

TAPE LOG

Name of person(s) interviewed: Elliott West and Eddie Lee Scipp

Fieldworker: Timothy C. Prizer

Date of interview: 15 July 2003

Location of interview: Front porch of Elliott West's home at 430 Okefenokee Dr. in Folkston, Georgia

Other people present: N/A

Brand of tape recorder: Radio Shack CTR-122

Brand and type of tape: Maxell XLII

Tape Number: 03.3 and 03.4 (Fieldworker's designations)

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

This recording, unfortunately, loses whatever it is worth in content in its extremely poor sound quality. On Mr. West's front porch the sounds of passing cars, whistling trains, buzzing bugs, bleating goats, and everything else associated with the rural-but-changing outdoors dominates the air. At one almost humorous point in the interview, a very large truck parked across the street from Mr. West's home and left its engine running for a good 15-25 minutes. Also, Mr. West had with him an old turpentine friend of his, Mr. Eddie Lee Scipp, and thus it was impossible to place the microphone in a position that would record their voices with adequate volume. Additionally, most of Mr. Scipp's words are unintelligible.

SUMMARY DESCRIPTION OF TAPE CONTENTS

Elliott West and Eddie Lee Scipp talk at length about their lives working turpentine – often together – in South Georgia.

TAPE INDEX

COUNTER NO.

SUBJECT

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 001 | Opening announcement |
| 006 | Elliott West says that he was born on August 27, 1920 in Darien, Georgia (McIntosh County). Mr. Scipp was born on August 5, 1936 in Bunnell, Florida. Mr. West lived on a turpentine camp |

from a very young age. He knows that by the time he was six or seven years old he was on a camp, and he was likely on one earlier than that. From as early as Mr. West can remember, his father raised him on a turpentine camp in Brantley County near Nahunta, Georgia. Mr. Scipp started turpentine in 1947. Mr. Scipp's father moved his family (including a young Eddie Lee) from Palatka, Florida to other areas in the state.

- 028 Mr. West has lived on so many turpentine camps that he is not confident enough to even guess at a number. West left his parents' home in Wayne County, Georgia near Jesup when he 17 years old. From there, he went to Mayday and then Homerville in Clinch County, Georgia. From 1937 until fairly recently, Mr. West has spent his life working on one turpentine camp or another. Mr. Scipp, meanwhile, began working turpentine as a boy of 11 years old. He remembers that as a boy, it once took him an entire week to fill a 24-gallon bucket with gum. Mr. Scipp then began working alongside another boy about his age while two teenagers worked nearby as well. When Scipp turned 16, he moved away from home and began working turpentine elsewhere in Florida. After about a year, he moved again, this time to Adel, Georgia in Cook County. One Saturday night, he left Adel and headed home to his mother's in Bunnell, Florida. Mr. Scipp lived in Bunnell until he got married in 1955. He moved again to a camp elsewhere in Florida before heading off to live and work in Georgia for Mr. Varn before moving to Hoboken, Georgia to work for Frank Dukes.
- 059 Mr. West says that he used to wake up at 4 a.m. when he lived in the turpentine camps, and he has continued this routine even now as an 82-year-old retired man living in his own home. Mr. West's wife usually prepared breakfasts in the morning that consisted of rice, peas, beans, and cornbread. Mr. West then carried bread, sausage, peanut butter, and saltines into the woods with him. Mr. Scipp woke up at about the same hour. Scipp says that he and Mr. West were never late for work.
- 079 On breaks in the woods, Mr. West normally sat down and enjoyed his food. Often there was no one around when Mr. West would take his breaks. He normally spent about 30 minutes to an hour resting and eating. When workers did work with him in the woods, they would sit and talk about turpentine while they ate. Mr. West was normally finished working for the day about 3 p.m. West used to buy his groceries at the commissary when he lived on camps that had one. Other times he went into town on the weekends to buy groceries at the store. The last commissary West remembers going

into was at the Eight-Mile Still in Homerville. He normally went there only for saltines and canned goods.

