

Beyond the Barstool

an Ethnography of The Woodland Inn / Uncle Joe's Woodpile
Short Gap, W.V.

ABSTRACT

In *Beyond the Barstool*, author Sarah Umstot simultaneously investigated and promoted sustainability through the utilization of skills in the areas of documentation, interviewing, participant observation fieldwork, primary source research, and partnership development to produce an ethnography based on Uncle Joe's Woodpile, formerly the Woodland Inn, located in Short Gap, West Virginia. Her primary goal was to document and archive the memories and rich oral history that support this communal cultural landmark to inspire action that contributed to the continued cultural vitality and sustainability of the area. The Woodpile has helped shape family traditions, reinforce beloved musical preferences specific to the area, promote bonds between families and friends, bridge the gap between the young and the old, and foster a broadened sense of community among local residents.

Specifically, she documented and compiled a series of interviews from past and present patrons, owners, lessees, and employees of The Woodpile. Photographic documentation accompanied each interview. The resulting data and materials culminated into an ethnography – literally, a graphing or describing of the people – of the Woodpile community. These interviews accompany photographs and historical documentation of relevance to the conversation or stories represented. The research presented here is complementary to the archival inventory of artifacts and historical documentation that Ms. Lara Justis has completed on a subject related to Uncle Joe's Woodpile.

**Typeface presented in italics is the personal opinion and reflections of the writer, Sarah Umstot. Typeface presented normally is original research based on factual data, statistical references, interviews conducted, and participant observation documentation.*

Additional research on this subject can be found on the blog *The Wild Woodland Inn, An Ethnography* (wildwoodlaninn.wordpress.com), the blog *Beyond the Barstool* (beyondthebarstool.wordpress.com), and an additional blog created by Ms. Lara Justis, *Culture and Community at The Woodland Inn* (thewoodlandinn.wordpress.com).

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Forward

Pulling off the pavement of Rt. 28 into the parking lot of Uncle Joe's Woodpile provides the satisfying sound of rubber meeting gravel – a plunking and grinding as the car steers itself into its usual parking spot. Not like there's any lines anyway, that would be much too regulated. Everyone just kind of knows who parks where. As I step out of the vehicle, I start mentally ticking off who will be inside – maroon Jeep is Gary, Harley with the Jack Daniels gas cap is Rod, Twiggy's black Silverado with the Fighting Irish stickers, Todd's work truck, Jenny's black Jeep Wrangler, Sara's navy Cherokee – so on and so forth, quickly so that when I push open the heavy wooden door and my eyes adjust, the seats fill with familiar (and expected) faces. As if on cue, three or four voices are sure to ring out my name. Some don't even bother turning around. The haze from slow-burning cigarettes still fills the space, circulating with the breath of fresh air the door sucks into the dimly lit atmosphere. Greetings and guffaws over, I settle myself in my usual position behind the bar, slinging beer and comebacks to my six o'clock crowd. My regulars, the working men, the legends, the pivot seat on the liars corner – whatever I choose to call them, they'll be there, day in and day out – same time, same seat, and if you're lucky and they don't mix it up, the same beer.

The 21 year old laborer apprentice that's sitting on the corner is sharing a drink with his 48 year old journeyman, and their old stories blend with new – their jokes and gripes passing back and forth. The wooden bar still has a bit of a shine even after all the years of grimy arms and dirty hands rubbing against it. Mike carelessly uses the bottom of his bottle to pick at the arrowhead sealed into a knot of wood on the bar. The main corner, built by Arnie in '86, definitely has some character marks. The water rings from cans and bottles having sat there during the day are a silent testimony to the popularity of the regulars' corner. It always seems to adjust, room being made, seats becoming available. The young men stand so the older ones can have a seat, and the space adjusts to the mood of the crowd by echoing the volume of booming laughter or sitting quietly and soaking up the silence of a more somber crowd.

Little piles of cash lay beside or near each man's drink – Cash Only, and a clunky old cash register takes up a chunk of the bar to attest to that. It's all punching buttons, no touch screens or computerized seating charts here. Miller, Miller, Highlife, shot of Ginger Brandy on the rocks – it all falls into the comfortable routine. Bill's got his tilt on, leaning his empty can back just a little further to his lips. That means he's ready for another of Milwaukee's Best. Roger buys a round as he puts his fourth (in five minutes) down. Kat seems content to sit and sip her soda as she listens to the men's stories, her laughter ringing above the quiet hum of the jukebox. As they filter out, the evening crowd filters in. Younger, older, pool league, dart league, jukebox junkies, and party animals – they always seem to forget it's only Thursday. The back door slams, letting me know the party has carried itself outside for horseshoes and warm summer evenings. But that's just how it is at the Woodland – consistently becoming whatever space you need it to be, always willing to bend the rules, all while you're looking just beyond the barstool.

I. Introduction

Uncle Joe's Woodpile (known previously as the Woodland Inn) was built and opened in 1935 and has grown as a cultural marker and community center for the Short Gap area of West Virginia over the last 77 years. It has helped shape family traditions, reinforce beloved musical preferences specific to the area, promote bonds between families and friends, bridge the gap between the young and the old, and has also aided in fostering a broadened sense of community among local residents. As a member of this particular community, both as an employee of the Woodpile and as a patron, I wanted to compile documentation and collect the memories of this community to preserve and sustain this lifestyle, the habitat, and the culturally distinguishing features associated with the community for future generations. This topic serves as my Capstone Project for the Goucher College of Baltimore's Masters of Cultural Sustainability program.

As the Goucher website points out, the Masters in Cultural Sustainability program was formed to allow students to learn how to "work closely with individuals and communities to identify, protect, and enhance their important traditions, their ways of life, their cherished spaces, and their vital relationships to each other and the world." This project serves as a culmination of the skills gained throughout the duration of my Master's program and also communicates a powerful example of community, history, and culture found in the rural area of Short Gap, West Virginia.

This capstone focused on a specific community, the patrons of Uncle Joe's Woodpile (formerly the Woodland Inn), in an effort to document the community and illustrate how it serves as an important cultural site. The interviews that I completed served as the primary research for this project. Both formal and informal, they include a combination of deeply personal stories, informative facts about the origin of the establishment and the area in which it is located, and recollections about times past. Formal interviews, like the one featuring The Woodpile's owner Arnie French, were extremely informative. He and his wife, Julie, helped provide this project with some of the earliest factual information about the bar. With the addition of their interview, the project became firmly grounded in historical research. Informal interviews, such as those with Jason Hiatt and Tony "Hondo" Haan contributed to a more complete understanding of the relevance of this place within the community. All interviews conducted during this project serve as primary source research that permitted me to collect detailed information that would have otherwise been inaccessible since no other resources on this specific subject matter exist.

These interviews also enabled me to identify the common cultural markers that have defined this establishment and its patrons from others in this area. Based on research findings, I determined the significance of these cultural markers based on their presence within local culture. Depending on how the cultural marker was received in the community and the degree to which it was protected or cherished, the markers have been maintained over the years and

evolved into modern-day practices, or have been totally eliminated from this particular area in West Virginia. It was especially interesting to examine contrasting aspects of culture that are deeply embraced alongside those that are less desirable, hidden, or masked. This comparison was necessary in order to determine the direct role that community action and participation plays in the presence of culture.

The compilation of all this research resulted in an ethnography of the place based on a history of its people and their experiences told from a first person point-of-view. By networking within this tightly-knit, unique community and using non-invasive methods of fact gathering, fieldwork, primary source research, and historical evidence, I can fully support my hypothesis that Uncle Joe's Woodpile is an excellent example of what will continue to remain a culturally sustainable place for years to come.

The following sections will introduce a brief history of Mineral County and the Woodland Inn. This information is vital to understanding the current community and their interactions and developments within the area. The cultural strength of a place is often defined by the adaptations and evolutions it has made, both economically and culturally, over a period of time. Just as you cannot very well understand a person without knowing where they came from, you cannot very well understand a community without knowing its history.

County Background

When reading and researching culture or folklore of any kind, it helps to have a sense of the area in which the culture exists. This historical background can provide the researcher with context clues and valuable tools for interpretation that may shed light on points that were previously unnoticed.

Located in the eastern panhandle and carved from the westernmost portion of Hampshire County (what is still the first and largest county of West Virginia), Mineral County now consists of 327.83 square miles of land area and has an average of 86.1 persons per square mile. Estimated population as of census 2010 was 28,212 people, up 4.2% from the census 2000. The median household income was \$36,571 – slightly lower than the West Virginia state median income of \$38,380. As of the census of 2010, there were 10,784 households and 7,710 families residing in the county. The lifestyle is primarily that of working class, rural America. Most work is union-based physical labor, contract jobs, factory positions, and/or agriculturally-based occupations. The cost of living is significantly lower than that of the surrounding metropolitan areas and, to parallel this, the average income is also lower. Mineral County is also the easternmost county containing coal deposits. Situated at the Allegheny Front mountain range, it once contained a wealth of minerals, including (but not limited to), coal, iron ore, and supplies of natural gas (Mineral County Economy, <http://www.mineralcountywv.com/economys.asp>)

Mineral County, although not recognized 'free and clear' as West Virginian until 1910, was settled as early as the 1700's. The property lay within the territory of Lord Thomas Fairfax. In

1733, Major William Mayo and party of six surveyors were commissioned by George I. – This initial survey developed property boundaries, and the journals of Mayo were extremely beneficial to settlers that were crossing the Blue Ridge into Western Virginia territory at much the same time. It was determined during this time that Lord Fairfax laid claim to over 5,000,000 acres of North America and a battle over territory ensued. In 1746, an expedition of 40 men spent 127 days surveying the property, following the North Branch of the Potomac to its headwaters. Surveyors then planted the Fairfax stone to mark the point. This further ignited the controversy between Maryland and the State of West Virginia, until in 1910 the US Supreme Court voted in favor of West Virginia.

Due to the number and severity of French and Indian invasions, many early settlers in the area fled to the forts that the Virginia Regiment had held and garrisoned. One such fort was that of Colonel John Ashby and the town, Fort Ashby, was later named for him and his services from 1746 through the Revolutionary War. Keyser and New Creek were also served important roles in the civil war. The site where Potomac State College now stands served as a command post for roads leading to the Shenandoah Valley, as well as the South Branch.

Settlers to the area were predominantly German and Irish, which contributed to the ways in which the area was tended based on prior lifestyles and folkways carried from the Old Country. The mineral rich soil also provided some of the most ideal areas for farming, orcharding, and raising livestock. The wealth of minerals in the area also gave the people a strong tie into the manual labor force as jobs dealing with construction and extraction were some of the first to arise (Mineral County History, <http://www.mineralcountywv.com/economicdevelopment/countyfacts.asp>).

The culture and defining aspects of the community have arisen from a need to not only survive, but prosper, based on the given conditions of the area. Many of these traditions have evolved to include particular ways of life that support their cultural well-being. All historical background presented here has directly contributed to the formation of communities, and within these communities it has contributed to the evolution of cultural traditions based in Appalachian practices.

For this particular project, the history provides insight into the structure of local communities, their formation and location. It also establishes a basis for the types of employment in the area. The forts in the area centralized the people and created two definite focal points within the county. The smaller towns and residential areas have branched out from these two key areas, creating outliers such as Short Gap. Both the Keyser end of the county and the Frankfort District (Fort Ashby) area have very unique attributes that make the areas distinct from one another. Keyser is much more commercialized and has evolved into what most in this area would consider a city, whereas the Frankfort District has remained predominantly rural and less densely populated.

Although Mineral County is not economically rich, it is culturally rich. There are many festivals

and events through the course of a year and there are many musicians, artists, performers and trade workers, basement crafts-people and porch sitting musicians. There are Strawberry Festivals, Apple Butter Harvest Festivals, Buckwheat Festivals, and Maple Festivals. In the summer there are pig roasts and bluegrass bands, mud bogs, and back country gatherings where the stories and tales flow as freely as the homemade wine. A wealth of traditions particular to the Appalachians such as those mentioned above can be found existing with the more modern traditions. The people here like to gather and share together, bringing food and new friends. New fables and music are as constant and ever changing as the staples of these stable and well developed gatherings.

This detailed historical information helps provide evidence of the situations and cultural shifts that the community of Uncle Joe's Woodpile has had to adapt to over the years. Based on economic, industrial, and mineral demands, the people that inhabit this area have had to adapt through the social outlets of a developed society. These adaptations have become cultural trademarks based on a way of life that can be seen daily within the Woodpile community.

A Brief History of the Woodland

The Woodland Inn was built in 1935, just a short two years after the end of prohibition in the United States. It was opened as a stablemen's club - a place for communion and congregation based on mutual interest in the consumption of alcohol and the connections between stablemen, their stories, and their daily lives. The term "stableman" refers to a horse owner. At the time, horses were the ideal form of labor and transportation over the mountainous and sometimes rugged landscape.

