

Tucker County, West Virginia Flood Audio Recordings
Ronald (Bo) Haddix Oral History
Date of Interview: March 19, 1986
Location: Unknown
Length of Interview: 01:05:17
Interviewer: MK – Michael Kline
Transcriber: NCC

Michael Kline: I'll try and get any pictures early on. What is your full name?

Bo Haddix: Bo Haddix.

MK: Bo? How do you spell it?

RH: B-O.

MK: Was that your given name?

RH: No.

MK: What was your given name?

RH: Ronald Haddix.

MK: Who's your mom and dad?

RH: Barbara Haddix and Bill Haddix.

MK: Where do they live?

RH: My mom lives in Davis, not knowing where my dad's at.

MK: Did you grow up in a big family of kids?

RH: No, there's only four.

MK: That's pretty good size. I got four kids, and I think it's a lot.

RH: Yes. I got a brother and two sisters.

MK: They're older than you or younger?

RH: My brother, he's eighteen and my sister's fifteen and one of them is thirteen.

MK: You guys are about grown.

RH: Yeah.

MK: What are they [inaudible]?

RH: Well, all good in school.

MK: Doing pretty well?

RH: Yes, honor students.

MK: Really?

RH: Yep.

MK: You never cared for school, though?

RH: No. Always had something better to do.

MK: That was the way with me, never cared for you. Shoot. So, you've been up here how long?

RH: Two months and twenty-one days.

MK: You got another?

RH: About month and a half, something like that, hopefully.

MK: Where did you grow up?

RH: At Parsons.

MK: Your mother lives here, but you?

RH: No. She was living in Parsons until the flood. Then the night after the flood, she moved up here in Davis.

MK: Oh, I see. Where did she live? Where did you all live?

RH: On Pennsylvania Avenue.

MK: I better know what happened.

RH: Yes. Tore everything up.

MK: Where were you on that night?

RH: I was at the house until they told us we had to leave. Then I went to town, and she went up on (Blackmoon flats?).

MK: Tell me everything you remember about that day.

RH: Well, they just came over and told us we had to leave. Then my mom, because the water was up in the road whenever they left. Then whenever she goes up on the flats, I went over in town. Then next thing I knew, there was water everywhere. Cars floating down the road, houses

floating, just the way it went.

MK: So, what did you do?

RH: Just help people move their furniture so it wouldn't get ruined and everything. Try to get most of their stuff out so it wouldn't get ruined.

MK: Do you remember all the people you helped?

RH: No. Just like Roger, I don't know what his last name is. Gary Lipscomb, we helped move his stuff upstairs. A couple other people down in the old city park and stuff like that. Helped Hank Thompson's wife and kids get out.

MK: Tell me all about that.

RH: Well, nobody realized they was in there until after the water was done almost up in the porch. Then we finally went in and got him.

MK: How'd you get in?

RH: Walked because the water's up to almost our chest. Then just brought him back out.

MK: Who'd you bring out?

RH: His little boy. Then I went back and helped his wife out.

MK: What did she say?

RH: Thanks.

MK: Where'd you get them out to?

RH: To right there where the red lights were, because there wasn't a water up there yet. Then they went to the church up on [inaudible].

MK: Had you known Hank Thompson before?

RH: Yes. He's all right for a cop.

MK: Tell me about your run ins with him.

RH: Well, he's caught me doing some things I shouldn't, like just being out after the curfew and stuff like that, but nothing real minor.

MK: Did he ever have any hard words with you?

RH: No. Me and him got along pretty good.

MK: So, after you got her out, what did you do?

RH: Went down to the (Jim Falls'?) trailer court and helped some of them guys get their furniture out. Then I went back downtown and (Phil Haddix?) was struck out. Then we stood there and watched everything float down, houses and trucks and cars and stuff.

MK: What did you think?

RH: I thought, just flipped out. There wasn't that much to think after everything is gone.

MK: What do you mean you flipped out?

RH: Yes. I never thought something like that can happen in Tucker County.

MK: Tell me again about going into Hank Thompson's. Was the water pretty deep?

RH: Yes. It was up almost to our chest when we went in there after them. Because his basement was full and it was coming up into the floor in his house. Then we helped his wife and his two kids out. Then they went down and they got a boat because it was too deep then to let the prisoners go. So, we had a rope hooked to a boat and let the cops go down. They opened it up and let them out.

