

TAPE LOG

Name of person(s) interviewed: Gillis Carter

Fieldworker: Timothy C. Prizer

Date of interview: 02 November 2003

Location of interview: The carport of Mr. Gillis Carter's home at Route 2, Box 4320 in Willacoochee, GA.

Other people present: N/A

Brand of tape recorder: Radio Shack CTR-122

Brand and type of tape: Maxell XLII

Tape Number(s): 03.6, 03.7 (Fieldworker's designations)

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

This recording is excellent in sound quality. Though recorded outdoors with the sound of the occasional passing automobile, the recording is surprisingly quiet and crisp. Mr. Carter's voice is nearly always perfectly audible and his words nearly all intelligible.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF TAPE CONTENTS

Mr. Gillis Carter speaks of his life working and employing others in the turpentine woods of south Georgia. He has had a long life in turpentine, and he remains one of the last individuals in the United States still actively working trees, even if for private use and personal reasons. Carter's words are laced with both striking honesty and heartfelt nostalgia. He is quite articulate, and his language is delightfully eloquent.

TAPE INDEX

COUNTER NO.

SUBJECT

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| 001 | Opening announcement |
| 005 | Gillis Carter was born in the eastern part of Coffee County, in a town called Wilsonville. Born May 1, 1941, he had already moved to Douglas in 1944. He lived in Douglas until 1946, when he moved to the farm in Willacoochee that lies across the street and just a few hundred yards down the road from his current home. Since 1946, he has not lived outside of Willacoochee. He says that he was just like any other farm boy, having chores to do around the |

farm. From Carter's earliest recollections, his father was always involved in the turpentine industry. His father, Era Carter, started out leasing land from others until eventually he had secured some land for private ownership. They worked and hired others to work turpentine on the land they owned, and they continued to work on land they leased from timber owners in various parts of three counties.

- 017 As early as the mid-to-late 1940s, Gillis Carter had become acquainted with the mules and wagons and the everyday activities of turpentiners. As he got older, he learned the menial tasks associated with the different seasons that are required of all turpentiners. In late spring, he remembers chipping boxes, an activity that would last into the fall. Carter and his three brothers learned early in life the value of work. He says that his father never was hard on them, but he raised them in such a way to understand the importance of hard work. As a grown man, he looks back fondly on turpentine and the basic skills it required, for it taught him profound lessons in the value of hard work and it is a reminder that such labor was the livelihood of people for centuries beforehand.
- 035 As far as Gillis Carter knows, his father was the first in his family to work extensively in the turpentine industry. But it is highly unlikely, he says, that his father was the first in the family to have any involvement whatsoever in turpentine. Farmers for centuries in the South, whether they picked cotton or tobacco, usually had a small patch of timber (a "one- or two-horse farm") that they worked on their own to supplement their profit from the naval stores industry. This was especially common in the "Hoover years" of the late 20s and 30s, Carter explains, when the economy was tough on laborers. Turpentine provided just the extra boost in income to account for the survival of many families in the southern states.
- 050 Gillis Carter's father era married a woman from the nearby Gillis family in December of 1937, and prior to this event, Era Carter had been involved in turpentine for only a short period of time. Era was raised a small farm boy, and only a small creek divided the farmlands of Gillis Carter's grandpa on the Carter side of the family and that of his grandpa Gillis. Carter's mother, née Gillis, was raised on one side of the creek while Carter's father was raised on the other. They were seven years apart in age. Carter's father opened a service station in 1937 and his mother worked there pumping gas and selling staple goods to people from the

Willacoochee community. It was at this time that Era became heavily involved in the production of turpentine, and for 41 years, he would remain a central figure in the industry. It wasn't until 1978 that turpentine had disappeared from his part of the country to the degree that Era and Gillis had to quit their reliance on it and turn to other sources of income.

- 067 All of Gillis Carter's involvement in the turpentine industry took place within 12-15 miles of his current home in Willacoochee. The furthest point at which Carter worked turpentine from his current home is across from Arnie Church on Highway 135 in Coffee County. Most of his involvement did take place in Atkinson County, however. They also did some work in Berrien County, and it was in Berrien County that Gillis did much of his work as an adult in the turpentine industry.

Children and Schooling

- 081 As a boy, he worked the trees around his home, and he remembers a great number of stories about working as a youngster in the woods. On one occasion at the age of eight or nine, he was working with his brother and they had dipped a fair amount of gum throughout the day. Gillis had a little bucket and his brother a larger one. When they were walking out of the woods with their full buckets of gum, Gillis tripped over a cypress knot. In an attempt to save his bucket of gum, he set the bucket straight down on his fall and fell over top of the bucket. The gum, however, sloshed over with its impact with the ground and splashed all over Carter's clothes. Gillis went to his neighbor's house, and there, the Spivey family was quick to offer some kerosene to clean the gum-soaked boy standing on their doorstep. Gillis and his brother worked hard at an early age, and they learned how to use the mules, the wagons, the equipment, and the tools as young children. On occasion, other boys in the area would come in the woods and help out the Carter brothers as well. They would ride the wagon home for lunch and come back in the afternoon.
- 119 As a boy, Carter was never assigned a certain piece of timber as his sole responsibility. All was worked under his father's name, but Gillis began helping out in the woods when he just eight years old. More than anything, as he grew a bit older, Gillis prepared land to be worked before laborers came in to begin chipping boxes. He made the woods fire-safe ("burning it of a night") and cut ditches throughout the woods. He learned how to handle the sharp tools and how to locate the trees that promised the highest productivity. Many of the best trees were in swampy areas in which people had

to walk “foot logs” to reach the pines and would then chip boxes while standing in water. Carter explains a specific area of the woods that required great balance and agility to traverse.

Knowledge, Innovation, and Coping with Danger

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Carter says that he and other workers always used to look up at the tops of the trees and would hang the cup on the side of the tree that had the most – or the thickest – branches and limbs. “I don’t whether that was of any value or not,” Carter says, “but the old-timers always said it’d run better with the cup on that side of the tree.” This decision also depended upon the curvature of the tree. Only if the side of the tree with the most limbs looked like it would accommodate a face could this theory be applied. They would flatten the face as much as possible to prevent having to use extra nails as well. Five nails generally can tack a cup to a tree, but at times there would be a crack that required mending or else the gum would run from the veins of the tree and out onto the ground rather than in the cup. At the end of the season, when the gum had been collected and dumped into the big Blue Whistler barrels to be hauled to the still, they would take the cups and “boil ‘em out,” i.e. place them in a boiler to clean them. They would then beat the cups out on cold mornings to get the flakes of old turpentine out of the cups. The cups would then be stacked 25 to a rack. The strongest worker in the woods was then responsible for toting the cups through the woods. Big trees allowed for two cups while most would accommodate only one. Carter recalls that they had to follow government regulations when it came to how many boxes could be chipped on each tree. No tree smaller than 10-inches in diameter and breast-high could be worked at all. Carter learned to chip, to dip, and all other activities before acid was introduced into the woods. This, he says, made it so that workers didn’t have to cut as deeply into the trees in order to crack a vein and cause the rosin to flow. Prior to 1978, Carter and his brothers were in the woods working daily. After 1978, they had to turn to more traditional forms of farming in order to make a living.

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Carter explains that there was some instruction from his father on how to work turpentine when he was a small boy just learning the ropes. But primarily, he says, it was a matter of *doing* the work, of observing and of hands on experience and learning from one’s mistakes.

Children and Schooling

Mr. Carter says that his father and mother always kept him and his brothers in the loop and informed of the success or failure of the

turpentine operation at the current time, even when Carter and his brothers were very young.

“I’ve got some written letters that my mother wrote back in the 50s. She was writing some relatives out in Arizona, and Daddy ... one particular place was the farm we’re sitting on right now, Daddy ... Mother wrote my aunt and says, ‘Era’s bought another farm and paid X number of dollars for it.’ And she says, ‘He’s dependent on these boys helping him work it out’ – helping him pay the debt. And we never was no secrets around us children. Daddy never kept one secret from us. And he and Mother always told us everything that was going on. We were exposed to it. We knew how much the tenants owed, you know, and if they borrowed money, how they were supposed to pay some back, you know. And how we did when trouble came, if somebody got hurt or if one of the laborers wives was in labor with children, we always went and carried and helped and paid and then they would pay us back in the years to follow.” People working turpentine, Carter says, were just like any other worker back then; they didn’t make much money but they made do with what they had.

Carter says his father showed him things in the woods now and then, but there was no rigid process to teach him and his brothers in the woods. Carter used to love to watch the man who was really good with the wood hack make the first cut on a virgin pine tree. Though it looked dangerous, he doesn’t remember anyone ever getting cut or anything while doing it. He also doesn’t feel that rattlesnakes were as big of a problem in the woods as many make them out to have been. Many employees killed rattlesnakes in the woods, but rarely were any workers bitten.

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Carter says that he normally did not go into the woods with the men in the morning. Before he went off to college at the University of Georgia (where he received his B.S. in Chemistry) and got married, we would awake in the mornings to large country breakfasts that his mother always had prepared for him and his brothers. She acted as though cooking for the men in her life was a “happy chore,” Carter says. Carter would be out of bed by 5:30 or 6 o’clock in the morning so he could eat and ride to pick up his workers and haul them into the woods. They drove the men into the woods either in the bed of the truck (in warm weather) or scrunched together in the cab (in cold weather). Nearly all of the workers were black, but some were white. Carter remembers that his workers always had eaten by the time he picked them up from

their homes, and they would bring a bucket lunch with them into the woods each day.