The logs used to create the structure that still stands today were taken from trees that grew where Frankfort High School is currently located. They were hand cut, stripped, and hauled to the site by horses and the same stablemen that later would become patrons of the establishment. Jason Hiatt, current patron, recalls that his grandfather was one of the men that helped to build the structure. His grandfather would have been fifteen at the time – a working man, out of school. During that time period, schooling only went through the eighth grade, and boys of thirteen and fourteen were considered men and were put to work.

When opened by Floyd Grace, the original bar portion of the building was only the front half of what it is now. The structure is 'L' shaped, and the front portion of the 'L' was open to the public. The rear portion of the structure was used as a meeting hall for the local Points Hunting Club and was off limits to non-members. A hallway ran the length of the rear part of the bar; [] connecting the walk-in patrons to the restrooms, while keeping them out of the meeting room. This area also was where the stored the cases of beer. There were two operating heat sources, a large fireplace in the rear meeting room, as well as a stove used for heating the front portion of the bar. As the stories go, on a cold, wet, or snowy day, one could find a row of boots drying around this front stove and a matching row of men sitting on the barstools in their sock feet.

The original front bar was also an 'L' shape. There was only one cooler and as Arnold 'Arnie'

French pointed out in our interview, nothing was run by electricity. The cooler that held the beer was chilled with ice. The only heating sources were the two fireplaces, and summer cooling was done by opening the doors. The floors were also dirt during this time.



When taken over by Helen Cannon in 1948, a back room in the open space of the 'L' was created. Helen used this room to rest in, and today it has become the kitchen area and it provides access to the walk-in beer cave.

Between '55 and '58, the hunting club moved out of the back room and the public started being allowed into the rear portion of the building. The hunting club, by this point, had disbanded and no longer needed their meeting room.

Sam Bosley, to Arnie's best recollection, was the owner that tore the log wall out that divided the space. This took place around '74. This wall coming down was the beginning of a series of structural changes inside the bar. Without the wall, the 'main' area of the bar shifted around to the side along the innermost part of the 'L'. The hallway was modified to be the bartenders' space, housing shelves of liquor, iced coolers, and draft beer.

Arnold 'Arnie' French purchased the bar in '85. He had been living in Florida and was the owner and operator of an air conditioning company, but when he learned that the Woodland was up for sale, he decided the move back home to run the bar. After his purchase, as wife Julie attests, Arnie invited his friend Danny up from Florida to spend some time working on remodeling the establishment. His contributions were instrumental in reinventing the long portion of the bar. Danny, a Mayan Indian, was a favorite of the locals, and helped Arnie rebuild the long bar and add in a sealed top that contains mementos, pictures, business cards, and novelty items brought in by patrons.



In '98, a year before his marriage to former bartender Julie, Arnie shut the bar down for a year to perform some renovations. It was during this time that the bar was arranged into its current layout. The bar now runs the entire length of the aforementioned hallway. Arnie extended it to create the front part of the bar and join it to the back, adding a corner to the bar near the entrance and running that corner across half the length of the front portion of the bar. During this time he also took out the 'wood-burners' and installed central air.

The establishment, today known as Uncle Joe's Woodpile, still operates within the original structure. A fenced in, outdoor area has been the most recent addition, with no structural changes to the main building. This outdoor area contains eight to ten picnic tables, a flattened area with two regulation horseshoe pits, a tiki bar (serving only beer) and two overhang areas that accommodate radio stations, vendors, and food sales during summer charity benefits.

Most of the current events that take place at the Woodpile are built off of events that have taken place among the patrons of the Woodpile over the last half-century. Favorites of the locals were the winter Rattlesnake Feeds that boasted rattlesnake and wild game taken by patrons over the fall hunting season; the Woodland Inn Float Trips at camps along the South Branch and Patterson's Creek; and the 'buck-skinned rendezvous', events where patrons dressed as Native Americans and acted out the native lifestyle, out to the rear of the bar. These events took an educational approach to fun and learning for the patrons and the community. They have evolved into what is currently the Wild Game Feed, which the locals fondly call 'Arnie's Party' since it is held near the date of his birthday, The Redneck Float, and the Cancer Band Bash. The latter of the two are not-for-profit events supporting the Western Maryland Regional Cancer Patient help program and they raise funds to aid in cost of treatment, travel, and living expenses for local area cancer patients.

II. Methods

I have been a member of the Woodpile community for slightly over two years now, my membership within the group growing exponentially within the last year. During this time, I've spent countless hours getting to know the patrons of the bar, becoming more than just a casual acquaintance, and developing meaningful relationships that have aided in my completion of this project. Having grown up in the area, I was familiar with many of the patrons of the establishment. As a lifetime resident of the area, as a patron of the establishment, and as an employee of the bar, I intrinsically understood parts of the personal characteristics and the lifestyles of patrons, without even without knowing many of them personally.

My role as participant observer throughout my research has been a work of trial and error. Learning how to take myself outside of situations and events that were part of my daily life to observe, interpret, and objectively see them as part of the subject matter often has proven to be difficult for me. As the project progressed, I was better able to differentiate my roles within the program – those roles as the bartender, the patron, and the researcher. These roles often overlapped, as one had to move into the realm of the other. For example, many of my interviews and conversations with patrons took place either while working, or before and after shifts as a patron of the establishment. The duality of this experience was difficult to absorb at first, but became increasingly more manageable as the project, research, and information gathering continued. The more I felt I knew about the topic, the easier it was for me to speak to people about it, gain their insight, and further the project. My patrons, though sometimes surprised in the switch in roles, were continuously helpful, insightful, and informative.

When the proposal was first developed, my intentions were to interview a number of patrons – past and present, owners, employees, etc. – and gather their knowledge, stories, and history with the Woodland Inn. There were several members of the community that were integral to my information base and provided me with connections to key people and information. In addition to identifying cultural markers, the interviews were instrumental in piecing together a more colorful history of the creation of the bar. For example, based on descriptions, I was able to determine various stages of renovations and repairs to the interior and exterior structure of The Woodpile.

After patrons had gradually become more comfortable with sharing information and stories via formal and informal interviews, more people voiced the desire to contribute to this project. In an effort to include more people in the process without directly involving them by name, I generated surveys to help provide a comprehensive economic snapshot of the community. In these surveys, patrons were able to identify themselves based on their age, occupation, residence, and gender. This technique was very successful in that it helped provide statistical categorization that, once interpreted, provided support as to why people remain in an effort to continue building upon old traditions while simultaneously creating new ones, as well as giving a comprehensive analysis of the patrons of the Woodpile.

As I continued reaching out to gather more information, the community gave back to me. Scheduling interviews became a bit of a tribulation with personal lives and busy work schedules, but I was able to do several. Those that couldn't (or didn't feel comfortable enough to) give me an interview, often reached out in other ways; Charlie Simpson Jr., Susie Peer, and Arnold French all contributed photos for me to look through. These photos later became the *Book of Memories* that sparked interest and conversation among bar patrons – recounting stories, sharing tales of loved ones lost, and identifying their own pasts within the history of the place.

I've found throughout this process that sometimes the best research methods aren't always the ones that you set out to complete, and that very little, if anything, goes as planned. I was only able to complete three recorded interviews during the eight months that I have spent on this Capstone project. These interviews were not always completed in the most ideal settings, nor did I get to complete as many as I would have liked. In the absence of these formal interviews, the many informal conversations I had with patrons continued to provide fresh information and provoke thoughtful consideration of what I was experiencing. All but one of the formal interviews included multiple persons (which, in the end, resulted in more knowledgeable interviews with multifaceted information rather than just the thoughts, memories, and ideas of a particular individual). Along with this collection of interviews, I have accumulated quite a record of personal artifacts and memorabilia associated with the Woodland and the times that have passed. All of these contributions have gone into creating a greater understanding of the place and its people.

In addition to personal contributions by Woodland patrons, I also sought to gain a greater understanding of the place by researching rights of ownership, property deeds, plats of

conveyance records, and statistical demographic information regarding the county and specific community the Woodland is located in. These documents allowed me to gain a broader understanding of the sustainability of the property and the means through which it has been passed and preserved over the years.

To analyze and understand all the information that I was taking in, I looked to research such as the books *Real Country* by Aaron Fox, and *The Great Good Place* by Ray Oldenberg. Each article, passage, or chapter that I read gave me new insight on what I considered every day, normal activities of the establishment. I researched a few particular things that I didn't, at first, feel were relevant to the community aspect of the bar, for example what and why we drink, and the effects of addiction, drunk driving, and sobriety. In researching these things, I have come to the realization that the surroundings have a major impact on the structure, fluidity, and sustainability of the establishment community. This additional research has allowed me to better understand the unique traditions of the community, where they developed, why they are sustainable, how they interact and feed upon one another, and how these functions can be carried on in the future. They also helped me paint a realistic picture of the community, its virtues and faults, and commemorate a deserving community in the way that it should be.

The following section provides demographic insight into this community. The information was collected over the course of a week from a variety of people from the Woodpile community, selected randomly, in an effort to be as comprehensive as possible.

Demographic Information

The Woodpile community is a diverse, intergenerational, and unique population. Patrons hold a variety of occupations and cover a large spectrum of ages. To provide a more detailed snapshot of the area's population with regard to employment and generational diversity, statistical information was collected anonymously over the course of a week at The Woodpile. Individuals were surveyed and asked to respond to four basic categories – age, gender, occupation, and hometown. An attempt was made to acquire as many peoples' information as possible so as to provide a random sampling and basic representation of The Woodpile patrons in one week's time. The following information illustrates the collective results of this survey.

Participants: 67

Male – 48 (71.7%)

Female – 19 (28.3%)

Average Age: 40.6

Max – 70

Minimum – 21

Median – 43

Occupation total: 83

Occupations included in this survey demonstrate the participants' main sources of income. These numbers may not accurately reflect the population when taking into consideration side jobs, hobbies that fall into an occupational field, or occupations that are not paid.

Of the 67 total participants, 7 (10%) report working multiple jobs (leaving 58 working only one job). Of the 7 participants that work multiple jobs, 5 (71%) were female and 2 (29%) were male.

Of these 83 occupations, 73 (88%) fall into 18 of the 23 major groups as defined by the Standard Occupational Classification (SOC) as defined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, a division of the United States Department of Labor (http://www.bls.gov/soc/major_groups.htm).

The categories are as follows:

11-0000 Management Occupations – 1 (1.2%)
17-0000 Architecture and Engineering Occupations – 5 (6%)
21-0000 Community and Social Services Occupations – 2 (2.4%)
25-0000 Education, Training, and Library Occupations – 5 (6%)
27-0000 Arts, Design, Entertainment, Sports, and Media Occupations – 1 (1.2%)
29-0000 Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Occupations – 1 (1.2%)
33-0000 Protective Service Occupations – 3 (3.6%)
35-0000 Food Preparation and Serving Related Occupations – 7 (8.4%)
37-0000 Building and Grounds Cleaning and Maintenance Occupations – 2 (2.4%)
39-0000 Personal Care and Service Occupations – 3 (3.6%)
41-0000 Sales and Related Occupations – 4 (4.8%)
43-0000 Office and Administrative Support Occupations – 5 (6%)
45-0000 Farming, Fishing, and Forestry Occupations – 2 (2.4%)
47-0000 Construction and Extraction Occupations – 22 (26.5%)
49-0000 Installation, Maintenance, and Repair Occupations – 2 (2.4%)
51-0000 Production Occupations – 3 (3.6%)
53-0000 Transportation and Material Moving Occupations – 4 (4.8%)
55-0000 Military Specific Occupations – 1 (1.2%)

Three other categories emerged that do not fall into paid-labor categories:

Retired – 6 (7.2%)
College Student – 2 (2.4%)
Stay-at-home Mothers – 2 (2.4%)

Once again, these statistics represent an overwhelming presence of labor-based jobs that contribute to local industrial and economic demands. The results further support the deeply-rooted historical tradition of men holding manually demanding positions in an effort to support the financial needs of growing families. As the cost of living continues to increase and wages remain largely unchanged, women in this community often seek multiple employment

opportunities to provide supplemental income. For single women, multiple jobs are usually a necessity, not a choice, which allows them to be financially independent. The demographic information above attests to the fact that it is substantially more common for females to hold multiple jobs than it is for males.

Cumberland, Maryland was recently rated the sixth poorest city in the United States, according to *DailyFinance.com*, recording a substantial population decrease to the area (50%) since the 1950's. During this time, many local factories shut down and relocated to larger cities such as Pittsburgh, limiting the availability of jobs readily available to local citizens. Short Gap, home of the Woodland Community, lies in the Cumberland-Metro area and many of the residents sought this type of employment. After the fall of the factories, families were forced to find other means of income since they were unable (or unwilling) to relocate and follow the factory resettlements. It was during this time that the rise of apprenticeships in construction occupations (i.e. sheet metal workers, iron workers, millwrights, electricians, pipe fitters, etc.) grew to the substantial amount that it has reached today.

