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**Tape Log...South Georgia Folk life Project**  
**Tape...Fieldworkers Tape # 1**  
**Person...Interview of Mr. Anthrom L. Green**  
**Fieldworker...Le Roy Henderson, Jr.**  
**Date of Interview...January 19, 2004**  
**Location...Living room of the Green home**  
**3840 Division St.**  
**Jacksonville, Florida**  
**Recorder...Sony Digital Walkman---AVLS**  
**Tape Type...Masterdat R-124 MD DAT**

**Summary Description of Tape Quality**

**Mr. Green is a soft spoken but well spoken man throughout the interview...there is very little background noise on the tape.**

**Summary Description of Tape Contents**

**This interview is a description of the life and times of Mr. Anthrom L. Green as a worker in the Turpentine Camps in and around the Soperton, Georgia area.**  
**Mr. Green is eighty five years old and has a very active recollection of his experiences.**

**Tape Index Counter # 00000**

**Subject Opening Introduction and Interview**

**0006...Mr. Anthrom L. Green though born in Soperton, Georgia on the Gillis Plantation considers himself a native of Jacksonville, Florida. He came to Jacksonville in 1938 and has lived there since that time. Green was born October 27, 1918.**

**00108..At the age of 14 Green went to work in the Turpentine camps in 1932. He was taken there by his father with whom he worked side by side.**

**00155..His father held several different jobs in the woods including the starting of "new crops". Green describes this process and the tools used to create a "virgin" crop", chipping, pulling boxes, streaking, hanging tin, and gathering gum. He also recounts the various stages of gum extraction based upon the height of the tree, which could reach up to eight feet in height.**

**00943..Once the gum was collected and put into barrels the next stop was the still. Green and his father had a camp shack across the road from where the still was located. He recalls that the process for the extraction of turpentine was the same as the process for the extraction of "moonshine liquor". Other products were gleaned from the gum as well: rosin was a by-product of the turpentine gum and it was used in the making of glass, rubber and other products. During the winter months a different process was used to extract the gum that involved scrapping the tree.**

**01227..Mr. Green recounts the hardships of working in the Turpentine Camp, and recalls the woods riders who made sure that each man did his job.**

**01407..He thought himself to young to be doing this type of work and even recalls working with a broken arm.**

**01503..Mr. Green recounts other aspects of Turpentining; raking pines in the winter which covered as many as three hundred trees, and the "hollers of the camp workers". The tools used during winter work were often quite different from those used in the warmer months.**



01848..The Gillis family owned the camp where Green and his father worked. Anthrom's maternal grandfather was a slave on the Gillis plantation and they carried the Gillis name until the marriage of his mother to Anthrom L. Green, Sr. . The Gillis family also owned and operated a sawmill and "quarters with little shacks". The people who worked for the Gillis' lived in these 2 and sometimes 3 room shacks. There was also a commissary for the camp quarters that carried everything that a worker and his family might need. He recalls a basic diet that consisted of fat back, salt pork, black eyed peas and rice. Beef was a rare luxury.

02020..Green details the payment system when dealing with the commissary and likens it to the same plight often suffered by those who share-cropped land. There was rarely a time when the camp workers, like the share-croppers, were due and money after "settling up their bills. They generally owed money simply because of the booking system that favored the man who kept the books....the camp owner. In his own words "workers were cheated out of earned money". In Turpentine "you just about worked for nothing, you go in indebted and you come out indebted".

02207..Greens family was afforded status in the camp as well as the community by virtue of the fact that they carried the Gillis name via slavery. This status was later bestowed upon his father as a result of marriage. He speaks of the plantation, slavery and status, as he recalls how the Gillis family acquired much of what they have today in ~~Troupeland~~ county.  
*Truetlan*

02615..The living conditions in the camp were "very bad" according to Green. Camp life was definitely not to be remembered as "the good old days".

02738..The Green family lived in a three bedroom home with a breezeway that led to the kitchen, and a smokehouse with various meats. These accommodations were in no way typical of African American home sites. This came to the Green family as a result of patronage.

02857..According to Mr. Green, the Gillis family treated their workers quite differently from other camp owners. In fact, he describes them as "good people". While in other camps, beatings and violent death were commonly suffered by Blacks. He cites the Phillips Settlement-The Randolph and the Coleman camps of Swainsboro as terrible places for Blacks. He was in fact beaten severely and threatened at gunpoint by one of the Coleman's'. This was the beginning of the end of his Turpentine Camp career. He recalls one man who was tied to a tree, beaten and left to die, and another who was forced out of his sick bed to work, only to die while working, and still another who was shot to death by a white man who had been having relations with the Black man's wife. The man was killed for confronting his own wife about the affair.



**03237..Children in the Gillis camp were content say's Green. Clothes were scarce but all had what they needed. They walked twelve miles round trip to attend school, while white children rode buses, often throwing things at the walking Black children through the windows. Certain trusted Black men in the community were sent to get teachers for the students-even as far away as Chicago. His first teacher was his mother's sister...his Aunt Maggie, and another was Ms. Evelyn Beasley. Doctors were seen by home visit as Blacks could not get treatment at any Hospitals. He remembers his education in Adrian, Georgia where he remained until high school. Generally, schools for Blacks consisted of one or two rooms.**

**03535..His church experience is recalled with fondness. He attended both the Methodist and the Baptist church in his area which had "circuit preachers" who divided their time between congregations. However, he states that they could not attend services in the Phillips Settlement because "whites would hang you if they caught you". Both churches attended by the Green family were named Pendleton Springs.**

**03634..Play for children included lots of games: baseball, ring around, rolling tires and wheels. They had Sunday clothes and through the week clothes...Sunday clothes were always starched and ironed.**

**03826..Cooking the Turpentine gum was done in a tub...Green states that the tub was as large in circumference as his living room...he details the process from cooking to shipping.**

**04023..Many men who worked in the camps died young because the work was so hard and took such a toll on the body and mind. As for women, work was basically in the home or on farms planting crops or chopping cotton. But life in the quarters could be rough on women due to womanizing and retaliation.**

**04129.. "The Rock" is fondly recalled by Green as a going from house to house singing spirituals and devoting time to religious pursuits. This was usually led by women on Wednesday night.**

