

Harley Langdale, Jr. Oral History

HKS: Why were you born in Lynchburg, Virginia?

HL: My mother was from Lynchburg. She was originally from a little town right south of Lynchburg. Her father's name was Silas Watkins Lee, and he had been in the Civil War. He had been with Lee when he surrendered at Appomatox Courthouse, and he walked home. Since I was the first child born, she went back to her family doctor, and I've found among some of the things a letter from that family doctor that delivered me. She stayed up there a month and brought me back to Georgia, and I've been in Georgia pretty well ever since.

HKS: You spent three years at the Citadel.

HL: Two years.

HKS: Why the Citadel? Did you get some....

HL: Well, my father liked the military training. I had heard of the Citadel, and he had heard of the Citadel, and we had a turpentine place in South Carolina at that time. I went up there not knowing a single solitary person in all that part of South Carolina. My family was out from Charleston. He encouraged me to go to the Citadel. So I went there two years and then transferred to the University of Georgia, studied forestry. And that's another story if you want me to tell you about that one.

HKS: Absolutely.

HL: We had a neighbor who owned some forestland in the southern part of South Carolina called Palmetto Bluff, it's now owned by Union Camp Corporation. We were in the turpentine business up there. He wanted somebody to do turpentine that knew what they were doing, and I had spent time up there in the summertime and I had spent time up there in the wintertime, and it was a great pleasure. I killed my first deer up there when I was twelve years old. My father and Mr. Varn and some of the other people around Valdosta would have the senators as guests. They had Senator "Cotton Ed" Smith from South Carolina, they had Senator Walter George, they'd have Senator Russell, they'd have some of the congressmen up there, and they'd entertain them on deer hunts. While I was up there, Senator George talked to me, and he was telling me what all Roosevelt was doing about conservation and all of that. Of course my background had been in the turpentine business and the timber business, and he had a son who attended the University of Georgia School of Forestry at that time. So that encouraged me and my father encouraged me, and that's what I wanted to do anyway so I sort of found myself when I got to the University of Georgia. I loved forestry, and I guess that's one of the great blessings of my life that I studied forestry at that time, because I was the first boy from Clinch County that I know anything about that went off to school to study forestry.

HKS: I asked John yesterday if it was your father's plan that you would study forestry and he would study law and the two of you together would be well groomed to run a business?

HL: No, I don't think he really had that in mind. He wanted us to amount to something. He wanted us to work hard, and his motto was "when you get out and get knocked down, get up." I think really that I was leaning to studying law even going to the Citadel. I had the books and all of that. I guess we followed our father in that way. But my idea all the time was not to be a technical or a professional person like that. I would more be like an operator on forest land and turpentine business.

HKS: What were the issues when you were in forestry school? The New Deal obviously was an issue for everyone. Use of fire? What were the controversies then?

HL: We had the beginnings of a forestry school at the University of Georgia. We didn't have really very good facilities. A lot of our books were translated from German, and we studied forestry that really didn't pertain to what we'd been doing in the South over these years. But I remember that the main issue that people talked about more and more about in those times, those kinds of times, was the fact that the Forest Service was a leader in trying to have forest regulations. That was the main topic right there. Of course, our problem was that we didn't have fire protection, we didn't have the markets, we didn't know about a lot of these things that we know about now, and nobody had the money to practice forestry. The forest finance book I studied had interest tables that didn't go up but to 8 percent. Most of the books were talking about trying to practice forestry and having a return of 3-4 percent on your investment. But I would say that forest regulation and fire protection, markets, the lack of money, were the main points when I was in forestry school.

HKS: When you came home how did your father react to his son with all these newfangled ideas?

HL: He understood, and he was a great believer. He used to quote who he said was Benjamin Franklin, "be not the first to try the new nor the last to throw the old aside." He was progressive to some extent. I guess when anybody gets out of school they think they know more answers than they do, and I got us in the pulpwood business. He questioned that strongly. Because nearly about every turpentine producer, naval stores producer, at that time questioned whether the pulp and paper mills were going to put them out of business because they're going to cut down the trees and they're going to utilize them all and there wouldn't be any timber to turpentine.

We had a policy of being conservative, he did. Now putting up one turpentine face, not putting two, to work the tree out but putting one and let the tree rest a little bit, put another one there and maybe then you'd have a vein you could put another one, because really all the income that he and most everybody else down in this section of the country came from naval stores. Sawlogs didn't bring any money, cross ties to some extent, and you didn't have any pulpwood market. It was

mostly from naval stores that people got something to eat and got ahead a little bit, made a little bit of money. So I would go around and a lot of these trees that would have two faces but room for another one, I would mark it with my gun to be cut. He would come by and he would say something to the producer that says, well I don't know about that, you'd better ask Harley how he went to forestry school and where I got the money to do that. He says we got the money out of naval stores and I don't think we ought to cut any tree that we can put a turpentine cup on. We had discussions like that, but he was very tolerant of me and he was very encouraging and he carried me in every situation that I could be exposed to.

HKS: How old does a tree have to be before it's good for producing gum?

HL: If it's on good quality land and a good site, I have seen them when they were fifteen years old with a cup on them. But that's unusual. I'd say mostly eighteen to twenty, and we had a lot of producers. That's what broke most turpentine producers back in the '20s when oleoresin, a gum, would bring in a good price, they would turpentine trees seven inches in diameter or maybe less. That was where the government stepped in and encouraged us under the Naval Stores Conservation Program not to turpentine anything less than nine inches DBH.

HKS: Is that a federal program?

HL: That was a federal program. Naval Stores Conservation Program that came in and paid the turpentine producers to take the cups off anything less than nine inches DBH. That encouraged us, so we went one step above that. We went on some of our places and said ten inches and up. The yield was better, so you have a little advantage from the cost standpoint.

HKS: This was longleaf or slash pine?

HL: Longleaf and slash pine.

HKS: Longleaf is hard to reproduce.

HL: They're hard to reproduce on most sites.

HKS: Loblolly's not good for...

HL: No sir. Loblolly does not produce enough oleoresin.

HKS: When I was here before I drove east to the Okefenokee Swamp. I saw trees that had the cups on. Were those longleaf or slash pine?

HL: They'd have to be longleaf or slash. When you get over in Alabama every now and then they'd have a loblolly pine that they would call a rosemary pine that was a fast growing old-field loblolly pine. And they'd put a cup on it, but they wouldn't make much gum. You'd go broke doing that. We didn't have many loblolly. While I was going to forestry school we didn't have a lot of work for turpentine laborers to do at certain times of the season, and the manager had them girdling loblolly pine because he wanted to get rid of them, they did not produce gum. Now

loblolly pine is the most important pine tree in Georgia, there's no doubt about that.

HKS: When did the big companies come that made lumber, or paper? When did trees become more valuable for lumber and paper other than gum?

HL: The paper business started moving south about 1930 or 1931. The first mill that I knew anything about that we could do anything with was International Paper Company, the Southerncraft Division at Panama City, Florida. They started operating in '31 or '32. But that didn't amount to anything. They had all the wood they wanted right around the plant, so we couldn't ship to them then.

Union Camp started up in '36, and the mill that we got connected with more and more, National Container Corporation, started up in 1938 in Jacksonville. I graduated from forestry school in 1937. In school we were not really subjected to much timber cutting from pulpwood standpoint. But we started cutting, and our company has been in the pulpwood business continuously every week since 1938. I believe that's a record with the most of any company. And we've shipped to Savannah, we've shipped to Brunswick, we've shipped to St. Mary's, we've shipped to Jacksonville, and we've shipped to Panama City. I'll tell you later about why we got the mill here, this county and all that.

HKS: To be sure that I understand. When you get involved in pulpwood and you're also producing gum, are these the same species or are you going to loblolly pine for pulp and longleaf for gum.

HL: No. At that time we did not pay any attention to our loblolly pine as such. We wanted to always have slash so we would have alternate sources of income, and slash was easy to plant. We didn't know much about planting longleaf, but we went out in the woods and dug up slash pine that would come up really thick in some low places and planted them. We planted them further apart, and our purpose was to grow trees that we could produce gum from.

HKS: So there were no nurseries yet?

HL: Not then to speak of. A little later on there began to be more and more in the state in the '30s, late '30s. It was slash and longleaf and more slash than anything else because slash was so easy to regenerate. Much easier than longleaf.

HKS: I studied forestry in the 1950's, and I remember longleaf was even then very difficult to regenerate.

HL: We're liking it better and better and we're doing more and more of it and we have learned what not to do pretty well. We've got some pretty good stands of longleaf that we planted now, and we like it because we can control burns so much quicker you know.

HKS: I didn't know that you can grow longleaf successfully.

HL: Oh yes you can now. And surprisingly so.

HKS: There's a lot of companies in the family and their names are confusing to me. Let's go back to the original naval stores company that your father started, and that still exists, right? But you don't do naval stores anymore.

HL: No sir, we quit. We sold out our naval stores plant back fifteen years ago and that was a sad day.

HKS: Who did you sell it to?

HL: Sold it to the government of Honduras. They came up here and took it apart and numbered every piece and shipped it down there. They said their purpose was to create employment. Their trees didn't run that good but they took it and they put it up and the last account I heard it had been running. What's the status of it now, I don't know.

HKS: I didn't know there was a market anywhere in the world for the old type naval stores.

HL: That's right. There wasn't much but they came up and wanted to buy the plant.

HKS: When people like me read about the history of forestry in the South, we read a lot about Charles Herty, the Herty cup and all, naval stores, and then what he did in newsprint. What did you think of Herty at the time? When you look back you can see he was important, but did you know he was important when you were in school?

HL: I met Dr. Herty. I met him and was with him on several occasions. I never shall forget the time he came to Valdosta and we had a meeting in the courtroom of the county courthouse. He was talking about forestry and he was talking about how he was going to grow trees and the trees could be used for pulp and paper. I guess we must have had fifteen or twenty people up there. He made the statement, I will never forget it, he says the great hindrance to growing trees in south Georgia and in this area is that the turpentine people who control burn their woods. He didn't say control, he said burn their woods every year. And we did back in those days, because the turpentine operator had such an investment in the cups and gutters and nails and gum in the cup and those turpentine faces would readily burn, so we would weed around the tree. They would use the word "wed" and you'd go about this far [gestures] all the way around and then you would burn the woods and hope those faces would not catch. He said the greatest hindrances were wildfires and the turpentine operators.

HKS: You weeded about a foot or so. But earlier Herty was very important to turpentine.

HL: Oh yes, because when he was at Georgia and all, he was the one who developed the Herty cup, which was the clay cup. You know the cup and the gutter system, metal galvanized gutters, he was right in the forefront of that. We could take those clay cups and we could make the highest grade of rosin which always brought the most money. So we used those clay cups which we called the Hearty cup.

HKS: The clay didn't contaminate...

HL: Right, right. Later on somebody figured out that we could use glass even better, so we jumped on that wagon and we ordered some. This is the first time that I remember that we had a freeze after a rain, and there was water in the bottom of them. They were so they could expand that way, but that water froze and then next day it warmed up in the middle of the day and then we had a hard freeze that next night and all those cups burst all over the woods and we worried about that a long time. The glass company paid us back the cost of the cups, and then we had to go and put the Herty cups in too. But the Herty cup would break too. In the wintertime we would turn it at an angle so that instead of the cup hanging like that perpendicular to the tree it would hang at an angle. You had a little nail you'd put under it and then that way if it froze it would have plenty of open space that it could expand the water.

HKS: What was the capacity of the cup? A pint?

HL: A quart. Later on we did have some cups, you've seen cups haven't you?

HKS: No, never have.

HL: Oh you haven't?

HKS: I've seen pictures of cups.

HL: Well, let's see if I haven't got something I can show you.

HKS: Look in your museum here, huh?

HL: Now these are some of the later cups. They're a little bit dirty. Now this is aluminum, and this is aluminum, and this is what we started using later, and this is plastic. I had some clay cups here. John J.'s got some over there in his office, I don't see any in here now. This is a cup that we put under there and we put the gutters. Now we used the galvanized cup, which was cheaper.

HKS: It looks a bit like a bread pan. How did this hang on the trees, a little nail head goes under the rib here?

HL: You put a twenty-penny nail underneath the cup, like this in the tree, and it would sit like that, and it would be tight up there next to that galvanized gutter.

HKS: Looks like to me it would fall over if a bird landed on it.

HL: No. You see if you've got a, we called it an apron, and then you had a gutter that went down like this.

HKS: The gutter...

HL: So then you put it up there and it couldn't move. Now we would fuss at our labor all the time to make sure that you put it up there in that fashion and that wouldn't happen. A lot of times they'd be in a hurry and it would lean a little like this and we'd have to go by and straighten them up or get on them about it or do something.

HKS: Okay, I see. This is called a hack?

HL: That's a hack. The paper mill gave me that. They went down and bought the timber from the people who had an agreement from the Crown down in the Islands. Another company had tried to turpentine down there, and they found out that that timber would grow to about eight or nine inches in diameter and then it would really slow down and it would be heart. In the turpentine business, it just wouldn't run. You don't want heart, you want the sap part, where you've got the cambium layer and all. That was a hack that they found there.

HKS: They fixed it up a little bit.

HL: They chromed it.

HKS: The photo on this calendar.

HL: There's your apron, see your apron right here? Now we usually put the apron, and then we might put a gutter right there so we wouldn't lose any around the corner, now that's exceptionally good. Now see here. See that's a virgin face, first year, we'd call that virgin, and this right here is the second year. That's first year, that's later in the year. We'd put on thirty streaks a year.

HKS: Fifty years ago did you go that low in the tree?

HL: Yes sir. Fifty years, yes sir.

HKS: I've only seen the photographs. I've only seen them up waist high.

HL: We always went down as low as we could back then. Now, see this one right here was up a little bit, but that shouldn't have been that high, it should have been down lower a bit.

HKS: I never realized that people in the naval stores business saw people in the lumber business as kind of enemies.

HL: Yes sir. They didn't get along until they got ready to sell out. A lot of them were in debt and all, and they would turpentine a tract and then maybe the price of logs had moved up a little bit and they sold out. That was about the only way to really make much money out of the naval stores business. And that's what happened to a lot of them.

HKS: In some of the material that you loaned me, either you or your father talked about the turpentine factors. How essential they were in the '30s and '40s. I'm not sure when they stopped being important. Tell me how the turpentine factor business worked.

HL: The factors started right back I guess after the middle of the 19th century, 1850s. Then it got more and more important, and the factors were really financial people who would finance turpentine operators. See in the wintertime you didn't make any crude gum, that was expense. You did your winter work, you put up your cups and your gutters and you got ready and you had your labor and you had commissaries and you furnished them everything. But the factors you would borrow money from, and the factors then would turn around and come April they would want some of that money back. They would put you on a basis that you started paying it back then. And what they wanted to do was you pay it back, borrow in the wintertime, pay it back in the summertime, and you do that every year.

They charged a high rate of interest, kind of like a loan-shark arrangement. I remember that when I got in it we were paying 8 percent interest, and then they charged us 2 1/2 percent of all our products that we would ship our product to them. They would sell it, they would take what they could get for it, or what we thought they got for it, and then they'd deduct 2 1/2 percent. Then they had wholesale grocery houses, had one in Valdosta, that you got your groceries from, and they made a profit on that. And gasoline for your trucks and your mule feed and everything that you bought pretty well they made a little profit on that. It was a big business but it was easy credit, hard to pay back, but it helped a lot of people get started that didn't have any money. They would look over and see people who had the ability to produce gum, and they would try to set them up in business. And the secret was that if you could handle the labor, most all turpentine labor was black labor, if you could handle those and knew how to get the work out of them, well then you could get along with the factors pretty good because you could operate.

HKS: Were these factors also the local banker? Who has capital?

HL: One factor got most of his money out of Chicago. I remember Finty's company had consolidated naval stores company. They were a factor. Turpentine and rosin factors had a certain amount of capital themselves. I think the most capital they ever had was five million dollars themselves, and then they would borrow money from the local banks. But the banks, just the regular banks, particularly any national bank, they couldn't loan you money on your timberland because legally that was what you'd call wasteland. They could loan you on your mule or your wagon or your supplies, the farmland, but they couldn't loan it to you on your timberland because that was wasteland, until the federal land bank stepped in. They changed that and we could get some money from that. Those banks would loan money to the factors, the factors in turn would loan money.

HKS: I see cotton fields here. There were cotton factors, where they ever the same people?

HL: No, the exchange over in Savannah was called the Cotton and Naval Stores Exchange, where they would meet every day and set the price. But they were pretty well different companies, different people. I don't know of any turpentine factor that was fooling with cotton or had anything to do with cotton.

HKS: If you had had enough money of your own, would you have made better profit selling your gum directly to the market? The factors had access to a larger market than you would, probably.

HL: Particularly the export market, and they would maneuver around all that. No, that was difficult to do, because the factors had those kinds of things sewed up. They could get several thousand drums of rosin together, or they could furnish more turpentine to somebody, you know, and the people who were buying were dealing with them rather than the individual operator. Now we did have a few operators that did have some sort of contact with them, but not many, not many. Until this thing changed around and the United States Department of Agriculture and their research station out from Lake City at Olustee developed the process of cleaning your gum before you cooked it, and you made a higher grade rosin and all that, then you had a market you could sell your gum to. So that was a great advance in the turpentine business.

HKS: So the factors were a necessary evil, but you just as soon not have one.

HL: And you couldn't hardly get out from under them. I'll tell you how we did finally do it, but it was very difficult to get out from under them because the bank was not ready to talk to you about financing a naval stores operation.

HKS: Is this a good time to explain or is that later?

HL: I'll finish up with the naval stores and then I'll tell you how we had these other companies.

HKS: I don't know enough about naval stores to ask more questions. So go ahead, tell me.

HL: It was a good business, and a lot of people who knew how to work the labor made money out of it. You'd have good years and you'd have bad years. I used to have a standard saying that we had people here that would buy the biggest car they could buy one year, and the next year they couldn't even buy a license plate for it. That was the way it was, ups and downs. The market was manipulated a good bit by the factors and the brokers and the exporters.

