

Frank Barger
October 17, 1982
Redbird, Kentucky
Clay County, Kentucky

Dr. Garrett: I am now again on Redbird River. I seem to spend a lot of time here. I am heading back toward Fort Thomas I am going to stop by J. D. Grocery up here where I hope to find a Mr. Frank Barger. They tell me he's in his 90's, an old time rafter, an old time frontiersman in Clay County. I want to play this back and see how it sounds.

Dr. Garrett: Let's start right back, now you are....

Frank Barger: Frank Barger

Dr. Garrett: All right, now tell me all about it again, your mother and dad.

Frank Barger: My dad was Levi Barger and my mother was Sophie Doyle and my mother's daddy and mother were Jobie and Lucy Doyle, and on my dad's side, Frank Barger....now wait just a minute, let me get her name right. My grandma, her name, is what I'm trying to get.

Dr. Garrett: Yeah, if you're hot, we can open that window a little.

Frank Barger: No, it ain't hot. I was at trying to study about what her name was, my grandma on my daddy's side. She's been dead so long, I'd just about forgot. And my granddaddy's been dead...He died when my dad was 12, I believe, he was 12 or 14 years old one. I don't remember which.

Dr. Garrett: When did they come in here to settle this country, Mr. Barger?

Frank Barger: Now that's something I don't know.

Dr. Garrett: Well, way back... Were they born in this country?

Frank Barger: My daddy's....my mother's people were all borned here. My daddy's people, I really don't know whether they were born here or not.

Dr. Garrett: Were any of them in the Revolutionary or Civil War?

Frank Barger: No...My great-granddaddy was in the Civil War, yeah. My Uncle Will Bowling, my great-granddaddy.

Dr. Garrett: Now when they came in here, living must have been kinda rough wasn't it. Tell me a little about it.

Frank Barger: My great-granddaddy on my mother's side, he came here from South Carolina and he had, there was 13 of them in the family. He had three sisters and ten brothers. And he settled on Goose Creek and he didn't know where his other nine settled period, but they settled in Leslie County and Perry County and Clay County. They settled in them three counties but he never did know where they settled at, and his three sisters settled in Oneida. His three sisters did. One of them married John Hicks, one married Boyd Burns, one married, well I'll have to get it in my mind. I can't think of it. You see thats been years ago.

Dr. Garrett: Well, Mr. Barger, tell me what this country was like when you were young. You didn't have any roads in here at all did you?

Frank Barger: No, there was no roads, period. It was a horse and back roads.

Dr. Garrett: Now where did you live?

Frank Barger: I lived on what they call the Laurel Branch up here.

Dr. Garrett: Now how did you live up there, farm?

Frank Barger: We farmed, that's all. We didn't know what to do.

Dr. Garrett: Now when they came in here and tried to clean this country up, there was a lot of big timber in here wasn't there?

Frank Barger: Yeah oh yeah. Had to clear it up and it was all done by man power.

Dr. Garrett: That was pretty backbreaking, wasn't it?

Frank Barger: Yeah, all done by manpower.

Dr. Garrett: Axe and saw.

Frank Barger: Yeah, axe and saw.

Dr. Garrett: Now did they use oxen or mules in those early days?

Frank Barger: Yeah, they used oxen most all the time. That's what we logged with.

Dr. Garrett: Now this was all virgin timber, wasn't it?

Frank Barger: Oh Yeah

Dr. Garrett: Tell me something about the woods, were they big?

Frank Barger: Oh yeah, plenty of it 50 or 60 inches. Plenty of it and some bigger than that. Some of it a seven foot saw wouldn't go through.

Dr. Garrett: And lots of walnuts, oak....

Frank Barger: Yeah, everything you can name in the wood line.

Dr. Garrett: That brings up one of the things I'm interested in. I saw these rafts go through Booneville and people would say those are the Redbird men. Now tell me. I want to put this copy of this tape will go to the University of Kentucky. I'd like your permission for that and information so that in the future, people will know what it's like. Tell us what it's like from the standing tree to how you build a raft and what you did one you built that raft. That's what they'll be interested in.

Frank Barger: We had a...when we built rafts..when we cut logs for rafts...

Dr. Garrett: Now tell me when you cut the logs and how you cut them and all that stuff.

Frank Barger: They would commence cutting our timber for rafting in the last part of July. They'd farm up till that time, then they'd go to cutting their timber, the last part of July. Then they would take oxes, steers, to get 'em to the river and then they would hire men to raft 'em.

Dr. Garrett: When you said put them, you mean actually put them in the river?

Frank Barger: No, they'd put 'em right on the bank and then when they got ready to start rafting them.....

Dr. Garrett: Now when was that. When would they get ready to make a raft?

Frank Barger: When they get from 60 all the way to 70 logs on the yard and then they would go get tie poles.

Dr. Garrett: Now what is a tie pole?

Frank Barger: That's what they pin them together with, to make a raft out of.

Dr. Garrett: Explain it so if somebody listens to this later, he can go out and cut a tree and do one.

Frank Barger: Well, when you cut the tie poles, they'd be something like your thigh, hickory. Had to have hickory tie poles. That's what they used and they take a six quarter auger...

Dr. Garrett: They'd split that log longitudinally, split it long ways.

Frank Barger: Yeah, split that long ways and then they take a six quarter auger and they'd bore a six quarter hole, a seven quarter up here in the tie pole, seven quarter hole and then they'd take a six and run in the log. And then they start their pin and drive their pin in that log in that six quarter hole.

