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**Transcript of DARE Interview (1966): Elbert County, Georgia; Primary Informant
GA001 (Tape 0289-S1)**

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INTRODUCTION: The following was recorded from Dictionary of American Regional English, tape zero two eight nine, side one.

FIELDWORKER: This is a recording of Mr. Monroe [beep], made at Elbert County, Georgia on March eleventh, nineteen sixty-six by [beep].

5 INFORMANT: Started sawmilling back in, uh, nineteen twenty-four through twenty-six and it was all together pine timber and I cut it in, uh, from the stump, into twelve- and sixteen-foot lengths.

FIELDWORKER: Where was it, where would you, where'd you get the pine?

10 INFORMANT: Out of the, it was out in the, you know, pine thicket, growing out in the woods, just a—

FIELDWORKER: Here in Elbert County {or in—?

INFORMANT: In Wilkes} County

FIELDWORKER: Wilkes County.

15 INFORMANT: And, uh, when it was cut, hauled in, those were called stock, that's the logs after it's cut up into these joints of twelve and sixteen foot.

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm.

20 INFORMANT: It was put into the sawmill, sawed up into lumber. When you first rolled it on the carriage, it was, you'd take off one side (of) which would be called a slab or a puncheon. And it was squared up then and cut in inch boards. From a four- to a sixteen-inch wide. And there was a sheet, and then it would come off of that log on the, from after the puncheon was took off, and it had a bark edge on both sides and it would go through what they call a edger. Rode it down to a six, eight or whatever it might be, and, and it was trucked off down a grade out from the mill and stacked up in stacks. Uh, six-inch plank, twelve-foot longs in a stack to itself. It was all sorted out in the, the different lengths, and the different widths. It was uh, all stacked to

25 itself. It wasn't all mixed up together when it was stacked in these big stacks. Then it was, uh, we, after it was stacked up, it would stay there till it was dry enough to haul to a planer mill, where it was dressed down, sized up, for shipping.

FIELDWORKER: That was somewhere else?

30 INFORMANT: Yes, that was off, maybe close to a railroad, some town, where it could be railroaded to some other part of the country.

FIELDWORKER: Uh, how did you, now you said, you said you were involved in, uh, actually cutting the timbers, too, didn't you?

INFORMANT: Oh yes, uh, that was cut by, back in the days of that was crosscut saw and ax. You had to pull it by hand.

35 FIELDWORKER: Yeah. And, uh [noise]

INFORMANT: Uh, i-it was a, well to go back to the, to the log cutting, after they were cut, the logs were hauled in to the mill where it was sawed up in lumber. It was hauled in by mules and oxens. It was drug in, snaked in, we called it.

FIELDWORKER: Snaked in?

40 INFORMANT: Yes, now that means just, you know, they're pulling it and that log dragging the ground.

FIELDWORKER: You mean they pulled it on the ground directly or on a sled of some type? [loud background noises]

45 INFORMANT: They would pull a sled on the ground, just drug in to the, to the mill and then run through there.

FIELDWORKER: Wha-, what kind of machinery ran the mill?

50 INFORMANT: Well, it was a steam, steam, uh, engine. Steam engine and boiler. And the one that we were on, that was a, that, the engine was, uh, set off to itself. The steam come from the steam engine and went over to the, uh, uh, engine, the boiler. There was a steam boiler and the engine then was the one that done the pulling. That's where the steam would go through and it would go through a valve to run the engine.

FIELDWORKER: And you just had one steam engine to do several different jobs at one time?

INFORMANT: Well they'd just run the sawmill and planer. I mean the, the edger.

FIELDWORKER: Oh they ran them both at once, huh?

55 INFORMANT: Oh yeah.

FIELDWORKER: One machine.

INFORMANT: By belt, you see it was belts was run over the, the engine pulley back to a mantle on the sawmill and that turned the saw, and then a belt from that sawmill mantle back to the edger that would run the edger. You'd operate both at one time.

60 FIELDWORKER: What happened to the scrap?

INFORMANT: Well, there was nothing but scru-, uh, puncheon and, uh, strips.

FIELDWORKER: What's puncheon?

INFORMANT: Well that's the first that come off was bark edge. Bark on it, that's no good for anything, it wasn't back then.

