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Abner Clinton Hedgepeth
Interviewee

Rt 2

Monticello, Miss.
Address

Priscilla P. Johansen
Director
Lincoln-Lawrence-Franklin
Regional Library

July 18, 1978
Date of Agreement

The lumber industry in Lawrence County, MS.

Subject of Tape(s)

Lincoln-Lawrence-Franklin Regional Library
Oral History
Data Sheet

FULL NAME Abner Clinton Hedgepeth

ADDRESS Rt. 2, Monticello, MS, c/o Dude Davis PHONE _____

BIRTHPLACE Beat Three, Lawrence County, MS DATE OF BIRTH September, 1890

EDUCATION Sixth grade - Bethel Schoolhouse

OCCUPATION Logger; Road foreman; Grade foreman; Public work; Sawmill-
ing; Cattle buyer

TRAVELS Eastern United States

SPOUSE'S FULL NAME 1st - Ellen Smith; 2nd - Inez Boyd; 3rd - Alma Duncan

BIRTHPLACE _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

OCCUPATION _____

NUMBER OF CHILDREN Seven (7)

NAMES OF CHILDREN

Ozzie Lee Hedgepeth

Ellen Hedgepeth

Edward Hedgepeth

Clifton Hedgepeth

Mattie Lou Hedgepeth

Raised Lloyd Powell

Willie Jay Hedgepeth

A. C. Hedgepeth

FATHER'S FULL NAME Warren Abner Hedgepeth

BIRTHPLACE Unknown DATE OF BIRTH _____

OCCUPATION Farmer

MOTHER'S FULL NAME Martha Lambert

BIRTHPLACE Beat Three, Lawrence County, MS DATE OF BIRTH _____

OCCUPATION Homemaker

MAJOR NATIONAL AND/OR LOCAL EVENTS OF IMPORTANCE DISCUSSED _____

INTERVIEWEE'S AREA OF INTEREST AND/OR CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY _____

Siber Lumber Company; Bogulusa Lumber Company; Picayune Lumber Company;

Denkman Lumber Company; Moss Tie Company (crossties); Logging with oxen;

Wages; Goots Lumber Company; Cattle buying;

An Interview with
Abner Clinton Hedgepeth
March 23, 1977

Interviewed by
Evelyn Benham

Mississippi
Department of Archives and History
and the
Lincoln-Lawrence-Franklin Regional Library
Oral History Project
Monticello and Vicinity

BENHAM: This is an interview with Abner Clinton Hedgepeth, Lawrence County Medic Center, Monticello, Mississippi, March 23, 1977. Interviewed by Evelyn Benham. Mr. Hedgepeth, what is your full name?

HEDGEPEETH: Abner C. Hedgepeth.

BENHAM: And what does the "C" stand for?

HEDGEPEETH: Clint. That's what I go by, Clint or A. C., one.

BENHAM: And what is your address?

HEDGEPEETH: Monticello.

BENHAM: Well, the Medic Center.

HEDGEPEETH: Monticello, Route 2, Dude Davis is where all my mail goes.

BENHAM: Oh, it does?

HEDGEPEETH: Yes, ma'am.

BENHAM: I see, but do you stay here at the Medic Center?

HEDGEPEETH: I stay here, but my mail comes down to his house. He's right out there, you see.

BENHAM: Yes, I see. All right.

HEDGEPEETH: My mail all comes there.

BENHAM: And where is that? Route what?

HEDGEPEETH: Route 2, Dude Davis.

BENHAM: Dude Davis. In Monticello?

HEDGEPEETH: Monticello. His name is Jewel, but everybody calls him Dude. And that's the way my mail comes.

Page Two: Hedgepeth

BENHAM: When were you born?

HEDGEPEETH: In September, 1890.

BENHAM: Where were you born?

HEDGEPEETH: Beat 3, Lawrence County.

BENHAM: Did you work away from your home?

HEDGEPEETH: Not very much. Don't now at all, of course, but I've always made it convenient to go home at night, been where I could go home at night.

BENHAM: What is your father's full name?

HEDGEPEETH: Warren Abner.

BENHAM: What?

HEDGEPEETH: Hedgepeth.

BENHAM: When was he born? Do you remember?

HEDGEPEETH: I don't remember.

BENHAM: Where was he born?

HEDGEPEETH: I don't know.

BENHAM: What kind of work did your father do?

