TAPE LOG

Fieldworker's tape #: **02.3 (First tape of interview)**

Name of person(s) interviewed: **Junior Taylor**

Fieldworker: **Timothy C. Prizer**

Date of interview: **July 14, 2002**

Location of interview: **Back bedroom of the Taylor residence at 823 Allen Avenue in Blackshear, GA**

Other people present: **None**

Brand of tape recorder: **Radio Shack, CTR-122**

Brand and type of tape: **Maxell XLII**

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF TAPE QUALITY (background noise, etc.)

Taylor's voice recorded much quieter than that of the fieldworker. The interview took place in an un-airconditioned back bedroom of the house, and an oscillating fan causes a constant, but not distractive, droning "white noise" in the background.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF TAPE CONTENTS

The contents are an occupational folklife (or folklore) analysis on Junior Taylor's life living and working in numerous turpentine camps. The interview focuses on all aspects of life in the camp, including child recreation and schooling, foodways, living conditions, church goings, and work in the woods. Speech hesitations such as "um", "and", "uh", and "you know" have been removed from all quotations.

TAPE INDEX

COUNTER NO. SUBJECT

(Opening announcement)

006 74 years old at the time of the interview, Junior Taylor was born on July 18, 1927 on a farm in Alabama. Shortly following his birth, he moved onto a turpentine camp in Mayday, Echols County, Georgia. He remained in Mayday for about 25 years, and started working turpentine at

the age of eight. In the sixty years that he has worked turpentine, Mr. Taylor has lived on approximately twenty camps as he moved from one to the next to escape commissary debt and harsh "boss men". His father was the first in his family to work in turpentine, and Taylor and his eight brothers and one stepbrother soon followed. Taylor also had five sisters who all lived in camps at one point or another.

Outside of turpentine, Taylor worked for a few months in farming in Jessup, Georgia. Until about five years ago, that was the extent to which Taylor had worked in anything other than in the turpentine woods.

040 For the last twenty years of his work in turpentine, Taylor worked on trees that were leased by the state, allowing him to come to work and leave work at whatever time he pleased. When he worked on camps, a man would drive his truck through the living quarters at 4 a.m. every morning and blow his horn to wake the workers up. Taylor says that some of the workers were lazy and wouldn't even go to work some days. Taylor says that he usually drove his own truck to and from the woods everyday. In most of the camps where he lived, the workers did not meet at the commissary before going to work each morning. He says that most evenings, the men would gather there for a while and "cut meat [bacon] out of the barrel."

Usually, a whole hour at lunch time was allowed for break. In the hot summer months, these breaks would sometimes be longer. The workers enjoyed sausage, beans or sardines for lunch each day, and these lunches were carried out with them into the woods in a bucket. Usually, these buckets had lids on them with a handle, and they were often called "syrup buckets" because workers would put syrup in them before leaving for work.

082 Working the camps, he was normally allowed to leave for home shortly before nightfall. It was usually dark by the time they reached their shanties though. Again, many of the workers wouldn't even go to work some days. The truck that came by and blew its horn did not wait very long for the workers. Those that did run to the truck had to share the tight space with the turpentine mules that were also being transported. Some men would still be drunk from the night before when they came to work early in the morning.

Wives normally made breakfasts for their husbands before they took to the woods, and they normally consisted of sardines, eggs, and some sort of meat. The workers would carry stone jugs of water with them in the woods, and to keep the water cool they would bury the jug underground.

122 Mr. Taylor has had both rough and easygoing woodsriders. He has seen one woodsrider slash a worker with a knife (at three feet long, it's really more like a sword) for missing some trees as he went boxing through the woods. Discipline was nearly always for workers who accidentally or perhaps purposefully skipped trees. Though he has seen workers beaten and kicked, Taylor has never seen or known any workers to be killed or lynched by woodsriders.

The mosquitoes were often terrible in the woods. Taylor has known some workers to die from the two or three different kinds of mosquitoes that preyed on the workers as they toiled. One 57-year-old man went home from work one day and died quickly from the mosquito bites. Some of the workers would wear nets over their heads to protect themselves from the mosquitoes.

