

VIDEO INTERVIEW – MAYNARD SEMBOWER

Paul G. Wiegman: ...trail in 1975, which was mostly the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy people. And then, talking to Hank Parke and Linc Van Sichel. And, I'll be talking to Dave Mankameyer and some of the other people. We're going to put all this together, and Linda Boxx wanted this as a record so that a hundred years from now we can look at it again.

[Laughter]

Maynard Sembower: I don't think I'll be here then.

Paul G. Wiegman: Well, somebody will have a chance to look at it again...

Maynard Sembower: Sure.

Paul G. Wiegman: ...and to get a history of the whole trail. We ready to go? So, let's begin. You're Maynard Sembower.

Maynard Sembower: Maynard R. Sembower

Paul G. Wiegman: Sembower. And, I know this – we'll just start at this point – you have the unique distinction of seeing the first train and the last train on the Western Maryland Railway. Can you tell me about the first train?

Maynard Sembower: I don't know if I can or not, to tell you the truth about it, because I know there was a train on it because I watched it.

Paul G. Wiegman: You did watch – okay.

Maynard Sembower: Yeah, but, we were kids in those days, you see.

Paul G. Wiegman: Uh-huh.

Maynard Sembower: And, I watched it go up and down the trail – the track – and also, I witnessed a lot of people working on it at that time.

Paul G. Wiegman: On building the...

Maynard Sembower: Building the rail structure.

Paul G. Wiegman: Building the railroad through here?

Maynard Sembower: Railroad tracks, yes. They had a bunch of people they brought in, in those days, because it was cheap labor.

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Paul G. Wiegman: Oh.

Maynard Sembower: And, they were working with the mules and dump carts.

Paul G. Wiegman: Really?

Maynard Sembower: Yeah. And so, I watched the whole procedure on that.

Paul G. Wiegman: And then, you – what year was that?

Maynard Sembower: Oh, that must've been about 1910, '11, along there.

Paul G. Wiegman: Along in there?

Maynard Sembower: Yeah.

Paul G. Wiegman: And then, the Western Maryland was a railroad all through the '20s and '30s...

Maynard Sembower: Right.

Paul G. Wiegman: ...and I guess it was pretty busy during the war.

Maynard Sembower: It was busy during the war. It hauled a lot of coal. It also hauled supplies for the government, for the Army.

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh, really?

Maynard Sembower: Yes. Every now and then a troop train would go through.

Paul G. Wiegman: Ah. Soldiers that had been training somewhere else and were...

Maynard Sembower: Well, they'd been trained and then they'd take them off occasionally. It stopped and take them off and walk them maybe a mile – exercise – bring them back and put them on the troop train and go.

Paul G. Wiegman: And, on they would go.

Maynard Sembower: Yeah.

Paul G. Wiegman: Was the station right here?

Maynard Sembower: The station, at that time, was here. But, the station I'm talking about was at Markleton. That's where I was born and raised.

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh, you were born and raised in Markleton.

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- Maynard Sembower:** Markleton.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, okay. Okay. And, there was a station right on...
- Maynard Sembower:** There was a station pretty close, yes, to where I lived.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Was the sanitarium still there when...?
- Maynard Sembower:** Sanitarium – oh, yeah.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Maynard Sembower:** Yeah, the sanitarium was there when I was a kid. I sold papers in that sanitarium.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh. I've often ridden by there. They say there's one building that was part of the sanitarium that still is standing. But, I've never been...
- Maynard Sembower:** I wouldn't know which one that would be.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah, it's very hard to picture.
- Maynard Sembower:** I have a picture of it.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah. It's very hard to picture in your mind. That was a very large building.
- Maynard Sembower:** Oh, yes. I have the big picture.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, okay.
- Maynard Sembower:** Yeah.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Now, when that was – it wasn't originally a sanitarium. It was a hotel at one time?
- Maynard Sembower:** No, it was – they called it a summer hotel.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Summer hotel.
- Maynard Sembower:** The people from New York – all over – doctors... They'd come there and spend the summer there.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Really? Oh, okay. Okay. And, enjoy the Allegheny Mountains.
- Maynard Sembower:** Oh, yes. That was a well-placed building. It had everything in it you could think of.

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Paul G. Wiegman: Mm-hmm.

Maynard Sembower: And, these doctors and big people come in because the train stopped right there in front of it.

Paul G. Wiegman: And, that would have been the B&O?

Maynard Sembower: That was the B&O.

Paul G. Wiegman: B&O.

Maynard Sembower: Yeah. It wasn't Western Maryland, it was the B&O.