Dr. Garrett: Now tell me about the pin..

Frank Barger: It had a knob on it.

Dr. Garrett: How big around was it?

Frank Barger: It was about an inch and a quarter and they would....

Dr. Garrett: What was it made of?

Frank Barger: It was made of white oak.

Dr. Garrett: Who made them?

Frank Barger: The men that rafted. They had to make the pins.

Dr. Garrett: They'd make them probably during the winter or off times?

Frank Barger: They'd make 'em right when they started....

Dr. Garrett: On the job.

Frank Barger: On the job. They had a hoss, they called it. They had nails drove in the end of the foot rest that held that pin in there and they took a drawing knife and shaped it, and made a head on it, and that's what they drove in the log.

Dr. Garrett: They had one of these on each end of the log, right?

Frank Barger: They drove on each run of logs. They'd run that plumb through, and as they cut them poles off, tie poles off, they called it making oar. They would hew them out an oar.

Dr. Garrett: How long was it and what kind of wood would they use?

Frank Barger: They'd use poplar for an oar and they would use them from 16 to 20 foot. Most of them would be 16 foot and they'd make a paddle on the end then, and they'd use from 2 to 4 men on each oar.

Dr. Garrett: How did they use that on the raft?

Frank Barger: They'd take, they called it deep poling. They'd put 'em a cross bar out there on one out here, and then they'd put one right in the middle. They put the big pin right down on the middle of that for the oar to set on.

Dr. Garrett: Oh, you mean the oar pivoted on a.....

Frank Barger: Yeah, on a pin. It would work backwards and forwards.

Dr. Garrett: A lot of work, was it hard work?

Frank Barger: Yeah, oh yeah, it was slaving work.

Dr. Garrett: And usually, I understand, you put a stob, coat stob on the thing.

Frank Barger: Yeah, had one right in the center to hang their coats on and to hold to when they went through the narrows down here.

Dr. Garrett: The most interesting part, was once you got that raft ready to roll, tell me what it's like. What kind of water did you need to get....

Frank Barger: We had to have pretty big water. Not too big, but water that would float....it was according to the size of the logs. That went more for the size of the logs than anything you see, the most floaters you had under that raft to float it up higher, the less water it'd take to take it on out.

Dr. Garrett: Now what did you use for floaters?

Frank Barger: Poplars. Peel 'em in the summertime and let them dry. Go cut 'em in the summer. Cut them in the hot

Frank Barger: (Cont'd.) part of the summer and peel. Let ~~them logs dry~~ then. They called 'em floater logs.

Dr. Garrett: How long a logs did you take out on a raft?

Frank Barger: They'd be from 12 to 14 all the way up to 16 foot.

Dr. Garrett: Now the big thing and the rough part was once ~~you got that~~ raft done was getting that danged thing down to Beattyville through the narrers.

Frank Barger: Yeah

Dr. Garrett: Tell me about some of your trips through there.

Frank Barger: Well, there's nothing much to it. All they ~~was to it in~~ the narrers was the steersman and some of them would come in there in the right angle and go through good and some of 'em come in there and tear up.

Dr. Garrett: Why would they tear up?

Frank Barger: They would hit them breakers and sometimes ~~they would swing around~~ AND HIT A ROCK RIGHT IN THE LOWER END OF THEM.

Dr. Garrett: Where were the breakers?

Frank Barger: Well, the breakers were mostly right in the center.

Dr. Garrett: What is that king breaker they talked about? How did ~~they~~ get that?

Frank Barger: Well, your raft would go in here like it was ~~going to shoot~~ right through and some of them, if they were heavy floated would cut them breakers but you couldn't see, the man on the bow...

Dr. Garrett: The raft would bend that much?

Frank Barger: Oh, you'd go thorough that water and you couldn't see them and some of them would get ahold of that hat-rack pole, post, in the middle to hold to till they got through. Most veterans grab hit to hold to...

Dr. Garrett: Was it kind of scary?

Frank Barger: ~~Oh~~ yeah, hit was scary. It didn't look like a man could go through there. The first time I went through I grabbed ahold of the clothesrack and I held to it.

Dr. Garrett: How old were you?

Frank Barger: I was 16.

Dr. Garrett: 16 years old, and you probably got a big rate of pay in those days.

Frank Barger: I got all of a dollar to go to Turkey Gap. One dollar.

Dr. Garrett: At Turkey Gap, what happened there, Did somebody else take over.

Frank Barger: No, they wouldn't need all the hands. When they got to Turkey Gap, they'd turn most of the hands back. They didn't need 'em all.

Dr. Garrett: That's right near the mouth of ^{Newfound} New Found, in that country.

Frank Barger: Yeah

Dr. Garrett: Now, did you ever stop and stay down....

Frank Barger: No, I never stayed but one night there. We'd met...I never went all the way through.

Dr. Garrett: Well, you had to have more guts than anybody to make a regular run through that upper part there.

Frank Barger: Oh, yeah. I'd go down there and then I'd come back, and if it rained on or came another tide, I'd get one another and go back.

Dr. Garrett: You got to be an expert. Were you ever really scared of it?

Frank Barger: Oh, yeah.

Dr. Garrett: Every time?

Frank Barger: Oh, no. Not ever time. I'd get scared sometime when we got on too big a water.

Dr. Garrett: What caused that breaker?

Frank Barger: Well, it's them cliffs there.

Dr. Garrett: Water hits the cliffs and bounces back. Was it in a curve?

