

Eric Lidji: Today is June 28th, 2017. I'm Eric Lidji and I'm here with Linda Boxx. We are with the Great Allegheny Passage Oral History Project, and we are going to be speaking to Don Moran. We are in the main dining room of the Fore Sisters Golf Course...

Don Moran: Fore Sisters Golf Course...

Eric Lidji: ...in Rawlings, Maryland. Before we get into what we were just talking about, do you mind if we go back? I always like to find out the relationship that people have with the area that we're talking about...

Don Moran: Mm-hmm.

Eric Lidji: ...and just from the little research I did, I got a sense that your family has been in western Maryland for a while. Is that right?

Don Moran: Yeah, I was born and raised in Westernport where I still live.

Eric Lidji: In Westernport?

Don Moran: Yes. And, my grandfather on my father's side, Moran, was up near Frostburg, in a little area they called "Morantown," I guess, because there were families there. I think there was 12 in my father's family.

Frostburg, down to where we live in Westernport, his father actually lived in the woods there. My dad had to leave school in the 8th grade because my grandfather died. And then, he had three older sisters and a mother, and so they got by, just making a living, cutting mining props, and their own garden, and things like that – and then, married my mother. She was a Wilkinson and her family came from England. Her mother and father were born in England and came over here. Then her mother died soon after they were here. She was a Kidd, K-I-D-D. We always say, don't know what it was, we always say she was related to the pirate.

[Laughter]

I had four older brothers and I was the youngest. My father, I guess, got an opportunity...because in those days this whole

area was coal mining, just up, like, up in Pennsylvania, because coal mining was the way you did, that's what...that's people here, really.

He worked for a fella by the name of Carroll Patterson, who actually got in a little start – after getting married, I guess and started having children, he, through Carroll, he got a lease, because we owned nothing, he owned nothing. He'd get a lease from the company that owned the whole area around West Virginia, near the Davis Coal and Coke Company, and he would lease from them for a nickel a ton of coal, and then you own the property. The mined coal would pay them royalties. That's how I got into the coal business here – my father did.

He died in his 40s, though. I had another brother that got killed in a car wreck in 1952, so that left the four of us. And, my mother sort of held the family together, and we just made a living...and that there were four bodies there that could work and I'm the only one other than- because I did play basketball in high school and was pretty good at it. I got to go to the University of Maryland. In those days, the college scholarships...you had to work, though. And, I had to sweep the dorms and, then, every weekend wax the floor.

My good friend and buddy that I played with there, and even he was All-American at Maryland, Gene Shue...he was an All-American...and these people at ball games...he had to sweep the floor we played on. That was his scholarship. So, things were really different in those days.

But, it made a big change in my life because I got to play. My first year after I graduated, I had to wait to go into the Air Force, I'd planned to go in the Air Force. In those days you had to put your time in. And, I was hired; my first job, I was the Assistant Coach at the University of Maryland for my one year while I was waiting to go in.

Then, in those days, North Carolina – they had one coach. They didn't have assistants. Now, they have dozens of

assistants sitting on that bench with them. But, it did help me because I learned to do a little coaching, and then when I was in the Air Force, I was actually brought to a base on Long Island, New York to organize the team and coach it, and beat a certain General's team. They had their own rivalry. I did that, and weekends I played ball in the Pennsylvania Eastern League, they called it. Back then, that, and along with the NBA was- I think the NBA only had eight or nine teams, [inaudible 0:05:18.7] with ten guys to a team. It was tough to get in through there. But, on weekends I'd get \$100 a game to play and I played Saturday and Sunday and then back to New York. And, of course, the government was playing your salary. And, I actually saved my money. I had four daughters, no sons, and put all four of my girls through school later on with the money I'd saved from that little bit of playing. And then, when I get out of the Air Force, I did sign on with the Detroit Pistons. The big salary for a year was \$5,000.

Eric Lidji:

Did you live in Detroit?

Don Moran:

No, I did not make the team. I was the last one they let go. I was through the exhibition season, and that's when I'd come back with my brothers in our coal business. And, I was the one with the so-called education to get some and we started finding some places to sell it – the Celanese Corporation and Potomac Edison and places like that. And, it didn't hurt, the fact that – I don't mind saying this now that I'm much older – but it didn't hurt that my background with the University of Maryland and being in athletics, helped get us orders through somebody. It's very much- I don't know why, but even flying across the country in an airplane – as soon as I mention the fact that I was in the NBA, the questions just keep coming, and coming, and coming. It's just amazing because there's so few people that do get in pro, as it happens.

But, that's how we got into the business. And, I continued to- we acquired property. We would start to lease them, but they said, "No, it's better to go ahead and buy it and keep it." We've acquired quite a bit of property. My brothers are all gone; I'm the only one left. Have been for years.

My brother, Jim, was sort of our president; my mother still kept hold of everybody, but my brother, Jim, had been in World War II, and he'd been a prisoner of war of the Germans and I guess, before my dad died in '46, '47, he sort of felt Jim- he wasn't the oldest, he was next to the oldest. I think he sort of thought that Jim was the guy to be the head man when he was gone. He died in 1948.

So, with that said, we got into business and it gets us around- I bought this piece of property. We're finally getting around to it. Bought this piece of property. Eddie, he had a tack sale here in Cumberland – a fella from over at Connellsville, Pennsylvania, somewhere, had been over in this area mining coal and he run out and left the place without paying taxes. His name was Clark. And so, it came up for sale. It wasn't much of a sale because it was a lateral, I mean, a long piece of ground, on either side of the railroad – that's what it was. It's 101 acres from Frostburg out to the line and one tunnel, and then another tunnel right into Pennsylvania, then. It wasn't on our property.

