

W. M. (WILLIE) STINNETT, Emerts Cove, Sevier County, Tennessee, 1939 /  
Disc 074a, 074b,

Willie Stinnett, W. M.

I: W. M. Stinnett.

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I: And where were you born, Mister Stinnett?

Born on Webbs Mountain.

I: And how far is Webbs Mountain from here?

About five miles.

I: Uh how long did you spend as a boy in, in Webbs Mountain?

Well, about ei-, seven or eight years.

I: And was there much of a settlement down there in Emerts Cove when you first came here?

Well, a right smart little, right smart little, not ...

I: About how many families do you suppose lived here?

Well, I, I couldn't hardly tell you, they wasn't very many, no, they, they was a family lived right over there, and a family lived right on up just a little piece further.

I2: Could you, could you tell them their names xx and Emerts was down here the first?

Mart, Marts, yes, Emerts down here first, old Roger, old Uncle Roger Timmons.

I2: First?

And John Headrick, no, John Headrick was first, I believe, no

I2: Yes, John Headrick.

No, no, old man, old man ...

I2: Shields?

No, wasn't Shields, Shields did move there later on, aw, I know his name, Shults, old Uncle Bill Shults lived in the first house in Emerts Cove, when we moved to this country here, and then he sold out to Shields, Shields, he, they lived there.

I2: Then old Uncle Roger Evins.

And then old uncle Rogers Evins, he was the next house, and then ...

I2: Mart Shults.

Mart Shults right over here, well, and, and old Mister Tooter lived on, on above.

I2: Right here at the end of the lane.

Right at the end of the lane.

I: Was there much of a settlement up in Greenbrier when you first came up there?

Well, not a big thing, they was several people lived there.

I: Who was the biggest landowner up in uh Greenbrier Cove?

Well ...

I2: Fred Emert would be one.

Fred Emert, and I expect my daddy owned about as much as, not hardly as much as Fred Emert but he was right at it.

I: Well, what was your father's name?

John Stinnett.

I: Uh when did uh John Stinnett come to this country?

When did he?

I: Yeah, do you have any idea?

No.

I: Was he born here, right in Sevier County?

He was borned in jo-, he was borned in Jones Cove, yes.

I: Born in Jones Cove?

Yes, sir.

I2: He and, he and his wife moved from Joneses Cove back here to ...

Yes, that's what he done, he moved, he moved to Greenbrier from Webbs Mountain.

I: Uh how many families do you suppose there were up in uh Greenbrier Cove uh when you were a boy?

Well, I expect they was fifty.

I: About fifty families then?

Yeah.

I: About how many families were there when the park came in?

Oh, law, I couldn't, I couldn't guess, they ...

I2: They was thick xx

They was thick, in every hollow nearly.

I: Do you suppose that there were three to four hundred families there  
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Yes, I guess they was.

I: More than that?

I2: I'd say between three and four hundred.

I: How did those people feel when the park came in?

I2: They's pleased to start in with a-plenty.

They was pleased reasonable well when they start, started in, but they  
got till they didn't like it.

I: Why, why didn't they like it?

Well, they, they got dissatisfied with their homes that they bought and  
couldn't pay for them, they lost their money and all like that.

I: They lost their homes.

Lost their home.

I: Why was it that they lost their money, the banks failing or ...

I2: No, they couldn't pay for ...

No, they couldn't pay for the land and the, and land had to go back.

I: Took off a bigger bite than they could chew.

I2: Yes.

Yes, yeah, yes.

I: Well, how do the people around here feel about the, this part of the  
park, uh do they uh like it uh ...

Well, they don't like it real genuine GRAM, all I hear them talk says it's the worst thing that ever happened.

I2: Most of them lost everything to the park xx

I've heard a few talk that said that it was the worst thing that ever happened to Greenbrier and Emerts Cove too = 'both'.

I2: Well, I think that xx worst thing that's ever happened.

I: Well, why'd you, why'd you suppose they think it's the worst thing that's ever happened?

Well, they was dissatisfied, they was men give their lives just back up from Greenbrier, they is.

I: Two years ago, Mister Stinnett, you told me uh you found traces of Indians through this country.

Yes, sir.

I: What did you, what kind of uh evidence did you find around here?

Well, I found rocks that they'd worked at.

I: Speak a little louder, please.

I'd found, found rocks, different kind of rocks, you know, that they'd worked at, a regular passway out through here with them they've claimed to me, and I suppose they lived here somewheres, I don't know just uh whereabouts.

I: Did you find arrowheads?

No, I don't think I did.

I2: Well, Will, you found a plenty of arrowheads.

Oh yes, yes, plenty of them, yeah, just a, just plenty of them.

I: Uh you had spoke of a couple of buildings that were here uh way back when you were a boy which might have been used as defense against the Indians, could you describe those buildings?

They was one that stood right down here, a big log house, right down below my barn, had portholes in it, made in that shape.

I: Portholes?

Yes, sir, they could see back up the road here, could see down the road, and see any way they wanted to.

I: Uh did you see many Indians through here when you were a boy?

No, I never saw many.

I: Where did that pathway uh seem to run, from where to where?

Went to, what they call the Indian Gap back here, right on through.

I: Indian Gap?

Yes, sir.

I: And where did it come from toward Indian Gap?

Well, it come from towards, to here, Cosby, and to, to here, you know, and the Indian Gap, what they used to call it up here, right up here on, what they call the Grapeyard Mountain, uh the Indians laid there, camped there on that mountain they tell me.

I: Um, how much Indian are you, Mister Stinnett?

Well, I'm about a fourth.

I: About a fourth Indian?

Yes, sir.

I: Is that on your father's side or on your mother's side?

On my father's side.

I: Is it Cherokee Indian?

I suppose so.

I: Uh what do you think about the English uh running the Indians when this area first settled?

Well, they ... I don't know hardly, that was pretty bad, that was pretty bad for them to run them way from their homes as, I took it to be, I'd hate for a man to run me away from my home, yeah, just force me away.

I: Yeah.

Yeah, I think they done wrong running the boys out of here.

I: About how many acres did your farm have when you first moved to Emerts Cove?

Well, this whole farm?

I: Yes sir.

Well, two hundred and four acres and three-fourths, that's what the old deed calls for.

I: Is your farm still as, uh big as that?

Yes, I suppose it is, it's right at it.

I: Uh what are, how are your crops here? Could you tell us a little bit about them?

Well, the crops are good, generally good.

I: What do you raise mostly?

Corn, some wheat, timothy hay, make anything you put on it.

I: Do you raise much tobacco?

No, I don't raise much tobacco, but hit makes fine tobacco, raise some tobacco, makes fine tobacco.

I: What kind of land would you call this here that your farm is located on?

Well, hit's loamy, sandy land, a portion of it, a portion is clay, you know.

I: Would you call it bottom land?

Yes, some bottom land.

I: Uh have you ever raised much cattle?

Yes, that's a big thing right here, cattle.

I: Where did you, where do you let the cattle graze?

Well, I let them graze here on my farm, but I used to, when I lived in Greenbrier, my father lived up there, we'd put them in the mountains.

I: Back on Smokies?

Yes sir, back up in there.

I: Just about where along the Smoky Mountains?

Along this side of Smoky in them big coves, rich coves he'd keep them.

I2: Porters Flats.

Porters Flats.

I2: Stony Flats.

Porters Flats and Stony Flats, and he'd keep as much as two hundred head of cattle there every summer.

I: Where did he market those cattle at?

Well, they, they'd come up from in below here and buy them.