**04238..Green recounts how to "run a route" in order to keep from getting snake bit.**

**04406..Sometimes men who observed worship service would go from house to house studying the bible and having devotionals, while others opted to go gambling or drinking moonshine. Juke joints were a major part of camp life and often featured pump organs and pianos played by locals, and later, harmonicas and guitars. These Jukes were often located in town but there were various red light activities carried on house to house.**

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**04655..The Gillis family had Black men in their employ who could not read or write, yet they could build houses . Green suspects that the three bedroom home in which he grew up was initially built for whites as it was just a short distance from the main house. The old still which stood across the road from the Green's camp shack still stands in dis-repair today, and so does the commissary.**

**04944..Green never knew just how much money he had made because all monies were paid to his father and often he would get as much as fifty cents for his own pocket. Young Green was often hired out to work other farms by his father. As early as age fourteen he could lay out a major farm area. He recalls his father with respect and disdain.**

**05131..Green left Soperton walking at midnight with only thirty-five cents in his pocket following an altercation with his father. His parents were separated at this time and his mother lived in Vidalia, Georgia. He walked there from Soperton.**

**05358..FOR OUR EARS ONLY**

**05425..He found work on a farm in Vidalia and stayed there for one week. He left by bus for Jacksonville and has remained there.**

**10542-End...song PASME NOT OH GENTLE SAVIOR---END**



Page I

0h 1m 17s---*Going to work as a turpentine*

In the year 1935, I don't think I was quite old enough at that time, but it was then when... (out cue)

0h 1m 29s

I was introduced to it by my father. I was seventeen. (out cue)

0h 1m 44s

I didn't know anything but what he had told me and what he had showed me. (out cue)

0h 1m 52s

Well, he did some of all of it, including starting new crops as they called it. New crops was done in the winter of the year, and the first crew that they had to go in these were pine trees. I don't know exactly what size, but they were good size. They had a crew called the blazers. They made a blaze on the right at the bottom of the tree. And in that blaze, another crew came with a broad axe, to cut a slot to put a tin in that the gum would run on, and then there was a cup nailed and put under that tin. And this crop, this tree, then was called a virgin crop.

And they made a streak with a hack: a hack was, was a stock, oh, about 2 feet with a weight on the bottom of it, and the hack was a cutter that would cut. You had to chip with it, so the weight was to help him chip. And he would make a mark like a V. The first mark like so, and there, the gum would run right into the cup. Now, they had to cut a streak like this every week. Every week they had to put a streak and the gum would run down to the cup. This virgin was used until it would get at least 3 or 4 feet; you chipping boxes then. (out cue)

0h 4m 11s

And who ever had it, these were called crops, and it may be 100, 200, no telling how many trees in the crop. Now, he would have to once a week make a streak with the hack; he had to chip it this way, and you done that until it was raised higher as it was higher. (out cue)

0h 4m 38s

Then they would raise the cup and call it a yearling. (out cue)

0h 4m 46s

It begin to be 3 or 4 feet and they'd raise the cup up. (out cue)

0h 4m 59s

And see, it become a face after it keep going, so everything you chip, it made what you call a cat face. Keep going up, keep going up, keep going up. (out cue)

0h 5m 13s

And the tar would keep running down. Now I forget exactly how long it took for those cups to fill, and when those cups were full, then a crew that we called the dippers, they would come in and dip the tar. Ah, and they done it by the barrel. Back in those days it was a very little bit they were getting per barrel to dip the gum. And whenever the barrels were full, each one would do so many barrels per day. If he was a good strong man he could do a lot of barrels a day. (out cue)

0h 5m 53s...*Mules and Wagons*

A mule and a wagon went all down in the rough, pick up the barrels and put them out to where the truck could get to them. (out cue)

0h 6m 9s

They made their trails even if it was a new crop. He still would have to make a new trail. The wagons would go down into places where trucks couldn't go. Then, them barrels was loaded on that wagon and brought out up higher, higher ground, that the truck could pick it up. They had to use skids to roll the barrels up on the truck. Turpentine was a hard job. (out cue)

0h 7m 6s

Pulling boxes was the same as chipping boxes. (out cue)

0h 7m 20s

Because when it got up high, where you pulled, and you pulling boxes, you did that more or less by the weight of your body anyway. (out cue)

0h 7m 43s

You would see a cat face, say from, well say from 12ft, 12inches from the ground up at least. (out cue)

0h 8m 4s

The pull was a long stock. See once you got up to where you had to pull, you didn't use the short stock no more, you had what they call, ah, a puller for to pull boxes, the lower one was a hack. (out cue)

0h 9m 0s

To dip a man had to use a big can, but some call it a bucket. It was made from nail kegs. Finally as things progressed, they started really making them in factories. They made them out of metal, but the first ones were made out of nail kegs, and they put a handle on it so you could carry it, and your leg helped you carry that heavy bucket. Once these barrels were hauled in to the still it was gum. And ah, I know about the still because the house that my father and I lived in was right across the street from the still.



Page III

0h 9m 0s continued

And the still, the process was the same as the way they make moonshine. The still, they would load this big kettle. It was like a two story outfit; down below is where, oh, it was like copper tubing all the way around in a great big tub, and that was for it to run down through. But they had to cook it until the turpentine came all around through this big tub, and come out down below where your stiller took care of filling the barrels with turpentine. Ah, it be done cooked and cooked and cooked, until when they do turn it out to run it, to run the tar out, its rosin then. Its been cooked, its not gum anymore its rosin. Its real hot. They had open barrels to put that in. (out cue)

So they would keep stilling the gum to make turpentine, and they also was making rosin that came out of it: rosin, they could make glass, they could make ah, rubber, oh I don't know how many products they could make out of the rosin that came from the turpentine. There was another process when winter time came. As it get colder, the gum would stick on the face. So in the winter they had to do what they call scrapping. Now this was hard. You had to scrape that off the face, and those cups would be full, and they'd dip them out into the barrels: that also made turpentine, and they would scrape that. Now the face is clean now and the tar can run down easier, and they loose a lot of it sticking on the face. So that's why they had to scrape it in the winter. And then, spring time come. That's when your turpentine business really started to work. (out cue)

0h 12m 8s---*Woods riders and Youth in the Woods*

Yes, it was a hard job, ah; they had what you would call a woods rider. Usually, he was white-he ride a horse. Now, he would ride the route just like you worked it, and he'd ride to see if you missed putting your streak on. If you missed any he would let you know about it. It was a hard job and I believe....