Frank Barger: No, it kindly is more where it goes down this-away. It's a drop.. Otherwise it's just about a straight drop down there and it comes down and up. Just like that. And the bigger the water gets the rougher the ripples is...

Dr. Garrett: No foolin....

Frank Barger: Yeah, that's the reason they always picked one that they thought could be a normal tide.

Dr. Garrett: How many feet would that be?

Frank Barger: I don't know, I really don't know.

Dr. Garrett: Did you ever run out of Redbird? It seems to me this river is so small.

Frank Barger: Yeah, but it's grewed up now. It's been since '32 or '33 was the last raft that ever went out of here and my dad was on it.

Dr. Garrett: And what was his name?

Frank Barger: Levi Barger

Dr. Garrett: Levi Barger. Was Harrison Davidson on That?

Frank Barger: Dan Davidson was on it.

Dr. Garrett: Dan Davidson was on it?

Frank Barger: Dan was on it. That was the last Redbird raft.

Dr. Garrett: Well, they must have just logged out millions and millions of trees didn't they?

Frank Barger: Oh yeah, I saw as many as 50 rafts go out of Redbird on one tide.

Dr. Garrett: Did the owner make a lot of money on a raft?

Frank Barger: Ah, they made a dollar a hundred.

Dr. Garrett: That wasn't much, was it?

Frank Barger: That didn't pay for their...well, they had to work at something you see.

Dr. Garrett: Did men get hurt on the rafts often?

Frank Barger: Not often, no, not often that anybody got hurt.

Dr. Garrett: Do you know anything about those mills that used to be down there the grist mills, the Allen mill and the Bishop mill?

Frank Barger: No, aLL I know is just where the dam was.

Dr. Garrett: How many times would you go out a year?

Frank Barger: I would go out sometimes 3 and 4 times a tide, I mean after they'd.....

Dr. Garrett: 3 and 4 times a tide?

Frank Barger: Yeah, I'd walk back from Turkey Gap and catch another one out and my dad would walk back and he would make dozens of trips. He'd raft 'em and then they'd give him a contract of rafting and running them. He was a steersman.

Dr. Garrett: A steersman? Where did he work, on the front?

Frank Barger: No, he'd work on the back....

Dr. Garrett: And he was the man in charge and would decide which way they were going?

Frank Barger: Yeah, he was.

Dr. Garrett: Once you got below the narrers, it really wasn't too bad.....

Frank Barger: No, no. It was smooth. Once you got below the narrers, you was alright. Coming out of Redbird or Goose Creek either one of those streams was rough. That was rough water.

Dr. Garrett: Did you ever go out of Goose Creek?

Frank Barger: No, I never did.

Dr. Garrett: You mean this water here got rough. You rafted all the way down this river.

Frank Barger: Oh yeah, this river was a rough river. We rafted for old man Blevins Esley, Green Leslie, and Bev Baker, and Hiram Riley and.....

Dr. Garrett: Well, that's way up in the head waters then.

Frank Barger: Oh yeah, and then we rafted some for, let's see, Ben Robertson and General Esley rafts, two rafts, last two that I helped raft.

Dr. Garrett: How long did it take you to go down from the head of Redbird to go down to the South Fork?

Frank Barger: Well, they generally make it down to here, to Oneida and then they stay overnight over there at Oneida and the they'd go on.....

Dr. Garrett: Tie up overnight and go on through then.

Frank Barger: Yeah, go on through then.

Dr. Garrett: Didn't try to go through that narrows?

Frank Barger: Not at night, uh huh, No, they would make that daylight.

Dr. Garrett: Did the rafts break up occasionally?

Frank Barger: Sometimes, they'd break in two.

Dr. Garrett: Did they hit a rock or....

Frank Barger: Naturally break...

Dr. Garrett: Just naturally break.

Frank Barger: Just naturally break in them breakers, and of course when they hit sometimes they'd just scoot the heads off, right offen the pins, and the logs just roll out.

Dr. Garrett: Shear the heads right off.

Frank Barger: Yeah, just shear them off. I seen them shear off as high as fifteen logs at a time.

Dr. Garrett: Then what happened? What did you do for that raft then?

Frank Barger: Well, they'd just go on with it and try to catch what logs they could and put them back as they went. They kept their auger and things right along with them. They could pin them back.

Dr. Garrett: And they had to carry all that stuff back.

Frank Barger: No, they didn't carry nothing back but the auger.

Dr. Garrett: That's what I mean, the auger.

Frank Barger: Sometimes they'd carry their cables back.

Dr. Garrett: Now it was pretty rainy weather. You were wet and uncomfortable.

Frank Barger: Never hurt them a bit. Never took a cold.

Dr. Garrett: What did you do for drinking water on the trip?

Frank Barger: Drunk out of the river.

Dr. Garrett: That's what I wanted you to tell me. I've had others tell me but I find it hard to believe.

Frank Barger: Drunk out of the river. Lay right down on the raft and drink 'er.

Dr. Garrett: Was the river real muddy in those days?

Frank Barger: Oh yeah.

Dr. Garrett: Like today. But you drank it, just leaned over...

Frank Barger: Oh, I drank it.

Dr. Garrett: Well, I'll be damned.

Frank Barger: Now, that's how clean these streams were at that time. They were clean streams of water.

Dr. Garrett: No sewage?

Frank Barger: No sewage, no nothing.

Dr. Garrett: So you got out of that raft at Turkey Gap and you came back and you made yourself another big dollar bill going back down there.

Frank Barger: Going back down there. Walked back.

Dr. Garrett: How long did it take you to walk back.