The woodsriders that Taylor is familiar with never carried guns, but always carried sword-like knives which were intended to be used for cutting unwieldy bushes and cumbersome scrub. Only occasionally would these weapons be used to discipline the workers.

151 Woodsriders were necessary for some of the lazier workers, while some (like Taylor) would have worked hard whether the woodsrider was present or not. Woodsriders were helpful in assisting the workers with injuries and illnesses, as he would often carry his workers into town to see a doctor. Trucks were used in transporting the barrels of gum to the still as Taylor got older. Earlier on in his life working in turpentine, mules would pull wagons hauling barrels. The wagon sitting in Taylor's backyard today could hold six barrels of gum at a time and was once pulled by mules in the turpentine woods.

180 Turpentine mules were extremely intelligent. All a worker had to do was call a mule's name and the mule would walk over to the worker. The mule would stop, go, come, and just about anything else on command. Some mules would run away, tearing apart the trailing wagons as they pranced. When a mule became too tired to continue, it would lie down and wouldn't budge. Some of the workers carried switches with them to hit the mule to make it go faster, etc. Each worker named his own mule, and Taylor remembers some named things like "Queen" and "May".

Some of the mules were tamer than others, and the more tame ones were often thought of as pets. A few workers had mules that would kick them occasionally, and Taylor remembers seeing a mule kick a seat completely off of a wagon one time.

219 Taylor has seen some workers use older methods of cutting box into trees, but he started working in turpentine after the cup-and-gutter system had already been introduced. He has always used sulfuric acid on the trees he worked, and says that it was extremely dangerous to the worker. He has seen the acid eat through workers' clothing and even through the paint and metal on a truck. Taylor is old enough to remember when gum barrels changed from wooden to metal composition. He remembers the coopers ("Mr. Boston" in particular) that would hammer the wooden barrels together, and he said that their work created a very pleasant sound. Children and adults alike would gather to hear them work. "It sounds like a song," Taylor recalls. The cooper would go around the barrel with a chisel, playing a rhythm that could be heard echoing throughout the camp.

281 The best grade of gum was known as "Water White" and the following was referred to as "Nancy". Junior worked with his brothers in the woods throughout his life, specifically with C.J., with whom he worked for approximately forty years. The work crew was normally eight or ten workers in one place, each doing specialized tasks including tacking, hanging cups, and streaking the bark off the tree. The biggest camp Taylor ever lived in had about forty or fifty workers residing within it. He explains that no matter where you were in the area of south Georgia and Florida during the early parts of the last century, there were turpentine camps, stills and workers. On every highway in the region, cups could be seen tacked to the sides of pine trees. Taylor now explains the different areas of Florida in which he also worked turpentine. In one place in Florida, orange groves were also grown in the woods, and the turpentine workers would frequently pick some of the fruit for a snack.

338 Workers were typically paid between $1.50 and $2 per barrel. When he worked in farming, Taylor made close to $30 a week, but he never approached this income in turpentine. Some of the workers were constantly in debt to the commissary, but some of them also found that they needed very little to survive, and therefore stayed out of debt. Most of the food the workers needed only cost a nickel or a dime.

373 Taylor says that he himself never laughed or joked about the woodsriders, but that other workers did frequently. He says that they would pick fun at the way the woodsriders talked. Some would get in cursing matches with the boss men when they were being demanded to do something they felt was unnecessary. Workers would sometimes leave trees unworked on purpose after the woodsrider had gone home for the evening, thinking he had accounted for all of the trees. Workers would often jokingly curse at each other about how lazy the other was. The workers that were called "sorry" or "lazy" would typically laugh it off and curse back at the jokester. Lazy workers were usually considered so because they would only dip about two barrels per day. When a lazy worker was teased, he would usually not work any harder. "He'd just go to laughing," Taylor chuckles.

