

An Interview with
WILLIAM P. LANGDALE

by
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Forest History Society
Durham, North Carolina

1991

WILLIAM P. LANGDALE

HKS: You've attended University of Georgia, Mercer, and Valdosta State College.

WPL: That's right. Back then it was Georgia State, a woman's college here. The name has been changed since then to Valdosta State. I just went in the summertime, I wasn't an outstanding student, never did take to college much. I graduated from high school in '37 and went to the University of Georgia in '38 and played some football. I wasn't on scholarship, I just went up there and played, I played a lot of freshman ball. I wasn't big enough to play tackle, and I was likely under 175 pounds easily. Back then there wasn't 300 pounders like there is now.

I went back my second year and I didn't do well and wasn't attending my studies and I ended up leaving school shortly after. I went to Mercer for a little while and didn't stay there long and came on back. Then my father sent me to the turpentine place. I was at a place called Tarver, which was at that time the biggest turpentine place in the world. It was a big double still that had several camps all around it. On pay day, which wasn't but once a month, we'd have a thousand employees there. I learned how to chip, dip. I never did work early as much as the other boys because I was the youngest I stayed around home more and stayed with my mother and all. Then I went back to school. I went to Mercer and went back to Georgia. In the meanwhile, my father had turpentine places all over the country. He had something like, I don't know, twelve or fifteen he had on Superior Pine Products land.

HKS: Down Fargo way.

WPL: Yes. He had one at Barnes and Tarver and Pineland and Fargo, and he had one at Council. The manager for Fargo left, I was there and ran Fargo for a little while, Fargo turpentine place. Then I went back to school for a brief period. I left school right after the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor. My folks didn't know where I was. I just picked up and left and I went to Columbia, South Carolina to join the National Guard. I had been in the National Guard unit here for three years during my high school days, you know, and they offered me a rank of sergeant if I'd come and sign up. So, when I got there me and another guy I'd talked into kindly going with me, and we got there and had all my luggage with me and everything, I just left, packed up and went. This was on right about my 21st birthday. I got there and they had sailed out.

So this guy wants to join the Marine Corps, and I wanted to join the Navy. So I said, "Hell, I've got a brother that's in the Navy, and he's got a cousin who's in the Marine Corps, so let us flip a coin." So we flipped a coin and he won, so we go into the Marine Corps. [laughter] And that marine guy, he was the durndest guy you'd ever seen, the recruiter. He said, "Man, you're the luckiest two people I've ever seen in my life. You've come just at the right time. The Marine Corps now is giving away booze to everybody going and giving away watches, brand new watches." Anyway, we were quite elated that we made the right decision.

We go in the Marine Corps. They put us on a bus and sent us to South Carolina, to Savannah. We got to Savannah, and I stayed in the YMCA a day or two. They carried some of us to Parris Island, and I was sworn in on my 21st birthday, in the Marine Corps. I was in the Marine Corps for, I got out in June of '45, went in in February of '42, I think it was the 10th. I stayed at Parris Island about six months. Then they sent me to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, and from there I went to American Samoa. While I was on Samoa, I'd been a private all this time, which was about like a year plus, and then I was sent to a school. I first went to the rangers and the rangers disbanded over there, didn't want to let me in. Then they sent me back to another

company and I went from there to a machine gun school, true American sport. While I was there, they decided they were going to make thirty-two second lieutenants in the field. They didn't like what they called the ninety-day wonders that had come out of college and this general, General Carwell, wasn't going to let his troops be led by that kind of officer.

HKS: What was the general's name?

WPL: General Carwell. He said he wasn't going to let his troops be led by ninety-day wonders, so I was promoted to corporal and second lieutenant the next day [laughter]. I became a second lieutenant and I went back to the same squad, the same platoon, the same company I'd been in as a private for about six months. They didn't have any kind of rank put on you to show you were second lieutenant because all of it had to go through Congress. So I came back with a little piece of adhesive tape that they put up there to show you were an officer. I didn't get any pay, didn't have any special clothes, but it was understood I was an officer. I could go up to the place and buy a case of beer and drink it, before I stayed in line to get two cans of 3.2 beer [laughter].

After that we went to Guadalcanal. It was over when we got there we got there as a clean up operation. I was selected to go on a patrol to land on Bougainville to find out, you know, the terrain and scout the area out. So I went on a submarine to Bougainville. The top ranking officer was a guy named Lewis Wilson who later became commandant of the Marine Corps, he finally made general and he's retired now. I was lieutenant and I carried my volunteers for security. I had fifteen men that led security for that inspection and we had three or four natives of the island that had lived there and then we had one Dutchman who had lived there. Then we had Lewis Wilson and we had a navy officer, I don't remember his name.

We went over on a submarine and then on rubber boats, buried the rubber boats. We landed about a mile from two thousand Japanese and went in and buried our rubber rafts, stayed on the island a couple or three days and came back out and the submarine picked us up. Later we landed right approximately the same place, and we stayed there and battled for two months. It was at that time I got invitation rank first lieutenant, got a bronze star. After we came on back to Guadalcanal, we stayed there for some more training missions. We're getting ready to go to Guam, and I was selected to come back as Quantico's instructor. They made you go back through training again. I had to go through it to lead a class of Quantico after I got out. I went through that training, and they asked me where I wanted to be assigned. I told them I wanted them to send me back to the Pacific, I liked it better in the Pacific than I did where it is spit and polish at Quantico. But I had malaria pretty bad while I was over there and they wouldn't send me back. So they sent me down to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.

When I got back to Camp Lejeune, my assignment was to train naval officers, the ones that had graduated from Annapolis that were going into the Marine Corps to orient them for Marine training. I had about ten of them, and I had to set up a schedule for training them for overseas duty. I wasn't going to go back overseas, and I felt I wouldn't do much for the war effort, so I asked to get out. I put in a letter that I needed to be terminated to come back to a critical industry. I wanted to go to work in the naval stores industry which is critical to the war effort. Nobody thought I could get through it, but I had some pretty good friends. I had Carl Vinson, his secretary in Washington, and Dick Russell, and everybody wrote that good letter.

My commanding officer was a guy named Chesty Puller, he was the most decorated man in the Marine Corps at the time, but he was very harsh on anybody wanted to get out of the service.

So somebody told me, "If you want to get out of the service, the way to do it is you've got to brag on Chesty Puller."

HKS: What was the last name?

WPL: Puller. Chesty.

HKS: I heard the name but...

