supermarket, and I can't remember the name of it, but they built a quite a big building and put a supermarket in. Then Tillie's Beauty Shop. I'm pretty sure that was the name of it. Was Tillie's Beauty Shop. The Hiltons lived in Cody. That was a name. There was a lot of Hiltons that lived there, and she was a Hilton was her maiden name. They built a real nice beauty shop. I can remember that beauty shop quite well.

NM: Did you spend some time in there?

CF: When it was open. I don't remember spending much time in there, but I can remember that their family was in the logging business. They had taken a pine tree that had a lot of branches on

it and put it in the center of that. That was odd that I had met Tillie, probably seven or eight years ago, and I mentioned that to her, and she just couldn't believe that I could remember that because I was really small. But that pine tree they took and took all the bark off of it, and a pine tree has a lot of branches on it. They had cut those branches off and actually made a, like a coat hanger, a place to hang your coats with all those little branches. But they'd stripped all the bark off of it and varnished it. It was beautiful. I remember bringing that up to her at a, I guess at the funeral home or something where someone had passed and we had that conversation and she couldn't believe that I could remember that. But that really sticks out in my mind. So, yes.

NM: Yes. That is pretty neat. Yes, that is a great visual.

CF: Oh yes, yes. That was at a beauty shop and she was pretty busy. I mean there was a lot of people in the community.

NM: What sorts of things as a ten year old boy, what sorts of things did you do for fun living there in Cody?

CF: I can't tell that. Anything that I wasn't supposed to do, I probably tried to do. But I did, I played in the creek a lot. I fished and I rode my bicycle. Dad always had ponies, I rode ponies. I don't know, I've done a lot of things. Again, I can remember the creek freezing over, completely over and us playing with a stick and a can. Like playing hockey on the creek. That wasn't a natural game for somebody from Cody. Hockey was it. But anyway we done that. We played a lot of basketball. Everybody had a basketball court at their house. So, you just went, you gang up with two, three guys or four or five over how many, and let's walk down to so-and-so's house and play basketball. We go play all day long on the weekends and of course, I did like to fish a lot. I fished in the creeks a lot. If I could catch a ride on a cold truck, I'd take a load of coal down to the dump site where they dump coal, because all the truck drivers knew me, and I was kind of partial to getting to ride in a big truck.

NM: Was that the impetus for the truck ride? Just the ride?

CF: Yes, pretty much. Just getting to go get up in a big truck and haul a load of coal down to usually to Vicco and turn around and come back and they'd drop me off. Yes, just the truck ride. Of course, the truck drivers were a rough bunch of guys, and I learned a lot of bad things from the truck drivers. [laughter]

NM: Nice, nice. What kind of fish was it that you would catch in the creek?

CF: In the creek? You'd catch creek chubs. You'd catch bass. Sometimes you catch catfish in the creek. We had a really good creek. Carr Creek was a really good creek for fishing. We'd do a little frog gigging overnight sometimes after I got a little older, not at ten, but when I was twelve or thirteen, probably, I'd do a little frog gigging and at night. Build a big fire up by the creek bank. They'd be five or six of us sitting on the creek bank fishing. My mother loved to fish. She fished with me a lot. So, yes. You'd catch the bait in Defeated Creek. You'd catch the little fish in Defeated Creek, and then you'd take it over to the big creek at Carr Creek and use them for bait. So, yes, I stayed pretty busy. Yes.

NM: Would people eat the fish out of Carr Creek or was it just for fun?

CF: Oh, no. No, we eat the fish. Yes, yes, we eat the fish. It was all good. It was all good.

NM: How deep about was Carr Creek?

CF: Well, Carr Creek it probably had some holes in it as a ten or twelve-year-old. It might have been over my head, but not very much. Not very much. So, I am going to guess most of the water was – I really could not tell you because I cannot remember, but I can remember it was deep enough swimming. [laughter]

NM: Do you remember about how wide across it was?