425 When the workers were hanging cups in the woods, they had many different calls and hollers that would be yelled to the woodsrider to let him know how the work was progressing. These calls would alert the woodsrider to the specific person who had completed a tree, and the woodsrider would mark it off on a notepad. Workers decided on these calls themselves. Taylor remembers himself hollering "Poor Boy", his brother C.G. hollering "Thirty-eight," and others hollering things like "How long" and "One more". The process of hanging cups moved quickly, and when large numbers of workers were working together, the hollers seemed to form one big song. A fast worker could tack from four hundred to six hundred cups in a day. Some of the workers just hollered the whole time, whether they had truthfully finished tacking a tree or not. The guy that hollered "One more" turned his holler into a song, and he would frustrate other workers by singing it constantly. Whether he had tacked a tree or not he would sing, and other workers would yell at him to shut up and let them holler. Another man, who Taylor refers to as "that joker," hollered "Automobile" all day long, whether he had completed a job or not.

467 Most of the time, workers didn't sing while they worked in the woods. But coming from a family of big time gospel singers, Taylor does remember one of his brothers singing frequently. This brother, who drowned at the age of 22 trying to kill an alligator, used to sing on the truck on the way into and out of the woods everyday. The other men on the truck would frequently start crying hearing him sing, and it took the Taylor's a long time to start singing again after this brother passed

away. Taylor's late brother would sing old church hymns like "Moses Is By Us" (?), "Time Will Bring Me Home" (?), "You Drive On", and "Hard-headed Child". When one of Taylor's sisters went to Germany, she took those songs with her and taught them to German citizens, telling them all about her famous Taylor Brothers.

509 The majority of communication in the woods was done through hollering, and very few if any hand signals were ever used. The hollering would get to be so much that even the woodsrider would tell them all to shut up and holler one at a time because he couldn't keep up with who had finished tacking a tree. Taylor says that the woodsrider would often say, "Shut up your damn mouth and let *me* holler! Y'all out there got a damn song going on!" A sense of seriousness comes over Taylor at this point, and he says "It ain't like that now 'cause there ain't no more turpentine like that."

542 Taylor says that most of workers in the woods, when they talked, just told "lies". Most of them were "funny" and obscene, and he did not feel comfortable relaying them to the fieldworker. He makes clear that women were very rarely in the woods with the men, so any topic was fair game for discussion. Sometimes workers knew when one man was courting another's wife and this would be discussed, but never led to any fights in the woods.

564 On most of the camps in which Taylor resided, electricity was not a commodity the workers were able to enjoy in their quarters. Most had a water well and no running water. Lanterns were used for lighting, and the doors were merely a piece of wood that attempted to shut. These doors were called "shutters" by the residents of the camp. To rid the place of mosquitoes, the workers would get a can, fill it with old rags, and then set fire to it. The smoke that followed the extinguishing of the fire drove the mosquitoes away. Workers were thrilled when electricity was introduced in the camps.

603 Though there were few white people at all that worked as hands in turpentine labor, Taylor did know two white families that lived in camps with him in Hoboken. The white workers got away with cursing at the boss men much more easily than did the black workers. Taylor recalls a time when one black worker shot a gun at one of the woodsriders and another worker deflected the barrel just in time for the bullet to miss the woodsrider.

-- SIDE A ENDS HERE --

-- SIDE B --

008 Workers normally wore brogan shoes, overalls and jeans when they worked in the woods. The jeans normally had all types of various patches on them. These patches were normally made from old raggedy pants. The woodsrider occasionally would have patches on their pants too. Homemade liquor and moonshine were always available in the camps. Rarely did any authority figure from off the camp come in to regulate in any way. Police officers were run off by woodsriders and producers numerous times, as were insurance men. Some woodsriders that Taylor has had in the past acted as camp police, and others were extremely laid back.

045 Some of the camps had raggedy homes, while others had nicer quarters for the workers. Most of the homes had no sheetrock or insulation whatsoever, causing for sunlight, rain, wind and cold to come in through the boards. The quarters all had fireplaces and some had heaters.
Pork, beans, and sardines were fixtures in the camp diet. Grits and meal were kept in two separate barrels. Taylor says that he never went hungry, that they had as much food as anyone else.
Beds were made out of wire and iron, and they were surprisingly comfortable, according to Taylor.
The woodsriders and boss men lived in nice big houses on the same piece of land as the workers' shanties.