WPL: I reason they called him Chesty, I think, he had all kinds of planks in his chest where he's been shot all over. But anyway, old Chesty, he got that letter. I had a letter written, signed by Carl Vinson, to me, but it was really made up by the secretary, which I don't think Carl Vinson ever saw. At that time I was captain, it said "Dear Captain Langdale, if you want to go back to serving in a critical industry where you're so much needed and you can't go back overseas in the Pacific on account of your malaria attack, you need to talk to Chesty Puller, the greatest of all the marines." I don't think he was even a colonel then, and his exploits and his rewards and all that kind of stuff. Anyway when I got that letter, I asked to see him and carried and showed him that letter. Well that sort of broke the ice.

We had to go through a chain of command to get out. He forwarded that letter, forwarded my request to get out to go to a critical industry, not recommending approval nor disapproval. Normally he would have disapproved it. So even without his approval I got out. So I got out of the service and got married on June the 10th, 1945.

When I came home I immediately went to work for the naval stores part of the Langdale Company, which was being formed at that time. And my wife and I, she was from right outside of Atlanta, we moved to Mayday, Georgia, which is a part of our landholdings just about right on the Southern Railroad, right almost east of here in Echols County. We moved down there and the man that was running that turpentine place moved away and he was moving all the labor and everything. They sent me down there to manage, try to keep labor together and try to run that place. So I lived down there about a year and a half running the naval stores operations. Had some experiences down there that are hard to believe. Then I came back...

HKS: Let's talk about those experiences.

WPL: Back in those days it was right there at the end of the war and labor was hard to get. Of course we would recruit labor for everybody and that was a big part of my job. I'd leave after I got through working six days a week; I'd leave Saturday afternoon and I'd get some moonshine whiskey and I would go to places like Crawfordville, Florida, which is down below Tallahassee. I'd carry a man with me that knew the situation, and we would get access to a few laborers and we'd give them a few drinks of that real strong moonshine. We'd tell him what good working conditions we had at Mayday, and what we could do and all, and then we had some jobs for them. The first thing you knew I had got three or four of them to come back with me. I'd bring them back to Mayday and the next Monday I'd go back and pay their account and move them.

You pay their account. Among turpentine people that was something you honored. Back then you couldn't make anybody pay the account but the way the turpentine places were run you just did. Of course I had to have a commissary and it had to be stocked with medicines of all kinds.

It had to be like the old timey remedies like 666, Black Drought, and every kind of medicine you can think of. Even stuff that, what's the name of the thing that they give to children, you know, you can't buy it now, it's a prescription deal now. You put a drop of it in a glass of water it would sort of give you a feeling of easiness when you had pain.

HKS: Were you still buying your materials through the factor system?

WPL: We had the turpentine factors. I bought also from the wholesale grocery place my uncle owned here. Groceries, wholesale groceries was a big outfit in here. I bought from them and I bought from T & R. You'd have people like that who'd call on you and sell you medicines too. Back when I was learning how to do a little turpentine work and living out there, I worked with a guy that was head of a turpentine place then named Troy Dukes. He was an old time turpentine and he knew about all the things. Like I say that was the biggest turpentine camp in the world at all. When I was there, rats would get in there and they would nibble off the bottom of some of the boxes where you had your different drugs. He'd take a gallon of moonshine whiskey and he poured half in one jug, and half in the other. He would take that half a gallon and he would put in there different things in there like Black Drought and 666 and Raymond's Little Kidney Pills, anything he had in there. He'd stir it up.

He was right there at Tarver when I was learning how to wake the labor up. He would get on the truck at four o'clock in the morning and blow the horn, and all the houses were sort of in a row, you know, and you go right out there and blow. Then you'd go and wait a little bit on the other end and come in and watch as you saw the fire coming out of the chimneys, if they had any electric lights. If there wasn't any, wake them up and then you'd go back a little later and see if all their houses were lit up. You'd find on Monday especially, we'd call it blue Monday, three, four or five houses that there wasn't any reaction to you, there wasn't anybody up. Then you knock on that door and offer them some medicine for their sickness. They were sick that day and I'd give them a glass full of this medicine mixed up with these various medicines we had and hand it to them and they'd drink it.

HKS: What was 666?

WPL: That was a cold tonic, but it was for chill and fevers. Black Drought was a big part of it. The main thing in it that made it work was a strong laxative. During the day you could ride back, and most of the outhouses were right back of the house, and you could see them coming and going about all day long. The next day they would be just as slick and pretty and nice as you'd ever seen, and they'd go to work the next day. They'd get over that. Most of them had what we called Blue Monday, it was a hangover from drinking moonshine during Friday and Saturday. We didn't pay off every week, there wasn't any money every week, but we'd pay off once a month. But they had commissary privileges, they ate out of the commissary and we took care of everyday needs.

To be a manager of a turpentine place was about a fifteen hour a day job. You would have to run the commissary, you had to haul the people to the woods, you'd have to make sure they done their work in the woods so you had to ride the woods and check on the ones that said they completed certain work, like chipping and pulling and that type thing. Then for the ones that got sick, you had to haul them to the doctor in Valdosta. If they had financial problems, you had to bail them out of that, if the furniture man was running them down, or somebody. You were acting as a financial man and a man that was issuing the medicine, carrying them to the doctor,

also you were taking care of the commissary and food needs and about everything. You were law and order too on a turpentine place. In a place like Mayday you had say thirty families, and they're just all kinds of various people. When I got there labor was short, you couldn't get people to work, and I got a lot of mine out of the prison system in Florida. They would be glad to throw them out if they wouldn't come back to Florida, if they'd come to Georgia.

HKS: I see.

WPL: I had murderers, I had every kind. I found out murder wasn't a bad offense with that kind of labor. One that was in there for fraud or something like that, you'd better not fool with. But you can in the heat of passion inflict some kind of wound on somebody else, it's a normal reaction. We always had on every turpentine place the sort of place they called the juke, and they would have a little home brew, a little dancing, a little stuff like that you know. And they had a squabble in one of those things, and most have twenty-five or thirty witnesses, and one man was cut and one man was killed. So the sheriff was very disturbed and said, "I'll get the GBI man here." So we got the GBI man.

HKS: GBI is Georgia Bureau of Investigation.

WPL: So he came in there and stayed about a week, and he investigated that thing and he checked on all of them and he came up to my house and said, "Billy, I don't believe it's any use to try anybody for murder. There's too many conflicting tales on this stuff." One man got stabbed with a cutter. They used to have tools that they used on a turpentine place and one of them was a cutter. Do you know what a cutter is?

HKS: For scarring the tree to make that...

WPL: No, a cutter is what you sharpen your tool with.

HKS: Okay.

WPL: A cutter is like a file except it's smooth on all three sides and it's real sharp. They've got whetstones then to whittle it down. But that cutter is a sharp pointed thing, like an ice pick. And many a black, he would kill with a cutter, just stick it right in him. This guy was killed with a cutter and the other guy was cut on the arm with it. But anyway, he recommended we try nobody for murder, there just wasn't enough evidence that would stand up in court to convict anybody. You know blacks have a different kind of feeling about things like that than whites. When somebody is dead and gone they'd don't seek revenge in that case. In other words that man's dead and that man's dead. Whites are not that way. They don't hold any grudges in things like that, they don't care if they're going to be convicted, you know.