HKS: What was the main outlet? What affected the price for turpentine?

HL: Out of your crude gum, which the proper name is oleoresin, you broke it down into gum turpentine from the living tree, and rosin. Rosin was a solid, turpentine of course was a liquid. Rosin went into soaps, it went into varnishes, it went into many chemicals of all kinds, it went into paper sizing, the lower grades of rosin did. Turpentine went in as a paint thinner, it went into cleaner, it went into all kinds of things too. Then finally it was broken down into various components that went into other chemical products. So it was a more or less a raw product for other chemical uses.

HKS: If housing starts are up or down, does that effect the turpentine business?

HL: No. But the general prosperity helped the turpentine business. I wouldn't say that we were dependent on housing starts like we are today in the lumber business and such. I would say general prosperity. A lot of the rosin and some of the turpentine was exported to England and the Netherlands and all of the countries over there. They used the rosin for paper sizing and soaps and varnishes, and it was a big export market.

HKS: So World War II increased the domestic demand, but overseas shipping...

HL: Right. Naval stores were very important in World War II. And we got the clearance to build our plant here in 1943. We had twenty-five or so turpentine stills scattered over the woods, and we did away with those and had this one plant here that made a better rosin and better turpentine and we had a priority to get the stainless steel equipment and the brass and aluminum. We built that plant in six months time. Rosin and turpentine were very much in demand during the war. In fact, I would say that about in 1941 and '42 were the first years that we had seen that were really profitable in the naval stores business since the '20s.

HKS: The labor was becoming scarce too.

HL: Becoming scarce. The trees that you were working were further back in the woods. The labor didn't mind being close to town and you haul them out a certain distance and all, but it was a way of life for a lot of the black labor. It was critical, but we got by. All of our equipment was critical. We used mules to bring in gum from the woods, before we used a truck.

HKS: Because of the gas and tires, which were rationed during the war.

HL: Gas and tires. We had a four-mule team that was down in the woods toward Fargo. It would go out ten miles and they would make two or three trips a day to bring in six barrels of gum. A barrel of gum weighing about five hundred pounds. So it was important.

The American Turpentine Farmers Association, which I'm sure my brother John talked to you about that my father...

HKS: No we didn't talk about this. I want to talk to you about them.

HL: They were formed in 1936 because all the turpentine operators were pretty well broke. The thing that really broke them was the fluctuation of the price, manipulated by the factors and the brokers and the exporters. You would start off a year and you'd have your expenses at this level [gestures], and the price might go up a little bit but then it might come right back down before the end of the year. That's where they would make their contracts and make money on it.

My father organized the American Turpentine Farmers Association in 1936, and the main purpose was to stabilize the market. Not to get it up this

high of a certain level, but to have it at a fair price. Then when you've got these periods where nobody wanted to buy. Then the Commodity Credit Corporation would step in and loan the association the money to take that and hold it. It was a great blessing that it was formed when it did, because we had some of that rosin when the war started and that's what carried us over.

HKS: Is this part of the NRA setting prices and other regulations of the New Deal?

HL: Right. That was a part of it and part of the Commodity Credit Corporation. By the way, I don't think the Commodity Credit Corporation ever lost any money on loaning money on rosin and turpentine because they made a level there and during a period right during the war and other times, they would sell it out at a profit. We would get the extra bonus from them when they'd sell some of it.

HKS: So a government agency became a factor, in a sense.

HL: Absolutely. They'd furnish you a price on the product that you produced, for no other purpose. Then you had the Naval Stores Conservation Program which was developed or promulgated or whatever you say there for that about this same time. That paid you if you quit turpentine those small trees. They were talking about more conservation, growing more trees, getting trees bigger for pulpwood, lumber, anything they could be used for. So those two things helped us considerably.

The turpentine business was a way of life. Just about every location that you went through going from here to Fargo or going from here to Savannah, or going from here to Jacksonville, or anywhere around here was pretty well started by somebody in the turpentine business. You can name them as you go down the road. There used to be a turpentine still there, they turpentine so long and then they sold the timber or some company bought the land and they sawed logs out of it and then pulp and paper companies started coming.

HKS: The naval stores industry moved around from North Carolina into Georgia.

HL: And then went on to Texas, and then it came back. It started in Virginia, North Carolina and came right after and then after that was turpentine out and sawmilled out. Then it started back and it never did really build up that much in Texas anymore, or Louisiana, but it did a little in Mississippi, did some in Alabama, but not as much as it did in south Georgia, and north Florida. And South Carolina, a little, a little came back together.

HKS: The federal government is a mixed blessing, though; it also deals with wages. It has a price support system, so I guess you have to take the good with the bad.

HL: Right. I don't remember any scandal about it at all, and they handled it with less expense than it can be handled any other way. It added

stability and it helped us get started on growing more trees and practicing forestry and conservation, so I would say that that was one program I just couldn't criticize.

HKS: In the 1930s when a tree had given up all the gum it could, was it then cut for lumber?

HL: We had in those days in our whole area around here what we called peckerwood mills, or push hard mills, or coffee pot mills. Sometimes that turpentine face would be higher than the ceiling, and you'd have to cut that off, because that would have worm holes in it or it might have something else wrong, or burned. My first experience of doing it actually myself was, we cut the tree down and if we had 50 percent of that tree that we could carry to the sawmill, then we were doing good. We'd leave that cat face there, we'd leave the top there, then we'd carry that part in the middle to the mill. The trees weren't that tall. When we got it to the sawmill I would say that our slab pit, our sawdust pit was the biggest thing that we had. We'd have to burn those seven days a week to have room to put more in on Monday, and I'd say 50 percent of that wood was usable.

HKS: I'm trying to understand naval stores silviculture. The rotation, how you deal with the new trees coming along. What kind of actual plan you would have in the long term for naval stores.

HL: We called that a turpentine rotation. It's got some bad points about it, but it's got a lot of good points about it. It attributed to the fact that we grew a lot of trees down there. We did it on the diameter limit. At nine inches or ten inches DBH we would put a cup on it. Then after we worked it and had two faces on it we'd go through there and cut out those turpentine faces. Those trees that were growing in between would come on in there. We'd let it rest a few years, we'd come back in there and do the same thing. What you would call your silviculture practice was a turpentine rotation. That's where the money was.

A lease would sell for about ten cents per face per year, and we had an average of maybe twenty faces to an acre. So you're talking about two dollars to the acre. That was unheard of, your takes weren't but about ten cents an acre back then. Then you would sell it for whatever you could get, but there wasn't much of a market for that lumber. I started out in trying to get rid of some of those trees, and I have great respect for anybody in the forest business that was in the naval stores business of what they were going to do with those worked out trees. But we just didn't have a market for it. We'd have these mills in the woods because we didn't have these debarkers, we didn't know what that was until 1952, I think, is the right date for that for our area. And we put our debarker in in 1957 and started operating in '58. But we had these little mills that we would saw lumber, and you know that was always miscut. It would be 2 x 4s and that would be 4" at one end and 2" at the other end when you wanted 2. That was a rotation that we had back in the earlier days, I would say in the late '30s. I've sold some of those logs they'd cut them Doyle scale for two dollars and a half a thousand for stumpage. But that was the silviculture practice that we knew when I got out of the forestry school and came back here.

I'd been working in the woods every summer before that in the naval stores end of it, but after training in the forestry school we came back and we turpented a little bit different. We tried to get a bigger tree and better conservation practices, but we would cut out the trees that were big enough. The only way we could thin was dead expense. I remember down on Superior Pine Products Company, which you rode through going to Fargo a while ago, they would pay us and our labor if we didn't have anything for us to do per day to take those people and let them go and use their judgment with an ax. It was sort of like a push ax that we'd use to cut down the little saplings and try to thin them, because a lot of those acres would come up with two thousand to the acre. We would try to thin enough of them so where they'd come through to help them, you know, to get started a little bit better. But that's all, we had no market, no market for that.

HKS: After the war when John and the others came back, where you in the service?

HL: No, I'll tell you what happened. I had an appendix operation while I was at the University of Georgia, and some way or another it happened that they left a little leakage and I had a tumor growth that came on my intestines right at the location where they cut my appendix out. I had quite a time, in fact it was a very serious operation and they had to cut out part of my intestines and bring them back together. They classified me 4-F, although I had been in the military and ROTC at the University of Georgia. I was in the cavalry there and the military at Citadel. So I did not go, and my two brothers did go.

HKS: After the war, John was telling me yesterday how he started consolidating all the different pieces into a single company. You're looking to the future but at the same time they're starting to make naval stores as a paper byproduct. Did you see then that at some point it was going to put you out of business?

HL: We didn't see it at first because everybody would tell us, chemists and all, sulphate turpentine just would not take the place of gum turpentine. It didn't smell alike, didn't look alike, didn't necessarily have all the same properties. We thought that we had a superior product, so at first we weren't worried about that too much. But then all of us that were closer to the pulp and paper mills soon realized that they had the money, they had the chemists, they had the people and that was going to come about. So it really has. They made the sulphate turpentine and tall oil rosin.

HKS: Can you tell the difference today?

HL: I don't think so; I think they can make it any grade. See we put great stock in spending money to make a light grade of rosin, you've seen how they've grade rosin.

HKS: No, I've heard about it, I haven't seen it.

HL: I kept one set of samples. I just keep these for memory, and I think I had to put a hundred dollar deposit in it. This is the way we graded rosin, this being the highest grade right here [demonstrates]. This right here is X, and the WW is water white, WG is window glass, Nancy, Mary, Kate, Isaac, Harry, George, Frank, Edward and Dolly. [laughter] And so...

HKS: So you hold this color gauge up next to the cup.

HL: You got a sample out of it. You got a sample of every barrel, then the inspector would come around and hold it up there and match the color, and that's the way you graded rosin. They say these colors came about by somebody way back in the 1800s matching these colors with the color of their labor. And you know a lot of blacks were nearly white and some of them were black dark and that's the way these colors came about. They weighted this to bring in the most money. So the paper mill couldn't make that grade to begin with, but then they went to work and they can, to my understanding.

HKS: John had a bottle of turpentine on his desk, and he said the only thing he ever used it for was if he cut himself he'd put a little bit on the cut. I'd never heard of that.

HL: My father thought that was the finest thing. In fact if he started getting a cold and had the sore throat, he'd take a teaspoon of sugar and put about two or three drops of turpentine on it and he'd just had great belief that that would cure that cough, for medicinal purposes. You see all those cans and bottles up there, we produced it and we shipped it all over the eastern part of the United States. I was trying all the time to get out of the commodity deal and get into a product every way that we could, and that was one attempt.

HKS: I remember when oil-based paint was the only paint you could buy, and you always thinned it with turpentine.

HL: Right.

HKS: All I knew what turpentine was used for was a paint thinner.

HL: There was a great use at one time. Now they've got these substitutes.

HKS: That's right. Latex.

HL: See most of the turpentine when I was coming along, we weren't getting but twenty or twenty-five cents a gallon for it. Now a gallon of turpentine is on up now to eight or ten dollars. It was a way of life for our black people around here, I don't know how they would have made a living. We'd do it on a piecework rates, and they would go out in the morning, they would carry a little old feist dog with them, they would have a bucket that they'd put their food.

HKS: What would they carry with them?

HL: Feist dog, any kind of little old dog. If a possum started out or rabbit, it'd catch that rabbit and put him in a bag and carry him home

and eat him that night. Then in the middle of the day if it got hot and they wanted to take a nap they'd take a nap, then they'd work later on in the afternoon. It was a way of life that those people enjoyed and made a living. Wasn't any welfare.

HKS: I would have thought that with the increase in paper production, there'd be so much turpentine on the market now that you could buy it for a nickel a barrel, but it's not true.

HL: But they're breaking it down to more and more chemical uses.

HKS: Is there more to talk about the American Turpentine Association that was formed to help stabilize the market? It must have been involved in all industry concerns, whatever they might be.

HL: It never did get that far in the lumber business. It might have been temporarily, we had price control during the war in lumber and things like that, but it never did get that way with other products out of the forest that I know about. It was just gum; we classed ourselves as naval stores farmers. That's the way we got classified, and that exempted us from some things, you know. And tree farmers. But the program really helped in stabilizing naval stores.

HKS: Was it after the war that you got really involved in lumber and pulp and so forth?

HL: I guess you could say that. We had always been in the lumber business. In fact I saw a report here where my grandfather had shipped in 1908 fourteen by fourteens to Jacksonville, from a place down below Fargo at Council. So we had been off and on and we had that tract and we had dealt with these peckerwood mills, and that's about all we had around here. All the bigger mills were out around here, they couldn't bring these smaller logs into the mill and then make the slab piles and the sawdust and bark piles, they didn't have any market for any of this.

We would use those little mills, and I would sell that lumber. Then later on I brought them into the plant here and had a planer mill and then we would separate it. We had a sorter, and we'd separate what we'd make, mostly dimension, we had some boards but mostly dimension. We'd make good quality because these turpentine trees, you know, you'd slow the growth down by turpentinizing and your grain would be dense most all the time. It was good quality, no size to it to speak of. Then we would dress that and ship it and just one thing led to another until the development of the debarker. Then we'd put that in and put in a bigger mill. Now we'd bring our logs in and we'd go out nearly about a hundred miles from Valdosta; certainly seventy-five is no problem. We have good road system here, and we'd bring them in. Now 30 percent of our sales from our lumber operation are by-products that we used to hire people to burn during the night and during the weekend.

HKS: What affects the market for posts and piling, the overall economy?

HL: Overall economies. However, in the pole business, utilities, telephone and electricity, it's been fairly steady. I'd say it slows down

in periods where housing starts slow down because they use a good many in the distribution of poles. We are not producing the bigger poles that the utilities did use. They're using now concrete and metal and other things. Our distribution poles out to the individual houses and places like that has been fairly steady. The price of cattle affects your fence posts business considerably. And so the market is really up and down, it's not very stable. We've been in it a long time and we have a marketing set-up. We started off where we were doing business with brokers and that we discontinued because we wanted to get closer to the market.

HKS: How far do you ship most of your stuff?

HL: Florida is a great market. They say that Florida is a user and not a producer, and being in Georgia we are sitting right here on top of the Florida market. We can produce here in Valdosta and we can leave here early in the morning and be in any part of Florida in that day. That's working out well with us. We have a plant in Tennessee that ships into Ohio and Indiana and Illinois and West Virginia and up that area, but here in Valdosta about five hundred miles in pretty well every direction. I'd say generally our biggest market is south of us. Florida has not been a producer of lumber, it's been dropping off all the time. Poles the same way, so Florida is becoming a bigger state. They're not really encouraging industry and so I think our market is developing more and more south of us. But generally five hundred miles will take care of it. We have shipped to Maine. And we're doing some export business.

HKS: Jacksonville, where do you ship?

HL: We do out of Fernandina, we have out of Jacksonville, we do a little out of Brunswick, we do some out of Mobile, we do some out of Savannah.

HKS: Is the company still involved in land acquisition?

HL: Yes sir, we do not say no. We buy from time to time but we're not buying as many tracts now as we have in the past. It's mostly filling out where we have a tract that comes on the market that's contiguous to what we have and we still look at it and buy. Where we used to buy eight and ten thousand acres a year, we're down now to fifteen hundred, two thousand acres ordinarily.

HKS: You sell any land?

HL: We are contemplating that because we have a good bit of land that we have accumulated over the years that's in the city limits or joining the city limits of some of these smaller towns that we think that we ought to sell. Probably the demand is there, and we ought to take that money and put in it our reforestation and maybe other lands.

HKS: So it's more urbanizing.

HL: All the time. We get more and more people to move to south Georgia and north Florida retiring from the north and south of us, and I think we're going to see more and more of that. These towns are getting bigger. Valdosta has tremendous growth.

HKS: You must have been approached or thought about selling the whole company to Weyerhaeuser or Georgia Pacific or Union Camp at some time.

HL: We knew the McGowins, all of them, we know some of the children.

HKS: Molpus.

HL: Yes sir, and Tom Deweese, knew them, and most of these companies. Knew the Willard Walker crowd that sold out to Willamette. I was working with the Southern Pine Association officers when the West Coast people started coming in the South and started talking about buying this land. I saw the family organizations sell out and merge and take stock and all of that. So I've enjoyed a, what would you say, a period of time that all of that has come about.

I remember going to the Great Southern Lumber Company and I remember when they started planting over that way and the Dicksons over in Alabama, the Fredrickburg crowd and the Harrigans of Scotch Lumber Company, Perpetual Forests in Florida, and all the turpentine people who owned land. Nearly about everyone of the turpentine people that we knew that owned any land, as soon as the prices picked up a little bit, they sold out. So I've been exposed to all of that.

HKS: You were going to tell me the story about the turpentine companies selling out, and we got on other things. This might be a good time to finish this.

HL: Just about all the turpentine people that's coming along, the families did not necessarily follow them into turpentine. It was a unique sort of business. Most of the families wanted a better life maybe and they studied other things, and got into other lines of business. So if any of them had any land when the pulp and paper mills gave them the opportunity of getting ten dollars, fifteen dollars an acre, they sold out and took that money and then they pretty well retired. Only a very few kept any land. The operators that were leasing land sort of deteriorated. The paper mills were in there and all and you just couldn't lease it for what we had been leasing it for, so they deteriorated. Labor was harder to get from World War II on, and then you had the Vietnam War and the Korean War and all of that, it made the labor difficult to get. So most people that this timber business has revolved around got rid of it. Now you're seeing doctors and lawyers and other people look at some of this farmland that they plant trees on and get a return, and maybe it's coming back around to that to some extent. Nearly all the families that I was in contact with and worked with in the Southern Pine Association, Forest Farmers Association, American Turpentine Farmers Association, or any of them have pretty well sold out. We have gradually gotten our land base up. I don't know what John W. told you but we have 207 thousand acres that we are trying to grow the maximum amount of timber on.