Frank Barger: Oh, it'd take us sometimes half a day.

Dr. Garrett: Well, hell, that's 10 or 15 miles.

Frank Barger: Yeah, it's over 15 miles.

Dr. Garrett: You mean you were loafing along.

Frank Barger: We'd make it back to Oneida and eat our lunch.

Dr. Garrett: Well, that's really something. See, the reason I want, in the future nobody will ever know how hard you people worked. They'll never have any idea. That's the reason I'm trying to get these points established on tape. I've gotten several. Now tell me, living up here was pretty isolated. Now how did you live. How did a family get through a year? This is something the kids of today have no idea about.

Frank Barger: They don't know what we did go through. They don't have the least idea.

Dr. Garrett: You didn't have a tractor did you?

Frank Barger: No, we didn't know what a tractor was. Didn't know what a dozer was, or a car was. Didn't know what none of them was and the way we got in and out was on an old mule or horseback or walked out and we done most of ours walking.

Dr. Garrett: And that was when you walked to town, you walked 10 or 15 miles.

Frank Barger: We walked into Manchester, plenty of times. Walked in there and back in one day.

Dr. Garrett: And how far is Manchester from here, 15 miles?

Frank Barger: Oh yeah.

Dr. Garrett: At least, and that was a trail.

Frank Barger: It was just a trail. We walked up what they called Beech Creek. We'd go up Beech Creek through that way.

Dr. Garrett: Now, you'd eat pretty well in those days though, still. How did you do that?

Frank Barger: Well, we raised it.

Dr. Garrett: And preserved it and dried it. Now tell me something about how you did it.

Frank Barger: Well, with apples, we'd take them and peel them and slice them and lay them out in the sun and they'd dry. And then if we wanted any other fruit, we smoked 'em, sulphured them. They called 'em sulphur. They'd put them in a basket and in a big barrel and they'd burn 'em oak bark and they'd put that sulphur down on top of them coals, bark coals, and they'd LAY 'EM DOWN ON THAT HOT FIRE AND THAT sulphur and they'd cover that barrel up you know, and tie that sulphur in there. They'd smoke 60 gallon barrels of them and have them all year round. And their meat, they had no trouble. They could smokehouse it and have plenty of that.

Dr. Garrett: Hog killing time was the best time of the year wasn't it?

Frank Barger: And they had plenty of old meat left from one year to another and be lots of neighbors that didn't have none. They'd give it to 'em.

Dr. Garrett: Ham, bacon, all that stuff. Side meat.

Frank Barger: Yeah, and all you could raise. You could raise your hogs and your cattle. You could turn them outside and they could go anywhere they wanted to. And everybody farmed had to fence their own garden and everything. And the cattle would run on the outside all the time in the woods. You didn't have to feed them much. Hogs fattened on the mast. Now they changed everything to a stock law business. They aint got no hogs, no cattle neither.

Dr. Garrett: Bet you dried pumpkin, bet you dug in winter crops.

Frank Barger: Dried punkin, cushaw. We had taters, beans and everything. We dried our beans. Strung them on thread.

Dr. Garrett: Did you ever cook much on an open hearth?

Frank Barger: Yeah, cooked on an old oven. Old oven to bake our bread in.

Dr. Garrett: How did you make your cornbread or hoe cakes? Tell me how you made your hoe cakes.

Frank Barger: Just make it up like you's going to make it in a pan like they do now only it'd be in a hoecake. It'd be in that old oven. Put it in there and put the lid on it. Come out just as brown as it could be and we'd call them buttercrusts and they'd fix the children them buttercrusts.

Dr. Garrett: Did you ever make maple sugar?

Frank Barger: No, I never did make none. I saw some made.

Dr. Garrett: Did you ginseng a lot?

Frank Barger: No, not then it wasn't....I think it got up to about a quarter a ounce back in them days. My dad said that they got most of his that he ever did know of when he was growing up and they got a quarter an ounce.

Dr. Garrett: Quarter an ounce, then it wasn't worth it. Where did you get your meal ground and so forth?

Frank Barger: They had an old water mill we called it.

Dr. Garrett: Where was that?

Frank Barger: Up here at the mouth of Redbird.

Dr. Garrett: On Redbird. I never heard of that one before.

Frank Barger: It was an old water mill and they called it Lang Gilbert's mill.

Dr. Garrett: Where was that?

Frank Barger: That's about I'd say three miles up here.

Dr. Garrett: On what creek was that?

Frank Barger: On an ordinary road, on the highway. Over from the highway now. They was right on the trail.

Dr. Garrett: Does it still stand?

Frank Barger: No, it washed out. They come one of those floods and washed it out.

Dr. Garrett: It was just out on the main river?

Frank Barger: Why it was right out over the river.

Dr. Garrett: Did he use a water wheel to run it?

Frank Barger: Yeah, one of them old big water wheels.

Dr. Garrett: I wonder if anybody ever had a picture of it? I never heard of it before.

Frank Barger: I wouldn't doubt...course he ain't able to tell you, but he's in the hospital right now, but I kindly studied who could give you a tip on that.

Dr. Garrett: Would Granville Davidson know?

Frank Barger: I wouldn't doubt it. Granville would know Do you know him?

Dr. Garrett: I know Granville. See, he's the first man I interviewed cause he's ninety-two now and I've gotten quite a few tapes together and I want one day to put out a thing on the Redbird and the South Fork raft through the narrows cause that was rough. You just walked down to a big hardware store and bought what tools you needed or did you make most of them?

