

TAPE LOG

Fieldworker's tape #: **02.1 (First tape of interview)**

Name of person(s) interviewed: **George E. Music, Jr.**

Fieldworker: **Timothy C. Prizer**

Date of interview: **July 12, 2002**

Location of interview: **Front porch of house at [REDACTED]
(mother's home), Waycross, GA**

Other people present: **Mr. Music's mother at times near the conclusion of
the interview**

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

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

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

Music's voice recorded much quieter than that of the fieldworker. The interview took place on the porch of Music's mother's home, and the sounds of birds, insects, dogs, wind and his mother's voice may at times be heard. These sounds do not lessen the sound quality of the interview, however.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF TAPE CONTENTS

The contents are a blend of oral history and occupational folklife (or folklore), focusing on George Music, Jr.'s life growing up and working in turpentine on his own land. His late father and former turpentine worker as well, George Music, Sr., is a recurring topic. Speech hesitations such as "um", "and", "uh", and "you know" have been removed from all quotations.

TAPE INDEX

COUNTER NO.

SUBJECT

(Opening announcement)

011 He has lived on this property his whole life, with the exception of about eight years when he lived in Jamestown, GA. He left for his first marriage when he was 17 years old in 1977. He worked as an automotive mechanic when he left for this period of times. He would still come home on many

weekends to help his dad work turpentine in the woods. Mr. Music returned to live on this property again when he was divorced from his first wife. He came back to stay until the day he dies. He never plans to move again.

028 Mr. Music started elementary school in Waresboro, GA in 1966. He quit school in the twelfth grade in 1977 and got married the same year. It was a small rural school with children mainly residing out in the country, outside the city limits of Waycross. The old one-room building was there when he started school, but they had a much larger school at that time. Most of the older parts of the school had been torn down by the time that he started there.

School

He was permitted to leave school during the day or not even go to school at all some days in order to stay home and work turpentine with his father. Most children in that area did the same. The teachers understood, and if they did not, the principal did and he would frequently override the teacher's refusal.

067 School was valued by him and his parents, but working was more important to them. His father thought that education was important up to a certain limit, and then you should be out working turpentine. Mr. Music says that his father always used to say that the only thing you could learn in adult life past the sixth grade was adultery. Mr. Music was the first in his family to go to school regularly. His father went to school at the same school much earlier, but did not attend nearly as regularly as did Jr.

092 The school added a twelfth grade right before his father ended the eleventh, and his father used to say that having to attend the twelfth grade cost him around 125 acres of land that joined the current property. In that one year, he could have worked turpentine and paid for the additional property. Mr. Music was seven years old (1967) when he started working turpentine. Since he was two years old, he had followed his dad into the woods for enjoyment. One year later, he was working much harder, as his father "cracked the whip" on him and told him had to start working more.

120 He started working in the fields on the property plowing corn in a tractor when he was just six years old. At seven, he was a chipper in the turpentine woods and by nine years old, he was doing the heavier task of dipping. He learned the work by watching his father do it for so long. When he

was young, if he were to do something wrong while working, his father would stop and show him the right way. This is the way all turpentiners were taught; it was passed through the generations.

150 He nor his father ever used sulfuric acid on the trees because it would decrease their productivity. This was because they always used a wood hack, an instrument that cut deeper into the tree than a bark hack. The acid was only necessary if the streak made was not deep enough into the vein of the tree. The acid was also thought of as very dangerous on the clothes and the skin. Many folks like to chew on the old rosin, and this is extremely dangerous if acid had been used on the tree.

175 Mr. Music has always enjoyed the work, even as a small child. He always wanted to be like “daddy,” and his father was an extremely hard worker. He says that times were different then and the work helped children stay out of trouble.

children

If he were to screw something up in the woods as a boy and didn't know any better, his father would get on to him verbally. If he did it again after he had been told and shown, his father would whip him. He makes it clear that these “whippings” were not like the beatings we hear about all the time today. Once he was whipped, he would never make the same mistake again.

203 He recalls a time when he was a four year old boy at the courthouse with his father and his father nearly jerked his shoulder out of socket for something he had done wrong. His father then promised to spank him when they got to the courthouse door, and to Jr.'s lasting regret, he did not forget. This discipline is what kept him out of trouble with the authorities.

213 His primary reward for the work that he did in the woods was simply a place to live and food to eat. Around 1972, at the age of twelve, his father started paying him some spending money once a month “for Saturday night.” This money was better than many of boys his same age made working in tobacco, but the work involved in turpentine was longer and harder also. As a boy, he would work three days a week for another man in tobacco, and then the remaining three or four would be spent working in the turpentine woods.