One instance that I had on a turpentine place, I was very fortunate in the long run. I had a family that moved with me, they had a single boy that lived with them and they had about three or four girls and one or two younger boys. The old man dipped and all the children helped him, even the small ones would get out there sometimes and help, you know, and they did real well and they were real good workers. They had a fellow that had lived in that area and he came in there recruiting, and had a man dressed like a soldier, he was in a soldier's clothes just like he'd just gotten out of the service. He started living with them. So he worked with them and he liked those girls and he was staying with those girls.

We used to have a railroad depot in Mayday, you don't have one now. I came in one day and all of them were toting everything they could get in their hands and they had gone to the railroad depot to catch a train. I said, "Wait a minute. Where are you going?" They said, "We're just going to town." I said, "Man, you ain't going to town and taking all of this stuff. There's something here funny going on." Anyway, I got that boy off, and he told me that a guy down there in Florida, out from Gainesville, had come in there and recruited them and given them all tickets to catch the train. Then they got bus tickets and they were going on down to Florida, and he was recruiting them. And I said, "Well, y'all not going to get on this train here." It felt like some of the stuff they had was collateral so I wouldn't let them go. They went on back home and that boy came back here, the old soldier boy, said he didn't want to go there anyway, said he liked it here better. But that fellow said, "He's giving us all these tickets" and one thing and another. So I took all the tickets up.

In the meanwhile the old man, they called him back off and he was down there, and just the young ones and this here soldier boy was still here. So I says I'll tell you what, when I get through working, this was two or three weeks later, I said, "I'll just take your wife, I'll take this woman, mother of the children, I'll take her down there and we'll get him and come back." So I went down there about ten or eleven o'clock, got down there after paying off everything. It was about ten or eleven o'clock at night when I got there, and I parked outside the quarters and I let her walk on in to get him and come back out. I sat there and the mosquitoes were eating me up. I waited and waited and it got to be about twelve o'clock, and she never did come back out so I decided I'd go on in.

So I went on in and the man that ran that turpentine place knew me and he's about my age, and when I drove up he's standing in his yard so I just drove up to his house and I told him what I'd come for. He pulled a pistol on me, and I didn't know it but he called the law. While I was standing there talking to him he had the pistol just like this and lights goes up back of me. I turn to see what it was and he hit me right in the jaw and got on top of me and he kind of leant away. I leaned over and gave him a sure enough good elbow.

The biggest deputy sheriff I'd ever seen, must have weighed three hundred pounds, grabbed me and shook me like I was a baby, and made me promise that I would let this fellow move these laborers from my place. I said, "I'll sure let him let them move if he'll come and pay their accounts. It will be about \$500. If he'll come pay those accounts, I'd be glad to let them move. Don't let him send a check, because I don't have much confidence in his check." So about two days later, this was on like a Saturday and about Tuesday after that, a truck drove up and a man wanted to move them and he handed me a check for this move. I said, "I've already had that out, I don't want no check." He said, "I don't care anyway, he's paying me for the trip, I don't care whether I move them or not." So he went on back. I didn't get anything out of that thing.

The next thing I knew the FBI man came to see me. There's a judge up in Tipton, Georgia, he was a superior court judge, and they had me for peonage. Orange County superior court had me for peonage. Have you ever heard of peonage?

HKS: Yes I have.

WPL: If it hadn't been for him, I expect I'd be in bad shape. He took all my testimony and wrote it all down, and I wrote letters. This guy that give me all that trouble, I know you've heard of him, his name was Billy Belott. You ever heard of him?

HKS: Billy Belott?

WPL: Belott. He bought the state mill down at Wrightsboro. He lived down there. His granddaddy was a partner with my father down at Mayday. He moved up to Dublin, Georgia. He got to Dublin and he started buying land and one thing or another and he accumulated forty or fifty-five acres of land. He got a little ahead and he lived at Wrightsboro, and he can't buy it. He's lost his mind now, he's lost about everything, but he still owns a good bit of land, his estate does, down in Florida and won't even sell it.

Then from those days in the turpentine woods, I left there and moved. Like I said I moved back to Valdosta and at that time then was looking after turpentine places, I was in the naval stores end of the operation. At that time we had a naval stores operation, and my daddy's partner just retired up in Nashville, Georgia, that's in Berrien County, then we had a turpentine camp at Lakeland, Georgia. The other places we had partners that were on a percentage type partnership and these were run by the company, that's what I looked after for a while.

HKS: You were up to the timberlands.

WPL: My father was looking after the woods end of it, and I looked after the purchasing of timber tracts and the financing of producers such as pulpwood and the loggers and that type of thing.

HKS: Cap Eldredge, we interviewed him about twenty years ago, talked about the problem of the moonshiners around Fargo. Was it a problem to you to have moonshiners on your land?

WPL: Not really. Most of the time they didn't do you any harm, and I just didn't go where I saw it. If I saw signs that let me know they was there I just would go the other way. I guess you might have some worry that you might get implicated. We had no interest in it and avoided any contact, but we didn't try to break in on it.

HKS: So you didn't buy your moonshine from the moonshiner himself.

WPL: My moonshine days was way back yonder when we didn't have so much land. Yeah we'd buy some from them but I didn't have any other dealings with them.

HKS: Okay.

WPL: In 1960 I ran for county commissioner. I was about 40 years old then, and I was elected. The way they elected then, eight of us ran and the top three were elected and the top of the three would be chairman, so I got more votes than the eight and I was elected and took office on January 1, 1961. I served as Camden County commissioner for sixteen years. At that time I was not as close to some of the company operations as I would have been because I spent lots of time in that political end of my life. But during that period of time I served as head of the woodlands end of timber procurement. I served in that capacity right on up through, I guess three or four years ago. At that time I stepped aside and then Johnny my nephew stepped in. And of course his job is a little bit bigger than some of the roles I had because he's now president of the company and he's looking out after other interests besides what I did. You know getting back to my earlier childhood.

HKS: What was it like growing up the youngest of the brothers?

WPL: I spent more time over at Fargo than any of the rest of the boys because even when I was first born, he carried me with him when ever he went in the woods. My father was an unusual type fellow. And he is remembered. I had a letter the other day from a friend that I'd gone to his brother's funeral and there wasn't many people at the funeral. He was real old and they moved the wake. He was saying to me in this card, he appreciated me coming to the funeral and said his mother always said my father was the last of the Chesterfields.