Manual-based employment opportunities are still quite popular today and comprise the largest section of the workforce. Many young men (and a few women) seek these apprenticeships instead of further education after high school for several reasons. Essentially, these jobs provide a steady source of income as well as a 4-5 year course of training that allows the participant, through union membership, to obtain a specific education in the labor force of their choice at no cost to them. After the apprenticeship is completed, workers are considered "journeymen" of their trade and their pay scale increases accordingly. Once the level of "journeymen" has been actualized, the opportunity presents itself for these individuals to go one step further, becoming the foreman, essentially the supervisor, of the job. This role can change hands from job to job, company to company, and is another chance to increase pay and build confidence and reputation. These sorts of jobs and opportunities make it possible for many who couldn't otherwise afford it to stay in the area.

Though this area is rated one of the poorest areas in the United States, it is, in reality, not as poor as it is self sufficient. The quality of living in Short Gap, for example, is not solely supported by monetary means. A large portion is supplemented by a modern "bartering" system which represents a wide variety of skills traded among local residents. The self-sufficiency the residents of this area possess is a well-suited example of "cultural capital," a term coined by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, referring to the non-material goods such as education, knowledge and expertise, verbal skills and aesthetic preferences that can be converted into economic capital.

The Woodpile is the perfect embodiment of this unique trading and capital system; patrons rely on one another to repair, reuse, or repurpose whatever is needed. If a particular patron is unable to fulfill a request, they utilize the network of the bar community to bring the request to fruition and meet the needs of community members. Because members of different social classes and economic statuses have found a common *habitus* within the bar culture, their ideas, knowledge, and skills - essentially, their cultural capital - can be shared. The structure in which

they function in daily living has been altered and expanded to include a diverse array of cultural capital. This diverse collection of cultural capital is something that the individual can then draw on to supplement their own skills and knowledge. In a way, the structure of their *habitus* has been restructured by their position within a particular social space (Appelrouth & Edles, p.450-453).

The ability to complete tasks of daily living and maintenance without having to consult, hire, or outsource a business service of some kind can lessen the observable economic activity in the area. Because there are more locals that specialize in different types of work, many people frequently consult a friend or an acquaintance to get a task completed. People here know how to *do* things; this, in turn, allows them to trade services with one another, limiting their expenses while still increasing their quality of life. This high degree of self-sustainability is something that area residents are immensely proud of and work diligently to maintain.

In speaking with many of the patrons, including Arnold and Julie French, these attributes were further confirmed. The sustainability of the bar itself relies on the talents, contributions, and loyalty of its patrons. It would not have continued thus far without support from the community. My conversations with French and other patrons confirmed and expanded upon actions and beliefs that support these community ideals.

Interview with Arnold French

(See Appendix A for partial transcriptions)

On Friday, November 11th, 2011, I had my first interview with Arnie French, owner of the Woodland Inn since 1985, and his wife Julie.



This interview took place at the Woodpile at around 3 o'clock in the afternoon. When I approached Arnie about where he wanted to do the interview the previous Wednesday, he answered simply, "Well if it's stories you're wanting, I'm bound to tell more sitting here at the bar."

I got to the bar around 2:30 p.m. and chose the area in which I would conduct my interviews. There were only 3 people in the bar at that time, including one of

the former bartenders, Gene. I chose the end of the bar (with room for three seats before it turns the corner) closest to the door for several reasons. This particular area offers the best lighting for pictures and for viewing photographs and, ironically, these are the seats that Arnie

and Julie usually choose when they walk through the door. These seats also make Arnie one of the most accessible people in the bar, so as not to cut him off from all the people he usually speaks with. All I had with me was my little recorder (Sony ICRRecorder), a notebook, and a pen. I had formulated several questions and decided the particular direction in which I wanted the interview to take, but I was reluctant to write these questions or display them in any fashion. I wanted the interview to be open ended and for it to allow for expansion on topics aside from the specific questions I may have had.

Set up with a round of drinks for everyone, we all took our places and the afternoon took off to a quick start. When the interview began, the patrons of the bar were very conscious that something was going on, and in turn, were very respectful of the interview process and their unspoken part in it. Voices that usually boom through the room were quieted, the usually blaring jukebox played soft music with an easy twang, and even the dart machine didn't seem to thump as loudly. I began by asking Arnie and Julie to sign the release form that I had provided to them, and started showing them the recorder that I would be using. I had spoken with them about this several times before, so they were very comfortable and were in agreement with what I was telling them.

Once all the preliminaries were taken care of, I started off by asking Arnie to give me a history – an overview – of the owners and lessees from the bar for as far back as he could remember. His furthest recollection (not including tales and accounts of times prior to this) dates back to 1948. At that time, Arnie's mother, Melody French, was a bartender at the Woodland Inn. Arnie was eight, and confessed to being in and out of the bar during his childhood. He reflected back on the building of the structure in 1935 by Floyd Grace and Company from the stories he had been told. He then recounted for me the original site where the logs used for the building were and the names of several of the men involved in the hauling, stripping, and placement of the logs into the structure that still stands today.

Arnie continued to tell me the timeline of the owners and lessees with Julie commenting periodically about certain people he may have skipped over or on the characteristics of certain people. I could tell Julie wanted to comment, but was hesitant for some reason, possibly she thought I just wanted to talk to Arnie, or she felt that her opinions were unnecessary or would mess with the recording in some way. In any case, I made the move to draw Julie more soundly into the conversation by asking her about her time bartending at the Woodland (late 70's through the 80's). Her tales led to heartfelt accounts of her and Arnie's romance and eventual marriage.

The afternoon progressed and as the evening crowd started coming in, the conversation turned more toward stories, recollections, and accounts of some of the more memorable experiences both Julie and Arnie had at the Woodland. One story, in particular, was told multiple times by different patrons. In this story it was said that a group of bikers came into the bar, causing a ruckus and threatening to tear the place down. When asked to calm down or leave they became even more rowdy. Arnie went to his rattlesnake cages out back and retrieved his largest female, holding her by the head and keeping her body tucked up under his arm. When

he returned to the bar, he confronted the bikers, telling them it was time to go. They proceeded to ask, "Who's gonna' make us?" As Arnie let the body of the snake uncurl from its folded position under his arm, he said "Me and my friend here will." The biker made a smart comment in return about how that only took care of one of them, and as he began to question how Arnie would make the rest leave, Arnie said, "We may only be able to take care of one, but it looks like you're the first to go". At this, the bikers got scared and took off out of the bar, leaving a cloud of dust and exhaust, never to return to the Woodland Inn.

The multiple versions I have recorded of this story truly illustrate the effect that alcohol, time, and elaboration can have on the details of what was a simple occurrence. In some versions, the bikers were simply a bunch of rowdy boys on dirt bikes; in others it was members of the Hells Angels gang. In others, Arnie brought in a bucket of snakes, not just one. It was bound to get twisted eventually, and these twists and turns in storytelling and folk tales, largely, are a part of a broad characteristic associated with altered states of consciousness and lowered inhibitions attached to drinking establishments (among other sorts of establishments), their patrons, and their tales.

Arnie and Julie had brought me several VHS tapes and a large stack of pictures, all of things pertaining to the Woodland, or to bits of their personal lives that were incorporated into the bar atmosphere during the duration of their daily involvement in operation. Arnie spoke of his sons, his love for rattlesnake hunting, and how the locals got involved in these traditions – and in turn, how these traditions influenced the atmosphere of the Woodland. As an example, the "snake pole" now resides in the middle of the floor as a support beam for the ceiling – a project Arnie and his son Quinn took on in Quinn's twelfth summer as a way to productively spend time and to get Quinn away from the unsavory crowd he was hanging out with. It is just one of the many personal touches and fond memories that mark the bar inside and out.

By this time (five o'clock approximately) the bar had about fifteen people in it, so background noise was growing substantially. There were many conversations going on, games of darts and pool, the cooler lids closing, and drinks being opened and set down. From the recording, I can still decipher what Arnie and company were saying. Gary and Pam Umstot (no relation) had come in. Pam happens to be Julie's sister, and Gary and Arnie are best friends. As they commenced to carrying on and telling stories, I let the recorder run, picking up those treasured pieces of camaraderie that were what I was hoping to capture all along – the embodied spirit of community, belonging, family, and culture wrapped into a blanket of drunken slurs, back pats, and laughter. As I stepped back from asking specific questions and allowed the group to move in their own direction, several other patrons stepped in to join the conversation, coming and going as easily as the drinks that moved on and off of the bar.

Since I had to work at six, my interview wrapped up shortly before, bringing the afternoon to a close and tucking away the memories for another day. This interview experience was imperative to my understanding of the evolution and growth that the establishment and its patrons have been through. I felt it necessary to include here my records and field notes from

that particular interview to provide a context as to how I gained much of my knowledge on the subject. All interviews both recorded and otherwise, were done very informally.

III. Interpretation

As I think about my work with the Woodland Inn/Uncle Joe's Woodpile over the last two years, I find it difficult to begin interpretation on something that is so deeply ingrained within my daily interactions. The people and the place have grown into something that I feel my existence would be incomplete without. It has been challenging, as a participant observer, to remove myself from the situation at times in an effort to simply observe and attempt to gain an objective view of the happenings and history presented to me.

As an undergraduate student, my discovery of the field of folklore within my study of sociology inspired me to look at the world in a new light. Folklore, for me, is a way of understanding people and the wide-ranging creative ways in which we express who we are, what we value, and what we believe. It is not so much something that we consciously study or attempt to do, but instead something that is involuntary. Folklore breathes and functions as we do – a living representation of the people and places that enable its functions and capabilities. My understandings and interpretations throughout this project are based in these fundamental concepts of folklore and folk-life.

Uncle Joe's Woodpile serves as a sustainable community center and a vibrant cultural hub for some residents of Mineral County, West Virginia and its surrounding areas (i.e. Allegheny County, MD; Hampshire County, WV). The loyalty of the patrons through the generations has allowed it to not only stay in business, but prosper as one of the longest running bars in the tri-state area.

The members of this particular community, like Scott Iliff and Tammy Houdersheldt, can recount many memories made around events at the Woodland, sharing times with siblings, family, and friends, and they consider the Woodland community as its own kind of family. (See interview transcriptions, Appendix A). The activities that the establishment hosts throughout the year are steeped in local traditions and tie in diverse parts of the community and rural lifestyle to a public setting. These events, such as live bands, benefits, bar sports, tournaments, and game feeds attract a wide age range of patrons, allowing them to intermingle and encourage intergenerational sharing.

Despite its many positive effects on the local community, The Woodpile has the potential for a negative reputation because it is a bar. For example, some residents interpret any type of bar behavior as raucous, disorderly, uncouth, or immoral. It is not accurate to say that Uncle Joe's Woodpile (The Woodland) is without these particular characteristics. As with any activity, extremes are present: there are those that consume too much, those that fight, and those that may be prone to behavior that exhibits lack of inhibition. There will always be some degree of gossip and bickering, heartbreak of internal wars, and potential for conflict based on the fact that people have continual and unrestricted access to this public arena.

The fact that people are the main source of sustainability for the bar speaks volumes about its role in the community. People are fluid and mobile, their situations constantly changing and adapting to the environment in which they exist. The fact that the patrons continue to support the establishment despite the unpredictability of their situations is evidence of its importance to them. Though the average patrons are fairly similar in socioeconomic backgrounds, each patron is ultimately an individual. This component of individuality and the presence of unique identities transform the bar into a place of constant flux. The interest for this capstone project was how the establishment not only existed, but flourished, amidst all of the possible negative aspects or situations that could arise. The goal is to illustrate, through fieldwork and detailed cultural documentation, how the many positive components of the establishment and its patrons have proven to be resilient.

As a result of its community presence over the decades, Uncle Joe's Woodpile has made and continues to make an important local impact through the characteristics of local patronage: customer loyalty, economic stimulus, sense of place and belonging, intergenerational sharing, relevance and symbolism of artifacts, and the incorporation, maintenance, or creation of local traditions and collective memory.

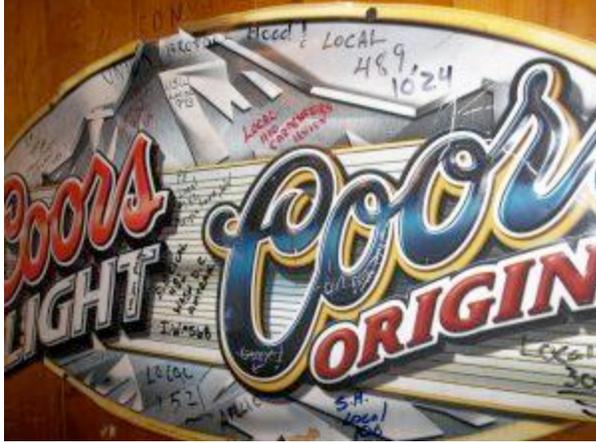
In an effort to use previously learned tools for understanding folklore and culture, I chose to use the sociologically based structuralism approach to interpreting the Woodland Inn/Woodpile community. Based on the basic format of structural analysis, the subsequent sections are broken down to take a better look at some of the individual intricacies of the Woodland/Uncle Joe's Woodpile. As pointed out in *Chapter Six - Approaches to Interpreting Folklore* in the book "Living Folklore" by Martha Sims and Martine Stephens, "structuralist analysis should reveal a basic, underlying pattern which accounts for all parts of the whole and how they relate to each other in forming the whole" (p. 179). The following breakdown is essential to identifying the patterns and characteristics that comprise the Woodpile community, as well a developing understanding of how these characteristics relate to one another in forming the whole and creating a sustainable community.