Frank Barger: No, they made 'em, most of 'em. They made their hosses, they made their pins, they made their..., well, otherwise they made their mauls that they drive the pins with and well they just about made everything they used. Except the auger and they, a lot of them had these old iron axes. I wisht I had kept that old iron axe. I let a feller have that in Ohio. I had one of the axes.

Dr. Garrett: Was it a broadblade?

Frank Barger: It was a little old broad blade with about that much steel on the blade of it and the rest of it was iron.

Dr. Garrett: Oh now, broader than a regular axe?

Frank Barger: No, they was about like that. They was about the same as a regular axe only they's, they was about like that only the head they had on 'em was rounder, not square across. It was rounded, the head on them old iron axes.

Dr. Garrett: No, I didn't know that.

Frank Barger: Yeah, they was rounded on the old iron axe. Now in the later days, they got to getting ahold of some good axes. My granddaddy on my mother's side, he got ahold of a 6 pound with more steel on it and he wouldn't chop with no other axe but that 6 lb. axe.

Dr. Garrett: It took a hell of a man to swing a 6 lb. axe all day.

Frank Barger: That's what he wanted and could go to the heart of a big white oak, any kind of a tree by the time you get your saw buried if you weren't careful.

Dr. Garrett: No fooling. How long did it take to fall a 6 foot tree say like a white oak?

Frank Barger: Well, it wouldn't take you long. Something like 5 or 10 minutes.

Dr. Garrett: You'd do it that quick?

Frank Barger: Oh yeah, with them old two cutters.

Dr. Garrett: But a man had to have a hell of a pair of shoulders and a back on him for that saw, didn't he. But they did it all the time.

Frank Barger: They was used to it. They had muscles to do that work. I've carried them old grabs, steel grabs, for them old fellers to log with when I was a growing up. They was old and I carried them when I was a boy for them to log with. Carry the grabs and clean out a road fer the old steers to go.

Dr. Garrett: Steers moved pretty steady, didn't they?

Frank Barger: They moved steady but they was slow. We'd make two trips a day. Was all we could make with them old steers from where we had to haul from.

Dr. Garrett: Was a mule better than a steer?

Frank Barger: Yeah, faster.

Dr. Garrett: Were they as good as a steer?

Frank Barger: No, No.

Dr. Garrett: Which could outpull?

Frank Barger: A steer. A steer could outpull them to death.

Dr. Garrett: How old would a steer be before he was put to service?

Frank Barger: Two year old. They start using them about two year old and they'd keep right on and on as long as they were able.

Dr. Garrett: They got pretty big, didn't they, and they could really move a load?

Frank Barger: Lord, the weight of them would move the load. They was....I've seed 'em wring that yoke in two.

Dr. Garrett: Never heard of that before.

Frank Barger: I've seed 'em wring it. They was stout. Of course they had the best of feed. That's what the'd feed them for stoutness.

Dr. Garrett: How many yoke would it take to move a big log?

Frank Barger: I've never seed but two yoke to one log.

Dr. Garrett: Two. That had to be a big log.

Frank Barger: Two is the most I've ever seed to one log, but I've heared tell of 'em having 6 yokes but bringing it up out from under a mountain. But now four is all I've ever seed.

Dr. Garrett: Now that's another thing, that's tough logging on these hills wasn't it?

Frank Barger: Yeah, they called it ball hooting. They'd get in there with spikes, these old men would, and get under them logs and catch a frozen time and they'd bark one side of 'em. They get it right to the ground be frozen. They'd start 'em and then run 'em right out into where they'd get to the steer tongue.

Dr. Garrett: Oh, they'd slide them down in the frozen weather?

Frank Barger: Yeah. They slide them down in frozen weather and then have them ready for spring to raft you see and run. That's what they'd mostly do.

Dr. Garrett: I wonder where the term ball hooting came from?

Frank Barger: Ah, I don't know what they called it. They just had that for a name, them old fellers did. They'd use big dogwood handspikes, we called it, and one would get on each side of the log and give it a shake up and down till they got it to start then they put a round pole under the end of it. They'd get it on that pole. Why that would give hit a start and then it was gone.

Dr. Garrett: Just scoot them right on down the hill.

Frank Barger: The only way they'd stop is to hit a tree when you got them started.

Dr. Garrett: But then you'd fasten the oxen on them....

Frank Barger: Yeah, they got on, they'd take 'em to the river with ox.

Dr. Garrett: Well, a lot of times you had to haul them clear out of these hollows.

Frank: Yeah, they'd just scoot them down hill to where they could get to them with the ox. They'd just scoot 'em down enough so they could let out the ox on them on steep ground.

Dr. Garrett: It would have been slow work to have brought the big ones out.

Frank Barger: They learnt to ball hoot that way and that's what they done most all on these rough grounds.

Dr. Garrett: I never heard that term before. Did they ever lose a raft by sinking by not having enough floaters?

Frank Barger: Oh yeah.

Dr. Garrett: What ever happened to those rafts?

Frank Barger: They's raised. They'd wait till the water got down in the summer and they'd eventually raise 'em right up out of there and put floaters on them and take them on out.

Dr. Garrett: I didn't know that.

Frank Barger: Yeah, they sink ever once in a while. They'd let 'em lay there till summer. Summer come, they'd put new floaters and everything under that and raise 'em right on up. They could bring it right on up, and drive it right on out.

Dr. Garrett: And then that wood was shipped all over the world. You seem to know more about this than almost anybody i've talked to and you've got a better knowledge.

Frank Barger: I worked a lot at it. I cut logs, skiffed log.