CF: Oh, it was probably twelve or fourteen feet wide in most places. It was pretty good sized creek. Yes. Pretty good sized creek.

NM: There was another question that popped in my head. Oh, I guess I was just going to ask. Working or living at your parent's business, I guess I am wondering, are there any characters that stick out in your mind or any funny stories or anything from spending time around the business?

CF: Oh, yes. There's all kinds of characters that we had. We had all kinds of people that hung out there. I remember a gentleman named Wallace Bowling. I thought about him the other day, and he was quite a character. His wife, Maxine. That's funny I can remember these people because that's been so long ago. But anyway, Wallace would hang out at the store a lot, and Wallace had funny stories to tell. A funny story about Wallace, one time, he was in Lexington, Kentucky. I don't know if this story was true, but he told this for a true story that he needed a ride back to the mountains, and he had no way of getting back. He went by the hospital and he seen hearse from the Hyman funeral home at the hospital, and he climbed up in the back of it. Then halfway home, he pecked on the window so he could get up in the front and ride, and almost caused a bad wreck. So, Wallace was that kind of guy, and a lot of people said that was a true story. So, anyway, and then we had people like Buster Adams that worked. He and my dad were good friends, and dad thought a lot of Buster. Buster, he worked around for dad a lot, like in the garden and cutting weeds and doing odd jobs for dad. So, I can remember him. I never will forget. Our T.V. Had an antenna way up on the hill, and we had our own line. You just had a single line and you got two, maybe three channels and that's all you got. But I remember as a little boy, when it comes a storm and a limb would fall on the line, we'd have to go run the TV Line. I hated that job. I was afraid of snakes and mosquitoes and all that kind of stuff. I didn't like climbing the hill in the summertime. I remember a guy named Stanley Morton. He decided to take that job on, and he started working on people's T.V. Line. I was really glad that Stanley came along so I didn't have to run the T.V. Line anymore. So, we had him and I can just remember, I guess my favorite people was my next door neighbors, was Dock and Cuba Hilton. I stayed there probably as much as I stayed at my house. Dock and Cuba had older children than I was. So, all their children had grown up and moved away. So, I moved in as their next child. I got really spoiled. So, I got to do about whatever I wanted to do. I can remember they were a little bit – well, they weren't a little bit, they were quite a bit political. I remember going to the

Edward Breathitt inaugural in Frankfort. I was just a little bitty boy, but I can remember getting to go to that because Dock and Cuba took me. That was quite a trip for a little boy. I can remember that. I'm just trying to think there's just all kinds of characters. Right off the top of my head, I can't think of any right now, but there was a lot of people that had lived around us, and all of them were really good friends.

NM: Did you ever have to work at the business or have any tasks?

CF: Yes, I had to work. We all had to work. That was the part I didn't like. I pumped gas when I was probably seven or eight years old. I pumped gas. Dad always said that I was in the summertime. I was one person he didn't have to hire. So, I learned how to pump gas, fix flats. I could do a whole lot. I could probably do more than I can now. [laughter] Cars have changed and everything's changed, but yes, we all worked. Everybody worked. We had people that mum and dad had people that worked for them. I mean, I can remember a lot of different people that worked for us. So, there was always a lot of people, like I said in earlier, there was a lot of people. Our place was kind of like a hangout because in the winter time I can remember the weather being bad and everybody would come to our house. We'd play cards and do puzzles. It was just kind of a hangout. It was all good. Yes.

NM: What card game would you all play?

CF: Oh, rummy. Play 500 rummy. I can remember playing that. We done a lot of puzzles. I can't think of any board games. Don't seem like we played a lot of board games, but we played a lot of a lot of rummy. Yes.

NM: Yes, that is a good one. [laughter]

CF: Yes, yes. Then there was another game similar to rummy that you don't keep as much score. You just play hand to hand, which was called Tonk. I don't know where that name came from, but that's what it was called.

NM: Tonk with a T?