0h 13m 49s...

it affected me being so young. I believe that's what broke this arm. I didn't even know it was broke. One Saturday I went to a ball game, you know how we had sandlot baseball. I went to throw the ball, naw, the ball got loose and it came over where I was standing. I reached and went to throw it, and when I threw it this arm fell on back-broke. (out cue)

0h 14m 32s....*Jobs in the Woods*

Cause in 1938 I had done some of everything to be done except pulling logs out of the woods, and so I know I needed to get Public Work, and I left and came to Jacksonville in 1938, and that got me away from turpentinig. (out cue)



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0h 14m 57s...*Winter Turpentining*

There were other things that we had to do during turpentining. In the winter they done what they call raking pines. You had to rake about and circle around each tree. Rake the pine needles away from the tree, and each one, you got paid for so many that you raked per day. (out cue)

0h 15m 34s

You had yourself assigned a number or you had some word. Some of them, some of them would have a word like Top line, some of them had a word like Four, some of them might have a word like Fifteen. (out cue)

0h 15m 50s

Somebody had to keep tab of this to know how many you had raked. That was in order when seasons come, when fire hit the woods, that if you had raked around, it wouldn't ruin that tree. (out cue)

0h 18m 56s...*The Gillis Quarters...The Commissary...Food...Settling Up...Losing*  
The Gillis', they had a quarters with little shacks; people lived in them. (out cue)

0h 19m 29s

The quarters: all those people that worked for the Gillis' lived in the quarters. They were little, two room maybe three. You didn't hardly see one with three: two room houses. You lived in them. They had a commissary. That was a store. They carried bout everything you would need. Course you ate a lot of white back salt pork, you ate a lot of black eyed peas, you ate a lot of rice. And those that when they killed hogs, they would cure that meat, and they'd put that meat in the commissary. Now, you went, whatever you needed, you went to the commissary, and you bought it, and it was put on the book.

They'd settle up with you every first Saturday. Every first Saturday, all those people that had worked had to go in to be settled up. They would determine how much you had made when they would determine how much you might owe. If you got any money you borrowed it from them. And at the end of the year when you settled up, we say, the first Saturday in December. He would determine whether or not you come out on top, or you still owed him. And you usually still owed him. (out cue)

0h 20m 57s

Sharecropping was something similar, very similar. (out cue)

Page V

0h 21m 10s

You take a sharecrop and you bring it up to where you lay it by. That's getting close to where you gonna harvest. And many times the owner would find a reason to fall out with you. And many times he would run you off his place, and you would wind up losers, and he would get the spoils. Well, turpentine was that. You was working for just about nothing, because you was always in debt to the man. If you wanted to leave, then another man had a turpentine farm. If you went to see him, then he would pay off what you owe this man, and you would work for him. (out cue)

0h 22m 00s

You go in in debt, and you come out in debt. (out cue)

0h 26m 17s...*Conditions in the Quarters*

The conditions were very bad. You might have heard statements that those were the good old days. But see, we lived in these little shacks, and a lot of times they would situate a well, they used to dig big wells, and it wasn't a well at every house. Ah, people had to gather round to get their water, or do their washing from that well. Now if it was a big quarters, there may be two wells but everybody had to get their water from that well. (out cue)

0h 28m 55s...*The Gillis'...The Randolph's...Old Man Coleman-The Attack*

The Gillis' were very good to their people. They didn't beat up on their people like the firm just below us: *THE PHILLIPS SETTLEMENT*. They beat them up. The *RANDOLPHS*, ah there around Swainsboro, would beat up theirs. I know they beat them up because one time I went to work for old man *COLEMAN* in Swainsboro. One weekend everybody was gone to town and different places and I had stayed home. And he come, everybody was gone, nobody was working. And you know, unbeknownst to me, he, and I didn't know he was going to attack me, and he did. He attacked me. Other words he hit me before I even know it. (out cue)

0h 29m 48s

Yep. And while I was right down, and I'm glad my wife didn't see it, Then he, now he wasn't gonna shoot me, it was just to put a scare in me, but I didn't know he wasn't gonna shoot me. (out cue)

0h 30 08

That was the last. That was getting close to the end of the season; when that season was done I was gone; I didn't work for him no more. (out cue)

0h 30 25

And he told me to get up and go out there and do my work. Get to work in my field. And everybody was gone, I was the only one. And some of those fellas don't know that



*right today, that that happened to me. But when the season was done, I left there. (out cue)*

Page VI

0h 31m 023

There were others that, people really suffered. Sometimes a man could be sick and he would have the little, he had his foremen of all the different departments, and they may go and roust him out of, out of bed. I know one man died. He was sick, he had pneumonia and they made him get up and go anyhow. (cue out)

0h 31m 42s

They took a fella, beat him, they tied him to a tree, a pine tree, and beat him to death, and left him tied to that tree. Another one in that same settlement, this white fella was using his wife, and he, this fella got kind of drunk; up and jumped on his wife-beat her up like Saturday. That white fella met him down the road on Sunday, shot him dead right in the road about his own wife. (cue out)

0h 33m 51s...*School*

We walked to school. (cue out)

0h 33m 55s

Six miles one way to school, that was twelve miles round. We walked while the white children rode the bus and throwed things after us as we walked along the road. (cue out)

0h 34m 16s

We knew they had a better situation than we had, cause the school I went to was only two rooms to it. They went in a big school. (cue out)

0h 35m 05s

I never will forget Ms. Evelyene Beasley that was my teacher. The first teacher I went to was my aunt. Aunt Maggie, ah, my mothers sister. She was teaching up in Adrian, Georgia, and that's where I went to school. The first year I went to school under my aunt. Little old, this was a one room school and ah, it was just like the churches. The schools and the churches were all, you know, wood, no paint on them; seats that were made by men who thought they could drive a nail. That's the way, that's the way we come up. (cue out)

0h 35m 43s...*Church*

Church was like church ought to be today. They had what they called, ah, circuit preachers because he'd have more than one church. Cause in our area there were two churches in the area; the Methodist church, Pendleton Springs, and Pendleton Springs Baptist church. And if when services was at the Methodist church we went, when it was at the Baptist church we went cause neither one of them had church every Sunday. And at one point we lived in a place where we were close to a school called, a church called Outler Grove. (cue out)