He said that he went off to school and his aunt got him to go off to school, and she furnished the money to go to school. His daddy didn't want him to go. He said his daddy wanted him to stay, give him a turpentine place so he'd stay in the woods. But he'd been hauling out cross ties, and he said if he'd hauled out cross ties he would trip over cypress knees and that tie would fall on top on him and he said he knew that there was a better way of making a living than that.

HKS: I'm sure.

WPL: He went off to school and got his education. My daddy never was one to do much manual labor. He was one that would get up early in the morning, have a lot of energy, and he'd go to these turpentine places. He had law partners, he would leave way before day and come back after the office would close. He'd beat his law partners to the law office. Stay there longer than them. He'd put in 16, 17, 18 hours a day.

I was right with him from early childhood. He'd take me with him, and I'd have just whatever clothes I had on and I'd be five or six years old. We'd go out to the woods where you'd see these people. He would stop at a fellows named Jack Allen that was at the time living there, and he'd say, "Why don't you let Billy stay with me?" Judge would say, "If he wants to," and I'd say, "Well, that suits me," and he'd just put me out. I'd stay three or four days in the clothes I had on. They'd wash them, they'd keep me there. They lived back in the woods where you had the old feather mattresses, you know, and you'd just lay down and just bog right down in them, you know, just regular old goose feathers, where you'd start off about that thick and go down to nothing.

He left me with the Carters, Will Carter, Mann Carter, and all the family down there. I'd stay down there three or four days. I hunted a lot with my daddy, he'd take me with him. We'd go to South Carolina and he'd take me hunting with him and take me on the stand with him. We were coming out of South Carolina, he had a big turpentine place over there and we were going by the barns and he was working the turpentine on a percentage type basis. I must have been then like ten or eleven years old. We were coming out and he said to me, as we put the gun in the car between us and the seat and it would lean up against the back seat. He says, "Billy, I'm going to load this gun because we may see a turkey going out of here. If we do we'll shoot him." So we started out, that gun went off and shot right through the back of the seat and right on through the back window. He said, "Did you mash that trigger?" I said, "No, sir." So we never did figure why the gun went off.

Anyway we went on and he said, "Now, don't tell your mama nothing. Don't tell her nothing about this gun going off." So he got up before daylight and took that car and carried it somewhere and got another car to drive. And mother said, "Where's your car, Harley?" He

says, "I'm just getting something fixed on it." And he had it, they fixed it and brought it back, she never did know, destroyed the evidence.

I was always pulling jokes on my daddy, and my daddy would tolerate me. He was a great quail hunter, and back in those days, I mean you hunted so much differently than you do now. We kept about four or five dogs at the house, of course my daddy would have me dip those dogs. We kept a barrel of stuff there, creosote dip right in the back yard. I dipped those dogs every week. He sent those dogs on the turpentine place in the summer to get them tough, ready for the hunt and all. We had some awfully good dogs then. We'd go hunting, we'd stop somewhere in the woods, we'd hunt in the woods, and we'd cut quail then. We'd stop and take those dogs out four at a time, and we would leave the car, maybe not get back for three or four hours walking, and ran right in the woods.

Anyway one day he came in, and I had built me a shocking machine. I built that thing out of a Ford unit that came out of a Model T, you hooked two batteries to it and you took two wires, you took two lines from the batteries to the part of it. Then you ran two lines off and then it would shock you. The Model T didn't have a battery, you cranked it by turning that thing and hitting the switch. Anyway he come in and his feet would be wet. He'd have his boots on, and he'd start reading the paper and he'd say, "Billy, take my boots off for me." So I pulled his boots off, and I wanted to see if that old shocking machine would work. I took one of those copper wires on his big toe. And I'd come down, he'd come high as that, he says, "Billy, you know I've got a bad heart." I don't know what I'd done if my young'un had done that way, but he didn't. But he jumped high as the ceiling. [laughter]

Nearly everybody called him Judge, that's the name you'd ever hear him called by and everybody loved him, he had a good disposition, and he had a good sense of humor. He was a best man to organize. Like I say he was not one that would do much good with the labor itself. The funny thing about him is, my aunt told me one time, said she got him to ride with her to go somewhere on a trip because if you had a flat tire she'd have him to change tires, and they did have a flat tire. My daddy got out of the car, and she said, "What are you going to do, Harley?" He said, "I'm going to flag the first truck that comes by here and get him to change that." [laughter] But he put on some sliced barbecue for the ATFA that he was president some twenty-four years, he formed it and spread it.

HKS: What is the ATFA?

WPL: It was the American Turpentine Farmer's Association.

HKS: Oh.

WPL: It's a funny thing in his forming it. I was just a small boy, and I remember some of the things that were said and done and of course. I guess in your and Harley's talk you heard a lot about Bill Oettmeier. Bill Oettmeier, you know was later on the key president of Forest Farmers. But he helped my daddy, of course he formed Forest Farmers, Bill Oettmeier did, he was the one that thought that up. But my daddy and he went to Washington a lot on a lot of trips. I was home, and my daddy was the kind of fellow that he wanted you to get my mother to pack his bags. When he got ready to go he didn't pack a bag. He'd just telephone and say, "I'm going to Washington, be there about three days" and she'd lay his clothes out and have everything just right, he never touched that. I came down and put them in, he didn't carry no

bag down either.

I went there early in the morning, and I could hear he and Oettmeier talking and they were talking then about the forming of the American Turpentine Farmers Association. While he was president, he'd put on a deer hunt, it's something, two or three day affair. He would call the biggest ones together, and they would sit in his office and he was organized. If you make on the head of this, and one this and one this and one here, then he would put it aside. I've never been able to learn that, I guess he'd put it through, but he was one that could get things done. He decided, and he'd back off and let you do it. He did that all the way through his business life. He had partners in the turpentine business, the naval stores business and things like that. He never did tell them how to get the job done, and all his partners were so different. One would do it by getting out and working with labor, one would have a completely different way of doing it. But he had a keen ability to recognize what people had to do and recognize the importance of people and at the same time not try to dictate how they did it. Like I say he loved to hunt, he loved to fish. He was a great fisherman and he had a lot of politics in his life. He went to Democratic conventions when, I believe, Kennedy was nominated. Went to Los Angeles, and they tell me about a little trick they pulled on him.

He was always conservative, but some of those legislators are pretty slick kind of folks, you know some of them are still living that were on that trip. They got out there and they told him, said Judge, this was like early '60s or something like that. Says, "Judge, you ought to put on a dinner 'cause it might be a nice thing for you to do." Judge says, "Well, I might do that." Of course I'm sure he's thinking about getting a delegate to vote, talk to fifteen or twenty something like that, but he was thinking something toward two or three hundred dollars, you know like that. Anyway Frank Twig says, "I'll handle it for you," so he gets one of the fanciest place, and all the old kind of flowers thrown in, and all kinds of hors d'oeuvres and drinks and I think it was around two thousand dollars. And they said my daddy, he liked to never got over it. He'd kind of color it to tell it, and he'd laugh about it later, but they really put a good one to him. They still talk about it. I see people now sometimes that were there and they laugh about that reaction, his reaction to it. But he was some kind of fellow, and my time with him was very enjoyable.