CF: Yes. T-O-N-K. Tonk. Yes. So, anyway, it was a fun game. So, yes.

NM: Nice. Well, I guess maybe switching gears a little bit. I am curious. Do you remember when you first heard about them wanting to build this lake and needing to move folks out?

CF: Yes, yes, I can sort of, kind of remember that. There was some strange people started showing up at the house and they were foreigners, I guess we would call them. They weren't foreigners, but they were from the bigger cities. They would come in. There was one particular gentleman I can remember, I think I'm writing this name is Crutchfield, Mr. Crutchfield. He worked for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. He was in charge of doing acquisitions on property. He came in and he and dad – my dad would have an occasion to have a drink occasionally. He and Mr. Crutchfield had a few drinks and they become pretty good friends. So, anyway, he was in charge of all the land acquisition. So, dad would kind of help him along and

directing him to such and such and kind of give him a little background on people. At one time, he may have even lived in our backyard for a while because we had some trailers back there that people lived in. I'm not sure about that though, but I remember him and dad talking and he told dad if he would help him, that he would see that he'd be the last one to leave the valley when the dam came. So, he was true to his words. We were the last to leave. Yes. So, he came and then after they, I guess, appropriated all the money, and I'm trying to think. It's on the dam down there. The date that's on the dam at Carr's Fork Lake, that was the year they actually appropriated the money. That could have been in the early [19]60s that they actually appropriated the money. Then it was a while before they bought the land and got all that done, and then started coming up the creek and buying properties and doing a lot of different things. But they were just so many people. There was another guy that a Mr. Beasley, I guess. He worked for the Army Corps of Engineers. I remember he had a little hot rod car. I can always remember. I loved that car because it was sort of a little hot rod. He did rent off of dad. Lived in the back. A lot of those guys were inspectors. They had to inspect the work being done. I'm trying to think of any more people at the Corps in the early years that I can remember. I think he was Beasley and Mr. Crutchfield was in charge of land acquisition, so. There was a lot of them, but those two stick out in my mind. Then after that came the construction workers. There was a lot of them. Wow. There was a lot of construction workers and from a lot of different places. It seems like they all ended up at our house. Not all of them. I'm sure there some who ended up somewhere else, but from the bridge builders TC Young Construction from Williamsburg and his crew of guys. They all ate at our house. These guys, a lot of these guys didn't just eat lunch there, they come back and ate supper with us. We got to be really good friends with a lot of those people. Then there was the guys and I can't remember the name of that company, but it was something maybe like Kentucky Steel Erectors or something. They actually put the big steel beams on top of the bridge. They all had nicknames, kind of like us. Charlie was one of them. We showed you a picture of him a little earlier. They had another one they called – it seemed like they called him Cutty or...

Debbie Holcomb: (Sweetie?).

NM: Sweetie, called him Sweetie. Deb, help me out there. Then the boss was named Art, and Art was a real serious guy. But of course he had to be. He ran the crane and set the steel on, and I remember getting to go to work with him and sitting in the big crane when they would set steel sometimes. So, I got to do a lot of that kind of fun stuff for a young boy. But a lot of those people was at our house. So, we made a lot of friends. Then another company, one engineering company, they rented a spot off of my dad and they had an office in the back yard. So, that was Ed Talbott – that was Zane Alexander, was the engineer, but he had Ed Talbert, Glenn Caudle, Doug Bentley and Kirby Caudle that they were engineers. They'd done a lot of the engineering. So, I can remember those guys because they had a little office out there and they kept stuff in their refrigerator they shouldn't have had. [laughter]

NM: Like what?

CF: Beer. [laughter].

So, as a thirteen or fourteen-year-old, I may have tried that. [laughter] I can tell that now.



NM: Yes. Trouble there.

CF: Yes. I'll be in trouble. Yes, I would have been.

NM: Well, yes. It sounds like you got sort of a front row seat to a lot of the action there.