The Turpentine Mule and the Pickup Truck

The mules were kept in barbed-wire pens built in the woods and Carter carried corn and hay into the woods for the mules. His father Era required that each mule had fifteen ears of corn, and he expected his sons to shuck it for them. The boys were required to chop the ear in two as well so that the mules didn't choke. Each was given a large block of hay and a barrel full of water. His father required that each mule be well-kempt as well, their manes trimmed and their fur clean. Anytime a mule became ill or injured, a veterinarian was called out to the woods to care for it. Most of the mules were gentle, and Carter's father had no problem with his young sons working with the mules. One African American man was a great handler of the mules that weren't so well-behaved, and he was responsible for disciplining them when they acted like a "real mischievous child" as they occasionally did.

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The Turpentine Mule and the Pickup Truck (cont.)

Gillis Carter was raised around mules. He had five in his barn near his home, and he alternated with couple of mules would work each day. "A mule is so much smarter than a horse 'til it's a sight in the world," Carter says. One of Carter's dippers, Chester A. Graham, a disabled veteran, was one of the best workers in the woods and he was one of the best with the mules. Chester worked with one mule named "Blue," and he had the mule trained to the degree that he never had to tie the mule up in the woods. "Blue" was left loose in the woods, and she came whenever called. If "Blue" hauled her wagon up against a tree or a stump, she had the intelligence to back up until the wagon was free, and she would then maneuver so that the wagon would follow her unobstructed. Some of the mules would get skittish and run away, sometimes with workers in tow. One teenage black worker, John Lockhart, was working with a big white mule one day. Trying to hook her to the wagon in the rain, John and the other workers finally got her tied down. John said that he was ready for them to let go of the mule, and when they did, the swift white animal took off through the corn patch. Luckily, the rain had softened the ground in the corn patch and the wagon bogged down until it came to a stop. Carter's father got rid of the mule after this incident. "She just maybe didn't get used to us," Carter says. "Or might've been like some of us, Tim; she might've been having a bad day." There was no real process to naming the mules, Carter says. They simply picked a name and called the

mules by that designation from there on. They had mules named “Kate,” “Red,” and “Blue.”

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The Turpentine Mule and the Pickup Truck (cont.)

Carter recalls one story in which a man from Pearson, Georgia purchased one of Era Carter’s mules in order to pull the newly chopped timber from his property. Two or three years later, Carter was in the Pearson area when he saw the mule on the property of the man who had purchased him years before.

“I seen our old mule out there, and you know, there just like friends are to you. I just wanted to stop and look at the old mule a minute, you know. And I can’t remember the exact words Tim, I used, but I’ll use this. I walked out there and there was several colored men out there. They were sawing down trees and cutting limbs off with an axe and sawing up the trees... And some of them had this old mule out there snaking the logs around to the old ‘bunch ground,’ we called it. And I says, ‘How’s old Joe doing?’ The colored man looks at me and says, ‘Joe? Who is that?’ I says, ‘It’s that old mule there that this gentleman had bought... from my father.’ I said, ‘Joe’s that old mule’s name.’ That guy looked real perturbed and disappointed. He says, ‘You know, we didn’t know that was his name.’ Said, ‘We been calling him Jack all this time.’” Though a true story, Carter says, a mule would likely answer to anything. One mule, a male “horse” mule, was extremely strong. When Carter bogged his truck down in a stream of water known as Mill Creek one day, he had six men wade into the water and push as hard as they could to try to dislodge the truck from the muddy creek floor. Unable to do so, an older black man named J. W. talked Carter into allowing their mule, “Doc,” to try. Though doubtful of the mule’s success, Carter took the chain and hooked it from the back of the wagon to the front of the truck. J. W. got off of the wagon with the reins in his hand, clucked “Doc,” “Doc” tightened up and felt the load. Doc’s tail stuck straight out when he felt the load he was charged to pull from the creek, and he pulled the truck from the water with Mr. Carter giving it the slightest bit of gas behind him. So many years later, Carter is still blown away by this event and the mule’s demonstration of brute strength. Another mule that Carter remembers was a reddish mule named Tom. Tom was notable because of his seemingly paradoxical qualities of strength and gentleness. Carter explains that he and others used to get very attached to the mules, especially when they were entrusted to feed

and water them. Rarely did Carter or any of the other workers ride the mules, but they did on occasion. The mules were kept of home except for when they would be working in a specific part of the woods a good ways from home. Then, the aforementioned barbed-wire pins were constructed to house the mules.

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When Carter was just in grammar school, he remembers that his father was pulling a mule behind his truck one day on the way home from the woods. The mule, for one reason or another, decided to be stubborn and repeatedly pulled back on the rope halter, causing the truck to strain. Carter's father became frustrated at the mule's obstinacy and continued to push on in the truck. The mule began to slobber, and as the rope became wet, it wouldn't give any at all. Suddenly, the mule fell to the ground. Gillis' father stopped the truck, jumped out, and ran around back to cut the rope from the mule's nose to give him some air as the rope had cut off his breathing. When he freed the mule from the rope, the mule took one breath of air and died on the spot, "just as dead as a hammer," Carter says. Though this was a very sad occasion, his father would never have done it on purpose for the world, Carter says. This is the only mule that Carter remembers dying when he was a boy. Carter remembers that, prior to 1950, mules were often used for plowing.

The only commands that Carter remembers using with the mules were "Whoa!," "Go!," and "G up!" "G up!" and "Hah!" meant for the mule to take a step in the other direction. [Carter's wife and mother-in-law come onto the carport and prepare to leave]

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Carter's father began hiring black laborers to work in his turpentine woods between the years of 1944-46. Prior to this, he did use black labor some, but his typical work crew consisted of three or four white men. When he began leasing land, he started hiring large numbers of black laborers.

Race and Nostalgia

An air of quiet sincerity falls over Carter's voice.

"We've had a lot of real good black people. They're just like white people. You'll have some that's mean, some that's in trouble, and some that don't want to cooperate, but most of the time, we had mighty good men, mighty good men. And we worked a good many through the years. You know, I could've written down a list. I thought about it one time, just writing a list of all the men that I remembered."

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The quarters in which the Carter's black laborers lived were built at various times, and most of them were standing before the Carters

arrived. On some of the quarters, Carter and his father and brothers built onto the back of the homes to make them larger. He says that many of the homes had been standing in the area since the 20s and 30s. [Carter's grandchildren make noise in the background] The homes housed laborers of the tobacco farms, the cotton farms, and even the turpentine woods before the Carter's gained ownership of the little homes. Many of the workers that occupied the homes worked a little in all of these industries, "a jack of all trades." Carter says it just came natural for these people to be hard workers to survive and provide for their families. At one point in time, none of the homes had running water. In fact, it was in 1957, when Gillis Carter was 16 years old, that he recalls using *his* first toilet. Up until this point, they used outhouses and drew their water from a well. Carter reflects for a moment on the dramatic role that electricity played in the lives of southern farm families. [Carter says goodbye to his grandchildren. The car starts and they depart] Carter says that a lot of producers built extensive quarters to house a large number of workers close to the woods so that they would have no excuse not to be in the woods the next morning. He remembers one man in particular, Mr. Betts, who even built a commissary on the place for his workers. Carter found this intriguing as a boy.

[End of Side A]

[Beginning of Side B]

001 The commissary that Mr. Betts had was stocked with staple goods. Some commissaries also had tokens that translated to certain amounts of money in the store. Workers used the tokens as currency for their groceries and other items. Carter remembers that Nat and Todd Gillis and their father Norman Gillis had a large turpentine operation and used these tokens. Carter says that he has one of these tokens today, and on it reads, "N. E. Gillis & Sons." **"From the Womb to the Tomb": The Commissary and Camp Life (A Humorous Folktale)**
Carter relates a folk story that he heard a number of times about the commissaries:
"Times was so hard back then that one of the hands had caught a big gopher and carried him to the commissary... He threw him up on the counter and the man says, 'What do you want for this gopher?' He says, 'I'd like to have a sack of flour.' The man who owned the commissary just set the gopher behind the counter and threw him a sack of flour up there and gave him two little bitty gophers for change." Carter explains that this and several other

stories used humor to refer to the barter system common on turpentine camps and in turpentine commissaries.

Carter explains that those who ran the commissaries kept ledger books to keep track of what was sold and who owned what back to the commissary. Until recently, Carter had his grandfather's ledger book. This gave him the opportunity to see his grandfather's beautiful handwriting. Carter says that his grandfather died when little Gillis was just six years old, and he scantily remembers him. He finds it interesting that his grandfather charged his own children the same amount for goods from the commissary that he charged his laborers, a fact that is clearly revealed in this old ledger book. Most of the entries in this ledger book were from the years of 1910-1915. Carter wanted a copy of this book so badly, but the house caught fire and burnt the ledger book to ashes. "It's just one of those little bits of history that's gone the other way," Carter laments.

The "Spirits" of Turpentine: A Conclusion

027 "There's been a lot of hard work, a lot of sweat dropped in these old piney woods around this area. A lot of people that's labored and worked so hard that's done forgotten. But the good Lord knows each and every one of 'em. And they're all counted."

"From the Womb to the Tomb": The Commissary and Camp Life

033 Though Carter didn't ever own or operate a camp, he did have quarters built solely to house black turpentiners close to the woods in which they would labor day in and day out. The workers were paid, Carter explains, on a percentage base. The landowner from which the Carters leased the land was given 25 percent of the profits. The employees were given 25 percent as well. The Carter family managed the remaining 50 percent, he explains, using it to pay the dipper, load the gum and haul it to the still. Plus, Carter adds, a turpentine producer in those days had to be somewhat of a banker. This was because workers would need to borrow money here and there. Over the years, these small but numerous borrowings accumulated to a good deal of debt, and the producer was responsible for keeping up with these transactions. The debt frequently drove workers to take off in the middle of the night to seek employment 100 miles away on another turpentine camp. In these situations, workers were often never heard from again and the producer had to swallow the debt. Producers occasionally hunted down the workers in an effort to bring them back and make them work off the debt, but this was not always possible. "As the old

saying goes,” Carter says, “You can’t get blood from a turnip.” Carter says that his father was always careful when hiring a new hand to ask the former hand’s boss how much the hand owed at the time. Carter’s father paid the producer off in full before taking the worker to his piece of land to work off the debt he had incurred to his new boss in the transfer. Interestingly, Gillis Carter is careful here to emphasize and clarify that his father didn’t *buy* workers (as in slavery); rather, he merely hired them. He explains that dippers especially made good money for the time. A dipper could realistically bring in \$50/week, which, Carter says, was sufficient in the 40s and 50s.