(Tape runs out here)

(Turn tape over)

Dr. Garrett: I asked you what the term skif log was.

Frank Barger: Skiffing them was to keep the sand from getting in them logs when you rolled them in the river. If you'd skif 'em there wasn't no sand or nothing stick on them logs and they'd float better. They'd float up better and you rolled them in with bark on well, that sand got in there and caused that much more weight to take them on down. You have to have better floaters to hold them up.

Dr. Garrett: So you took the bark off.

Frank Barger: Took that bark off. That's why they skiffed most of them

Dr. Garrett: Used a spud.

Frank Barger: Yeah...No, we used an axe. Skiff them with an axe.

Dr. Garrett: Skiff that bark right off.

Frank Barger: We have to skiff it.

Dr. Garrett: In other words, there was just a lot of physical labor.

Frank Barger: Five cents a log for skiffing a 16 foot log. Get 1 nickel.

Dr. Garrett: Get a nickel to do that. How many would you do in a day?

Frank Barger: Oh, sometimes 5 and 10. Them 16 foot white oak.

Dr. Garrett: Kids today wouldn't look at them for that.

Frank Barger: Oh, Lord No, uh huh.

Dr. Garrett: You'd have to roll it over and get all sides of it too included in that.

Frank Barger: That's right. Have to roll it over every time you'd skiff one. You'd just have to keep turning it till you got it all.

Fr. Garrett: Did you ever just float logs down the river, just turn them loose?

Frank Barger: No, I never did float none out but my Dad did. Mr Dad helped float 'em out of Bullskin and Redbird both. They just turn 'em loose, just roll 'em all in AND LET 'EM GO BUT THEY'D PEEL 'EM....WHAT THEY'D DO THEY'D SKIFF 'EM. They didn't peel 'em on the other side. They didn't want 'em peeled. They didn't want 'em cut when the sap was in 'em too heavy, and they'd skiff 'em and when they rolled 'em in then they'd be dry and they'd float high. They use to float 'em out of here all the time and out of Bullskin over here. He used to float 'em out of it.

Dr. Garrett: How long could you make a raft, how many big logs?

Frank Barger: Oh, they've had all the way from 60 to 70.

Dr. Garrett: Logs. That might be 100 or 200 feet almost.

Frank Barger: No, that would be about 100 foot on average and sometimes they wouldn't put hardly that many. It was according to the size of the logs.

Dr. Garrett: Did you have trouble tying up in the tide?

Frank Barger: Yeah, sometimes.

Dr. Garrett: Well, how would you tie, say this river is going pretty fast and you decided you were going to tie up? Find a piece of stillwater?

Frank Barger: Yeah, they'd go till they got to the main edge and they'd holler for somebody to tie them out on the bank and they might have to follow them a half a mile down the river before they get into a place to tie them up.

Dr. Garrett: Then they just snubbed them around a tree.

Frank Barger: You'd make you a one row and a loop and get as large a bunch of rope as you could in your hand. Just commence slacking it and letting it pull. You couldn't just tie it all at once cause your cable wouldn't hold it.

Dr. Garrett: Yeah, pull the tree out or break it...

Frank Barger: Yeah, break the cable or pull the tree out one.

Dr. Garrett: So you had to slow it up.

Frank Barger: Yeah, that's the way we done. I tied many a one.

Dr. Garrett: What did you do for food on a raft?

Frank Barger: Well, they generally put it on there and take it with them.

Dr. Garrett: You mainly took it. It's interesting to me that you just leaned over and drank that river water.

Frank Barger: Well, that's all they had, and the only way of getting it.

Dr. Garrett: Never was any moonshine in this part of the country was there?

Frank Barger: Why yeah, plenty of it. There was plenty of it.

Dr. Garrett: There was lots of feuding and shooting around up here in the whole of Eastern Kentucky at that time wasn't there. Was it bad on Redbird?

Frank Barger: Not on Redbird. If it was, I don't remember. I was very small back when we first... my dad first come in

Frank Barger: (Cont'd) I was small but they did have feuds back at that time. But I don't remember any of them. But it was all settled back before I can remember anything about it.

Dr. Garrett: What did you do for school and church in those days?

Frank Barger: Well, right there used to be our schoolhouse where that cabin's setting.

Dr. Garrett: What was the name of it?

Frank Barger: Annie Pass Schoolhouse. That was the name of it.

Dr. Garrett: I know where the Annie Pass Church is.

Frank Barger: Well, that used to be the schoolhouse right there. They moved it from right there up to where that little church house is on the right of the road and I used to be right there.

Dr. Garrett: One room school?

Frank Barger: One room school.

Dr. Garrett: Eight grades?

Frank Barger: Yeah, right there and they finally moved it up yonder and we'd walk and wade the river. There wasn't no such thing as bridges. We'd have to wade the river to come to school and get what we could out of it. We never got much schooling.

Dr. Garrett: When you were a kid how did you all celebrate Christmas up in this country. Did you go to church or did you CELEBRATE IT AT HOME OR WHAT?

Frank Barger: At home.

Dr. Garrett: Just have a big feed huh.

Frank Barger: That's all.

Dr. Garrett: You all have wild turkeys in those days?

Frank Barger: Yeah, there was several wild turkeys back when I was small but I never...yeah, I can remember seeing one. One wild turkey and it had 13 chestnuts in it.

ANTIPAS

Dr. Garrett: You killed it?

Frank Barger: My dad did.

Dr. Garrett: It ate chestnuts.

Frank Barger: Yeah.