081 There were a large number of women and girls in the camps. Women worked a lot in the farm, picking and stringing tobacco. Taylor remembers one or two women working in the woods as chippers, and says that they were as good as the male workers. These female workers were normally encouraged by their fathers to work turpentine, and often times they would work beside their fathers all day everyday.

112 Children in the camp could do as they pleased most of the time. Some went to school, but none were forced to by anyone other than their parents. A lot of kids went to school three or four days a week and worked in the woods the rest of the days. Taylor went to school off and on through the fourth grade, before quitting to become a full-time turpentiner for the rest of his life. His brother C.J. had much more schooling than he did.

There were no schoolhouses on the camps, but Taylor remembers that the church houses served as makeshift schoolhouses. The church converted to a one-room schoolhouse on the weekdays, and all the grades would sit together in the same classroom. The teachers were good, according to Taylor, and the children enjoyed going to school. "The children wasn't bad like they is now," Taylor says. He says that the reasons for misbehavior nowadays are guns and drugs. "We didn't know nothing about no dope," he says of the past. Liquor and moonshine were the only drugs kids knew about on turpentine camps.

138 Teachers in the camps rarely lived there permanently, as they would travel onto the camp to teach. Sometimes, they would stay with a worker and his family for a while. Taylor says that one of his brothers courted a teacher that was only about twenty years old at one time while living in the camp.

School and work were both valued commodities, but work was the one thing that helped the families have money for food. He says that he used to try to get two barrels a day done – no more, no less. This was enough for him to eat off of. He was eight or nine years old when he started working in the woods.

165 The little boys in the camps were eager to start working in the woods like their fathers. Taylor's nephew's son, a boy of about ten or eleven years old, wants to be a turpentiner just like his great-uncles. By the time the boy was eight, he loved to go dip gum with them. Before they were old enough to go to work, children would play hide-and-go-seek in the woods a lot. Taylor remembers that he would shoot marbles with other children all the time.

Adults in the camp acted as parents to all of the children. Children could be disciplined by any adult in the camp, whether or not the disciplinarian was the child's biological mother or father. Also, if a worker's wife were to become ill, another woman on the camp would come cook, clean and wash clothes for the ailing woman's family.

193 Little girls in the camp would often play "rings" – games involving several girls standing in a circle, singing rhymes and dancing or walking in a circular motion. Girls never shot marbles like the boys. The girls frequently played with dolls, and they often played a game Taylor calls "Hip

Scotch", referring to the popular children's folk game "Hop Scotch". They also loved to jump rope. "The girls wasn't having no babies like these little girls now do," he says.

The black children that lived in the shanties of the camp were not allowed to play with any white children. The woodsrider's and boss man's children lived lives totally separate from the black children in the camp. Taylor remembers not being allowed to go into the bus station because he was a black man.

220 Churches were much better back in the day when Taylor lived in the camp than they are today. "Them people, you could hear them singing for miles and miles," he says. Taylor and his brothers sang in the churches on the turpentine camps where they lived. These beautifully boisterous songs would carry great distances, from the church and through the pines. "We used to sing one song about 'You Fight On'… My grandmamma used to sing me that song," Taylor reminisces. "Some guy'd be walking by and they'd be about drunk, she'd be singing so in that church until they'd come in that church and give some money to sing that song. That's the truth. You know it be sounding good if it's sounding good to a drunk."

"Keep the sword in your hand

And you'll get what you want

Until the end"

-- You Fight On

257 Church services were usually only held on Sundays. The preachers were both workers and outsiders who came into the camp just on Sundays. The services were sated with clapping, dancing and shouting.

278 When someone would die in the camp, everyone would stay up all night to honor the dead. Bodies were placed in a makeshift casket – a simple wooden box – and buried with the rest of the dead outside of the camp church house. There were no tombstones, merely sticks that would be placed beside the grave. Taylor's father and brother are buried in a turpentine camp graveyard.

Workers were given a full day off of work after someone in the camp passed away. Deaths were rarely caused by anything other than old age, but occasionally people would die from bee stings,

overheating, and the like. Taylor remembers no accidents in the woods that took the life of a worker.