“From the Womb to the Tomb”: The Commissary and Camp Life

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Carter says that he too had workers that remained in debt to him and would up and leave in the middle of the night for that reason. Another reason workers left operations for others also, he says, was severe dissatisfaction. Also, there were those workers who missed family. “Maybe you got a fellow that, he don’t have any relatives within 40 miles of here, and he’s like the Wayfaring Stranger, he’s just in a place that he just can’t get adjusted to, and he’s never satisfied ‘til he gets back home.” Other workers were simply “mean,” Carter says, and their sole purpose was to beat you – to borrow all he could and get lost in the middle of the night. Carter says that he and his father have had good friends to get shot to death after happening upon a turpentine laborer moving in the middle of the night to escape his debt. One particular occasion involved Gillis’ father’s best friend in Wilsonville. The man was shot and killed by a turpentine’s shotgun. The man’s brother-in-law was downed as well, but he survived. The man that did the killing was caught and killed – likely lynched – by a mob of white men in the Wilsonville area. “But times is different,” Carter says, “and I’m glad things ain’t like they used to be, Tim. It was just a way of life that’s kind of gone, but I think it’s got a lot of history. For so many years, starting out in North Carolina, and as the belt, as the timber was cut out, they come by down South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, the Alabama-Mississippi area. But it was a long process, and our little turpentine operation was just a drop in the bucket because there was a lot of operators, a lot of big operators. And then always remember those little small one-horse farmers that had him a thousand trees that he could get him two or three barrels out of. And the gum might not have been bringing him a bunch, but in relationship to everything else, it was bringing him a pretty fair price.”

Carter runs through the payment percentage breakdown on his operation again. He explains that the amount left for his family – the largest percentage – was used to handle the time, gas, trouble, aggravation, “blowed-out” tires, and such with which a turpentine producer must deal. [A car pulls up and Carter wonders aloud why it is stopping]

- 095 On any given day in the woods, Carter had about eight or ten men chipping boxes. In dipping season, only two or three would come into the woods each day. In later years, some of the men drove their own vehicles into the woods each day. [Carter requests that tape be stopped so that he can look into why the car has stopped in his driveway. It turns out to be Carter’s preacher, and the tape is stopped for nearly 45 minutes while the two men visit with one another.]
- 104 Those black workers employed by Carter and his father did various things for entertainment outside of the woods. Many of them, Carter says, played bingo and other games at night. Nearly all of them loved to fish. And many of them were fond of beer. Carter says that he and his father knew that they had to tolerate alcohol consumption among their workers, and oddly, Carter says, those workers who drank the most were often the best workers. Though the Carters did have great workers who were arrow-straight preachers, most workers did drink on the weekends and they were most typically the best workers. Though the workers that drank the hardest on the weekends rarely made it into the woods on Mondays, they “worked like the mischief” Tuesday-Friday and often accomplished more in four days than most did in five. If a worker chose to work on Saturday, the Carters paid double wages. Many workers took advantage of the extra income. Carter says that Saturdays were also the days that he would load 37 barrels of gum onto his old yellow GMC truck and haul them to the still. He explains how he made “skid poles” from pine trees, which served as a ramp on which to roll the barrels up onto the truck. Carter remembers that there was one black worker who could load an entire load of 550-pound barrels onto the truck by himself. Carter moved the truck from station to station in the woods, loading barrels onto the truck.
- 167 The black workers rarely did any horse riding, though Era Carter did have a jet-black horse available to them at all times. Some rode occasionally, but most of the workers that enjoyed riding the horse were white. Carter reflects on the fact that nowadays, it seems more blacks have become interested in horse riding. Many

workers also tinkered with little gardens in the yards in front of their quarters. Workers and their wives were avid farmers of all sorts of vegetables. Rarely did any workers bring their kids into the woods with them as the children were normally in school. Carter says that he feels sure that before his time, workers did bring their kids into the woods with them. Prior to Carter's time, schooling was felt much less imperative than working to help the family make ends meet. Carter recalls that he and his brother used to gather up the mule in the morning and pick up a couple of young white boys, the sons of Jesse Hall, and haul them into the woods to dip gum all day.

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Turpentiners were often specific about the type of boxes they liked to chip. Many of them found virgin boxes preferable to all others. After two years, the boxes are raised up higher on the tree. These are then called "snatch" boxes, for the motion required to chip them was similar to a snatching action. Later still, the boxes are moved further up the tree, when they become known as "pulling" boxes because a long-handled tool known as a puller is required to reach up the tree and chip the boxes. Jesse Hall preferred pulling boxes to all others, Carter remembers. Carter says that his father always allowed his workers to choose which type of boxes they liked to chip, and if at all possible, he would direct them to the trees that needed their preferred method of chipping.

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"It Just Sounded Like a Song, All Day Long"

Carter explains that, though his father certainly didn't favor him over his other children, Gillis was allowed to act as the tallyman in the woods, perhaps because from the earliest years he exhibited the most interest in the turpentine industry. Carter's father paid the workers by the tree, an incentive that drove the men to tack tin on as many trees as possible. "If you was gonna pay 'em \$6 a day," Carter explains, "they didn't care if they tacked a hundred or 200, preferably a hundred." Carter said he doesn't remember how much the men were paid per tree when he was tallying, but he does remember their calls and hollers. One man in particular, Carter says, had a very intriguing call. Wilburt Johnson, who still lives in Willacoochee, was a bit wild as a young man. Though he found the Lord later in life, he was once a "leader of the clannish black people," Carter says, and he had a jook that catered to the rowdy desires of black turpentine woodsmen. The workers gambled and drank their money away in this place. Wilburt was one of 4-7 men that Carter had in the woods nailing tins at any given time. Each one had a distinct holler, and Wilburt's was by far the most distinct. Wilburt hollered "Can I Go, Man? Can I Go?" Carter

would put a mark down on the tally sheet for each time Johnson let his holler out. Another man, Isaiah Samms, had an extremely deep voice that carried a long way across the pines. His holler of choice was "Two." Yet another man, Walt Wesley, the late brother of current Willacoochee resident and former turpentineer Ralph Wesley, hollered "Viola" in the woods. Carter says that he wishes he remembered all the tally calls, but these few will stay with him always. Carter says he has no idea how the calls and hollers were chosen, but that he will give the interviewer the phone number of Wilburt Johnson to inquire directly to the man who chose it. Carter says that Wilburt never was a heavy drinker himself, but he sold it and was very much exposed to it. He has since become a straight-laced Christian, however. In his day, he was a leader of the black workers, and they looked up to him as their superior.

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Carter says that he can't remember many nicknames that the workers designated for one another or for places in the woods. One man went by "Book" Lockhart, but Carter isn't sure if this was a nickname or his real name. Carter recalls that one night, a car pulled up in his driveway after dark and blew the horn. He went to see about it, and the driver told him that one of his workers, William Jones, had been "stuck" (i.e. stabbed) in town and had been carried to the hospital in Douglas. Carter said that he'd put his clothes on and go to the hospital. When he was preparing to leave, he noticed that Book was standing in his yard, and he was "three sheets to the wind." Book demanded to go with Mr. Carter to the hospital. Carter told him that, with as drunk as he was, he would get arrested by the security guards at the hospital. Book insisted that he'd only had a few beers, so Carter took him along. At the hospital, Carter was relieved to discover that William wasn't hurt badly. He merely had to stay a couple of days for observation and such. Carter left William's hospital room and started heading out to the car when he ran across Book standing in the security guard's booth, carrying on a conversation with him. Carter was so afraid, he says, that Book was going to get arrested for public intoxication. Carter says that, though he can't remember nicknames very well, he'd be happy to show the interviewer his father's old ledger books from the commissary.

325

Carter says that his father tended to walk the woods to look after his workers rather than riding them as would a woods rider. Era Carter kept a four-wheel drive pickup truck in his possession at all times from the time they first became available. Gillis says that his father would stand in the woods and watch his workers in surveillance, and if they skipped a tree or a patch of trees, he would

calmly tell them to go back and attend to the trees they had missed. Unlike many other woodsriders and producers, he didn't yell and scream or physically harm the workers in any way. It was important to not miss any trees as the faces would "grow up" or heal over if they were neglected when it came their time in the cycle to be worked. Carter remembers a handicapped worker that used to labor on his property named Junior May. May was hare-lipped and a bit slow, but he was "precious to [Carter's] soul," he says. He lived alone with his mother well into adulthood. Junior once bought a Cadillac and wanted Era Carter to sit in it and see how it felt. Junior also frequently associated with the sons of Jesse Hall, a wild group of boys who seemed to always be in trouble. One night, the Hall boys and Junior May were riding through town in May's new Cadillac. May had bought insurance for the car, which was somewhat rare in his day. This night, the Hall boys were able to talk Junior into setting the car afire. They pulled off of Highway 135 in Willacoochee and burnt the car for fun. Era found out about this and asked Junior just to see if the story were true. "Them damn Hall boys burnt my car," Junior ensured. Junior left the Carter's operation eventually but would return after his mother passed away. He then left again and moved back to Homerville, GA to live and work. He eventually was diagnosed with cancer and died in the mid-to-late 80s. Junior loved to sing and play the guitar. He was a lonely man who found no greater joy or company than in his six-string and in the droning sounds of his own vocal cords. Carter remembers that he used to go and sit with him while he'd play the guitar, and the two of them would sing. "It'd just make tears come to your eyes," Carter says. Before moving to the nursing home in Homerville where he would eventually die, Junior May spent time in treatment in Augusta. One day while in treatment, Junior May was visited by a case worker who wanted to know if there was anything Junior didn't have that he wanted. "Ma'am, I'd like to have an old guitar," Junior said. In just a few minutes, she had happened upon a guitar for him, and he sat for days and happily strummed and picked upon its strings.