CF: We did. We got a front row seat. Earlier you mentioned about the houses moving down the road. There was a company, New Way House movers from Middlesboro, Kentucky. They came in the area and they moved a lot of the houses. It was really strange to see that. They actually moved the house that I talked about earlier out of our backyard to Pinetop, Kentucky. They disconnected everything from the ground and jacked that house up and put a trailer under it and then hooked a truck to it and pulled it up there. Quite fascinating to see those houses. It was not uncommon to see houses moved on a maybe not a daily basis, but pretty regular. You'd see a house, they'd be blocking traffic and be moving a house up the road. Then I guess one thing that really I remember is we had a pretty big church, the Smithboro Baptist Church, and I believe the guy's name that that owned the Norway Moving House movers was either New Kirk or Kirk or something like that. I can remember, but I'm pretty sure he was like a deacon in the church at Middlesboro. So, he was a good Christian man, and the church wanted to move their church. Smithboro Baptist Church wanted to move the church, but they was afraid, it being so big that it couldn't be moved. I can remember this story being told that he agreed to move it, and if he got it moved to the side they wanted to put it on, they could pay him. But if he for some reason he didn't make it, they didn't owe him anything. So, there was a big project that went on, and sure enough, they lost the church in the creek on the way to Sassafras. They moved the Smithboro church. It was a big red brick building. They jacked it up, put it on a truck, and it was a really big deal in the community because everybody talked about it. Everybody talked about him moving the Smithboro church, and they were going to move it to Sassafras. There was a lot of people that said, "Oh, they'll never make it. It'll fall down." Some people said, "Yes. They'll make it." It was just a lot of talk went around. Sure enough, the day that they moved it that afternoon, it fell. Fell into the creek at a little place we called Kelly Town, is where it fell in the creek. Yes. So, that was quite a story. Then another thing I remember is, was quite controversial, was the moving of cemeteries. That was pretty interesting. All the cemeteries that was in the flood that was going to be in the lake zone had to be moved. They built the Carr's Fort Cemetery, I think is the name of it. They bought a big piece of property and moved a lot of those cemeteries because there was some pretty good sized cemeteries, and then there was a lot of controversy about that, and rightfully so. So, no one wants their loved ones to be tampered with after they've been buried. But anyway, they took those up, moved them to Litt Carr. Now we have the Carr Fort Cemetery. So, I can remember that little thing. So, there was a whole lot of stuff that went on. Yes.

NM: I wonder with the Smithboro church, where people gathered on the day that it was being moved?

CF: I remember dad jumping in the truck driving down there. That was big deal. So, we got in the truck and down the road we went and we drove down there, and of course the traffic was way blocked up and we got out and we all walked down there to where the creek. There was a lot of

people there. There was a lot of people. I'm sure, a lot of church members and then a lot of just the community members that went down there. So, yes, it was it was a pretty big deal.

NM: Had it already fallen by the time you got there?

CF: It had already fallen by the time we went. Yes. Yes. Yes, word traveled pretty quick back then, even by word of mouth, because somebody came up the road and said the church fell off the truck. We got the truck. We wanted to go see it. So, dad took us down there. Times were much different, then we got to ride in the back of the truck the way we went. Yes. So, yes, we got to do a lot of things then that we don't get to do now.

NM: Yes. I do not know if you can remember, but what did you think about the fact that you were going to have to leave where you had been making home?

CF: I was ten or eleven years old. I had no thought about that. I had no thought about that. I can remember, though it was a boom for us personally, economically. That's probably not the right word. But anyway, yes, I guess economically. We were running a little bitty grocery store and service station and the little two lane road. The Army Corps of Engineers came by and bought my mum and dad's property and we moved, I guess, six or eight miles up the road and got a new house and new restaurant, a new garage. But during the time that they were building the dam, business was great. My dad was very, I don't know, I don't have the right word, industrious about certain things. It was like all the construction workers, they furnished them ice water in the summertime. So, my dad started selling ice, and that's before we had ice machines. It's not like we got now. We would go to hazard. I remember going with my dad, and he would buy a thousand pounds of black ice and put in the back of a pickup truck, and we would cover it with tarpaulins. Then when we would get back home, we would take an ice pick and chunk it up into certain sizes to where it would fit down in to the water coolers, and we put them in deep freezers. Then he sold that ice. Along with whatever else they bought. They bought lots of gas. They bought oil, grease, fixed tires, worked on cars, ham sandwich, baloney sandwich, soup beans. Things were good for my family. It was it was an economic boom for us. Yes, I think that's a fair statement. Yes.