The first person in his family that Music is certain was a turpentiner was his grandfather, Louis Music, but he thinks that his great-grandfather probably worked it too. Back in his grandfather's days (the 1920s and 30s), there was not much of a choice other than turpentine or railroad work for to make a living.

269 The barrels of resin were usually hauled by pickup truck from the Music's land to a still located off of Waring St. in Waycross, the back of which still stands today. Up until the end of his and his father's life working in turpentine, the barrels were taken to a still in Baxley, GA.

285 Mules and wagons were used daily in these woods up until the 1950s, and in 1972, at just twelve years old, Mr. Music farmed the entire property himself using a mule for two years.

Mules

His father was always the type to favor any change in the business that would bring about more production and more profit. But at first, the trucks were expensive to the point that buying one would actually make them lose money. This, and the fact that new parts for a faulty tractor were becoming too expensive, is the very reason that Mr. Music had to use a mule as late as the early 70s. When they could afford it, however, the truck was considered a beneficial change.

316 Mr. Music considers turpentine mules to be some of the smartest animals ever. All you have to do to get a mule to come to you in the woods is holler at it, and it will come right over. The mule Music had previously carried logs, and it used would respond to its name and walk back and forth all day long between trees as people called for it. Also, mules responded to specific commands. Music goes through these directional commands and says that the mules would obey every time. In many ways, Music feels that the mules are smarter than many people.

362 Mules always had names, but Music's had been named before he acquired it. The aforementioned mule that he worked with had been named "Diner". Diner used to steal food from out of people's hands. She wouldn't bother with any food that was lying around; she only wanted it if someone else was getting ready to eat it. Diner became "part of" Mr. Music as he worked with her more and more, he considered her a pet with personality rather than a beast of burden.

386 Mr. Music has witnessed many changes in technology and has seen a lot of experimentation with new methods of working turpentine. The most recent of these, as he describes, is boring a hole into the tree and putting a bottle on it. He asserts that this new technique actually decreases the productivity of the gum. He says that it is simply a search for a lazy way out, and it is reflective of the mechanization of current times. The work becomes less enjoyable, and much less productive, with technology.

Changes in technology

R

425 Music's grandfather worked in turpentine both before and after the cup-and-gutter system was introduced. His grandfather was in favor of the change completely because it made dipping much easier, especially in the hot months, without taking the enjoyment of the production involved in the work. Music says he remembers his dad showing him old birdeye cups (cone-shaped) that were once used, but neither he nor his father worked turpentine before cups and gutters were used.

459 He says that there are approximately 3,000 trees on his land that are or were used for turpentine. At any one time while they were working in the woods regularly, they kept in between 1800 and 2500 faces in production on their own property. He says that his dad once worked 5,000 boxes at a time.

Music says that they have both hill and slash pines on their property and that the work does not change from tree to tree. The slash pine is, however, the most productive rosin-wise of all types of pine trees (about twice as productive as the hill pine). There are more slash pines on his property than there are hill pines.

496 The most faces in active production on one tree at the same time that he has ever seen are three. However, there have been some abnormally large trees on the property that, over the years, sported up to six or seven faces.

When the barrels of gum were taken to the still, a paycheck was written right then and there. His grandfather once lived in a turpentine camp and would trade the barrels for groceries at the commissary, but neither Music nor his father ever did simple trading for groceries.

539 For a long time, before Music was born, there was a still located right off of their property. This place became known as the "still place" and still is, even though no trace of it remains.

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-- SIDE B --

003 Back in the times when he was working turpentine, Music would normally awake everyday by 5:30 or 6 a.m., before daylight. He would then eat a huge breakfast that would hold him until lunchtime that day. If breakfast wasn't ample, they would not be able to stand the work and the heat.

daily routine

Someone would stand on the porch and call him, his father and whatever other workers they had to lunch everyday.

He would normally be asleep by 9:30 p.m. most nights. In the summertime, when the days were longer, they may be awake until 10 p.m., but any later than that was very rare. Most of the time, the work had tired him out so much that by the time he had washed up and eaten dinner, he was ready for bed.

019 His family did not have television until 1977, so the only thing that they would do for entertainment was on Saturday nights, they would listen to the Grand Ole Opry on the radio. He jokes that people used to tell them that they lived so far back in the country that the Grand Ole Opry they heard on Saturday nights had actually been performed the Saturday night before.