Some of the benefits of this approach include allowing classification of genres and ideas to be more than just labels, and to instead be seen as general ideals that support actions which can then be placed into thematic categories. In looking at these underlying patterns, structuralism also gives voice to characteristics (such as diction, riddles, or 'inside jokes') that may have otherwise been considered "lesser" forms of folklore. Examining structure, themes, and patterns in this way allows for a wider view of folklore in relation to culture. In other words, these sections look at how a "set of rules [i.e. patterns of understood behavior], taken together, is the whole that is greater than its parts" and how "the rules structure the whole" (p.183).

Writings on the Wall

The Importance of Labor Associations, Belonging, and Marking of Territory

This sign hangs in the men's room at the rear of the Woodpile. It's my favorite sign in the entire place.



Even if it is in the bathroom.

The simple beer sign has been peppered with representation from just about every local workers union – iron workers, pipe fitters, millwrights, electricians, sheet metal workers, carpenters, etc. – tagging, not for themselves, but instead for a group that they belong to that plays a defining role in their lives. The handwritten scribbles and union stickers that pepper this mirror are also found on lunch boxes, hard-hats, t-shirts, and truck windows

and markedly say something about the individuals that carry them. It's almost as if they brand themselves, labeled by association.

And then, at the end of a long, tiring day, many of the men 'pull up a bar stool' – whether to relax, swap stories, bitch and moan, or just let some of the stress melt away – those proud constituents of the 'happy hour' crowd feel that they have earned their seat, their right to be proud. And they're not ashamed to show it. It's about belonging to something bigger than yourself, about a sense of accomplishment, about being able to support rather than be supported, about sharing the load and learning the ropes.

Many of the men in the area choose local labor unions over furthering their education in a college or technical center setting. There are a multitude of reasons for this decision – immediate entry into the workforce, apprenticeship programs, excellent pay scales (contextual to the cost of living in the area), the opportunity to travel, job diversity and variation, the ability to hold a position that allows one to be outside rather than at a desk in an office, the opportunity to expand upon skills learned through childhood and young adulthood. Ultimately, the satisfaction of standing back at the end of a day, hands on hips, and thinking "Look what I've accomplished today. I've built something that will last," is an alluring draw for many.

In a predominantly blue-collar area, these sorts of jobs define livelihoods and support families. Though it seems the unemployment rate grows each day, people never stop building, and the work that comes in waves keeps many families afloat. The loyalty of these men to their unions seems to stem from long running support of local unions and the means of livelihood that the jobs associated with them have provided. This loyalty then reflects onto and becomes a part of the local business they choose to support. The displayed patronization of these establishments breeds loyalty in each new generation of workers and contributes to the sustainability of the businesses. Their personal contributions and 'marks' on places that they consider they belong

to are as much a part of the bar as the physical totems that give the place it's unique aesthetic qualities.

Totems, Icons, & Legends

The moose came down. He wasn't regulation – less than 4 feet from the pool table and a problem for the league. I guess that big nose just kept jutting out and nudging people to the point they couldn't make a good shot. During league time, that's completely unacceptable. So now he's laying on the stage, looking lonely and forlorn – and prompting a lot of conversations by leaving a blank spot on the wall.



I still duck to miss it when I'm wiping off the tables.

One of the many totems of the bar – the moose has embodied the spirit of patrons and has become a representation of collective memory. A totem, in the sense that it has been referenced here, refers to an object (usually plant or animal, or some representation of those) that serves as a reminder of ancestry and heritage. The stories told, recalled, and embellished about that iconic moose head on

the wall are innumerable and varied - from decorations, to pictures with visitors, and even an engagement beneath the moose.

Patrons that come in for pool league, especially those that don't frequent the Woodpile any longer, usually only make it about 5 steps in the door before exclaiming, "Well, where in the hell did the moose go? That thing's been here forever..." These exclamations usually lead to a series of stories based in collective memory about events and mishaps that occurred in the presence of the moose.

Supposedly, the moose was stolen from one of the outdoor clubs in Cumberland, Maryland. No one can verify exactly which bar it was taken from. Two men hauled it out the door and strapped it to the top of a red (or grey, depending on who is telling the story) Geo Metro. They came flying down the road with a moose head strapped to the top of their car until they arrived with a screeching halt at the Woodland. The moose was then brought inside and mounted as a trophy of their event, and has been there ever since.

The moose will be making his return soon, relocated so as not to interfere with the pool league. The very fact that it had to come down points to another important function of the establishment: league bar sports. These events are centered on the local community and increase camaraderie among members of each establishment while encouraging healthy

competition and socialization among persons from the different social groups and communities in the area. League sports include darts, billiards, and horseshoes – other establishments also sponsor softball teams and bowling leagues. Most area bars have at least one team for each sport; many have two or more. As bars close or change hands, these teams often will stay together, changing their host establishment so that they can still participate. This institution within the bar culture provides an outlet for loyalty and participation that may not have otherwise been attracted by the establishment alone.

Another totem of the Woodland is the snake pole. It serves as a support beam running from the top bridge of the old dividing wall to the floor, put in to support the ceiling when the wall was taken out. This pole is hand carved and it appears as if a rattlesnake is wound around the pole. The rattlesnake is about 10 times the size (girth) of a real snake and winds from the ceiling, where a large fanged head extends off the pole, to the floor where an impressive rattle marks it with defining characteristics. At one point, you can see that the snake even had a tongue carved to come out of the opened mouth, but that has long since been broken off.

As the story goes, Arnie carved this pole with his son, Quinn. When the boy was in his early teens, Arnie believed him to be running around with a ‘rough sort of crowd.’ To prevent Quinn



from getting into trouble, Arnie devised a project that they could work on together over the summer. The snake pole is a result of that diversion, and the base of it boasts Quinn’s name. It is this sort of personal touch and the story associated with it that most patrons who do not frequent the place may see as trivial, or will not notice at all. To the regulars, it has become a fixture within the place, and the atmosphere would change without it. The stories behind such objects breathe life into them, creating a living history that is compounded by the additional memories of others.

In discussions during this project about collective memory, history, and memorabilia, symbols like that of the moose and the snake pole remain at the top of the list when it comes to invoking recollection of a tale. People attach memories to certain objects (or now, the lack-thereof) and as the sociologist and student of Emile Durkheim, Maurice Halbwachs, points out, “History is the remembered past to which we no longer have an “organic” relation—the past that is no longer an important part of our lives—while collective memory is the active past that forms our identities” (Olick, p.8). The collective memory of a place and the record of it are essential to its ability to sustain a particular way of life, diversify, and evolve into it a form that encourages continued support from the community.

The Book of Memories and the Woodland as an Establishment

The "Book of Memories" compiled during this project also serves as a visual representation of many of the people, totems, and events that define the Woodland. It served as a gateway to conversation and the discovery of new information, as well as brought life to many of the static items that make up the establishment

Over the course of this capstone project, photos were gathered from past patrons, employees, and owners. These photos were then copied and compiled into a rough-hewn scrapbook of sorts. This scrapbook stayed at the Woodpile for the duration of the first half of the project, before being taken home to be interpreted and digitally captured. The photos were placed on



the pages with painter's tape, only two per page, leaving plenty of room for the writing of names, dates, and experiences.

The scrapbook created a whirlwind of conversation – leading to sprawling lists of names and ideas scrawled on whatever piece of paper, napkin, or peeled-off label that was handy. The locals, regulars, "kids" of the bar, and the bartenders poured through the book, comparing past experiences and common histories with their present day situation.

Several of the young men reading the book looked it over, while nursing often the same brand of beer their pictured fathers, uncles, or extended family were drinking. The ability of these photographs to spark interest and create conversation among patrons was widespread and people would ask for the book to show to a friend when a picture hit home or when the fact that they couldn't remember a name or a date continued to bother them.

In the *European Journal of Social Psychology* (2002), the article "The Social Psychological Power of Photography" addresses how taking a picture imparts social significance to the moment being captured. Written by Mark Burgess, Michael Enzel, and Marian Morry, the article states, "In the United States alone, amateur and professional photographers collectively developed more than 710 million rolls of film in 1995, the equivalent of 2.5 billion pictures" (p .614). The sheer volume of those numbers shows that we, as a societal whole, love to capture and share our daily lives and those special moments that we feel should be commemorated, making the ordinary something to be cherished. As we move into the digital age, this phenomenon becomes increasingly easier based on the rise of digital cameras and social networking sites that allow us to instantly capture and share these moments with virtually the entirety of our social community.

In addition to the ability to share these captured moments, we allow our world to comment on them, creating conversations and collective memory of times past. The photographs help people to construct a narrative of their community and validate their lives in a tangible and

sharable way. As their faces light up in recognition, and the patrons listen to the stories and memories sparked by the photos that continue compiling, they are inspired to learn more and to document and share the rich history of these great, hidden places within communities.

Many other researchers have looked at this sort of community as a “home away from home.” In the preface to *The Great Good Place* by Ray Oldenberg, he states that “when the good citizens of a community find places to spend pleasurable hours with one another for no specific or obvious purpose, there *is* purpose to such association” (ix). Companionship and socialization can be found in many establishments like the Woodpile, and although it may seem that there is no purpose for the gatherings that take place there, these places act as a host to social functions that other institutions do not offer. As Oldenberg points out, “It is a fortunate aspect of the third place that its capacity to serve the human need for communion does not much depend on the capacity of a nation to comprehend its virtues” (p. 20).

Through this, Oldenberg asserts that a bar is a context for passage into an altered state of consciousness providing emotional and physical relief. This means, in reference to this project, that “passage” - drink and sometimes raucous behavior - may make it difficult for the place to maintain a good reputation in the larger community. The consumption of alcohol comes with several attached stigmas, and often assumptions can be made about individuals that not only consume the substance, but that are around it on a daily basis, but not always drinking, i.e., bartenders.

A Note on Alcholoism and Socialization

Throughout this project, I have grown increasingly interested in how establishments such as the Woodpile gain such loyal community support and such sustainable inter-generational involvement when the broad public opinion of establishments such as them has been for so long negative. I have discovered how membership within this group is viewed by the members themselves, the surrounding community and by those that reside in the grey area somewhere between the bar life and the non-bar life. Joseph ‘Father’ Martin, a Roman Catholic priest, was a recovering alcoholic who educated people on the effects of drug and alcohol addiction. First created for intervention and treatment programs in the US Navy, his “Chalk Talk” videos became the resource of choice for most treatment facilities in the U.S., including hospitals, rehabilitation centers, most branches of the U.S. Government, and in business and industry presentations. In an alcohol awareness video “Chalk Talk on Alcohol,” Father Martin addresses the learned patterns of drinking -- the how and why of what we drink.

Father Martin stresses that the consumption of alcohol is a learned behavior, much like drinking coffee. We do not drink these things because our body needs them for nutrition or needs them to survive, or even because they taste good. Instead, we consume these beverages because we are taught, as we age, that we are expected in society to learn to consume (and like) certain things. Although some people are socialized differently, many eagerly await the day that they will be of legal drinking age, the opportunity to go out with friends and drink for their birthday, celebrate holidays with a toast, or raise a glass after a hard day’s work just to ‘take the edge

off."

Father Martin, in this video series, makes a valid point that, if something is causing you problems, then it is a problem. For many, the consumption of alcohol or addiction, in general, can become an overwhelming part of their life. The effects of addiction on their family, friends, work-life, and livelihood can be devastating. When working with a community that centers on the consumption of alcohol and altered states of consciousness, it is pertinent to remember that actions, beliefs, and behaviors are often clues to underlying problems that may be neglected or under-observed because of the diminished frontal lobe (processes of thought, reason, and logic) capacities of others that are consuming.

This does not mean, however, that every person that drinks is an alcoholic or that every person involved in the establishment is simply an enabler of this sort of detrimental behavior. Some simply come out and take part in this sort of behavior for the social aspects attached to it -- the ability to spend time with friends, meet new people, and experience entertainments of the arts, particularly music, which are almost necessary components of human socialization.

The Jukebox & Music at the Woodland

"Ninety-nine percent of the world's lovers are not with their first choice. That's why the jukebox plays."

-Willie Nelson

As I finish up with job number one for the day and start getting ready to leave and go to work at the bar, I have a few things I have to get in order.