*But we stayed away from Phillips, you heard me mention that Phillips Chapel. We stayed away from that because those people would kill up Blacks. They would hang them. Yes, they would kill a man in a minute. (Cue out)*

*0h 36m 40s...Playtime in the Camps...Clothes*

We had our own way of playing. Ah, we made whatever we had to play with. We'd roll a car tire to death, or we'd get a hold of a wheel with a iron guider and we'd roll it. We could roll it for miles, just running along with that guider. An old tire, we may bat that, I don't know how far. Ah, and we played a lot of games: ring around the something, and we used to use the whip and the different kind of games we played. We had a lot of fun with the way we played. Ah, we didn't have the things we have now. (cue out)

The clothes; I wore overalls, they had the jacket. The overalls, all that went together, and you had one you kept special. You kept that ironed, starched and ironed. You wore that on the weekend. And through the week, ah, your brogan shoes you had, and to work in the woods, you had to wade a lot of water. (cue out)

*0h 40m 36s...A Tough Job*

There were people who didn't live as long as me, I'm 85 years old. There was a lot of young men didn't make it that long, because they worked wading in the water in the winter, ah, with that heavy work. Those barrels, rolling them up onto the truck. (cue out)

*0h 40m 57s*

Dipping tar, that was no easy job, and a lot of them died early-young. (cue out)

*0h 41m 06s...Rough For Women... But Some Rocked*

Ah, for women, it was, it was rough in the quarters. (cue out)

*0h 41m 13s*

Well, what made it so rough, now you know how women are? They ah, first of all I learned a lot when I was a little fella. Those guys would be running one another's wives, and I saw one get slashed good with a razor, cause the other one was running with her husband. All of that kind of stuff was going on. Now, there was some spiritual folks in it. On a Wednesday night, they ROCK-they would sing songs, hymns, and some of them would pray. (cue out)

*0h 41m 52s*

They would do that on Wednesday nights; now it might be at our house tonight, and next Wednesday night it be at somebody else's house. It went round and round and round. And ah, they would do that on Wednesday night. They called it a ROCK: but ah, those people who believed in God, they would all be involved. (cue out)



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0h 42m 55s...*Dangers in the Woods*

And let me tell you something about the woods. If I had a crop I knew where I wanted to start my work. If I started pulling my boxes right here, I'd run a certain way, a certain way I would go. Now you'd be surprised, you'd very seldom run in to any kind of, like, a rattle snake. But sometime I take a notion, to say well, I'm gonna start over here this time, come back this way. You bound to run into him. (cue out)

0h 43m 25s

He knew your regular route. (cue out)

0h 43m 30s

But if you run it another way, you subject to run into him, because he know how to stay out your way. If you run it the way you always run it, he knew how to stay out your way. (cue out)

0h 44m 0s...*Work Clothes*

You know what? When you wear turpentine clothes, they're stiff. And the teeth out of one of them, his teeth got hung in them and he didn't get loose. And the guy jumped and runned so (laughter), he was about dead when he stopped running, this is no joke. So, it was many things that you had to contend with in working in the woods. (cue out)

0h 44m 28s...*The Bible...Gambling....Moonshine...Jukes*

Those that, those that ah, believed in worship service, they would like meet around each others house, sat and talk the bible or stuff like this. The others that didn't, if they were drinking moonshine, they got together and drank the moonshine. They shot dice, they done the gambling and all that kind of thing. (cue out)

0h 44m 55s

They would like, if they were gambling or drinking, it would take place, like they buddies, certain ones buddied together and you'd find them at the same place drinking moonshine; that's what they had moonshine. (cue out)

0h 45m 11s

We didn't know nothing about no juke joints. (cue out)

0h 45m 14s

Not unless you went in to town, and that was a little old place, shucks, 10 or 12 people, it was loaded. (cue out)

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**0h 45m 30s**

**They had people who could play an organ which you had to pump it with your feet. Ah, later they was able to have a piano, but way back it was either a guy with either a guitar or a harmonica. (cue out)**

**0h 45m 52s**

**Now if you had a dance, it was either at the school, and ah, the school if it had a platform, then he would come and play the music, and the guys, that's how most of us learned to slow drag; behind guitar or harmonica music. And they knew how to play for you to dance. (cue out)**

**0h 56m 48s...*It was tough, but I learned something.***

**Turpentineing was tough and I feel like I was put into too early. (cue out)**

**0h 59m 29s**

**The one thing that it did teach me was that I was to earn whatever I received. Other words, if I worked for you, I needed to give you a day's work for a days pay. That stayed with me; that stayed with me even until this day. (cue out)**

**1h 05m 37s...*A Song---Pass Me Not O Gentle Savior***

**(out cue at 1h 06m 34s)...END**



### **Group 1- Turpentining**

0 Hours	1 min	17 secs
0 Hours	1 min	29 secs
0 Hours	1 min	44 secs
0 Hours	1 min	52 secs
0 Hours	4 min	11 secs
0 Hours	4 mins	38 secs
0 Hours	4 mins	46 secs
0 Hours	4 mins	59 secs
0 Hours	5 mins	13 secs
0 Hours	7 mins	6 secs
0 Hours	7 mins	20 secs
0 Hours	7 mins	43 secs
0 Hours	8 mins	4 secs
0 Hours	9 mins	0 secs
0 Hours	14 mins	57 secs
0 Hours	15 mins	34 secs
0 Hours	15 mins	50 secs

### **Group 2-Mules & Wagon**

0 Hours	5 mins	53 secs
0 Hours	6 mins	9 secs

### **Group 3-Stillins**

0 Hours	9 mins	0 secs
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### **Group 4-Woods, Riders, and Youth in the Woods**

0 Hours	12 mins	8 secs
0 Hours	13 mins	49 secs
0 Hours-Jobs in the Woods	14 mins	32 secs

### **Group 5-Danger in the Woods**

0 Hours	42 mins	55 secs
0 Hours	43 mins	22 secs
0 Hours	43 mins	30 secs
0 Hours-Work Clothes	44 mins	0 secs

### **Group 6-Bible...Gambliling...Shine...Jukes**

0 Hours	44 mins	28 secs
0 Hours	44 mins	55 secs
0 Hours	45 mins	11 secs
0 Hours	45 mins	14 secs

**Group 7-The Gillis Quarters- Commissary, Food, Setting Up, Losing**

0 Hours	18 mins	56 secs
0 Hours	19 mins	29 secs
0 Hours	20 mins	57 secs
0 Hours	21 mins	10 secs
0 Hours	22 mins	0 secs

**Group 8-Conditions at the Quarters**

0 Hours	26 mins	17 secs
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**Group 9-The Gillis...Randolph, Coleman, and the Attack**