His mother would cook Music and his father eggs, grits, sausage and some toast or biscuits and would be up at least as early as they were. Every now and then, they would have ham, for which they considered themselves very lucky. He swears that his mother was the best cook he has ever come across and that she made "stuff that would stick to your ribs."

039 Normally, the workers would stop for a break about two hours after they had started working for some water. He would sit on a log for about ten minutes at the most and have some water before returning to the work. They would typically have these breaks twice in the morning and twice in the afternoon, depending on the temperature. The only time that he can remember his dad calling off a day's work except for a storm was one day that it was 106 degrees outside. He recalls his father saying that it was simply too hot to be out in the woods that day. This is a fond memory for him because that day they went out to the [Satilla] river to swim and cool off.

060 Rarely would he ever take his lunch with him in the woods because of the proximity of his house. When his father worked turpentine at other places, he would often take his lunch with him into the woods, but this was before Music's time. He says that his father's lunch during these times was normally grits or rice and some type of meat with a biscuit.

It was usually his mother that would call from the porch for them to come in and eat dinner. At times, she would go out to one of the many pickup trucks and just blow the horn. When he was a small child, his mother would send him to call for his dad to come have dinner. Instead of calling

him, though, he would normally just go find him. He says that he could tell, from about two miles, close to the exact tree that his dad was working because of having followed him in the woods so many times. When his father would get through eating, he would take a nap for about 45 minutes to an hour, and then he would get back up and go work again until dark.

- 092 It was normally just his father and him in the woods working, but about once every three or four weeks they would have a couple of black workers come help out. They were twin brothers and their names were Leroy and Junior. They were traveling turpentiners and would work for many people, but they felt close to the Music's. One of them came to his father's funeral last year and the other one would have but had health problems. They still come by and see how George is doing sometimes.

Just about everywhere in the woods had a nickname that had been passed from his grandfather to his father and finally to him. Some of these places included "The Knob," "The Hill," "The Pond," etc. "The Pond" was merely low land that was often moist. The animals in the woods were normally just referred to by general names.

- 129 When they became thirsty in the woods during the day, they would just hang their hacks on a tree somewhere and walk over the hand pump that they had for a water break. Sometimes they would also fill a milk jug up with water and freeze it. The water would be enjoyed throughout the day as it thawed out. Blackberries and huckleberries grew in the wild in the woods and they would eat those a lot while working. Most of these berries are gone now due to lumber companies spraying chemicals from helicopters.

To this day and since before he can remember, they have grown corn, watermelon, tomatoes and such on their property. They also used to have a few hogs and cows on the land. The food that they grow is a large part of their diet, and a lot of the corn is given to a neighbor that has cows. A lot of times, they will have their corn ground into grits and meal so that they don't have to buy it from the grocery store.

- 177 Most of knowledge of the wildlife in the woods comes naturally. You learn what to avoid. Most of the time, they would rarely see any snakes on their land. The reason for this was that they worked in a pattern and the snakes knew this pattern. The snakes would steer clear of the parts of

local knowledge

the woods where they knew the work was taking place. The only time they see snakes is when they change the pattern to start dipping. As soon as the pattern changes, the snakes become visible. He has found out that most wildlife is just as scared of people as they are of them. Hornets' nests are highly respected in the woods. Unless someone stirs their nest, they will rarely bother anyone. Sometimes, wasps will form nests right underneath the cups on the trees, and they will sting occasionally. If there were any trees that they thought would be productive but had a nest of some sort in it, they would simply skip the tree. He learned to avoid these insects at all costs. He has been stung though, seven times at once in fact. He says that his "mouth wasn't big enough to let all the racket out."

222 Some of the tools were very sharp and knowledge of first aid was important. If someone got cut, they normally had a handkerchief in their pocket that they could wrap the wound with. If the cut was especially deep, they would sometimes go back to the house, but it had to be really bad not to finish that day's work. There was much more of a sense of respect than there was knowledge, per say, in the woods. Overall, turpentine wasn't very dangerous work. It was hard work, but not very dangerous as are some other occupations in the woods. He does recall one instance where a barrel rolled off a wagon and over someone's foot. A broken foot or arm was about the most serious injuries he knows of in turpentineing.

Fire ants have become a problem now on his property, but when he worked turpentine they were not. He thinks this is because of all the products that are now shipped from overseas (turpentine included), and the ants come over in the packages. He has heard that the first ones came to this country in Louisiana and then worked their way across the southeast.