Dr. Garrett: Chestnuts went out in our lifetime, haven't they?

Frank Barger: Yeah, yeah, they went. I can remember picking up sacksful back in the back woods. Picking them up and there'd be squirrels on one end of the log and you'd be picking up on the other.

Dr. Garrett: Did you ever cook the chestnuts. Somebody was telling me yesterday about chestnut bread. Do you know anything about it?

Frank Barger: No, I don't know anything about that. I've heard them talk, but I don't know ANYTHING ABOUT IT. But one thing that I do know, one of the studies I do, is why was so much game in those days and so little now?

Dr. Garrett: We fenced everything in, I think, and taken over the good land, and we've ruined the water.

Frank Barger: That's what I think happened.

Dr. Garrett: We've killed the water. Tell me about fishing when you were young. There had to be a lot of fish.

Frank Barger: Oh Lord, you could just go out with a pin hook and make you a pin crooked and catch all the fish you wanted.

Dr. Garrett: Big fish?

Frank Barger: Yeah, now you can't catch nothing.

Dr. Garrett: Were there any sturgeon up here in this river?

Frank Barger: No, not as I know of.

Dr. Garrett: But there were lots of large fish.....

Frank Barger: Lord yeah, you could go out anywhere you wanted to and set down and catch a mess of fish and go to the house.

Dr. Garrett: And they were clean.

Frank Barger: Clean fish...Now if you go out to catch you a mess, you'll maybe fish all day and not get nary 'un. And when you get it, it don't taste right.

Dr. Garrett: Were there any quail in here when you were.....

Frank Barger: Yeah, yeah. There was plenty of quail back then and they's several now.

Dr. Garrett: Of course when you farmed back in those days you're talking about a few acres of corn, you weren't talking about any big deal...

Frank Barger: No, No. We just tend what we could use, and bread was the most important thing back in those days.

Dr. Garrett: Bread and a little meat.

Frank Barger: Bread and meat. They had their milk. They had their meat and then what they all had to do was make enough bread to feed their stock and feed them.

Dr. Garrett: Did you all kill a lot of hogs?

Frank Barger: Yeah, oh yeah. Always kept hogs.

Dr. Garrett: That's good meat, that had been fattened on the mast. I've eaten some of that and it's good.

Frank Barger: Yeah, it was good. That was the only....when they put it under the stock law that destroyed the old peoples pleasure because they had to just keep what they could feed and fatten.

Dr. Garrett: Were they still using logs for building back in your day?

Frank Barger: Yeah, oh yeah.

Dr. Garrett: Now they claim...I lived over in Owsley County. You can't find a man who claims he can build a log cabin.

Frank Barger: That's out of existence. The old people's all gone that built them. They're all gone.

Dr. Garrett: I'll bet you could build one.

Frank Barger: Oh, yeah, I could build one. Now if I was able I could.

Dr. Garrett: Did you ever hew ties?

Frank Barger: Yeah, I've hewed a many a one.

Dr. Garrett: Now hewing on oak tie was a job.

Frank Barger: We'd score and hew.

Dr. Garrett: What did you get paid for hewing it?

Frank Barger: About a dollar apiece.

Dr. Garrett: A dollar apiece?

Frank Barger: A dollar apiece for scoring all day 8 and 12 hours.

Dr. Garrett: A dollar a day, or a dollar a tie?

Frank Barger: A dollar a day, scoring and hewing?

Dr. Garrett: How many ties could you turn out in the run of a day?

Frank Barger: It'd be according to the.....we had to split 'em and hew 'em. We'd turn out maybe 15 or 20 ties.

Dr. Garrett: For a dollar.

Frank Barger: But if we had to hew 'em, we wouldn't get more than 10 or maybe 12. If they was round you know and had to score all 4 sides. When you split 'em you wouldn't have to score but the one side.....three sides of 'em and it was easy hewing.

Dr. Garrett: For the sake of somebody in the future that's listening to this tape, why did you hew a tie?

Frank Barger: Well, that's when the railroad was building these railroads and they hewed them for the railroad company.

Dr. Garrett: But you used mainly a small log didn't you? It wouldn't saw out as well as you could hew it. Was that part of it?

Frank Barger: Most of them wanted to hew them. They could get more for 'em.

Dr. Garrett: Yeah, that's what I always understood and I wondered why a hewed tie was considered better.

Frank Barger: It lasted longer.

Dr. Garrett: Than a sawed tie?

Frank Barger: Than a saWED TIE.

Dr. Garrett: I guess you went more with the grain didn't you?

Frank Barger: Yeah, that's what they hewed by, the grain. And it'd last as long as any sawed tie.

Dr. Garrett: Now in cities, I've got a boy that works for me. He's giving everybody a bargain by bringing them about 2/3 of a cord of wood for \$60.00. You didn't get \$60.00 when you were young for a cord of wood did you?

Frank Barger: Huh, about 50¢.

Dr. Garrett: Did you cut it or furnish it at 50¢ a cord?

Frank Barger: Cut it, furnished it and cut it for 50¢.

Dr. Garrett: That's hard work.

Frank Barger: That's what we got now, 50¢.

Dr. Garrett: Did you ever mine? Early or recently?

Frank Barger: Well, **early**, back early. Back when we had to do our own.

Dr. Garrett: Did you mine locally?

Frank Barger: Yeah

Dr. Garrett: How big a vein of coal did you work?

Frank Barger: It went all the way from 30 to 32 inches.

Dr. Garrett: It was all done by hand? Now you worked in there a lot of times on your side didn't you, tell me about that. Nobody would believe that.