- 097 In the camps, West woke himself up at 4 a.m. every morning. Other men in the quarters, though, were more difficult to wake up. The boss used to ride through the quarters blowing his truck horn to wake workers up, and sometimes many of them still didn't move from their beds. West remembers when he was a little boy and his father would wake him up to go to work in the woods. He also remembers living in turpentine camps in which rides to the woods were not offered, forcing workers to walk five to seven miles just to get to the woods.
- 115 West recalls the woodsriders sitting on horseback and watching the workers carefully to make sure that they didn't miss any trees. The bosses never had to wake West's father either, for he was awake long before the other workers as well. Mr. West says that some of the workers had problems with the woodsriders, but that most of them got along just fine. "If I couldn't suit [a woodsrider]," West says, "I'd know what I'd do – get up and move. I'd move away from there. That's what I'd do." West does remember having woodsriders who were too watchful of his work and who thus aggravated him severely. But West says that he would have nothing of it. "He'll come one week, 'Well, you need to set your streak up a little bit.' And then he'll come the next week, 'Set it a little across.' And that kept on aggravating me and I said, 'Well, I'm fixing to set it now 'cause I'm gone.'" He would move if he couldn't suit his bosses.
- 141 The threat of having Mr. West leave and work elsewhere was usually enough to persuade the bosses and woodsriders to allow him to work how he pleased. If he said that he was going to leave, the boss would say, "Well, I hate to see you go," and the offer him \$100 or even \$200 to stay for the rest of the year. He remembers one boss giving him \$100 at Christmas time one year in hopes of having Mr. West stick around for the next year. "He just liked my work that good," West says. West normally accepted the money and stayed on the camp working for the same boss. When Mr. West was tempted to go work turpentine on half, the same boss gave him \$200 not to leave.
- 158 West and Scipp both remember working in the woods before pickup trucks had been significantly introduced. During these times, the barrels of gum were always loaded onto wagons and then hauled to the still. Mr. West used to ride on the wagon

through the woods, depending on its daily route. The wagons used to go to different areas of the woods on different days, and depending on the area of the woods in which a worker was supposed to report, he would either catch a ride on the wagon or walk. West remembers walking many days and arriving in the woods before those who rode on the wagon. “Yeah, I came up the hard way with that turpentine,” West says. “Had to roll [the barrels] up with skids on the wagon. That’s a job... That wagon is high, you know. Them back wheels are high off the ground.”

175 Mr. West says that some of the hardest workers in the woods were the mules. Scipp remembers being able to use commands to direct the mule. West says that some mules were willing to work for anyone while others would not budge unless a familiar voice and face hollered the command. Some, West remembers, were unusually stubborn and prone to kick. “Some,” West says, “would look at you and turn their foot. You know what they mean. You best get out the way.” Mr. Scipp recalls a joke involving a mule and an ox. [Paraphrased] A mule refuses to go to work in the turpentine woods when the ox tells him, “You got to work today.” The mule says, “One day they’re gonna butcher you.” The ox then responds with the joke’s punch line: “And after they butcher me, they’ll use my hide to whip you for the rest of your life.”

195 Mr. Scipp remembers Mr. West outperforming him many times in woods when they would have contests. Mr. Scipp tried and tried to chip trees more quickly than Mr. West, but he never could. Around this time, Mr. West was a heavy drinker and would stay out of the woods most Mondays. He says this is why he decided to go into turpentine on his own. With no boss, he could drink as much as he wished and miss work when he pleased. Mr. Scipp remembers being done with work most days by noon or so when he was his own boss in the woods. People from in town would think that he never worked because he was home so early every day. Scipp would ask them, “How do you think I’m paying for a house and a car if I don’t work?” Scipp says that he would never just be lazy and not work. It doesn’t fit his character or Mr. West’s character. Scipp says that he and Mr. West were both born in August and have the same horoscope. Therefore, they have a lot in common when it comes to personality. Scipp says that he nor West like a lot of fuss, they don’t like being around a crowd of people, if they borrow money from someone they will pay them back, and they want to work for everything they have. Scipp says that he will also talk right back to a white man or boss who gives

him a hard time. He adheres to the belief that people should treat others how they themselves wish to be treated.