But, we bought it because the ground on the north side of that area, all the way to Mount Savage – little town of Mount Savage – we owned 2,900 acres of property, of coal property. And, this railroad – the reason the railroad was built that way was to get over the mountain to go to Pennsylvania, to go to Pittsburgh. And, it makes a couple of turns, but it was the easiest way out of Cumberland to get over that hill. Well, obviously, then, if we're going to go up and mine coal or clay, or whatever – they did have some clay mines up there. To do that, the road is right there. The railroad had ballast rocks about this size, and they'd been there for many, many years. They kept adding more, so it was a great road for us. And, that's getting back to you now, that's... We didn't want to sell the thing; it had a use for us, a very, very important use, that whole property, if and when we did sell it.

Linda Boxx:

May I go back and ask a question? So, I wasn't aware- I've never heard about a Mr. Clark from Connellsville having- I

guess he's the one who bought the property from the Western Maryland when they were abandoning.

- Don Moran:** I don't know how he got it. The fella was a coal mining, strip mining operator, and he'd mined some down our area, in our way, towards Westernport.
- Linda Boxx:** Okay. But, he owned 101 acres?
- Don Moran:** Yes. He must...
- Linda Boxx:** Oh, we'll follow up on that. We'll track that down. Thank you for that.
- Eric Lidji:** About what year did you buy it?
- Don Moran:** It seems to me, around '60-something. I could...
- Eric Lidji:** Oh, so you had it for a long time.
- Don Moran:** Yes, yes, long time. No, it was in the '70s. It had to be in the late '70s because of...
- Eric Lidji:** Because of the decommission?
- Linda Boxx:** Yeah, I think the Western Maryland was being abandoned in '74, '75, '76.
- Don Moran:** Yeah. It was right in that area. And Clark left the area. I don't know where – whatever happened to him.
- Linda Boxx:** Okay.
- Don Moran:** Yeah, the Western Maryland was being bought out by the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.
- Linda Boxx:** Mm-hmm.
- Don Moran:** And now, it's the CSX.

Linda Boxx:

Yeah, forming the Chessie System. Yeah.

Eric Lidji:

So, the advantage of this piece of property was that the railroad provided an access to get through the mountain easily?

Don Moran:

To mine the entire, you know, the 2,900 acres is a big piece of ground.

Eric Lidji:

Right.

Don Moran:

And, we know there's coal under there, and we know there's other stuff under there because there were two big companies in there for years – many, many years ago that that's all they did was make brick. They didn't mine coal, mining brick. One of them is still up there. That's a little bit right out outside of Frostburg.

So, for us to give up the property – to sell it or whatever – the state wanted, it was a no, no. We had to get up in there. Why-Let's back up again. I think I said that I was a bicycler myself, and I had talked to different people down there at the State of Maryland and in Annapolis, and there wasn't any big pushing on it, it was just that eventually, they're going to put this bicycle path through.

I went to a couple meetings, too. I don't remember what they were for, but there were different people there, about putting the thing there. And, I actually talked to them, I don't know who from the State – being the owner of the property, they wanted to talk. Our state – I guess every state – the first thing they do is offer you money. They don't want to make any deals, or this, that, and the other, and they weren't interested in me telling them why we wanted to be there. That kind of thing. That's not the way it works for the state.

After talking to them about the thing, I went back and offered them a 99-year lease for \$1 a year, that would take care of it, but we would still own the property, and we would use beside the railroad track if and when we- and we never did. It's still

there. But, if and when we used the road, we would be right there, but they would have the bike path. They could have had that back in 1990, '95, or something. But, they said no, they wouldn't accept that. They wanted ownership.

Or, if in fact, we had to keep ownership, they said that they would go ahead and if we would let them know – I think it was 60 days in advance when we were going to use the road. Well, you can't be in business and know 60 days in advance we'd be mining coal and have a truck in there. They said that way they could make sure that the risk, or this, that, and the other, wouldn't interfere with the bike. I said, "Well, that won't work for us. We have to have a way in and out."

So, we actually worked back and forth with them. A fella, other people here – he was born and raised up here in Garrett County and knew it pretty well, and then a fella by the name of Cass Taylor was the- from Cumberland, Maryland was in- you'll run into his name in the thing. Cass was the head of the House of Delegates.

Linda Boxx: What was the other fella's name?

Don Moran: He still works for the state. First name is John.

Linda Boxx: The first name is John?

Don Moran: Yeah.

Linda Boxx: Okay.

Don Moran: It'll come to me. When you get to be my age, the names are awful hard to remember, really. I can remember a lot of other things, but names just seem to- just gone. But, anyway, I dealt with him, back and forth, because my big thing...

Eric Lidji: You dealt with John, or you dealt with House of...?

Don Moran: No. That's right. I'm mixing you up there. Cass Taylor was a good friend of ours, and he was the head man in the House of

Delegates, which gave him a little- and Cass kept after me. I knew him for years, and he kept after me to help him out, want to get this thing done. So, I do, too.

I took up biking...when we were in San Diego in basketball, and I loved it. Back here, we had a group that- we traveled all the time together and biked. But, Cass kept after us to do something. "Well, we're trying to do something." But, I told the state people that we didn't want to sell it right out, but since they didn't want to take it in a 99-year lease, that we had to trade property, and they said, "Why is that?" I said, "Well, the fact is that we own quite a bit of property and we pay taxes on that property. If we give you property, then that comes out of the tax bracket – the state doesn't get the tax on them – but they make them up off of us, we are still owners of the property." That's a little up and down of thing for that. I think, but when you live in the county here, Allegheny County, that the state owns 41%, 42% of the whole county. Well, if they take out this acreage that they're collecting taxes off of me, that means they're going to charge me more on property that's not coming out.