0 Hours	28 mins	55 mins
0 Hours	29 mins	48 secs
0 Hours	30 mins	8 secs
0 Hours	30 mins	25 secs
0 Hours	31 mins	23 secs
0 Hours	31 mins	42 secs
0 Hours	33 mins	51 secs
0 Hours	33 mins	55 secs
0 Hours	34 mins	16 secs
0 Hours	35 mins	5 mins

**Group 10-Church**

0 Hours	35 mins	43 secs
0 Hours-Playtime at the Camp... Clothes	36 mins	40 secs

**Group 11-A Tough Job**

0 Hours	40 mins	36 secs
0 Hours	40 mins	57 secs

**Group 12-Rough For Women**

0 Hours	41 mins	6 secs
0 Hours	41 mins	13 secs
0 Hours	41 mins	52 secs

**Group 13-Tough, but I Learned A lot**

0 Hours	56 mins	48 secs
0 Hours	59 mins	29 secs



Page I

0h 1m 17s---*Going to work as a turpentine*

In the year 1935, I don't think I was quite old enough at that time, but it was then when... (out cue)

0h 1m 29s

I was introduced to it by my father. I was seventeen. (out cue)

0h 1m 44s

I didn't know anything but what he had told me and what he had showed me. (out cue)

0h 1m 52s

Well, he did some of all of it, including starting new crops as they called it. New crops was done in the winter of the year, and the first crew that they had to go in these were pine trees. I don't know exactly what size, but they were good size. They had a crew called the blazers. They made a blaze on the right at the bottom of the tree. And in that blaze, another crew came with a broad axe, to cut a slot to put a tin in that the gum would run on, and then there was a cup nailed and put under that tin. And this crop, this tree, then was called a virgin crop.

And they made a streak with a hack: a hack was, was a stock, oh, about 2 feet with a weight on the bottom of it, and the hack was a cutter that would cut. You had to chip with it, so the weight was to help him chip. And he would make a mark like a V. The first mark like so, and there, the gum would run right into the cup. Now, they had to cut a streak like this every week. Every week they had to put a streak and the gum would run down to the cup. This virgin was used until it would get at least 3 or 4 feet; you chipping boxes then. (out cue)

0h 4m 11s

And who ever had it, these were called crops, and it may be 100, 200, no telling how many trees in the crop. Now, he would have to once a week make a streak with the hack; he had to chip it this way, and you done that until it was raised higher as it was higher. (out cue)

0h 4m 38s

Then they would raise the cup and call it a yearling. (out cue)

0h 4m 46s

It begin to be 3 or 4 feet and they'd raise the cup up. (out cue)

0h 4m 59s

And see, it become a face after it keep going, so everything you chip, it made what you call a cat face. Keep going up, keep going up, keep going up. (out cue)

0h 5m 13s

And the tar would keep running down. Now I forget exactly how long it took for those cups to fill, and when those cups were full, then a crew that we called the dippers, they would come in and dip the tar. Ah, and they done it by the barrel. Back in those days it was a very little bit they were getting per barrel to dip the gum. And whenever the barrels were full, each one would do so many barrels per day. If he was a good strong man he could do a lot of barrels a day. (out cue)

0h 5m 53s...*Mules and Wagons*

A mule and a wagon went all down in the rough, pick up the barrels and put them out to where the truck could get to them. (out cue)

0h 6m 9s

They made their trails even if it was a new crop. He still would have to make a new trail. The wagons would go down into places where trucks couldn't go. Then, them barrels was loaded on that wagon and brought out up higher, higher ground, that the truck could pick it up. They had to use skids to roll the barrels up on the truck. Turpentine was a hard job. (out cue)

0h 7m 6s

Pulling boxes was the same as chipping boxes. (out cue)

0h 7m 20s

Because when it got up high, where you pulled, and you pulling boxes, you did that more or less by the weight of your body anyway. (out cue)

0h 7m 43s

You would see a cat face, say from, well say from 12ft, 12inches from the ground up at least. (out cue)

0h 8m 4s

The pull was a long stock. See once you got up to where you had to pull, you didn't use the short stock no more, you had what they call, ah, a puller for to pull boxes, the lower one was a hack. (out cue)

0h 9m 0s

To dip a man had to use a big can, but some call it a bucket. It was made from nail kegs. Finally as things progressed, they started really making them in factories. They made them out of metal, but the first ones were made out of nail kegs, and they put a handle on it so you could carry it, and your leg helped you carry that heavy bucket. Once these barrels were hauled in to the still it was gum. And ah, I know about the still because the house that my father and I lived in was right across the street from the still.



0h 9m 0s continued

And the still, the process was the same as the way they make moonshine. The still, they would load this big kettle. It was like a two story outfit; down below is where, oh, it was like copper tubing all the way around in a great big tub, and that was for it to run down through. But they had to cook it until the turpentine came all around through this big tub, and come out down below where your stiller took care of filling the barrels with turpentine. Ah, it be done cooked and cooked and cooked, until when they do turn it out to run it, to run the tar out, its rosin then. Its been cooked, its not gum anymore its rosin. Its real hot. They had open barrels to put that in.

(out cue)

So they would keep stilling the gum to make turpentine, and they also was making rosin that came out of it: rosin, they could make glass, they could make ah, rubber, oh I don't know how many products they could make out of the rosin that came from the turpentine. There was another process when winter time came. As it get colder, the gum would stick on the face. So in the winter they had to do what they call scrapping. Now this was hard. You had to scrape that off the face, and those cups would be full, and they'd dip them out into the barrels: that also made turpentine, and they would scrape that. Now the face is clean now and the tar can run down easier, and they loose a lot of it sticking on the face. So that's why they had to scrape it in the winter. And then, spring time come. That's when your turpentine business really started to work. (out cue)

0h 12m 8s---*Woods riders and Youth in the Woods*

Yes, it was a hard job, ah; they had what you would call a woods rider. Usually, he was white-he ride a horse. Now, he would ride the route just like you worked it, and he'd ride to see if you missed putting your streak on. If you missed any he would let you know about it. It was a hard job and I believe....