NM: Yes. So, for you or your parents, when it was time to then finally leave the Valley, what was that like?

CF: Well, Mr. Crutchfield told dad he would be the last guy to leave. We had a pretty big, I don't, for lack of a better word, we had a pretty big compound. We had the house out back. We had four or five trailers, we had a barn. But while all this was going on, we started moving out the trailers. Of course, they rented the trailers, so they stayed pretty late. But we tore the barn down, got rid of the horses and the cows and the chickens and the pigs. They went away. Dad sold the house to somebody, to Robert Short. Dad sold the house to Robert Short, which was later in life was the county court clerk in Knott County. But anyway, Robert bought the house. They moved the house to the Pinetop. Then the old tire building went away. We tore it down and got rid of it and closer as the time came, we were tearing down different parts of the business, the garage, even the house we lived in. We had to start because we got a new house in Red Fox. So, we tore the house apart down. There was only a small cubicle left, I guess that had

a place in the back that we slept, that me and Uncle John stayed there and he lived with us for a long time after his wife died. He wasn't any relation to us, but his wife was my dad's aunt. When she passed, he wanted to live with us. He asked dad if he could live with us, and dad said, "You sure can." So, me and Uncle John stayed there a lot. Uncle John was like in his eighties back then, but I got a lot of life's lesson off of him. So, anyway, we stayed there and we stayed in there that summer. So, [inaudible] and potted meat and crackers and soft drinks and chewing tobacco and just whatever ice, whatever they needed. They kept saying it was getting closer and getting closer. Then we finally dug the gas tanks out of the ground and done away with the gas tanks. Then, I never will forget, they came up one day and they said, you better get a hold of Gid. We're getting ready to close the gates on the dam and you'll have about a week. So, when dad came by that evening, I said, "They came by and said he's closing gates on the dam." [laughter] Dad said, "Well, we better tear this place down." And we finished tearing it down in a week and they wouldn't let us burn it. They made us tear it down and haul it away. The Corps of Engineers did, they were really strict. So, we tore it down and hauled it away and moved to Red Fox. That was the end of Cody, almost. Then my dad, they built the Carr Fork Lake, and my dad bid on the opportunity to build the Irishman Creek Marina. That's the Marina on the lake today. He won the bid. So, then, he and I, undertook to build the Carr Fork Marina. Irishman Creek Marina is what we call it. Now, this was a little later because I was a little older, because it was about – I was in high school. I guess that was maybe [19]75, [19]76 when that happened. It took them that long before they established that they were going to build a Marina on there, because that was my first job out of high school. I worked for my dad and that was a struggle. [laughter]

NM: Which part? Building or working for your dad?

CF: Working for dad. Yes, and the Army Corps of Engineers. I don't know who was the worst, dad or the Army Corps of Engineers. But anyway, we did win the bid. We built the Marina at Carr Fork Lake. He owned that for several years, I can't remember. I only could stand it for two or three years, and then I had to move on.

NM: Yes, it is so interesting to hear your experience with all this because some of the folks that I have talked with have expressed that they saw the lake being built as not a great thing for them. They did not want to have to move and that it was like a pretty difficult thing. I guess I am wondering, do you remember there being any resistance to it?