Eric Lidji: That's right.

Linda Boxx: Mm-hmm.

Don Moran: So, I said, "Let's trade property. We give you this acreage, you give us some acreage that joins us somewhere else which [inaudible 0:16:50.2]. And we worked and worked and worked, and that's why it took so long, is because we'll probably, in the next ten years, we'll probably talk to, I don't know, 30 different people in the State of Maryland, and you didn't know the same people came out here all the time because it's enough to upset you, really, because we'd have property that we would agree to take, if, in fact, they were given the bicycle property up there.

And, at the last moment, they would stop it and say, "We just talked to the fisheries people for the state, and they claim that this piece of ground that you want up near Westernport,"

adjoining our property, “they say the Coleman Run is a great fish place, and so they can’t go ahead and give us that piece of property.”

In other words, they would back off, and of course, I sort of made a game out of it. I would ask who the head man down there that was saying, “Had he ever been up to the property, or has he ever seen Coleman Run?” Well, no, he took it from his people, they’d tell me. I said, “Well, for your information, Coleman Run is dry six months out of the year. There are no fish in it and never have been. And, even to get up there from the Potomac and Savage River, it’s almost like up a waterfall.” I said, “If they could get...” After that, it was something else, and it would be another year or so before they’d do anything about it.

Pennsylvania was actually pushing our state to get things done, but we’d go a year or so and it’d be the same criteria. We would take a piece of property from them, such and such, and 1,500- settled, so that they could keep their property on the Savage River up there, that we wouldn’t even take property they had above. It’d be 1,500 feet above sea level, which would put us up such and such, you know. Trying to work any kind of thing out.

Then it would be the hunting. Well, the hunters, they always- the state always had something. Cass Taylor would get in and say, “Don, you’ve got to help us out. I’ve got to get this thing done.” We were trying to do that, too. We finally settled on the trade of ground and John – I’ll get his name in a minute, the guy that we’re still [inaudible 0:19:27.6] – John called me at the office this morning and he said, “You can’t leave this because I got a message from Annapolis saying no deal unless, unless...”

Now, if we were to get that piece of property next to us that we would get for them, it, 1,500 feet above sea level, and the top of the hills around here are around the 2,500, 2,800, so we were getting the top, the top. And so, he said, out of the acreage that we were getting, something like, maybe, 145

acres, or something like that. So, he says, "You have pieces. You'll have to come down and I'll have to show you," and they sent him up a map of the area we were to get. And then, they had a square, just like this, a square off of it, and saying, "We could have that property," out of the hundred and some we were going to get, it was probably half of the property. They had it squared – four squares and colored, and said, "You can't use it. You will own it, but you can't use it because we've discovered that the Western Maryland Woods Rat is extinct," or getting...

Linda Boxx: Extinct, yeah.

Don Moran: And, I said- I had to ask twice. I said, "I've only lived here all my life. I've never heard of a Western Maryland Woods Rat. He said he hadn't either. He was born and raised in Grantsville, Maryland. But, they said, "No, that was that." I said, "You mean that we can go ahead and pay taxes on that piece of property, but we can't go on the property, we can't cut the timber, if there is any on the property, we can't do anything?" He said, "Yep, that's it." I said, "Well, that's not it then. Tear the thing up." And so we were stopped again.

And, that's when Cass Taylor gets back into it again. He had me come down to his office and he said the pressure he was getting from Annapolis- because they waited too long to do something, and Pennsylvania was pushing them. They'd come as far as they could, and plus those two tunnels had to be repaired. The one on the Pennsylvania side had to be really repaired; it was falling in.

Eric Lidji: That's the [inaudible 0:21:56.0]?

Don Moran: Yeah. The one that was on our property wasn't so bad. After buying the property, I had to go ahead and close it up there because the students from Frostburg State University would go out there and have bonfires and parties, and they'd run four-wheelers, and one kid actually upset – after drinking a lot – and busted his neck up pretty bad and he was fine. We

thought, "Oh my God. If that guy is an invalid..." We were property owners...

It's like the – what is it – like the...

Linda Boxx: "Attractive nuisance," they call it.

Don Moran: Yeah, that's it. If your neighbor kid comes over to your swimming pool, which you've got locked up, and drowns, then you're the one that's in trouble. Anyway, what we had done with the property, other than making a road out of it, our idea was to get some of our money back. We sold the rail; it had this regular big rail on it. We sold it to a company over in Pennsylvania.

Eric Lidji: For scrap?

Don Moran: Mmm?

Eric Lidji: You mean scrap?

Don Moran: No, no, no. It's that heavy rail that- it'll last almost forever. They were in the business, and if somebody needed a certain...

Linda Boxx: A gauge rail, then...

Don Moran: Yeah. They'd sell it.

Eric Lidji: They just re-use it?

Don Moran: Re-use it, yeah.

Linda Boxx: Yeah.

Eric Lidji: Huh.

Don Moran: Plus, we found we could also re-use that stone. We would sell that by the truckloads to people in their yards, so, get some of our money back.

[Laughter]

Linda Boxx: Do you remember what you paid for that 101 acres?

Don Moran: No, it was...

Linda Boxx: You said that was- no, that wasn't the bankruptcy.

Don Moran: Oh, no, no, no. It was in the hundreds of thousands. It was in the six-figures money. I don't know exactly what it was. But, we actually, after talking to Cass again, and he brought somebody else up – who I don't remember – from the state, who, the governor had evidently had appointed him to get the damn thing handled. And Cass was, "We got to do something, we just got to do something."

So, I had to go ahead and decide whether we would go ahead and just sell it because there was no way they were going to- they kept all these things doing- stirring the pot. And so, we sold it to them, but even then it wasn't proper.