Make sure the right pool-team t-shirt is clean to wear. (It's probably still buried in my car from last week).



*Attempt to make some semblance of an attractive appearance out of jeans and a grease-stained t-shirt.
Find comfortable shoes.
Find comfortable shoes that match.
Make sure I have a full pack of smokes (as well as that handy extra pack for when everyone mysteriously seems to run out.)
Check to see how many ones I have in my wallet. The jukebox must be in working order.
People surely don't want to listen to my CD's all night.*

That jukebox just hangs there on the wall, until that one dollar that starts the latest cycle makes it come alive. It embodies the souls of a place, reverberates into the silent cracks and crevices, and fills what can feel so empty. A place can speak without words and it can gesture without

hands or eyes. What it says is heard differently by every occupant, making the story unique in quality and depth for each person who pushes open the heavy, wooden door and walks into the dimly lit haze.

The jukebox is an essential contributing factor to the atmosphere of the Woodpile. Patrons use the music as a way to share with one another, to express their feelings and emotions, or simply as a way to relax and enjoy themselves. As the Willie Nelson quote mentions, this desire to play music may have specific relation to the feeling that patrons are having and is used as a way to express these emotions when they simply do not know how verbally or physically explain them. The music has the ability to draw out different characteristics within different individuals, and it is the way that these characteristics play against each other that makes the topic so intriguing. As a bartender and a patron, I find music to be an irreplaceable draw to the establishment, among many other reasons.

During the theoretical foundations work that I completed on this project, I read and referenced the writings of Aaron Fox in his ethnography *Real Country: Music and Language In Working-Class Culture*. Fox, an anthropologist and musician, spent years in Lockhart, Texas, making research notes, music, and friends, much as I have done with the community of the Woodpile. In *Real Country*, he provides an intimate, in-depth ethnography of the community and its music. Showing that country music is deeply embedded in the textures of working-class life, Fox argues that it is the cultural and intellectual property of working-class people and not only of the Nashville-based music industry or the stars whose lives figure so prominently in popular and scholarly writing about the genre.

“The jukebox was, in fact, at the center of ordinary sociability, and live music was even more essential to social rituals.... Graffiti, photographs, sentimental souvenirs, and funny, oddly labeled objects covered every available surface in a visual riot of text, color, and texture and layered, piled-up meanings. Ann’s was never silent except in meaningful moments when speech and song both seemed inadequate” (Fox, p. 49).

As Fox points out, the music, more often than not, drives not only the mood, but the entire atmosphere of the establishments that it fills. It also sets unspoken limits and parameters. The TV and jukebox are off during a live band -- some music is heard, and some is listened to. You can also use the sort of music playing, although very stereotypically based, to judge what sort of crowd is in the bar at any given time.

In times past, every Sunday you could find the streets lined and the parking lots full as people came from all over to hear the great music featured at the Woodland. Arnie recounts that the bar would always be full, brimming with locals out to enjoy the last of their weekend, and local musicians just wanting a chance to set up and play. When he ran it, the bands were predominantly country. Before and after his time, the variety has expanded to include rock, metal, blues, and alternative. Although the direction of the music changes, predominately you can expect to hear a sweet southern grind seeping out the cracks and into the night.

This mood and music carry over to the summer benefits, filled from start to finish with the variety of sounds from local bands. All time is donated by the artists and their crews, but the bands are the huge drawing point for the benefits and the reason that most come. Without the talent of these generous individuals, the tiki bar, horseshoes, and raffles would have nothing to be centered on. The entertainment provides a reason to attend other than just for the cause.

Tony Haan, current and past patron of the Woodland and Uncle Joe's Woodpile, has been in several bands that have performed at the establishment. He currently plays in two different acts, a full country band called "Renegade," as well as a solitary acoustic act. Most call him "Hondo," and he is a favorite of the regulars. He can also be seen frequenting the bar through the weeknights, and always when his son Anthony plays in his band "Heart Gravy," the largest growing local band currently. Haan was a studio artist and performer in Nashville for a time. Having never "made it big," he returned home and currently works for Pitt Ohio. His son attends school in Nashville now, studying music and interning at a recording studio. This kind of intergenerational blending and continuity is a vital factor to the sustainability of the Woodland. The Haans are one of several examples of multiple generations that frequent the Woodpile. This kind of patronage guarantees that there will be new customers as the years pass, as well as a customer base whose culture, ideals, and interests continue to overlap. It is very much this sort of patronage that has kept the atmosphere of the Woodland so constant over the duration of its operating time, now almost 77 years.

Benefits & "The Rednecks"

In addition to the bar serving as a social haven and cultural community for local residents, it has adopted efforts to make a lasting impression within other aspects of community life as well. Originally developed as a result of a conversation among a group of patrons seated at the corner of the bar, the cancer benefits soon evolved to become a major outreach component of The Woodpile. Patrons decided to unite resources and use their efforts to make a difference for local citizens, family, and friends affected by cancer. Soon a committee, The Rednecks, was formed. This group is now responsible for planning and organizing fundraising benefits. Based on the reaction of the public and the overwhelming attendance at these events, it became clear that there was a strong demand for this cause in the area.

The Rednecks then turned into a slightly larger non-profit organization based in Short Gap, West Virginia. It is a volunteer-based team motivated by the desire to hold fundraisers in an effort to donate money for the costs associated with cancer related medical treatments. Fundraising has transformed from small collections to large benefits that continue to be widely attended by community members. The vision of the organization is to engage the maximum number of community members by implementing new strategies in marketing, advertising, and promotion in an effort to increase awareness about the effects of cancer and to raise funds for those affected by the disease. Through these events, the Rednecks are able to make financial contributions to the Western Maryland Health Systems Regional Cancer Patient Fund. All of the funds raised are used locally to offset the costs of living, treatment, transportation, and daily expenses.

These multi-annual events and have raised a total of \$46,000 over a period of four years. Started as a way to help just a few friends and families affected by cancer, the events sponsored by Uncle Joe's Rednecks have transformed into something much greater. The Rednecks continue to exemplify the core values of human dedication, perseverance, support, and hope.

Typically, Uncle Joe's Rednecks host (at minimum) three benefits a year. Events are open to the general public and attract a diverse group ranging from ages 21 to 70. As there are not many opportunities for this sort of communal gathering, these benefits provide a space in which participants can celebrate their culture, help their fellow citizens in supporting a good cause, enjoy several excellent local live bands, and partake in eating, drinking, and dancing.



The Cancer Bash occurs the first weekend in June and takes place at The Woodpile. The Cancer Bash features live music from seven to ten local bands, raffles, live auctions, and a various types of food and drink. They are always a favorite of the locals, announcing the beginning of summer fun.

The Redneck Float is a family-friendly event that takes place towards the end of June along

the South Branch of the Potomac River in Hampshire County, West Virginia. At this event, participants pay to enter their "float" in a contest. All floats travel the river for a three-hour float-trip and are assessed by "judges" selected from the area, most of whom are the owners of businesses that support and donate to the cause. Winners receive prizes that have been donated by local community businesses. After the actual floating event, the party and fundraising continues at a camp along the river with four to eight local bands, raffles, t-shirt sales, and festivities.



Since the benefits for the previous three years had been such a success, the Rednecks decided to host another benefit in 2011. The third event added to their schedule was The Cancer Charity Ride. This event was a three hour motorcycle ride totaling almost 100 miles with one stop made at another local establishment to show support for their fundraising efforts. After the ride commenced, riders met back at Uncle Joe's Woodpile for a celebratory cookout and music.

These benefits have proven to be an excellent way for the bar to promote outreach to the local community while simultaneously increasing the customer base and encouraging customer loyalty. Because these events occur frequently during the summer months, community members are more likely to continue their patronage since they recognize these occasions as a way to enjoy the natural beauty of West Virginia while contributing to a worthy cause. Many of the events, like the Redneck Float, have built on the previous traditions of the bar, such as the Woodland Inn Float Trip that took place in the '70's and '80's.

It is common for many patrons to become fans of the bands they hear at these benefits. These fans continue to come to the bar for more regular entertainment and for an opportunity for increased socialization. The local participating businesses are able to take advantage of the increased community size through benefit sponsorship. Their financial support helps stimulate the local economy, allowing businesses to give back to their community and establish a charitable reputation. In turn, the patrons become loyal customers of these businesses. This circle of contribution is one technique through which the establishment is able to promote a more vibrant and community-oriented approach to cultural sustainability.

IV. Conclusion

In operation for nearly 77 years now, the Woodland Inn/Uncle Joe's Woodpile has become a many voiced fixture within the community. The approaches used to research and interpret the community followed the patterns of cultural relativism and structuralism, a stress on the integrity of individual cultures and the "individual" found within those cultures, and on the parts that create the whole. These theoretical approaches emphasize culture and the way that it shapes the groups' and individuals' views of the world. Understanding and insight from these particular theoretical approaches allowed me to interpret the material as something that expresses, reinforces, and sometimes challenges peoples' values and beliefs within their particular cultural group and outside of it.

I tried to remember, as I completed this project, that we are all constantly living and creating history. The very thing that makes a place sustainable is this prolonged and purposeful preservation of traditions and the diversification of ideas that create a hospitable environment for growth, warmth, and belonging.

Throughout the capstone journey, I successfully collected, observed, participated in, and researched many layers of information that, when pieced together, help provide a more intimate look at one of West Virginia's oldest continually-operating bars. This project has allowed me to form new friendships with bar patrons and assert a strengthened sense of identity within the community. Through the course of my interactions with patrons, I witnessed a shift of self-reflection in how patrons viewed themselves and the bar within the surrounding community. As a direct result of interviews and the ethnographic materials I gathered, patrons

clearly began to view the bar in a different way than they had before my research began. Before my direct interactions with them, most members of the community struggled with how to verbalize the implications of their involvement with the bar.

Upon reflecting on the relationships that many of them have maintained with the establishment for decades, they realized that the bar played an influential role in how they, on the most basic level, contextually identify themselves. The Woodpile has helped shape family traditions, reinforce beloved musical preferences specific to the area, promote bonds between families and friends, bridge the gap between the young and the old, and foster a broadened sense of community among local residents.

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Appendix A

Transcriptions

Transcription Conventions

I borrowed the following transcription conventions from the book *Real Country: Music and Language in Working Class Culture* by Aaron Fox. After browsing many transcription formats and patterns, I felt that this one best fit the language I was applying it to as well as provided an appearance that is easier for readers to follow.

Notation	Interpretation
Line Breaks	prosodic junctures (usually pause-marked)
CAPS	syllables marked by strong prosodic stress
<i>Italics</i>	voice quality marked by heightened intonation
...	lengthy pauses (sometimes given in seconds)
=	rapid overlap; also indicated by line layout
“Quotation marks”	purportedly “direct” reported speech
Bold	words, phrases, or segments analyzed in text
[...]	transcript elides significant material on tape
[Brackets]	contextual glosses and paralinguistic descriptions
(xxxxx)	inaudible or questionable on tape

Scott & Tammy – Interview Transcription – December, 14th 2011



Location: Uncle Joe’s Woodpile

Time: 11:15 pm – 11:30 pm

Participants: Scott Iliff & Tammy Houdersheldt

Description of Settings & Context: Closing up the bar for the evening. Slow night and everyone cleared out early. Scott &

Tammy are the last two remaining at the bar, carrying on a conversation with myself (the only bartender at the time). The bar is quiet, jukebox playing softly in the background. Surrounding noises come from the sound of the three of us sitting at the bar – bottles being set down, clothes/chairs rustling, cell phones being sat down, etc. As we sat talking, Scott & Tammy became interested in my school project. I asked if they would be willing to give me a quick interview, and they both readily agreed.

File Name: aUJW.ScottandTammy.12/14/12

SARAH: First - first thing I’ll have you to do is just state your names, makes it easy...

SCOTT: Scott Iliff and Tammy Houdersheldt

SARAH: How long have you guys lived in this area?

SCOTT & TAMMY: My whole life [IN UNISON]

[group laughter]

SARAH: Okay, long have you been coming to the Woodland?

TAMMY: Since I Was 18 SCOTT: since I was 'bout 18

SARAH: So like 22 years for Scott, and how long for you, Tammy— 'cause I know you're not that old.

SCOTT: A long time, yeah 18 years TAMMY: laughter

SCOTT: 30 years

SARAH: So you guys were both in here as underage and started drinking

TAMMY: Drinking age was 18, [SCOTT: – Yeahhhhh.] I could leave Frankfort High School and come here and have a beer, LEGALLY.

SARAH: Yeah? Sweet. What are – What are some of your favorite things about the bar?

SCOTT: My favorite thing about the bar is – is it's always been here, and it'll always be here. LOVE this place.

TAMMY: It's still the same.

SARAH: How so?

SCOTT: The people – the people are just wonderful.

TAMMY: The moose is missing – Slot machines are new, but everything else is still... *THE WOODLAND*.

SCOTT: YEAH, it's the Woodland.