HEDGEPEETH: Farmed all his life.

BENHAM: What is your mother's maiden name?

HEDGEPEETH: Martha Lambert.

BENHAM: When was she born?

HEDGEPEETH: I wouldn't know.

BENHAM: Where was she born?

HEDGEPEETH: Well, I'll say Beat 3, Lawrence County.

BENHAM: Was your mother a homemaker?

HEDGEPEETH: A what, now?

Page Three: Hedgepeth

BENHAM: A homemaker.

HEDGEPEETH: She stayed home.

BENHAM: Right, that's what I mean. Did she stay at home?

HEDGEPEETH: Stayed at home and raised ten (10) children.

BENHAM: That's remarkable. Where did you go to school?

HEDGEPEETH: Bethel.

BENHAM: And where is this?

HEDGEPEETH: Three (3) miles out of Monticello, Bethel Church, all the schooling I ever went right there.

BENHAM: How long did you go to school?

HEDGEPEETH: Oh, I wouldn't have no idea. Off and on, but not ever regularly.

BENHAM: Well, what grade did you stop in?

HEDGEPEETH: About the sixth, fifth or sixth, something like that.

BENHAM: And what was the name of the school?

HEDGEPEETH: Bethel.

BENHAM: How did you get to school?

HEDGEPEETH: Walked two (2) miles.

BENHAM: I know. I did a lot of walking to my school too when I was growing up.

HEDGEPEETH: We did, too.

BENHAM: What did you do after you quit school?

HEDGEPEETH: I went to logging for the Siber Lumber Company down here in Pearl River County.

BENHAM: How old were you?

Page Four: Hedgepeth

HEDGEPEETH: I was, I think when I left home I think I was sixteen (16). But I just worked around before I could get a job for a boy until I got old enough to take a public job and then I went to working for the Siber Lumber Company and from that I went to the Bogalusa Lumber Company and worked there.

BENHAM: How do you spell that first company? How do you spell it?

HEDGEPEETH: Siber Lumber Company. I wouldn't know.

BENHAM: You don't. All right. Can you give me a rundown on the different jobs that you had?

HEDGEPEETH: All in my life?

BENHAM: Yes, right. Tell me some of them right now.

HEDGEPEETH: Well, sawmilling.

BENHAM: All right.

HEDGEPEETH: Logging, road foreman, grade foreman.

BENHAM: You already said sawmilling for...

HEDGEPEETH: Yes, ma'am. I was fixing to tell who for then. But I have put it all in one, sawmilling, that's all. And cattle buyer, that's my last, that's my last work. I hauled for twenty (20) years.

BENHAM: All right. What year was it when you became a road foreman?

HEDGEPEETH: I wouldn't know. I was thirty-four (34) years old when I took the road for four (4) years. Road foreman.

BENHAM: But you don't know what year it was?

HEDGEPEETH: I don't know what year it was. I just can't remember that way.

BENHAM: Well, what did you do as a road foreman? What were your duties?

HEDGEPEETH: I was boss over the road. I told them what to do. And I

Page Five: Hedgepeth

ran the machine and laid out the work for the other hands all the time.

Supervisor had nothing to do with it. He'd tell anybody asked him anything, "That isn't my job. That's Clint's job. Mine's in Monticello." I hired and fired every man I had. They were working for me, not him. And he'd tell them that quick if they asked him.

BENHAM: What road did you take care of?

HEDGEPEETH: I worked Beat 3, all of Beat 3 roads.

BENHAM: And where is Beat 3?

HEDGEPEETH: Down here around Divide.

BENHAM: What did you do as a grade foreman?

HEDGEPEETH: I just saw that the men worked building railroads. And I just stayed there. I didn't work. Superintendent caught me working in the gravel pit. He called me out and said, "Don't you know better than to do that?" I said, "Why?" "If you are trying to work a bunch of men and you work, they're going to want to work just like you do and if you'll stand there and tell them what to do, then they'll work." That taught me something. That's where I became a labor foreman. Right there, I made it. I knew what to do from then on. When I was foreman, I didn't do anything. I just saw it was done and I played that many years on different things. Now, I worked there in Bogalusa a long time for that Picayune Lumber Company, but I was just driving a log team and I had nothing to do, but when I left there he asked me would I come back when they started to shut it down, asked me would I come back. I told him "yes" is he'd let me know. He said, "Now, your job is different when you come back. You come here as an ox driver, but you are a woods foreman, that's what you need. You're a labor foreman and that's what

Page Six: Hedgepeth

you're going to have," but they never did start. I came on back here and married.

