

# **The Back Mountain Oral History Project**

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**Project Coordinated by Allan W. Austin, Ph.D.**

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Shirley Ann Hanson  
1936-2014

Shirley Ann Hanson was born in Pittston and graduated from Pittston High School. She was preceded in death by her husband, Donald J. E. Hanson (1923-1990).

Donald Hanson was a son of John Hanson who acquired the Harvey's Lake amusement park in 1930-1935. When John Hanson died in December 1966, the Hanson family continued the park's operations. Donald and Shirley Hanson obtained ownership of the park in 1973 and Hanson's Amusement Park became Don Hanson's Amusement Park.

The amusement park closed in the Fall of 1984. Don Hanson died in 1990. After the park closed and continuing after Don Hanson's death, Shirley Hanson and other family members continued various services at the park grounds including a leased amphitheater in 1992-1998, campground, restaurant, marina, and beach operations. These operations closed with the sale of the grounds in 2002-2005 for residential development.

A fuller account of Don Hanson's Amusement Park and its final years is available at [www.harveyslakebook.org](http://www.harveyslakebook.org) and under Recent Additions at [www.harveyslake.org](http://www.harveyslake.org) or [www.harveyslakehistory.org](http://www.harveyslakehistory.org)

This oral interview is one of many interviews totaling 274 pages conducted by the Back Mountain Oral History Project 2006, College Misericordia, coordinated by Prof. Allan W. Austin who provided permission to reprint . interview on the [www.harveyslake.org](http://www.harveyslake.org) (see, too, [www.harveyslakehistory.org](http://www.harveyslakehistory.org)) website. Thank you, Allan. Other history interviews from this project will also appear on this site.

*Oral History  
Shirley Hanson  
Hanson's Amusement Park  
August 20, 2004*

John Sipper: Can you state your name for the record?

Shirley: Shirley Hanson.

John: Date of Birth?

Shirley: March 28, 1936.

John: Place of Birth?

Shirley: Pittston, Pennsylvania.

John: Do you have any siblings?

Shirley: Yes, I have my son and daughter. Step-sons, two sisters.

John: What is your maiden name?

Shirley: Roat

John: You grew up in Pittston right?

Shirley: Right.

John: So do you have any memories of the Back Mountain when you were growing up?

Shirley: Yes, I spent most of my summers out here since I was five years old.

John: And your parents' names?

Shirley: Alan and Helen Roat. Roat.

John: The name of your business that you and husband's family ran?

Shirley: Now you want to know about Hanson's amusement park? It was Don Hanson's amusement park.

John: What was the date it opened?

Shirley: John Hanson, well now you want to go back. There is a lot of history to this park. You

could go back to the Lehigh Valley Railroad, they used to have a picnic area and of course that goes back to the late 1800's. And then it goes back to when it became a picnic area with John Remington and then the Wintersteins and then Mr. John Hanson went into the business in 1929.

John: So he is the one who originated...

Shirley: No. Lehigh Valley Railroad originated it. It came because they used to come over here with the railroad used to come over here with their family picnic for the railroad. The tracks ran all the way from, coming up to Luzerne all the way through Dallas. In fact the tracks ran right in front of my house here and right down and you see that iron piece of structure down there, the railroad made them put that up because that's where the railroad went under right through the middle of the park and right down to Noxen and right up to, Red Rock and up towards Towanda, it was used for lumber and everything.

John: But he converted it into an amusement park?

Shirley: No. The Lehigh Valley had a picnic area and then Remington and Winterstein leased it from the railroad. And then they start putting in some rides because there was no electricity over here. And then John Hanson, he and Mrs. Winterstein built the coaster together in 1931 and that's when basically it really started coming up, it started getting bigger rides and became an amusement park, a full blown amusement park. It was established and then Mr. Hanson, my husband and I in 1964 leased the property from John who retired and we ran it ever since.

John: Why did he choose the name Hanson's?

Shirley: Because it was our last name. Yes, because it was Hanson's amusement park and when my husband and I bought it, to distinguish between owners it became Don Hanson's amusement park.

John: And what type of rides did it have. You said it was a full blown amusement park?

Shirley: We had the coaster, the merry-go-round, the dodgems, the whip, the ferris wheel, the octopus, the merry mixer, so all kinds of rides. Kiddy Land had about eight rides and a little coaster. Kiddy Land had two coasters. They had a small wooden coaster and they had a metal coaster.

John: And was there anyone that was more popular for patrons? Did they have favorites?