CF: Yes, absolutely. Absolutely, there was resistance. Actually, the property we're sitting on today was resistance. The state condemned this piece of property right here that we're sitting on today. This is right off of highway 15. They condemned this property and took the property from the landowner. He didn't want to sell it. He didn't think they was giving him a fair price. He didn't want to sell it. So, there was a lot of that went on. I understand that. I think everybody, as I look back, would I still be love to live at Cody. Absolutely, I'd love to be living at Cody. But that's just not possible. Think about all the good we got out of it. We got new schools, we got new roads. This area has never had infrastructure. Our old politicians never considered infrastructure. There's no railroad in Knott County. One little strip way over in Beaver. So, our forefathers didn't really take care of us. We don't have infrastructure. We had none. So, now we have a four lane road here at Red Fox. Yes, yes, it was sad leaving. I didn't

want to leave. Yes, I can fully understand people didn't want their loved ones moved out of the cemeteries. They didn't want to give up their old home place. I get all that. But all in the big scope of things, things can't stay the same. We have to go forward and we went forward and yes, it's pretty sad. To be honest with you just coming out of the flood that we came out in 2022, in July, if not for the Carr Fork Lake, there would be no hazard. There would be no Jackson. We saved them and we've saved them many times before that. So, it's all good. Yes, there'll be some criticism to me saying that. I'm pretty much an old Cody guy that I was sure sad to leave, but then when you grow up and you take the blinders off and look at the whole big picture, it's all good. It was good for my parents because our business boomed. That's been a little selfish, it's good for us. Might not been good for my neighbor, but it's good for us. But in the whole big scope of things, the kids that I went to school with, we got to go to new schools. We had a brand new school. I just missed it. I went all seven years at Carr Creek Elementary. My eighth grade year was at the Old Carr Creek High School. We was in the basement. I went my freshman sophomore year there, and then I got to go to Knott County Central High School. Big new high school, great things. All the kids under me went to the new Carr Creek Elementary, a really a nice two story, great facility, but do we get a better education now? I don't know, you know, maybe we do, maybe we don't. But we have better opportunities and we must seize the opportunity.

NM: Yes, yes. I guess I am curious to know. After the Frazier's guff was no more your – you said that you and your dad built the Marina. So, what did your parents do? What did life look like after Frazier's guff and the move?

CF: What did what look like?

NM: What did life look like?

CF: Life looked like Frazier's restaurant and Frazier's guff at Red Fox. It sits right out here at the end of this property. My mum and dad built a restaurant and a house. Just like at Cody, the restaurant was on one end of the house and the house was on the other end. We lived in the same building because my mum and dad worked seven days a week. They closed Christmas Day. Did we ever close any other time? We closed Christmas Day. My dad had a little service station. Now the service station business never did really take off here. Mum had a really good business in the restaurant and she worked for many years. Deb probably know. Deb worked there many years. Deb probably knows how many years, I don't know. But anyway, we came up here in 1972 and I had a shower instead of a bathtub. So, yes, it's all good, I can tell you. I lived at Red Fox on the four lane, and I could get out here and I could go places that I couldn't go before. I go to Letcher County, where I met my wife. Yes. So, I was just across the hill. I was pretty quick. Times were much, a lot more fun at Cody. But again, we had to change it because I've been driving since I was twelve years old. Yes, on the road. So, when I got to come up here, I had a bigger road to drive on and I didn't run as many people off the road, but. So, yes, it was good for us. So, we came up here and mum and dad stayed in business for many years. Then like I said, we worked at the boat dock and I worked three or four years there before I went out on started working other places. I should have stayed at the boat dock. Hindsight's 2020.

NM: It sure is.

CF: [laughter]

NM: All the time, school without a doubt.

CF: Yes.

NM: Well, I feel like I could just keep on chatting. You have got so many great stories and details to share, but I want to be mindful of your time. So, before closing out, I just want to get about thirty seconds of the sound of the room. Then I will ask you if there is just anything else you want to share, anything else that is still on your mind. Anything I did not ask you about that you think would be important for folks to know. So, I will give you a little time to ponder that as I get the room sound here for about thirty seconds. Anything else still on your mind?