217 This made the bosses respect Scipp perhaps more than other workers. Mr. West remembers a boss who cursed “every other word.” This boss once hollered at a group of workers (of which West was a part) because they weren’t working hard enough. West spoke up and said that the boss had better speak to the workers individually because West was working as hard as ever. The boss said that he wasn’t talking about Mr. West, apologized, and never yelled at West – directly or indirectly – again. Mr. Scipp recalls a similar story [nearly all unintelligible]. Even when Mr. West had a boss in the woods, he was not afraid to simply refuse to go to work some days. One day, his boss came by to get him to go into the woods and West looked him straight in the eye and said, “I got drunk last night and I’m not going to work today.” The boss was a bit shocked and told Mr. West to put a shirt on and come on out into the woods to work. West told him once again that he was not going to work today. The boss then asked if Mr. West would be ready the next morning when he came by. West replied, “Yeah. One way or the other. That’s what I mean. I’ll either go to work or down the road.” He never had any more trouble from that boss.

249 West remembers the names of several mules he worked with. Most readily he remembers “Pete,” “Cat,” and “Kitty.” “Kitty” was a violent kicker. West remembers “Kitty” splitting the seat of a wagon with a kick one day. “That was the kicking-est mule I ever seen in my life,” West says. Mr. Scipp remembers working with mules named “George” and “Dan.” The mules usually had names chosen for them by the time the workers started working with them. [Truck pulls up across the street from Mr. West’s home and parks with his engine running. This sound continues for quite a while.] Mr. Scipp recalls one mule named “Drake” that was very stubborn and very fast. For seemingly no reason, “Drake” would often take off in a gallop and men would chase after him until they caught the mule. Many mules were a lot like pets, according to both West and Scipp. West says that many mules liked to be petted and many responded to human commands very well. Scipp recalls one mule that they called “Tiger” because it had stripes on its body a lot like a tiger’s. This mule, too, was also very dangerous. Scipp also recalls a horse on one of the camps that would take off in a gallop and jump several fences trying to escape.

290 The size of the quarters in the camps ranged with each camp. The largest camp West remembers living in only housed about 20 or 25

workers and their families. Other camps, West says, had three or four different sets of quarters which each housed 20 or 25 families. West never lived in a camp this large, however. With all these families close by, they formed a community that operated on a system of reciprocity. Scipp remembers that if a worker became ill, another man would chop firewood for his family and bring food to his house. Women would provide each other with water in order to wash clothes.

- 307 Payment on the camps also varied from place to place. West remembers that when he first started working turpentine in the 1920s, he only got paid once a month. He also remembers getting paid “by the thousand,” meaning that for every 1,000 trees the workers chipped, they received a set price. West remembers getting paid just 70 cents for his work a long time ago. In the 30s, or in the “Hoover days,” as West remembers, payments were much worse than even 70 cents. Workers were expected to work 10 hours a day, six days a week. Sunday was the only day they were allowed off when working during the Depression. Sawmill workers made even less during these times.
- 329 On payday, some workers went into town to buy groceries. But many workers could only go to the commissary for financial reasons. Families with a lot of children almost never bought groceries from anywhere other than the commissary. West recalls that there were no refrigerators or freezers in the camps long ago. Thus, it was impossible to keep ice. A man would come around with ice for the families in the quarters about once or twice a week, West says.
- 350 West nor Scipp remember any jokes about woodsriders or bosses, but they do remember some workers talking about the woodsriders behind their backs. Many of the workers though were also extremely lazy. West remembers some workers who had families who needed to eat and they were still too lazy to get out in the woods and make money to support them. Other workers picked on him and others like him for not wanting to work. West and Scipp say that they rarely ever joked around though. They took the work seriously and always took care of their families. Scipp recalls leaving the woods for a while to find other work (once at a tractor place), but he always came back to turpentine.
- 396 West and Scipp remember workers’ calls and hollers in the woods. West never did any tacking himself though. He says that every time he tried he busted up his fingers. Mr. Scipp used to tack a lot

of tin and thus had several calls and hollers. Mr. Scipp recalls one worker who could tack more tin than anyone else. Mr. West remembers a 70-year-old man named Smiley who could tack more tin than the youngest of workers. Scipp used to holler “Twelve” and “Gettin’ Better.” He remembers other workers hollering “Ten,” “Two,” “Five.” Mr. Scipp says that when he got real good at chipping, he could beat anybody in the woods except Mr. West. No one could beat Mr. West at chipping, according to Mr. Scipp. Mr. West remembers a worker hollering “Polecat.”