Paul G. Wiegman: But, the Western Maryland was on the other side of the river.

Maynard Sembower: The other side, yeah.

Paul G. Wiegman: And then, we go through the years that the Western Maryland was fairly prosperous. It was a passenger train also.

Maynard Sembower: There was a passenger train, ran twice a day.

Paul G. Wiegman: Twice a day.

Maynard Sembower: Once in the morning and once in the evening.

Paul G. Wiegman: And, where could you stop?

Maynard Sembower: Well, you stopped at the station there in Markleton.

Paul G. Wiegman: Mm-hmm.

Maynard Sembower: Then, if you wanted to stop anyplace else, you had to flag it down.

Paul G. Wiegman: Yeah just...

Maynard Sembower: I have the – what-do-you-call-it – in there on the wall.

Paul G. Wiegman: The flag – you just...

Maynard Sembower: The flag stops and all.

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh, okay. Okay.

Maynard Sembower: So, that's the way they've got to stop. And, they stop and pick you up.

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Paul G. Wiegman: Pick you up and on you went to...

Maynard Sembower: On you went.

Paul G. Wiegman: ...to Confluence or...

Maynard Sembower: Confluence – yes.

Paul G. Wiegman: Did you ride it very often?

Maynard Sembower: Oh, occasionally I'd ride it to Rockwood and back.

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh, okay. And, come up here in the morning and...

Maynard Sembower: Well, yeah. Yeah, come up in the morning.

Paul G. Wiegman: Mm-hmm. And, these were all steam engines at the time.

Maynard Sembower: Oh, yeah. This was just – it was a small steam engine on it at that time.

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh, okay.

Maynard Sembower: No big ones.

Paul G. Wiegman: No big ones.

Maynard Sembower: Small. Not what you'd call a real small one now, but it was a small engine.

Paul G. Wiegman: And then, we go through and finally in 1974... Now, I take it you moved to Rockwood at some point?

Maynard Sembower: In 1924, I moved to Rockwood.

Paul G. Wiegman: I see. Okay.

Maynard Sembower: Yeah. Which, you must understand, that this Western Maryland – also, there's a lot of sawmills in the Markleton area.

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh.

Maynard Sembower: And, they'd load the boxcars with posts, lumber, and stuff like that.

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh. Uh-huh.

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Maynard Sembower: And, they also- the farmers that bring their hay in there to Rockwood. And, it loaded in the boxcars and take it on with them.

Paul G. Wiegman: Where was it going?

Maynard Sembower: I don't know. Out of state someplace.

Paul G. Wiegman: And then, there was also coal.

Maynard Sembower: Oh, a lot of coal.

Paul G. Wiegman: A lot of coal cars.

Maynard Sembower: Yes. You take – these sidings, they'd put in 50, 60 cars. And, when they'd get them full, well then they'd pull in and pick them up and pull them out.

Paul G. Wiegman: So, this area right here where you had the siding right here?

Maynard Sembower: Oh yeah, that's right.

Paul G. Wiegman: Yeah. Yeah.

Maynard Sembower: [aside] Can we help you folks in any way?

Man: No, not until you're done there.

[Laughter]

Paul G. Wiegman: Well, come on in and ask a question.

Man: We don't want to interfere with your picture here.

Paul G. Wiegman: No, that's fine. That's fine.

Maynard Sembower: Yes, sir?

Man: Three-wheeled bikes – do you have them?

Maynard Sembower: We don't. But over at this bed and breakfast has them.

Man: Bed and breakfast has them?

Maynard Sembower: Yeah.

Man: Okay.

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Paul G. Wiegman: I have one. I don't have one with me.

[Chuckle]

Maynard Sembower: I have one, too. But, it's in Florida.

Man: Well, that don't do me no good.

[Chuckle]

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh, do you? I didn't... Yeah.

Woman: Oh, yes... He has it.

Man: And, they're wanting to know – this is my daughter and she's not from around here. But, they're wanting to know – they bought one of these – this one here, the two-seater – and they want to know if you're allowed to ride that on the trail or not.

Maynard Sembower: Yeah, if you can get it through the gate.

Paul G. Wiegman: Yeah, sure.

Maynard Sembower: That's the main thing.

Paul G. Wiegman: It's a bicycle.

Man: It's a bicycle. You peddle it.

Paul G. Wiegman: Yep. You're allowed.

Man: There's two seats on it. I mean, it's for two people.

Maynard Sembower: Yeah.

Woman: [inaudible off camera 0:12:25.7]

Paul G. Wiegman: Yeah.