317 Most of the time, workers did not have weddings per say; they simply went to the church and had a preacher run through the vows. Taylor himself was married for $60 at the Valdosta courthouse and four relatives were the only people in attendance. Preachers would occasionally come to people's homes to marry them as well. Taylor marvels over the fact that people spend so much on weddings today and only stay together for two or three months. Wedding rings were fairly rare in the camp.

Taylor drove over 100 miles to see his girlfriend numerous times during the two years he courted her before they were married. "When I was courting her, I had about three or four more girls. She didn't know it though." When a couple would marry in a camp, they were normally given a house of their own. A lot of people married at eighteen or twenty, but the majority were over twenty years of age at the time of marriage.

363 Turpentiners' wives often gave them a lot of flack for not being home often enough. "I didn't stay home either," Taylor says. When Taylor was younger, he often stayed out extremely late even on weeknights, and his wife frequently fussed at him about it.

The commissary was open every evening, and the workers would normally stop by there on their way home from the woods to pick up some food. The commissary sold just about everything the workers could have wanted or needed, but some would occasionally go to the stores in town on the weekends. Sausage was always considered a luxury food, and would only be purchased for special occasions or when the worker found himself with more money than usual.

399 Taylor remembers times on certain camps when money was not accepted at the commissary. A book of stamps, only to be spent at the commissary, served as money for the workers. These stamps were broken into increments of $1, $5, $10 and $20. Workers would pay for a $20 book or a $30 book, and then this would be the only form of payment accepted at the commissary. The workers at Taylor's camps were allowed to leave and go to other stores in town. There were never any requirements that the workers shop at the commissary. Some of the workers worked largely, but not entirely, for groceries.

423 Workers would frequently gather at the commissary to sit around and tell stories. Taylor says that all of these stories were "lies".

444 Taylor has run from camp to camp throughout his life because certain ones treat their workers better than others. Some pay workers more money than others also. Many of the camps Taylor lived on were selected by his father. His father was trying to find the best place to work and raise children, and therefore his dad jumped from camp to camps throughout south Georgia and Florida. The law prohibited owners from crossing the Georgia-Florida line to come get escaped workers. Thus, Taylor went back and forth between states many times to avoid being dragged back to the camp from which he came. It was never difficult for a man who wanted to work turpentine to find a job, no matter where he went. Taylor remembers a time that one Florida producer needed labor so badly that he came late on a Sunday night to help Taylor's father escape to his camp. This man was the nicest turpentine boss Taylor has ever known. The boss treated his father very well, and even gave him two hogs to kill one Christmas.

502 Taylor did a lot of "jooking" in his day. The jooks on the camps were supposed to be open every night of the week except Sunday, but workers would still come on Sundays. Some workers would pile in there every night to drink, gamble and party. Taylor says that he doesn't remember any fights at the jooks, but he does recall a lot of dancing and drinking homemade moonshine. At the jooks, piccolo music would be played, and people would play songs for a quarter on a jukebox. One man in every camp had a jukebox.

528 The dance done most frequently at the jook was called the "Jitterbug". Taylor remembers a brother of his that did this dance often, and he would wear a big hat and big baggy pants that were known as "jitterbug pants" when he would go to the juke. "You don't even got to take your shoes off to take [the pants] off," Taylor explains.

Gambling was very popular at the jooks, and workers would sit there all day and night on Sundays playing cards and dice. One of Taylor's older brothers used to gamble all night some nights, and could win or lose between $400 and $500 a night. Other than "skinning," Poker was the most popular gambling game.

578 "We didn't do nothing but dance and drink liquor and have fun. They didn't never fight hardly," Taylor says of activities in the jook. Police never came into the camp, and when they did, the woodsrider or the producer would run them off. "Jook women" were noticeable at the jooks, but according to Taylor, there never was any prostitution. "They may 'court' different men, but they ain't prostituting," he says.

617 Woodsriders left workers alone when they were at home for the most part.

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-- END OF TAPE 1 (02.3) --

TAPE LOG

Fieldworker's tape #: **02.4 (Second and last tape of interview)**

Name of person(s) interviewed: **Junior Taylor**

Fieldworker: **Timothy C. Prizer**

Date of interview: **July 14, 2002**

Location of interview: **Back bedroom of the Taylor residence at 823 Allen Avenue in Blackshear, GA**

Other people present: **None**

Brand of tape recorder: **Radio Shack, CTR-122**

Brand and type of tape: **Maxell XLII**

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF TAPE QUALITY (background noise, etc.)