406

Carter says that he once had a group of white folks who lived with one another in the small quarters in Carter's cotton field next to his home. All of them were musicians, and Carter remembers them putting microphones up in pine trees so that their sound would be amplified across the fields and down the road. They'd blast their speakers and get on the microphones and announce themselves like they were on WLS in Douglas, Carter remembers fondly. "We're

out here at Era Carter's turpentine place," the men would say into the microphone before breaking into song.

422

Junior May was so talented on the guitar that he could lay it behind his neck and play "Wildwood Flower" without missing a note. Carter hums the tune to "Wildwood Flower" and says, "He could pick that thing as pretty as you ever seen." Carter says that they mostly sang gospel songs, but he remembers in particular a country/western song called "The Little Nashville Girl." Carter sings a line of the song and explains that it was a tragic tale of murder. Regardless, Junior May loved to play and sing it, and he and Gillis often sung it together. The group of white folks that lived on Carter's land and played their amplified guitars could be heard for miles upon miles on still nights, Carter says. They also played harmonicas at times. Carter recalls that his worker John Lockhart was talented at "Limbo Rock," or merely "Limbo."

"It Just Sounded Like a Song, All Day Long" – "Beating the Bones"

460

One of the favorite pastimes of the black turpentine in Carter's memory was an activity called "beating the bones." Workers gathered around and created entrancing beats with nothing more than the sound of their hands dragging and slapping the meat of their legs. Carter introduces the practice. "The key to it is making rhythm. Blacks are excellent at making rhythm. That's the reason they're on 90 percent of the channels on television now; they got such a gift for that." He begins playing a captivating rhythm using just one hand and his leg. The rhythm becomes more complex and full when he adds his other hand to the mix. He stops. "I couldn't have found that nowhere but observing them and learning how to do it long, long ago. Fifty something years ago." Carter remembers that one man could strike his open mouth with a cupped hand in the middle of the rhythm when he "beat the bones" to make the beat even more intricate. Once the black folks matured past the stages of "knee babies," as Carter calls them, they were already participating in the practice of "beating the bones." By the time they were five or six years old, black children had all but mastered the art. Carter now demonstrates that some workers could play the rhythm with one hand crossing from one leg to the other. Carter says that rhythm has always come natural to him as well. He used to dance, and he believes that his talent with rhythm comes to him from his mother's side of the family. Carter has had foot troubles in the past, and a couple of years ago, he lost half of his foot to surgery. Since then, he has lost his will to dance, but he wishes to pass the tradition on to his grandchildren one day.

“Beating the bones” rarely took place in the woods, but occasionally on breaks the subject would come up and the workers would “get down and get with it,” Carter says.

Race and Nostalgia

515

After speaking about the habits and traditional practices of African Americans, Carter introduces his next narrative with a bit of hesitancy. He states cautiously that, “I’ll probably pick up on it when we turn the tape off,” and he laughs.

“It’s been rather intriguing being around ‘em [blacks]. You learn a lot. They have feelings just like we do. And I’ve seen some sad times with some of them, you know. And I might of mentioned yesterday about the lady asked my father to pick her up some Silver Cow [milk] for the baby when he goes to town because it was out of milk. That same particular family lost a child while they were here, and as a little boy, I don’t know, it was just an instinct within us, we couldn’t stand to see people hurt. We was down in Willacoochee, and the couple’s child was real sick and they carried to a doctor in Pearson and it died [Carter’s voice trembles with sad compassion]. Well, back then, a lot of times, Tim, they didn’t carry it to a funeral home. They’d just bring it home and the next day bury it. And they pulled up to a certain station in Willacoochee and we were across the street. And Daddy and Mother maybe had already heard that the child was dead. But they had the child in the back seat of that car covered up. And they stopped over there and those little kids was eating ice cream right in that backseat with that little baby. You know, it covered up. And us children was across the road over there eating a Snowball. And when Mother told us that that little baby was in that car dead, we couldn’t taste of our Snowball again. Lost all thoughts of wanting anything to eat. Our hearts, we could see the little kids in the backseat of that car over there. It’s just touching, heart-rending, but this is the truth. Those little kids were licking those ice creams and that little dead baby covered up there in the backseat. That’s one of the sad things that happened out here.

Knowledge, Innovation, and Coping with Danger

555

Another black man that the Carter family was fond of was an elderly man named Jesse Henderson. In 1970, Jesse was old but extremely intelligent. He assumed the task of taking care of Era Carter’s mules in addition to his regular turpentine work. He did

several odd jobs that were difficult to get others to do. He cut back pecan limbs and built hog chutes for the family. Jesse had a brown dog named "Old Man," whom he carried to the woods with him everyday. While working some timber four or five miles from the Carter home one day, Jesse came upon a bunch of rattlesnakes. Because he had killed so many in the past, he wasn't frightened. "Old Man" used to bellow boisterously when he came upon a snake, and he would chase the snakes up the nearest tree. Jesse lived just a mile and a half or so from the Carters, and on one occasion, he came by and told Gillis that "Old Man" had trailed up a rattlesnake just across the field a ways. "Old Man" chased the snake to a fence and the snake slithered under it and into a gopher hole. Jesse laid his shovel over the hole and ran to the Carter home to tell the Carter boys that, if they wanted to go over there with him, they'd get that snake out of the gopher hole. Naturally, they were interested and wanted to go. Carter's baby brother Morris carried a shotgun and they all went, out across the field and over toward the fence and the little gopher hole. They all climbed the fence. Jesse brought with him some gasoline and a hose. When they arrived at the hole, Jesse cleaned the hole with his shovel and then ran about a quart of gasoline down the length of the hose and into the hole. After waiting just a moment, he said, "Boys, back up. That snake'll be out in a minute." They backed up, and in just a few moments, a "humungous" rattlesnake came up and out of the hole. As soon as the snake was fully exposed, Morris Carter blasted it with his shotgun.

"That's a quick story about how a colored man's old dog... Man, he wouldn't take nothing for 'Old Man.' Jesse could tell you, he would make you lick your lips when he would tell you how he could do a possum – how he could clean him and cook him. And how he'd pack sweet potatoes around him and he'd put this on him and that on him. And he'd boil him 'til he got him good and tender. And about that time, you're licking your lips. You're wanting to taste of it. But I mean that was a way of life for them. They loved things like that. They'd eat coon. Eat a lot of coon. And possum. I never did want any possum. They used to turn me off, their looks. Looked to much like me," Carter laughs. "But Daddy always said you could tell the worth of a man by the way he treated his dog. If you've got a dog and you don't never feed him, and he gets mangy and you don't try to clean him up," [end of tape] Carter says, that says a lot about the humanity of the dog's owner.

[End of Tape One]

[Begin Tape Two, Side A]

001 Continuation of interview announcement

005 Carter says that there were many pieces of traditional knowledge that he and the workers had about the woods. One thing is that they knew never to drink any still or stagnant water. To drink out of a moving stream was fine, but if the water was stagnant, it was a good idea to withhold from consuming it. "They claim that every so many feet, water purifies itself," Carter says. "I think that's scientific, but it kind of stands to reason." Carter speaks of how it is quite a sight to see water that is always fresh and always cold bubbling from a spring in the sand. Additionally, workers' traditional knowledge of the woods was also evident in their material culture. Carter mentions a puller tool that has a machete wielded to the end of it. This tool would be of great value and use to a worker who was unusually scared of rattlesnakes. It could also be used just to warn the snakes when a worker raked it through the brush and gallberries at the base of a tree. Carter says that workers rarely wore gloves back then, and black workers often took black heavy thread to repair a cut in their brogans. "People just wore things out and kept wearing 'em out," he says. "They just kept wearing 'em."

Knowledge, Innovation, and Coping with Danger

032 One black worker of Carter's once upon a time was found outside of Willacoochee near Pinebloom when Carter had dropped off in the woods in Willacoochee just that morning. The man had happened upon a large nest of yellow jackets and hopped a ride with someone to the Pinebloom vicinity after being stung numerous times. The man, now shirtless, told Gillis what happened. He happened upon the nest and a swarm of the yellow jackets began stinging him. He took off running through the bushes, trying to knock them off, but they persisted. He was left with only one option. He told Mr. Carter later, "Mr. Gillis, I just took my shirt like this and I just give my shirt to them bees."

Another threat was black widow spiders, which loved to make their homes beneath turpentine cups tacked on pine trees. Luckily, no worker that Carter knows was ever bitten by one.

Beneath the Steeple

051

Another of Carter's black workers (an "excellent hand") was a preacher at three different little country churches in the area, and he did a lot of carpenter work on the churches in his spare time as well. Carter's father was always lenient with the man when he needed time off for one reason or another, as he was "such a dedicated man of God," Carter says. "He did an excellent job working in the woods, but then he had a calling beyond that... He was good to do his work, but he took care of the Lord's business too."