HKS: Your grandfather and your father and your generation, and Johnny and Robert and they have children coming along, you're looking at this as maintaining the family.

HL: That's been my hope all the time, to keep this as a family controlled company. Now whether we can or not under the tax laws and everything, I don't know. But we've done everything that we could hopefully, and we're looking at that from the standpoint of being a land based company and going that route. Now as far as the operating companies, which I'm sure John told you about Langdale Industries which is more or less an operating company.

HKS: Very little. I want to talk more about the companies.

HL: Now that might be possible that we ought to be if not a public, to some extent, corporation, maybe we ought to go more to something to bring in our managers so that they will participate in any profit that we'd have in the operating company. But the land companies I would like to see in family control, right on and on. That's been my desire, and I think that would be John's too.

HKS: I'm impressed, this office was built in 1946?

HL: This office was built in 1951, we moved here.

HKS: Most companies would have a new office by now, but you're satisfied with this beautiful room you're in and all the rest. Georgia Pacific built a 50-story building in Atlanta, and this is what companies do, you see, but you haven't felt that need.

HL: We've been buying land and putting and taking all our money and we have lived conservatively and our families live conservatively and we haven't spent money. I always thought it was sort of a waste to have too big an office, and we made money in our manufacturing plants and in our forests operations, and we just haven't done it. I don't know whether you've been to our other office here.

HKS: No I haven't.

HL: It was built later than this one, and you have to go in there while you're here. It's a well operating business but it's not elaborate. We haven't really stood out here that we had money to spend. I grew up in a time that we had several families here in Valdosta who had made money in cotton, they'd made money in lumber, they'd made money in naval stores, they'd made money in banking maybe, and most of them had spent it or lost it. My thinking was that just don't get out here and start waving flags and spending money and all that.

We want to be here and known as conservationist, original environmentalists, and trying to improve our land and trying to furnish good employment. I get great pleasure out of some of the employees we've got here, and black families that I've known them and I knew their family. They tell me they could get more money if they did this or that, but say Mr. Harley, "I've been out here for so many years and I've raised seven children and I haven't missed a single payroll." And we have never shut down, we just keep operating. It might not be the best business

practice but we might slow down a little but we keep operating, we're pretty steady employers.

HKS: Does the state regulate the way you reforest or not?

HL: No sir. No sir. We have no regulation about that now.

HKS: So if you burn slash, what you do is a decision you make as a land manager. There is no requirement to do something.

HL: We make it as a land manager. We've had management plans, and we try to grow the maximum amount of timber and then we try to grow timber that will go into lumber and poles rather than just on a pulpwood rotation. We do not prepare the site and plant our land unnecessarily. We'd rather not do that. We'd rather get natural reproduction. But we've got some land where we had longleaf where you can't get natural reproduction. We've taken some of our longleaf sites, and we've clearcut them and spent money on the site and planted slash, and planted some loblolly, improved seedlings, and that's doing well. And we're growing. I feel like in many instances, we've got land that is a better site that we're growing a cord or better per acre per year. In fact I know that we've got some that was at one time or other that could have been farmland that we grow two cords per acre per year. But I'll say generally speaking on a whole lot of land we're not doing that well.

You know Georgia has been a leader in state-wide fire protection, and that was the problem when I got out of school. We did not have any fire protection except what we did with a pine top or a shovel or with one of these flats. We'd have a few of us would have those five gallon back pumps, and we had to get fire protection. So we formed TPOs and the government worked with us on that and we got a reimbursement of about a third of the money we spent. We would take in our neighbors, the neighbors to get tractors.

HKS: Did you say GPO? Georgia...?

HL: Timber, TPO. Timber Protective Organization. And so that was a big help. Then I worked with some insurance companies to see if we could get money. We were approved as foresters that would appraise their land for them and they would go ahead and loan 50 percent of what we said it was worth, and that was a big help until the banks got in on loaning money and all that so the credit's better. And then I guess markets. I think here in Valdosta and this area that we have got markets now for nearly all our species of trees and any size. I'm proud of the fact that we've got good fire protection and good markets, and I relate that to what I saw in Germany that I think we're practicing good forestry here. We are furnishing employment for a lot of people both in the woods and in the plants. I want to say that the income from this area and this country, 50 percent of it comes from forestland and eventual manufacturing of that product. So I think that we've made a lot of progress and I think it will even be better in the future.

HKS: When you got out of the naval stores business with trees with the scars on it, is fire protection less important now than it was? The trees are less flammable.

HL: That's right, it's less flammable. I guess it was very, very important to have some fire protection then. We'd weed around the tree and we'd have more control burning, and we had people who were experts at that and actually didn't mind getting out there and doing and start in the afternoon and let it burn until twelve o'clock at night. Now you don't have those people. You've got to pay them by the hour, and they're not that dedicated to something and it's more difficult, it's more expensive to have control burning. We're doing less and less controlled, prescribed burning. We're building up fuels that we could have a catastrophe like we did in 1955 when 90,000 acres burned in one fire down here on Superior Pine Products Company's land, a little of ours but most of theirs.

HKS: Was that an intensive enough fire to kill the trees?

HL: Kill the trees, and they harvested what they could and then had to reseed it and replant it.

HKS: What's the rotation from the pine I see out here?

HL: We like to say that we're on a thirty, thirty-five year rotation, but the paper mill will tell you they're probably on a twenty-three year rotation. We plant our trees in twelve foot rows. By the way I didn't say that we don't plant unless it's absolutely necessary. We've got 80,000 acres of planted forests that we thought was not growing, and we didn't think there was a possibility of natural regeneration. The rest of the land, which would be 127,000 acres, we think that we're pretty well stabilized on natural reproduction. So what we do, we go in and thin our trees as quick as we can get pulpwood or fence posts out of it. After we thin it the first time we do it again, and we thin it a little lighter than most papermills would, then we go in and thin it again in six or seven years. And we probably have three thinnings that we won't get much out of except pulpwood and fence posts and maybe a few small logs, chip and saw we would call it. Then the next time would be chip and saw and poles and all. We'd go over the same tract of land maybe until we get that crop trees at thirty-five years old maybe five times. We're able to do that around here. Our road system is good, our trucks we can do that with. And our mechanical equipment is so much better than what it used to be.

HKS: Are you waiting with expectation or concern about the Bush Administration making its determination on the definition of wetlands?

HL: I sure am. I've been disturbed about it because you know nearly about every county has got somebody in it now with the ASCS office that tell you whether it's wetlands or not. They look at an aerial photograph and tell you whether it's wetlands or not. We're certainly not clearing up any wetlands, we do cut timber in wetlands. We're so happy that we're getting started on some of these areas that we have not been able to cut anything on, those so-called wetlands, by cutting hardwoods and they're

sprouting and we're planting some hardwoods now. We're also getting some loblolly pine and slash pine seedlings, seeds that will fall in those areas. Yes, we're worried about the definition of wetlands. Now Bush in his last explanation of that, an order that came out, was a little bit not as stringent as it was to begin with. I think Bush is right about that, if I understand right what he's saying. There's so many of these things come out now, I don't get to the final end of it. You know, we've got some wetlands here that's probably our best timber growing lands, because a lot of our wetlands are wet only during January and February, maybe a little bit in March. If you do get wet later on in the summer it won't last very long, especially with the trees and practicing forestry like we try to do, it'll use that water.

HKS: I haven't studied it, but I understand that the problem with wetlands is that you can't change the species composition.

HL: I think that's right. As far as we know we have not had any problem with that. And we do have a problem with these county places where they think that if you can go in there and cut timber that you might be going to change it into agricultural. There's nothing that can be further from my mind. Now we have stabilized pretty well between four and five thousand acres of cultivatable land, that's our best land. And we plant; we've got a big tobacco allotment, tobacco carries our farming operation. We've got a peanut allotment. Those two crops are your cash crops. Cotton is sort of hit or miss and then corn is difficult to make any money, soybeans are difficult, or oats and rye and wheat we can't make any money. We make a little bit on cattle, not much. So we're not taking any land for agriculture.

HKS: Should I talk to you about agricultural land or should I talk to Billy about that?

HL: I'm responsible for the agricultural land.

HKS: I read somewhere that Billy's been very active in tobacco.

HL: Billy? He was on the board of the tobacco program in Durham for a couple of years, but Billy has never been active really in the farming operation.

HKS: We'll come back to agriculture then. So the only regulations really on land management are federal? Other than county zoning ordinances for agricultural land and so forth.

HL: When you say federal, you mean on federal land?

HKS: No, well wetlands, that's a federal.

HL: Yeah, right, right.

HKS: And the pollution problems from your preservatives, those are federal laws. The state is not involved.

HL: Well the state is environmentally. They're strong, they work with the general federal laws on that.

HKS: So there are state laws to comply with.

HL: Yes sir.

HKS: On land management?

HL: Not on land management any more than a tie in with the federal law on the agriculture, changing land for a different purpose. So we hadn't had any trouble, you might say, from the state.

HKS: You don't have wilderness issues, you have don't have rare and endangered species, or do you have rare and endangered species here?

HL: No.

HKS: So it's wetlands and pollution.

HL: Right.

HKS: Those are the two issues that affect you. It's probably going to get worse rather than better.

HL: Right, because it's hitting the federal lands and state lands first, more so. We do have where you're talking about the woodpeckers and all of that, now you're talking about the spotted owl out west, but you know we're talking about the redheaded pileated woodpecker over in Thomasville in older growth timber. But we haven't had that problem because we're not growing older growth timber. Now you've got some plantations over there that just keep it and keep it and keep it, and that's a home of the redheaded pileated woodpecker.

HKS: When does a tree become old?

HL: Probably seventy-five or eighty years.

HKS: From a management point of view does it make sense to you to keep timber that long?

HL: No. I hear talk about one place over there that this fellow says that he's able to sell some of his logs, that he has a special, small sawmill. Saw off some of that and it's just plain hardwood, you know, that he sells to somebody up in the northeast that wants some of that and he gets a tremendous price out of him. Now he might have enough to do that, but I wouldn't say that that's the way for us to go.

HKS: Does Georgia have a yield tax, or have ad valorem....

HL: We have ad valorem tax and we just now passed a law that we're going to pay a tax on what we produce off the land. We did have our ad valorem tax, we had to pay each year on the value of our land and the value of the timber on the land. Now it's changed and we have Amendment Number 3

and it starts here in January that we're going to pay so much for the timber that we sell and sever from our land. Then we're going to pay on the basis of just the value of the land, not the timber. Which we think is going to be better if we get all the details worked out.

HKS: Your commercial thinnings will be taxed.

HL: Right. Everything that brings in money in.

HKS: So this fellow that's growing these eighty-year old trees, he's going to be better off when it goes to the yield tax, severance tax.

HL: That's right. Would be if he got that market. That's right. Johnny who you talked to is keeping up with that for the Georgia Forestry Association. The rest of us have spent our time with the Georgia Forestry Association and Forest Farmers, and so that's his detail now. But you know I told somebody, I said I guess the things that worried me as much as anything in life is that taxes, taxes on land has been a problem every since day one when they were ten cents an acre and it's just been creeping up all the time. Now our taxes are on up there, this ad valorem taxes are three and a half, four dollars and some of them even higher than that per acre. Then the environmental laws that worried us, and then of course your labor unions, which we really haven't had that much trouble with but is always in the background.

HKS: Sure. I don't know how to talk about the various companies. Langdale Timber Company, Langdale Woodlands, J.W. Langdale, Langdale Industries. To me they are names. You know why they exist, why they're separate, why some of them merged? John yesterday talked about how he helped with his law training, helped bring all these companies together into a single company, and then they spread out again.

HL: That's right. I guess the best way for me to explain that is to show you a little [long pause].

HKS: If you have an organizational chart, I guess that's what you're looking for.

HL: I've got it right here. The Langdale Company is the main corporation. That's who files our tax return, the Langdale Company. The Langdale Company owns Langdale Industries. We've got Jim Respass as president of Langdale Industries, and Johnny Langdale is president of the Langdale Company. We've got profit sharing with all of our people, pretty well, except those that might belong to the union. If we have one organization that's in union we've got a pension plan, and we're not in the profit sharing business for that. We've got several corporations like Langdale Tire Company or Industrial Saw Works, just sort of started up because we had to sharpen our saws and we wanted the best equipment that money could buy and we wanted the best people. When we did that somebody wanted us to do theirs for them, and the next thing you knew we were seeing 50 percent was outside and 50 percent was us, and now it's about 75 percent outside and 25 percent with us. We've got a plant up toward Atlanta and here. If they make a profit they share in the profit and we go from that standpoint.

We've got Greenleaf Wood Products which is wholesale, we're buying and selling, and then we've got Langdale Forest Products which is sawmills and the treatment plants. Then we've got Langboard which I want you to see while you're here, over in Brooks County where we're making OSB. We were the first company in the southeast, first one in Georgia. Then we've got Southern Remanufacturing, we call it Southern Reman, and we take our lower grade lumber and we cut out the defects and we make other things out of it, and we do specialized sawing, and that needed to be under the overall company. And we have that separate. Then we've got Southland Forest Products where we're dealing with individual pulpwood producers, loggers and all that, which is a little bit better from a liability standpoint, and we make all our producers have workmen's compensation, but we are self insurers here in our main company. But we can work those things a little better that way. Langdale Fuel Company, we sell propane gas and specialized oil and some gasoline, that works out pretty good.

Now separate from all of this, we've got J.W. Langdale Company, which was the part that we had down there below Fargo that my grandfather had. Didn't have much land but that was a separate company. We've had that all the time. Then we've got another company right with it which totals about 30,000 acres, both of us, Langdale Woodmen's Incorporated. Then we've got Langdale Timber Company, and I'll show you how we do that. My father left some of the land that he owned, he did not own much stock in Langdale Company. We worked all that around, and we've got H. Langdale Trustee which is distributed, not to his children except I share in it, and then his grandchildren. And then we've got the Langdale Foundation and then we've got Langdale Ford Company. We have A Southern Wheels which is some of our truckers, we thought that would be better separated. We have Langdale Foreign Sales, which we have a tax advantage by doing it that way. So that's really the way we did some of that.

This is a map of our local holdings. Right here is our plant site, all our lands around here, most all of it's within fifty miles of each other. That piece of 5,000 acres over in Glen County just before you get to Jeckyl Island. And you see, our land, the yellow is the Langdale Company and then I own some, no this is H. Langdale, Sr., the blue, this is the H. Langdale Trustee Trust, and then you've got some lease land that we've got, thirty-five year lease along on, and then you've got the J. W. Langdale Company which is here. Then your Langdale Woodlands are here.

HKS: Is this Fargo right here?

HL: Fargo is right here, this is going on down to Jacksonville, this is Fargo. This is the Fargo land right here.

HKS: Why haven't you expanded more into Florida?

HL: We had opportunity. We thought that this is where the paper mill is down here, and maybe we should have, but that land was not quite as productive, really and truly this is some of the more productive land. This is some that we had a good while, you see we've got little holes here and there that we buy up when the opportunity presents itself. But you'd be amazed. Now this piece right here, I'd say I started buying that

in 1938, and bought fifteen different people out to get it that solid all the way to the river there.

HKS: Which river is this?

HL: This is the Willacoochee River coming all the way down, goes into the Suwannee River and goes into the Gulf.

HKS: And this paper mill, who has the mill?

HL: Well right now it belongs to PCA, Packaging Corporation of America, which is a Tenneco Company. It was a National Container of Jacksonville.

HKS: What river is it on there?

HL: It's on the Willacoochee River, it comes on down here and it goes in...

HKS: Chattahoochee River I've heard of, but I haven't heard of this.

HL: Well the Willacoochee is not as big a river but it comes on down this river right here. It comes on into the Willacoochee River just, it goes in there and right, I'll bet you not a hundred yards in Florida. They regret that, they wish it had come on in to Georgia. Florida has raised a sand about that a little bit in there you know, and it comes on in right here. So the paper mill is on that. Well we won't have any other paper mill in this area. The other paper mill is down here in this part of Florida.

HKS: All those different types of ownerships, I guess having John in the company was very handy. There's a lot of legal questions.

HL: John was a great blessing to me from the day he got back in from the war. Of course he practiced law and he was busy some of the time. Finally I talked him out of that and my father came down in '51, when we moved down here. He wasn't really interested in a lot of the things we were doing but he sure did like to be down here where things were going on. John came down here later. And I can attribute many of our trades to the fact that when things got hot and you could trade, I could take John and he and I could go and we could go ahead and trade. You've got to get a law firm and they're going to put you off and this and that, but John was a great blessing to me and this company.

HKS: All these different companies. This is an internal breakdown because you said the Langdale Company pays taxes for everybody?

HL: Well not necessarily pay the taxes, but the Langdale Company pays its pro-rated share. The Langdale Company is the holding company of all others except now those I named that were separate, J. W. Langdale Company, Langdale Woodlands, Langdale Company.

HKS: And they are separate for historic reasons?

HL: Well, that's right. I guess that that was done several years ago, and we just haven't changed them. There's some merit in not having everything in one basket.

HKS: I want to discuss your agricultural lands. Is there more that we should talk about the various companies? You've listed them in terms of what you do. You're making oriented strand board now. Is this something we should get on the record is the actual manufacturing processes. We've talked a little bit about poles, and about naval stores, but all the other things you make today, we haven't discussed. Would you like to go through the companies?

HL: When I got back in from school we found out that we didn't have fire protection, you couldn't borrow money, and you didn't have any markets. Our whole theme out of all this is how can we make our land more profitable. We were buying land, it took money, you borrowed money, and it's hard to pay back. Especially if you were in the hands of the factors, it was really hard to pay back. So what I've been trying to do is to utilize our wood to the highest value possible.

After naval stores being our main crop, we got into the pulpwood business by the fact that pulp mills moved south. I had great respect for any forester or any landowner trying to grow trees that didn't have a pulpwood market, because I don't know how you could really do it without it costing you a lot of money. So that helped our forest practices, it paid a lot of our expenses. I remember that I would take a hundred dollars every Saturday morning up to the bank, we owed the bank money to pay for land that way. So I guess that it was our desire to improve our land and grow more wood, to make it more profitable, in order to buy more land that we needed markets.