Frank Barger: I would lay on one side a while till I'd get tired and turn over....

Dr. Garrett: That's for picking and shoveling?

Frank Barger: That's picking and shoveling.

Dr. Garrett: Did you pad your shoulder any way?

Frank Barger: No, we just got tough in doing this and it didn't bother us.

Dr. Garrett: Did the dust bother you?

Frank Barger: No.

Dr. Garrett: You didn't use much dynamite in those days did you? or powder?

Frank Barger: No, no. we used powder but no dynamite.

Dr. Garrett: What would you do, drill the holes and then blast it and then go back?

Frank Barger: We'd drill our holes up to four foot sometimes we'd go five, be according, and we'd drill four holes you know. We'd light all four holes and come out. We blew down about 100 or 150, we called it bushels then we'd go back.

Dr. Garrett: How long did you let it clear out before you went back? You didn't have any ventilation did you?

Frank Barger: Ah, no, we'd stay out a couple of hours. Go back in. It was all clear. But we wasn't back under fur, you know.

Dr. Garrett: Were you propping behind?

Frank Barger: Yeah, we'd have our props right up with us, space the coal and we'd buggy that out in a little old home-made outfit.

Dr. Garrett: Pushed it out on little rails?

Frank Barger: Yeah, we have wooden rails. Have 2 x 4. Make us a track on those 2 x 4's and hew 'em at that. We'd call them 2 x 4's. We'd hew them you know.

Dr. Garrett: Hewed 2 x 4's?

Frank Barger: Yeah

Dr. Garrett: Never knew you hewed anything that small.

Frank Barger: You hew them like in there to run your buggy on till after they got to sawing them later on.

Dr. Garrett: How far back did you all face those mines?

Frank Barger: We'd go back about 150 feet sometimes. Sometimes that would be the limit because the air would get too rough on it. You couldn't go far back. And then they'd make a new opening go out the side and make them another.

Dr. Garrett: Just go in parallel to that one. Used to do that over in Owsley County a lot.

Frank Barger: I've got right now on my place up on Bar Creek there where there are 4 openings on it and they're about 100 feet back each one.

Dr. Garrett: In other words, you did hard work all your life.

Frank Barger: Oh yeah

Dr. Garrett: Did you get bothered much by the smoke and fumes?

Frank Barger: No, no, that never did bother me.

Dr. Garrett: Laying on your side and loading coal though with a shovel was.....

Frank Barger: That was the only hard part they was to it, loading on your side.

Dr. Garrett: I used to see that down in Owsley County. I'd see a lot of them take an old coffee sack and put up under their shoulders and lay there and throw coal. They didn't get much money for it.

Frank Barger: We got 5¢ a bushel and pay a penny bankage otherwise we just got 4 cents.

Dr. Garrett: That's for bringing it out of the mine.

Frank Barger. That was for bringing and hauling to these schools.

Dr. Garrett: You mean hauling to these schools for a nickel a bushel. Mr gosh, a wagon would have hauled what?

Frank Barger: 20 bushels

Dr. Garrett: So you'd get \$11.00 a load.

Frank Barger: A dollar a load.

Dr. Garrett: You furnished the coal and hauled....

Frank Barger: Furnished the coal and hauled it for a dollar a load.

Dr. Garrett: Um, that was work.

Frank Barger: That was what we called....we didn't have nothing to do and there's no money. There wasn't no money back then.

Dr. Garrett: When did your good roads come in here?

Frank Barger: We got ah....they've been in here....let me figure...this road has been built about 16 years and these country roads ARE JUST WHERE THEY always have been.

Dr. Garrett: But basically, they mainly just follow right by the river, the same old mud road across. Then they started building their bridges in here.

Frank Barger: We finally got...they finally come in, the counties finally got to getting in...the first old grader they got was an old iron wheeled outfit and people thought that was a sight, the first they'd ever seed. They graded up and down this river right here, this river road, over here where the old road is over on the other side.

Dr. Garrett: Tell me who your wife was and tell me about your family. Let's put that down in the tape.

Frank Barger: My first wife was Robert Herd's daughter and my second wife was Bige Spurlock's daughter. Me and my first wife had two kids and me and my second wife's got two kids.

Dr. Garrett: So you've got four children. They're all around here somewhere?

Frank Barger: Two of them. One of them is in Indiana and three of them is here. One lives right out that way in and out the holler and that grocery store out there.

Dr. Garrett: J. D. Grocery store?

Frank Barger: No, Moore. Now that's my oldest boy there.

Dr. Garrett: How baout letting me get some pictures of you and I'll send you copies of them, Mr. Barger, and let me get a picture of you out there by that cabin you went to school in, cause nobody maybe has ever made a picture of it again. See what I want to do is.....

Frank Barger: That ain't the one now, that's where it was.

Dr. Garrett: That's where it was...O.K., well, I know then but I want to shoot some pictures of you and what I'm going to do one day, and you've given me a lot of new terminology I've never run into before, but when I do something on this, I want to use this, your name, give you full credit for this

Dr. Garrett: (Cont'd) because it's my feeling that the kinds have got to know what it was like in the old days.

Frank Barger: They want to know.

Dr. Garrett: They do want to know and I've got a whole bunch of good tape and I think this is probably the best I've made and I think I'll stop by and see Granville and see if he can tell me where that old mill was.

Frank Barger: Granville's up this road right up there....

Dr. Garrett: He lives up at Oakley's place. Let me take some pictures of you.....

END OF TAPE