SARAH: What makes the Woodland – What makes this different from other bars in the area?

SCOTT: You just – you just have to have that IN you, you just, honest to god, gotta' LOVE the Woodland. There's nothing else that would ever give you anything else but, [TAMMY: *Comfort*]

SCOTT: you know what I mean. Yeah the WOODLAND, yeah the comfort, just to be here, you know? Because I know all them and I know everybody. Yeah, yeah, this is it. And just because it's Joe's woodpile don't mean *SHIT*. It's still been the fuckin' Woodland.

SARAH: Okay. So I would, as a bartender, consider you guys regulars. So what do you, as regulars - what does it take to be a regular, from your all's point of view?

SCOTT: Just somebody that's old as hell – a regular is just somebody that will always be in here, every day

TAMMY: Yeah, I can walk in here by myself and feel completely comfortable,[SCOTT: yeah me too]- you know- as opposed to other bars

SARAH: Why do you think that is?

SCOTT: 'Cause it's comfortable

TAMMY: 'Cause – it's bartenders here! Friendly, great service!

[Sarah Laughs]

SCOTT: It's not *only* that, not only that. You're comfortable – you're comfortable where you're drinking at, you know what I mean?

SARAH: It has a lot to do with the people

TAMMY: Absolutely.

SARAH: I've had a lot of people say it's like a family.

SCOTT: It IS a family.

SARAH: Okay – And you guys come to a lot of the benefits, what do you think of those?

TAMMY: Great!

SCOTT: Love 'em. You know why? [SARAH: Why?] Because we're HELPING somebody – every god damn thing – there you go – helping somebody.

SARAH: If there was anything you could tell somebody that doesn't know anything about this bar that you know - complete stranger, doesn't know anything about this bar or this area - what would you tell them?

TAMMY: [It's] Boot Scootin'!

[Group Laughter]

SCOTT: Can you PLEASE meet me down there?

SARAH: Yeah?

TAMMY: Yeah, it feels like family

SCOTT: It is family. This, this place is, [TAMMY: Good people.] family.

SARAH: Do you have any good stories of anything that's happened here? [SCOTT: Oh, I do.]Anything in particular that just like jumps to mind?

SCOTT: Well, you know somethin'? Let me tell you this part of it. There's NOTHING and NOBODY, somebody your age, that knows - there's nothing that would take place of the Woodland Inn just 'cause Uncle Joe's took over it, you know everybody knows this place is the Woodland Inn. They don't know it as Uncle Joe's Woodpile. [SARAH: Why] They don't know it, you know what I mean?

SARAH: A lot of the younger generation calls it the 'Pile', but they all still know it was the Woodland Inn & half of them, like, I go back and for the between the Pile and the Woodland - kind of depends on what's going on.

SCOTT: Yeah and well, I always say, 'Let's go to the Woodland'. [TAMMY: 'What's going on at the Woodland?'] You know, they just don't call it Joe's Woodpile. But, a lot of people do.

Is there anything you don't like about this bar?

SCOTT: Yeah, there's a LOT of things I don't like about this bar

SARAH: Like what?

SCOTT: Well, the first thing I don't like about this bar is they got rid of Gene & I'm PISSED off about that. And I love you and I love Jen and I love all of you guys but MAN I'm pissed off they got rid of Gene. I AM.

SARAH: Okay, anything else about coming in here that makes you angry?

SCOTT: YOU make me angry sometimes [Jokingly]

[Group Laughter]

TAMMY: I LOVE to hear Sarah sing

SCOTT: I love to just fucking see ya'. I love her SO fucking much [TAMMY: She's beautiful] that fucking little cat. [Group Laughter] I DO! I'm fuckin' CRAZY bout' you!

SARAH: Thank you, thank you guys

TAMMY: Yeah, I like when I come in here & you're bartending.

SCOTT: You better get my fucking God damn - you better get my... fishin' hook.

SARAH: I will get your ties, flies tied.....

Tammy – Solo 12/14/12

Context: Scott had gone to the restroom. I took that opportunity to ask Tammy a few questions just to get a female perspective without interjection.

File Name: aUJW.Tammysolo.12/14/12

TAMMY: I mean, no, I'll just say it and you can put it in there. I do worry about all the robberies you know, and how bad, you know, and I would be afraid that somebody would come in here and, you know, and rob you when you're here. You know, when we walk out, I mean I would hope that you...

SARAH: Well we do have a dead bolt on the door, so we can always close up and dead bolt the door while we do everything, and then leave

TAMMY: I mean it's REALLY bad, it's, you know, and I know myself just from where I work - at social services - just how bad. People can't pay their bills, you know, they're gonna', they...
[SARAH: Do what they can] Yeah, yeah - and we're not getting the state funding so people are... more crazy.

SARAH: And I did want to ask you, without Scott interrupting you - as a, as a woman, you know, there's a lot of men in this bar, as a woman to come in here, you're usually outnumbered. Why is it that you feel comfortable walking in here by yourself? ... Cause I'm the same way. This is the first bar I started coming back to.

TAMMY: Yeah, well I think it's about trust, because the people are local, you know, you almost - I'd never come in here and NOT know someone. So, and as a woman, I feel completely comfortable because, you know, being like family, somebody will always- somebody would have my back. If someone started something, or you know ... I know that.

Julie & Arnie – Interview Transcription – November 11th, 2011 (Partial)



Location: Uncle Joe's Woodpile

Time: 2:00 pm – 5:30 pm

Main Participants: Arnold 'Arnie' & Julie French

Description of Settings & Context: Long, formal interview with Arnie and Jules. Took place in the bar because Arnie thought being there would give him more to talk about and would allow him to tell more stories. Several other patrons can be heard throughout, because the bar couldn't be closed down for this. Many of the Patrons at one point contributed to the conversation, and all were very respectful of the fact that I was recording. Towards the end of the interview, Gary & Pam Umstot, best friend and sister to Arnie and Julie, join the conversation to add a depth and that joyful laughter of friendship. Account here is partial, entire transcription too lengthy to include.

File Name: aUJW.ArnieandJulie.11/11/12

Sarah: Well basically today, I just wanted to get the history from you because you said you knew most of the owners and the lessees and everything and that's....

Arnie: yeah, I can take you back to 1948

Sarah: Yeah? That's a long way back. I mean I have the deeds back to 1935 when it was opened, but there's been a lot of people that's ran it...

Arnie: Well I can tell you who owned it in 19...

Sarah: Yeah

Arnie: 1948...the same guy that owned the building in 1935.

Sarah: What was his name?

Arnie: Floyd Grace.

Sarah: And he was with the Grace's down here with the church?

Arnie: Graceland...that's old boy Grace's property.

Sarah: Okay. So he owned it, he built it...I heard the logs came from....

Arnie: Right behind my house. Between my house and the high school.

Sarah: Very cool. I talked to Jason Hiatt a little bit about that; he said his grandfather was one of the ones that helped build it.

Arnie: His grandfather was 15 years old in 1935.

Sarah: Yeah? Uh-huh.

Arnie: And he drug the logs down here with a horse. Skinned the bark off of 'em and Mister....let me think of his name.....Mc_____? Mr. Mc_____? Lived here in Short Gap. He was the lead carpenter, I guess you'd call him....he was the one who laid the logs up. Had a bunch of local guys, but he was the boss.

Sarah: So there was Mr. Grace; who came after him?

Arnie: Mr. Grace? Well, he owned it, actually, up until...let me see, I bought it in '85...Charlie bought it in '84 and sold it to me in '85. He only owned it for a year. I don't even think it was even quite a year...about 11 months.

Julie: Do you want people that leased it in between and stuff like that?

Sarah: Yeah.

Arnie: Oh, well I can tell you...

Sarah: Yeah, 'cause there's been a lot more lessees...

Arnie: Well are you gonna write it down or...?

Sarah: I'll just...I will record it.

Arnie: Oh you're gonna record it? Oh, okay.

Sarah: Yep, and that way I can just do it later...so....

Arnie: After Floyd...well Floyd Grace leased it. From 1948 back to 1935, I don't know who had it except Floyd Grace because my mother worked here in 1948.

Sarah: What was her name? (2:33)

Arnie: Melanie French. Right there she is.

Sarah: Oh.

Arnie: Uh...my mother worked here, '48. Then after...the first people I remember leasing it...uh...after that, let me see if I can get them in order now. Uh...might have been...let me get this right...Helen Cannon. Then Ken Hostettler. After Ken...Homer and Billie Moore.

Julie: Oh I forgot about them.

Arnie: Yeah, that was in the mid-50s. Yeah. Uh, let's see...Homer...Helen Cannon...uh...did I say um, Jessie and Betty Lambert?

Sarah: Uh-uh.

Arnie: Jessie and Betty Lambert. I don't' know exactly what years they owned, or leased it...but uh, after that...

Julie: Chop's mom and dad?

Arnie: Yeah, I told her. Homer and Billie Moore. Um...let me see...Eva and John Riley. They owned it in...or leased it in the 60s. Then after them, I left and went to Florida and I think it was...what's his name?

Julie: Bosely?

Arnie: Sam Bosely and another guy. They owned it together. Uh...or leased it, I should say. And after Sam and the other guy, uh, Charlie Simpson. I think he had it for about 10 years and then I came back in '85 and bought it off of Charlie. He owned it for about a year.

Sarah: Okay.

Arnie: And I've owned it ever since. (6:09)

Sarah: Who's leased it since you've owned it?

Arnie: Oh, since I've owned it? Buddy, my brother, Buddy French. He leased it for a year. Then, um...

Julie: Roxy.

Arnie: Roxy. Do you know Roxy?

Sarah: I don't.

Arnie: You probably don't want to.

Sarah: What was her last name?

Arnie: What was her last name?

Julie: It was Powell...

Arnie: Yeah.

Julie: I think she's married now...

Arnie: Yeah, she was a riot. She was...if she would have stayed out of the booze, she would have had the best business this place ever did. She was crazy and everybody loved her, but she was...too much booze and too much....let's see....after Roxy, there was Ron DeBones, yeah, and then after Ron DeBones was Barbie Valentine. And then after Barbie was Joe.

Sarah: Very nice. So when you came back from Florida, what made you want to buy it?

Arnie: Well, uh, I missed West Virginia. I had 11 years in Florida and I sold my air conditioning business down there and heard it was for sale, and I came up and bought it.

Sarah: And you said your mom worked here, so you must have been in and out when you were younger? I can imagine with your mom workin' here...

Arnie: Yeah, I was 8 years old in 1948.

Sarah: Uh huh.

Arnie: Mom worked here when I was a little kid and then whenever I bought it, she came in and I just gave her the kitchen because she loved to cook.

Sarah: Yeah?

Arnie: She did a great job. Everything through the kitchen was her. Everything through the kitchen was her. She was a hell of a cook. Wasn't she?

Julie: Yes she was.

Arnie: She made some good meatballs and uh, spaghetti sauce. And the girls, the bartenders, would eat all the damn meatballs! (8:32)

Julie: Once!

Sarah: Now Julie, you bartended here?

Julie: I started here in...

Arnie: '86.

Julie: '85. Arnie bought it in July; I started working here in August. And in '86, we started seeing each other. The following August.

Arnie: Yeah. We don't know the date, though, sometime in August.

Julie: And I worked here until....

Arnie: We know it was a Wednesday night, though.

Julie: We know it was a Wednesday night. Yeah. The rest is up for discussion or debate. Um...And I worked here until...I worked here a little while for Buddy, but by then I was trying to....you know, I had been here with him all these years, I just wanted to get out of the bar business, but I was kinda helping Buddy get settled in. So, whatever year that was. I don't even remember.

Sarah: And what were some of your favorite things about the bar?

Arnie: The people that came here. A lot of good people. I mean a lot of good people.

Julie: Yeah.

Arnie: When I first took it over, I had to run a bunch of drug dealers outta here because they thought they uh, was gonna use it for a trading post.

Sarah: Well this place had a pretty rough reputation.

Arnie: Yeah, it had a pretty bad reputation. I thinned it out. Just got rid of all the drug dealers and starting having things for....I started telling people, "you can bring your girlfriends and your wives in here now," and it worked. It worked.

Sarah: So you changed the way that the community approached the bar...you know, saw the bar.

Arnie: Uh, yeah, the whole...actually, people came in here that used to come in here when my mom...when my mom and dad....when my mom worked here when I was younger. I mean, all these people started coming in again once they knew that I had it and cleaned it up. Uh, a lot of older people came in, you know.

Sarah: Well the crowd now is very, very diverse.

Arnie: Yeah, yeah.

Sarah: You get a lot of older people and you get a lot of younger people.

Arnie: Yeah.

Sarah: You know, a lot of people my age. And it's all over the spectrum. Everybody feels comfortable here.

Arnie: Right. Yeah. And that's the good thing. That's the way it's supposed to be. I will always want it to be a neighborhood bar, not a biker's bar, per se, or a drunk's bar...

Sarah: Yeah.