256 The biggest fear in the woods was a bear or two that they would occasionally see while working. They also used to have a black panther that would come around about once a year for about three weeks at a time. They would know that he was around because they could see his tracks, and occasionally they would see him cross the road. Also, there would be times that they suspected the panther to be around and then a cow or a hog would be missing. They figured the panther had gotten a hold of him. But all of these things were avoided by the workers' and the animals' knowledge of each other's patterns. His biggest fear was running across a bear with cubs, and he

↑
danger
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actually did one time. He says that his respect paid off here too, because he "left her some tracks to look at."

Sometimes, a rifle was carried with him into the woods mainly just to shoot some rabbits or squirrels for dinner. He always lived in the woods so he always took advantage of the wildlife in them. His dad used to sit on the porch and shoot deer from great distances. He would then joke about how far he had to travel to hunt.

293 The machinery that he worked with in the woods was not dangerous. He knew a lot about tractors, and other than that, it was just a hack, puller and a dip iron. Again, it was very hard work, but not very dangerous work.

They would burn the woods every year, but fortunately never had any wildfires. He says that that is a much bigger problem down in the Okefinokee Swamp areas due to lightning.

burns

318 Turpentine beetles would occasionally get in a little section of the timber, but never caused a large problem. They are most prevalent in times that other people had cut the timber on surrounding properties. Also, the Music's property has gone through some problems in recent years with lightning and winds, specifically Hurricane Hugo. It is after these lightning strikes that the bugs become the worst. It seems like since then, every storm takes out a few trees. He says that the soil in this area is not as strong as it seems. It gets weaker as the roots go deeper.

349 Naturally, knowledge of navigation and orientation in the woods comes with the time spent in them. Music has formed such a pattern of work in the woods that he knows where he is no matter how deep he is just by looking up at the treetops. He says that he could do the same thing in the pitch black of darkness. He says doesn't even realize it, but he knows where every tree is in these woods. Also, he is able to tell by the positioning of the sun and the moon. By looking at his shadow, he can tell you where he is in the woods in relation to every thing else.

386 If people from "in town" were to come out in the country, they may see someone's cut and think that the injured person should go to the doctor and get stitches. But what's the use in going to a doctor when the world's best natural healer – raw turpentine – is all around your house. He rarely found himself in any dangerous situations in life because of the knowledge and respect of the woods and the outdoors in general.

medicine

- 407 The spirits of turpentine were often used in medicines and paint thinners. He says that raw turpentine is one of the best healers anywhere, and it is natural. Medically, raw turpentine is great for cuts, scrapes and even colds. Cuts heal extremely quickly when turpentine is applied to them. He has heard of turpentine being used for bee stings and stomach aches, but has never used it for those purposes himself.
- 438 Due to using turpentine so regularly, he never went to the doctor more than twice before he was ten years old. His father used to smear some turpentine underneath his nose to clear congestion. He says that he also remembers his father mixing liquor and honey to use as cough syrup. The liquor was said to help you relax while the honey would coat your throat.
- 474 Putting raw turpentine in a cut did burn a little, but was not near as bad as alcohol. He used to chew raw turpentine scrape off of an older tree face and says that it tastes just like it smells – not too great. Turpentine was used on animals on his property for medicine also.

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-- END OF TAPE 1 (02.1) --

TAPE LOG

Fieldworker's tape #: **02.2 (Second and last tape of interview)**

Name of person(s) interviewed: **George E. Music, Jr.**

Fieldworker: **Timothy C. Prizer**

Date of interview: **July 12, 2002**

Location of interview: **Front porch of house at 5250 George Music Rd.
(mother's home), Waycross, GA**

Other people present: **Mr. Music's mother at times near the conclusion of
the interview**

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

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

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

Music's voice recorded much quieter than that of the fieldworker. The interview took place on the porch of Music's mother's home, and the sounds of birds, insects, dogs, wind and his mother's voice may at times be heard. These sounds do not lessen the sound quality of the interview, however.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF TAPE CONTENTS

The contents are a blend of oral history and occupational folklife (or folklore), focusing on George Music, Jr.'s life growing up and working in turpentine on his own land. His late father and former turpentine worker as well, George Music, Sr., is a recurring topic.

TAPE INDEX

COUNTER NO.