HKS: That article in the Post in 1955, he calls you the family rouster.

WPL: He always said that he had one son who knew how to make money, he had one son who knew how to keep money, and he had one who knew how to spend money. But he always said I was the only one that ever learned the inside of a pool room. But I think that's not quite true.

HKS: Okay.

WPL: I think some of the rest of them went in there, I went in the front door and everybody's coming in the back door.

HKS: Sure.

WPL: I've been a little bit close to the people. Now John, my brother, he's close to the church group and all like that but for the everyday man, I reckon I spent more time on that. Right now my lifestyle is, I get out of bed at four o'clock, I get up at four on Sundays, holidays, weekends, of course Harley is the same way. But I go to the restaurant down here at the Gold

Plate, and I get there at 4:30 every morning. My reason for going is I like to see people, and I like to hear people and the ones that I find get up early in the morning seem to have views and news that haven't been accumulated over the day. It's their own thoughts, you know. It's not something you've read or heard. Right now you can't talk about anything but the Kennedy [rape] trial. That's been dominating for about six weeks.

My daddy went all through all the sly things, and I did and my other two brothers didn't. I'm like him, I've belonged to about everything you can belong to like the American Legion and the AmVets and the PAVs and the Elks and all this kind of things. I've always been more oriented toward people, and Harley's been more the closed-in, and we tried little different things. We've got a good relationship. One thing about my daddy, I guess he taught us all. He died when he was 84, and when he died, that afternoon he had gone fishing and caught two big nice flavored fish, come home and cleaned them. His sister who lives in Wichita, Kansas, and they had a fish fry. I had gone out that night and I got home about 10 o'clock when my mother called and said, "Come quick, it's Daddy." He was sitting there in a rocking chair, and he was practicing a turkey yelp. There was a maid that helped my mother, she was making the bed up and he gave this big yelp, and she looked over and he was slumped over in the chair and they called the doctor. I got there right when the doctor did. He was dead. That rocking chair was a great big high back rocking chair. He was and sitting right up, and he was slumped over.

HKS: That turkey caller, what did you call that?

WPL: Yelper, yelper, it yelps like a turkey. It's made out of cedar and it has a little slit to it, and it's built up on the side and you get the sound yelp, yelp, yelp, yelp like a turkey, a gobbler when he's gobbling. He called a hen with it. My daddy loved turkey hunting. They were going to pick him up at 3:30 and go turkey hunting. The day before he says, "I ain't got no business going now, boy." I said, "Daddy, why don't you just tell them you can't go."

I guess they told you that when he was like forty years old he tried to get an insurance policy. He borrowed a lot of money, and he wanted to get a hundred thousand dollar insurance policy. This Dr. Conrad Williams who was here and he examined him and said his health was good. So the insurance company canceled it, about a month after he'd paid his check, saying that they wanted to send him to another doctor. They sent him to another doctor and the doctor said he had a murmur in his heart, he was trying to buy a twenty-year policy, he was probably about forty-five when he was trying to get this policy. They canceled it out and said he had a murmur in the heart. He always laughed about the fact that he had some forty years after that they canceled that policy, this twenty-year policy. Judge had a lot of things wrong with him. He had gall bladder trouble.

One of the worse things that ever happened to him; I used to live right over here in a house that belongs to the company. My son Bill was like fifteen or sixteen.

HKS: He's a lawyer.

WPL: Yes. My daddy came by and wanted one of the boys to ride with him in the woods. Bill was tickled to death to get to drive him, so he drove in there, he came back up, he drove in and pulled aside of the house and got out and just stepped out of the car, didn't leave it in drive or nothing. The other children were out there playing, and as my daddy got under the wheel, one of the young'uns squealed. He hit the brakes and hit the gas and took off and he hit a huge oak

tree and it broke him up right in here. And he was 72 years old when this happened. And it's broken all to pieces.

My daddy got on very well, and he rode a horse all the time and deer hunted, now he'd shoot off that horse. He was telling a joke about he got on this horse one time and he asked this black sister can you shoot off this horse. "Yassir." So he got on him and a deer came by and he shot him and the horse threw him, he said, "I thought you said you could shoot off this horse." "Yassir, I did say you could shoot of the horse, but I didn't say you could stay on the horse after you shot." [laughter]

He graduated from Mercer, and of course we've got the picture in yonder of his class. He was in his Mercer law class, and he graduated in 1912, and my son Bill, graduated in the Mercer law class of 1972, exactly 60 years later. Judge went to that graduation. When Bill first was going to law school, he'd come to talk to my daddy and that was one of the most enjoyable things. Daddy wasn't like John my brother, you could ask him a legal question and he'd give you an answer just like that. But if you were to ask John a legal question, you'd get a long answer. He would read you what the law books say. But my daddy was not that way. They used to say about my daddy; they said he had a cramp if you asked him to sign a deed. He just couldn't sign a deed to land, he just didn't agree to that, but he bought up things. Back in the old days we used to have around those flatwoods, we used to have things like hog clings, where hogs could go wild, you know, run wild. So he'd have a cling, you'd mark them with a certain mark and my daddy's mark was a swallow fork and an underbit in each ear.

HKS: What was it?

WPL: A swallow fork and underbit in each ear. In other words, right up under there, there would be a cut right here, that was the underbit and the swallow fork was up here.

HKS: Okay, on the ears.

WPL: On the ears like this here. You'd cut out a plug here and a plug here [gestures] and that's the underbit and this is the swallow fork. Some of the cows he had he branded with an SA. He'd brought this fellow out, his brand was SA. Of course my daddy's, later on his brand was HL. And then all the stock was run out with other people's stock and you'd get them up. Then you'd try to get the calf that belonged to your cow and make sure you got yours wherever you could find them. Back then people worked together. I don't know how many cows he ever had, but I know in Council alone they probably had a thousand. But up in South Carolina, they ran that turpentine place in the woods, and he had some of the finest cows you've ever seen, three or four or five hundred of them, just showed us the cows out in the woods.