On the middle finger of this man's left hand he had been injured, and Carter never knew exactly how it had happened. He had been cut many years before, and this finger remained curled down into the palm of his hand at all times. He held his hack oddly, but he never got a blister on the finger and he always did superb work in the woods.

066

One of the first men that Era Carter ever employed was Irving Spivey, a white man from the Douglas area and the oldest brother of Ottis Spivey. Irving worked with Era when Era was a newcomer in the business, in the late 1930s in Wilsonville, GA. In his later years after he was too old to work in the turpentine woods, Irving began to craft wooden handles for axes, bush hacks, hammers, etc. After whittling the wood of specific types of trees into these handles, he'd drive around to people's homes and sell the handles. They were quite popular as people were primarily manual laborers. Irving Spivey was able to make a decent living off of nothing but these handles. In his younger years, he was one of the workers that Era hauled into the woods each day. Irving was a heavyset, "big, burly man," Carter says. "He had hair on him like a bear, on his chest and on his back." Carter's father had a truck, but it wasn't very large. Still, Era hauled barrels in the truck and set them out in the woods occasionally for the men dipping gum. Most workers naturally worked from within the woods to the margins, so that when they arrived at the large barrels that Era had left for them, they would have a bunch of gum with which to fill up the barrel. Irving Spivey, however, worked from the barrels into the heart of the woods for hundreds of yards. Of course, Irving would have a bucket full of gum once he reached the center of the woods, and then he'd have to walk all the way back to the periphery of the woods to empty it. Gillis remembers his father saying that, in the summertime, Irving would work with his shirt off, and he'd carry the buckets of gum from the center of the woods to the edge on his shoulder. The gum would slosh over the edges and onto Irving's torso with each heavy step. Era used to swear

that there would be a huge ring of tar that would gather on Irving's back around his belt and would accumulate throughout the day, "trying to get in his britches," Carter laughs. "Back then," Carter reflects, "you'd say a fellow really wasn't afraid of turpentine." In a similar vein, the aforementioned hare-lipped boy named Junior May used to sit to eat his lunch in the woods each day, and instead of leaning back on the part of the tree that had not been worked, he would lean back on the oozing face of the tree. He'd accidentally rub his full head of hair in the tar, but he never noticed or at least never seemed to mind. "So I remember, coming up, that Junior May and Irving Spivey, neither one of 'em was afraid of tar." Carter explains that tar will wash off without too much of a problem, and indeed, a great number of cleansers are made from the byproducts of turpentine. Carter explains that dirt rubbed on the hands will remove the stickiness of tar until one can get a cleansing agent like kerosene to clean it off completely.

"It Just Sounded Like a Song, All Day Long"
Carter says that, as he remembers it, workers usually only sung outside of the woods and not while they were working. He does remember that his father used to remark on how odd it was that workers had stopped singing in the woods like they once had in the 30s and 40s:

"Daddy's saying was this: 'People aren't happy anymore.' And you'd say, 'Why is that, Daddy?' 'Well,' Daddy says, 'I remember when the colored men down around Wilsonville would be in the woods a' dipping.' Daddy says, 'You could hear 'em for a mile or two when he'd dip a barrel. He'd take his dip paddle and hit on the side of the barrel and holler out a tune.' Just letting everybody know everywhere that he had got a barrel of gum. You know, he had accomplished a feat, you know. But Daddy says, 'People's not happy anymore.' And really, Tim, you don't see people out singing much anymore. It's not that their voice has changed; they just don't have the prodding, you know." Carter comments that African Americans have a lot of rhythm and do a lot of singing.

Beneath the Steeple
Carter is inspired by the African American Christian faith and religious intensity he has witnessed since he was a boy:

"I coined a phrase right lately. If you wanna talk to somebody about Jesus, find you a black, old black person, male or female. They'll tell you about the Lord. White people are too ashamed. White people are kind of a poor

witness, really. In a way. I hate to say that, you know. I kind of believe it's true. We got to be bold as Christians, and black people are. They've always been bold. If you wanna strike up a conversation, you just mention the Lord around one of 'em. Young people pretty much are that a' way, but principally the older people. You ain't got to say but one word, and they're ready, you know."

Diversions in the Woods

137

Carter says that the most feared creature in the woods was undoubtedly the rattlesnake. Even though they rarely caused problems, they were the most feared. Carter recalls a humorous story about a black dipper who was working over on the property of a man named Ben Lindsay. The black worker's name was Willie Lee Powell. Carter's father Era came upon Willie Lee and some other workers leaning upon the wagon in the woods, and he saw that they had just killed a raccoon. They had tossed the raccoon up on the wagon with the barrels. Willie Lee came walking across the woods with a bucket of gum and poured into the barrel on the wagon. Era asked Willie Lee, "Willie Lee, what kind of coon is that you got there?" Willie Lee reached and turned the raccoon over two or three times, analyzing it thoughtfully. "I don't really no, sir, what kind of coon he is," Willie Lee replied. "But I kind of believe he's a lady coon." Gillis says that that particular story has struck him as funny since he was a small child.

Diversions continued...

161

Carter used to drive a group of workers out to River Road, just beyond the Alapaha River, and drop them off to work there. On one occasion, he was driving a 20- or 22-year-old Harry Powell, brother of Willie Lee, out to the patch of timber when Harry noticed a small spotted deer running through the field:

"Harry tapped on the hood, on the top of my truck cab and I stuck my hand out the window, and Harry says, 'There goes a little deer! Let me catch it!' So, I slam on brakes. And that was deer country 25 years ago, 30... Harry jumped off of that truck and he was long-legged and he had burnt those woods and you could see a quarter of a mile across those woods. Harry took after that little old spotted deer," Carter laughs, "and it was so funny as us men stood there and watched him. The little ol' deer just went right on out of sight, and the further the deer went, the further behind Harry got. But he was giving it his best shot. He was going just as hard as he could."

Harry Powell was once a large, robust man. He lived on Carter's property in Willacoochee. He now resides in Douglas, and unfortunately, he has had to have both of his legs amputated.

179 One time, Carter was working tobacco about a mile and a half from his home. He used to pride himself on being quick on his feet, and a lot of the strong black workers he had raised on his farm were also very swift runners. Carter told one of his workers, Leonard Tomlin, that he would race him for his week's pay. With a couple of witnesses on hand, the two competitors were counted off, and they took off running. Carter outran Leonard Tomlin that day, and Leonard was as angry as he could be. Tomlin was only 17 or 18 years old, while Carter was in his upper 20s. Carter had placed Tomlin's money on the line only to make the competition all the more competitive, but Carter didn't really take his week's pay.

Nature's Best Medicine: Pure Turpentine (and other remedies)

189 Carter remembers that this racing was common. When he was young, there would be two or three wagons parked along the lane to his childhood home with shafts down. As children, he and his brothers would race each other down the lane and past the wagons. They and the little black children of Era Carter's workers would also wrestle each other near the wagons. On one occasion, they were all wrestling when Carter's little brother Mackie caught his foot on one of the wagon shafts extended to the ground. Mackie fell and plum near bit his tongue in two. Blood gushed from his mouth. "Back then, you know," Carter begins, "The average thought now if anybody gets hurt a bit, he's going to the hospital and will be there for days." Carter's mother was certainly alarmed when she saw Mackie bleeding so, but the thought of a hospital or even a doctor never crossed her mind. Problems, practically no matter how severe, were thought to be able to be solved within the home back then. And they often were. Carter's mother got a handful of flour, had Mackie stick his bleeding tongue out, and piled the flour on his tongue. The blood clotted and the wound healed on its own.

Nature's Best Medicine (cont.)

203 "We used all kinds of remedies. One important remedy that Mother used to use, when us four boys would be out and part of the time running in barefoot, we'd step on a piece of glass, and we'd slice our foot open or something. And Mother would send one of the other boys down there in the woods to get some fresh tar out of a tar cup. And Mother would come back and make a tar plaster. She'd take some of that tar and put it right on that cut, and then

cover it with gauze and cover it with tape. And the old saying was it would pull the soreness out of it. And actually, in a few days, it'd be plum alright. But now, you know, I don't know, it's just the way people are. But if you got a little bitty gash, you got to go and it's a hundred dollars to see a doctor near you, you know. But times has really changed. I'm just amazed at how, today, people are so concerned about things that years ago they wasn't near so concerned, principally because there wasn't many doctors back then and everybody didn't have a way to go. And they tried everything that they knew, Tim, before they would tackle trying to get to a doctor 'cause they didn't have no money to pay him with."

220

Nature's Best Medicine (cont.)

Carter says that turpentine played a major role in the medicinal practices of homes throughout his area for many, many years. His family used to buy turpentine from the store and his mother and all houses on Carter's property kept the product handy for its medicinal value. One of the many ailments it could cure was a sore throat. Any type of infected throat, whether it was a whooping cough or any other type of cough, turpentine would clear up. Carter says that when he or his brothers would be congested from the common cold or whatnot, his mother would rub their chests down with camphorated oil. Additionally, she'd soak a rag in camphorated oil and hang it over her children's heads as they slept at night in order to open up their passages. "It's just like being on one of these breathing treatments now," Carter says. "But people gets away from things like that." Carter makes it clear that his mother wasn't unusually wise or inventive when it came to household medicines; rather, these techniques were common knowledge for the time and place and were used by every household in the region. Castor oil was another product that was always kept handy. Though Carter doesn't remember exactly all that it was used for, he does know that there is little more disgusting when you are young to have to swallow a spoonful of the oil after it has been sitting by the fire all night. It is slimy, greasy, oily, and nearly impossible to swallow. Carter remembers that the parents of "city boys" – those that rather living on a farm, lived in the little (and still very rural) *town* of Willacoochee – used to mix the viscous and fatty castor oil with orange juice to stultify the taste of the oil alone. Farm boys, Carter says, were never so lucky. Orange juice was a luxury on the farm.