- 449 Mr. Scipp explains the precision required to be able to tack tin well. Avoiding your fingers when you are tacking is a must, and there is an exact science to doing it. Scipp demonstrates with his hands that one must hold the nail steady, give it one good whack on the head, and immediately pull the fingers back to avoid smashing them. West remembers some times when he wouldn’t even take a break in the woods because he was too busy chipping. He would stand up and eat his sandwich for lunch while he was working in the hot sun. Mr. Scipp says that it is much easier to get a lot of work done early in the morning before it gets too hot. By 10:30 a.m., it is much too hot to just be getting started for the day.
- 475 West says that he never sang any songs when working in the woods. Scipp and West agree that they normally worked too far away from any other workers to hear them singing, and neither West nor Scipp ever sang in the woods themselves. Scipp remembers the music that coopers would make when they hammered the wooden barrels together in the days before the metal barrels. After the metal barrels were introduced, Scipp remembers workers using their dip irons as drumsticks on the metal dip bucket. Scipp said the metal barrels made good music, but he agrees with West’s comments that the wooden barrels did sound much better.
- 507 Mr. West says that he rarely talked in the woods. Even when he was working in a squad with several other workers around, he would leave the group for another if they were talking too much. He infers that he was too serious about the work to stand around talking. “If you join the party,” West says, “you ain’t gonna do nothing.”
- 533 The houses in the quarters were dilapidated at best, West says. They were just boards nailed together and many of the boards weren’t level or lined up with each other. There was no insulation, and there were cracks in the walls and the ceilings. “You could see

the stars. Oh boy, it was rough,” West says. The floors had cracks in them as well, revealing the dirt on the ground underneath in full view. Mr. West remembers his mother taking newspaper, water, and flour in order to make a sort of “starch” that would patch the cracks in the walls. Every Christmas, West says, they would remove the last year’s starch and put up a fresh coat. Scipp and West also remember their mothers making a formula that would clean the floors as well. They would mix potash, washing powder, and water together to make what they remember as a highly effective wooden floor cleaner.

[End of Side A]

[Begin Side B]

- 001 Families in the camps used wood irons that they would have to heat with a fire. The radios also took batteries that were connected to the back and were sometimes larger than the radio itself. Scipp remembers going deep into the woods in the wintertime to get firewood for the woodstove. Scipp also remembers his mother washing clothes in a large bucket. Scipp reminisces on the fact that childrearing was much different then than it is now. He says that parents were not afraid then to whip their children. Now, they have to worry about charges of abuse. But children were much more disciplined then than they are now, Scipp says. West agrees that he would never talk back to his mother, and he would always do just as she said. Scipp recalls a story of a whipping.
- 051 The houses were so poorly insulated that the rain often came inside the house. West remembers having to wade water inside and outside his home after heavy summer rains. Scipp recalls a heavy storm he once witnessed [nearly all unintelligible].
- 084 West says that most women in the camps had no paying jobs whatsoever. Most cooked and cleaned for their families. West does remember some women working in the woods, and he says that they were nearly always very good workers. Most of them that desired to go into the woods were as good of workers as most of the men. West remembers his mother cutting pulpwood frequently. Kids rarely went to school when Mr. West was coming up in turpentine. Most just hung out in the camps and played on the dirt roads. Scipp remembers that he and some other kids in the camp used to make their own wagons out of wood. He says he still remembers how to do it. West remembers doing the same thing in the “Hoover days.” “We didn’t know what toys was,” he says.

“Makes us own wagon.” West says that they would find a round tree and cut it down. They would then bore a hole through the middle of the round slice of tree and use it as a wheel on the wagon. Scipp says that he makes knives now and that no one taught him how to do it. West encourages him to go get some of the knives out of his truck to show the fieldworker. [Scipp exits the porch and the door slams shut.] West says that Mr. Scipp can do a lot of things. He is a good mechanic.