BENHAM: Well, wait, before we get any further, I want to get back to this. When you were the grade foreman you said you built railroads.

HEDGEPEETH: I built railroads.

BENHAM: What was one of the railroads?

HEDGEPEETH: For the Denkman Lumber Company, Railroad through the woods, you know, logging railroads. Spurs and things, we called them,

BENHAM: I see. Can you tell me the year that you did that?

HEDGEPEETH: No, ma'am, I can't.

BENHAM: Well, can you tell me the year that you were sawmilling?

HEDGEPEETH: I can't. I never recollect, I never tried to keep up with anything like that. I just did the work and went ahead.

BENHAM: Well, how did you get interested in the logging and sawmilling operations? How did you get interested in doing that?

HEDGEPEETH: I got into it with Jap Davis. Went in partnership with him. And me and him ran a long time, several years, and then that left me - we quit. We thought all the timber was gone and we quit. And then I went to doing other things, working four (4) years for - me and Ulman Davis - for the Moss Tie people. We sawmilled it. Columbia and at Arm, ran two (2) mills; one until it'd catch up logging with one, while they logged the other one. That's the way we handled it.

BENHAM: Well, what was your job at the sawmill?

HEDGEPEETH: Labor foreman. I did nothing but see it was going on.

BENHAM: Did you have any other duties?

Page Seven: Hedgepeth

HEDGEPEETH: Not a bit, only paying off.

BENHAM: How were the trees cut in the woods?

HEDGEPEETH: The timber cut in the woods?

BENHAM: Yes.

HEDGEPEETH: They were sawed in double lengths most of them and brought to the mill and I cut them on the yard.

BENHAM: And how were the trees gotten out of the woods?

HEDGEPEETH: By trucks and horses and mules.

BENHAM: Did you ever use any oxen?

HEDGEPEETH: Oh, Lord, I've used a many and I have driven a many many a day.

BENHAM: Well, did they help to bring the trees out?

HEDGEPEETH: Not when I was on. That was all played out, oxen. Mules and trucks, they took it, you see, then.

BENHAM: How were the logs taken to the mill?

HEDGEPEETH: On those trucks and wagons. I've hauled with eight-wheel log wagons and all like that.

BENHAM: What kind of power was used to run the saw?

HEDGEPEETH: A motor. Just a motor is all I can say. We had a motor engine.

BENHAM: What kind of timber did Lawrence County grow when you were logging?

HEDGEPEETH: Mostly pine. We wouldn't fool with anything else much, only in cutting oak crossties. We'd cut them.

BENHAM: Was the timber ever shipped out of the county?

Page Eight: Hedgepeth

HEDGEPEETH: It was all shipped out. We were cutting crossties now, you see, then.

BENHAM: Can you remember where some of the places it was shipped to?

HEDGEPEETH: No, ma'am, I don't know any place. I had nothing to do with the shipping. Even I didn't have to load them or anything. I just racked them on the railroad.

BENHAM: How was it shipped out?

HEDGEPEETH: By train.

BENHAM: Where was the lumber shipped to? But you said you didn't know.

HEDGEPEETH: I don't know.

BENHAM: Did you have a planing saw at the mill? A planing saw?

HEDGEPEETH: A planer? No, we didn't run any planer, we just sawed it rough. Aged it and all.

BENHAM: And so it came out of there, you shipped it just rough. You didn't ship it planed?

HEDGEPEETH: We just racked it and then the company did the coming and getting and shipping and hauling. We had nothing to do with that.

BENHAM: You just cut the lumber and shipped it out rough?

HEDGEPEETH: Cut the timber, cut what lumber off of it down to a cross-tie, you see.

BENHAM: Oh, yes, I see. Yes, I see what you mean.

HEDGEPEETH: That's the way we did them.

BENHAM: Well, what other kinds of equipment did you have at the sawmill?

HEDGEPEETH: Nothing but a loader and a sawmill. We had a loader on the yard to load the logs on the ramp. Pick them up and load them.

Page Nine: Hedgepeth

BENHAM: Well, was the lumber cut into different sizes like two-by-fours and two-by-sixes?