SUBJECT

(Opening announcement)

006 The clothing that he and his father wore in the woods changed throughout the year, depending on the temperature. The clothes were thicker in the winter months for dipping, but most the time, the workers wore long sleeves year round. The sweat caused by wearing long sleeve shirts in the heat would help cool the workers and protect them from thorn bushes, tree bark, etc.

*Turpentine
water*

The turpentine water that would gather on the ground after a rain was sometimes a thirst quencher while working in the heat. This water was not thought to be dangerous and only had a little bit of the turpentine taste in it. Most of the time they would go to the pitcher pump to quell their thirsts, though.

Liquor, to his knowledge, was never made on his property, but there were people close by who did distill it. But just because liquor was never made on the property, that doesn't mean that none was enjoyed there, he jokes. His great-grandfather used to brag about his ability to hold a lot of liquor. His great-grandfather used to sample a lot of liquor with other men, and the others would get so drunk that his great-grandpa would have to carry them to the wagon.

035 He boasts that his great-grandfather also worked on the railroads with an eight and a half pound axe with a four foot handle, he used to eat a dozen eggs, grits and ham for breakfast every morning, and he once ate an 18-pound ham all by himself. His great-grandfather would also hold the mule with one hand and a trace chain with the other. He proved his manhood in many ways, including prize fighting. In the woods, the man would cut trees all morning without any of them falling, and then all of a sudden, he'd cut one and all the ones around him that he would had been working on would fall by domino effect. Unfortunately, he never knew his great-grandfather. Turpentine itself was rarely used as an ingredient in liquor, but many times the liquor would be purposefully stored in turpentine barrels to increase its potency.

053 Mr. Music's property was not merely a place for working turpentine. They would often hunt on it as well. He says that the property has been in the family since 1922 and there has never been a mortgage on it. He plans to keep it that way for as long as he lives because of the pleasure it brings him to walk to woods and look and the trees and the animals. He says that his woods are one set of pine trees that will never be cut down as long as he has something to say about it.

063 He used to fish every weekend on the Satilla River, sitting by a tree on the bank. He rarely fishes anymore because the river doesn't hold as much water now, due to big timber companies draining the pond woods. He used to gather his bait for fishing from the woods on his property. He says that he often would just go out and lift up a piece of wood to gather worms or he would pull them out of the tree bark. He also used to grunt earthworms out of the ground by vibrating them out.

Mostly squirrel, rabbit and quail were the only animals that would be hunted on the property when he was younger. Back then, there were not many deer on the land as there are now. He never has hunted deer, mainly because so many of his neighbors hunt enough to keep him in stock with deer meat.

092 As a small child too young to go work turpentine, he found the woods to be his main place for recreation. He said that he must have rolled some sort of old barrel lid "three million miles," all over this land as a small child. He says that he never had the opportunity to run to town to buy battery-operated toys like kids do nowadays. He also used to take an old hatchet out to the woods with his father and make believe that he was "just like daddy." As long as he only hacked at bushes – not pine trees – his father didn't mind. He also used to sit on an old block of wood and pretend that it was a tractor. Many times, his cousins would come out and they would play hide-and-go seek in the thick of the woods.

play

110 One of his happiest memories as a child is digging sweet potatoes around the time of Thanksgiving. After digging, he and his cousins would play all day and boil peanuts in the evening. As he got to be an older child, he began playing music, "picking and singing" at little get-togethers at his house. His father taught him his first three chords on the guitar when he was just seven years old. When he turned 12 or 13 years old, he started messing with the fiddle and has ever since.

140 His grandfather used to be a woods rider on a camp for a while, but he never liked being a boss. He always wanted to be a worker and Mr. Music says that he is the same way – a worker by nature. His father did tell him what amount had to be done, but he was never over-demanding. As a child, he would get scolded in the woods for things like messing with hornets' nests and cutting into pine trees. His dad could almost feel it when Music, as a boy, would cut into a pine tree. His scarring of a pine tree was the one thing that angered his father more than anything when he was a boy.

169 Calls and hollers were rarely used in the woods on the Music's land. They would usually meet up at a certain time and place to discuss how the work was progressing rather than calling to one another. There were no specific calls that he can remember, "other than dinner," he laughs. The pitcher pump was almost always the meeting place for the workers.

186 He and his father would often sing songs while they worked in the woods. The songs were normally old country songs that were learned from the radio – he lists Hank Snow, Hank Williams and Ernest Tubb. Occasionally, gospel songs would also be sung. His father always whistled songs like “Wildwood Flower,” “Down Yonder,” and “Red Wing” while he worked. The songs whistled depended on the mood of the day and of the workers. He says that he whistled a lot while he worked too because it was lonely, quiet work. “You see all the traffic we’ve had,” he kids.