I heard people say that my daddy would buy a claim from a fellow, and they'd get them up and there'd be thirty or forty or fifty cows, and they'd agree on the price, and he'd pay him. That would be his claim. He'd go back a year later and then get those same cows up and he would say, "Where is that potted cow that was here last year? I don't see her, where is she?" They stick together cows would, in certain ranges. They wouldn't go too far, seven, eight miles they'd travel. Those hogs were what we called the old piney wood rooters, nose would be about that long, a foot. They said the way you can balance out is grab him by his ears and there's just about as much in front as there is in the back. [laughter]

Mother always worried about where they're going to get meat from five years from now. You know they didn't even fatten a hog until he was five years old. You leave them on the range and all, and he really wouldn't fatten much until he got a lot of age on him, while he was young he wouldn't fatten. My daddy loved hogs, he loved hogs better than any part of life I think, of the agricultural and farming. His daddy could call a hog he said for three or four or five miles. He would go out in the woods and spend the night and call hogs. He said in the morning he'd look around and there would be three or four hundred hogs that he'd called up during the night. They'd feed those hogs a little corn, and they would separate them and get the ones they wanted to keep and leave the others and tote them some twenty-five or thirty miles and trade them to a fellow that made wine. They'd give him the hogs for wine, they'd bring the barrels of wine back and put it in the commissary and sell it to the employees. John showed you this thing on J. W. Langdale.

HKS: That's right, it's right here.

WPL: He had in the Civil War a grandfather and two uncles that went off to the Civil War and none of them were ever heard from after they left. And, of course living where they lived on down on the Okefenokee Swamp it was hard to write them a note, but they didn't want to go but they joined. Since that time they've already found where two of them died, where their burial place is up here. And just recently they found in Augusta, one of them's dead in Augusta. The reason he's buried in Augusta, Georgia, is the train stopped in Augusta and there was a hospital there. I don't know whether he was wounded in the battle or had some kind of sickness, but they found out where two of them are, I think both of them were in the battle of Shiloh or Vicksburg, one or the other.

HKS: When you went to work in the lumber side of it, were you involved in land purchases?

WPL: Yes. I handled mostly the Berrien County, Lanier County, and the areas in Cook County, the areas up in that is where I did most of the land purchasing I did and...

HKS: Did you look for cutover land, did you look for standing timber, what were you looking for?

WPL: We tried to buy land with timber on it. We didn't never buy much cutover land. Harley was purchasing land, and he first started the operation in the pulpwood business. A lot of the land we got changed through our pulpwood people that we had working for us. We had a guy that would buy a piece of land and cut the timber and bring the timber to us and put the land up for collateral and then lay it on the side to sit until something came back with it. But most of the land we bought quicker. Daddy, a lot of land he accumulated, he showed me he had a lot of land one time that a man gave him, clear title. Of course he got a lot of land for 25 cents an acre.

HKS: You were still in the naval stores business at the time you were buying land?

WPL: Yes. I would leave to go up to Nashville, Georgia, and Lakeland and places like that. The people that owned the place, they would know of land that was for sale. It wasn't worth so much then, you know. It wasn't like it is now. About everything that sells now has gone through some kind of consultant. Back in those days there wasn't so many consultants, and there wasn't a lot of advertisement where you're going to have an auction or this type of thing. It was

just somebody who wanted to sell his land and it's approximately this and that. We made some awfully good purchases. Up in Berrien County, we bought some land for nine and ten dollars an acre that it wasn't that many years after that you could cut twice that much timber off of it.

HKS: Sure.

WPL: When I first started fooling with the timber business, you pay like \$5 a cord for pulpwood. Nobody ever dreamed pulpwood would ever bring \$30 or \$40 a cord. Of course saw timber was like \$18 a thousand and nobody ever thought you'd get up to \$200 and some odd dollars per thousand for saw timber.

HKS: I suppose if we saw the future better we'd all be better off.

WPL: My daddy saw the future better than anybody I ever saw. Somebody said, "Yep, what would it do to you if they strike oil on your land." He said, "That would ruin my family. I hope they never strike oil." I don't know whether he ever meant it or not, but he sure said that.

HKS: Is there any oil in this part of the South?

WPL: They have drilled and drilled and drilled and Georgia's got all kind of things. There's all kinds of rumors that there's going to be oil, you know. About the best mineral that they've gotten under the soil is phosphate, plenty of phosphate here. I don't think it takes much land to produce much phosphate. I think the big part about mining phosphate is getting your money when you sell it. There are countries that really need it, I don't think they have the money to pay for it. There's plenty of phosphate in Echols County, maybe in all that land down there. But oil, I don't know whether they'll strike oil.

HKS: There's oil in Louisiana.

WPL: There's an old fellow used to live up in Berrien County. He was in school with my daddy. For a while we leased his turpentine timber and worked it and paid him a percentage. That was some of the land I was looking at up there, and while he was on his deathbed.

Did y'all never sell any land. Never sell land that you've got up here around mine here in Berrien county. There's a German geologist came in here, was in here for several months, he drilled around and said there's definitely oil in this particular land right in here. I don't know whether that's really true or not. But you know they had that all drilled, and they've got signs up, oil. I couldn't tell you how many wells have been drilled all over this country.

HKS: The water table's high here, right?

WPL: It is in certain times, it's not as high as it used to be. I can remember when I was on that turpentine lace down at Tarver, part of my job was to put down a pump. The way we put those pumps out, we'd put a strain on the end of a pump pipe and take a maul. You know what a maul is?

HKS: Yes.

WPL: Take a maul and put a cap on that thing and drive it down in the ground, put another pipe on it, drive it down, put another pipe in and drive it a little bit, then put a pump on it and prime

it and you'd have water. Sometimes you could do it in thirty or forty minutes or an hour, in no time. Down in this section through here, we have what's called hard pan. You can see it in beds, and it would be right for 12, 14 inches deep. It looks like lime or something, tight, compacted, hard, white. When you go through that thing you hit moisture at the roots. That's the one reason they say that longleaf pine doesn't do good down there. Slash roots will penetrate that and longleaf doesn't. It doesn't grow as well. In a real wet time it might penetrate it, but that's a problem, that hard pan.

HKS: It must make it hard to log certain times of the year.

WPL: I'll tell you one thing about logging, there are two or three signs you can always tell that you can go in this country and log it. Usually if you see palmettos growing, you can generally unload your logging equipment and log most any time. And if you don't see palmettos and you see gall berries you'd better keep your logging equipment on your truck. [laughter] Now that's sort of a rule of thumb. Back when I was financing loggers, there's a lots of telltale things that will tell you whether you ought to finance a fellow. You didn't go to the credit bureau. When a fellow comes in here, and he'll tell you about his need for a pulpwood truck. Back in the days when Harley started, I guess he told you, he one time was shipping pulpwood in seventy counties in Georgia. He was doing it then on a bill-of-lading type deal. He would go ahead, and when he first got it, he didn't have it like he wanted it, he had some foresters with him and he had one bookkeeper.

They were shipping like a couple of hundred cars of pulpwood, and they were shipping it to about three or four different paper mills all over the country. But the guy come in here, he'd never seen us before, and he wanted to get some help. We helped him get a pulpwood truck, and he was going to pick up the bill of lading. The bank sent him a draft for that bill of lading. That made him just go. You'd put the man on the wood, and you watched him operate all the way through, it was just one of the deals where had the independent operators out there doing it, there wasn't so many regulations and everything. But when you financed these producers like we ended up doing...