Maynard Sembower: Nothing wrong with it if you can it through the gate and get permission to put it on.

Woman: Where's the gate?

Paul G. Wiegman: Well, it's...

Maynard Sembower: You got to walk down there. You see the gate down there?

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Man: Yeah, yeah.

Maynard Sembower: Well, you walk down and take a look at it.

Paul G. Wiegman: Or, there's a gate on the other...

Maynard Sembower: There's a gate on the other side.

Paul G. Wiegman: ...on the other side.

Maynard Sembower: But, you let me know when you're coming.

Man: Well, we have no idea.

Maynard Sembower: Yeah. We'll see if you get in.

Man: We're just checking, and I'm going... I've got a pinched nerve in my back...

Paul G. Wiegman: Uh-huh.

Man: ...and it goes down my leg and I'm going for an operation next week sometime. And, I've always ridden my own bike. It's my two-wheeler. I like that.

Paul G. Wiegman: Uh-huh.

Man: But now, I'm getting a little shaky and I'm falling off of it. And, I don't like that.

[Laughter]

Maynard Sembower: That's not so good. The bear will get you.

[Laughter]

Cameraman: Yeah.

Man: And, that's why I was investigating about these three-wheelers.

Maynard Sembower: Yeah.

Paul G. Wiegman: Okay. Yeah.

Maynard Sembower: Nothing wrong with that. As long as it's not motorized.

Paul G. Wiegman: Yeah.

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- Man:** Great.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah, I have one that I ride. Just rode it on Saturday from here to Confluence.
- Man:** You say they have them down here?
- Maynard Sembower:** This fella over here that runs the bed and breakfast – he has a bicycle shop. But, I don't think he's open right now.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** There is a place in West Newton, towards Pittsburgh, that has them. And, there's a place in Cumberland, Maryland that has them also that you can rent – and give them a try.
- Man:** Yeah. That's what I'd like to do. Are they – have gears on them?
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yes.
- Man:** They do. How many?
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mine has 27.
- Man:** Holy cow!
- Paul G. Wiegman:** It has – no, 21 – 7 on the back and then 3 in the hub. And, some of them have seven on the back and three in the front. So, they ride like a regular bike.
- Man:** Oh. Well, that's great.
- Maynard Sembower:** I'd advise you to take your wife along in case you don't get up the hill – she can push.
- [Chuckle]
- Man:** Well, that's why she wants me to get this here. She said then she can stand on the back.
- Maynard Sembower:** Yeah!
- [Laughter]
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, that's a good idea.
- [Laughter]

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Man: Now, wait a minute – don't agree with her!

[Laughter]

Paul G. Wiegman: Well, I think maybe I could – maybe if I stand on the back my wife can pedal hers.

[Laughter]

Maynard Sembower: That's right. That's right. Well, you get the bike and bring it in. We'll see that you get on the trail.

Man: Okay. Well, they just bought one. But – it's not made yet?

Woman: They're making it.

Man: They're making it.

Woman: They pick it up next month.

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh, okay.

Man: But, they don't live close to the bike trail. We live in Berlin.

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh. Okay.

Man: And, I ride the bike trail all the time.

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh, great. Good.

Man: Most of the time, anyhow.

Paul G. Wiegman: Uh-huh.

Man: But, they want to bring this along up to our – this is my daughter – and they want to bring it up to my place and get on the trail and try it on the trail. And I said, "I don't know whether it'd be too wide to be on the trail or not."

Maynard Sembower: No, no.

Paul G. Wiegman: No.

Man: No?

Paul G. Wiegman: No.

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Maynard Sembower: Well, you just bring up. And, when she comes, you come over. We'll see that you get on and you can try it out.

Man: Okay.

Woman: You could move the barrier a little bit if you have to?

Maynard Sembower: Oh, I can open the gates if we have to.

Woman: Clear open.

Man: Well, great.

Paul G. Wiegman: And, it's all downhill, so we just give you one push and...

[Laughter]

Maynard Sembower: That's right.

Man: Yeah.

Paul G. Wiegman: ...and we'll meet you in Confluence.

Maynard Sembower: Take a little walk on the trail and see what you think of it. Go down and look at that gate.

Woman: I'll go down and...

Man: I can't walk. I'm going for a leg operation and I can't walk.

Paul G. Wiegman: Yeah.

Man: You going along?

Woman: No, I'll wait.

[Laughter]

Maynard Sembower: Yeah, over there's a little park, a couple benches. Enjoy yourself.