HEDGEPEETH: No, ma'am. No, ma'am, It was cut in any kind of lumber it would make. We didn't fool with two-by-fours, It was lumber. But it's all eight-and-a-half feet long.

BENHAM: I see. Well, how wide was it? Do you remember?

HEDGEPEETH: Well, we cut six-by-eights. Mostly six-by-eights.

BENHAM: And you said you cut crossties.

HEDGEPEETH: Well, that's what I'm talking about - six-by-eight crossties.

BENHAM: And what were those crossties made from? What kind of wood?

HEDGEPEETH: Oak and gum. Mostly oak in those days.

BENHAM: Well, why was that?

HEDGEPEETH: Well, they just didn't fool with anything else much.

BENHAM: Was oak wood a more superior wood?

HEDGEPEETH: I wouldn't know why the company preferred that, but they'd take them and creosote them and put them out on the railroad.

BENHAM: Can you remember what the sawdust was used for?

HEDGEPEETH: It wasn't used for anything, just to burn and waste.

BENHAM: What are slabs?

HEDGEPEETH: Burn them.

BENHAM: Well, what are they?

HEDGEPEETH: What are slabs?

BENHAM: Yes.

HEDGEPEETH: It's the first line you saw, the bark and all comes off.
That's the slab.

Page Ten: Hedgepeth

BENHAM: Well, what did you do with that?

HEDGEPEETH: Burn it.

BENHAM: How was the lumber dried in the county?

HEDGEPEETH: We racked it, Stood there for six (6) months, maybe, before the company sold it. And who they'd sell to, I know nothing about that, you see.

BENHAM: Well, can you explain about racking? How can you explain that?

HEDGEPEETH: Yes, ma'am, I had two (2) black men - that was their job, was to rack the lumber. They put crosspieces under it, you know, and then put a layer of boards. Two-inch pieces for sticks, we called them. We'd saw them and they'd put them between them and then lay a solid rack of boards. That's the way it was racked.

BENHAM: Did you ever sell lumber right from the mill?

HEDGEPEETH: Never did,

BENHAM: How much did you get per hour working at the sawmill?

HEDGEPEETH: Oh, Lord, we didn't work by the hour. We worked by the day those days.

BENHAM: Well, about how much did you get? That's kind of personal.

HEDGEPEETH: I reckon maybe around, I think I was paying my men a dollar and seventy-five cents a day, I think that's what it was.

BENHAM: How much?

HEDGEPEETH: Most of the time, a dollar seventy-five cents a day.

BENHAM: Well, what were you getting?

HEDGEPEETH: Well, I was just getting what was left when the company came in and paid us off for those ties and for that lumber. Then I paid off all

Page Eleven: Hedgepeth

the hands and me and my partner split up the rest of it. Sometimes we'd get a hundred dollars a week, sometimes we'd get fifty (50) dollars a week. But I had two (2) men to take those mills over that went broke and had to quit. And I came along and they knew I was a sawmill man and they hunted me up.

BENHAM: What were your duties as a logger?

HEDGEPEETH: I logged mostly for myself.

BENHAM: I know, but what were your duties, what did you have to do? What were your duties?

HEDGEPEETH: When I logged for myself, I was driving my own log team - that's what I did. But when I'd drive for the other fellow, I just drove the other fellow's team.

BENHAM: How much would you say that a thousand (1000) feet of lumber cost years ago?

HEDGEPEETH: Lord, I don't anymore know than anything.

BENHAM: I mean, just sort of give us a guess.

HEDGEPEETH: Well, I'd just imagine that that lumber we were a racking would bring ten (10), twelve (12) dollars a thousand. I'm just thinking that's about what it was.

BENHAM: Do you know what year that was?

HEDGEPEETH: I don't, I don't. I can't keep up with anything like that.

BENHAM: About how old were you when you were doing all this logging?

HEDGEPEETH: I'll say around in fifty (50), fifty-five (55) years old. Something like that.

BENHAM: How many people worked at the sawmill?

HEDGEPEETH: We had seven (7). That's all we were allowed to work.

Page Twelve: Hedgepeth

BENHAM: About how many sawmills were there in Lawrence County when you were working?

HEDGEPEETH: I wouldn't know that, I have no idea.

BENHAM: Do you feel that the lumber industry was important to the county?

HEDGEPEETH: It wasn't worth a dime to the county.

BENHAM: Well, why is that?