- 104 West says that he has had very little schooling in his day. Times were so hard that he had to work as soon as he could to help make money for his family. [Scipp comes back onto the porch and the door slams shut. He shows the fieldworker his self-crafted knives.] Scipp explains how he makes the knives. Children in the camp played what they called “Merry-Go-Round” in the camps. Church was a big gathering in the camps every Sunday. Preachers normally came from off the camp to preach every Sunday. Scipp remembers that in the churches is where he got most of his education. He is able to read, he says, but he can’t spell well. He demonstrates that he can spell the word *international*. He says he can read a car engine and fix it better than he can understand any book. [Scipp tells an unintelligible story.]
- 146 When someone died in the camp, workers and their families would sit up in the home all night with the deceased. They would also make a casket out of wood for the body. The deceased were buried in a cemetery on the camp. When a couple in the camp decided that they wanted to marry, they would tell the preacher and he normally came out and married them on the spot in the camp. Rarely did couples go to the courthouse or to a church off the camp to get married. Sometimes marriages occurred between a man and a woman who live on the camp together, and other times it occurred between a man on the camp and a woman who lived off the camp.
- 167 Mr. West nor Mr. Scipp know any jokes that men on the camp would tell about their wives. The fieldworker explains that he has heard some, and Mr. Scipp asks to hear one. The fieldworker tells one: “One boy says, ‘My daddy owns a lot of land. He owns 100 turpentine trees.’ Another boy says, ‘Well, my daddy owns 200 turpentine trees.’ The third boy says, ‘That’s nothing. When daddy came home at 3 a.m. last night, Mamma gave him hell.’” West and Scipp say that if someone had heard something like that, they better not spread it around the camp. West says that workers occasionally gathered at the commissary to sit around and

talk. West and Scipp both speak of their amazement at the language some children use nowadays. They say that they would never have dreamed of using that type of language when they were young.

- 198 Many workers fled the camp when they needed to because of financial reasons or because they simply wanted to go elsewhere. Nearly all workers fled from one camp to another and began working for another boss on another camp right away. Many workers were in so much debt that they had to run away. Several camps had jukeboxes in which workers would drink, listen to music, and dance. Camps that didn't have jukeboxes nearly always had a man that could play guitar, and workers would gather at one of the homes in the quarters to party there. Mr. West speaks of how Mr. Scipp is a guitarist. Scipp remembers piccolo music in the jukeboxes too. Workers in the jukeboxes drank a whole lot of alcohol and gambled. West says that he never gambled, but that he drank a whole lot of whiskey. He never did want to gamble while he was drunk. Fights also occurred fairly frequently in the jukeboxes. "Now and then, one would get cut up," West says. "Some of 'em would fight and they'd be back together the next time. Now and then somebody would get killed, especially with that gambling business." Scipp says that some workers brought turpentine cutters to the jukeboxes with them in case they got in a fight. [Truck across the street finally pulls away and there is relative silence in the background.] Scipp says that workers almost never told on each other after situations like this because they knew that they might need the others to remain silent about them the next time.
- 253 When the police came out to the camp to regulate, the bosses would normally make sure that the police knew that they would handle it and that there was really no need for the cops. Some bosses didn't even allow the police on their camps. Thus, the bosses really made the law themselves on a lot of camps. But as West recalls, the workers did have a bit of say-so for themselves on the camps too. West recalls the story again of how he refused to go to work one day. Mr. Scipp recalls another story about how Mr. West was a wonderful and efficient worker.
- 302 Moonshine was often made on the turpentine camps. West laughs when he remembers that his father used to make moonshine West's mother's wash bucket. West says that the boss usually knew that the production of moonshine was going on, and that they rarely cared back in the twenties and thirties. Nowadays, West admits, one couldn't get away with that anymore. Scipp remembers that

people from off the camp (residents of the town) would frequently make fun of turpentiners and try to avoid them in public. West says that people used to degrade turpentiners by calling them “Tar Heels” and such. Turpentiners, West says, rarely paid too much attention to this kind of harassment though. He says that most turpentiners were their own bosses, unlike people in the town who worked other jobs. Also, Scipp and West agree that at least turpentiners usually had enough money to support their families and put food on the table. West and Scipp say that they personally haven’t had too much problem with harassment from outsiders to the camp, but that they have heard of other workers having a lot of trouble.

348 West says that he never believed in playing jokes or pranks in the woods. He says that others played jokes on each other, but he always stayed away from it. Scipp says the same. West remembers workers talking about each other’s mammas and such, but that he never liked that type of joking around. Scipp and West agree that you should pay respect to others so that they will respect you. Neither Scipp nor West remember playing pranks on new workers to try to initiate them into the group. West remembers helping new workers learn the ropes. He also recalls working alongside a preacher who West says was the best worker he ever worked with because he refused to joke around in the woods. This preacher though had a mental illness that caused him to lose track of what he was doing in the woods. West was sure to patiently guide him and keep him on track.