Paul G. Wiegman: That brings us to what you do. That's a good example of what you do here on The Great Allegheny Passage. You're the ambassador?

Maynard Sembower: I don't know what they call me.

[Chuckle]

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Paul G. Wiegman: What do you call yourself?

Maynard Sembower: I'm just the spokesperson.

Paul G. Wiegman: You're the spokesperson.

Maynard Sembower: Right.

Paul G. Wiegman: How did you get started doing this?

Maynard Sembower: Well, you see, I put 30 years into the Pennsylvania Game Commissioner.

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh, okay. I didn't know that.

Maynard Sembower: Yeah.

Paul G. Wiegman: Yeah.

Maynard Sembower: This is right down my alley.

Paul G. Wiegman: Okay.

Maynard Sembower: People want to know about these trees or anything, about wildlife, flowers – I have no problems. I don't know all the flowers, but I know some.

Paul G. Wiegman: Probably a lot of them.

Maynard Sembower: That's right.

Paul G. Wiegman: And, you worked in this area?

Maynard Sembower: I work the whole area, yeah.

Paul G. Wiegman: How far away – what game lands were you involved with?

Maynard Sembower: Well, they'd send me up north every now and then.

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh, okay.

Maynard Sembower: So, I worked all around as land manager, law enforcement, you name it, I done it.

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh. You probably knew Dan Jenkins.

Maynard Sembower: Oh, yeah. Dan was here the other day.

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Paul G. Wiegman: Was he?

Maynard Sembower: Oh, yeah.

Paul G. Wiegman: I went to grade school and high school with Dan Jenkins.

Maynard Sembower: Did you now?

Paul G. Wiegman: Yes, sir.

Maynard Sembower: Yeah, he was here the other day.

Paul G. Wiegman: Yeah. Yeah. He was a grade school and high school friend of mine.

Maynard Sembower: Oh, yeah.

Paul G. Wiegman: I haven't seen him for a few years.

Maynard Sembower: Yeah, he stopped here – I forget what he was doing or what he was going to do. Anyway, he stopped here.

Paul G. Wiegman: Okay.

Maynard Sembower: Oh, I knew him way back when he first went on as an officer for the game commission.

Paul G. Wiegman: When he just started?

Maynard Sembower: Yeah.

Paul G. Wiegman: That had to be in the...

Maynard Sembower: Yeah. He was back at Ebensburg for a number of years.

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh, okay.

Maynard Sembower: Yeah.

Paul G. Wiegman: And then came down here to Somerset County.

Maynard Sembower: Yeah, he came to Somerset County.

Paul G. Wiegman: And, you were land manager, and...

Maynard Sembower: Well, I was the law enforcement land manager – whatever they needed.

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- Paul G. Wiegman:** Whatever they needed.
- Maynard Sembower:** Yeah. Whenever they wanted something done, they sent me. So, I done what they told me.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Then when you retired, you were here in Rockwood...
- Maynard Sembower:** I was here in Rockwood.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** ...and, I guess in the '80s, somebody came along and built a bicycle trail.
- Maynard Sembower:** Well, whenever they finished this- this was opened in '93, see.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay. This section was opened in '93.
- Maynard Sembower:** Yeah, right. This section here was opened in '93.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, this was the first section to be opened.
- Maynard Sembower:** So, my wife passed away in '92, see.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** I see.
- Maynard Sembower:** So, I said, "Now, what am I gonna do?" And, I just happened to think, well, I'm going down to the trail today. I'll hand out some literature...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Maynard Sembower:** ...get talking to people. And, the first thing you know, I'm here.
[Chuckle]
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Every day.
- Maynard Sembower:** And, it wasn't long I was selling t-shirts out of my car.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, okay. Oh. Here in the...
- Maynard Sembower:** Here – here.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Here in the parking lot?
- Maynard Sembower:** Yeah. That was about for two years.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** I see.