65 FIELDWORKER: Uh-huh.

INFORMANT: Was just fire wood, in fact we used the puncheons to keep steam up on the boilers. Put in, you know, burn to keep steam. And, uh, the saw dust was pulled out with a chain rig. It would, uh, go overhead, over the to the top of the sawmill and back down under the frame, what's called a husk frame, that's what your mantle and your saw and everything is, uh, fitted in. This chain would go under that mantel, under that husk frame and drag the sawdust out. Gather up in a big pile.

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FIELDWORKER: Was any of this, where was the sawmill? Was it, it wasn't on a river here, was it?

INFORMANT: Well, it was on creeks, on running water or where you could get water, see you had pump your steam, your water, from some well or creek branch, or—

75

FIELDWORKER: Yeah.

INFORMANT: Something or other. Was always close to water where you could—

FIELDWORKER: Well they weren't-, they weren't making paper out of this wood pulp then?

INFORMANT: Oh no. No, it was, uh building material for houses.

80 FIELDWORKER: Yeah, well I mean, don't they make the paper out of scraps?

INFORMANT: They do now, {but they didn't then.

FIELDWORKER: They didn't then,} huh.

INFORMANT: They were just throwed out and—

FIELDWORKER: Just throw out.

85 INFORMANT: —burnt, rotted down. What they do now, I think they save everything but the bark now for paper, pulp. And, uh, this day in time there's very little saw timber in the, around in this part anyway, uh, biggest thing there is pulpwood. {That's paper.

FIELDWORKER: (Maybe they just)} mash it all up.

INFORMANT: Huh?

90 FIELDWORKER: They mash it all up.

INFORMANT: Oh yes, it's mashed up, ground up and, uh, they call it pulpwood.

FIELDWORKER: It's the same timber, isn't it?

INFORMANT: Well, it's pine, yes. It's not as see, u-uh, this big timber—

FIELDWORKER: Was all cut down.

95 INFORMANT: It was cut down for, for lumber, and this little stuff is something maybe not more than six or eight inches, you know, 'cross.

FIELDWORKER: Yeah. You said you was farming at the same time you were working in the sawmill.

100 INFORMANT: Oh yes, done, uh, farming in, I mean uh sawmilling in lay-by time and through the winter months, when it wasn't, you know, in the, in the farming season?

FIELDWORKER: Uh-huh.

INFORMANT: (And) we have a farming season which is from spring till around the first of July, then we call that a lay-by time between the growing time and the gathering time.

FIELDWORKER: Between growing time and what?

105 INFORMANT: Gathering time.

FIELDWORKER: {Oh.

INFORMANT: Which,} you know, you gather your stuff that you done already made. That's, that's when we would do our sawmilling is through the lay-by time and through the winter months.

110 FIELDWORKER: Now was this true generally of the whole crew of people working on this?

INFORMANT: Yes, there would, uh, sometimes be, oh, eight to ten, sometimes twelve men a-working, you know, had to be a—

FIELDWORKER: Well they didn't close the mill down though?

INFORMANT: Oh yes, through-

115 FIELDWORKER: Oh did they?

INFORMANT: Yes, it was closed down through crop time.

FIELDWORKER: Oh.

INFORMANT: See, it was just a, uh, labor picked up by anybody that would like to work at the sawmill for, get a little money, you know, through, through these times. Now we get back on to farming. Uh, and farming in this country was all done by mules. And, uh, go in the first thing in the spring of the year and plow up your land, break it, tear it up good and lay it off, list it, bed it.

FIELDWORKER: What was that, list it?

INFORMANT: Listing, that's uh, making a small list, and then you get back out further and throw your dirt on up and make what they call a bed.

125 FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm.

INFORMANT: That's your seed bed, you, then run a distributor, which would put out fertilizer. That uh, goes down in the, in the ground under your seed and your seed bed.

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm.

INFORMANT: Then there's a—

130 FIELDWORKER: What kinds of fertilizer did you use?

INFORMANT: Well, it's just a, uh, I don't know, different, uh, uh—

FIELDWORKER: Manure?

INFORMANT: No, it wasn't a manure, it was, uh, commercial fertilizer.

FIELDWORKER: Ah.

135 INFORMANT: We uh, some call it guano.

FIELDWORKER: Oh.