I'd said, "We'd still like to have a piece of ground in the back of our place here," six acres. Well, they would be more than happy to let us have that on the trade. Plus, on up over the hill here, we owned 248 acres that they wanted that also from me – all this at the last minute. I mean, it's just one thing after another. And, they said they had to do that to get that other ground to offset the fact that the railroad bicycle path was going to be expensive, whatever [inaudible 0:25:04.5].

I think they gave \$60 an acre, or something, for that, but it was just ground up in here, in between state property. That's why they wanted it. They wanted it [inaudible 0:25:16.8], and that was included, and they took that and...

Linda Boxx: So, you got property adjacent to the golf course, six acres?

Don Moran: That's six acres, yeah. They got...

Linda Boxx: And, then they swapped...

Don Moran: They got 101 acres and they got 248 acres, the other place.

Eric Lidji: In return for your six?

Don Moran: No, no. They were buying, we were selling them the 101 acres.

Eric Lidji: Buying. Okay.

Don Moran: The whole thing in there.

Linda Boxx: But, they gave you- what'd you say, \$60- how much per acre for your 240? You had to pay...

Don Moran: Yeah.

Linda Boxx: You had to pay...

Don Moran: Yeah, they had to put a price on it. The whole thing was they were giving us "X" number of dollars for the purchase of that 101 acres.

Linda Boxx: Okay.

Don Moran: But, they had to do it – I'm glad I'm not a politician – they had to have it look like something else. I don't know how it worked out. And, actually, the square piece, that area there, even in the sales clause, when we finished, we even had a paragraph in there that, eventually, they would – I don't recall how it said it now – but there was still a chance we may get that property. But, within a year they said no.

[Laughter]

Eric Lidji: That's the Woods Rat property?

Linda Boxx: Uh-huh.

Don Moran: Uh-huh, yeah.

Eric Lidji: Okay.

Don Moran: And, that was about it.

Linda Boxx: What was the final deal that you worked out with the state after 20 or 30 years of haggling? I mean, what was the price was...?

Don Moran: I'd rather not- they did not want us to come up with a price, that's why they wanted the other property that was involved in it.

Linda Boxx: Okay, I see, I see.

Don Moran: Because they said of the extreme value of their pricing it was putting a- the number one thing, as I recall was the tunnels.

Linda Boxx: Mm-hmm.

Don Moran: And so, the guy that- they hired a guy from up in Canada, the company would come down and fix those tunnels, especially – well, both of them – but the one in Pennsylvania was really bad. Very nice fella and he had to get into there. He still had to go up across property we owned. And, it was almost impossible for them to do it unless they built a road.

[Laughter]

So, I met with him, I said, "You certainly can go on our road," and we weren't going to charge or anything for it, just to get the thing done. He was a very nice fella. He says, "Well, I'll do something for you. What can we do for you?" And, I said...

Linda Boxx: Because Pennsylvania's paying for it.

[Laughter]

Don Moran: So, I told him, what he could do. We had a helicopter at the time. I used to fly a helicopter. I told him, why didn't he put a helicopter pad on that area – the whole area. If someone had a problem, they could get in there then and pick them up if somebody back in those woods...on the bike trail would be hard to get in there, you know? And he did, but he did another thing. All the way from Frostburg to the tunnels, he took the

rock that was still there and made a beautiful road which saved Allegheny County or the state, it saved them a huge amount of money. All they had to do was come in and put the little black stuff on it or whatever.

Like I said, he was a very nice fella. He brought his dad down here – I'll never forget – his dad would- used to come in there and play golf every day while they worked up there. He was a really nice guy.

Linda Boxx: Now, I know some of those people. There was a Jim Coburn was the president, and then Victor Chasin was the project manager.

Don Moran: The name sounds familiar, the first one, but I don't remember the...

Linda Boxx: Jim, and then there was – I'm bad at names, too – Pollack.

Don Moran: Well, they were from Canada. The companies were from Canada.

Linda Boxx: Yeah. Advanced – ACT – Advanced Construction Techniques is what's the name of their company.

Don Moran: And, he does a great job on the- because when it was all finished, I bicycled up through and saw the whole works.

Linda Boxx: Uh-huh.

Don Moran: And, that was that.

Linda Boxx: Bowman, Bowman...Pete Bowman.

Don Moran: Pete Bowman?

Linda Boxx: Pete Bowman was a younger man who's actually now, I think, the president of ACT. I can't imagine Victor or Jim having a father- they were older gentlemen.

Don Moran: That's how I got involved in it and it seems it's not an awful lot...

Linda Boxx: But, it says 30 people that you kept talking to at the state, and I wouldn't ever expect anybody to remember all of that back and forth, but I think you went through – I know Governor Glendening was governor when the deal was finally...

Don Moran: It wasn't...yeah, I guess it was.

Linda Boxx: But, I don't know how many other governors and staffs and so forth you worked with.

Don Moran: I got to the point where I thought the 99-year, \$1 a year thing was something they couldn't turn down. But, they did, very simply.

Linda Boxx: Mm-hmm.

Don Moran: And had they gone at the- still, we would have never used it. We had never mined up there yet.

Linda Boxx: Do you not mine any of that area? On either side?

Don Moran: No, we still have the property. The tunnel was on our property. Actually, we own over top of it. The 101 acres did not include the top of it, it goes straight through the bottom.

[Laughter]

Eric Lidji: You mean the surface?

Don Moran: I don't mean the surface, over the top of the tunnel.

Eric Lidji: Oh, I see.

[Laughter]

Don Moran: They owned both sides of that deal.

Eric Lidji: But, they owned the middle part of the tunnel.

Don Moran: Uh-huh. Yeah.