We'd been in the lumber business on the peckerwood deal, but that's all we could do on that. We didn't see building a big mill at that time. I guess the first thing that we did was to have a centralized naval stores plant right here on this property. And we had at one time 110 thousand drums of rosin on this yard, more than anywhere else in the world. That was a big operation, and it worked out fine because we could keep our records on a weekly basis, how much gum we could produce and what our expenses were and that helped us.

Then the next thing we did was to put in the most modern wood pressure treatment plant that we could. We got an engineer from Pittsburgh who was well known named Grant Shipley and built our plant here and got into the pressure treatment business, starting off with poles and pilings, and then lumber and fence posts and any product that anybody wanted treated. So that was good, that stood us well. Then after that we were still bringing in the lumber from the small sawmills and separated it, on a lumber separator, then run it through the planer mill. And about that time the debarker was coming into use, and that was a great blessing to us. That really improved the marketing situation because our chips; we sell now more than a thousand cords of chips a week.

HKS: You chip them yourself.

HL: All of our chips go to PCA down here in Clyattville, eight miles from here. I might deviate right now and tell you that we did business with the National Container Corporation, it was a paper mill built in Jacksonville in 1938. They converted an old fertilizer plant, a concrete fertilizer plant down near the river. This fellow's name was Sam Kipmis, he was a Russian Jew. He came to this country without anything and he started making cardboard boxes. We started off trying to do business with him and we found out that was impossible. He got somebody to run his wood instead of him and we got along fine with them, and we were shipping wood to them regularly. Sam Kipmis got to be a good businessman after he made a little bit of money down there. I enjoyed doing business with him and he and I became friends from a standpoint that he and I could do business without calling in all the lawyers and everything, and we understood each other.

That mill was built in '38, and then about 1950, '51, he started talking about another mill. He was really doing good. I told him that we would work with him, and we would furnish him his wood, but he didn't have any money. So we got together, and his crew came up here and decided on this spot to have enough fall going down the river that they could have the ponding areas and that would aerate the water more and that was the only place he could have it. We guaranteed them that we would furnish them so many cords of wood over fifteen years, and then we would have the exclusive rights to the territory and work with him on pulpwood procurement. So we did that and that caused me a lot of concern in wet weather. If we didn't live up to that contract they had a right to come on our land and get that much wood. Anyway, he got his crowd in New York, that's where he started, in Long Island. They came down here in an airplane with about fifteen financial people out of New York City.

They got here one morning, and we rode them around, had lunch in the woods and every one of them said they saw more trees than they'd seen all the rest of their lives put together. They were dusty and dirty, and we didn't have the paved roads then. He needed twenty-five million dollars to build that mill, but he owed six million dollars down here on the mill that he had built because it didn't cost him that much to build it back in the '30s. So he borrowed thirty-one million dollars, and built this mill and we had the contract with him for fifteen years. Then he sold out later to Owens Illinois. Owens Illinois and we worked together and then Owens Illinois sold out to this K. K. R. crowd you know, junk bond deal. Then they sold the forest products end of that to Great Northern Nekoosa. Great Northern Nekoosa was taken over by Georgia Pacific, and Georgia Pacific sold the Valdosta mill and this operation around here to Tenneco which is a subsidiary of Packaging Corporation of America, and that's what we've got now.

All through these changes and all that we haven't missed a week of selling them pulpwood and pulp chips. So that's been mutually advantageous. I guess that's what's really added to us that we worked together and that's helped us from a standpoint of the development of forest practices around here. We have a few smaller landowners that have cut their trees and not do anything about it, but they don't really own the land very long. Somebody's going to buy it, because you can't own land unless you're getting something out of it. You'll see very little

land around here that's not either in the process of being reforested or growing wood, or developing it for some kind of purpose.

All of that tied in to us going ahead, and then we said we're not using hardwood. And I would beg every paper mill to take hardwood. Brunswick would not come over this far and get it, and the mill in Jacksonville wasn't using it. Union Camp was too far. I guess from the time I was in forestry school until a few years ago, we sat back when southern pine came into being a raw material for southern pine plywood, and we said our timber wouldn't fit that. So we had the timber that would fit the oriented strand board business. We jumped on that and we built this plant over there and we intend some improvements. I want you to see it, we're proud of the plant, we're making a superior quality. The price has not been good because every since we've been operating housing starts have been down. March the 9th of next year will be four years we've been operating. So that ties in, and that gives me great satisfaction that we've taken these areas and we're going to be able to use all the species. I have said for many years that oftentimes the best silvicultural practice is utilization.

HKS: I see samples of the strand board, and I'm sure it's more complicated than it looks. I remember Harry Merlo, Louisiana Pacific, said half a dozen years ago that LP is going to put a major commitment into this.

HL: They have to.

HKS: So there's a lot of competition. A lot of folks are making this. What problems did you have when you started? Did you use any kind of a tree?

HL: No, we have not used the hard hardwood such as oak and hickory, beech.

HKS: You said you were planting some hardwood somewhere. Is that used for pulp or is that used for OSB?

HL: For pulp. We planted some hardwoods like sawtooth oak tree for producer of acorns for deer management. We are planting some yellow poplar, we planted some sweet gum. We find that some of our gums grow faster than our pine trees. We're using all the gums, our sweet red gum, our black gum, our tupelo gum, our water gum, we're using yellow poplar. We're using about any species that we grow down here except hickory and oak. There are plants that are using both hickory and oak.

HKS: There are five or six samples here of OSB, different sizes, one has some numbers on it. Do you see something different in these. They really look like all the same thing?

HL: They are the same thing, the same mixing. Now what we do is three layers, see, we put in one layer that's facing say east and west, one north and south, and another east and west.

HKS: This looks a little bit different, is that....

HL: It's the same thing, basically the same thing. But that's the one being commonly used right there for subflooring and sheeting and roofing.

HKS: What's happened to the plywood industry, this...

HL: It's going down. The price on plywood, you know, is really different. I was looking at it yesterday. Look a here, here's the present price of OSB, which takes the place of plywood and here's the price of plywood. You see it's up here about two-twenty, and this right here is up about one-thirty-five, one-thirty-seven I think to be exact, say one-forty. But one-forty to two-twenty is eighty dollars a thousand square feet difference. We've got contractors now and architects that say this is better for where you use it for than plywood. Now I think the reason this is holding up is on account of the plywood mills are shutting down on the west coast, and we don't really have that many over here that are operating.

HKS: Yes. Of course plywood you can paint. It has a smoother surface than this.

HL: I think we're coming to that. We're going to have an overlayment, we're going to have a veneer, we're going to have paper, we're going to have a vinyl. I think that's our next step over there. I think that tongue-in-groove is in order. I think the sanding is there. And I think you're going to be able to do most anything.

HKS: The tongue-in-groove, that would really make tighter joints.

HL: We can do that now, but we've just got to put that equipment in.

HKS: Are these cross sections of the same tree, eleven and eleven years old?

HL: That's not the same tree. That's unmanaged and this is managed. And look at this one right here. This one right here is something like seventy-five or eighty years old. Now see here, this is the same size as eleven years.

HKS: This grows back as big in sixteen years and that's about fourteen inches. So back in the turpentine days...

HL: Oh that would have been great. That happens to be a loblolly pine.

HKS: Let's go back and talk about your school days with Marckworth as dean because that's an interesting story.

HL: While I was up there we didn't have much of a building. Gordon Marckworth set me up to it, and I was the one that had the new idea. I went to the chairman of the board of regents to get a new school. Governor Rivers was from right over here, twenty miles, and I happened to know him, and our families had known each other, and I went to see him. They finally got the school on account of that. But we had a good school, we didn't have many people there. Gordon Marckworth I felt was a mighty

good dean. I think he saw the opportunity and at that time, you know, the West Coast looked like that was the place to be to practice forestry. Now it looks like all of our West Coast friends in about the 1960s decided that down here was the place to come, so things have changed.

HKS: The changing situation in the old growth timber could have a big influence on that. When I went to forestry school we studied old growth forestry. We read about loblolly pine and all of that stuff. I worked for the Forest Service, we laid out clear cuts in forty acre blocks, high lead logging and took out the old growth. But that's changing.

HL: Yes sir. We're not involved with any land that the Forest Service owns except this forest down here at Olustee called Osceola between Lake City and Jacksonville. We don't get any wood off of that. All of our wood is coming from private industry. Now there is a national forest down below Tallahassee but we don't get anything off of that. Apalachicola.

HKS: Those are mainly wildlife-recreation, they're not used for timber production.

HL: They are used for timber production but they are tying in wildlife and recreation. That's another thing that we've done over the years. We were always looking for some way to increase our income from the land. One way was to have cattle. We had cattle on our land, and we worked that out and it's got to be impossible to do that with those kinds of cattle now, with fences and the liability and hiring people to look after them and all. You've really got to burn your woods when you've got cattle. We got the idea that we could lease our lands and develop these recreational areas where they could hunt and fish. That gives me great satisfaction to see the people, the people and men and their wives and their children out on our land. We give them certain areas to camp in and then we lease it to them. We've got something like 146 different leases on all our land. They are great conservationists, and they are planting feed for game.

HKS: These are hunting clubs.

HL: Hunting clubs. The groups of people; some of them will be just two people and some of them are twenty people. But it's working out good and I hope that develops because the deer population has really come back.

HKS: Why is that?

HL: Getting rid of the screw worms is the main reason. When they got rid of the screw worms, my father was on the Fish and Game Commission. They brought down the Wisconsin deer to South Georgia, Texas deer to north Georgia, and they put those out and you know they protected them for a while. It's unbelievable how they have expanded and grown and taken care of themselves.

HKS: Do you have beaver this far south?

HL: We sure do. I live out west of town, we've got beaver there. We've got a creek there that's dammed by beaver that is a blessing right now because we don't have any water. Most of the time it's a hindrance.

HKS: Before we took a break for coffee we were talking about oriented strand board. How does a company like yours learn about new products? You're involved in trade associations, and magazines come in the mail, but how do you decide, "let's look into this?"

HL: First we took a look at what we had and what we were going to grow. We said this looks like a product we're going to have the raw material for. We're going to have the raw material on our land and it's going to help us that way. Then we do a lot of reading and we do a lot of talking, and we talk to all these people. One thing leads to another. That's the way I got into the wood preserving business, that's the way we got more into the lumber business and talking to manufacturers and more into OSB business.

HKS: But these are major, or significant capital investments.

HL: Yes sir.

HKS: You have to demonstrate the viability. I don't know if you borrow money or if you have your own assets that you can build on. Strand board plant, that's a major capital investment, and you could buy IBM stock instead. You're making a lot of decisions here, a lot of money is involved. Do you have enough personnel so that you can make your decisions internally, or do you bring in consultants?

HL: No, we bring in consultants. We've been trying to do something with these products all the time, and we work with paper mills and we work with other people in joint ventures. But we finally decided that we'd go it alone and we decided this is what we ought to be in and then we hired consultants. They made a prospectus for us and all that, and we decided that's what we ought to go in. It was a big investment. Before that time, yes, we had pretty well our own capital, we didn't borrow any money, so that when we built that we did borrow the money. At the time we borrowed it, it cost us money too, it cost us more, now it's more reasonable because it was based on the prime rate. That's the first time that we've gone into a major operation with borrowed money. Otherwise we're using our own capital. We've been very conservative and we haven't paid much dividends through the years, and we had accumulated the money to do these other things.

HKS: I would suppose a graduate of the Harvard Business School would be critical of not leveraging your assets.

HL: Right, right, and we've got some people here that are critical. The fellow you just met has been with us twenty-one years, he's extraordinary smart, he's one of eleven children. He went to Georgia Tech and graduated in Industrial Management. And then he went to Georgia State and he graduated in accounting and passed the CPA, and when he got here he went to Valdosta State and got his masters in business management. He's tried to improve himself, and of course that's what he's talking about all the time. That we ought to go public on certain things, we ought to leverage things, and we ought to get money from other things. It worried me when things got tough here about a year ago, and we owed money

because I'd owed money but I had had enough money put aside somewhere else to pay it, I didn't have myself in a jam. But that's the way they want to talk, you're right about that. [laughter] Absolutely. That's carried me pretty fast.

HKS: But that same person fifteen years ago might have said you should have gone over to Union Camp or Weyerhaeuser, St. Regis, and cashed in on your land.

HL: Yeah, right.

HKS: But you see this business as more than the bottom line?

HL: That's right. It's a pleasure and it's our life. It's all we know.

HKS: If you had all that money in the bank, then what would you do?

HL: That's right. You know I've said that many times, we'd ruin all these grandchildren if they're coming along if they had enough money. I'm afraid that when I die that they're going to want more and more money, and you can't control things like that.

HKS: We did interviews with the McGowins about the same issue. Family owned company, and they didn't pay dividends, and they had some major stockholders that lived in California that couldn't buy a new car every ten years. That was really one of the primary impulses to sell to Union Camp at the time.

HL: I remember when they sold. I knew all those McGowins, I know Greeley now. You know they didn't think they had anybody to run it. Floyd had two sons, Greeley and the other one is Floyd. Floyd has been running the logging operations over there for Union Camp, and Greeley is in charge of all their land management and everything, and Greeley is an outstanding person.

HKS: I know Greeley, he's retired now isn't he?

HL: I think he retired too young, but I guess you've got to with some of these corporations. But you're right about that. That will happen as it comes down layer after layer. Now I've been careful about nepotism, and I've tried to put it on that everybody's going to earn their right to be here or get gone, one of the two. I've only got two of this generation coming in. John has one boy, I've got him here, and he's showing me that he's got the ability to get along with people, he's got the imagination and he'll work. He is not as detailed as Billy's son Bob that graduated from Georgia Tech as an engineer. I said well now there's only one thing wrong about that, and that is you ought to be a business man engineer. And he'd rather engineer something, and he doesn't want to get into that detail of the money making end of that, but he loves that engineering, which we need.

He's engineering something over there at the OSB plant that was costing up four and a half million dollars. It's a new wrinkle that we're going to waferize the whole tree rather than these thirty-three inch blocks,

you know. All the plants cut them into thirty-three inch blocks and then make wafers out of them. So this is going to be a big improvement. Louisiana Pacific is just doing it too. Harry Merlo, I figure he's going to study it out and do the best thing. Some of the people he's got, they're hard.

I'm hoping that these two boys can carry on, and I'm hoping that we're doing the right thing but you'll never know that because tax laws change and all this. That happens on nearly any piece of land is that you can take any piece of land and sell it and take that money and get greater income than what they're getting out of growing trees, right now. In the long run, I think they're wrong. Now I see that the paper mill in Macon, I've listened to their manager talk, says we don't want any land, we have sold our land. Then he told us how he did it, said they sold it for so many million dollars. Say we eliminated this many people on our payroll. We can buy trees, and with that much money we can draw interest on that and we can pay more money for wood. We don't need to be growing trees. People, companies, other folks can grow trees cheaper than we can. I think that's right, at the moment. But I don't think in the long run that if you don't have some kind of backlog you're going to set yourself in a precarious situation. But that's the way some of them are looking now.

HKS: Maybe the way accountants look at things. I can't see why they can't grow wood as cheap as anybody else. It's fascinating to me. A couple of weeks ago I was in Oregon as a guest of the Starker family, you might have heard of the Starker Tree Farm near Corvallis.

HL: Uh-huh. I've seen that name.

HKS: It's third generation. Their grandfather was a forestry professor at Oregon State. He started buying land during the depression. And they have fifty-eight thousand acres; they just have land, and they're doing very well. Because it's private property and with the demise of the federal timber they get a very good market for their products now. But they have the same concerns that you do about the next generation, tax laws, inheritance tax, ad valorem tax, plus environmental concerns about land being taken away from them. That may happen here, some of the wetlands may be taken.

HL: Yes, in fact we get more and more pressure on some of this. I can see that coming about.

HKS: If the Bush administration defines wetlands in a broader sense so a significant amount of forestland is no longer available for silvicultural practices, will there be lawsuits for taking without just compensation?

HL: I would think so, I would think so. Although, you know what? I'm seeing that some of these people are sort of happy about it. They're going in there and they're cutting the timber off of some of these wetland areas and they say well now I'm not going to get anything out of that wetland, it's going to be a long time, I'd have to spend a lot of money. I just saw in the Florida Times Union today where they're taking on a border tract down there on the St. Johns River, a tributary of the St. Johns River below Jacksonville, and for six thousand

acres they paid eight and a half million dollars. But what really happened is that owner is getting a better price than he could have gotten any other way. So he's going along with it. I know it's a problem. I know, of course, the alternative to some of that is to form a corporation. I read the book @MDUL~@MDUL~Timber and Men@MDNM~, Weyerhaeuser, and I read the @MDUL~Maverick@MDNM~ book of Georgia Pacific, I read the book that Winn Dixie the grocery crowd that lives down there in Jacksonville, @MDUL~Don't Make A&P Mad@MDNM~, and I like all that biography and autobiography and the companies they started, but it's very difficult to keep them going.

HKS: George Weyerhaeuser retired and there's no Weyerhaeuser family member...

HL: His son is coming along, he's not ready yet I guess. I've been with George Weyerhaeuser. I tried to get him to buy this paper mill down here, too. I think he got his feathers ruffled because Georgia Pacific wanted to swap land with him, you know, the mill, they wanted some of the land that the mill had and let them have some that they had further over here toward the Gulf that was about half as good. I kind of think that ruffled George Weyerhaeuser's people, and it would me too. They were taking advantage of that. But I told George Weyerhaeuser over the telephone, I talked to him and I says now, I told him how old I was, I'm going to be seventy-eight years old my next birthday, and I says we hope that we can keep everything going but I don't know. But that you'd be sitting right here in a good position if it did come about.

HKS: Yes.

HL: I knew Lowry Wyatt, did you know him?

HKS: I knew Lowry, yes.