HKS: I want to understand. You're shipping pulpwood off your land?

WPL: No. We're shipping pulpwood in timber tracts I'd purchased and put the man on. Sometimes he'd buy some on his own, but most of it I had purchased. It could be timber off our land. But we didn't ever cut over 25 or 30 percent of our land, ever. We were always buying from the outside. Making leases, you know.

HKS: You were buying pulpwood from other owners, and you would ship it to the mills.

WPL: That's right. Of course in Harley's day, he did some of both. All in all you'd ship it to some fellow on the Alabama line, and you didn't even see what that fellow was doing. All you know he'd give you a bill of lading, and he'd get a draft for it. You wasn't right on top of anything. But when I got into it, the financing was something that you could lose money right easily. It wasn't big money, but it was big money for little guys and percentage wise.

HKS: You were in effect a pulpwood factor?

WPL: We were shipping to pulpwood companies and getting our commission. We was doing the financing of these different producers, and they'd come in every Friday. They'd always

want to get an advance on wood they'd ship and that type thing. See the mill came here, I believe about 1955. But before that we shipped everything by rail.

One of the things I learned quite early in life was if a man wants to come in here, and he's giving you all kinds of tales about how he good he's going to do and all the things he's got going for him, if you'll go to wherever his workplace is or his house and it's all cluttered up with all kinds of all pieces of motors and everything, grass growing up, you don't want to finance that fellow. If you find a little orderly arrangement there, you can sure finance him. But you better not go ahead in the other way. Now that's as good a circumstance as you can do. We had all kinds of equipment, you know. Way back yonder there wasn't many different ones. I know you're acquainted with all the new-fangled stuff now, but back in those days when you first started off with a saw it was a cross-cut saw. I had one producer that stayed with it right on a good many years. That's all he used, cross-cut. Then of course you've got one with the rubber wheel tires, the big wheels and then you had a round type blade, you know, before the chain saw. But there's been a lot of changes in that thing.

HKS: It takes a lot more capital now.

WPL: It takes a lot more capital, it sure does. It takes a lot better operator. The ones that you finance that have been in it all their lives, and we've got some that their daddy never did do anything but cut timber for us, and the children right back of him. They've always got equipment, and they're not buying all of it at one time. But you take a guy trying to go in new, buy all the equipment, he's got to cut gold.

HKS: Sure.

WPL: You can't hardly get into any kind of operation now for less than one hundred fifty, two hundred thousand dollars. Big investment for an average fellow.

HKS: Some of the other things you've done. Being vice-president of the Langdale Ford Company, is that...

WPL: That has not been so crushing. We got in that Ford business like twenty-eight or nine years ago. It had gone sort of down to rock bottom and...

HKS: Was that an existing agency?

WPL: It was an existing agency. We got it really for about nothing, because they'd gone broke. One of the guys that was there was a conservative type fellow, and he'd gone broke a time or two in his life but he was very conservative and he took that thing over and he just suited us to a tee, because he didn't try to expand too fast. I just called on him to keep our interests informed and one thing and another, and I never did get involved any more. We made money every year for practically twenty-five years.

It was just a steady growth and everything, he went from a corporation worth thirty or forty thousand dollars to a corporation worth maybe in the two or three hundred thousand dollars, four hundred thousand. But in the last two or three years it's been just the other way. It's gone down, and we've got terrible times now. We've got a new manager in there, and he's spreading some new fashioned ways and a lot of spending and he has not been productive, he's been

financially a catastrophe. Of course, I don't know how he would have done under good economic times, these times haven't been good to him.

HKS: You always drive Fords, you don't buy Chevrolets?

WPL: Total. See that's a point, my daddy used to always drive Chevrolets. He used to brag on Chevrolets, and Daddy was the kind of guy used to go over to the coffee club and he always expounded and talked to everybody. He started driving Fords after we bought it. I said, "Judge, I thought you always bragged on Chevrolets." He said, "Well, since we got involved they're doing a little better." [laughter]

HKS: You still are on the Flue-Cured Tobacco Stabilization Board?

WPL: No. I was a director of the Flue-Cured Tobacco Stabilization Board. I'll tell you how I got to be director. I always looked after the farms on those lands up there, but I never was strong in the farming end of it. We had a guy named Phil Campbell that went on to Washington, I guess it was in the '60s. He had a guy that was on the stabilization board from Georgia and he wanted to beat him and he knew that the Langdale name would get him some votes. He talked me into offering my name, and I was elected to that thing and served on it right at three years and I got off. I went to it in Georgia and had to go to Raleigh once a month, and it was a good thing to get involved in. I met a lot of people, but I didn't stay very active in it and very little tobacco farming did I ever do.

HKS: The main issue was price stabilization?

WPL: Just like the American Turpentine Farmers Association, except it was dealing with the tobacco runs and not naval stores price. In other words, what they did was set the minimum price on the leaf of tobacco, and when it sold the farmers that were members could put theirs in stabilization and then we put it in storage. They've got a good program, they've got it on a good basis now, it's no cost to the government now. We're still members, though.

HKS: I can't in a few days learn all about all the different family companies there are and how they interact. The Langdale Company is the holding company.

WPL: The Langdale Company is the holding company.

HKS: Okay. The major amount of your time over the years was with the Langdale Timber Company.

WPL: Truly, the Langdale Company was my employer over the years. Most of the time I was serving we didn't have the Langdale Industries, and the Langdale Forest Products, these things, they're like five, six, seven, eight, ten years old. See I went to work here in 1945, see that's 46 years ago.

HKS: Right.

WPL: So it's just been a small percentage of that time these other companies even existed. Of course Langdale Woodlands has always been here. Langdale Woodlands, you know, owns about eight thousand acres and that land was owned primarily by my father and Harley and my uncle.

Of course Langdale Timber Company is one they thought it would be better to buy land. My sister and my brother own it and it's good stuff. A good operator he's going sit here buy and sell timber and operate farms and stuff like that. Langdale Industries is the umbrella that goes over Langdale Forest Products, which is your manufacturing unit. You've got Langdale Tire and Langdale Saw and the factory manufacturing lumber here, all these other corporations come up under it. All of them are not large, they don't own any land to speak of. All they do is own the operation end of it.

HKS: But your time over the years has been in the field and the forest, as opposed to the mills?

WPL: Correct, that's right. I spent a lot of time just to carry that title of public relations, being with people. I'm now within a few months of four years on that DOT board. I'm a second congressional district board member, DOT.

HKS: What do you do there? What's the Department of Transportation board do?