0h 13m 49s...

it affected me being so young. I believe that's what broke this arm. I didn't even know it was broke. One Saturday I went to a ball game, you know how we had sandlot baseball. I went to throw the ball, naw, the ball got loose and it came over where I was standing. I reached and went to throw it, and when I threw it this arm fell on back-broke. (out cue)

0h 14m 32s...*Jobs in the Woods*

Cause in 1938 I had done some of everything to be done except pulling logs out of the woods, and so I know I needed to get Public Work, and I left and came to Jacksonville in 1938, and that got me away from turpentinig. (out cue)

Page IV

0h 14m 57s...*Winter Turpentining*

There were other things that we had to do during turpentining. In the winter they done what they call raking pines. You had to rake about and circle around each tree. Rake the pine needles away from the tree, and each one, you got paid for so many that you raked per day. (out cue)

0h 15m 34s

You had yourself assigned a number or you had some word. Some of them, some of them would have a word like Top line, some of them had a word like Four, some of them might have a word like Fifteen. (out cue)

0h 15m 50s

Somebody had to keep tab of this to know how many you had raked. That was in order when seasons come, when fire hit the woods, that if you had raked around, it wouldn't ruin that tree. (out cue)

0h 18m 56s...*The Gillis Quarters...The Commissary...Food...Settling Up...Losing The Gillis'*, they had a quarters with little shacks; people lived in them. (out cue)

0h 19m 29s

The quarters: all those people that worked for the Gillis' lived in the quarters. They were little, two room maybe three. You didn't hardly see one with three: two room houses. You lived in them. They had a commissary. That was a store. They carried bout everything you would need. Course you ate a lot of white back salt pork, you ate a lot of black eyed peas, you ate a lot of rice. And those that when they killed hogs, they would cure that meat, and they'd put that meat in the commissary. Now, you went, whatever you needed, you went to the commissary, and you bought it, and it was put on the book.

They'd settle up with you every first Saturday. Every first Saturday, all those people that had worked had to go in to be settled up. They would determine how much you had made when they would determine how much you might owe. If you got any money you borrowed it from them. And at the end of the year when you settled up, we say, the first Saturday in December. He would determine whether or not you come out on top, or you still owed him. And you usually still owed him. (out cue)

0h 20m 57s

Sharecropping was something similar, very similar. (out cue)



Page V

0h 21m 10s

You take a sharecrop and you bring it up to where you lay it by. That's getting close to where you gonna harvest. And many times the owner would find a reason to fall out with you. And many times he would run you off his place, and you would wind up losers, and he would get the spoils. Well, turpentine was that. You was working for just about nothing, because you was always in debt to the man. If you wanted to leave, then another man had a turpentine farm. If you went to see him, then he would pay off what you owe this man, and you would work for him. (out cue)

0h 22m 00s

You go in in debt, and you come out in debt. (out cue)

0h 26m 17s...*Conditions in the Quarters*

The conditions were very bad. You might have heard statements that those were the good old days. But see, we lived in these little shacks, and a lot of times they would situate a well, they used to dig big wells, and it wasn't a well at every house. Ah, people had to gather round to get their water, or do their washing from that well. Now if it was a big quarters, there may be two wells but everybody had to get their water from that well. (out cue)

0h 28m 55s...*The Gillis'...The Randolph's...Old Man Coleman-The Attack*

The Gillis' were very good to their people. They didn't beat up on their people like the firm just below us: *THE PHILLIPS SETTLEMENT*. They beat them up. The *RANDOLPHS*, ah there around Swainsboro, would beat up theirs. I know they beat them up because one time I went to work for old man *COLEMAN* in Swainsboro. One weekend everybody was gone to town and different places and I had stayed home. And he come, everybody was gone, nobody was working. And you know, unbeknownst to me, he, and I didn't know he was going to attack me, and he did. He attacked me. Other words he hit me before I even know it. (out cue)

0h 29m 48s

Yep. And while I was right down, and I'm glad my wife didn't see it, Then he, now he wasn't gonna shoot me, it was just to put a scare in me, but I didn't know he wasn't gonna shoot me. (out cue)

0h 30 08

That was the last. That was getting close to the end of the season; when that season was done I was gone; I didn't work for him no more. (out cue)

0h 30 25

And he told me to get up and go out there and do my work. Get to work in my field. And everybody was gone, I was the only one. And some of those fellas don't know that

*right today, that that happened to me. But when the season was done, I left there. (out cue)*

Page VI

**0h 31m 02s**

There were others that, people really suffered. Sometimes a man could be sick and he would have the little, he had his foremen of all the different departments, and they may go and roust him out of, out of bed. I know one man died. He was sick, he had pneumonia and they made him get up and go anyhow. (cue out)

**0h 31m 42s**

They took a fella, beat him, they tied him to a tree, a pine tree, and beat him to death, and left him tied to that tree. Another one in that same settlement, this white fella was using his wife, and he, this fella got kind of drunk; up and jumped on his wife-beat her up like Saturday. That white fella met him down the road on Sunday, shot him dead right in the road about his own wife. (cue out)

**0h 33m 51s...School**

We walked to school. (cue out)

**0h 33m 55s**

Six miles one way to school, that was twelve miles round. We walked while the white children rode the bus and throwed things after us as we walked along the road. (cue out)

**0h 34m 16s**

We knew they had a better situation than we had, cause the school I went to was only two rooms to it. They went in a big school. (cue out)

**0h 35m 05s**

I never will forget Ms. Evelyene Beasley that was my teacher. The first teacher I went to was my aunt. Aunt Maggie, ah, my mothers sister. She was teaching up in Adrian, Georgia, and that's where I went to school. The first year I went to school under my aunt. Little old, this was a one room school and ah, it was just like the churches. The schools and the churches were all, you know, wood, no paint on them; seats that were made by men who thought they could drive a nail. That's the way, that's the way we come up. (cue out)

**0h 35m 43s...Church**

Church was like church ought to be today. They had what they called, ah, circuit preachers because he'd have more than one church. Cause in our area there were two churches in the area; the Methodist church, Pendleton Springs, and Pendleton Springs Baptist church. And if when services was at the Methodist church we went, when it was at the Baptist church we went cause neither one of them had church every Sunday. And at one point we lived in a place where we were close to a school called, a church called Outler Grove. (cue out)