INFORMANT: And, u-uh, it was put down below your seed, and then on that seed bed you'd have a, most of the time there'd be three head of mules. One would be putting out the guano pulling a distributor, and one ba-, between the distributor and the planter which would be pulling the harrow and then your planter. Then, after you got that done, it was, everything was planted and then you'd have about a week or ten days between that before your seed would come up and then you start to cultivating. We'd start the first thing with the harrow, the plants, or take a Haiman plow and bar it off. That's to pull your dirt away from it, and then you give it a choppin', that's thin your cotton, or, hoe your corn. And, and, uh, then after it was chopped out, you get back then with a (xx) plow and a sweep with a fender on your plow stop to keep from covering up that little plant.

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FIELDWORKER: Uh-huh.

INFORMANT: That's called *dirting*, putting dirt back to your cotton. But it was, oh every so often, maybe every ten days or two weeks you'd go back and, uh, freshen that, uh, round that
150 cotton again. Corn the same way. And, you'd keep, every time you plow it, you'd put on a little bigger plow and a little wider sweep. Which would throw more dirt to your cotton and corn till you plowed that middle plumb out. It'd take you several plowings to get it all bedded back up to, back to that growing crop. And, then after you, that was, that was at the end of your laying-by time, what, what I mean, your lay-by, when you get it all worked back out.

155 FIELDWORKER: Yeah.

INFORMANT: Round first or the middle of July. And your corn crop will work the same way. And then there was several weeks in there, between your growing time and then time for you to start to gathering your crop, which is your, back in them days, we'd pull fodder, that's the blades off of the corn for feed.

160 FIELDWORKER: Uh-huh.

INFORMANT: And, then uh, later on, after frost, we'd go back there then and we call it shucking, uh, uh, pulling corn, a heap of folks call it, uh, uh, breaking corn. We call it pulling corn and picking cotton. You go back and pick cotton out of the burrs by hand. And, uh, you have a sack, tote a sack along with a strap across your shoulder, you'd put that cotton in your
165 sack as you picked it. When you'd get a good sack full, you had a, what we called a cotton basket. You would take this cotton to the basket, and empty out the sacks and have a empty sack to start back to picking. And from that you got, uh, what they call a bale of cotton, bale of seed cotton. Which was, back in them days, about twelve or fifteen hundred pound of seed, lint, and all together. Now this was hauled off then to a stationary gin. And, uh, the seed and
170 the lint would be separated. The seed would go one way and the lint would go another. The lint would go into a, what we called a cotton press. Would be put into bales. And they called a bale five hundred pounds of lint cotton.

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm.

INFORMANT: Well you'd have then anywhere from eight to a thousand pound of seed. That
175 seed was sold at the gin, or you took it back home, sometimes the, that cotton seed was swapped for meal and hulls to feed cows on through the winter.

FIELDWORKER: You mean they used the seed to feed them?

INFORMANT: Oh yes, feed seed to cows, sometimes, but uh, most of the time they would take it to a oil mill and swap the seed for meal and hulls, which is, that meal is out of the pulp of the
180 seed and then the outside hull of that seed was called hulls.

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm.

INFORMANT: And it would be mixed, meal and hulls.

FIELDWORKER: Was the seed used for anything else?

185 INFORMANT: Oh, just to plant back with, save your seed to plant back with. And, uh, then they got a, uh, cotton seed oil out of that stuff. It was pressed out before it was made into meal it was pressed out in cakes. And, uh, that stuff is hard, it'd have to be reground and I wasn't in the oil mill enough to know what process it went through to grind, whether it was like on a old-fashioned corn mill, or what it was to beat back up into a meal.

FIELDWORKER: What'd you do with the corn?

190 INFORMANT: [cough] Well the corn was used for feed for the, for your hogs and your cow-, uh, mules, your stock, and, uh, then there would be every so often we'd shuck and shell and take a ton of this corn, which would be, maybe a bushel, two bushels up to five bushels, to a grist mill, corn mill, and ground up into corn to make corn bread, take it back home to eat. That uh, corn bread in them days, fellow worked sawmilling and out farming, walking and following a plow all
195 day, he could really sit down and eat corn bread when supper time come.

FIELDWORKER: W-was there enough corn produced and not enough to sell it?

INFORMANT: Well, there would be some sold, maybe if I run short I could buy some from the neighbor or somebody, but it was not a, a money crop.

FIELDWORKER: How about grain?

200 INFORMANT: Well, grain was about the same way, it was not too much ever sold, it was mostly for the family use, the wheat we carried to a flour mill and ground up into flour, which we called home-made flour. Home-raised flour.