HL: He was a fine person, and he talked George Weyerhaeuser into building this particle board plant up here at Adel right on the highway. I got involved in that a little bit. I wanted to be part of it. But that's the first plant Lowry Wyatt told me that George Weyerhaeuser and the Weyerhaeuser crowd agreed that they didn't have any good understanding about their raw material. We sell our planer mill shavings to him. But all those old companies like that, they've been fascinating to me. See, I was president of the Southern Pine Association, and when you're president you see you start off as second vice president, first vice president, president, and then chairman, and you get to knowing all these people you're working with and these companies.

Up until the time I got there, we were always fighting Douglas-fir wood. We found out that wasn't our problem, our problem was getting people to use wood, and then about that time Willamette started coming over here, of course Weyerhaeuser bought Tom Deweese out in Philadelphia. Of course International Paper Company was over here and they were spreading out. Georgia Pacific was over here. You had some of these other companies, but most all of them would come by here and want to talk about some kind of deal. Even Bill Swindells, he bought that Hunt deal there in Louisiana, you know. So, that's profit.

HKS: What's supply? I'm still intrigued by this paper mill in Macon that says it doesn't need its own wood supply, because it's a major reversal of attitude.

HL: Absolutely. It shocked me. I went up there and I listened to it. We were there for some sort of meeting. But you know Macon is in a very good position for wood. There's a lot of loblolly pine around there, and way back yonder before the war, when we'd have a slow down in business. People would not buy those kinds of woods up there, they'd call those roofers and your grain would be far apart, and they would slow down. They were having 15 percent number three graded lumber when we were having 3 percent down here out of ordinary logs. So they don't really have the competition from lumber companies. And that loblolly pine is a prolific tree.

HKS: That's right.

HL: Australians bought that mill. Flack or Platt or something of that order.

HKS: Fletcher-Challenge? That's New Zealand.

HL: No, that doesn't sound right. But anyway that I would assume that what they're doing is the fact that he's going to make money now, he's going to get that mill paid for and then he's going to sell out. A lot of these mills have got that in mind and are not looking at it for a long term because those executives now are interested in what they're going to get and what benefits they're going to get and what retirement they're going to get.

HKS: That's one of the problems of a publicly owned company, too. You have to pay quarterly dividends.

HL: Yes. And that's where, a lot of times, where they get the money. They quit buying and they start cutting their timber to get that money to pay that dividend. Very interesting. It's a pleasure to talk to you about all these things and you seeing it from another angle.

HKS: I want to follow up on the dividends and the privately held company. All of these companies that we went through on the organizational chart, the families involved own shares. They are stockholders in...

HL: We've got two classes of stock. We've got class A and class B, class B non-voting. Nobody, well I wouldn't say nobody because some of them have got a little bit. My two brothers, and see my sister, John and I are trustees for that, and we've got all the voting stock, so we don't have to get involved in the people that have some stock in this company with the voting part. That's sort of like Ford Motor Company did.

HKS: But I'm thinking of the income distribution. A company doesn't pay dividends to the stock holders, the share holders. You work for the company you draw a salary, but you also have this asset that increases in value.

HL: Right. Under our arrangements with the trust, Langdale Trust stock, we don't owe any money on that and we've got an income coming in there, that they get some income there, and then a smaller dividend. But I think you're absolutely right that sooner or later they're going to want that dividend, because they know that the company's worth more money. Everybody tells them that. I tell them how poor we're doing and how hard it is to make ends meet, but a lot of people think that if you own a hundred acres of land you're independently wealthy. Which is not the case.

HKS: Let's talk a little bit about agriculture. In some of the reading material, one of the magazine articles, maybe it was the @MDUL`Saturday Evening Post@MDNM` article, talked about the tobacco allotment of four hundred acres or three hundred sixty-eight acres might be the largest in the country. Why is that large for a tobacco allotment.

HL: Georgia was later coming in and growing tobacco. We grow flue-cured tobacco and we grow a good grade, it brings a good price. The foreign buyers like our tobacco for their cigarettes. They have a law that they don't want any additives. They want natural tobacco, so they come down here and they hike our price up and we've got a good tobacco market here. Even with all the talk about tobacco being so bad for you. Tobacco is a good cash crop, and we've got our people on the farm that they can make their cash money out of tobacco and then the other crops are sort of incidental that they can grow along and they can make a living. We had too wet a year and a lot of people did not make their quota, but our people did.

We did I think have the biggest quota in Georgia or Florida. But then you know they changed the laws or the rules and regulations, I guess, where if you were individual farmer and you wanted to sell your allotment, you could sell it to somebody else and then they had to move it and put it on their land or whatever. A lot of people did that. We've had two or three that I know about that did more of that. We did a little of it. But we didn't want to get too much bigger. We didn't want to be known as the biggest tobacco grower, really. We kept that sort of quiet. My father would talk about that because he liked farming. Our quota now is five hundred thousand pounds of flue-cured tobacco so I would say it's in the upper eight or ten of Georgia and Florida, maybe more than that. But we've got a farm manager that that's his forte you might say, growing tobacco. He knows how to grow tobacco.

Now peanuts, peanuts are under quota too and that's been good, but you know they've already opened the foreign markets up a little bit and they're going to do more of that I think. And if Mexico can ship peanuts up here, that's going to cut down on what our peanuts are bringing. So I don't know how that will be. But the way we got that quota is the fact that we would buy a little farm next to us and they would have an acre or two and we would consolidate that with ours and then we'd plant, his land might be poorer land and we'd plant that in pine trees, but we'd keep our better land, our tobacco land over here and we'd have it all consolidated. That's the way we got it. By buying land over the years. We didn't buy any tobacco allotment to speak of straight out, it was buying

the land and we got the tobacco allotment or peanut allotment or whatever.

HKS: But the laws are if you wanted to grow more tobacco you still...

HL: You can't grow it. No you can't grow more tobacco. Now you can buy somebody's allotment and grow his allotment. But you can't increase the allotment because they say the allotment this year is so many million pounds in Georgia, this county. They've got all that controlled, and they would say well we're going to raise it 2 percent, state of Georgia wise and that means this county is going to get 2 percent and we'll get 2 percent. But it's controlled.

HKS: This is a federal control.

HL: Federal control.

HKS: Same way for peanuts?

HL: Yes. Now peanuts you can grow some what you call market peanuts, but then you're at the mercy of the market. This year we had some farmers that went ahead and contracted those up right before they planted them, and they got a good price for them. About that time the administration announced they were going to let so many tons come in imported, and the price got like that and everybody that waited but had a contract lost money on it. So I don't know what's going to happen there because all the consumer is fussing about peanut prices being so high, peanut butter and all that. I would think the peanut business is not going to be as good as it has been in the past. But we've got a lot of farmers that have made some money in the peanut business. Because the peanut business you do with machinery and equipment and it doesn't take that many people and you're not worried with the labor costs, and people made money.

HKS: So the capital investment in these expensive tractors is easier to deal with than labor.

HL: Yes sir, yes sir. If you've got the land.

HKS: If you've got the land.

HL: We were farming a little over five thousand acres, and we've cut that down in the last five years to about four thousand acres of cultivatable land. That's tobacco and peanuts and all these other crops. We're just not dependent on it. But it's been an income factor to us.

HKS: One more question about peanuts. I like peanut butter. Are there different kinds? Do you grow one kind of peanuts for peanut butter, one kind of peanuts that you buy in the shell, or do you just grow peanuts?

HL: We grow two kinds of peanuts down here. We call them Spanish peanuts and runner peanuts. Spanish peanuts are a little smaller than the runner. But both of them are used for peanuts, for food, and for peanut oil. Peanut oil, there's a big market for that. A lot of people cook in peanut oil. They say if you fry fish and everything, peanut oil is better. Of

course there are all kinds of other oils now. They're trying to encourage us to plant canola, and canola is an oil that's sold as Puritan oil that has no cholesterol. It's a little bean about, just big enough to see. But we planted some last year, it comes out good. This year it's too dry to plant. But we've got some of our land irrigated because we found that irrigating tobacco will pay off, but some of these other crops, I'm not so sure.

HKS: Did your family acquire this land as agricultural land, is that why you acquired it?

HL: No, no I don't think we ever acquired anything just because it's agricultural land. Maybe we could say that with a piece that joined us or something. But ordinarily we bought it and it came with the forestland. Of course my father used to say that he started off farming and he had farmed back in the '20s and had lost money and he didn't particularly like it. But he had to get in to look after the farms because he said I was going to plant them all in pine trees and he said that will happen when he's gone because farming was difficult, but he loves farming. He likes to talk to farmers.

HKS: Part of my preparation for the interviews was to read the interview we did with Cap Eldredge, maybe twenty years ago. You must have known him well.

HL: Oh yes. I remember very well. In fact he said something about us in one of his books, "The 4 Forests and the Future of the South", did you write that?

HKS: No, we weren't involved in "The 4 Forests". I saw that book. In our interview he told a lot about the naval stores, turpentine factors. He also talked a lot about Fargo. He must have been involved there, he knew a lot about Fargo.

HL: You know how it came about. Well, back in the '20s three families got together. Lawrence and Knight and Williams. Two of them lived in Pennsylvania, one lived in Kalamazoo, Michigan. Lawrence lived there. They were in the paper sizing business, the name of their company was Papermakers Chemical Corporation. Lawrence's family was originally from Nova Scotia. They started making paper sizing for the paper mills. They decided that there wasn't going to be any trees, there was going to be a shortage of trees and there wasn't going to be any naval stores and there wasn't going to be any rosin for them to make paper size out of.

They were making money, so they hauled off and bought a hundred and fifty thousand acres of land in Fargo that came back this way. We own around it and worked with them. They did that in 1926, they paid \$6.25 an acre for it. It had been burned, it had been turpented. They started off down there, and they got Cap Eldredge to run it. So he moved to Fargo, built a house and started fire protection. He had the toughest time you ever saw. Those crackers down there would have the woods cows and they'd burn the woods and this and that, and he tried and tried the best he could to have some fire protection without equipment. They tried to turpentine, they just lost money, everything they did about turpentering. They tried to

sawmill a little bit and they lost most sawmilling. Captain Eldredge, I was there, and he was trying to get an assistant and he got Bill Oettmeier from Pennsylvania who had gone to forestry school up there, W. M. Oettmeier. He had been in World War I, and he had been with the radio deal and everything. So Captain Eldredge left that forest down there, but about the time he left Bill Oettmeier took over.

Bill Oettmeier conceived the idea of getting people who were in the lumber business to saw logs and people in turpentine business to turpentine. Then is when we got into the turpentine business big, and we started in 1929 with one camp down there, we took over. Then about 1931 they said, well take them all over. So we were turpentineing down there on a percent basis, which was a unique way of turpentineing back in those days. We would do everything. They'd furnish the trees, we built some shanties you might say for our labor. We had the mules and the horses and the wagons and the trucks and the people and we'd make rosin and turpentine and we gave them 25 percent of whatever we produced. And Bill Oettmeier came down there running it, and so he and I got to be great friends. And I was working with him, and he was so happy, I never will forget, we went to a Society of American Foresters meeting in Lake City, and all the foresters that you could roust out of anywhere, including those with the national forest in Florida and Georgia and everywhere, I think we had fifteen foresters down there, back in the '30s, now that was the late '30s.

We started working with Bill Oettmeier, and so this company got along better then. They are a landowning company but other people are doing this. So Bill Oettmeier went to World War II, and when he came back they were having a little bit of difficulty there so he conceived the idea of leasing it to St. Regis Paper Company, and he did. I always thought he ought not to have done it. I'd argue with him about it. But he wanted to quiet down the rumblings of some of the management problems and some of the ownership problems and keep the continuity up. So he leased it for sixty years, in 1948, to St. Regis. St. Regis, you know, went broke and Champion has got it now, and Champion doesn't have a mill. St. Regis had the mill down there in Texasville, East Port, and they shut it down. But anyway, that's been a great forest, Superior Pine Products Company. And I've got a little video tape of what they put together on that if you'd like.

HKS: I'd like to see that.

HL: But we worked together, and we were the ones the promulgated more and more CC camps down there and didn't have any roads, didn't have nothing, no drainage or anything. When I graduated from college I moved down there in a house and I was riding my horse and supervising turpentine work. The house it didn't have screens, didn't have any running water, didn't have any bathroom, didn't have any electricity, and I moved down there and Bill Oettmeier was living in Fargo. Now his son is manager down there. Bill Oettmeier died about ten or twelve years ago, fifteen maybe now. His wife is still living here and she's eighty-nine years old, and I see her quite frequently.

HKS: I was going to ask you about Oettmeier because obviously the two of you respected each other very much. You wrote articles about each other in various magazines.

HL: That was true. [laughter] That's right.

HKS: It's getting a little bit away from the story here, but Eldredge tells the story about moonshining. And how a moonshiner deposited a hundred thousand dollars in a bank in Valdosta. Now moonshining, was that a problem to you. You've got people on your land, they start fires, it's illegal, it's all those...

HL: We really never did have any bad trouble with them, because they respected us and we respected them and we never did report them. We knew that if we reported them and they found out about it they would burn us from one end to the other. They got to respect us about that. And that wasn't any problem. Now when Captain Eldredge went down there it was a problem because they would have these gruff looking moonshine stills down there and they would haul that whiskey to Atlanta or Macon or further up and they would sell it.

I've been up on the stills many a time, and our people have known about them, and we've left them alone, and that problem went away, because they couldn't make any money out of it eventually. We had pretty good revenue officers down here that worked on that, but we had a policy to leave them alone. Now even after we came up here and bought land in this county, I can take you down there and show you places where liquor stills were, they'd have brick and they'd have the barrels, and the old hoops are still there, and they'd make the buck there and they would go ahead and make moonshine and sell it.

HKS: They're fairly permanent stills if they had brick.

HL: Well no, they wouldn't be permanent. They'd put them on brick but they wouldn't be bricked up...

HKS: And mortared.

HL: And mortared. They would have the barrels, they would most of the time have it and they would stay there so long then they would build another one somewhere else and the revenue officer would find that one and tear it up. I've seen some big stills. There's one down here that I saw one time about twenty-five years ago that was as long as from here as the front of the office and about five or six feet wide and high, and definitely, he cooked it with butane, and it was a commercial outfit, they were making a lot of moonshine and carrying it to Atlanta.

Captain Eldredge was a good person, but I tell you what, a lot of those crackers, he was very smooth to them, and if he had been a little bit of rough and tried to bow up against them he'd have had a lot of trouble, because there was a lot of problems down there. His wife, Mrs. Oettmeier, said they used to have a killing down there every week. This is the interview they had with me for the video.

HKS: Why is he doing this video?

HL: This is Superior Pine doing it because the Lawrence boys are still living, and one of them I think he's seventy-four and the other is sixty-four. The one sixty-four has got what he calls a Lawrence video tape, there it is Lawrence Productions. So his own company is doing it, but he's doing it for Superior Pine Products Company. Superior Pine Products Company is now not producing anything themselves, they're doing like you said this family did out west, and you know that's all right now, but until you had the markets you couldn't do that.

HKS: Is there more about the Oettmeier family? Obviously Bill Oettmeier, Jr. is a friend.

HL: Yes sir. Bill Oettmeier, Sr. came there and he married Mildred Williams, and we have been friends ever since. He and I would go around to these forestry meetings together. I was with him when he organized the Forest Farmers Association. I was at the factors and not at the meeting place, we organized in Jacksonville in 1941, fifty years ago. And that's when they gave me the Forest Farmers Award after we'd been in there fifty years as the only father and son that ever received the Forest Farmers Award, my father and me.

Bill and I would go to forestry meetings, we'd go to some society meetings we'd go to Forest Farmers meetings, we'd go to Georgia Forestry Association meetings, we'd go to other meetings in Georgia because we'd make arrangements. We had good relations here in Georgia on forestry for a long time. We could rally people that owned land for many years. When we got a problem with the legislature that we could go to Atlanta and get something done about it. But we've lost our ability to do that now, because we don't have the landowners in that country. You've got the paper mills and the representatives don't even want to talk to them unless they're tied in with them some way or another. But we had mighty good relations for a number of years. You know we used to have what we called the county unit system, where Echols County with the fewest people in Georgia had two county units, and Fulton with the most people had six. These two down here had as much to do as two of theirs and they just represented maybe a thousand people, or fifteen hundred maybe. But they were talking about a million up there, you know. So that was a relationship of the people in the woods to get the attention of your legislators.

HKS: That's happening everywhere in America.

HL: I guess so.

HKS: Urban dominance now is...

HL: One vote one person.

HKS: That's right.

HL: Whether they show any responsibility or not. It really doesn't make sense that somebody out there on welfare has got just as much a vote as you and me. That's the way it is.

HKS: One of the operations we haven't discussed, you mentioned it and I'm intrigued by it, is the Langdale Foundation. Some of the newspaper clippings say the foundation has pledged or given a quarter of a million dollars to a senior living center. So it's a major operation.

HL: We didn't give all that money from the Langdale Foundation. It might have looked like it. We gave some of it out of Langdale Company and some out of Langdale Timber Company and the Langdale Foundation. We really don't have that much in the foundation, but we were building it up pretty good, and we have used it over the years for a lot of things like that, but our things that we give to. Our idea when we organized it was to do more and I was going to leave my stock to the foundation, not having any children, and that would be one way to do these things. But then the law changed under the Nixon administration, I believe it was, and it's more difficult to do that now. But we still operate that way.

[Breaking for video tape]

HKS: We just finished watching a video tape for Superior Pine. You and Johnny looked at each other and smiled when Oettmeier was saying the big problem was taking control of the land. Was that an exaggeration, was that why you smiled?

HL: No, not really, but that did have some exaggeration. Johnny wouldn't know about that but I did because they had a lot of people that lived around on that property, I guess from Civil War days, that were down there. They'd have a twenty-acre field and they'd be living there and they would have some cows on the other land, just plain what we called piney wood cows, wasn't any real breed or bred stock. They had a time with those people because they wanted to make a living. They either had to make moonshine or they had to steal, or they had to get into something, someway or another. So it was a problem. But he might have exaggerated some. Then Mrs. Oettmeier, she said they had a killing every Saturday night, it wasn't quite like that.