Nature's Best Medicine (cont.)

- 245 Carter says that a lot of blacks used to wear metal bracelets that were said to ward off a myriad of ailments and undesirables. "We'd have to talk with one of them to find out what all that warded off," Carter says. Jesse Henderson, the man with the snake-hungry dog named "Old Man," used to *always* wear one of these metal bracelets that he made himself. Another black worker, William Jones, used to take spoons and beat them into the shape of a ring. Carter says the rings, though only a spoon rolled into a circle, would fit like a charm and were actually very pretty. "If they had plenty of time," Carter says, "they could make it pretty if a fellow sits there an hour or two and beat on it. He ain't like me and you. We'd bang two or three licks and it wouldn't fit and we'd throw it in the garbage," he laughs. Going back to the bracelets, Carter says that they were usually made of copper and were said to keep arthritis from ailing the bones and joints as one aged.
- 272 Turpentine was also used as a medicine on animals, particularly turpentine mules. And when vets came out to work on animals once upon a time, they brought with them a blue ointment. Carter recalls that a mule got cut one day when Buddy and John Rutherford were working with him. A veterinarian from Douglas came out to aid the mule, and he placed the blue ointment on the mule. John Rutherford watched and asked the vet if it would be a problem or if it would hurt if he were to rub some of that ointment on the ground itch between his son Buddy's toes that had been rubbed bloody. The vet said no, and John applied the blue ointment to his son's toes. As soon as the ointment set in, Buddy let out a yell and began dancing around. He ran off as the ointment stung his open wounds. Clearly, the vet had never used the ointment on a creature who could comment on the product's side effects.
- 289 Era Carter had a big black horse named "Beauty." Though Gillis and his brothers were never ardent riders, Era did ride quite often. Carter remembers that "Beauty" was trained to where she would rear back when directed to do so like Roy Rodgers' horse "Trigger" did on the screen. One of Era's workers, Leo Sweat, came to the house one day and asked Gillis' mother if he could ride "Beauty." Carter's mother agreed to let him ride it, and Leo went to saddle up the horse. Problem was that Leo didn't know that Era Carter had "Beauty" trained to rear back when she felt rider's feet cluck and the reins tighten. When Leo climbed astraddle, he naturally clucked and pulled on the reins. Of course "Beauty" reared back, sending Leo on his back to the rocky ground below. Carter's mother had been watching out of the window the whole

time. Carter remembers that when she told the story, she always spoke of Leo standing up from the rocky ground and looking 360 degrees around himself to see if anyone had seen his embarrassing tumble. Leo saw no one around, so he unsaddled the horse, removed the bridle, and placed the horse back in the stall. "He had done rode her all he wanted," Carter laughs.

322

Mr. Carter says that his workers did occasionally have initiation rites through which they required new workers to pass. But more often, if Carter's father was in need of another hand, a worker would simply ask a relative to join the crew, whether temporarily or permanently. Many of the Carter's workers were consanguineal kin of one sort or another. Carter says that he was able to tell very quickly the quality of the newly hired hand. He recalls a story to this effect concerning specifically an African American worker named Ralph Wesley:

"We got Ralph to move here in 1969. We were building that main structure of the barn up there... The main structure in 1969. And we had a man from Nichols building that barn, and he was pretty high and he had the rafters. He was putting the logging in up there on the barn. And Ralph was here that day and normally, most people, black or whites, unless they're really trained in it, they don't like to climb way up high... They're afraid of heights. But Ralph Wesley climbed right up there with this man, a Willis from Nichols, and he cat-walked those rafters and nailed that logging on just like he was borned up there. And I've always been impressed with him. You can add the years; that was in 1969. He moved here with one child, he and his wife Clareth had one child. He lived here 'til we quit turpentineing. That would have been from '69 'til '78. When we quit turpentineing, he was already a pretty good what we call a shade-tree mechanic because he'd tackle transmissions and motors. But he got him a job working at Willacoochee... Ralph owed us more money than any worker that had ever worked with us. Can't remember the exact amount, but it was somewheres between three and four thousand dollars, which was a lot of money 30, or 20 or 30 years ago. But anyhow, what put him in debt so bad, he came here in '69 with one child. He left here in '78 and he had eight children. And those seven was all born at the Coffee County hospital. Back then, it'd cost two to three hundred dollars, maybe four hundred. And that's really what put him in debt to my daddy. But when he went to leave, the man that hired him went to the

People's Bank in Willacoochee and borrowed the money. And they brought that money out here and give my daddy and me."

Most workers only owed a few hundred dollars at the termination of their employment, but Ralph's situation was different because of the birth of so many children. Carter says that his family always gave Ralph whatever money he needed to get his wife and the newborn out of the hospital. Ralph Wesley owns and operates Ralph's Garage in Willacoochee today.

388 Carter says that Mr. Wesley could do anything you needed him to in woods, and that made him an invaluable hand. "Could do *anything*, Tim. When I say could do anything, that means that if the truck shut off or a wagon wheel run off or the mule gear slipped and tore a piece, he was always the person who would be right there to fix it. Some of the men would know to go get Ralph."

394 Another worker that Carter valued was William Jones, a white man who worked for Carter up until the termination of their turpentine operation in 1978. Jones lived on the Carter's property long after the operation shut down, however, and he didn't move off the property until five or six years ago. Mr. Jones did good work, but he was extremely slow in the woods and had trouble finding employment because of this fact. Carter always kept work for him in the woods regardless. Recently, Jones had a massive stroke and is now in a Pinehurst, NC nursing home, recovering slowly but surely. When Jones was working for Carter, he was always famously bad with animals. Despite his aversion for working with animals, there were occasions in which Carter had to allow Jones to use a mule so that he could dip gum. One afternoon, Jones drove his mule off the path and into what Carter calls a "sapling thicket," a dense cluster of small one-to-two inch thick pine trees. He continuously attempted to pull the mule out until the thin pines were wedged up under the shafts of the wagon. The mule couldn't move forward or backward, and Jones had no one around to help him. Mr. Jones walked across the woods to where Junior May was working. Knowing that Junior was an excellent hand with a mule, William was confident that Junior would be able to free the mule and the wagon from the thicket. Indeed, Junior was able to clear the thicket enough to get the mule out unscathed. Carter explains that getting the mule out at all was a feat in itself, but to get it out unmarked was simply amazing. It was easy, Carter explains, to severely skin a mule when attempting to free it from natural traps in the turpentine woods. Carter says that most workers were able

to handle mules better than William Jones, and at the same time, very close to none could handle them as well as Junior May.

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Carter says that he feels sure workers pulled pranks and jokes on one another in the woods, but he is only able to comment on those pranks that concerned either him personally or his father. Carter explains one of these:

“I remember one that my father pulled on Junior May... We had some boxes around the fishpond down here, about twelve or thirteen hundred that was real tall boxes, and they were pulling them with those long pullers... And Daddy went down there and walked in the woods behind Junior, and Junior was pulling ‘em. And once in a while Junior couldn’t reach ‘em and he wouldn’t pull it. And Daddy confronted Junior about it, but Daddy did it in a joking way. Daddy said, ‘Junior, I noticed that you’ve been leaving some of those boxes down there around that fishpond.’ He said, ‘Yes sir.’ Says, ‘Them things are so tall I can’t reach ‘em.’ Daddy says, ‘Well, I tell you what. I want ‘em pulled anyhow.’ He says, ‘If you have to tote you a box down there and get up on that box and reach up there and pull it, I want ‘em pulled!’ [Junior does his best Junior impression, as Junior “couldn’t talk plain.”] ‘I ain’t gonna pull them boxes. I’ve given up on pulling them boxes.’ But it was just a funny story. Daddy was just kind of pulling a prank on him.”

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Diversions in the Woods or “Them Jokers Could Work”

Carter recalls a prank that his uncle played on a worker near Wilsonville, GA around the time that Era Carter began to get involved in the turpentine industry.

“There was a turpentine down there named Andrew Tanner, and my uncle Cecil Carter, which is my daddy’s older brother, he loved to pull pranks on people. And Uncle Cecil got him a wildcat stuffed. That’s been many, many years ago. And Uncle Cecil was so mischievous, he’d go down in the roughest part of the woods, and he would hide that... little bobcat looking thing. He called it a wildcat, but I’m sure it was bobcat. Had him stuffed, and he’d put him there when a black man would walk in there to chip a tree, he’d put him right where he could see him right in the edge of the bushes. And Uncle Cecil would get over there behind him and he’d wait ‘til the man would start to chip the tree. And Uncle Cecil would growl like a tiger or a bobcat, and automatically, the guy would stop and

he'd go to looking around. And about that time, he'd see that thing and it was a stuffed animal, but he thought it was a real one. He'd 'part the bushes,' as the saying was," Carter laughs. "He'd *run* out of there, you know. And I guess it runs in the family, Tim, 'cause my brother's got two big rattlesnakes stuffed down there at the office at Carter Oil. And they don't try to scare people, but they just got 'em standing there in the corner. If a stranger walks in there and just happens to look down, they're ferocious looking. They got 'em in a coil. One of the snakes I killed, Tim, 16 rattles. Tremendous snake. I killed him over here to my brother and he carried him to Lem Griffis. That name would ring a bell to the old-timers because he was an old guy that was raised in the swamps down at Fargo on the Suwannee River. As a matter of fact, his son still owns a camp down there. And they got old bear hides and all kinds of things. And he's a taxidermist. And he fixed those two snakes for my brother. But that was another thing they'd scare 'em with, have an old stuffed snake. Have him I in a coil, you know, and make a fuss."