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm.

205 INFORMANT: [Cough] And you got a, uh, shorts out of that to bring back, you'd feed that to your hogs. [cough]

FIELDWORKER: Uh, when you had, how did you separate the grain from the, from the, uh—

INFORMANT: Well, there was a thrash, back in, in my day, this was pulled around by a pair of mules or yoke of steers, and you had your grain shocked up in a field out from, in the houses where you, (xx) grain crop.

210 FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm.

INFORMANT: Uh, it was just shocked up and uh, then a heap of times, a-after everything got dry and you wasn't gonna push for your row crop stuff, you'd go out, get somebody to come in with a thrash and it would thrash it out. And that grain went through a sieve. From that sieve back trough a auger to your, where it was sacked up, it was (xx), pour out into a sack, a bushel
215 measure, half a bushel measure. And there was a man stood right there at that measuring thing and would, uh, would keep right up with your grain, knowed what you, when you got though

thrashing, he knowed how many bushels you had. And then the straw and the chaff would go out another way, there was a, a fan on the inside of that thrasher, it would throw your chaff and straw out into a big pile. Well a heap of times this, some of that, uh, uh, straw and stuff
220 would be housed up for hay for your stock through the winter. That, uh, wheat then, that grain after it was thrashed, you'd, sometimes if it was just a little damp, you'd spread it in a big uh, barn, open-floor barn and let it dry before you ever started to can it to mill, where it would make a good eating flour.

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm. W-what did you use for hay besides grain?

225 INFORMANT: Oh, used cane, sowed, would sow big fields of cane and peas.

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm.

INFORMANT: Have cane and pea-vine hay mixed together. And, uh, then outside of that we'd go in the river bottoms, meadows, and cut hay, just regular swamp hay. That was good feed for winter. And, uh, back i-i-in m-my farming days, they had just a little lespedeza, with the, not like
230 they have this day and time. Different kinds of—

FIELDWORKER: Special hay.

INFORMANT: Special hay, that's right.

FIELDWORKER: OK

INFORMANT: Well, when I was just a small kid, people around in the community would have
235 what we called a pound supper, pound party. Each person would carry a pound of fruit, apples or you know, candy, or just something to what'd be called a pound party.

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm.

INFORMANT: And, uh, it was a bunch of us, it was our neighbors, they had a, one of the parties and two brothers older than me, course they were invited and us being right there neighbors,
240 uh, uh, I was asked to go too. Well, I thought as much as of the two older people there as I did the young people, because I had a lot of fun with them. And, uh, seemed that they enjoyed it. Oh, one of the boys, this, this old couple, they, 'bout grown and he smoked a old pipe and Prince Albert tobacco. (Our) little house out, good piece from the edge of the yard, they called it the privy. Toilet. So, me being a kid I'd go to that toilet when I got ready and think nothing
245 about it. Well one day I went down and around dinner time, the boys older than me laying around on the porch at dinner time where there wasn't, you know, getting their rest at dinner. Well I picked up the pipe and the tobacco and carried it back to this fella, his name was (Hyte) [beep]. I carried it back to him, says, "Hyte," I say, "here's your pipe and tobacco." He says, "Monroe," says, "where did you, where'd you find that pipe and tobacco?" [laugh] And, I, not
250 knowing no better, I just spoke up and said, "Down at the privy." Well when they had that pound party, uh, he asked me that same question, come out and asked me where'd I get his pipe and tobacco, where did I find it. And me not knowing no better just being a kid, I just

spoke out before the whole crowd, I said, "Down at the privy." And they all had a big laugh.
[distortion] [cough] Now when I was a young fella, started out, uh, money was so scarce, sort of
255 hard to get, so what uh, my daddy told me, says, "Get out and make some money. Make it
honest if you can, but if you can't make it honest, you know, make it anyway." So I thought to
try to make it honest I'd start trapping for fur. We trapped for mushrat, mink, coon, possum,
fox, and, uh, during the time I happened to catch two polecats, which is a difference from a
260 skunk. This polecat is striped and uh, oh, ah, carried them in, drowned them, you can get no
smell from them till you got ready to skin them. (xx) carried them off in the woods, had me
some old rags and lint cotton to keep the scent down.