Linda Boxx: You can't mine too deeply, I guess.

Eric Lidji: Right. You could plant something.

Don Moran: There was, actually, right beside it, if you've been up to that area, there's the big wind things in there. They're on the Pennsylvania side of the line, but they come down through our property, which adjoins this, and comes through here into Maryland, because they had to bring the juice down that way to the station down there, up near Frostburg, really.

Eric Lidji: So, this will probably obvious to both of you, because you know the land a little better than I do – but why couldn't they just divide the railroad corridor in half and make half a bi-plane, or a quarter of it a bi-plane, and three-quarters of it a road so that you could...?

Don Moran: They easily could have, very easily could have. But that's, shall we say, politics, whatever the reasons were. Actually, they had another way to come down because they... See, as much as I wanted to get the bike path in there and do this, it sort of irked you, though, when these people, they always fall back on why don't you buy it, or why don't you sell it to us? The state can buy it. It's not their money, it's the state's money because they don't want to get through this other stuff. They actually, in one of the meetings, told me, well, they would just take the property, now how's that make you feel? They'll just take the property.

Eric Lidji: You mean eminent domain?

Don Moran: Yeah. And I said, "Really?" and that's what they said. I said, "Really? Where is the eminent domain to put a bike path in? You have a highway – Route 40, and all this over there." And I said, "You want to go ahead and bring a suit against...we'd love to go to court with you."

Linda Boxx: Do you remember who threatened that?

Don Moran: Oh, no, no.

Linda Boxx: No. Someone from Annapolis?

Don Moran: Oh, yes.

Linda Boxx: Yeah, these are all from...

Don Moran: If it would have been handled up here, the problem had been handled up here between people – John – I'll get his name before I leave... He was state employed, but he was from up here. It would have been over and done within a very easy way. They would have probably found a piece of property that we could...and it doesn't hurt them. The state has some sort of a thing that if you trade or do anything with them – with property – they always have to get more than they give. It's an unwritten rule that they do. So, that's why we came up with the 252 acres on the other side.

Linda Boxx: Mm-hmm.

Don Moran: But, we're getting in the business now. But, what I started to say is, when they brought that to us about eminent domain, I pointed out to them that in one of our meetings that they had, one of the people there had a paperwork there from the alternate way if they didn't get through the tunnels. It seems they come across [inaudible 0:34:15.0] up the top of that hill. They could come straight down into- it would have been a little steeper, but they could have brought a bike path and come right down into Mount Savage and then caught the railroad that was abandoned and take it on into Cumberland. They could have done that, but they didn't want to do that. They didn't want to bring it straight down. Especially somebody from down in Annapolis- one of the [inaudible 0:34:44.5] here at Cumberland the way they wanted it. Here again, politics. You're probably getting the idea that I'm a non-politician.

[Laughter]

Don Moran: But, it's so many things that were involved. And, I was very proud of the fact when we get it finished and the Canadian guy

did the few things [inaudible 0:35:09.5]. So, it was very nice. We had a good little party down here when he finished it.

Eric Lidji: Here at the golf course?

Don Moran: Uh-huh.

Eric Lidji: Who was there?

Don Moran: Not from the state people. No, no, no.

Eric Lidji: Just you and Canadian guy?

Don Moran: My attorney and I, we flew down to the Baltimore Airport and met an attorney from the state – he had a restaurant down there close – and she brought all the legal papers and a check for us. There were no handshakes or anything like that. There was a young fella whose parents had been in the scrap business, here in the Cumberland, and I've forgotten his name also, but you'll probably run into him. He was very much involved in biking and on the thing. He would get pieces put in the newspaper about what's going on, this, that, and the other.

Linda Boxx: Are you talking about Larry Brock?

Don Moran: Yeah. Larry Brock, Larry Brock.

Linda Boxx: Okay.

Don Moran: Larry was into things all the time and keeping it up. When my daughters asked me to talk to you folks, I said, "Well, what is that I can tell them? I wasn't in any committees or anything like that to..."

Linda Boxx: But this is a fascinating story. It really is.

[Chuckle]

Don Moran: It's one of the what you call the bumps in the road as you going to get something done, I guess. I don't know.

Eric Lidji: Yeah.

Don Moran: Actually, I don't even remember what year it was, but one of the newspaper writers put an editorial in the paper about why Mr. Moran refused to sell the property to the State of Maryland, etc., etc. – a whole line. And, I sent him a nice line back to them, too, and an apology from me. Oddly enough, when he put that in, we'd already come to this- we hadn't done it yet, but it was over and done with. He sort of leaned towards local people don't do enough for their communities.

Eric Lidji: The writer did?

Don Moran: Yeah.

Eric Lidji: Was this the Cumberland paper?

Don Moran: Uh-huh. Yeah.

Eric Lidji: Okay.

Linda Boxx: I'm glad he didn't sour the deal.

Don Moran: Oh, no. The head of the Cumberland paper at the time was a friend of mine also. And, he was very upset about it. When I said my piece, he was very upset. He printed it right up in there. It was sort of ridiculous because just very shortly, things were over and done with. You might enjoy reading it – his thing and then my retort.

Eric Lidji: When did it close, the deal? What year?

Don Moran: I think it was '02.

Linda Boxx: I'm trying to think. It was during the Glendening administration, and all the trail was built during Governor Ehrlich's brief four-year term, in '04, '05, and '06. So, once the property was appraised- so it would have been before '04, or '03 even. I'm not sure when they're...

Don Moran: Yeah, I think it's '02, so I think that's when we sold it. I could have looked at my books and found out when we sold it.

Linda Boxx: Well, the Big Savage tunnel guys were- they were, basically, living here during 2002.

Don Moran: That's when- they get on it right away. Yeah.