Shirley: The two favorite rides in the park were the coaster and the dodgems. And then the merry-go-round came close those were the three favorite rides. Of course everyone went for the thrill ride of the coaster and for the bumper cars for when it rained or anything the dodgems became the popular, and of course the merry-go-round, that was an authentic merry-go-round, they were the three major rides. But then Kiddy Land brought a lot of people came just for the kid, for the kiddy rides and that was in the back of the park.



John: What kind of entertainment was there at the park? Was there additional entertainment with the rides, did you have bands?

Shirley: We had bands, we of course had country western band in the park, and when we had the dance hall we had the teenage dances and then toward the later years, when the amphitheater came in we had we had big name stars, we had Dolly Parton and Hank Williams, Junior. We had a lot of stars then with the amphitheater. They always had a lot of stars, even back before my time, they always took in a lot of the well known entertainers. We had Chubby Checkers upstairs, that was in 1965, Chubby Checkers and Bobby Goldsborough, and we had a lot of teenage dances. Then later on we came with the oldie dances and that how the oldies originated back in here. That's how Joe Nardone came to give his dance once a year now at Irem Temple because we got them all together with the oldies dances and people liked it so much he got together with his old musicians and here he is now once a year they have a the band came together. I understand the Starfires that originated, we called it the Starfires Ballroom down there that they came back for the first time this year, they came back now and their going to play, the original band is going to play over at the Irem Temple, I believe. Now they came when they were sixteen and seventeen and now, they're all teachers and ministers or retirees, but they got together.

John: What kind of concessions did you have?

Shirley: We had all kinds of game concessions and food concessions you have what all amusement parks had. Popcorn, ice cream, the snow cones, the candy cotton, all kinds of food concessions. And then we had the big restaurant and inside that we had pizza and French fires and then on long through the park we, we had games. You know the kids could play.

John: How did the park run? Was it free admission or was there admission cost?

Shirley: Always free admission.

John: And then there was a cost to ride the rides?

Shirley: Yes that's it, and then once or twice we always had your nickel days. You had your special reduced prices, we called them our nickel days reduced prices on rides and it was always usually the first part of the week like on Tuesday.

John: Was that every month or?

Shirley: That was every week you had your reduced price rates that was one of your slower days of the week. And then we used to have a lot of people come in on buses, for reunions, picnics, and family reunions were a big thing out here.

John: Now you said that it was paid per ride and everything, it was like that all the years?

Shirley: All the years there was never paid admission to come into the park or to park.

John: And what was your attendance like? Did you have peak hours, what months were you opened and then how was the attendance?

Shirley: We opened up around the beginning of May and stayed open a week maybe two weeks after Labor Day. So basically we always said we have six main weeks of business because school would start, and right after 4<sup>th</sup> of July you always said the season was going the other way already. So your main holiday was Memorial Day and, 4<sup>th</sup> of July and Labor Day.

John: Did you do anything special for those holidays?

Shirley: Yes, 4<sup>th</sup> of July we always had a big display of fireworks. You come up this highway and we would have entertainment down at the park. I couldn't get out of my driveway here, I would literally walk around my property and leave my car here. And when we had, a special show of water skiers, we took them in and had a special promotion with the radio station you couldn't get around the lake, the traffic was just bumper to bumper. But those were the good old days and people talk about traffic now, but that's everyday now, but there was traffic on special days. Harvey's Lake always had traffic coming out to it.

John: So when do you think the popularity of the park peaked?

Shirley: When did it peak, 1950's and 60's, they were the major years and in the 70's was after the flood really, because the people with cottages they were starting to get out of the flood area so what they did was either sold their cottage or redid the cottage and made it their year round residence. And when they got the sewers in, you could see the lake getting more and more, the real-estate for private living instead of recreation. And then one by one the beaches they were sold, but it should always stay a recreation area. It's a beautiful area to live and I'm happy I live here, but the recreation for the general public, unless you have a boat is gone from the lake. I mean you had Sunset, you had Sandy Beach, you had our place, and there was a lot to do. At one time there were two movie theaters, outdoor movie theaters so here at the lake so when people came to vacation there was always something to do.

John: So how did you said there Sandy Beach and those type things. How did they did they help your business? Did they?

Shirley: We all helped, the more you have to do, for someone to come to the lake, and they would go around from place to place, a food area to eat or a swimming area. I mean they would just come out to the lake to picnic or to vacation. There were a lot of cottages and people really. So really one business helped the other business. When we had the fireworks a going out the highway I mean everyone was busy. Everybody was busy when the park was going, we took a lot of business out to the Back Mountain even to the Dallas, to the restaurants. They used to look forward to the fireworks.