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Carter recalls another such prank that occurred when Carter's uncle was working as a sharecropper with a black man named Red Carter. They worked for a man named Edison Carter. There was a little store about a quarter of a mile from one of the tobacco barns that Red was using. Near the store, a big, long-legged bird (probably an egret) flew into a light line. The bird wasn't seriously injured but was flopping on the ground and couldn't fly. Gillis says that his uncle carried the bird and tied him to one of the tobacco barns so that when Red came out at night to check his thermometer in the barn, the bird would scare the daylights out of him. Uncle Cecil took the bird and tied it to a pole in the barn and rested it on a bed of warm tobacco. Carter says that the bird had to have "settled down into a deep sleep" right after his uncle left, as the tobacco would have made a soft and warm bed. Later on, long after dark, Red came into the barn to check the temperature of the tobacco. He struck a match so that he could see, and when he did, the egret stood tall and started flailing its wings about wildly, cawing noisily. Red, frightened out of his wits, began running and didn't stop until he made it to the little store nearby. When he got to the store, he could only stutter enough to say that Cecil Carter had put "one of those *things*" in his tobacco barn.

know, it looked like there'd be slobber on it, but it didn't matter. And people, you know, it's good that children are innocent, Tim, you know. And you know, there ain't no difference in Bill Williams' slobber and mine." Carter says that his little brother Mackey clung to Bill like a big brother. He idolized him. Bill would blow a piece on the harmonica and hand it off to Mackey. Mackey couldn't play anything, but he could make the harmonica make a noise, and when he did, he felt like he was as cool as he believed Bill Williams to be.

Knowledge, Innovation, and Coping with Danger

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Carter says that there were several signs and signals in the woods that pointed to the potential of danger, bad luck, or bad weather. A group of black birds making a fuss in the woods was a signal that something strange was around. Heavy rains and bad looking clouds were awful news for those workers laboring in a segment of the woods absent of a tin-roofed shelter. In this case, workers huddled on the windless side of a tree while the rains came in sideways. "Naturally, they're scared of bad thunder and lightning," Carter says. "That's natural for whites and blacks." When the winds would blow especially hard, workers did not like being in the woods because of falling limbs and pine burrs. "Good size limbs could kill you," Carter points out.

"I know you can call it all kinds of things, but people has thoughts about things in that regard. You know, being warned about something. Maybe in a dream or a thought might occur, go through your mind and sure enough, later in the day, something would happen to remind you, say, 'You know, I was warned about that today.' I've heard 'em say that. 'I've had that feeling all day that something was wrong with my Ivey.' You know, and sure enough, maybe there was something wrong."

The "Spirits" of Turpentine: A Conclusion

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Gillis Carter is one of the last people in the United States to continue to use turpentine trees for the extraction of crude gum and for the production of turpentine. In his front yard, he keeps in operation four trees and a total of six faces.

"I reckon, next to my love for the Lord Jesus, I just love turpentin. Not that I know anymore than anybody else about it, but I was raised up in it, and it was my dad's livelihood all of his life. And I just grown a fondness for it, and I just wanted to cut those trees out there and chip 'em for people that passes this highway out here, that they might

stop and show it to their kids. Because the time has done passed since 1978. We've got a generation of children that's 22 or 24 year old that's never seen a face. Course there's some little places about, remote areas that you'll find some [faces] that's still standing, you know. There's two side of the road over here about two miles that we worked back in the 60s. And when they came in here to log it, it was between the grated road and a fishpond dam and they left those two trees. Matter fact, I got pictures of 'em in yonder. I'm always looking at things like that. That just happens to be my nature. It happens to be my love. But knowing that Daddy was pretty successful, and I knew a lot of people that was pretty successful, and it was just a livelihood that not everybody was interested in. First of all, it's kind of dirty as far as physically getting on ya. And secondly, a lot of aggravation with the labor. A lot of people just rather do his own little thing and not be bothered with anybody. But Daddy always started out, and you know he, that's part of the program so to speak. You gotta be bothered with your labor and you got to love what you do, you know. And you got to love animals because you had to love mules. Had to fool with them and feed 'em and water 'em and take care of 'em. You had to keep good wagons for 'em to pull in the woods. You had to keep plenty of tar barrels and plenty of utensils to work with. And it just so happened that I've got a love for that. I catch myself at the barn sharpening axes all the time. Bush axes. Regular axes. Hatches. I got a little of all of it, and we use it here in the yard, but just, I just like to take, I like to go to town, if I find an old axe and it's rusty, I'll clean it up and go to town and buy me a handle. Put it in the vice and I'll take my daddy's old drawing knife. And I'll cut it down to where it'll fit. And I'll fit that booger in and take me some wood and put in the little slot, if not wood, put you three or four nails in there, and nail it in there good and tight so that the next feller uses it, he's got a good instrument to use. He won't have to be worried about it coming out of the handle and cutting him or hurting somebody else. But it's just always been my love, Tim, and I take pride in it, you know. Not that I know very much about it..."

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Carter remembers the little pieces of business knowledge he kept in his head in order to be successful in the turpentine industry. One story concerns a particular piece of woodlands, belonging to Elton Metts, that joins Carter's on the east side. In about 1960, the

Carter turpentine operation began working the virgin timber on this land, and they continued to work it for about five years. There worked about 12,000 trees on 490 acres of land. And the end of the five years, Mr. Metts cut the faced trees out. Five years later, the Carter's went back onto the same property and cupped 12,000 more virgin trees. Two men worked 6,000 each. Jimmy Cheney worked half with an old wood hack and a wood puller, and Ottis Spivey worked the other half using sulfuric acid. Carter says he can't remember which one produced the most gum, whether technology beat the old-fashioned way or vice versa. But Carter says that he has found it to be a rule of thumb that a 500-acre property will permit the cupping of about 12,000 trees. Carter remembers that 1,000 half-gallon cups would fill only three turpentine barrels. Back in the 60s, the Carters were using quart cups, and thus a thousand would only fill a barrel and a half. This and other pieces of information, like the amount of profit per the different grades of gum, were kept readily in the minds of those who profited from the turpentine industry. This didn't just include Era Carter and his family. "Really, the turpentine men was kinda interested in that because that makes a difference in their check," Carter explains. "If they're working virgins and they're getting, you know, ten more dollars a barrel, they're getting a fourth of that, two dollars and a half a barrel more than the other guy that's pulling the boxes."

The Spirits of Turpentine: A Conclusion

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Carter says that the trees in his yard are principally to remind people who may forget that the turpentine industry once occupied such a major role in the lives of the region's people. He is a self-proclaimed "advocate of the turpentine industry." Part of his current pride in turpentine is that fact that he knows how to do nearly everything involved in turpentine labor, and today, it is something that very few people can do. He enjoys when people are interested in his involvement with the turpentine industry. He likes when people say, "They tell me you used to dip tar, or you know how to pull, or you know how to chip, or you know how to tack up a tin." Turpentine, he recognizes, is a "gone art"

"It's something that I would like to see it kept alive 50 years down the road. Maybe somebody might open a little piece of literature and say, 'Here's a guy north of Willacoochee that worked, actually did this type work. Or was raised doing this type work.'"

Carter says that turpentine was a good life for him and many others. He knew big producers and small operators in the turpentine industry alike who would agree.

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Carter says that the gum he collects from the trees in his yard today is used nowhere in particular. The still at the Agrirama in Tifton, GA, which is still fired every year, takes about eight barrels of gum (3600-3800 pounds). On the four trees and six faces that Carter has in his yard, he only gathers about 60 pounds of the exudate each year. Carter did get involved last year with the festival and firing of the still at the Agrirama, and he carried with him his bucket of tar. He was able to use his gum to add to the rest that had been collected throughout the year by various individuals across the state. Proudly, he states that his gum was clean and fresh, while some of the other barrels that they used at the Agrirama that day were full of low-quality black gum. The finished product was a very low-grade gum that they had to rake out and throw away. A Mr. Johnson, who is in charge of collecting the gum for the firing of the still at the Agrirama, is planning on getting Carter's gum once again to add to the others that he collects from across the area. Carter knows a man who would like to work about 500 trees on a few acres of his property and take the gum to Tifton to "let people the world over that comes in there see that product being worked with." Carter says that he found the still in Tifton quite interesting and that there is also a wood still in Willacoochee, owned by the McCranie brothers. The McCranie Brothers Still is on the list of the US government's list of historic landmarks, and it's open to the public. Carter says that he has a picture of the still on his wall drawn by the same man who created a portrait of Mr. Carter for him to hang on his wall, which he has done. In addition, he was given a picture of the old church in Willacoochee in which his mother-in-law was born 95 years ago. Carter's great-grandparents are buried at the same church.

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Carter says that his favorite old landmarks are simply the trees that were clearly once worked for the naval stores or turpentine industries. A catfaced tree is a wonderful sight for Mr. Carter. Carter says that his cousin in Jeff Davis County, near Hazlehurst, GA, is building a new house for himself and his family. Carter says that he was unaware of his cousin's love for the turpentine industry until he went to see the new house in early fall of 2003. His cousin had found a tree on his father's property that he had spent nearly his entire life near and never really noticed. He stumbled upon the tree later in life, and noticed that it was a huge laddered face on a tree with a diameter of probably 18 inches. On two sides of the tree, it has two long catfaces, and on the other side, it has two square box faces from the times when workers cut the boxes into the trees themselves rather than tacking boxes onto

them for the collection of gum. Carter's cousin cut the tree down and brought it in his new home before the foundation had been laid. When the foundation was finally poured, the builders poured it around this massive 18-foot tree that was positioned in the corner of what would become the living room. The tree is now firmly deposited in the bedrock of the home and stands tall next to the staircase underneath a 21-foot-high ceiling in the 1200-square-foot living room. "It's one of those believe it or nots," Carter says. He wonders at the beauty and perfection of the tree and at the fact that his cousin loves turpentine enough to put the tree in his home. Carter runs down the dimensions and features of his cousin's new home.