Linda Boxx: Yeah, that was their big year.

Don Moran: It might have been '01 then when we did it. I don't remember exactly.

Eric Lidji: And Frostburg, the Mason-Dixon was in '04.

Linda Boxx: It was...okay.

Eric Lidji: That's what I found. I don't know if that's true or not, but that's what I saw.

Linda Boxx: Okay. No, if you found it. I should know everything.

[Chuckle]

Eric Lidji: So, I want to make sure I understand all the pieces of it.

Don Moran: Yes.

Eric Lidji: So, in the '70s you buy this piece of property that abuts existing property you have, and it's got the railroad going through it?

Don Moran: Yep.

Eric Lidji: Then, at some point, when the trail starts to come along, the state wants to buy just the corridor where the train tracks are to hook up the bike trail?

Don Moran: No, they wanted the whole 101 acres.

Eric Lidji: The whole thing? That you had bought.

Don Moran: Yeah.

Eric Lidji: The whole plot of land.

Linda Boxx: The five miles.

Don Moran: Yeah, it's five miles long from Pennsylvania line to Frostburg.

Eric Lidji: Okay.

Don Moran: That's the line, but it wasn't 101 acres of narrow ground.

Eric Lidji: Okay.

Don Moran: There's plenty of room on the sides for us to put our road in or anything like that.

Eric Lidji: But, what they wanted to buy was the whole piece of property that you had bought from the guy in Connellsville?

Don Moran: Oh, yes. Yeah. We got it from the tax...

Eric Lidji: The tax sale?

Don Moran: Yeah.

Eric Lidji: Okay. So, the deal that you end up striking is that they buy the...?

Don Moran: We sold them what they wanted.

Eric Lidji: But, there were these two additional parcels, right?

Don Moran: Yeah, we sold them a 248-acre piece back here.

Eric Lidji: That was part of your original property?

Don Moran: That's our original, beyond this, yes, it had nothing to do in the area or anything with this, it's just the fact that, I think it may have been muddled up, but the politicians were pricing this; they had to have more ground than they got and they were getting it.

Eric Lidji: So they bought the whole 101 acres and these two other plots, and then they swapped you...

Don Moran: They gave me the...

Eric Lidji: ...the Wood Rat spot?

Don Moran: Yeah, the six or eight acres. No, no, no, they kept the Wood Rats. The six or eight acres is just is the corner of our property up here of the golf course. And, I thought that that little piece...we'd get something out of this that we could use.

[Laughter]

Eric Lidji: So, they bought three plots from you?

Linda Boxx: No, two.

Eric Lidji: Well, they bought the railroad plots – 101, and then they bought two other...

Linda Boxx: Right. The Wood Rats...

Don Moran: No, the Wood Rat area they own.

Eric Lidji: Right.

Don Moran: See, that was the piece they were going to give us in exchange. The original situation was we would give them the railroad property, and they would give us equal property somewhere else that joined us. And, they found one place up near the top of the mountain above Frostburg, but they were more than happy to let us have acreage, but it did not join us, it was 25 miles from us. And, of course, we couldn't take that.

And, down in the Savage River area where we have about 4,000 acres, there, we wanted this piece to join it. That's the situation. And, going through all of these years of arguing about the fish, and this, that, and the other, why- I hate to say it, but it all went back to the fact that we were probably the first ones that ever neglected to buy when they said, "We'll pay you for it." The state always gets their way, you know? Sometimes they pay a lot more than they should, too.

Eric Lidji:

So, there was a lease idea – that fell through. There was a direct swap, one-to-one – that fell through. And then, the deal that ultimately goes through is to sell them the 101 acres and two other plots, and then they give you an additional plot somewhere else that hooks onto your property?

Don Moran:

They give us six acres that hooked onto our property here. You'd say it was not the equal deal the way it sounds, but they paid us some good money for it.

Eric Lidji:

Do you feel that you got a good deal out of it – a fair deal out of it?

Don Moran:

Well, depends on how you look at it. Obviously, it's a good deal by the fact that we never did mine the property; we haven't used the road. What it ends- in business sense, the state had to pay us money to build a road if and when we were going in. That's what it amounted to. They were giving us money to buy the property or have someone- I had a contractor, actually, give me a price on what it would take for us to put a road in to get to our 2,900-acre property if they took the railroads from us. And, it's very expensive, building roads.

Eric Lidji:

Did you ever build that road?

Don Moran:

No, we've never had the opportunity or the reason to mine coal up there. We're still mining- right now, a matter of fact, we've been working the last three years in our area getting a permit. Don't get me started on permits and stuff.

[Laughter]

But, three years to get a mining permit – underground mining, and we're, right now, we're finishing the coal seam that's just 200 feet above this one. This one's going to mine down here. We hope to get in it August. It's taken us two years for permits to get the thing ready to get into mine.

Like I say, it's 250-60 feet above it, there's another seam of coal that we have been mining since 2003 – underground mine. The permit for that took us six months. That's what's happening in our little world – six months to three years. And, they're in the same place, just deeper. It's funny when you think about it, and it's expensive.

Linda Boxx: Mr. Moran, I guess, you know, Eric's question about what it cost – if you charged \$100 an hour for all the negotiations and your legal time and that would have added up.

[Laughter]

Don Moran: It would have been very expensive, yes. Yes, very expensive. A lot of years, and it became sort of a joke with us. The guy who worked for the state, John...

[Chuckle]

...I'll get this. His brother's an attorney, Jim. It's amazing. Sometimes I'll forget my own name, I guess.

[Chuckle]

Linda Boxx: Yeah. Is he an attorney in Cumberland?

Don Moran: No, he's up in the Frostburg area.