Singing

209 The singing was never set to the rhythm of the work because most of the work had no rhythm. He was born after the time of coopers and always used metal barrels, called “Blue Whistlers” and “gauge barrels.” Most of the barrels on his land are Blue Whistlers, which hold up to 600 pounds of gum. His father preferred these because they hold more, and he was, of course, paid by the pound.

238 Most of the time, there was only one person working in the woods at any given time, except for when it was time for dipping. Then, the work crew was typically the two aforementioned black men and either Music or his father. When he first saw the bear with her cubs, he thought it was another guy that had been hanging around that day. As soon as he saw that it was a bear, there “wasn’t much time for talking.”

Rarely were any constructive jokes or pranks played in the woods on workers, but sometimes either Music or his father would hide behind a tree and then jump out and scare the other one. There wasn’t a whole lot of joking around, but when he was little and his father knew he was fishing at night down at the river, he would sometimes meet him and scare him.

264 His father made clear that the woods were not a place for horsing around, nor was it a place for competition. The most important thing was to make sure to stay constantly busy. The black brothers that came to work on their land were already friends of the Music’s and skilled turpentiners. Therefore, they required no teaching or initiating. The workers would sometimes skip their other jobs to come help out at the Music’s because they knew the production was higher there and they would be paid better.

294 The combination of hard work and common sense makes Music’s father the best worker he has ever seen in turpentine. His father was a very sharp mathematician and could do complicated math

problems in his head where most people would need a calculator. From the top of his head, his father could sit at a livestock auction and pinpoint the price that a pin full of hogs at a certain weight would cost.

George Music, Sr.'s skill was proven in the woods by his abnormally high production rates. He would usually produce 30% more tar than most people. Also, he worked from daylight to dark everyday.

326 Mr. Music's father was such a hard worker that the doctor that examined him when he had heart trouble late in life said that his lungs were enlarged from working. In fact, they had to take two pictures of his lungs because they couldn't fit them all in one screen. The doctor said that the only time they had seen that was in an athlete that worked especially hard and some older people who had worked real hard their whole lives.

The style of streaking the trees that Music and his father used helped their trees be more productive than most other turpentiners' trees. They believed strongly in catfacing the entire tree throughout the process of collecting gum. Many workers would cut streaks in horizontal rows near the base of the tree and then begin cutting in a V-shape as they worked their way higher up the tree. But the Music's used this V-shape "peaked" technique from the start. This was more productive because it sliced the tree at an angle without stopping up the pores.

369 His father was quite the jokester. He used to joke about anything and everything. Here, Mr. Music tells a wonderful joke about two fellows fishing on a trestle that his father used to tell while working in the woods. He says that people who worked turpentine were much too tired when they got done to do too much joking about anything.

406 Most the times in the woods, there was very little conversation at all. When they would get to talking in the woods, however, the discussion would usually revolve around the turpentiners' conservatism in the face of so many changes taking place in the world. This desire for little change was heard most clearly in their conversations about advancing technology in other forms of farming. "There is no way to take the work out of turpentine," he confirms, but other farmers had plenty of ways to make things easier on themselves. "The good Lord and old Mother Nature are

Jokes

the onliest thing that's going to control [the pines]," he says. Other farmers have plenty of ways to control their crops. When folks did try to change turpentine technology, it always failed.

431 His father used to watch the clouds to tell whether or not bad weather was approaching, and if he felt that it was, he was nearly always right. By watching smoke come out of a chimney, they could tell whether or not it was going to rain. If the smoke rose up and fell to the ground immediately, it was going to rain. If the smoke drifted upwards and never seemed to come down, the rain wouldn't come no matter how threatening the skies appeared. The older generations of people found ways to predict the weather because they didn't have televisions or radars, etc.

471 Once a year, Music and his father would gather for a barbecue put on by the Turpentine Association. The workers at these barbecues would share different techniques regarding work in the woods. People doing research on how to make the work easier and more productive would be present at these barbecues, but Music says they would leave convinced that there really was no easy way to work turpentine. Barbecue pork, baked beans and french fries would normally be the foods served at the barbecues. A little band would sometimes be present and they would normally play old country and gospel.