CF: I've got thousands of things on my mind. It's amazing. I do appreciate you being mindful of our time and everything, but if at some point, if you would like to do some more of this, I would be willing to and I could jot down some things, maybe because I think of things all the time about this. I think as I get older, I reminisce about the old times a lot more because they were good times. But no, today I don't really have anything else that I can think of other than just a real quick story that my wife and my children really get on to me about no matter where we go. I promise you, no matter where we go, and we've been out of the country and we've been out of the state, and I have run into somebody from Cody. Yes. It's amazing. We go to Disney World or Disneyland, whatever in Florida, and we walk in and lo and behold, Minnie Mouse. Minnie Mouse runs up and says, "Feller, it's you." I have no idea until later who that was, but she was from Red Fox, so close to Cody. We go to Mexico, I run into somebody Michelle says, "Who was that?" We're in Mexico at the airport. I said, "This a guy from Cody." It's amazing that the people that we know from Cody or their relatives because there's people all around that lived in Cody, and once the dam came, they left and branched out. There's a great group on Facebook if they'll let you in. I remember, Cody, you can pull that up on Facebook. That might give you some pictures. One thing I did forget. Jeez, I'm just glad I thought of it. I heard a little church, the Cody Bible Church. I went several years to the Cody Bible Church without missing Sunday school. For a mean little boy, that was hard for a lot of people to believe. But Cuba Hilton, my next door neighbor, made sure I went. She's a Sunday school teacher. So, anyway, I can remember the flood coming in 1963 and the men in the community waded out into the water and tied down the gas tank. It had a propane gas tank, and they changed it to a tree to keep it from floating away. That was the kind of community we had, and probably those men that waited out in that water didn't go to church there. They were some pretty rough characters in that area, too, and they waited in that water to save that gas tank for the church. They were basically good people. They might have been a little rough cut, but they were basically good people. But my little church, Cody Bible Church. Yes.

NM: Yes. Is it the one that is next door?

CF: Yes, yes. It's next door too. I forgot about that.

NM: They moved it?

CF: They moved it. Yes. Well, they didn't move the building because it was a huge big old church. It was an old wooden church. It wasn't on a foundation. It was built on cut stone. I don't mean like concrete blocks. I'm talking about a stone here, six or eight feet where you could crawl under the floor. So, it was kind of unique. But excuse me, but anyway, the Cody Bible Church. Then when they got this place, they came to Red Fox and built the Cody Bible Church. So, there it sits. Yes.

NM: Well, maybe one last thing. Is there anyone else who you think I should – besides, obviously Debbie who is here, anyone else you think I should talk with that might have memories to share?

CF: Oh, Jeez.

NM: And if you want to think on it, too.

CF: I have to think on that. Yes, I just have to think.

DH: Said he knew somebody too.

CF: Yes, yes, there's a lot of people.

DH: Taylor Hill.

CF: Yes, yes. James Hilton, Taylor was his nickname.

NM: Taylor Hill.

CF: Taylor Hill. [laughter]

He lives in Smithboro. Doug Bentley at Litt Carr. He was one of the engineers during the dam when they was building the dam. Glen Caudle, I believe, lives in London now, they worked there. Matter of fact, I don't know. That's been a couple of years ago. I'm just trying to think if there's anybody else, but...

DH: Jimmy Holcomb.

CF: Jimmy Holcomb would be another one. He lives in Hyman. There's just a lot of people that got misplaced that moved to Hyman, that moved to Letcher County, moved to Perry County. So, there's some out there. I'll try to think of some. Yes. Because everybody's going to have a unique story to tell.

NM: Okay, great. Well, I will go ahead and sign us off here. So, this is Nicole Musgrave speaking with Charles Frazier aka Feller. It is February 6th, 2023. We are at his sister Debbie's home in Red Fox, Kentucky, and this is for the Carr Creek Oral History Project.

[end of transcript]