383 West says that he never even tried to put workers who bragged too much in their place. Other workers would combat their boasts by telling them that they would beat them at some form of work in the woods, but West never got involved in this. West says that he certainly does remember workers who bragged from the time they got on the wagon to the time they finished work for the day. West doesn’t remember calling anybody a nickname. He just called them by their first name. Scipp says that he used to be called “Tiger” sometimes. Scipp also remembers calling one place in the woods “Bear Hollow” because several workers had spotted some bears in the area.

421 West says that rattlesnakes were the biggest danger in the woods. West used to kill them every chance he got and he says that he almost stepped on one several times. Scipp says that he can sense when a rattlesnake is around by the smell in the air. West says that one big danger is hunters. When he would decide to work alone in

the woods one day, he would always look around for hunters in tree stands. If he saw one, he'd ask if they were going to be hunting in the woods that day. If they answered yes, that's all the incentive West needed to call it a day and go back home.

453 Mosquitoes and yellow jackets caused a lot of problems too. West says that he'd rather have ticks pestering him than mosquitoes. Scipp recalls a time when he was driving through Florida and the mosquitoes were so bad that he almost couldn't see out of his windshield. He says that almost his whole windshield was black from the dead bugs. West has never had any problem with fire in the woods either. If the wind were high one day, he wouldn't make a fire. If it were low, he wouldn't hesitate to start a fire. West remembers turpentine beetles and termites that would get in the trees and kill them occasionally. Sometimes they damaged the trees so badly that all the timber had to be cut down.

503 The acid workers used on the trees also caused some problems. It ate away at clothing and if a worker got it on their skin, it would burn them pretty severely. West and Scipp have seen workers with torn up clothing and burnt skin from the acid. Scipp and West recall near danger they have both experienced with fire. They both extinguished the fire before it got out of control, and they both were always very careful to clean thoroughly around the fire in order to keep it under control.

550 West remembers getting paste in his eyes too. He says that the paste they used on the trees was worse than the acid if it got in the eyes. He had to flush it out with water and a damp rag. West says that he doesn't understand how he's not blind from all the times he got paste in his eyes.

[End of Side B]

[Begin Side A of Tape 03.4]

001 Opening announcement

005 For medicine, turpentiners often used 66 oil or Castor oil mixed with turpentine. People in the camps often used turpentine on their cuts and scrapes for quick healing. Additionally, West says, he has heard of it being used in bath water for muscle soreness. Scipp says that his mother used to use turpentine to assuage colds. Also, she used to concoct a substance that her family rubbed on their foreheads to cure fever. West says that people then didn't have

doctors like we have grown so accustomed to. West remembers that his grandmother also used another concoction to cure fever. Scipp once had an ulcer for which he went to the doctor. He was not comfortable taking the medicine the doctor prescribed, so he called his mother. He told her he had an ulcer and she said to get some fat lighter wood, make a fire, and put a tin over it. When the syrup began running into the tin, he was to scrape it up and drink it. If he did this several times, his mother said, it would repair the lining in his stomach. She was correct. Sap on the pine tree, Scipp's mother also told him, would cure heartburn. Her methods of remedy never failed, Scipp says. Many of medicines, West says, can be found right in the woods. Scipp says that a penny and a piece of fat meat also works wonders for reducing swelling.

- 061 Mr. West says that he could tell where he was when he was chipping in the woods by “joining his work.” He explains that this meant that he worked in a circle or in a horseshoe shape that brought him right back to his starting place. All he had to do then was remember how he got into the woods. Scipp and West agree that after working in any given patch of woods long enough, there's no way a worker could get lost in the woods. If one doesn't chip boxes in a pattern, it is very possible that they will get lost. West remembers when nails were made out of wood. Wooden nails were driven into trees in the woods once upon a time and West remembers crafting his toy wagon as a child using nails made of wood.
- 084 Some workers did have contests in the woods with each other, but West says that it was pretty rare in his experiences. He does remember a boss putting up a blackboard in one camp in the mid-1960s to track the best chipper, dipper, etc. Scipp makes it clear, though, that workers certainly did try to outdo one another. Scipp recalls workers trying to beat him in the woods at various tasks. He says none ever could though, except of course for Mr. West when it came to chipping.
- 095 West and Scipp both remember workers talking about various nonexistent dreamlands, the most popular of which was “Diddy-Wah-Diddy.” West says he had heard of this place, but that he doesn't know where it is. Scipp confirms that it isn't a real place; it's just a place workers invented in their minds. Scipp remembers workers saying that in “Diddy-Wah-Diddy” they could go into the woods with a croaker sack, open it up, and birds would fly in the sack because they knew the workers were hungry. Scipp says he

has looked for “Diddy-Wah-Diddy” on a map, but he was unable to find it.