**Page VII...Church continued**

***But we stayed away from Phillips, you heard me mention that Phillips Chapel. We stayed away from that because those people would kill up Blacks. They would hang them. Yes, they would kill a man in a minute. (Cue out)***

**0h 36m 40s...Playtime in the Camps...Clothes**

**We had our own way of playing. Ah, we made whatever we had to play with. We'd roll a car tire to death, or we'd get a hold of a wheel with a iron guider and we'd roll it. We could roll it for miles, just running along with that guider. An old tire, we may bat that, I don't know how far. Ah, and we played a lot of games: ring around the something, and we used to use the whip and the different kind of games we played. We had a lot of fun with the way we played. Ah, we didn't have the things we have now. (cue out)**

**The clothes; I wore overalls, they had the jacket. The overalls, all that went together, and you had one you kept special. You kept that ironed, starched and ironed. You wore that on the weekend. And through the week, ah, your brogan shoes you had, and to work in the woods, you had to wade a lot of water. (cue out)**

**0h 40m 36s...A Tough Job**

**There were people who didn't live as long as me, I'm 85 years old. There was a lot of young men didn't make it that long, because they worked wading in the water in the winter, ah, with that heavy work. Those barrels, rolling them up onto the truck. (cue out)**

**0h 40m 57s**

**Dipping tar, that was no easy job, and a lot of them died early-young. (cue out)**

**0h 41m 06s...Rough For Women... But Some Rocked**

**Ah, for women, it was, it was rough in the quarters. (cue out)**

**0h 41m 13s**

**Well, what made it so rough, now you know how women are? They ah, first of all I learned a lot when I was a little fella. Those guys would be running one another's wives, and I saw one get slashed good with a razor, cause the other one was running with her husband. All of that kind of stuff was going on. Now, there was some spiritual folks in it. On a Wednesday night, they ROCK-they would sing songs, hymns, and some of them would pray. (cue out)**

**0h 41m 52s**

**They would do that on Wednesday nights; now it might be at our house tonight, and next Wednesday night it be at somebody else's house. It went round and round and**

round. And ah, they would do that on Wednesday night. They called it a ROCK: but ah, those people who believed in God, they would all be involved. (cue out)  
Page VIII

0h 42m 55s...*Dangers in the Woods*

And let me tell you something about the woods. If I had a crop I knew where I wanted to start my work. If I started pulling my boxes right here, I'd run a certain way, a certain way I would go. Now you'd be surprised, you'd very seldom run in to any kind of, like, a rattle snake. But sometime I take a notion, to say well, I'm gonna start over here this time, come back this way. You bound to run into him. (cue out)

0h 43m 25s

He knew your regular route. (cue out)

0h 43m 30s

But if you run it another way, you subject to run into him, because he know how to stay out your way. If you run it the way you always run it, he knew how to stay out your way. (cue out)

0h 44m 0s...*Work Clothes*

You know what? When you wear turpentine clothes, they're stiff. And the teeth out of one of them, his teeth got hung in them and he didn't get loose. And the guy jumped and runned so (laughter), he was about dead when he stopped running, this is no joke. So, it was many things that you had to contend with in working in the woods. (cue out)

0h 44m 28s...*The Bible...Gambling....Moonshine...Jukes*

Those that, those that ah, believed in worship service, they would like meet around each others house, sat and talk the bible or stuff like this. The others that didn't, if they were drinking moonshine, they got together and drank the moonshine. They shot dice, they done the gambling and all that kind of thing. (cue out)

0h 44m 55s

They would like, if they were gambling or drinking, it would take place, like they buddies, certain ones buddied together and you'd find them at the same place drinking moonshine; that's what they had moonshine. (cue out)

0h 45m 11s

We didn't know nothing about no juke joints. (cue out)

0h 45m 14s

Not unless you went in to town, and that was a little old place, shucks, 10 or 12 people, it was loaded. (cue out)



**Page IX...*Cont'd from page eight***

**0h 45m 30s**

**They had people who could play an organ which you had to pump it with your feet. Ah, later they was able to have a piano, but way back it was either a guy with either a guitar or a harmonica. (cue out)**

**0h 45m 52s**

**Now if you had a dance, it was either at the school, and ah, the school if it had a platform, then he would come and play the music, and the guys, that's how most of us learned to slow drag; behind guitar or harmonica music. And they knew how to play for you to dance. (cue out)**

**0h 56m 48s...*It was tough, but I learned something.***

**Turpentinaing was tough and I feel like I was put into too early. (cue out)**

**0h 59m 29s**

**The one thing that it did teach me was that I was to earn whatever I received. Other words, if I worked for you, I needed to give you a day's work for a days pay. That stayed with me; that stayed with me even until this day. (cue out)**

**1h 05m 37s...*A Song---Pass Me Not O Gentle Savior***

**(out cue at 1h 06m 34s)...*END***

**Mr. Anthrom Green Jr.**  
**Jacksonville, Florida**  
**Interviewed by Le Roy Henderson**

Mr. Anthrom Green Jr. was born in Soperton, Georgia on October 27, 1918 on the Gillis Plantation. He came to Jacksonville, Florida in 1938 and has lived there since that time. Green was introduced to the business of turpentine by his father, Anthrom Green Sr. at the age of 17 in 1935; he and his father worked side by side. Green guides us through his recounting the hardships of the various jobs he held in the turpentine woods. As he takes us from job to job and from town to town, he remembers various bosses and woods riders, and the process of turpentine, from start to finish.

Though he feels that he began his career in the woods far too early in life, he went on to master various aspects of the job. He relives his days on the Gillis Plantation, and life in the camps. He describes in detail for us camp diets, entertainment, share-cropping and payment, camp conditions, the house that he grew up in, and the treatment of camp workers in different camps.

Education, religion, playtime, avoiding snake bites, worship services and life for the women in the camp are all covered well by Mr. Green in this interview. Then, he recounts for us the some of the events that led up to his departure from the woods, as he decides to go to Jacksonville. This is his story; he is 85.

***Going to work as a turpentine***

In the year 1935, I don't think I was quite old enough at that time, but it was then when... I was introduced to it by my father. I was seventeen. I didn't know anything but what he had told me and what he had showed me.