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TAPE INDEX

COUNTER NO. SUBJECT

(Opening announcement)

007 Workers were paid once a month for their duties in the woods. A worker could work overtime, which was simply called "extra" by the workers and producers. If a worker did more than was expected of him or if he worked extra time on the weekends, he was usually paid more. The Monday after payday, workers were given the day off. This day was known as "Blue Monday". The workers would often go into town on payday to celebrate. The celebration included shopping

for groceries and clothing. Some of the workers were so in debt to the commissary that they didn't have the money to celebrate. By the time the workers would return to the camp at night, they would all be intoxicated.

030 Someone from the camp would normally drive a large truckload of the workers into town and then sit and wait on them late at night to return to the truck for the ride back home. The truck driver normally had a hell of a time trying to get the workers all back to the truck. "Like I'd be there [at the truck] and they'd send me to go hunt the workers and I'd go back, then I might not come back [to the truck]… Then they'd come hunting me then," Taylor explains. The workers were normally scattered everywhere and by the time the driver had loaded them all back on the truck, it was often one or two o'clock in the morning. Then, the truck had to go to several different camps to take all the workers back. The truck that they loaded on was a long flatbed with wooden sides.

The police rarely became a problem when the workers went into town unless they became especially drunk and rowdy. The guy who drove the truck would look out for them and try to keep them out of the arms of the law. The boss would have to bail workers out of jail occasionally, but this was a rare occurrence.

048 Moonshine was normally made off of the camp and then sold on the camp. The moonshine normally only ran about 75 cents for a pint. A whole five-gallon jug was only $16. The liquor had to be hidden from the boss on most occasions, but sometimes the bosses were lax about enforcing the abstinence of it. Taylor remembers when he and a bunch of other fellows almost got caught with moonshine. The boss threatened to take them to jail, but instead just scolded them and told them not to sell it anymore. Liquor was sold all night Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. Some Monday mornings, the workers would stumble upon a worker from the night before, sleeping under an oak tree with a bottle of moonshine, "cooling out".

079 A "white lady" once told Taylor that she uses turpentine rosin as an ingredient in a potato recipe she enjoys preparing. Though he has not worked turpentine for a few years, Taylor continues to enjoy the benefits of the substance. He often puts turpentine on his cuts and scrapes to help speed the healing process. A little dab of pure turpentine works extremely well on cuts and scrapes, but Taylor says that he would never use any that was drawn from a tree where sulfuric acid was used to

help speed the resin flow. He also remembers taking a small tablespoon of sugar with turpentine dripped on top of it for a cough. He says that many of the older folks in the community today want to buy turpentine from him for medical purposes. "A lot of these old people around here be – 70 and 80 years old – be coming out here wanting me to give them some turpentine. I'm about to run out now," he says. These older folks that want the turpentine from Taylor want it for aching joints in their legs and such. It works anywhere that hurts, Taylor says.

111 If a worker were to get skinned up in the woods, he or someone else would often put turpentine on it quickly. This would increase the speed of the healing process. Taylor says that his arms are scratched up and the skin is tough but thin from working for so many years in short sleeves. Despite people telling him to wear long sleeves in the woods, Taylor never listened because the heat was too much to bear. If ever he did wear a long sleeve shirt, he would end up rolling up the sleeves.

Turpentine was also used to kill off screw worms. Pouring the turpentine into the worms' holes would kill them quickly. These worms would sometimes get inside of dogs' and hogs' heads, eventually drilling holes in their heads and killing them. The workers would take turpentine and pour it directly into the wound of the animal, killing the worms and leaving the animal unharmed.

144 Turpentiners were often picked on by people in the town and elsewhere that did not have any experience in turpentine. They were often called names like "turpentine niggers" as they rode past on trucks. Taylor figures that they were looked down upon because they worked for low wages. The truth is, Taylor asserts, that turpentine workers often made much better money than did guys working on the railroads.