John: So how many people would you say annually?



Shirley: I don't know

John: Several thousands?

Shirley: Yes, I had seen days when they would be standing in line to get on one of the rides.

John: So was there any competition or, with other parks?

Shirley: No.

John: When did the park close?

Shirley: The park, in 1984, we auctioned off. September of 1984 we auctioned off the rides.

John: Now, did that, did the larger amusement parks that are more popular today did they provide competition for you?

Shirley: Yes, when the big parks were starting, like Great Adventure and that one, when they started coming, then, see we used to get school picnics, the end of the school year was the beginning of our season because we would get a lot of the buses coming from all over for their annual school picnics. When the big parks started coming in and they had these big major coasters and things the thrill rides, school buses went to that area. See one time we never had any fairs, then this fair would start up then that fair would, everything would hurt, start hurting the small amusement parks. But really the big thing that hurt us with the amusement park was the insurance. You had such a short time in the business and it was really the insurance like the doctors today have a rough time meeting their insurance because of the liability. When they mandated, I don't know what year it was, Great Adventure had a big accident where these kids went into the dark ride and it caught fire and several of the children lost their lives, they started mandating the amusement parks in Pennsylvania, do this and do that, we were already doing it. But what it did to the insurance it would, there was no sense in being in business anymore because what you were doing was paying insurance premiums for something you were already covering. But since then, it became a law, when something becomes law then it just went on... Then the insurance just went out of sight.

John: So that's what really killed the amusement park?

Shirley: That's what we decided. Yes, for the amount of time you had to be in business and then the insurance premiums it just wasn't feasible. It wasn't a year round business, you only had a couple months to work and then we didn't have a year round business to make the money to pay the premiums.

John: Did the fact that the lake became very private also lead to the downfall?

Shirley: No.

John: Or was it mainly the insurance?

Shirley: No, this came after. There are many things, leading up to it. But the lake being private, no.

John: Now you had said there was competing with the school groups going away and everything. Did you do something different? Did you have incentives to try to get those groups back?

Shirley: Yes. We did promotions and sent promotions out and everything. And we would get a lot of the elementary kids coming, but the bigger kids and they would get the buses and go like I said they would go to the bigger parks that they had. More thrill rides. But then that changed around when they started having so many problems and they wish the small parks was back again and now everybody would say, I wish the small parks, I wish Hanson's was back again, and I wish Rocky Glenn was back again. But there's no turning back, and the kids missed out, the parents missed out. Kiddy Land where the kid used to come, and they didn't worry about their kids running around the park and it was secure. It was secure, the parents never had to worry about something happening to their children or somebody. It was always a secure feeling with their families.

John: Now what was so special about Kiddy Land? Was it just...

Shirley: Yes, there was seven or eight little just for kids, and it was a special price. And you had your miniature train, your little miniature rides, and the parents and the god parents would come up and the kids would just love Kiddy Land, there was just enough in Kiddy Land to give them a thrill with the two little coasters that the kids loved it.

John: How many rides would you say you had in the park?

Shirley: You see we used to have eight or nine rides, but then in Kiddy Land it was the same. About eight or nine each.

John: About twenty total.

Shirley: Yes.

John: And how big of an area did you have for the park?

Shirley: Now where were we, about thirty acres.

John: You said you take rides in and out like that.

Shirley: To give them something different or else somebody might want to take in on a concession, to try a swing ride or like one time, one fellow took a monorail ride in and you would let people take some rides, and see how they were going to work out.



John: Now when you say you let people bring them in, what do you mean?

Shirley: You let them bring them, set them in and then you would charge them a certain percentage of their ticket price, that's how you made your commission.

John: So you never owned any of the rides or?

Shirley: Yes, we owned them all. But we, now when a (inaudible) would come in and say they had a ride like the swing ride, could they take it in and set it up, and if it worked out. But no, we owned all the rides ourselves except for (inaudible) people would take a ride in now and then to see if it would work out.

John: So you were testing...

Shirley: Just like somebody would take you a carnival ride or something just to, yes just to try it plus if it was somebody we knew and they would want to try a ride to see how it would work out.

John: So you would get a percentage of...

Shirley: Yes.

John: Their tickets, but they would also...