Linda Boxx: Okay. Because I could Google attorney Jim, Frostburg.

Don Moran: Well, just Jim, you probably couldn't get him because he lost his license for one of the things he had done for a client. It wasn't illegal. It was one of those things that you're looking out for your client, he gets some money for it and you put it in his name instead of his, and someone picks it out, and right away they take his license away.

Anyway, I don't know how to even put it. The time we spent doing it, it sort of became a joke. Oddly enough, for three governors, I was – myself and another fella from up in the Oakland area, in Garrett County – we'd gone to meetings. We were – I don't remember the name now what it was. But, the forest, the trees, the whole works, we were on this committee for three governors. Here this thing comes along, why isn't that committee, or somebody talking to us and seeing what would do this? But, no, it was, like I say, it seemed like whoever was there wanted to get a promotion or something for doing the deal by buying it. The state, when they buy it, they don't have to worry about it – they buy it. And then, they raise your taxes to pay for that.

Eric Lidji: You sat on some state boards over the years, right?

Don Moran: Yeah.

Eric Lidji: Did that give you any insight, and were you prepared for the way that the state works, having worked on those boards?

Don Moran: Yes and no. I'd say this, it might answer your question. Over the years, I have gone into the senator of Maryland's office in Washington, D.C.; I've gone into mayor's offices in various cities; I've gone into county commissioner's offices; I've gone into Bureau of Mines office. They're only up here because there is no coal anywhere else in the state. All the years, up until the last 15 to 20, I'd say, every one of those offices I'd go in, soon as you're in the door, senator, governor, whoever it was, he'd say, "Eric, how you doing? Good to see you. What can I do for you?" We all want the same thing like that.

These last 15 years, you go in any of those places...first of all, it's hard to get in, but the first thing they'd say is, "What are you doing here?" It's not, "What can I help you with," it's "You're bothering me." I took our attorney and another attorney who played ball with me at Maryland – he's been in Annapolis all his life; he died the year before last – he knows everybody in Annapolis in the government building down there. And, I took a couple of the people with me. It took us-

my God, it took us, probably, two-three months to get a meeting down there because they didn't know who we were to talk to. The mine I was just telling you about that we are finishing up now, on one side it comes right up against the state of Maryland's property, and they're bitching about and hollering about how much money they're into debt, and we want to get in and talk to him. While we're under the ground taking our coal out, the big load of cost for that kind of thing is already taken care of. I won't tell you the amount, but we wanted to have the state allow us to take their coal out and it would cost them nothing. It doesn't hurt the surface, then they don't even know it's gone. And it took us, I'd say, months and months to find out somebody to talk to ask about it.

Eric Lidji: Yeah.

Don Moran: Where we're mining, we're going by, you can't wait forever. When you mine, after you've gone past it, it closes down. You can't go back again and again. It's not like a tunnel is there forever.

Eric Lidji: Yeah.

So, we got down there and two fellas came in the office and we introduced ourselves. I have no idea today who they were or what they did. [Cell Phone Ringing] Uh oh. Oddly enough, that's my All-American friend, Gene Shue.

Linda Boxx: Ooh, you should take it.

Don Moran: He's calling me from Los Angeles. No, I'll call him back. He's coming down next week and he wanted to talk to me a little bit, I guess. He still works for the 76ers and he lives in LA. After college, Gene played for the Knicks and whatever. He played 12 years and then he coached for years. I was with him when we went to San Diego, and back with the Bullets. So, we've been friends all these 50 years.

Linda Boxx: That's wonderful.

Don Moran: So, now I've lost my place.

Eric Lidji: There were these two guys in an office.

Don Moran: Oh, yes, and after everybody says hello and all this, that, and the other, we explain to him we had all this paperwork and we show them what we could do and we'd like to do it, telling them people were mining through that area and whatever. One guy finally said, well, he wanted to be straight with us. He said, "This building..." we were on the bottom floor, and we were in an office, and it must have been, I would say, probably it would have, maybe, 60 offices on that floor, and then how many layers, I don't know.

He said, very truthfully, he said, "All that paper," he says, "We will have to look that over," and he said, "Then we will go ahead and we have to give it to another office." And he said, "It has to touch every office on this floor." He said, "Then they move it up to the next one," and he said, "It's hard to tell when that piece of paper you're giving us reaches the top." And I said, "Well, you mean to tell me it's useless to be here?" He said, "Yes. That's exactly it. Yes."

And, he was being honest, I guess. He just said it takes so much time to do whatever. There was no one to say yes. Heck, how many million dollars can we get out of that – do it, sign. Now that coal was there, it probably was lost forever.

Eric Lidji: Have you seen any changes to the area as a result of the trail?

Don Moran: In the Cumberland area, yes, it's done just what they expected it to do. You go down- there's a restaurant down there, it's called The Crabby Pig. That whole area actually beams with the people coming in and out with the biking and from all over. It helps them.

Oddly enough, it sets- from Cumberland, which is 800 feet above sea level...not 800, yeah, I guess it is about 800, up to Frostburg – it's probably one of the better trails that goes very

smoothly up. And people that are good bikers, they'll just go up there and it just gives them a little puffing and huffing. They go on up to get over into Pennsylvania. I've been halfway on the one up Pennsylvania, on through to Uniontown. It's getting to be a habit. I understand that they'll ride up to Frostburg with their bikes, and then they'll go downhill. If you're not much of a biker – and it's very sightseeing – and they'll go down and then go back and get their vehicles and go home. That's just a 15-mile thing.

Eric Lidji: Yeah.

Don Moran: The ones that really want to go, they're going from Cumberland on the path that they use there. It's not nearly as nice as the one they put in, but it's the old canal path. It went from here to Washington, D.C., or Cumberland to Washington, D.C. It's almost level all the way down. And, that's 180 miles, I believe, total.