HKS: When you bought property there were some people who had traditionally used it for running their cattle or hunting on it or whatever.

HL: Right, right. And they took it as their own. And you couldn't stop it. They'd burn those woods too, because you see if you burn the woods then your cows would do fine on this wild grass, and if you burn it you get about three months of good grazing. If you don't burn it you don't get it, that new growth.

HKS: I never realized that they burned other people's land.

HL: Oh yes, that's what they did most of. That was our problem. I would say our problem in starting fire control was people burning other

people's land to get the grass for their cows. Because see we had a law that you had to fence your fields, they didn't have to fence their cows.

HKS: That's the way it was out west, the fencing laws. So the same thing here.

HL: Now it's the opposite. Everybody down there thought they were absolutely ruined when that happened. And a lot of people had to get rid of their cows. But it was the best thing, because they couldn't live on those cows.

HKS: Someone in this video tape, Ken Bailey was on our board of directors, I know him a little bit, Champion's vice president in this area. Champion doesn't think that's a very good deal they've got.

HL: They got it from St. Regis, but they really didn't have any consumption for that wood. It would make a difference if you had your manufacturing plant there and had that paper mill and that was...

HKS: Not knowing the story at all, I thought the film was amazingly candid.

HL: Yes.

HKS: Usually they slough over problems in relationships.

HL: I think it was too. I think it was good. And the Lawrences, I knew every one of those, I knew the Lawrences' father and those two boys, and I knew everybody except the senior Knight. He put his wife in an institution and he married his secretary and he just left and gave his family his stock in Superior Pine, so I never did come in contact with him. They said he was a good businessman, I don't know. I knew the Williamses, the Williamses and the Lawrences and some of the Knight children, but not Mr. Knight himself.

HKS: You said you argued with Oettmeier against signing the lease.

HL: Oh yeah, I didn't want him to do that. And I thought that he was doing it on a cheaper basis than he should have. I guess that what he over rode me on was that he was afraid they were going to have trouble with the ownership, just like you do with any business where you've got several families in. And we had had trouble. During the war when Bill Oettmeier went into the communications part of the Air Force, a Knight moved down there, a Knight son, and he didn't know anything about it. He'd alienate those people, he'd alienate anybody and he would just cause problems. And he wanted to change things. And he wanted to get back in business sort of. The people down there didn't like him that much. Well Bill Oettmeier got back, I don't think he wanted to fight that problem and he wanted to do it, so he went ahead and did it.

HKS: If they hadn't signed that lease, would they have had to build manufacturing plants like you did?

HL: No. At that time things were coming along a little better. They made that lease in '48, started in '48. Things were getting a little bit better. But it would have been better. Of course Bill Oettmeier was looking at it like I was. He wanted a pulp and paper mill there that could do it. But Bill Oettmeier and I had gone around to paper mills, and that's one reason I got into the pulpwood business as soon as I did, because we knew we had to have a pulpwood market. Had to have it the way you were going to practice forestry. He and us.

HKS: He could have done that too.

HL: Yes. The Lawrence's and all, they had paper mill friends and owned stock in paper mills up there. In fact I went up to Kalamazoo Michigan, their headquarters, and they wanted to talk to us about a paper mill up there they had an interest in because they wanted to build one in the South at that time and build it down between us and Superior Pine Products Company, and we'd make a deal with them. I was interested at that time, but it didn't materialize. Kalamazoo Vegetable Parchment Paper Company.

HKS: Let's talk about the 1920s.

HL: I came along being the oldest son, and I was very fortunate. My father was practicing law at that time and he was interested in the J. D. Langdale Company, but he really didn't have much other activity about the naval stores business. But in the '20s, he got really more interested in the naval stores business. He would always take me in the woods with him, and we would go in the woods and he would try to explain it to me. He at that time was practicing law but he would go down late in the afternoon and sometime on Saturday and sometimes on Sunday, and he talked to people that he knew. He was getting into the turpentine business by trying to pick the best partner he could pick whether he had any money or not, then borrowing money from the factors and setting up a turpentine operation.

I had the opportunity of riding around with him and listening to all that conversation, so my background has been the naval stores business, the timber business, and those kinds of people. I guess the key to his success was the ability to size up the people and that's been the secret of whether you were successful in the naval stores business or unsuccessful, because you get the right man that can handle the labor and use good judgment and work, and you can make money. If you just didn't have that kind of person that had that talent it was very difficult, because I knew some mighty good men that would have a hard time with labor, particularly when times would get a little better and labor would be a little more difficult. They couldn't get it, and so they couldn't make any money.

Back in those days my father would borrow money from the factors, and he had as many as two and three partners to one naval stores camp. So I had that experience. And then as we sons came along and he started on some of this leasing of turpentine places like I told you about, Superior Pine Products Company. I was old enough to realize that and to go down to those camps, and a few times we would spend the night, but most of the time we'd go down and if we didn't get stuck or bogged down or the car

break down, we'd get home at night. That was a great experience and that really helped me in my thinking about forestry and trees. Of course, I guess none of us at that time thought we could grow trees like we are, or did later on. But we were primarily trying to have trees to improve our turpentine practices in order to make money.

I guess John has already told you that we, in the summertime, our father believed in us working. When I was ten years old my father sent me to my uncle, who had not married at that time and lived down below Fargo. I spent several weeks with him down there and I'd work in the woods and I'd be fooling with the mules and the horses and then dipping gum, and knowing something about the turpentine business and the people that made up the turpentine business. Later on as we progressed along, John and I would go down to the turpentine camp and we would have a cook and we would go down there and stay during the summer months and we would dip gum. We later got to where we were foremen of the dip squad where we'd go around with all the cups and gather the gum.

Then I got in the business of riding horseback. I went to the YMCA camp one summer, and I might have missed another summer, but every other summer, my father and my mother believed in us working. We would go down, and some of the clothing stores up here, one in particular. Our mother would take us there and outfit us with brogan shoes and overalls then, you didn't buy jeans, you bought overalls, go down there and work in the woods. A lot of my friends would laugh at us and think we didn't have to do that and couldn't stand it, but I think we learned some lessons from those people and going down there that we wouldn't have learned any other way. And that might have contributed to us trying to be as conservative as we are.

It surely was in a blessing when in the '30s, after coming back from the forestry school. I started in, as I said at Catawba, the other side of Statesville, and stayed down there all the week. I'd usually come home Saturday afternoon and go back Sunday afternoon, but that was a great lesson. My father at that time had gone through the depression, and he was very glad for me to take the responsibility. Then I started looking at the turpentine places, and he was more or less farming. But I guess that my father gave me the opportunity to make those mistakes when I started out, and learn from the actual working that really helped me in all my life. My father was a very hard working person, but he believed in taking off enough time to do some hunting and fishing, and he liked to meet people and he liked to talk and he was quite a person.

My mother was a very hard working person. I told you before her father was much older, and he died in 1900 when she was fifteen years old, and she had to get out and work. And her brother had to work, and that's where my mother learned to be a milliner, making hats. People in Valdosta were making money on Long Island cotton, and they sent for her to come to Valdosta and she was making hats for people. And that's where my father had just graduated from law school and living in Valdosta, and they got married. My mother knew what hard times were when her father died and left nothing and she was fifteen years old and everybody had to get out and scratch for a living, so that was a good background. So we'd been brought up like that.

Then after getting out of college my father, although he didn't believe in cutting down trees at that time, harvesting them, but wanted the turpentine because that's the only money that he'd seen come out of trees. He would yield to me and our forestry ideas and he was mighty proud of the fact that I had gone to forestry school. So after getting started here in the naval stores business, he'd give me as much leeway as any father could give a son to go ahead and make mistakes and he agreed with me. So he took a lesser road. At that time he was about fifty-one or two years old when he turned it over to me, and then we had these ideas and we sort of put them together.

A lot of people didn't know what pulpwood was and didn't know that you could plant trees. A few people would laugh at us, a lot of people would say well you're not going to get anything out of it. I'm seeing those same families planting trees now. But it took time for it to come around. So I guess that without a lot of rambling around about, we've been very fortunate to be at a time when the turpentine business was stabilized and it was profitable, and we worked through that and now it's been very good to come up through these years that we've had so much increase in price and so many advantages in forestry and so much improvement. I get to thinking sometimes it's just hard to believe that when I started out after school now, not during school when I was working in it, but to think that we bought land for two and three and four and five dollars an acre and now would be selling for more than a thousand dollars an acre. We worked it for turpentine.

I remember when I first started in the pulpwood business, the highest value that we could get for a tree was to hue crossties and then cut up the top into pulpwood. That was better because sawlog stumpage at that time, we were getting six, seven, eight dollars. I never will forget when we started getting ten dollars. Then when I got to sawing more of it and getting ten dollars, that was good. We've just ridden that up to now you're talking about two hundred dollars a thousand for stumpage and you're getting it on a basis more like the International Rule or certainly Scribner Rule over what most people thought at that time. I started off on Doyle scale, and we were dealing with small logs, and so really your scale would be for the running foot of the log, would be one board foot.

HKS: I've heard about the Doyle. What was the logic behind the Doyle rule, why was it used in the South?

HL: When we had big timber the Doyle rule wasn't that bad. I don't know where the break is but somewhere up to fourteen or fifteen inches, then it's more nearer like the Scribner scale. But then as the timber got smaller, it was a big advantage to buy that way and a disadvantage to sell. I guess what happened was that people couldn't make any money on these small logs and they took advantage of the man who had the tree. They used to have all kinds of rules like that.

And scaling. We were the first ones to ever buy our logs by weight, and that worked out. The reason we did that was that we had so much trouble with our scaler and the arguments he'd have with the loggers. Then that

assured the landowner that he was getting value received when he knew how many pounds it was, and we'd convert the pounds to thousand board feet. That stopped a lot of arguments back in those days. Land had gone up so in price, and then the fact that you can grow more for pulpwood and pulpwood is such a good market, it's just unbelievable. So I guess that our timing coming along and what we've done and then with the support that I've had from the family and of course John has always supported me and Billy has supported me, and well everybody in the family has. In fact, they didn't even want to question me about forestry decisions and things like that, so that's been a great plus.

HKS: Did you ever look at plywood? Like Bill Harrigan?

HL: Oh yes. I looked at it strong when Bill Harrigan put that plant in. Now Bill Harrigan had so much more loblolly pine than we've got, and that's what he was banking on a good bit. But our timber just wasn't the size that we ought to have. I had the opportunity to buy the plywood plant in Waycross, went over there and looked at it. I'm glad I didn't buy it, because I thought Waycross was about the worse location you can have. That's longleaf and some slash, but it was turpentine, and you're talking about a good peeler log back when they started that was I'd say nine inches, maybe eight. Because we turpented to nine inches and then you're talking about up the tree.

But we wanted to, I wanted to, but we didn't think it would fit what we were doing. We were growing smaller timber, we were trying to grow it fairly fast. We were turpentineing, and then we thought that we could get these reasonable size poles. We never have been into big pole market. If we sell sixties...I guess the biggest pole that I remember treating here has been about an eighty-five or ninety, we can get that from Alabama over there toward Bill Harrigan, Pine Grove, not far from where he is. The rivers have a junction there, you know, and that's loblolly pine and we would get that. It would be sort of a rough, big pole, but the utilities would buy it. Now we have done this, we have gone all the way to West Coast and bought some cedar poles and furnished some of our utilities with some of these bigger poles we didn't think we could furnish. But our primary business started out with the utilities and REA's and we were producing thirty foot poles and thirty-five and forties, mostly. Class five, sixes, and sevens.

HKS: It's probably just as well you didn't go into plywood. It seems like they've been involved in price-fixing lawsuits for a long time.

HL: Yes, they sure have. Cost them some money, didn't it, I hear. There's always some trouble. These things are not as easy and they think they are. Something will come up if you don't watch out. But I'm hoping that our OSB is a good product and I think after you see it I'd like to have your comments on that.

HKS: I'm aware of it, and I know it's a major enterprise now.

HL: Sure is.

HKS: I'm not sure of the big companies other than LP who's doing this. Weyerhaeuser?

HL: Weyerhaeuser has got plants. GP's got plants, LPs got more plants than anybody. Huber Corporation up north of Athens has got a plant. You know they're a big company in all kinds of things. What do you call this clay that they dig up there out from Macon that goes into paper. They're a big company in mining and other things, but they've got a nice plant. You have a few more independent plants. Let me see what other big companies. I don't think Willamette has any, they have plywood and lumber. That's about it. Now Georgia Pacific is building a big plant up here at Cordele, and they're building it through their Masonite subsidiary, they're going to use pine. I'm interested to see how they're going to come out of that area. They have started the plant and then they decided they wouldn't operate and changed it and they're going to do several other things to it. I can't find out all about it.

HKS: Do hardwoods grow well in this country?

HL: They do better than we think.

HKS: Have you ever thought about getting serious about hardwood forestry?

HL: Yes sir. Way back yonder. I've been interested in hardwood forestry for a long time and I talked the U.S. Forest Service into letting John Putnam come over here. Do you remember him? He was in Mississippi with the U.S. Forest Service, and they called him Mr. Hardwood. He knew as much about it as anybody, and they let me have him for two days. And so I went around with him, and we went into some of our places, and he thought that we were growing hardwood, but it was a low quality hardwood, most of it. At first when he got here he thought that we could go in and selectively log these places, and we could grow some good hardwood. Before he left he came to the conclusion that what we ought to do was clearcut it and let it sprout, and that we ought to grow volume and it was low-grade hardwood and that's what was going to happen. Now if you go up to what we call the fall line, which is about half way in Georgia from Columbus to Macon to Augusta, your hardwood up that way is quality hardwood. But we don't really have that much quality hardwood.

HKS: When I was here before we stopped at Milledgeville and met with Tommy Thompson.

HL: He's good, I know Tommy. Tommy used to be with Georgia Pacific, he's a successful hardwood man. He's about as far south as you ought to be.

HKS: I see. But you use hardwood in strand board.

HL: Yes. But it's all low grade hardwood. You'll see the yard when you go over there, and you'll see that we've got a lot of decay in it, and a lot of it's not straight. You'll see some quality hardwood but not much. We don't have enough, to really separate it. We thought about when we put this thing in that we could bring those logs in and we could cut a log out and we could saw that or make veneer out of it and we'd come out

better. We came to the conclusion that there wasn't enough of it to really come out that well with it.

HKS: Is there a recipe? A certain amount of a certain kind of species in order to get uniformity?

HL: Not necessarily. Now I think that it could be, but we are sticking to what we call the soft hardwoods, and we think now with this new installation that we've got that we're going to be able to use the hard hardwoods too. But we don't think there is any problem. We know that our board is better by using the soft hardwoods than anything else that we've done. We have put some pine. When it gets wet we can't get in these bottoms, and we're going to have to put a percentage of pine. That costs us more money.

HKS: If strand board had been in existence when John Putnam was here years ago, that would have made a difference.

HL: Absolutely. I went to Germany, and we bought German equipment, sawmill equipment. I went to the Frashour factory and other places, and I saw what they were making out of it. I saw they were doing all those kinds of things. I saw them picking up the limbs and the twigs and everything else and making something out of it. So we've been interested in it for a long time. I hope that we made the right decision. I noticed when you said now this is a major investment, and it is a major investment. A plant like we've got, I would say you're going to have a minimum of thirty million dollars, and I'd say today that's five years after we bought our equipment you're talking about more like a forty million dollar investment for a plant that you're going to see when you go see ours. That's certainly major for us.

HKS: And when you buy overseas you deal with exchange rates, the market is strong.

HL: That's right. Particularly now that's right. I guess Washington Iron Works are coming in and making more of that equipment. We bought the Siempelkamp equipment because that's what everybody wanted to recommend to us now. The other company over there is, well it's another German company, but either one would have been alright, I think, but they didn't recommend Washington Iron Works at that time. But I believe Washington Iron Works are making better presses now.

HKS: You said you wanted to talk about the '20s. Have you covered that adequately?

HL: I think so. I could keep right on but I think I'd be redundant.

HKS: Let's talk about some of these directorships, like Georgia Southern and Florida Railway. This photograph up on the wall and you're in there, right?

HL: That's right, and you know I'm the only person in that picture still living.

HKS: Oh, this is 1954.

HL: I'm the only living director of that group.

HKS: That's the railroad that comes through town here.

HL: That's the railroad that runs from Macon to Valdosta to Palatka and also goes from here to Jacksonville. That was a great experience. The liability got so great with these railroads that it changed that and consolidated and now the Southern was a big stockholder in it. They merged with the Norfolk and Western and now it's the Norfolk Southern. It was a great experience because the Southern has had good leadership and they run a good railroad. That was a group of super people. I'm just amazed, when I started out I was always the youngest one at a meeting, and now I go I'm the oldest one, and it happened in a short time. But everybody up there is dead now. The last one died here about six months ago. And I wasn't the youngest one up there. But that was Harry De Butts was president of Southern Railroad at that time.

HKS: Did it carry passengers at one time?

HL: Oh yes, the main line was going all the way. Now they stopped the passage going to Palatka, they didn't have that many people going down there, but they came through Valdosta and went to Jacksonville.

HKS: But Amtrack's not that involved in this.

HL: No Amtrack didn't run the Atlantic coastline. Some of their other ventures ran the train from Chicago to Valdosta to Waycross and then Miami, but they stopped that pretty quick. I think we're going to go back to that, I think this train travel is the way to go. My wife and I enjoy going to England, and we buy a BritRail pass and we like to go out in the countryside, and we get us a little place to stay in London. We get up early in the morning and get on those fast trains and they go 125 mph, and we can go to any part of England and get out and walk four or five hours. She likes to walk and I like to walk, and we see what's there and we eat lunch and we come back and then we spend the night in our apartment.