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- Maynard Sembower:** And then, I got after Hank and said, “We need a building.”
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Maynard Sembower:** He said, “All right. You go ahead and see what you can get.” My son-in-law and I, we looked at what we thought we wanted and we drew up the blueprints and everything and gave it to Hank, the Rails-to-Trials, and we got a building.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, Hank had it built for you.
- Maynard Sembower:** Oh, yeah. Well, the Amish built – not the Amish, but the man out here that builds them.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Maynard Sembower:** He built it for us.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** So, you had a little bit more space.
- Maynard Sembower:** Oh, we had more space. Yeah. Then started getting t-shirts and stuff and all kinds of literature. We just fixed it the way we wanted it. It’s been here ever since.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** How much time do you spend here a day?
- Maynard Sembower:** Well, I come down at about anywhere from 9:00 to 10:00 in the morning and I’m here until 11:00, 11:30. Then I go back to lunch. Then I can see down here from my house.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh, okay.
- Maynard Sembower:** So, if there’s any cars here that amount to anything, then I come back down again. Then, I spend a couple hours in the afternoon here – talking to the people.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** That’s probably the most important part.
- Maynard Sembower:** That’s the big thing, yes, because they’re from all over.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** What’s all over?
- Maynard Sembower:** Well, the other day, you know, we had that busload in here. Did you know that?
- Paul G. Wiegman:** No, I didn’t.

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Maynard Sembower: Yeah, there was a busload of people here. And, they – oh, about every state was represented.

Paul G. Wiegman: Really?

Maynard Sembower: Yeah. And, California and all over.

Paul G. Wiegman: Wow.

Maynard Sembower: And, they just called me from Greensburg – I guess it was from what's-her-name – you mentioned her name a while ago.

Paul G. Wiegman: Linda.

Maynard Sembower: Linda.

Paul G. Wiegman: Linda Boxx.

Maynard Sembower: Yeah. Somebody called me and wanted to know if I would be here. I said, "I'll be here. Sure."

[Chuckle]

Maynard Sembower: Sure. And then, I met them here. They had their lunch here. They had a big bus – they had a big van that had their food and everything and took their bicycles to Meyersdale, and that's where they started from.

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh. Okay.

Maynard Sembower: And, they came through here and they spent an hour here with me.

Paul G. Wiegman: Wow.

Maynard Sembower: And, I sold t-shirts galore. Everybody wanted one because they're in Pennsylvania and they wanted to take a souvenir back.

Paul G. Wiegman: I see. And, of the trail.

Maynard Sembower: Yeah. And, another thing they wanted was a patch of the trail.

Paul G. Wiegman: Mm-hmm.

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Maynard Sembower: I said, “I’m sorry. We just don’t have them.” But, I’ve been after them for two years to get the patch saying that’s Allegheny Highland Trail, Rockwood, PA...

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh.

Maynard Sembower: Or Somerset County – anyway they wanted it.

Paul G. Wiegman: Mm-hmm.

Maynard Sembower: But, so far, nobody has moved yet.

Paul G. Wiegman: Well...

[Chuckle]

Maynard Sembower: They promise you, but you don’t get it, see.

Paul G. Wiegman: Yeah.

Maynard Sembower: So, I met a wonderful lot of people – elderly people, now. I’d say they started out anywhere from 45 to 50 and went up – some were 70.

Paul G. Wiegman: Mm-hmm. Oh.

Maynard Sembower: And, they rode from Meyersdale to Confluence.

Paul G. Wiegman: Boy, that’s a...

Maynard Sembower: But, when you’re talking to them, they, “Oh, that’s nothing.” They’re used to riding, you see.

Paul G. Wiegman: Did they enjoy the trail?

Maynard Sembower: Oh, wonderful. Said it’s beautiful. They ride a lot of trails, but most of them, you know, are improved trails with blacktop.

Paul G. Wiegman: Yeah.

Maynard Sembower: But, they liked this out here in the country. Then they saw a few deer and the wildflowers.

Paul G. Wiegman: Mm-hmm. Yeah. What do they like the best?

Maynard Sembower: Well, they liked the scenery – everything. The river – you know the Casselman River runs right along it.

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- Paul G. Wiegman:** Right.
- Maynard Sembower:** And, everything – and the trees that were starting to turn, and there's still some flowers left yet.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Maynard Sembower:** And, they really enjoyed it.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** A lot of the asters are in bloom right now...
- Maynard Sembower:** Oh, yeah.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** ...and it's a beautiful time of the year.
- Maynard Sembower:** Right.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** The people that come here – do you see more and more? Obviously, you said it opened in 1993...
- Maynard Sembower:** '93 – yeah.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, how many people were using it at that time?
- Maynard Sembower:** Well, I don't know. A couple years there, I took a count of about all of them.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Maynard Sembower:** It would vary – 800, 900 people, occasionally.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Wow. On a weekend, or...?
- Maynard Sembower:** Over a weekend...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Over a weekend.
- Maynard Sembower:** ...Saturdays and Sundays.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Maynard Sembower:** And, there was a good many during the daytime, but then the gasoline prices and everything started to go up here in the last year or so.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Uh-huh.
- Maynard Sembower:** And now, we don't get the people like we used to.