Contests were held amongst workers in the woods to see who could fill up the barrels the fastest. By rushing for this contest, four men could have 25 barrels dipped by three o'clock in the afternoon. Jokes were never played on new workers to Taylor's knowledge. The workers simply tried to teach them how to do the work. Some learned more easily than others.

176 "Some people like to work in the woods. Some of them do, some of them don't. It ain't really all that hard after you get used to it. It's hard work, but you get used to it and it ain't all that hard," Taylor says.

Many times, workers would brag about how good and how hard of a worker they were. The other workers would then try to put them back in their place by beating them at the work. Even the woodsriders and tallymen would compete in their work as well. Taylor remembers a time when his father was tallying trees for a white man that couldn't make it in to work one day, and his father was commended for a job well done – better than that of the normal white woodsrider.

202 "I beat them jokers doing everything, chipping and everything. I chipped more trees than any man of the job. I be dipping more gum too," Taylor says. "Another thing, when you're rosining them trees down off that bark, I was the onliest one that could stand it. All the rest of them that wasn't dead gave up. Because that's all I do in the wintertime, rosin that bark off the tree... I'd rosin every tree we put up; I'd rosin it down myself. Them jokers went to calling me 'Iron Man'."

Taylor runs through similar stories about beating workers and taking trash about it. He recalls as he got older, a younger worker saying that he was going to catch Taylor because the day was so hot and he was getting old. Taylor beat him, and sent him home red-faced and angry. Then, Taylor picks on his brother C.J. "I toted him about forty years. I done all the work, and he'd just be out there most the time. You ask him," Taylor guffaws. "He couldn't take that work like I could. None of them could… Old Man Dukes told them, say 'Ain't none of y'all can stick with ol' Junior.' That's what the boss man told them." "Iron Man" is the only nickname Taylor can remember being used, and he says that it has stuck with him to this day in some people's company. Taylor says that he once chipped 4500 trees in one day and dipped 75 barrels of gum in one month.

254 Taylor and his coworkers had many names for specific locations in the woods. He remembers a place called the "Turn Around" and "Gator Roads". Taylor now remembers some other nicknames for workers – things like "Gator", "Slim", and "Spiderman". The place known as "Turn Around" was deep in the Okefinokee Swamp and most likely got its name from this great distance from the camp. Also, the roads in some of Taylor's camps had actual road signs imprinted with the names that the workers had created.

Gators, bears, deer, wildcats and turkeys were commonly seen in the woods while working. The bears would run away from the workers – often down the road – as soon as they sensed human

presence. One guy would tranquilize the bears and keep them in a cage for a while for people to come see. He would later turn them loose, and Taylor says that he refused to be anywhere near the bear when he was finally let loose.

286 Taylor has come extremely close to being bit by rattlesnakes many times, but fortunately never has been bitten. One day, he stepped within inches of two rattlesnakes that were mating. Luckily, they were not interested in him and Taylor returned with his shotgun.

If someone cut themselves in the woods, he would tie a rag around the wound to stop the bleeding. Occasionally, turpentine was applied to the rag before applying it to the wound.

312 **(Taylor's wife interrupts for a moment, but is not present throughout the interview.)** Yellow jackets, wasps and hornets were a major problem in the woods, and some of their attacks would be deadly. Taylor has been stung many times all over his body. He says that the most important thing is to make sure the hornet is killed after it stings you or it will continue to do so. Yellow jackets were Taylor's least favorite creatures in the woods.

346 Rattlesnakes were the most feared and dangerous creatures in the woods. Only one or two workers were bitten throughout Taylor's entire career. Seeing them was a daily occurrence, and Taylor remembers killing many of them.

Taylor works landscape now – trimming bushes and killing weeds.

381 The only unintentional fires in the woods were caused by workers' cigarettes. Taylor remembers himself throwing a cigarette out two different times and them landing in some gum. Needless to say, the faces of the trees went up in flames. One of the times, the fire got out of control after the workers thought they had put it out. By the time they returned to the woods with boss to put it out, the boss had no idea how by whom the fire was started. Turpentine beetles were a major problem at times, and when the trees would become infested with them nothing could be done but to cut the trees down.