D. W. Brooks was down here Saturday, and I told him they ought to use their influence; nothing would help south Georgia better than having their new airport they're going to build south of Atlanta and put on a fast train from Valdosta. Tie it in with Savannah coming into Macon, Valdosta going up the route we've got now with the Southern and then having someone meet you at the airport and you can go there two hours, only it would be two hundred miles to it. I think it would be so much better than these feeder airlines that you can't tell, like you came down on, whether they're going to run or not.

HKS: That's right.

HL: They believed in having meetings in different places, and I enjoyed knowing those people. They would always invite the business people of

every location that we went to whether it was Macon or Charleston or North Carolina. So I enjoyed being a director of that railroad.

HKS: But when you ship your product south to Florida, it goes by truck.

HL: Most of the time. We have shipped some in Florida by rail all the way to Miami. We have to Tampa, but ordinarily it's better to go by truck. And over at our plant at Brooks County, OSB plant, we're shipping everything by truck, although we're right on the CSX Corporation railroad track.

HKS: Other than costs, is it the convenience of schedules. A truck can leave when you're ready, you don't have to meet someone else's schedule.

HL: I guess we get a good bit of business that way because we can get telephone calls today at noon, and we can load a trailer and they can be down there before noon tomorrow, most any place in Florida.

HKS: What about the Herty Foundation?

HL: I knew Dr. Herty and I remember him coming to Valdosta and being with him, and I was with him on maybe three occasions, two besides right here. He had a little laboratory over in Savannah and it wasn't much of a laboratory but it was a laboratory. After his death, and I think I'm right when I say that, the state of Georgia came in and subsidized it and started giving so much money a year. I was appointed by the governor, and I had the tenure of officer on the Herty Foundation, I think the longest of anybody. I enjoyed my meetings over there. We carried out Herty's thinking of utilizing wood and paper and we had a model paper mill there, and they used different species of wood, they used different chips, they used sawdust, they used planer mill shavings, and I was very interested in that. And we had a good director. You'd be amazed at how the paper mills would come down and work with the Herty laboratory to run something on their paper machine that they wanted to try out that they couldn't run on the big machine. And it worked out fine. Union Camp supported us, well many of the paper mills supported us.

HKS: Is it a foundation that can accept contributions from industry? I don't understand why it's a foundation.

HL: They can accept contributions from industry, and they do research for industries. We had a special project that was an explosive that they wanted us to test and work with. We had a lot of projects like that. But it was something that you could contribute to and be a participant in it. The state contributed so much, and they would run other experiments along with the Georgia Forestry Commission. They'd want to know if there's any way that we could use sycamore, because that was a project at that time that they could grow sycamore. They were talking about clearcutting it every five years. And letting it sprout from the root.

HKS: He was a remarkable man. He was a professor of chemistry at the University of North Carolina.

HL: Oh he was?

HKS: And he was president of the American Chemical Association during the '20s. He was worried about German chemistry surpassing American chemistry, he made it a major part of his career. We remember him for the Herty cup and newsprint.

HL: And then in Georgia he was head of the chemistry department there, wasn't he?

HKS: That's right.

HL: Herty was great. I never will forget when it was announced that we could make paper out of southern pine. That was just unheard of, and the people wouldn't believe it. And the same way when they announced the fact of, I assume that came about through the U.S. Forest Service research facility at Madison, Wisconsin, when they announced that they could make plywood out of southern pine. That was a momentous occasion. Dr. Herty did a lot for us. We weren't getting a lot of money, but you know we'd get special appropriations, and then we'd go to the governor. We'd have meetings with the governor, we'd have the governor down there and tell him what we wanted to do, and most of them had their roots and background you know in the rural areas, and they'd come along and give us a special one hundred to two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. We had to move that whole laboratory one time. They came in and gave us enough money on a special deal like that to do it. So the Herty laboratory was very interesting to me and it was something that I enjoyed.

HKS: So there was an executive director or an executive vice president that managed the lab and the Board of Directors was a sounding board and made sure that everything was...

HL: And go to the governor to get money, or go to the state and talk to the representatives and help him that way. And then lead them right. We'd had a director one time that wanted to do far out things, and we felt that we ought to do practical things until we got a little bit more money and experience and all things like that. So that was the way it was run.

HKS: So the foundation itself doesn't give grants to people. It is a mechanism for managing the money that comes in to operate the laboratory.

HL: Right.

HKS: Okay. Some of the photographs you showed me were of the Southern Pine Association. There's a history of that by Jim Fickle at Memphis State, I don't know if you've seen the history of the Southern Pine Association.

HL: I've got the book for the first fifty years.

HKS: No, it's a full size book. As a matter of fact, we were the co-publishers.

HL: I haven't seen that. The Southern Pine Association is a good organization, and they've done a lot of good work and it's been there for

years and all. When you do something like that the dues keep building up. We had another organization here in the Southeast, with the headquarters in Atlanta, called the Southeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association, SLMA. I tried my best to work out a deal to get them consolidated. There's a lot of smaller producers, especially in your area in North Carolina and all of that, that didn't want to belong to the Southern Pine Association, that had smaller mills. And if we could have gotten them all together we would have had enough money to do more advertising, or more activity. But it was just nearly about impossible. They're beginning now a little bit to have certain projects that they share in, but not to consolidate. But the dues in the SLMA are much cheaper, that gave a lot of the producers a feeling of belonging to something or doing some good and not paying the higher rate that the Southern Pine Association, so that was a problem with it. But Southern Pine Association has some very good people. Mostly bigger mills, though.

HKS: Were dues based upon sales, or...?

HL: Our dues were based on the manufacturing and sales per thousand board feet.

HKS: How about pulpwood...?

HL: We don't pay that dues to the Southern Pine Association on pulpwood. Now we do pay dues to the Georgia Forestry Association based on our pulpwood production, but not Southern Pine Association, based on lumber. We produce, here at Valdosta, about eighty million board feet of lumber a year. I wanted to get up to a hundred thousand feet a week, and we did that pretty quick, and then we went right on until now we're up to eighty million board feet right here on one plant. We've got two plants, we run one, which is so much more modern than the other. I guess my experience with the Southern Pine Association, and knowing those people...I keep saying that the real benefit of any association is knowing the people. That's where I got the good out of that, the opportunity to see them and be with them and talk with them over the telephone and discuss problems has been a great experience.

HKS: I talked to Earl McGowin; I had lunch with him at his home in Chapman five years ago or so. He was still mad at those western lumbermen over lumber standards. I guess when he was president that was a major issue. What were issues when you were...

HL: Standards.

HKS: Still standards.

HL: But we got that through right after that pretty well. And that was a great blessing to all of us you know, after we got it. When I first started with Southern Pine, yes we were all mad with the western woods people. But as I told you earlier, we found out that wasn't our problem, our problem was getting people to use wood. And we had other problems. When my time was over there was a little bit more activity by the union, a little bit more by the wage and hour law and things like that. Then

freight rates were a problem, and then trying to encourage growing trees. But I guess that the big thing was lumber standards and promoting wood.

HKS: Every reasonable person, it seems to me, would agree that a two by four ought to be cut to the same dimension. Why was there a difference, why was there resistance? It seems everyone would agree we'd all be better off with the same standards. Is it because their mills are already set to cut a certain dimension and they didn't want to change?

HL: You had different groups. Your mills would pretty well agree to it, but you had the builders, and they had built houses and you go to replace something that was an inch and five-eighths over there, they would make it more difficult. We had a lot of conversation about that, and you had to have all those hearings and it took time. Then it took economic conditions. We never would have gotten it through except for the time that it came about. If you remember that there were some times that we pushed that through. I keep a little sheet here. That's our average price of lumber that we sell each month of the year, white lumber, not treated lumber, wholesale price F.O.B. Valdosta. I do not separate it because we grade everything. Our highest price that we have ever received on a monthly average for lumber was \$301.41 and that was in 1979. That was the year that we pushed these new standards through.

HKS: I see.

HL: The demand was so good on that year that we could do it. Because you had a lot of resistance from builders and contractors and architects and all those kinds of people. But we had some lumber people that didn't want to do it. I talked with some of them, and they would be positive that they didn't want to do it. They had certain little reasons about it. One reason was that they were used to it. I guess lumber people are like all other people, engineers and everybody, they don't want to change unless they had to. Just like me talking to all the paper mills about trying to use hardwood. I said we've got it, 20 or 25 percent of our land is in hardwood, we've got to utilize it somewhere. They wouldn't do it, and finally after I got started the paper mills down here spent I don't know how many millions of dollars to put in different separate digesters to use hardwood. So they're using oak and hickory and all, and we're working with them to furnish them that. And we're taking the other hardwoods.

I put down here the number of feet we have per year and what the average price was, and it's amazing. Everybody tells you that inflation and everything else has gone up so high, now that month we sold it, and that year we had an average of \$272.80 for the year, and this past year that we just went through, we had an average of \$230.69. By the fact that we have such great recovery from pulpwood chips, and see we're selling our planer mill shavings, we're selling our sawdust, we're selling our bark. We've got a company here that came from Germany to take our bark and they're mixing it with certain chemicals and they're selling that and putting it up in bags that came right here. We have a plant here just a few miles out, came here on account that we could be a dependable supplier to them. Just from our sawmill here, we sell right at two thousand tons every week of sawdust and bark and planer mill shavings, end trimmings. We've got a chipper that chips that up, and then we sell a

thousand cords of pulpwood chips. Well that is 30 percent of our income from the sawmill. What that means is that we've held the price of lumber down, and this is taking care of it. And all of our money is going for stumpage that we buy, or either we put on our stumpage, which makes a difference.

So the Southern Pine was a great experience, but the best of all is the opportunity to see the people. Then there is the Forest Farmers Association. There's only one person that was there that besides myself that was still living, and he was from Waycross. He died about six months ago, and he was one hundred and one or one hundred and two years old. Bill Oettmeier, I guess you know the story about the Forest Farmers Association. My father was trying to get some of these programs through on the naval stores conservation program, and Bill Oettmeier was a good one to take along because we were talking to people in the U.S. Forest Service along with some of these other people, commodity credit. You needed somebody that could talk the language of the Forest Service. So Bill would go with them. Bill realized that he was going up there to help the naval stores operators, which was going to help his place down there. Then he got to thinking that there wasn't anybody representing the tree farmers.

Then he says, let's get together, so they did and he went to my father's law office up there and they got the charter together and went down to Jacksonville and had the first meeting fifty years ago this past April, and organized the Forest Farmers Association. Let's see, Bill Oettmeier was the first president, and our second president which we don't hear much about was C. P. Kelly, from Madison, Florida down here who was just an interim when Bill went on to the war. Vivien Whitfield and I followed him, so it's had an effect on forest farming, and it does a lot of good things and it was sort of a struggle to begin with but it's supported by a lot of progressive tree farmers, and the pulp and paper mills are supporting it now fairly good. At one time they didn't.

HKS: It started almost the same time as, now it's called the American Forest Council. Both are about fifty years old. Is there some competition between the National Tree Farm Program, which includes the South?

HL: I don't really think so.

HKS: What does Forest Farmers do that the Tree Farm Program doesn't do?

HL: I'll tell you one thing that all of us are grateful for, they really supported us in the treatment of income from trees under capital gain for taxes. Now that was really a major situation. That got the attention of a lot of people that were cutting their own timber. You remember when that started out, if you were growing trees and we had a sawmill, there was no problem, you could treat yours as capital gains. But if you owned a sawmill and you were cutting your own timber, you couldn't. That was changed and that was a big advantage. They have supported the states in their forest fire programs. They have supported the improvement in our seedlings, they have supported most states' efforts of trying to increase forest growth. They really get into this pine tree planting program.

I was sitting down there at the meeting. (I have quit going and now Johnny is going to some of those meetings and we're trying to do that) but thought to myself, you know we're fighting some of the same problems that we fought fifty years ago, and that's the way it is.

HKS: I know there's a lot of concern about capital gains.

HL: Yes, there sure is. I think you'll really see things change if that capital gains was put in like Bush wants to do.

HKS: You've also been very active in the Georgia Forestry Association. There's a certain amount of overlap. Some of it I'm sure is public service, it's a role that you need to play because you're a major landowner in Georgia, but...

HL: You get a lot of pressure, you know, on you that they want you to do it, and you want to do it because you want to be part of what you're doing, and it really was necessary. As I said, we've been fortunate in Georgia. We had so many problems about ad valorem taxes, and then supporting the Georgia Forestry Commission. When Eisenhower was president he had a committee on forest research. I was a member of that for a good many years, and we traveled all over the United States to these research stations and listened to what they were doing and gave a report. I was also on the committee of Eisenhower's using farm commodities for industrial use some way or another, and that was very interesting.

I was supporting our Georgia Forestry Commission. I was proud of the fact that Georgia was leading with twenty-five million acres and we had state wide fire protection earlier, and we started off with just by county by county. We were certainly leaders in the improvement of research on seedlings, and other things. I was with Herman Talmadge the other day. Herman Talmadge was at Georgia when I was there, and we knew each other then. He offered me the job as state forester. I told him I said if I'd taken that job I wouldn't have all these worries now, I'd have been able to retire. But Herman Talmadge really helped us in the promotion of forest activity, and our nursery and other things.

The state has given one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars a year to the Georgia Forestry Commission, which was named something else at that time when Melvin Thompson was governor. When Talmadge went in we started increasing that every year. Georgia has certainly been a leader. And we've got a forest business in Georgia now, you know, worth twelve billion dollars a year. The Georgia Forestry Association ties in to all of that in trying to solve some of these problems. It was aggravating at the time. I think I served as president for two years and vice president for several years, but I guess our main problem was really this ad valorem tax. We get so many tallies that we want to try to operate on ad valorem taxes, and I guess one of our great blessings was when we got that sales tax in, it would help on that. I know it has in this county.

HKS: A good friend of mine is Bob Izlar.

HL: Yeah, he's very capable too.

HKS: He's very active in our organization, and I dealt with him when he was in Mississippi.

HL: Well he's capable. That's what it takes, it takes somebody that will work in an organization like that. You get a lot of people in that sort of drag along, and they've sort of got a job but don't do it, but Bob impresses me.

HKS: Good. You were active in the National Forest Products Association, I guess that's not...

HL: I wasn't that active, but they really put the pressure on me to get more active, I'll tell you that. Being a member of the Southern Pine Association, we were also members of the American Wood Preservers Association, American Wood Preservers Institute, and Cross Ties Association. We all belonged to the National Forest Products, you know, all these different associations. And so I went to some of the meetings. Now I guess it was Floyd, Earl's brother, that was president of the National at one time, I don't believe Earl was.

HKS: I don't believe I...

HL: But that was good. On a national level that could do right good on a lot of things and help in many ways. I try not to get involved in these associations any more than I could help it, some of it you couldn't help it. I doubt if I had the ability to be in a national association like that covering all those United States. But I think the National has done good, and I guess a lot of us forest products people have been riding, letting somebody else pay the dues and we get some of the benefits. Now that happens.

HKS: How national is the forest products business? Obviously you benefitted by standardizing grades. What other issues are national, as far as you're concerned?

HL: Of course the capital gains treatment is very, very important. Now, we are worried about this environmental situation, and I'm sure that other people are more worried than we are about endangered species. You know we get more and more people that don't understand why you've got to cut down a tree, and they don't realize that it's a crop and that's a livelihood and that's what we ought to do. I think that that's going to really be important in the future, more and more. I'm amazed at some of the people.

We've been very fortunate here at Valdosta State College, but we do have a professor out there that calls himself an environmentalist, and he doesn't believe in cutting down trees under any circumstances. We had a lady out there, her husband is a dermatologist, and they're from Pennsylvania, and he's also a herpetologist, and we let him go out on our land. They catch these land tortoises, I call them gophers, and they'll bring the class out. They'll catch them and tell whether they're male or female and weigh them and how old they are and all that and stick a pen to hold them. They don't want us to plant trees. They want us to leave it just like it is. I don't know where those kinds of people think they're

going to get their salary from if we don't produce something. And how people are going to have a job.

I think these associations are going to be more important in that kind of direction. Wetlands for instance. When I first came along, everybody was so proud of the fact that people had jobs out here, and they were so glad that they were bringing in logs and all that. But now we've got a lot of people that think that's terrible, to cut down trees, leave it open. I don't think it's any exaggeration at all. We've got land that's got more game on it, I believe, than at any time ever, really. Just by practicing forestry right. It's just amazing to me how much progress we've made on conservation of game like deer and wild turkey. We didn't have a wild turkey in this county and now I go out I'll bet not half a mile from my house and run into twenty wild turkeys that will take off and fly above any tree that we've got. It's a great sight. And we've got more quail per acre than we ever had. I see we can't have deer and quail both, something's got to give because the deer are eating up everything I plant for quail.

HKS: Your affection for quail, have you been involved with Tall Timbers?

HL: Oh, yes, we're members, and working with them.

HKS: I'm not sure where they're located, they're in Florida, right?

HL: They are in Florida right across the line. You go from Thomasville to Tallahassee and it's right below the line. They've got a place there that one of the people who had an estate over there gave them, many years ago, and that's their headquarters. I think it's the Beadle family that gave it to them.

HKS: What's the family that runs Tall Timbers?

HL: He just died, Komarek. Stoddard got him in. Stoddard they say is the dean of quail management, and he got Ed and Roy Komarek, Roy just died, Ed is in bad shape and not able to do anything anymore. But they really made many, many studies and they've got a book out about that thick on quail management. They've changed around now and doing more management. We're finding out a lot of things we thought about quail are not necessarily so, you know. I guess in all research you do that. They've been aggressive. They have two meetings a year.

I think they're doing a good job and of course they're worried about those pileated woodpeckers over there, because see some of those estates don't like to cut trees either. We tried to tell them, some of us foresters, that they would do better. I'll tell you what is worrying them, though, unless are some of these super rich it is costing them more and more money to have those places over there. The feed and the equipment and the people and all of that is really costing them lots more money than it did just a few years ago. Tall Timbers I think are doing a very good job and those people in Thomasville support it.

HKS: How was Kinderlouw named?