MK: Where did the prisoners go?

RH: They told them to just go on and then they get him later. I guess they took them after that. I don't know.

MK: You weren't ever in that jail yourself, though, before?

RH: No.

MK: It's a good place to keep away from.

RH: Yes. Like David said, stay away from it.

MK: What did your own house look like the next morning or did you go back to it that night?

RH: No, I went back the next day. It was full of mud. Lost everything, like most people did.

MK: What do you mean you lost everything? Stuff flowed out of the house?

RH: No. It was still there, but it was ruined. There was full mud and water and stuff. It wasn't no good no more.

MK: Did it hurt the house?

RH: No, it was still standing there, but it was just full mud.

MK: What'd you do, grab a shovel?

RH: No, they just said that condemned it.

MK: They condemned it?

RH: Yes, tore down.

MK: Did you all get anything out of it?

RH: No, just the stuff that was upstairs because it didn't [inaudible].

MK: I mean, when they condemn a house like that, is there any conversation to you?

RH: I don't know. Because my mom was just renting it off of some guy or something. We got our beds upstairs and stuff like that.

MK: So, then she moved up here?

RH: Yes.

MK: Have you thought about the flood very much since it happened?

RH: Not only what it's going to be like whenever I get out of here. Everything's going to be back like it was.

MK: Not quite.

RH: Or if it's going to be different or anything.

MK: Do you ever dream about what happened that night?

RH: No. Sometimes you forget it.

MK: It's real bad.

RH: Yes. Especially whenever people lose everything that they work for all this time. Like my mom and other people like that. Then something like that happens and you lose everything.

MK: What made you want to go around helping people like that like you did?

RH: I don't know. I just thought it was the right thing to do.

MK: Did you think that it was a good thing to do or did you just jump in and do it?

RH: I just thought it was a good thing to do, so some people could have some things that left.

MK: So, you helped move furniture upstairs?

RH: Yes. Help people move it out of their houses and stuff that they thought it was going to ruin.

MK: John, do you have any questions?

Male Speaker: How'd you get yourself up here in Davis center?

RH: Fighting.

MS: Another kid?

RH: No. Rob Roy.

MS: Who's Rob Roy?

RH: No. Charlie Roy's son. He's twenty-three. The prosecutor just put me up here.

MK: Wasn't your first fight, though, wasn't it?

RH: No, I've been in a few.

MK: But you're saying you're thinking now you'll give it up.

RH: I didn't give it up. I think I learned my lesson after being here in [inaudible].

MS: There was a guy that wanted to fight me a few days ago now. There's going to be somebody wanting to fight you again sometime.

RH: Well, I'm going to walk away because I learned my lesson. I see where it gets you. The only thing it gets you is locked up. But this here isn't nothing, really. Because in Davis Center, at least you got things to do. [inaudible] you just get locked in a room and that's it. Then whenever you do walk outside, you got about four of them guards with you and you can't do nothing. You got to always have people with you and they lock doors behind you at night, locked in a little room. Their beds are like you're sleeping on the floor.

MK: [inaudible]

RH: It feels like laying on concrete.

MK: How long were you over there?

RH: Twenty-six days.

MK: Did you have any trouble inside there?

RH: Yes. Because there's some boys, like if the guards don't like you or something, whenever they come down to fight with you, they'll just like be doing on the phone or in the bathroom or getting something for somebody and let them do it. Then it didn't quite work whenever they did it to me. They sent two boys down there and then after we got done fighting, I walked up there and told him, I said, "Now, down there they lay and then just don't send them down anymore." I got locked in my room.

MK: Do they have a pretty good school program up here?

RH: Yes. Up here they didn't. In Salem, if you don't want to do something, you just put your feet up and don't do it.

MK: You've been taking what, English?

RH: Yes, English and Science and Math. Just like a public school, only can't go home at night. It's the only difference.

MK: You're getting something out of the classes though.

RH: Yes. Learnt more since I've been in prison than I did the whole time I was in public school.

MK: Maybe you could go take your GED.

RH: Yes. I've been working on that. I've been in auto mechanics. I'll get a certificate in that for being in it.

MK: Well, that's real nice. I need to talk.

[end of transcript]