Well, he did some of all of it, including starting new crops as they called it. New crops was done in the winter of the year, and the first crew that they had to go in- these were pine trees. I don't know exactly what size, but they were good size. They had a crew called the blazers. They made a blaze on the right at the bottom of the tree. And in that blaze, another crew came with a broad axe, to cut a slot to put a tin in that the gum would run on, and then there was a cup nailed and put under that tin. And this crop, this tree, then was called a virgin crop.

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And the tar would keep running down. Now I forget exactly how long it took for those cups to fill, and when those cups were full, then a crew that we called the dippers, they would come in and dip the tar. Ah, and they done it by the barrel. Back in those days it was a very little bit they were getting per barrel to dip the gum. And whenever the barrels were full, each one would do so many barrels per day. If he was a good strong man he could do a lot of barrels a day.

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The conditions were very bad. You might have heard statements that those were the good old days. But see, we lived in these little shacks, and a lot of times they would situate a well, they used to dig big wells, and it wasn't a well at every house. Ah, people had to gather round to get their water, or do their washing from that well. Now if it was a big quarters, there may be two wells but everybody had to get their water from that well.

There were others that, people really suffered. Sometimes a man could be sick and he would have the little, he had his foremen of all the different departments, and they may go and roust him out of, out of bed. I know one man died. He was sick, he had pneumonia and they made him get up and go anyhow.

They took a fella, beat him, they tied him to a tree, a pine tree, and beat him to death, and left him tied to that tree. Another one in that same settlement, this white fella was using his wife, and he, this fella got kind of drunk; up and jumped on his wife-beat her up like Saturday. That white fella met him down the road on Sunday, shot him dead right in the road about his own wife.

### ***School***

We walked to school.

Six miles one way to school, that was twelve miles round. We walked while the white children rode the bus and throwed things after us as we walked along the road.



We knew they had a better situation than we had, cause the school I went to was only two rooms to it. They went in a big school.

I never will forget Ms. Evelyene Beasley that was my teacher. The first teacher I went to was my aunt. Aunt Maggie, ah, my mothers sister. She was teaching up in Adrian, Georgia, and that's where I went to school. The first year I went to school under my aunt. Little old, this was a one room school and ah, it was just like the churches. The schools and the churches were all, you know, wood, no paint on them; seats that were made by men who thought they could drive a nail. That's the way, that's the way we come up.

### ***Church***

Church was like church ought to be today. They had what they called, ah, circuit preachers because he'd have more than one church. Cause in our area there were two churches in the area; the Methodist church, Pendleton Springs, and Pendleton Springs Baptist church. And if when services was at the Methodist church we went, when it was at the Baptist church we went cause neither one of them had church every Sunday. And at one point we lived in a place where we were close to a school called, a church called Outler Grove.

### ***Playtime in the Camps...Clothes***

We had our own way of playing. Ah, we made whatever we had to play with. We'd roll a car tire to death, or we'd get a hold of a wheel with a iron guider and we'd roll it. We could roll it for miles, just running along with that guider. An old tire, we may bat that, I don't know how far. Ah, and we played a lot of games: ring around the something, and we used to use the whip and the different kind of games we played. We had a lot of fun with the way we played. Ah, we didn't have the things we have now.

The clothes; I wore overalls, they had the jacket. The overalls, all that went together, and you had one you kept special. You kept that ironed, starched and ironed. You wore that on the weekend. And through the week, ah, your brogan shoes you had, and to work in the woods, you had to wade a lot of water.

### ***A Tough Job***

There were people who didn't live as long as me, I'm 85 years old. There was a lot of young men didn't make it that long, because they worked wading in the water in the winter, ah, with that heavy work. Those barrels, rolling them up onto the truck.

Dipping tar, that was no easy job, and a lot of them died early-young.

### ***Rough For Women... But Some Rocked***

Ah, for women, it was, it was rough in the quarters.

Well, what made it so rough, now you know how women are? They ah, first of all I learned a lot when I was a little fella. Those guys would be running one another's wives, and I saw one get slashed good with a razor, cause the other one was running with her husband. All of that kind of stuff was going on. Now, there was some spiritual folks in it. On a Wednesday night, they ROCK-they would sing songs, hymns, and some of them would pray.

They would do that on Wednesday nights; now it might be at our house tonight, and next Wednesday night it be at somebody else's house. It went round and round and round. And ah, they would do that on Wednesday night. They called it a ROCK: but ah, those people who believed in God, they would all be involved.

### ***Dangers in the Woods***

And let me tell you something about the woods. If I had a crop I knew where I wanted to start my work. If I started pulling my boxes right here, I'd run a certain way, a certain way I would go. Now you'd be surprised, you'd very seldom run in to any kind of, like, a rattle snake. But sometime I take a notion, to say well, I'm gonna start over here this time, come back this way. You bound to run into him.

He knew your regular route.

But if you run it another way, you subject to run into him, because he know how to stay out your way. If you run it the way you always run it, he knew how to stay out your way.

### ***Work Clothes***

You know what? When you wear turpentine clothes, they're stiff. And the teeth out of one of them, his teeth got hung in them and he didn't get loose. And the guy jumped and runned so (laughter), he was about dead when he stopped running, this is no joke. So, it was many things that you had to contend with in working in the woods.

### ***The Bible...Gambling....Moonshine...Jukes***

Those that, those that ah, believed in worship service, they would like meet around each others house, sat and talk the bible or stuff like this. The others that didn't, if they were drinking moonshine, they got together and drank the moonshine. They shot dice, they done the gambling and all that kind of thing.

They would like, if they were gambling or drinking, it would take place, like they buddies, certain ones buddied together and you'd find them at the same place drinking moonshine; that's what they had moonshine.

We didn't know nothing about no juke joints.

Not unless you went in to town, and that was a little old place, shucks, 10 or 12 people, it was loaded.

They had people who could play an organ which you had to pump it with your feet. Ah, later they was able to have a piano, but way back it was either a guy with either a guitar or a harmonica.

Now if you had a dance, it was either at the school, and ah, the school if it had a platform, then he would come and play the music, and the guys, that's how most of us learned to slow drag; behind guitar or harmonica music. And they knew how to play for you to dance.

***It was tough, but I learned something.***

Turpentine was tough and I feel like I was put into too early.

The one thing that it did teach me was that I was to earn whatever I received. Other words, if I worked for you, I needed to give you a day's work for a days pay. That stayed with me; that stayed with me even until this day.

***A Song---Pass Me Not O Gentle Savior***

(out cue at 1h 06m 34s)...END