Shirley: They would get, we would get usually... to make a profit. We would usually get twenty-five percent of what they took in the day because we sold tickets, they would turn the tickets in, and we would give them the percentage, but that may depend.

John: So how do you think the business, Hanson's, how it affected Harvey's Lake itself?

Shirley: In the beginning, we put a lot of kids through school, through college. At one time, we had over a hundred employees. That's a lot of employees and they were the mothers, we had whole families working for us. On the weekends, on the holidays we would have whole families working and a lot of girls and boys put themselves through college and school working here in the summertime.

John: So that was the, the main... employees...

Shirley: Yes at that time because around the lake they had small concession stands and things, but when we were busy back in there we had over a hundred employees. We had the restaurant, we had the concession, and we had the beach, so we had a lot of employees.

John: So the park consisted of part of the beach?

Shirley: Yes, we had back in the fifty's we had the motor boat rides and then when the boats

started going then we had the pontoon. People always liked that because people would take that across the lake, that was a nice ride and then we had the swimming so then if it was a hot summer you had a good season. Wouldn't be too good this year (laugh). They said it was something that should go on with the weather too. But our arcades, we had two big arcades so then if it did rain people and we had a bingo building, so there was always something to do even if it was rainy or cold.

John: Now how do you think Harvey's Lake was prosperous for the park? The location of it...

Shirley: We never had any problem taking people around, you give the people something they want and no problem. Taking people out over there, I think the business do have a problem is the winter restaurants and the licensed establishments. In the summer they do well, but in the winter time you had a rough time, but I still think to this day you have a tough time taking people in the winter time to go around the lake. The summer time was busy and the winter time, the establishments paid their bills. And remember one time there was thirty two bars around Harvey's Lake. Thirty two licensed establishments.

John: That's a lot.

Shirley: There was always something, you had your main beaches, you have Sunset, you had Sand Beach, Sandy Bottom and you had Hanson's. So really there was a lot to do and there were a lot of licensed establishments around the lake. Today, I can count 5. That's a big difference now you can't compare today with the way it was back then, it was it was purely recreational and for vacation.

John: Now you said you and your husband bought the park.

Shirley: Yes. In '64, my husband and I leased the park and after John Hanson died, he died in 1966. My husband and I bought the park fully on our own in 1973.

John: So you only had it for about ten years before it closed.

Shirley: The park, but then the restaurant and campground remained opened, and the marina left opened. The only thing that closed was the rides, but we still had the campground which I only closed two years ago because I sold the property. It is in transition and we have the boat slips that I just gave them up this past year because their going to build villas, so I sold my property. They are just waiting to fix the sewers.

John: Now you said you auctioned off the rides and everything...

Shirley: Yes.

John: Could you describe that a little bit?

Shirley: We auctioned off, we got Norton who is a big auctioneer company I believe out of



Michigan, and they sent out brochures all over the country, and our rides are all over the country.

John: So they are still in operation today?

Shirley: Yes, the merry-go-round, which belongs to the Wintersteins' right now that's in Florida, in the International Market Place down there. And our little train ride is up at Bonnoms' Nursing Home up in Benton so the rides are still in operation, and I think our ferris wheel was going to be put inside, in a big shopping mall. The Knobles, I think they got a couple of our coaster cars (inaudible).

John: So even Knobles bought some of the...

Shirley: I think they got some coaster cars. I can't remember what else Knobles, but our rides went all over the country to people who had amusement parks and when they have an auction like they came from all over the country.

John: What about the coaster itself?

Shirley: It was torn down.

John: What was its name?

Shirley: The Speedhound. The big one was called the Speedhound and that was built in 1930, 1931 and that was a fast coaster. It was about 65 foot high, which is small compared to what they have now, but at that time it was huge, and I always said that was one of the fastest coasters I was ever on. You would go up and the momentum would carry you. You needed a motor to take you to the top of the hill and then once they let the brake go, people don't realize you are just on momentum until it comes back into the area where you have to brake again to stop it. If you didn't do that, it'd go right up and around again, and that happened too.

John: Did you ever have accidents with the rides.

Shirley: You always have accidents. We never had in my time, now before there were always accidents, in my time there were never any major accidents, no deaths. We had a marriage on top of the coaster and that was in the 80's. Richard Tarasol, married them on right on top of the coaster. I have pictures of all of that you see this room. A lot of my memories are in this room. You see that book behind you, these are postcards when you talk about the coaster, when my son was just 14 and he would have to put the oil on the track before we would open up. This is him here, but these are all pictures of Harvey's Lake (inaudible). See I collect all these here, but that was a poster, all the way up to Kiddy Land because to people Kiddy Land was one of the ... that was where the merry-go-round was, you missed out on something, everybody that didn't know, there is a scooter, here's the restaurant so I have all my memories. They tell you about a bridge going across Harvey's Lake, there it is. That's how they filled in the lake going over to the Grotto (Pizza).