415 Taylor is able to look at a tree and tell precisely how long it has been since it has been chipped. He was also capable of looking up at the tops of the pines to know exactly where he was in the woods at all times, even in the dark of night. This came in handy especially on Friday nights when

the workers would stay out in the woods and hunt all night. The workers could also look up at the moon, and by its position in the sky, they could tell where they were in the woods.

442 One of Taylor's brothers used to make tables, dressers, picture frames, rocking chairs, swings, stools, desks and bed stands out of the fallen timber of the turpentine woods. Women rarely made any crafts as they were typically too busy picking tobacco and cotton.

The only way for a worker to become legendary or well known as a hard worker was to work harder than anyone else, according to Taylor.

478 Workers would often dream of going places off the camp that they knew they would never be able to see for lack of money. "The Greyhound bus would come by where they're working at, and they'd be talking, 'Yeah, you're going my way, but this ain't my day'." This debt that prevented them from going to see these places would also prevent them from retiring. Workers wouldn't have a period of rest before they died. "They'd get so old, they'd just die," Taylor says. Turpentiners worked until the day they died. Taylor says that this makes him glad, in a way, that turpentine went out before he became too old work in it.

544 Taylor remembers the pleasant smell that lingered in the camp from the still after it was charged. "It smells good, that steam do," he says. "All that steam would be coming off that gum, and I'd go get right in that smoke. It'd get up your nose and everything… It'd open you up." He believes that the steam was good for you.

585 Holidays were celebrated predominately by drinking and partying at the jooks. On Christmas morning, children enjoyed standing outside and shooting firecrackers and cap guns. Children normally got wagons, B.B. guns and bicycles for Christmas. Older boys would often get .22 rifles.

-- SIDE A ENDS HERE --

-- SIDE B --

003 Taylor remembers being called by the military to go fight in a war, but does not recall which war it was. He stayed up and drank liquor out of fear all night when he found out that he had been drafted. The boss on Taylor's camp lied to the military and told them that Taylor had a bad heart, making it so that Taylor could stay and work. The boss made it clear that no worker would have to

go to war if they didn't want to. Taylor remembers his brother C.J. voluntarily fighting in the Korean War.

021 It has been three years since Taylor has done any work in turpentine whatsoever, and he says that he doesn't miss it any. "I had gotten sick of it anyway," he says, due to the insufficient pay for barrels of gum towards the end of the industry's downfall.

032 Taylor says that working turpentine has taught him that everyone must fend for themselves, and if they do, they will have the money to survive. "'Cause if you don't work, then you don't get nothing. The more you work, the more you make." Towards the end of Taylor's career in turpentine, he worked for himself on state-leased trees. He furnished all of the tools and cups, and made 80% of the money after turning in the barrels of gum. He enjoyed working for himself because "they can't make you work and they can't make you stop," he says.

047 The cheap production of gum and turpentine overseas in places like China has caused turpentine's downfall in America. The fact that the work is gone for good has sunken in for Taylor. "It's just like anything else, like everything else that goes out," Taylor claims. "You have to forget about it because it ain't never coming back." He says that the fate of the tobacco farming industry seems to be following the same dwindling path.

081 Taylor's father worked turpentine until the day he died about 20 or 25 years ago. Taylor and several of his other brothers are older now that their father was at the time of his death.

If Taylor was to suddenly become a millionaire during his years working turpentine, he would have quit, no questions asked. The work was too hard to stay in it if you didn't have to. He says that if he had become a millionaire, he would have retired and bought a new truck and a big boat for fishing in St. Simons Island. Taylor remains an avid fisherman to this day, just before his 75th birthday.

127 Taylor has not attended or heard of any turpentine festivals in the area, and he says that no one even talks about turpentine work anymore. He wishes that he had pictures of himself working in the woods so that he could "make a movie" to show people all the work that he did. He reminisces on working in the middle of a swamp, the water up to his chest, chipping and dipping deep in the water.

153 For some workers, working turpentine was a form of slavery. Workers that were unable to do a whole lot of work would not get to go home at night until they had finally finished the job.

-- END OF INTERVIEW --

-- END OF TAPE 2 (02.4) --