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Paul G. Wiegman: So, you've seen a decrease over the past couple...?

Maynard Sembower: Oh, yes, very much. And, I talk to these people. And, you come out there from Pittsburgh and go back...

Paul G. Wiegman: Mm-hmm.

Maynard Sembower: ...then your children are going to school, and maybe you've got four children...

Paul G. Wiegman: Yeah.

Maynard Sembower: And, one's going to a different school, or something. He has to go to the soccer game, and this and that...

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh.

Maynard Sembower: ...over here and have to go there.

Paul G. Wiegman: Yeah.

Maynard Sembower: So, you know, he said that it gets pretty expensive.

Paul G. Wiegman: Yeah. It is expensive.

Maynard Sembower: [aside] You have a question?

Man: Yeah. Like, we get on at Garrett?

[Break]

Maynard Sembower: Yes, sir.

Paul G. Wiegman: Well, thank you.

Maynard Sembower: Well, you're quite welcome.

Paul G. Wiegman: It's been a pleasure.

Maynard Sembower: That takes care of your what-do-you-call-it. Another thing I wanted to mention...

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh, okay.

Maynard Sembower: When we started out here in '93, we put barrels to put garbage in.

Paul G. Wiegman: Yes.

VIDEO INTERVIEW – MAYNARD SEMBOWER

- Maynard Sembower:** And, we had barrels all around here and they weren't used much during the day. But, I'd be sitting up there on the porch and I'd see these cars come in the evening, got dark...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Maynard Sembower:** And, loaded up the garbage. And, I told Tony Marsh, who was the head of the what-do-you-call-it...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** He's the Park and Recreation Board, yes.
- Maynard Sembower:** Yeah. We're going to get rid of the barrels because we're not paying to haul the garbage for people.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Maynard Sembower:** So, we got rid of them. Now, do you see any place where there's any paper or garbage around here?
- Paul G. Wiegman:** No, it's very clean.
- Maynard Sembower:** It's very clean because I'm very up on that because the game commission never allowed you to throw the can down...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Nope.
- Maynard Sembower:** ...or throw paper or anything.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** No, no.
- Maynard Sembower:** So, you don't see that around here.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, I think there's – well, I saw you this morning cleaning up.
- Maynard Sembower:** Oh, yeah.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, I always carry a bag with me when I'm riding the trail. And, if there is anything, I'll pick that up.
- Maynard Sembower:** Yeah. I have a lot of people that does that.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah, yeah.
- Maynard Sembower:** I had a guy come in here the other day – he had a whole bag. He was up there at the swimming hole right off of the trail. And, the people have been going down there and throwing the garbage.

VIDEO INTERVIEW – MAYNARD SEMBOWER

Paul G. Wiegman: Oh. Oh.

Maynard Sembower: He wanted to know what he could with it. I said, “Just let it here, I’ll take care of it.”

Paul G. Wiegman: Okay. Very good.

Maynard Sembower: So, does that fill your...

Paul G. Wiegman: That fills my needs.

Maynard Sembower: Okay, thanks, fellas.

Paul G. Wiegman: Thank you.

Maynard Sembower: Thank you.

[Break]

Paul G. Wiegman: You ready? You’ve seen this area since 1911 until today, 2005. What’s the difference? What differences do you see?

Maynard Sembower: Well, the difference I see – it’s more open today than what it was when they first started, see, because there was just enough for a trail at that time. They opened it so that they could get through and everything. But, I’ll bet you, you walk down here – did you see any marks on the rocks?

Paul G. Wiegman: This section, towards...?

Maynard Sembower: Yeah, just as far as you went down a while ago.

Paul G. Wiegman: Yes. There’s – I see the drill marks.

Maynard Sembower: Drill marks. Now, how do you suppose they drilled those in those days?

Paul G. Wiegman: I would think a steam drill, but I...

Maynard Sembower: That’s exactly what they used.

Paul G. Wiegman: Is that what they used?

Maynard Sembower: They used a steam drill. And, they have a – what they call – the ice pole. A pole that went up, that picked the rocks up, and took them off, out of the road. That was wooden in those days.

VIDEO INTERVIEW – MAYNARD SEMBOWER

Paul G. Wiegman: Wow.

Maynard Sembower: Yes.

Paul G. Wiegman: And, that's how they made the cut for the...

Maynard Sembower: Yeah.

Paul G. Wiegman: ...for the railroad?

Maynard Sembower: That's right. They had a little – it was a steam engine on a car...

Paul G. Wiegman: Okay.