Arnie: ...or a drug dealers and all that. I didn't like it. Uh, I lived in Florida for 11 years and I never took a drug in my life. And I just said, when I get up there, I already heard about the reputation. I said it's...the dealers are outta here. And I'll tell you what, it hurt my business for a little while because they wasn't...they used to be a board up there where they put it up there. A guy would put it up there come back and maybe pay somebody, the guy that put it up there...tell him where it's at and they'd just reach up there to get it. Uh uh. I got threatened...this place could burn down. Course I knew the guy...when the guy told me that, I said, I'll tell you what. You better hope Jewish lightning don't strike ___??? Because I'm coming after your ass.

Sarah: No doubt.

Arnie: Yeah, and it won't be pretty.

Sarah: No doubt.

Arnie: Yeah. But it's the way I always wanted it right now. Joe's doing a good job.

Sarah: He's very community-involved. Very community-oriented.

Arnie: Joe's doing, actually, he's doing a better job than anyone I've ever leased it to.

Sarah: A lot of people say it's like coming to church.

Arnie: Believe it. I've had preachers in here. The guy that married me and Julie, he wasn't gonna marry us. I went out and talked to him and he said well, you've been married before, haven't you? And I said, yes. And I'm divorced. And I said but Julie's never been married. But we decided we wanted to get married. We'd been living together for so many years and he said, uh, I can't do that. I can't marry you. You've been married before....blah, blah, blah, blah. So, Jason Hiatt's grandmother and grandfather goes to church out there. I'm really good friends with them. Well I was; they're dead now. Well they went out and they talked to them and said well, we've known Arnie all his life. And you're not gonna meet a better guy. So they invited me to come out to church one day, just some kind of little community thing that was going on. And I showed up. And the minister talked to me for a while and said well, you've come to my church, so I guess I'm gonna have to stop in your bar and have a soda or something. He said, I'd just like to see the place inside. You've seen my church, I need to see your bar.

Sarah: Yeah?

Arnie: And he came in and he sat here and talked for a while and he really liked the way things were and he said, yeah, I'll go ahead and marry you and Julie.

Sarah: Aww. That's excellent.

Arnie: Yeah. And we got married down at camp. Down at our camp. It was the most beautiful wedding I've ever been to.

Sarah: I would hope so!

Julie: Good answer.

Sarah: Good answer!

Arnie: It was! It was beautiful. (14:42)

Julie: It turned out nice.

Arnie: That big field that was down through where the trees and the driveway is...it was all out in the middle of that. It was really nice. She had a harp player there instead of regular music. She had a lady playing a harp. Oh man! It was great.

Sarah: Tell me a little bit about like how the bar has changed inside.

Arnie: Well...

Sarah: Structurally and you know, just atmospherically.

Arnie: From originally? Originally, originally that whole section here was closed off with logs. And that was what they called the Points Hunting Club Meeting Room. Nobody was allowed back there. That was back in the 40s and maybe the early 50s. Maybe, actually, I'm gonna say '55, '58....somewhere in there before anybody was even allowed back there. Um...the bar used to be along that wall over there. And it was a little bit of an "L" shape.

Sarah: Uh huh?

Arnie: And there was one big cooler and they cooled the beer with ice.

Sarah: Un huh.

Arnie: It wasn't electric. Then, this area right here, going all the way straight back through, that's how you went back to the bathroom.

Sarah: Uh huh.

Arnie: And then on each side of that, uh, that's where they stored the beer. You know, the cases. The kitchen area was added on by Helen Cannon....added that on because she, when she had the bartenders in here, sometimes she'd go back there and take a nap. And then it finally got turned into a kitchen.

Sarah: Yeah?

Arnie: Yeah. But that room back there was off-limits for a long time. ---??? Guy tore the wall out.

Julie: ???

Arnie: No, no. After, way after...??? A football player. Big mouth.

Sarah: That doesn't narrow it down around here.

Julie: No.

Arnie: His daughter came in here...

Julie: Oh! Oh, oh...Bosely.

Arnie: Yeah, Sam Bosely is the one that tore the wall down here and opened it up. That was probably sometime in...I left here in '74...

Sarah: Uh huh?

Arnie: Came back in '85...sometime in between there is when he tore that wall out.

Sarah: Okay. And the bar itself...when did this move over to this area?

Arnie: You mean when did they tear the old part of the bar out?

Sarah: When did that all move around?

Arnie: Wow. I'm just trying to think. Probably somewhere around '60 or '62 while I was in the military. I don't know exactly when they tore the old bar out and started using this part. Well...that would have had to have been when Sam Bosely tore that wall out because that was not at all down there. This wasn't here...I put this here and I added this section. Let's see, I added this section on in '80...'90. I leased it to Buddy in '90. I added this section of bar...wow....I'm just trying to remember. I had it shut down for a year. I was going to do a couple minor repairs and it turned into major repairs, so I had it shut down for a year. I'm trying to remember what year I had it shut down...

Julie: I'm trying to think of how close it was to when we got married. It was pretty close. (19:58)

Arnie: Well, it was after I ran Ron Debones out.

Julie: Yeah. I gotta think about that.

Arnie: Well we got married in '99.

Julie: '99. I think it was right around during that time when you had to close down and was doing all that stuff.

Arnie: It was after Ron Debonas. I'm just trying to count back the years a little bit. Joe's been here about 4 years. Barbie was here 5. So go back 9 years.

Sarah: 2002?

Arnie: Huh?

Sarah: 2002?

Arnie: No, it was probably '98.

Julie: That's what I'm thinking.

Arnie: I'm thinking '98 I shut it down for a year before me and Julie got married.

Sarah: Yeah.

Arnie: And added this section of bar, took the old wood burner out, put central air in...and all that.

Julie: Now there's so many...now that we've been talking about, there's so many things that I've remembered that I want to say.

Sarah: Go ahead!

Julie: You'll have to keep me...

Sarah: No, go ahead! Go ahead.

Julie: Well, like that bar there on the other side. Um, when Arnie took over, um, he redid that whole bar and he had a friend of his from Florida, Danny, come up and he did it all in that epoxy resin and all the locals brought in their pictures and wrote notes and put all the stuff that's in the bar.

Sarah: That's one of my favorite things, is all the stuff. And I thought, you know, that I had sat and looked at it a lot and I knew pretty much, pretty much what was in there. And then we came in one day and started taking pictures. We were taking pictures just of the unique things that are in this bar, because it's got so many things that are very specific to this bar and to the people that come here and to the community.

Julie & Arnie. Yeah, uh huh.

Sarah: And I started looking at the pictures of the bar and I'm like "I've never seen that before!"

Julie: Right.

Sarah: I really thought I had looked at this whole bar, and I really haven't seen that.

Arnie: Yeah, you just got to start real...and it will take you all day to just look it over.

Sarah: Yeah! It will take more than that. It's just amazing.

Julie: But that was his friend, Danny, who came up from Florida, who was a...what was he...

Arnie: He was a Mayan.

Julie: A Mayan.

Arnie: A Mayan Indian. He just lived on a reservation down there with a bunch of my Seminole friends and when I decided to come up and take it over, he wanted to come up and help me. And he was a wood worker.

Sarah: Uh huh?

Arnie: You know, he did a lot of my wood work for me. And a good friend. He almost became adopted by all the locals around here; they just loved him.

Sarah: Yeah.

Arnie: I had a hard time keeping him on the job. He was partying with everybody. (23:16)

Sarah: One...like I said, there's a lot of unique things. I know the snake table is yours.

Arnie: Yeah.

Sarah: Tell me a little about that.

Arnie: Well, I'm a rattlesnake hunter. Did anybody ever tell you that?

Sarah: You did. You've told me that.

Arnie: There are probably some pictures in here. There's one with the deer. I raised a couple deer here...see the little ribbon around his neck?

Sarah: Aww! Got him all spiffed up.

Arnie: There's another one. She's feeding him saltine crackers. He loved 'em. You know Terry Brelsford, right?

Sarah: Uh huh.

Arnie: This is the day before he got the Mohawk haircuts.

Sarah: All right!

Arnie: There's old Buck Foutz. He was like one of my favorite locals.

Sarah: Susie Peer was telling me about him. She kept telling me, she's like "Buck was The Woodland."

Julie: He was a fixture.

Arnie: He was just a great old guy and I just loved him. Julie, here's um....Al Cross...we just got back from a fishing trip, me, him and a couple other guys. Here's one Julie wanted you to see. That's when we had the teepee's down....that's what this one video is about. We used to have rendezvous....buck-skinned....and we'd invited like schools, school kids, boyscouts, and girls scouts and all that. We had big pow-wows and stuff out here. Here's a rattlesnake. There was a couple of them in that bag. Actually, Terry Brelsford thought I was ??? one day....there's some more of them. And that bag right there....I said "Yeah, I got a bunch of???" He said, "let me see!" And he looked down in that bag and the rattlesnakes were laying....he almost fell flat on his back! Here's some of the rattlers and there's ??? And I'd have 'em when we had our wild game feed in the winter time. I'd skin 'em out and we'd have rattlesnake. I had one that I skinned out and put in the top of that table. (25:51)

Sarah: Yeah, that table is really neat. It's very, very cool. I have a great picture of it long-ways so you can see the snake going down through the table. It's really cool.

Arnie: Yeah. This is us – this is rattlesnake hunting here. That's a bunch...I used to take a bunch of local guys; I'd go by myself sometimes. Then guys started saying, "Oh man! I'd like to go, I'd like to go!" So I'd take 'em with me.

Sarah: Uh huh.

Arnie: Take a different guy. That's me bending over looking for one of these rocks. This is some of the local boys.

Sarah: Where were these at?

Arnie: This was up in White Horse Mountain.

Sarah: You and your "Old German!"

Arnie: Yeah. That there's Julie. I mean, that's uh, Julie's brother. And that's "Chops."

Julie: Yeah. Kinda of switched....I put those pictures together so quickly; I had to go through a whole bunch. I mentioned that um...I put these pictures in there for the Rattlesnake Feed because that was a part of The Woodland Inn thing at the time.

Sarah: Yeah.

Julie: It was The Woodland Inn Rattlesnake Hunt like The Woodland Inn Float trips and that kind of thing....it was just a common thing that people did.

Sarah: What were some of those traditions that you guys did?

Arnie: Well, we had float trips every summer. We had at least one or two float trips.

Sarah: And those have kinda turned into the Redneck Float that they do for cancer now.

Julie: Yeah. That's exactly right. Yeah.

Arnie: Yeah. And then we have the...we also have the fishing tournaments.

Sarah: Uh huh?

Arnie: All the local guys would show up...there might be 15 or 20 of them floating in the river.

Sarah: Yeah?

Arnie: We'd have fishing tournaments to see who caught the biggest fish and then we'd come back here and party after. This is Appalachia...the band Appalachia. That was the drummer; he was only about...do you remember Appalachia? The band Appalachia? Um...what's his name?

Sarah: Are they from over Hampshire County way?

Arnie: McGreevys? You know the McGreevy boys? The drummers?

Julie: No. Um...not McGreevy.

Arnie: That's Pat McGreevy there. Little Pat. He's not very big. Look at this one!

[Bar Patron]: Dixie Express.

Arnie: That's one of the bands that played here. Here's another shot of 'em. I think there was the big sign up behind 'em.

Sarah: Yeah. Where is that big Woodland Inn sign? Because it's awesome.

Arnie: I don't know what they did with it. Somebody took it outta here. Actually, I think...Oh shit. I'm trying to remember who painted that sign. It might even be stored in my shed up there.

Sarah: That's an awesome sign. I think it needs to come back.

Arnie: Yeah, yeah. Dixie Southern Express. Southern rock and country. Now that one – this is the one that was up behind the band.

Sarah: Mmm hmm.

Arnie: And that was the band – that was the one that they called "Dixie Express." (29:24).

Sarah: When was the stage built? Because it's not in....

Arnie: I built that.

Sarah: Okay. Because it's not in a lot of the pictures from like Charlie's era.

Arnie: Yeah, when I took that over....here's old Buck Foutz. Now he'd come in here at eleven o'clock...

Sarah: Yeah? In the morning?

Arnie: In the morning. Start drinking draft beer and this is probably about midnight...

Sarah: Oh my goodness!

Arnie: And he's out there dancing.

Julie: Sarah, he would come in. I worked the mornings...and it took me a while to get to know Buck when I first started working here, but he would come in in the mornings and I knew to get him a draft beer and he would reach for that draft, his hand was shaking. And you didn't talk to him. I learned that you don't even say "Hi, Buck," you just give him his beer. And then four or five beers into it, he would be like....

Arnie: Talk your ear off.

Julie: Well, he'd be getting there. He'd at least say "hello" and be cordial. Well, by the end of the evening, he was dancing with the young people and dancing with the bands and having a blast. And...

Sarah: Who were some of the other regulars that were in here like all the time – that were like fixtures?