John: Yes.

Shirley: You just go (inaudible) that's the bridge, that's what it used to look like, that's what it looks like today (inaudible) when everybody got thrown in. So I have pictures, but I have all my memories. The oldest postcard I have I think is 1905, here is another picture of the bridge. People say do I miss it. There they are getting married, picture from on top of the coaster, their either going up or coming down.

John: Now when you tore the coaster down did....

Shirley: The coaster, people took some of the wood to build fencing for their horses, they took the rail and wrote on it showing, they took as souvenirs, a lot of the coaster went for souvenirs.

John: Was there any outcry to try to save it, or?

Shirley: No you couldn't save, no there was never an outcry no. So as I have my memories of Harvey's Lake, that was the era of the Steamboat era so there's a lot of history at Harvey's Lake, not only the Hanson's era but it gets all the way back to the hotel era, you're going back into the early 1900's and Harvey's Lake was really a beautiful place to come and vacation. I wish some of those hotels were still here. Did you ever read those books on Harvey's Lake?

John: Yes, I've seen some of them, it is amazing what was actually here.

Shirley: Yes, Harvey's Lake has a lot of beautiful history to it, and I am sorry to see the recreation part has gone out of it. But don't blame the people who have the lake front or the dock, the state, and the county, and the borough itself had the opportunity to buy and didn't. The only thing the state ever bought was the ramp down there, the place where the boats go in and out. Now that's the only part that the state ever bought or owned, and still does and that's opened to the public. They could never charge there because it was grant money that they came and the state put that in. But you think of all the beaches that were up for sale, the state, the county could have themselves bought one of those and made it recreation, even my own property here, the opportunity was there it was given to them but they never used it for a state lake. See, we owned the property, but the state, the state governs the water, the state doesn't own any of the land around except for the boat ramp down there. So the opportunity was there and it was missed out and the people say we have no place to go we can't swim at Harvey's Lake, they can't blame the people, the opportunity was there, but no one ever just didn't pick up on it and continue it for a swimming area for the people of Luzerne County alone, but they built a Moon Lake, they built a Slocum Dam, but here at Harvey's Lake they just didn't...

John: They let it go.

Shirley: Yes, they let it go.

John: So you were talking about the school groups could you elaborate a little more on those.

Shirley: They used to at the end of the school year they always have a picnic and I believe they still do when they go to different places. And that started our season, you might have 15 or 20 picnics in, in the beginning. They were from all over, you got them from Wilkes-Barre, you got them from Williamsport, that business depended on them until Memorial Weekend that really started off the season that you'd get these picnics in the beginning of the year. And sometimes you would have, 7 or 8 school buses coming in (inaudible) a lot of them didn't even have their own buses at that time. We used to get picnics from all over. We got them from Philadelphia, from New York, New Jersey, they had to find something different so we always had a lot of picnics. And we saw that (inaudible) going down and then the fairs. And now look at the fairs in the area, we never had those kind, we used to have one, the Bloomsburg Fair, but now every time you turn around there is a festival or a fair and that also put a damper on business until we had something big like the fireworks or something that we did then you could pull quite a few people in.

John: Now you had mentioned earlier of the amphitheater, did you have anything to do with that?

Shirley: No, I leased that.

John: But you had originally owned that?

Shirley: I owned all the property.

John: And then you leased that?

Shirley: I leased that out.

John: Why did that go under?

Shirley: (laugh) We had some wonderful shows, but the people that leased it argued among themselves. It just didn't work out.

John: Now, what were some of your fondest memories of the park? You had owned it for a brief time, I'm sure there is a lot of...