516 One of the biggest holiday celebrations was the opportunity to eat a cold watermelon on July the 4th. He remembers only getting one or two toys and some clothes for Christmas. These two toys were normally toy trucks, toy cars, and dolls for girls. As he got older, he would get a pocket knife or a flashlight - something that could be used while working. Christmas was his favorite holiday because of the number of relatives that would gather, and Thanksgiving followed closely behind.

564 The trees, once some died in the winter, were frequently used as firewood. They would also sell dead pulpwood. He is not sure whether or not the wood used to build his old house (and his mother's current house) was the wood from his property, but he thinks it probably was. The house was built circa 1900, before the Music family moved there.

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weather signs

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002 His father never knew exactly when the house was built because it was there when he came in 1959. He did live on the same piece of property before that, however. In 1977, Mr. Music moved out of the old house and when he came back after eight or nine years, he moved into a mobile home located just a few hundred yards across the way. He says that it was good to be back on the property, but strange to be living in a different house than the one he was born in. His grandfather lived and worked on the same property as well, and he lived in the old house for four or five years in the 1920s himself. The Great Depression of the 30s drove him out of the house, but he returned when his own economic strife had calmed down.

049 Mr. Music explains that virgin timber is that which has not ever been worked on, while yearling timber has been worked for about a year. He relates this terminology to that used by farmers with livestock. He has heard of the trees being called by human names as they moved past the yearling stage, but he and his father never did so themselves.

There are two basic grades of gum. They are "WW" or "Water White," which is the highest grade, and "WG", which is a fair grade of gum with a little bit of trash in it. Grades lower than "WG" are rarely ever heard about due to the fact that hardly anyone would buy a grade lower than "WG".

071 Mr. Music never had any experience working at the still, as he would usually just drop the barrels off there. He says his father was more experienced at the still than he is. He says that a smell would linger in town after the charging of the still, and it smelled like a fire burning. He jokes that the smell was always a pleasant one to him because it always smelled like money. He says that the fumes were not dangerous whatsoever as toxic chemicals were never put in the gum beforehand.

103 He says that women were extremely important in the lives of his father and himself as workers of turpentine. The most important contribution made by his mother was that of keeping groceries at the house. He stresses the importance of this seemingly simple task. He says that he thinks his grandmother did work turpentine in the woods at some time or another. His mother worked the garden throughout her lifetime, and he makes clear that this was just as important as working in the woods. "We had to eat," he says.

Music's mother had a lot of trouble raising him because he was a self-proclaimed "mean child." He says his mother would have to run and catch him nearly everyday when he was three and four

years old. At this age he had few responsibilities outside of feeding the chickens. None of the women in his life worked outside of the home while he was growing up. Tending to domestic tasks, his mother is the best cook he has ever known. She made the best biscuits and the best rice and tomatoes he has ever had.

139 Music's father was drafted into the military around 1955, but never had to go to war due to a medical problem the military found after he had been there just nine months or so. One of his great-grandfathers fought in the Civil War. At the time that his father was drafted, his grandfather still lived on the property and kept the work up.

As a teenager, Music found recreation in the form of roller skating and going to see movies in Waycross. Until he got his driver's license at the age of sixteen (1976), he had never done anything else for enjoyment off the property.

166 Very little celebration resulted from paydays, he says, because not enough money was left over after expenses. The highlight of every week for Music was the one trip made into town to buy groceries. The Coca-Cola and the Moon Pie he would get on these trips were the most exciting things he knew for a long time – until well into his teens.

183 The Music family, as turpentiners, was nearly always considered inferior by the townspeople of Waycross because they lived out in the country and were considered "poor people". Some of the people in town did know what it was like – how hard it was – to work turpentine and therefore were respectful. Usually, however, the former was the case. The townsfolk had this attitude of arrogance towards nearly everyone who lived outside of the city limits. He recalls several times when his family would go into town to eat and the restaurant workers acted as though they did not want to serve them. Once, at the city coffee shop, his family was treated so poorly that they decided to leave and go somewhere else. Typically, the Music's would not eat at any restaurant more than two or three times a year. Also, the bigger grocery stores in town did not like dealing with the smaller grocery store frequented by residents of the countryside.

227 The hard physical work that went along with turpentine has taught Music much about life. He says that when one works that hard for something, they learn to respect and care for the little that they do have.

Other than just making sure that the timber remains healthy and standing, Music does very little work in turpentine today. Occasionally, he will take a puller out to the woods and cut into the vein of a tree just for the joy of watching the resin run. "After all, I've done it all my life," he says. "And it's still amazing to watch even though I've done it all my life." He says watching the work disappear from his life is much like being married for a long time and then trying to turn loose of the person and the memories. Knowing that work in turpentine put groceries on the table for so long makes the work hard to part with.