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In one of Carter's barns near his home, he has what amounts to a sort of museum of old agricultural tools and pieces of equipment, many of which are specifically from the turpentine industry. Carter says that one day, though he says he may not live that long, he would like to get the barn in order enough to where he could have the public come look at the artifacts free of charge. Carter says that he had a friend that passed away just two years ago that gave him his first box axe. A very old tool, this axe was used in the days before cups were tacked on trees for the collection of rosin and gum. The tool was used up until just after the turn of the twentieth century to cut a gaping slot into the tree itself in which the gum would gather. Supposedly, Wilburt Johnson's father was so talented with a box hack that he could take it and make just 32 licks in the tree and have a box cut big enough to hold a quart and a half of gum. According to Carroll Butler's book on turpentine, Treasures of the Longleaf Pines, a quart and a half was generally the size of these boxes, Carter says. Carter is thankful that his friend wished for him to have the box axe. Another friend that Carter met "in my Christian movements" gave him two other old rusted box axes as well. Carter cleaned the axes as he does all in his possession with wire brushes and he bought new handles for them as well. He also painted the axes black to restrain the rust from spreading further across the axe. Carter says that he also has two broadaxes that were once used in the woods before there were nails to tack the tins onto the trees. The broadax would be placed up a tree and hit with a maul, creating an indenture in the tree into which a cup would comfortably slide and fit snugly. Herty cups were often used in these days, and though many don't know it, Carter says, there were also glass cups used in the turpentine woods. Carter has a couple of friends who still have some of the valuable glass cups. In addition, Carter has several sets of tin pullers in his barn. These were used to pull the cups from their

position on the tree when it was time to raise them higher on the face. Eventually, double-headed nails were introduced into the woods along with several different types of tin cups. The double-headed nails were a "precious" invention to the turpentine, Carter says. Aluminum cups were popular in some areas, but the Carter's used galvanized cups most generally because of their affordability in comparison to those made of aluminum. Carter explains that he has plenty of scrape irons, dip buckets, and scrape boxes in his barn as well. The scrape boxes stood on legs the length of which depended on the height of the face. Carter remembers workers carrying the scrape boxes on their shoulders as well as they moved through the woods in the chilly months at the end of the year. Carter runs through the yearly process of turpentine, beginning with the plowing of trails and the clearing of the brush with bush hacks for the mandatory burning of the woods and ending with the collection of the solidified scrape. Carter also has some old barrelheads in his barn that he says he will likely never use to any great extent. But he does hope that a friend will come looking for one sometime so that he can give one away as a gift. Carter says that he is a sharing and a giving man. "The only thing that you ever accomplish is the things that you give away in life... And I think that ought to be our motto... I've never lost anything from giving or helping anyone, and that came through my father and mother. They were givers in life, and I think God wants us to be givers." Carter recalls some of the oldest things he has in his collection in his barn. He has given away some old hacks that are now worth \$125. Carter says the he one day hopes to make his collection "look a little better."

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Carter wishes he had some old wooden barrels, but all he has is the newer metal barrels known esoterically among turpentiners as "Blue Whistlers." The older barrels are hard to come across. He remembers that when he was a boy, he and his brothers used to take his fathers old wooden barrels with oak staves to the natural water hole on their property and toss them in so that the wood wouldn't dry out and crack. It was important to occasionally wet the barrels so that the wood would swell and remain healthy to avoid cracking. Also, if the wood dried out, the gum would often begin to leak out of the barrels through the cracks between the staves. If properly treated with water, the barrels would remain air tight. It is interesting to Carter that workers once had to be careful with how they handled the barrels or else they would bust if they were handled carelessly. Carter remembers that sometimes, after retrieving the barrels from the water, there would be so many mudcats in the water in the barrels that they would get enough to

bring home for dinner. "Times has changed" since then, Carter says:

"People has ditched this property, this land, until everything's dry now, Tim. Water goes to moving and it don't stop until it gets to the Atlantic or the Gulf, you know."

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Mr. Carter says that he has been to several festivals and celebrations for turpentiners since the passing of the industry. Four or five years ago in Lakeland, GA, Carter had the privilege of meeting Mr. Carroll Butler, the man who literally "wrote the book" on turpentine. Butler's Treasures of the Longleaf Pines is well-known among those who read or research about the turpentine industry. Carter had just ordered one of Butler's books just before Carter met him. Butler has a collection of turpentine artifacts that at least rivals Mr. Carter's. Carter invited Butler to Pearson, GA's Pine and Agricultural Festival in 2003, and Butler and his wife happily attended, bringing with them some of their display of turpentine materials. Butler has become a "fast friend" of Mr. Carter's, and Carter recently discovered that Butler is married to one of Carter's grammar school teachers. Carter has had a couple of opportunities to bring his own turpentine materials to the festival as well, and he says that he always gets a lot of favorable comments from festival patrons. Old-timers walk by, Carter says, and comment about their memories working with all the old equipment.

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Carter says that he has a love for old equipment:

"I don't know intrigues me so much about shovels and hoes and axes, but I can't go by one without buying it at a antique market or either picking one up in a junk pile and cleaning it up and putting me a handle in it. I know I'm not gonna be able to swing that axe right on, but I like to have several of 'em anyhow. But I've just enjoyed my little collection. I got a lot of my grandmother's stuff there and my grandfather's. And it's just a bygone era if you don't have somebody to tell ya, 'Why did you use, what did they use with this old, these old shucks and this old mop looking thing?' Well, they couldn't go to Wal-Mart and buy a mop. They took that and they used it. They kept the old floors plum slick using that thing."

Carter comments on his collection's old corn sheller and his grandmother's old corn cracker, which she called her "bitty mill."

“That’s where us children, 50, 55 years ago, used to pull corn in that little booger and turn it with our hands and it’d crack corn for the little bitties to feed. You didn’t have to go to town to buy cracked corn; you could make it right there on the farm.”

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Race and Nostalgia

Fieldworker:

“Something that’s, as I’ve been doing research with turpentiners, speaking to different turpentiners across the southern part of the state, become interesting to me, both in black and white, but mostly in black workers, is a kind of a three-part phenomenon. And what it involves is, at the same time, workers remember how people from in the surrounding town looked down on them as turpentiners – of course the terms “turpentine niggers” and then “tar heels,” you know, all those derogatory terms. But at the same time, with that, they have an extremely intense pride that counters that - an extremely intense pride that they worked in turpentine. And then, to make things even more complicated, they also are quick to tell you how hard the life was. And how, they’re nostalgic about it passing, and at the same time, if you were to just hear parts of their stories about their pasts, you’d think they’d be glad that it was gone. I don’t know what you have to say about that. That’s just a phenomenon that I have noticed...”

Gillis Carter:

“I’d like to comment on that, Tim, if I may. I think a lot of that goes back to the white people’s raisings, you know. Part of that goes right back to the Good Book. ‘Do unto others as you’d have ‘em do to you.’ If you can’t say something good about somebody, don’t say it. And I would be the first to say that I’ve used the word *nigger* a many o’ times. But I certainly, in talking about it, as being brought up before integration, if you see a bunch of blacks out there, we’d just naturally say, ‘There goes a bunch of niggers out there,’ and not mean nothing ugly by it. Not at all. And I’d be the first to say that my daddy loved blacks as good as he did whites. And that was instilled within us four boys. And I just ain’t got nothing but something good to say about blacks. The only thing different in a black and a white is the color of their skin. And I think, I think a lot of times people look down on the black people and call ‘em ‘tar heels,’ and you wanna ‘bout think of them as being the very lowest employed people. But when you *really* learn

their history, Tim; when you *really* learn what all they went through; when you even take into consideration that didn't even have an outhouse, they just used a pile of gallberries or dog fennels or palmettos; your heart has to bleed, a person like you that don't know about all this and a person like me that, I went through the era with no... indoor plumbing, no running water inside the house. But people, it didn't kill 'em. They stayed butterball fat. As the old saying is, they stayed 'plum slick.' They had plenty to eat, I think. My daddy was always giving 'em garden stuff and sweet potatoes and syrup and anything we had on the farm we'd share. And I think the general run of the population did that. I think a lot of the times, the people that *really* talked ugly about the blacks was the people in towns that never knew anything about 'em. Maybe when they come to town on Saturday evenings, maybe their clothes wasn't as clean as pretty as a lot of town people. Maybe their smell wasn't just right because maybe they had used a little potash soap instead of Palmolive or lava. Maybe that used some old potash soap that the old granny normally made. Which I have used it myself and I still love to smell it, and if I see somebody with it, I'll buy me a bar of it, just to have it, you know. But then, I wanna think, and I hope that the younger generation that's coming, I know we got a lot of educated people now, Tim. And I hope of the lot of the black educated people will look back on their great-grandparents and they won't look back [Carter's voice begins to crack with emotion] with a ugly thought. I hope they would look back with a thought of admiration for people that went through the toughest of times – and *survived* it. You've heard of survival of the fittest? They're the survival of the fittest. They took a lot of hardships, but they were [able to] over come it. And my heart, I hate to get emotional, but my heart just kind of bleeds when I think about how tough it's been for some of 'em. But them, Tim, when you think about Glory – what's in store – t'aint nothing too tough for us. Because we've got something great to look forward to. And... if you want a good topic mentioned, you just mention Jesus Christ to a black. He can tell you something. They're quick to ask prayer for their people – people that's sick. You just open your eyes and notice that. They're quick. We whites are hesitant to bring things out into the open, to say, 'I'd appreciate you men praying for me, or this congregation praying for me. I'm having a difficult time physically. Or