HL: I'll tell you how that happened. That was an old plantation and it was owned by Jones, and then the Spains, and then the McCreedys. The McCreedy family had four boys. And when the fourth one was born their mother died, so their father went and got her sister, who was named Lou, to come and look after those boys. And these boys liked her so well, that they named the place Kinderlou, the German word for children, so it's Lou's children.

HKS: How about that? I didn't know Tall Timbers, where that was. HL: Right north of Tallahassee, that's one way you can come to it, it's right in there [points to map]. It's right on this lake here, Lake Iamonia. It's a pretty place, very pretty. If you're ever close to Tallahassee, you see, you can get a car and from the airport it's no distance to it, come right here and turn in you can't miss it, on the road to Thomasville.

HKS: Alright.

HL: So we have field trials and we run the dogs, and I like to do that. I have had some good dogs, but right now I'm not sure I have.

HKS: How active are you in the Forest Industries Committee on Timber Value and Taxation? First thing they've got to do is make an easier title, that's a very complicated title.

HL: How did you know I was on that?

HKS: It's on your resume.

HL: It is, I didn't know I listed that.

HKS: Maybe I saw it listed somewhere else.

HL: I believe you did. We're all interested in taxation and everything, and I think that's the one that I went up and I appeared before the House Ways and Means Committee on two occasions about the treatment of income as a capital gains. And that was really promulgated by people, bigger landowners and bigger ownerships.

HKS: So that was your involvement?

HL: Mostly that. It really didn't take a lot of time, not like some of these others that there's something all the time.

HKS: The last one I have is the Forest Products Research Society.

HL: We've been members of that for a long time, and I was chairman of it at one time, and it's interesting. I like to keep up with it and we thought that tied into our business and we've been active in it. In fact I guess that some of the people, now I don't know where they were, I kind of believe some of the Forest Service actually wanted me to get involved with the organization back yonder when we had this southeastern section of it, Georgia and Florida and Alabama. I was chairman and I served my time, and I really haven't done that much since then. Same way with the Society of American Foresters, back when I was chairman of it, you know,

they didn't have that many foresters, now they've got a lot, they've got groups everywhere.

HKS: Sure. That's an organization having some problems, declining membership.

HL: Yes.

HKS: It's getting expensive and foresters are asking what are they getting out of it. It's a tough one to answer. My dues are \$135 a year. The times are changing. Fewer than half the foresters in the country belong to SAF.

HL: I don't have to pay dues now. After fifty years. But they also ask you wouldn't you like to contribute, so I contribute every year. But I just contribute, I think, fifty dollars.

HKS: I've been so impressed with what I've seen. I've been talking to five or six people about the company and what I saw yesterday. Your knowledge of the land is extraordinary. You really know through personal observation over the years what this acre does and what that tract does. You said maybe you should have put in more sample plots and maintained all of the official records. The question I haven't asked is, "Was there a plan on land acquisition?" You have over two hundred thousand acres now. Was it simply a matter of availability of land at the time you had some extra cash, or was there a plan to acquire enough to practice a sustained yield to supply a mill, as a transition from turpentine to pulp and lumber?

You were trained in forestry and you were looking at the land differently than your father did, you saw different opportunities. He wouldn't buy cutover land, I assume, because he wanted to turpentine it. But a forester would see cutover land differently, thinking about reforestation and rotation and the long term, different kinds of markets. It's a long question. Looking back, was there a master plan, formal or informal, on land acquisition and land management?

HL: I would say that the love of the land has been foremost in my mind, and I think it was important in my father's mind. It stems back, I think, in our family history as people of the soil, people of the land. I came along and of course after studying forestry, which was really new down here. I was the first person to go off from this area that I know about to study forestry and get a degree and come back, and it opened entirely new fields. The people who are woodsmen and all just didn't realize it. And it's been a very fascinating and interesting career.

It was my belief to have enough land to practice sustained yield forestry, but we had to temper that with the fact that we didn't have any money, and it was difficult to borrow any to begin with. I tried to work that out to the best that we could, and when we did have money we bought it when we had the opportunity. Now several things happened in my life that we had the opportunity to buy. Yes we missed some of those opportunities because we didn't have the money, and we were conservative and we didn't want to get out on a limb so far that we would have

financial problems. And we tried to keep enough money aside that we could do these things.

When the pulp business started here and all and we were developing the lumber operation and the pressure treating business and pulpwood business, all of that helped me, enabled me to go out and buy land that I was familiar with or knew something about or knew the circumstances of the people, the land owners. We would buy land on those particular times. Especially when we would see an increase in the price. And pulpwood, as it started off, I never will forget that my first pulpwood that I shipped. I got three dollars and fifty cents a unit, and a unit was a cord and a quarter. That was put in boxcars, and that was difficult, because you'd have to go to the back end and all of that. But I have seen the rise of pulpwood from \$3.50 a unit F.O.B. cars, to now it's bringing closer to \$60 a cord. And so when those rises would come about, I would try to take advantage and buy another piece of land that would pay. So I've ridden this from land that cost up \$2 an acre on up to where we paid more than a thousand dollars an acre for land. It's inherent in my belief that we needed more land for sustained yield, and then the love of the land, and that's what has been my foremost thought in my entire life, even before I got out of school.

HKS: We have the advantage now to see how things turned out, but your land under the sustained yield basis produces about a third of the wood that you're manufacturing arm uses.

HL: I would say that's about right.

HKS: Is that okay?

HL: Yes, because the way we do that is we have our management plans. Maybe not as in detail and as written out as we learned in school to do, but it's been in my head all the time. And we worked this around. Now you take right today, of all the wood we're using or producing and selling, less than 10 percent of our mix. And we work that in cycles and in a dry period like this, that we're having here right now, it might get down to less than 10 percent. But we went two years which were here I would say in '88 and '89 and '90, we probably didn't use 10 percent of our total operation from these samples. Last year it was 50 percent, or a little better than 50 percent. Wet weather make a difference, markets make a difference. The attitude of people, landowners, and we're very fortunate to be in an area that the U.S. Forest Service doesn't control everything, they don't have much land. The state doesn't own much land. And we have more smaller land owners.

HKS: To continue this line just a little bit longer, you don't feel that it's too bad you didn't acquire more land because as it turned out you're using more wood than you thought you would fifty years ago or twenty-five years ago.

HL: Yes, I regret on some of the sales that I didn't. I was too conservative, I should have gone on and bought, and I would have liked to do that. But I still have in the backside of my head, many people who own land, in particular a lot of them in the turpentine business who had gone

into bankruptcy and lost their land or had to sell it at a time when it didn't bring as much money.

I look back and I say well I wouldn't have bought this tract if I had bought the other tract. We have been very fortunate in getting the better grade of land over the years because we were buying before the pulp and paper mills came. As they progressed they were not as aggressive buyers at that time, and they bought land from landowners, that they bought the cheaper land at first. So we think our land is more productive than the average pulp and paper company land. I think you'd agree with me if you rode around and saw it and saw some of their land too. We're very fortunate to have our land within fifty miles of our plant, so we've worked on that sort of area. We've worked in the area where we thought we could protect it from fire. Some land that I turned down and didn't buy that I regret because there wasn't any fire protection and it wasn't big enough that we could have a unit there some sort of way, and that worried me. But yes, answering your question, I wish we had of bought more land when I had the opportunity to do it, and now it's more expensive.

HKS: Sure. But you don't see having difficulty of buying your wood from other owners in the area.

HL: No, because we've tried to build up a good reputation with these smaller owners, and we've cut a many of the smaller owners' tracts several times. We've done it selectively. We've tried to help them, we've tried to help them in fire protection, our neighbors, and we think that we've got as good a chance as anybody coming in here. We really haven't had that much competition from bigger forest products companies that are further away from us. They have not come in here. We have a good relationship with the paper mill here that we helped get here.

Of course I realize that younger people coming along want the best dollar, the highest dollar. But I think that we stand in very good shape with them. And we try to help them practice forestry. I have the feeling that in this area that we've been operating, that we have helped create markets. I'm getting the feeling that I'm seeing as good a forestry practice as I saw in Germany when I went over there several times and in the Black Forest. I think with a little bit more improvement, and I would say that would be in the woods residues, if we could solve that problem, and I think co-generation would do that to some extent, I think that we would be practicing forestry sort of like Germany did.

HKS: I saw that OSB plant; it's very impressive where you're making your own fuel and the whole works.

HL: Out here we have not bought a dollar's worth of fuel in twenty-five years. Drying all of our wood, and when we used to steam our poles and all of that, we have this boiler, one or two boilers here that has been environmentally improved and we use sawdust and bark. And that's a big savings. In England we had our naval stores processing plant that was an envy of the whole turpentine business, because we had our boilers, and we had our fuel. During the war effort when things were different and all of that, and more expensive, we were sitting right there in a good position.

HKS: Plus you don't have to get rid of the waste, haul it away somewhere.

HL: Right. Of course we have worked with these companies and built up the markets. For instance, Goldkist over here that processes soybeans, now we worked with them and they put in this co-generation plant and we have been furnishing them fuel, and we call ourselves reliable. We're also working with this German company making mulch out of our bark, and we have other plants around here that can use sawdust and bark and such wood for fuel.

HKS: Okay. A month ago I was in Oregon on a third-generation family owned tree farm, sixty thousand acres, and what impressed me there, they had the knowledge of the land. They drove along, the two brothers talked to each other about when this was logged, when this was thinned, they had some disease over there. It was the kind of land management understanding that you can't get in a million acre corporation like Weyerhaeuser or something, it's not possible.

HL: That's right.

HKS: At some point you get too big and you lose that.

HL: We've been very intimate with our land, we've walked over it, we've ridden over it and we've worked over it and we've cut it. Some of the areas that we have cut, I would say from five to ten different times that we've been in there thinning or improving the stand and all. So we think we're intimate with our land. We think that we have practiced as good a forestry, I think as good a forest practice as anybody, and I think the state forestry commission would tell you that. In fact, we had one of the chief foresters of the United States down here, Lyle Watts was down here, and went back up to Minnesota and made a speech that said that he'd visited all the South and all parts of the United States and said of all the places that he'd visited, that he was more impressed with right here in Valdosta where we were. Turpentining and then utilizing the trees and that we had more markets and more of a forest management plan that utilized the tree to its advantage.

My father encouraged me to buy land, and he turned me loose and I'd buy it and I would work with the paper mills to borrow money. I borrowed money from the paper mills, I borrowed money from the naval stores factors, I borrowed money from most anywhere I could borrow money from. But I would only go so far and then I would pay that up, I'd have a plan. It bothers me that when we make a big investment that we have to have plans to take that. We've come so far within a lifetime, maybe we've made as many steps as we could make without going too far out and not being, endangering the whole company. But in forest practices and management a lifetime is not really long enough to do all these things you want to do, particularly with forest management methods changing so rapidly.

We have a young girl, and I want you to meet her, I'm going to take you down to this office here. I spoke to her the other day and got to talking to her and she's a fifth generation in one family that I myself have done business with one way or another. That relationship is unbelievable.

We've gotten along with all of our governors except Jimmy Carter, and he tried to put the Game and Fish, the Park Service and the Forestry Department in the same group. We said, "Well, that was about like penning cats and dogs."

HKS: Well tell me a little bit about that because that's still famous. Supposedly the Forest Service believes that when he became president, he went to Washington with a bad feeling about forestry because of his experiences as governor of Georgia, about that merger that didn't work.

HL: Well we fought it. And so the Georgia Forestry Commission is separate. He wanted to combine it all.

HKS: I understand that.

HL: But not all of us fought it. Some of the bigger paper mills gave in. But we in the Georgia Forestry Association and we as individuals fought it and we won. And he didn't do it.

HKS: To us out west Governor Carter was known for his managerial skills of reorganizing the Georgia government.

HL: Cutting down, that's right, cutting down about sixty-some committees.

HKS: That's right, that was the image we were presented.

HL: But that did not do the good that he thought it was or anybody else, other people thought it was. He didn't save anything by that, really. It looked like you would but you didn't. And we were against a lot of that. Particularly when he wanted to take forestry and put it with the park service. Now that's the damn truth.

HKS: Okay, well that's that. I never knew why it didn't work. I just got the answer now.

HL: Yeah. I introduced Governor Carter at an Agribusiness dinner in Atlanta, and I said, "We're all so happy because we've got somebody, one of our own now, that's going to be governor, and we're going to be able to work from the forestry standpoint, agriculture standpoint." Bless my soul it looked like when he got in there he wanted to alienate us quick.

HKS: You suggested that you might want to talk a little bit more about the start of naval stores, the growth of naval stores.

HL: As I tried to say, the naval stores business, the gum naval stores business, has been very, very important to landowners in this area because it's been an income that they could get from their trees when there wasn't any other income. Back then we didn't have the pulp and paper mills down here. They had sawmills but they were sawing the bigger trees, and so the income, which back even in the '30s averaged about 30 cents per turpentine face per year, was very, very important. I've seen that a lot of people who had been over to southern forest areas that were turpented were generally better forests than they are where they're not turpented. I think that's the reason that a good bit of our land had

been held together from the standpoint of small ownership, because they did have an income from the forest land.

I guess we were working more or less on a turpentine rotation, which is probably not the best silviculture practice, but it was a silviculture practice and it enabled us to cut out the bigger trees and get the growth from the younger trees. We knew that we were slowing the growth down on the tree that we were turpentineing. Research shows us that maybe we were slowing the growth down 25 percent on the trees that we were turpentineing. But we really didn't realize that. Besides the tree that we were turpentineing, we were slowing down the other, the smaller trees. If we took out the turpentine tree we would have a better growth and we would have the dominant tree that we were turpentineing. Then your intermediates and your reproduction were not hampered by that tree. We're finding that our growth has really increased since we quit turpentineing. Although I have to go back and say that the reason that we have our land was on account of that we were in the naval stores business at that particular time, and then we were able to buy more when the pulpwood demand came about, and then sawmills.

The methods that were developed to take the bark off was such an improvement. But what I want to go back and say is I don't know whether I made it clear or not that my father had come up in the woods, and that's what he knew. He had studied law and his father, maybe John told you this, didn't want him to study law. He told him, and my father repeated this many times, that his father came to him when he was supposed to catch a train to go to Mercer, he studied law at Mercer, and he says if you won't go and study law, and I never have seen lawyers that amounted to much, says I'll try to buy you a turpentine place and then you'll be in business. My father declined that and went and got a degree in law, and then came back to Valdosta. He practiced law diligently for some twelve or fifteen years, and then he decided to get back into the turpentine business. In doing that, he was practicing law and trying to make a living. He wasn't getting any money out of the turpentine business because he was starting up, but he had all these partners. I want to say how important it was in picking the right person to run these turpentine camps.

Superior Pine Products Company started up in 1926, and then they tried until 1929 to turpentine themselves and found out that wasn't a business they wanted to be in, they were losing money. He turpentineed on a percentage basis which was a unique way of turpentineing. That was the first that we knew anything about. That increased our production a good bit. But in the meantime in the '30s a lot of people in the naval stores business had gone broke, and he would have from one partner to three or four partners in each one of these little turpentine camps. I guess that my father was an operator in the naval stores business, but he did it through other people. He didn't get into the regular details of it, but he was more or less working with them on the financial end of it. Borrowed money from the factors and then trying to help them any way he can. But the secret is to get the right person and try to get the best timber.

My father was a very outstanding person, and he was a hard worker and he took time off from hard working to do hunting or fishing or something like that. But ordinarily he worked hard on Saturdays and Sundays when the other lawyers were doing other things. But then we had to buy out after the turpentine business got a little bit better. These turpentine operators that were good at the time became older and not in a position, they didn't change their methods of conservation that were being developed by research. And they were taking off more wood, and you had to take off less wood. You want to go down to the cambium layer, not go into the wood. And things like that that came about, they were difficult for them to change their thinking and their ideas. And so that was a very difficult situation.

That's when I entered into the picture of trying to talk to them to try to buy them out. And that took some really doing back in those days. But that was the stimulus that really gave us the opportunity. Nearly about all of them had bought a little bit of land, and by us taking that over, that gave us a jump to go ahead and build a modern naval stores plant that was developed through forest research and through the Forest Service down here at Olustee, that really made a better rosin. We were able to, just by cleaning the gum before we distilled it, to get a better a content of something like fifteen pounds per barrel more than we had been getting. Before, we would cook it in a still that was a copper still, but we would pour it in like it was and do all the cooking and separate the turpentine from the rosin. Then we would strain the rosin over cotton padding to get the foreign material out of it.

The new way that was developed was to get all the foreign matter out before we started cooking it. That did not leave that residue around that foreign matter that we had been losing. All of that came about. I want to say that if my father hadn't had the foresight to be in the turpentine business, and to go ahead with some of these people like in a partnership basis, it would have not enabled us to form the Langdale Company to do the processing and the naval stores plant that we did. That was a great benefit to us and very profitable because we had some advantages. I want to make clear to you is that I don't want to belittle anything that they had started and their way of doing things when I came there with a forestry background and plans didn't fit in and then we could move forward. The basics were there.

I told you that my father didn't believe in cutting trees. Harvesting trees might be a better word. It was amazing that after he saw the growth and after he saw the damage that we were doing from turpentine, and you know even back in those days we had the beetles, but we have the mortality that we've had in some instances now. But after we would adjust our turpentine pace something like 3 to 4 percent every year, because we'd have that much mortality. It didn't worry us because that value wasn't there except for turpentine. So after he saw that the mortality had changed and the trees were growing better consistently, he fell in line with that and he didn't mind having a stand. He always liked the plant, but he never did want to get involved in the plant. His forte, you might say, was talking to people of the soil, farmers or people out in the woods. He liked to do that. He didn't want to get into the tax angle, he didn't want to get into the labor angle, he didn't want to get into

the accounting problems, and he didn't want to get into the complications of a smaller manufacturing plant. But all of that has come together to do what we're doing to try to have more markets, and we try to grow more trees. And I guess that's about what I wanted to tell you.

HKS: Thank you. This has been a good interview.