Eric Lidji: Yeah.

Don Moran: We were more than happy to get the- I was, honestly, too old to even try now. But, I often thought it would be nice to go both ways – go from here on through to Pittsburgh, and there's a way to get around Pittsburgh and go all the way to Ohio. You can go to Ohio on a bicycle, and then turn around and come all the way to Washington, D.C. That's amazing. It really is.

Like myself, I took a bike with me in San Diego and I learned the city. I learned the city and I learned- out there and other places, biking is top dog. Cars, they have to stay out of the way and off the... Here, I can come back here and get on the highway and there's side places, and you go by and a big truck will come by, and about the time they get up next to you, they'll toot their horn or something. Not very possible.

I still bike a little bit, but I've had, recently, had some operations – spine, and various [inaudible 0:55:47.5]. My legs have worn out. That's why [inaudible 0:55:49.8] after all these years on hardwood floors and whatever.

Eric Lidji: Yeah. Linda, anything else you want to...

Linda Boxx: Well, I just need to mention since this is just an audio recording, Mr. Moran has a Bay Hill shirt on in honor of our mutual good friend, Arnold Palmer.

Don Moran: Well, that's another story. Arnold went to Wake Forest University, and I went to the University of Maryland. He was two years ahead of me. Arnold never finished. He left and got on the pros, I think in his junior year, or something like that.

But, turns out – this is how things happen – I told you, when I was at University of Maryland and coached the freshmen one year, and then went into the Air Force and had to coach there, one of my players that I had was from this area. He had come into the Air Force and I had him on my team. And, I got him a scholarship when he finished Maryland. When he finished the service, he went to Maryland. And, we just stayed in touch. He ended up working in Florida and we'd go down and see him every now and then. We used to play golf and stuff together, still. We got into a business, a printing business. He called me in November of '78, I believe it was- and said something about how would I like to get into this business. We were in the coal business and I had a business. So, it's for backing. So, we did.

He and this other fella, they believe who they work for if they would go over and run this business and put it on its feet, because it was just a small business – a father, and a mother, and two sons, and they had four other people there. They had been going bankrupt with what they had. Anyway, we get the thing and we go ahead and the second year we're there- that was only four years after Arnold and Winnie had gone to Florida and bought Bay Hill. It was just a golf course with a few places around it, but a lot of houses, a lot of room for houses. The PGA, two years later, gave Arnold the tournament – the Florida Tournament, that's the Bay Hill thing.

Oddly enough, we bought a condominium and we got into business because you have to have someplace to put up somebody, a customer, in a hotel, or a motel, or whatever, if

they're coming into okay a printing job, because of the huge amount of printing – a million, or a half-million, whatever it is. If the color's wrong when it comes out and it's already printed, it's a lot of lost paper, and 60% of the costs are in the paper.

So, I would go down twice a month, and those other two guys, and we moved it up. But, Arnold, oddly enough we bought this condominium just for that reason – to have customers come in. Arnold was my neighbor. Arnold and Winnie were my neighbors and very nice people. And, it was a great sales point for us because you're getting this printing job from me and you would come down and spend the weekend to be there on Bay Hill, if you're a golfer or not, and Arnold's your neighbor.

[Laughter]

I guess the word got around to the customers that they'd love to come down and look at their job, maybe twice or [inaudible 0:59:29.7].

[Laughter]

But, that's Arnold, he was our neighbor, and over the years... We didn't go out, it wasn't that kind of a friendship, but we just knew each other. Occasionally, I would say something to him about Wake Forest and he'd say the University of Maryland and all that big rivals and all that. But, he's a great guy. And, over the years, Arnold gave me any number of things to give out to the church out in San Diego I went to. We put on a program to raise money for the golf thing, and Arnold would give me a few things to get off all that [inaudible 1:00:07.0]. And, we did all his printing, too. Always printing there. He just really was a nice guy. I shouldn't- have this.

His number two man, Jim Bell was his name, and Jim's been here many times. Actually, I asked Arnold, on his way flying to Latrobe if he'd stop by on his way to the airport – stop here and he said he couldn't do that. He's so big time. I think he and his wife pay for two women's, or kid's, hospitals. He's done a huge amount of stuff.

We have a new hospital here, locally, Western Maryland Health System. I was on that to get some money together to get it started – it's a \$260 million hospital. It's very nice. And we have a golf outing every September. Not here, but we have it Cumberland Country Club and over at Bedford Springs. It's a beautiful place. And, the night before we have a big auction and various other things, and I've been pushing that for many, many years now. Three years ago we hit the \$100,000 mark; last year we made \$120,000.

Linda Boxx: Wow. That's very impressive.

Don Moran: In this little area, that's pretty good. We have a little tournament here in June every year for a scholarship program and I put up for my brother – it's in his name – but it's a scholarship program that I started in '74 for students. We give a scholarship out for three kids for four years. So, we have 12 kids in school all the time.

But, our little tournament – to help raise money – this year we made like \$8,000. Whatever we come up with, I double it and we can put it in the bank, which we have a trust fund, and I'm working towards seven figures. I hope, before I die, we get to \$1 million in the trust. It should make enough money then to pay the \$40,000-some year a cost to put those kids through school. So, things like that that I've been involved with that I feel very good about.

Eric Lidji: Yeah. Thank you so much for talking with us.

Don Moran: Nice talking with you. And, I'm glad you said "with," because I've always been a coach, and even in talking with people, when they say, "Nice talking to you," I stop them right away and coach them properly. I say, "You talk to children; you talk with adults."

[Laughter]

Don Moran: I'm always coaching.

[end 1:02:53.8]

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