Shirley: Yes, I have fond memories, I've been coming over here since I was five years old. We used to come over here every summer just to see what new rides were in the park, and the people, just being with the people, seeing them enjoy themselves, we were working, but I mean we had weddings in the park, we had weddings in the grove, and then people would say I met my husband or wife at the teenage dance and so all those memories, and still to this day I still meet people when I go out, they say I met my husband or I met my wife, that's where we met and how we miss those times. And those teenage dances, the kids really enjoyed them. And we did too. And then I enjoyed the oldie dances back in 1988, that's when people started talking well we like to reminisce they wanted to reminisce, so in 1988 we had an oldies dance and we packed that



ballroom, it was packed, and we had some of these big dances up there, we had quite a few people up there. We had Chubby Checker and it was nothing to have 2,000 people in that building. And even the oldie dance, I mean they came out, and their still as successful to this day. Because they all started in 1988 of all these kids that went to the dances in the 1960's, and then we said we were going reopen our ballroom, I mean that ballroom was basically the length of the restaurant building down there, and it was their original ballroom and the floor it was an oak floor, nothing changed everything stayed the same, so when they came back it was reminiscing because it, it didn't change everything was the same way and I figure the dances were a good time and a happy time for people.

John: Now you said you opened that back up, was the ballroom closed for a time being or?

Shirley: Yes, after the teenage dances, which ended in the late 60's, things started changing, teenagers they start getting more problems, alcohol started playing in and it was getting to be a liability so we did away with the teenage dances. They didn't come back until 1988 when we started calling it the oldies dances and they were reminiscing and that started again. I ran those until 1992, 1993 and my husband died in 1990, and the amphitheater came in into the picture, and I just ran the campground and the marina.

John: So any other kind of interesting memories. Other stories?

Shirley: I could go on with stories forever, (inaudible) people getting married on top of the coaster and the dances and there are always stories to tell. As I think back right now I would have to sit and think about it.

John: So how do you think Hanson's Amusement Park affected the Back Mountain as an area?

Shirley: (inaudible) We brought a lot of people back to the Back Mountain area. People would never know about Harvey's Lake if it wasn't for the amusement park because we took people from all over and we had a lot of employees, and right now it's missed. Everything, things just can't go back, but we had a lot of people come to Harvey's Lake because that's why they came to Harvey's Lake for the amusement park, for the kids to ride, and have their picnics and their reunions.

John: Now what made you get into this business?

Shirley: I married my husband (laugh).

John: So he was into it and then...

Shirley: Yes, his father in 1929, his dad was in construction and he was asked by that time, Mrs. Winterstein who was into the park, she needed a partner and since he knew construction and everything he became partners with Mrs. Winterstien. Then in 1935 he bought the park out totally and then so John became, that's when he was young, he bought it out totally and became full owner. He owned the whole park. And his sons, the sons always worked, it was a family



park, the family and the son they all worked in the park just like mine did. It stayed that way until the rides went out in 1984, but we could still use the restaurant and the campground and the amphitheater, so really it went on until the late '90's. And I'll tell you those concerts brought in thousands of people. You weren't around here then?

John: I was little. I remember them, but very little.

Shirley: Crosby, Stills and Nash, I think that was, Crosby, Stills and Nash could have been one of the biggest, they took in thousands, they had close to 7 or 8 thousand people, and some of these, the amphitheater was built to hold about, it was a small amphitheater in size between 4,000 and 4,500, but I've seen as high as, when Crosby, Stills and Nash was here, 7,500 or 8,000 people. And that was that was packed back there, Dolly Parton we had we had, we had a lot of good entertainment. I think some of the people miss that too but then some people complained about the noise, but these were over by 10:30-11:00, and the lake was quiet again.

John: I think that might be about it.

Shirley: Good. You are trying to see the whole Back Mountain? It's changed completely I mean with the building, but that's progress, everything changes. I mean we could go back and I wish, the hotels and steamboats were still here. I wish there was a steamboat out on that lake because they were beautiful. But so many years have gone by. The Leigh Valley Railroad had a picnic area, and you couldn't come around the lake. The railroad came into the amusement park and the steamboat took the people from the other side over to the park. So everything revolved around the park, but the railroad had lumber and everything. It was the railroad that started the park for a picnic area for their employees and that's how it all originated, and that's how it started and then when the railroad started leasing areas out to concessionaires and all and then finally sold it to Remington to think this evolved into something bigger. And it was a good time in the Back Mountain, not that times are not good now, but it is different, all the recreation gone basically, except for the boaters, is gone from the lake.

John: You had said John Hanson was your husbands' father, and he was good with construction

Shirley: Yes.

John: Now why would she want him as a partner if he was so good with construction?

Shirley: Because he used to build homes, he built lots of homes (inaudible) and to run the park you need somebody that knows how to build and how to repair, because if you don't do it yourself, and she needed somebody, and he saw the opportunity and he came out and that's how it started. My husband was only six years old when he came out here with his father and that evolved into a family business.