Maynard Sembower: ...where they fired, and that there is what they used for power.

Paul G. Wiegman: Now, once they drilled the holes, they dynamited?

Maynard Sembower: Yeah.

Paul G. Wiegman: And, it came apart.

Maynard Sembower: Right, right.

Paul G. Wiegman: And, you called this an "ice pole"?

Maynard Sembower: Well, they called it a drag pole, or whatever they called it because...

Paul G. Wiegman: A drag pole.

Maynard Sembower: ...it was a good length sticking up there because they had to reach down there and hit those rocks and stuff.

Paul G. Wiegman: Did they use steam shovels?

Maynard Sembower: I don't know if they had steam shovels in those days.

Paul G. Wiegman: Really?

Maynard Sembower: Yeah. They could have had, but I don't recall.

Paul G. Wiegman: How many people were working at that time?

Maynard Sembower: Well, they had just the people they brought in here, the- what do they call it – Asian people, back in those days?

VIDEO INTERVIEW – MAYNARD SEMBOWER

- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay. Right.
- Maynard Sembower:** Maybe they got 50 cents a day out of it.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Fifty cents a day.
- Maynard Sembower:** I don't know.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah. Whatever.
- Maynard Sembower:** They brought them in here and they were using the pick and the shovel and putting the rocks on these dump carts – they had dump carts.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Maynard Sembower:** And, the mules would back it up to over to the bank, they'd pull a lever, and up would go the dump cart.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh.
- Maynard Sembower:** Now, between here and Garrett, there was a great big place up there field-like.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Maynard Sembower:** And, they called is **Blechly [? 0:29:51.8]**. And, there's where they had their horses and a lot of their supplies up there in those days. They had a great big place where they fed those people.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** So, they lived there...
- Maynard Sembower:** Oh, yeah.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** ...and then came to different sections of the corridor, of the right-of-way.
- Maynard Sembower:** Well, yeah. Of course, they were set up down this way, too, when it was coming through, you know.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, to build the tunnels and things they were using, again, the steam drills and...
- Maynard Sembower:** Well, I imagine they did.

VIDEO INTERVIEW – MAYNARD SEMBOWER

Paul G. Wiegman: Yeah. The mountains that were around here. I have always envisioned that there was much less forest then than there is now. Is that the case?

Maynard Sembower: Well, you know, they timbered in those days.

Paul G. Wiegman: Right, right.

Maynard Sembower: Yes. Yeah, they timbered. And, what they had was timber. They had those big hemlocks.

Paul G. Wiegman: Okay.

Maynard Sembower: They had no saws to cut them – it wasn't big enough. You know how they got them down?

Paul G. Wiegman: No.

Maynard Sembower: Dynamite. Blew them off the stump.

Paul G. Wiegman: Really.

Maynard Sembower: That's right.

Paul G. Wiegman: Would they drill into them and then...

Maynard Sembower: They had some way of doing it because they'd push about two or three sticks of dynamite around the bottom...

Paul G. Wiegman: And then just blew them up?

Maynard Sembower: Just blew them right out.

Paul G. Wiegman: How big around were they?

Maynard Sembower: Well, they had a six-foot crosscut saw and they couldn't handle it.

Paul G. Wiegman: It wasn't big enough.

Maynard Sembower: No.

Paul G. Wiegman: Wow.

Maynard Sembower: Because there was timber in those days.

Paul G. Wiegman: And, that was all coming down. They were taking it from the mountains and bringing it down to the railroad?

VIDEO INTERVIEW – MAYNARD SEMBOWER

- Maynard Sembower:** Bringing it down – yes.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Were the mules used to get it to the railroad?
- Maynard Sembower:** Well, they had what they called dinky trucks – dinkies – it was a narrow gauged for the railroad.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Oh. Okay.
- Maynard Sembower:** And, that's the way they brought it down out of the mountain.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Wow. And then, once the...
- Maynard Sembower:** I have a book on it. I'll show it to you someday.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And then, once that logging was done, it began to grow back.
- Maynard Sembower:** That's right. Then they had a place Markleton where they brought all that timber down to the railroad.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Okay.
- Maynard Sembower:** And, they also had a place down there which made ties for the railroad.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** So, the ties were being made from the wood that was right in this area.
- Maynard Sembower:** That's right. Yeah.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, of course, the mines that were in this area were also being worked by hand.
- Maynard Sembower:** Oh, it's all by hand in those days. Yes.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, it's a miner going in with a pick and a shovel.
- Maynard Sembower:** Yep. That's all... Something about like that – enough for a mule to get in to pull the cars out.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Wow. That had to be pretty hard work.
- Maynard Sembower:** Oh, that was hard work.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, they weren't getting paid a lot either.
- Maynard Sembower:** No, not in those days.