- 111 Workers rarely retired; they just worked turpentine until they got so old that they couldn’t do it anymore. Old men worked right beside boys in the woods. Mr. West and Mr. Scipp remember one 87-year-old man who was a wonderful worker. West and Scipp speak of how healthy turpentiners were. They lived long lives because they worked so hard in the woods and sweated a lot. Scipp says he knew one worker who was in perfect health working in the woods when he decided to retire. Within two years of quitting turpentine, the man had passed away. Scipp says that because he worked turpentine for so long, he can still do a lot that the kids nowadays couldn’t imagine doing.
- 136 West remembers loving the smell of turpentine in the woods when the still had just been charged. He believes that the steam and smoke that rose off the gum when it was cooking was extremely beneficial for ones health and sinus passages. West and Scipp both recall drinking water out of the turpentine cups in the woods as well, and they both say that it was great water. The film on top of the water was pure pine gum and it tasted great, they say. Ingesting turpentine, West says, not only tasted good, but also it was healthy. But West says that everyone had to stop ingesting turpentine after the acid was introduced into the woods. It was no longer safe to consume. [West enters his home and returns with a bottle of turpentine to show the fieldworker.] West says that Mr. [Alton] Carter gave him that bottle of turpentine. Scipp begins to talk about the many ways that turpentine was used commercially.
- 162 The only time workers celebrated holidays in any significant manner was on the 4th of July and Christmas. They usually had a cookout on the camps on the 4th of July, and sometimes the bosses gave the workers a bonus at Christmastime. Mr. West tried to go into the military, but he didn’t pass the entry exam. Mr. Scipp was a volunteer for the military and wanted to fight in Vietnam, but he never got the chance. West remembers bosses trying to keep their workers out of the draft so they didn’t have to suffer any loss in productivity. But West says that the draft rarely cared about these matters, and they would draft the boss man too if he was healthy enough to fight. Some workers who were poorly disciplined were pushed toward the military, Scipp remembers. Some bosses would hope to get rid of misbehaving workers. West says that the military needs to draft some of the young people coming up today who are involved in crime and drugs. “They’ll steal before they

work,” West says. West says the only times he spent time in prison when he was too drunk. “If I didn’t drink none, I wouldn’t have never been in jail,” West says. “I didn’t know what a jailhouse was ‘til I started drinking.”

197 West nor Scipp have been able to attend any festivals or reunions since turpentine’s departure from the United States. Scipp does remember hearing of one in Homerville, Georgia not too long ago however. West and Scipp both miss turpentine a lot and wish they could still be working in it. West says that it was a healthful job, and that a man told him one time, “You know turpentiners live longer than the rest of ‘em... He wasn’t lying. You do a lot of exercise, you inhale that turpentine, so that helps.” Rarely did turpentiners ever get sick. West talks about how chipping was a great workout.

225 West says that he thinks turpentine is gone from the U.S. because now “they can buy it cheaper across the water.” He never did think turpentine would leave though. Scipp and West both say they would go back to working turpentine immediately if it came back, but neither of them thinks there is any hope for its return. West, at almost 83 years old, says that he still loves to work and loves to exercise. Scipp says that one time he was working so hard that he forgot he was hungry. By the time he finished working, he didn’t remember ever being hungry. West says that he kept water bottles all over the woods, scattered around so that he could have a drink whenever he needed it. West also remembers that he used to work so hard that he would forget about his lunch until about 2 p.m. Scipp learned the method of putting water bottles throughout the woods from West, and he says that it helps save a lot of time. West remembers working so hard that he wouldn’t even stop on his way to take his break. West would chip trees on the way to take his lunch break and on the way back to the place where he had last stopped working. West says that he used to take folding chairs into the woods too on days he didn’t feel good so that he could stretch out and relax. West remembers being such an early riser and hard worker that boss men even asked him to wake them up in the morning. By the time he would wake the boss man, West had already eaten breakfast and prepared for his day in the woods.

293 [End of Interview]