262 Mr. Music enjoys listening to traditional bluegrass music while he works in his garage nowadays. When he or his mother plays this music loud, the deer that roam his property come close – within ten or fifteen feet – to listen. He says that they will sit and listen to old style mountain music for as long as the music remains on and the people stay still.

291 The main reasons that Music sees for the decline of turpentine work in America include people's constant search for an easier way of life and the purchasing of turpentine made in foreign countries such as China. He makes clear that he and most others that worked turpentine would be in the woods chipping and pulling tomorrow if they had a place to sell it.

318 If his grandfather were to come back and see this work and this way of life gone, it would be very tough for him to deal with. "It sure wouldn't be pretty to be standing around, I would imagine," he says.

The last day his father hauled barrels to the still, he returned home and told Music, "I reckon I just hauled the last load." It was one of the saddest days of his father's life. This also played a large role in the diminishing of his father's health. His father enjoyed and looked forward to chipping and pulling every year, and when he no longer needed to, he still rode his tractor through the woods all the time. He had to look for other things to do to fill his time. He took up mechanical work and construction in the community. He was 67 years old when he passed on September 12, 2001, the day after the attacks on New York's World Trade Center and Washington's Pentagon.

380 The day his father went in for his open heart surgery, the doctor told Music how bad of a shape his father was in. But the doctor did not know that his father had been in the woods the whole day before chipping turpentine boxes. Music told the doctor, "I don't think you know who you're

dealing with here. He'll be walking in three days." The doctor laughed it off and told Music how bad the surgery was going to be. The surgery was held on Friday, and the next day, he was 100% off of life support. Sunday, by noon, his father was up walking around. Three days later, he was plowing corn back at home.

412 In 1988, Music bought a service truck owned by the 76 station in Waycross for his father. This truck was used to haul the barrels of gum to the still, including the last load ever hauled there. Supposedly, if his father went anywhere, it was in that truck. "I guarantee you, if you go get in that truck right now and start to Florida, you'll have people waving at you because he made him many trips to Florida and north Georgia."

457 Music has not been able to attend any festivals or gatherings for turpentine workers since the demise of the industry and way of life, but he has heard of some being held. He would like to go to some of them in the future, though.

The pines that stand on Music's property will be here for as long as he has a say in it. "I just don't need the money bad enough to see the timber cut off of it," he says. "Daddy always wanted it to where his grand kids could walk through and say well, this is grandpa's natural standing timber."

491 A new stump now grows on the first tree Music ever cut as a seven-year-old boy in 1967. This presents a lot of irony to him, in that it shows that the pines are self-reproductive. They, put here and reproduced by "The Old Master", will continue to come back. It makes Music happy to know that they will continue to come back. "They don't got to be planted by a man's hands," he confirms. The way of life will only come back if "The Old Master" wants it to be so as well, but Music doesn't think he will ever see the turpentine way of life back the way it used to be. "I believe the world is coming to an end before too long. The Bible also states that. If you get to reading the Book of Revelations, you'll see that a lot of things have already come and passed. It's getting close to the end."

529 Music says that if a turpentine worker were to suddenly become a millionaire, some of them would quit the work and be lazy, while others, like Music's father, would keep on working in the woods no matter how much money they had.

Music feels that the fiddle could have been his occupation rather than working turpentine. This was not the case, even though he loves music, because he had a stronger passion for the work, and he would not like to have to live on the road as does a musician. Fiddling was merely enjoyment, and Music would rather do the physical work involved with turpentine than the mental work involved with living on the road and playing music.

578 Music originally started playing the fiddle at the age of just 13 or 14, when he bought one from his mother's twin sister for three dollars. He quit for a while as a teenager when he started courting girls, but then returned to the fiddle in his early twenties.

609 For a period of time, Music took fiddle lessons from his neighbor Hubert Cox, who Music calls "one of the best fiddle players in the South." Music thinks very little of Cox's wife, and in fact, she is what ended his stint of lessons with Hubert Cox. Music went to Hubert's house one evening for a lesson and overheard Cox's wife telling Hubert that Music would never learn the fiddle, that he was just wasting his time. <<THE FOLLOWING WAS SAID AFTER THE END OF THE TAPE>> So, Music never did return for another lesson after that, but says that if he were to bump into Hubert Cox today, Hubert would want to saw out some songs with him.

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