WPL: We got a billion dollars of budget that we spend. We allocate as a board member. I represent the second congressional district, it's thirty-two counties. I go halfway up the state and then I go across to Alabama, and then back to Florida. My main job is to represent these thirty-two counties. Most everybody has road problems, and they need to get financing from the state. And we have, we've got two different highway district offices, one at Tifton and one up at Thomasville. If they've got any kind of problems, they come to me on that. We meet once a month in Atlanta, and we approve the roads that are going to be let the following month. We approve the roads at the meeting, and the next month we approve the different highways that are going to be improved or what's going to be helped. Allocated by district, so much for each district.

We had an interesting thing happen back while ago. We're a constitutional board and we hire the commissioner and the commissioner hires the deputy commissioner with our approval. Then he runs it under our guidance, and the only recourse we've got is to fire him. We can fire him at any time, he just works as secretary to the board. The governor decided he was going to change the commissioner. Several governors have decided that they wanted to change it. So this governor he really got everything going, he decided he was going to change that thing. So we had an awfully good man, and he was going to retire anyway in March, but he just sped up the process and got him out a little early, and we all went our own way. Of course he had the governor, lieutenant governor, and the speaker all with him, you know, but it worked out very nice. The man we've got there now has got a good background. I think he's going to be a good man and it worked out good. We've got money problems like everybody else.

HKS: Now Bob is your son, right?

WPL: Bob and Bill. Bob is an engineer and he graduated Georgia Academy and Georgia Tech. He's an awfully dedicated kind of fellow. Bill, my lawyer son has been very, very successful.

HKS: He's general counsel for the company.

WPL: He's general counsel, and he's done very very well. My daddy started several law firms, and he wanted to get him in one of the law firms that's the biggest in the county. I tell you Bill has done awfully well, his firm is just getting better and better and better, and now he's just

turned into gold, he's an outstanding judge of his clients and he's very active, he flies his own airplane. I don't know how much he's made, but he's spent a lot of money.

HKS: So it's John and Bob are the two in that generation that are active in the company.

WPL: Yes. I think Bill would come out here but at the time he wouldn't have suited Harley 100 percent, because Bill believes in playing hard. The son he's got just graduated from college and he's going to work in Atlanta. But he's done well, that boy has. Bill got a divorce from his wife when that young'un was two years old and we raised him, my wife and I did. My wife is like his mother, he goes to her with all his problems. Bill would have come here I think, but Harley and I didn't want to pay any kind of salary that was needed and he got somewhere else, so he's done better on his own. So one day I would assume he'd probably come back here, because I don't know how much longer anymore he'd hold on. If Langdale Company sticks on like it is now, I would look for him to come back. Bob is the kind of guy that's a detailed kind of guy and Bill's different, Bill's more like my father. He depends on other people and assigns it out and expects them to get it out. Bob is the kind of fellow like myself, he wants to see it put in there, he wants to be on top of it while it's going on.

HKS: Maybe tomorrow I go to the OSB plant. Bob's been very influential in designing equipment.

WPL: Yes. Bob's the kind of guy that if he puts anything down it will be put down so well. I can tell you things he put down twenty years ago that's as strong today as the day he put it down. It's just as good as the day he put it down. He took a swing one time when his children were real small so it would hold up to two thousand pounds I believe it was, thirty-five young'uns. He doesn't do anything except do it with the thought that it's going to last right on.

HKS: The changes in market and technology can make land management change. I mean with OSB, you can use a lot of material that maybe twenty years ago wasn't marketable.

WPL: That's right.

HKS: So the work that you were doing then is much different now, the field work. Land purchase, you're looking for different kinds of things.

WPL: That's right.

HKS: Is there something more that you think we should talk about?

WPL: Looking back over my life, sometimes it's a pity, and I think all young people will have the same problem in the future that I had as a young person. Some of the happier moments of my life were living back on that turpentine place and living right there in that small community. At the time there were a lot of hours put in, but they weren't unpleasant hours and there were not problems like you have today. They were problems that were solvable, you could solve yourself. A lot of problems we had you could solve with hay wire. You get gum with what we call a Hoover wagon, you know what a Hoover wagon is.

HKS: No, I'm not familiar with that term.

WPL: Well you know back right at the end, just getting over the depression and...

HKS: Yes, there was a Hooverville, a Hoover holidays, Hoover...

WPL: Everything got named Hoover. Anyway, you put rubber tires on a wagon, and a mule could pull it, and that's what you dipped gum on. It would be easy to pull. A barrel of gum would weigh five hundred or some odd pounds and you could put eight or ten barrels on there...

HKS: That's Hoover wagon.

WPL: They called it Hoover wagon. It had shafts on it, just a regular wagon and hubs that you grease. But when anything would break down, take hay wire. We had a lot of hay wire then. We fed the mules the very finest hay, and we'd buy hay from North Carolina. We didn't feed them just any kind of old hay. And it would have wire around it, didn't have strings like it has now. That wire would accumulate, and if anything got broke, shaft or anything like that you could wire it together with that hay wire to keep it going. But those days, like I say, you look at minutes going fishing to catch all the fish you want. There wasn't any deer in this country back in those days. We didn't have any deer come into this country until we killed the screw worms. You don't remember screw worms do you?

HKS: I didn't know it affected wildlife. I know it was very important to cattle.

WPL: The deer would fight, you know, and they was fighting one another and fighting and somebody would shoot one and the screw worms would get in and kill one. You'd see a cow, and you could tell she had screw worms. And you'd go catch that cow and tie her down and put medicine in to kill the screw worms and you could just see them in there working. Kill them and then put that tar over it and you could save them a heap of times, that was way back yonder.

One thing I can remember back on one of those turpentine places, in the commissary we didn't have any refrigeration. We had a lot of salt meat. Of course the laborers, they ate a lot of salt meat and they couldn't have done without it. When I first came back out of the war, we had to have ration coupons to get meat. There was a black market where you could pick up some meat, it wasn't the best quality meat but you could buy it and you always got that meat to give that black laborer. They moved around in different places and we had a coupon to get meat. So to be able to sell meat without coupons you had to run that dadgone thing out.

Every now and then you want some fresh beef, and you could get some old cows, ten or twelve years old and you could burn off that wild grass in March, and that wild grass was sort of growing real good and those cows would fatten up real good. You could go out there and shoot one of those old cows and dress her right there and that was the prettiest meat, the best flavor and just as tender as any beef you ever ate. We'd do that. It would last a day or two, before we keep it on three rations a day or two...

HKS: Times change. Now they want fresh fruit, fresh vegetables and all...

WPL: Freezer locker. I don't know where we're better off or not. We've got a lot of conveniences, that I know. I've put stuff in the freezer for a long time and go get it and it's very nastier than it was.

HKS: Thank you very much. This has been an interesting interview.