FIELDWORKER: [laugh]

INFORMANT: And, uh, got them skinned, which it made me awful sick [laugh] and thought I'd
get a good price for it, being, it was, you know, it was pretty stuff, sent it in to, I believe
265 (Folkestone), in uh, believe New York. And got a check back for the two polecat hides for thirty
cents, fifteen cents apiece.

FIELDWORKER: [laugh]

INFORMANT: I, I, I really think that was getting money honest.

FIELDWORKER: [laugh] What's the difference between a polecat and a skunk now?

270 INFORMANT: Well, a, a polecat is smaller than a skunk and he's got stripes, more, you know, up
and down sort of like the stripes on a zebra or something like that, just white and black, they,
they're close together and a skunk, he's got black stripe down his back and on his sides is white,
big, white as the whole part of your hand.

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm.

275 INFORMANT: And the, then underside and around his legs is all black. Got a pretty long, bushy
tail. And from that uh, tail, that's where they throw the scent on it and then they sling it with
that tail.

FIELDWORKER: [laugh] Oh yeah?

INFORMANT: Yeah.

280 FIELDWORKER: Goo-, is this, is it, now (wait a minute), that's a skunk that does that?

INFORMANT: Well both, {both do that.

FIELDWORKER: Oh both of them} do the same {thing.

INFORMANT: Bo-}, both throw scent the same away, but there is a difference between a
polecat and a skunk.

285 FIELDWORKER: Yeah, and is the scent the same?

INFORMANT: Same. You can't tell the difference. And a, a mink, there ain't much difference when a, when a mink throw his scent out, there ain't much difference in a mink and a, and a polecat.

FIELDWORKER: And a polecat. Ah, you said something about the polecat making dogs sick.

290 INFORMANT: Oh, yes. Ah, one night we was possum hunting, there was several of us, and I was terrible to climb a tree, dog didn't, every time he'd tree a possum up the tree I'd go up and get the possum out, or shake him out, anyway get him out on the ground. I went up in the tree one night, they done treed, I went up in one, c-, didn't see him till I got up in there. He was out on a limb, and, uh, too far out, I couldn't go out to get him, couldn't reach him, uh, generally carried
295 my ax under my belt, let the handle go down through a belt down side of my leg, take the ax with me. So if I couldn't get to him, I could cut the limb. Knock it where he'd fall off. Well this one was out on the limb, too far for me to get out or reach, I took my ax, hit that limb, jar it, and uh, when he hit the ground, the dog caught him. (xx) begin to shake him, I like to fell out the tree cause the scent'd come back extra strong to, i-it like to knock me out of the tree.

300 FIELDWORKER: [laugh]

INFORMANT: And the dogs got sick, you know, when you catch a po-, uh, a polecat or a skunk, hunting with a pair of dogs or bunch of dogs, you just as well as quit cause it makes them sick, they'd vomit, lay down, roll, just, w-when we'd always tree a polecat or a skunk and the dogs get a hold to it, that'd break up our hunt for about a week then we-. No need to go on back and
305 I had about a week's time. 'Cause they couldn't, that scent done got all in the nose and they couldn't do any tracking.

FIELDWORKER: Oh, I see, yeah. They uh, you said this polecat make 'em sicker than a skunk.

INFORMANT: No, one about as bad as the other, of, of that. Yes, that polecat and skunk, and, and uh, the scent would be no difference.

310 FIELDWORKER: Mm. Now, what, what's this about a mink?

INFORMANT: Well, mink is a fur-bearing animal and uh, uh, they smell a little sorta like a polecat or a skunk,

FIELDWORKER: What do they look like?

INFORMANT: They're, well there's some black, and some, most of them brown, but a, a black
315 mink, there's a, their fur is worth more than the, than the brown mink, they're, they're a small animal, short legs, long-bodied.

FIELDWORKER: You got 'em around here, huh?

INFORMANT: Oh yes, we have minks, muskrat, coon, possum, otter, beaver, I have never
320 caught a otter or beaver, either one, but I have seen them even here in this lake. I've seen a, uh,
otter, a beaver right here out on the dock.

FIELDWORKER: Oh yeah?

INFORMANT: Yes, I've seen—

FIELDWORKER: Are there any beaver dams around here?

INFORMANT: Oh yeah.

325 FIELDWORKER: Uh, you say a mink stinks like a skunk, though.

INFORMANT: They smell right smart like a skunk, they don't, not as bad.

FIELDWORKER: Not as bad. [loud background noise] This tape is continued on side two.