Arnie: Tom Coil, he passed away too. Um, Tom Coil was a perfectionist. When he walked in, he always sat down here and always had frost—frozen mugs in the freezer. And they always liked their beer frosted. Well after the defrost, you know, we'd just get 'em a new one and make sure their draft beer was cold. Tom would come in and he'd sit down and tell you what – well we knew what he wanted – and he'd take a nap and he would lay it down like this. And he'd fold it –

Julie: He had been in the military.

Arnie: Yeah. Everything – I mean it had to be perfect before he sat that beer down. But he was a janitor up here at the high school and his uh, I think his parents used to own a big jewelry store up in Cumberland called "Coil's Jewelry Store." Anyhow, he ended up being a janitor up here and he retired and everything. He was a regular; every day. Then there was, of course, Harry Bosely. There was a couple old guys from Ft. Ashby that used to come in with Harry. I can't remember all their names anymore, but it was like every morning, all these old guys would stop here and have a couple drafts and then leave. And then sometimes in the evenings, they'd come back.

Sarah: That still happens.

Arnie: Yeah. What they do, is that they go to a couple other bars....

Sarah: Ha, ha. Yeah.

Arnie: And play the jars and stuff and then they end up coming back here. But I had...I was talking to somebody the other night....oh, Billy Nichol. Harry Bosely, whenever ??? they didn't have Schmidt's here...so I got it for him. And I got another old guy to come in, Brady Lewis...he liked Schlitz. One liked Schmidt's and one liked Schlitz and I had it for 'em. Old Brady, he would come in and drink one beer and get a six-pack to go, wouldn't he?

Julie: Yeah. And they loved that because most of the bars...

Arnie: Didn't have what they liked.

Julie: Well, they wouldn't cater to 'em like Arnie did. He appreciated, though, people coming in, so what they wanted, he would get. You know, a case would last forever, but still.

Sarah: Yeah.

Julie: He would get that for them because he knew they came in. And they weren't people that made us tons of money, but they were people that he respected and had known and he would cater to those people so they were here and he knew them from way back.

Arnie: Yeah, and I went to school with their kids. Most of 'em, you know. But if I didn't know them before I moved back here, it didn't make any difference because I liked 'em.

Sarah: Yeah.

Arnie: I loved the older people. And always respected them. And they loved to talk; they loved to talk to me. I took the time and sat and talked to 'em. (34:12) Old Buck, he used to go fishing with all of us younger guys, uh...he didn't fish, he'd just go along with us. And I would always tell him, now, where we're going, there's probably going to be some trash and stuff along the streams. And I always picked up the trash. I said, man, nothing makes me madder than to see a beautiful stream with beer cans and all kinds of garbage...sometimes, we'd ???? bring garbage bags full of trash back from that dam...everytime we went over, we'd clean up around where we'd fish.

Sarah: Yeah.

Arnie: And he just loved that. He thought that was the greatest thing.

Sarah: Yeah.

Arnie: And I told him, I said, I don't care. Anywhere you see trash, if you want to pick it up, you can bring it out and put it in my garbage can, you know.

Sarah: Yeah.

Arnie: We did good with that. We did the same thing on our float trips. Everybody took a garbage bag with them. And I'd tell them, I don't care what you see lying along that river...if you can get it in your boat, we're taking it out with us.

Sarah: Yeah.

Arnie: We cleaned up a lot on the river.

Sarah: Yeah. That's great. (35:39)

Arnie: I'm trying to think of some of the other old local guys that used to come in...

Julie: Glenwood Emmert.

Arnie: Oh yeah, old Glenwood Emmert. He'd come in...he wouldn't come in until about 11 o'clock here. About 11 o'clock at night because he didn't...we called him the Sleek -n- Deacon. He was a Mennonite and he didn't want the local people that knew him around here to see him come out, so he'd come in and have a couple drinks. I'd sit and talk to him for an hour because business was slow during the week; he'd never ever come in on the weekends. ??? Everybody had a unique personality.

Sarah: Uh huh?

Arnie: And uh, I just used to love to sit...I remember, I think it was Diane Mc???, she was one of my bartenders, and she said, "you know, you are probably one of the best listeners I've ever...to have around." She said, "You talk to these people and you take a lot of time just to listen to them." I said well, I like people, so if they want to talk, let 'em talk.

Sarah: It's a good place to talk.

Arnie: Yeah. Yeah. (37:18)

Sarah: I know that's one of my favorite things is to sit there and listen to all the stories that everyone tells. And I've been uh, especially with that Scrapbook, because they'll see a picture and I get like six or seven people who go into this big, elaborate story about something that might be remotely related to that picture, but it reminded them of a story. And they're great, great stories.

Arnie: Yeah. Oh yeah.

Sarah: Um, I remember you told me one time -- back to the rattlesnake thing -- just because that's so, that's you. That's your part of the bar. Every time I see it, I think "Arnie." And you told me about throwing a bag of rattlesnakes at a bunch of bikers that wouldn't leave?

Arnie: Oh, just one rattlesnake.

Sarah: Just one?

Arnie: Yeah, Julie was here when I did that.

Julie: Tell her the whole story. It's worth telling.

Sarah: It is.

Arnie: Well, I gotta tell you before Gary gets here. He oughta be here any minute.

Sarah: I was hoping for that.

Arnie: And he swears he was here and he was not here. He acts like, he goes, oh, I remember that.... Blah blah blah

Sarah: He remembers everything.

Arnie: He wasn't even here!

Julie: Well he's not the only one.

Arnie: No! A lot of other people do it now.

Julie: Because they've heard the story for so many years and they've been here and, in their minds, they were here.

Sarah: Yeah.

Arnie: Not only that, they stretch the story.

Julie: Yeah, and then they tell it bigger like...

Arnie: They tell the story while I'm sitting here...and I'm going, well that's awful funny, I don't remember doing that.

Sarah: Ha, ha.

Julie: Like probably when somebody told you about him throwing a bag of rattlesnakes at the bikers?

Arnie: Ha, ha. It was one!

Julie: Yeah, I'm sure that's what somebody told you, but like Arnie says the story gets bigger and bigger and bigger....

Sarah: Yeah.

Julie: And more and more people were here...

Arnie: It was only one rattlesnake!

Julie: But it's a great story.

Sarah: So for the record, what actually happened?

Julie: Yeah.

Sarah: Because I'll put this in the book and we'll tell Gary that he's wrong. (39:05)

Arnie: They had the dirt bike races over at Raleigh's; they used to have the dirt bike races over there every year.

Sarah: Uh huh.

Arnie: And, uh, just so happened that I had – I don't know – maybe 10 or 12 rattlesnakes up there in my cage. I kept 'em ??? over the summer. But anyhow, they came in and they were gonna take the bar over.

Julie: Truly, that was working. It was scary. I was scared. I was scared of everybody then, but anyway. It was scary.

Arnie: They weren't, you know, Harley-riders. They weren't regular bikers.

Julie: No.

Arnie: These guys were just a bunch of drunken dirt bike riders. A lot of 'em had their bikes on the trucks and trailers, but there was a bunch of 'em that rode 'em over here.

Julie: There were very few of us in here. Very few of us.

Arnie: I'll tell you who it was. It was me, Julie, my brother Buddy, Buck – old Buck – and Buck had a mug of beer in his hand and I went back and talked to them. They were back there around the pool table just about ready to tear the place up and I said, hey guys, do me a favor and settle down a little bit, will ya? And they just told me where to go, you know. They said, well, man, we can wreck this place in a heartbeat. Well, old Buck, he grabbed his mug of beer and he said, I'll get one of 'em. I said, no Buck, no. Just sit still now. About that time, Paul Peer pulled in, him and his girlfriend. He had a Harley. And he pulled in; he was a friend of mine, you know, he just pulled in. There was a bunch of 'em out on the porch just harassing him because he was on a Harley and, you know, these dirt bikers. So, Paul came in and said, man, what the hell is going on? I said, just...just relax a minute. I'll be back in a minute. So these guys were going...and we were outnumbered. There was probably 15 in here and maybe 6 or 8 out on the front, so I went out the kitchen door and I went up behind ??? and I went up and got one...the biggest rattlesnake I had. It was a female. I called her "Gertrude."

Sarah: Gertrude!

Arnie: Big ol' beautiful yellow. So I just rolled her up under my arm; I had her by the head and I rolled her up under my arm and I came walking in and I said, well boys, I think it's about time for you to go. They said, well, says who? I said, me and my friends. And they said, well it don't look like you got very many friends. I said, this is the only one I need. That son of a bitch dropped down about 4 ½ foot and the leader of the pack said, well that son of a bitch can only fight one of us! I said, looks like you're the first one. And I started after him and I mean they just about tore my door off going out.

Julie: True story.

Arnie: That's...that's all that happened. And I was standing in the doorway....the one that gave me the mouth...he threw a beer can out on his way by and I just laughed my ass off because all I saw was dust. Pick-up trucks spinning and they said "you're a crazy son of a bitch!" And I said, yeah, but me and my friend won this battle.

[Bar patron]: Put Gertrude back in there!

Arnie: Yeah. And that's the first time after they all left, Paul Peer came over and said "you didn't do what I think you did, didja?" I said, well, they're gone, aren't they? They were gone. And then Julie comes over; I'm holding this big rattlesnake. She comes over and goes "Oh! I've never touched a snake before!" It's a rattlesnake.

Julie: I'm not afraid of snakes and you had a hold of its head, so I knew it couldn't bite me. And it was over there, where that barstool used to be on that side right over there and, um, you were standing there by the door into the bar. Standing there with the snake and, um...

Arnie: And I'm thinking in my mind: now this is a real woman. I may have to check into this.

Sarah & Julie: Ha, Ha.

Julie: Might have sealed the deal.

Sarah: Looks like you made a good decision, there.

Julie: Aw. Thank you guys.

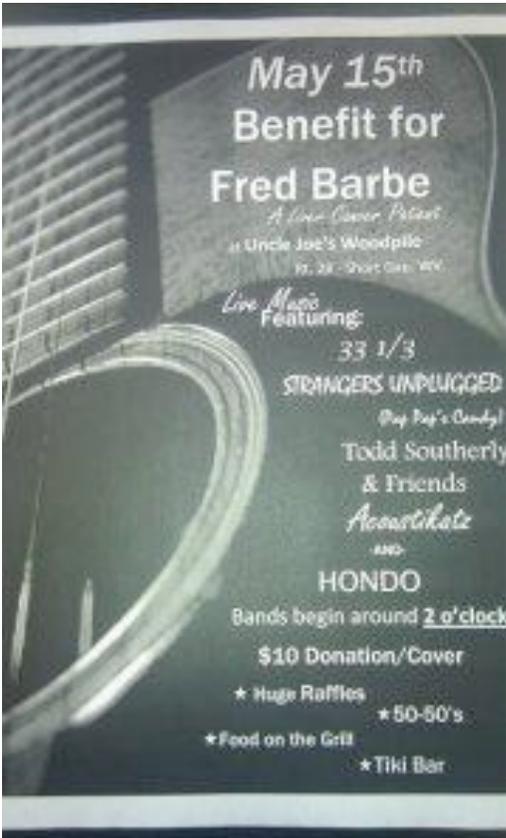
[Bar patron]: So I hope you didn't eat Gertrude after all the good fortune she gave ya.

Arnie: I tell you what – it was a hell of a meal at the next rattlesnake feed! (43:58)

*** This is only a partial transcription. The full file is being kept on file with records of research.*

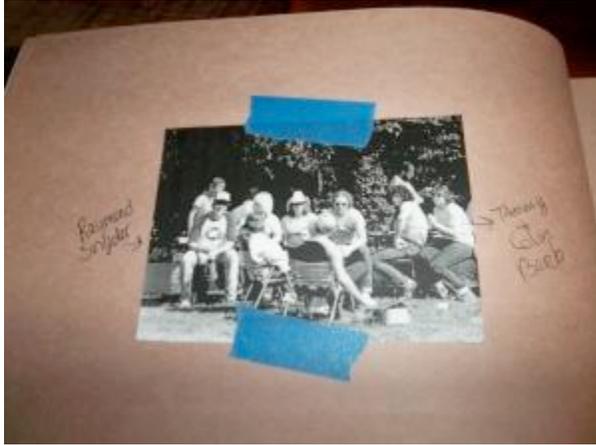
Appendix B

Promotional Resources for Benefits – This section illustrates some of the promotional flyers used by the bar to advertise benefits and events. Flyer distribution & radio advertisements are two of the predominant ways in which Uncle Joe’s Woodpile advertises.



Appendix C

Example Photos (Book of Memories and research related)



These pictures depict several pages from the Book of Memories. Photos were laid in the book, 2 per page, allowing plenty of space for writing and space to photograph the written tags.



Many patrons participated in the 'tagging' process and were very helpful identifying patrons, events, locations, and revealing the stories behind some of the photographs.

The following pictures show some details of the inside of the bar (i.e. bar tops, coolers, signs, etc.)