VIDEO INTERVIEW – MAYNARD SEMBOWER

Paul G. Wiegman: Do you remember when the opera house was operating here in Rockwood?

Maynard Sembower: I heard of it when I was younger, yeah. But, I knew those people for years and years.

Paul G. Wiegman: Ah, okay. How big was Markleton when you were living there? How many families were there?

Maynard Sembower: Well, you see, there was a lot of mines up through there. There was a lot of what we called in those days, shanties.

Paul G. Wiegman: Uh-huh.

Maynard Sembower: And, I went to school there when I was a kid. We had about 36, 38 people going to school there every day.

Paul G. Wiegman: Wow.

Maynard Sembower: So, there was a good many miners up through there.

Paul G. Wiegman: Up in that area?

Maynard Sembower: Yeah.

Paul G. Wiegman: In all of this area.

Maynard Sembower: Oh, yeah.

Paul G. Wiegman: All of this – the Somerset County.

Maynard Sembower: That's right. Yeah.

Paul G. Wiegman: The Somerset County corridor.

Maynard Sembower: Yeah.

Paul G. Wiegman: Did you ever expect that this would become a bicycle trail?

Maynard Sembower: I never did, no. Somebody told me that 50, 60 years ago, I'd tell them, "You're crazy."

[Chuckle]

Maynard Sembower: But, I walked down through here just before they started to clean it off. And gosh, there was trees on it like that, you know.

Paul G. Wiegman: Yeah.

VIDEO INTERVIEW – MAYNARD SEMBOWER

- Maynard Sembower:** All through here.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** It was a lot of work to open it up.
- Maynard Sembower:** It was a lot of work – that’s right.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Well, even in 1975 when that last train came through – you saw that train come through.
- Maynard Sembower:** Yeah.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** And, that train was to get people used to the idea that this could become a bike trail.
- Maynard Sembower:** That’s right. Yeah.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Did you think it would happen then?
- Maynard Sembower:** I never thought it would, no.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** But it did.
- Maynard Sembower:** But it did.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Are you glad that it did?
- Maynard Sembower:** Oh, I’m glad. Yes. This is a gift – God’s gift to the people. Where can you take a family and get on. Don’t cost you a cent. All you do is get on and get a bicycle.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm. Yeah.
- Maynard Sembower:** And, the people – what we have riding this is a number one people. It’s not a bunch of hobos or anything.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm.
- Maynard Sembower:** And, they take care of it. And, they don’t throw out garbage or anything because they’ve all been told.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** It’s been good for Rockwood, too.
- Maynard Sembower:** Oh, it’s good for Rockwood. Yes. But, it took a lot to clean this thing up along here.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Mm-hmm. Is it getting better and better?
- Maynard Sembower:** Oh, yeah, it’s getting better. Sure. Yeah.

VIDEO INTERVIEW – MAYNARD SEMBOWER

- Paul G. Wiegman:** You obviously enjoy the people that you're meeting.
- Maynard Sembower:** Oh, yeah, yeah. You're getting a different class of people that's riding it now.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** I see. And, some of these people are not just from Somerset County or Western Pennsylvania, but from all over the country and outside of the country.
- Maynard Sembower:** Well, that's true. We have people living and raised of 15 to 20 miles of here that's never been on this trail. And, they come down here and said, "Well, I didn't know you had anything like this." "Well," I says, "You gotta come down and visit and see what we have."
- Paul G. Wiegman:** See what we have. What about the people from other countries?
- Maynard Sembower:** We have them. I've had them in here from Austria, across Germany, all over. I've had people in here. Even out west.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Uh-huh.
- Maynard Sembower:** A lot of people ride this through here and they just love it.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Do the people from foreign countries seem to enjoy it?
- Maynard Sembower:** Oh, yeah. There's a lot of foreign people that ride these trails because they go all over. They just love to do that.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Uh-huh. Good. That was a little extra. Thank you.
- Maynard Sembower:** Hey, thank you, sir. Thank you.
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Thank you very much.
- Maynard Sembower:** Now, let Brett come and give...
- Paul G. Wiegman:** Yeah, we'll get Brett in here.
- Maynard Sembower:** Yeah.

[End 0:37:29.8]

jvh-t/cr-p

VIDEO INTERVIEW – MAYNARD SEMBOWER

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