HEDGEPEETH: It was just worth that to the Moss Tie people wherever they sold it. County didn't get anything out of it. There were no taxes to be paid those days out of such as that.

BENHAM: Well, what year was that, do you remember?

HEDGEPEETH: I wouldn't know; I can't keep up with anything like that. I have forgotten all about such as years. I have forgotten how old any of my children are. I know one of them's birthday because he was born on the Fourth of July and that's all I know.

BENHAM: Well, that's good. Well, that wasn't too good then. The county just wasn't benefited because it was shipped out.

HEDGEPEETH: No, it didn't do the county a bit of good. Crossties nor the lumber.

BENHAM: How did the Depression affect the lumber industry?

HEDGEPEETH: I wouldn't know how to answer it. It just held it down cheap is all right. I bought timber, gave three (3) dollars a thousand for it, sawed it at the mill, and then loaded it on a car for seven (7) dollars a thousand. That's the price I got out of it.

BENHAM: Well, did the sawmill have to shut down their business during

Page Thirteen: Hedgepeth

the Depression?

HEDGEPEETH: I'll be dogged if I know. I don't know, I just never did have any Depression; I worked for what I could get,

BENHAM: You remember the Depression, don't you?

HEDGEPEETH: Oh, yes, I remember it. But now, just how everything was going, I don't.

BENHAM: What changes have you seen in the timber industry here?

HEDGEPEETH: Oh, Lord, I've seen the price go up so. I wish it had been that way when I was logging. And the way of getting it out of the woods and things. It's just no way to compare it to what it is now,

BENHAM: Well, you think it's easier now?

HEDGEPEETH: Oh, Lord, I reckon it is easier. Just like our road machines. When I'd run a road machine I had to do it with mainly strength with a wheel. And now, just touch a little lever and it does the work,

BENHAM: What road were you working on when you were a road foreman?

HEDGEPEETH: Beat 3, all of Beat 3 roads,

BENHAM: Do you remember when you began this job?

HEDGEPEETH: No, ma'am, I don't.

BENHAM: What was your hourly wage?

HEDGEPEETH: Well, I know I was getting a dollar and seventy-five cents a day but now, you can figure by we worked from ten (10) hours.

BENHAM: This is a road foreman?

HEDGEPEETH: I know, I was a foreman but I had to work.

BENHAM: I know you did,

HEDGEPEETH: You mighty right I did.

Page Fourteen: Hedgepeth

BENHAM: And they just got a dollar and seventy-five cents?

HEDGEPEETH: A dollar and seventy-five cents.

BENHAM: A day?

HEDGEPEETH: A day.

BENHAM: A day.

HEDGEPEETH: A day.

BENHAM: And they could work for all day and they just got a dollar and seventy-five.

HEDGEPEETH: And if they lost an hour, they were docked for it. I had to keep the time and everything. But I had it to do, supervisor would tell me what to do, you see, and I had to do it.

BENHAM: All right. You paid the men and what did you get? How much were you paid?

HEDGEPEETH: I got just like they got.

BENHAM: You got a dollar seventy-five, too?

HEDGEPEETH: A dollar seventy-five cents, just like they got. I had all the responsibility and didn't get a thing for it.

BENHAM: Describe how a road was made.

HEDGEPEETH: Ma'am?

BENHAM: Can you describe how a road was made?

HEDGEPEETH: Oh, they were gravelled roads. They were nothing but.

BENHAM: Well, how did you go about making a gravel road?

HEDGEPEETH: Well, you just line them up with a plow and then machine them up and build them and gravel them and let them go. Just like putting a blacktop on them. They put the blacktop they're doing and I put the gravel

Page Fifteen: Hedgepeth

I was doing those days. There wasn't a blacktop anywhere in nary a beat in Lawrence County.

BENHAM: What is a grade foreman?

HEDGEPEETH: He's a man that stands there and sees that the hands work. And sees it's done right. He has to know how it is when it gets right and then have them to do that.

BENHAM: Well, when did you think the grade for the road was right?

HEDGEPEETH: We didn't have to grade roads that way. Now, the railroads, we had to put them up to specifications, But the road we just changed enough where people could get over them and let them go.

BENHAM: Do you remember what year this was?

HEDGEPEETH: No, ma'am. I don't.

BENHAM: Where did you work in the county?

HEDGEPEETH: Beat Three. That's where I did all my road work, in Beat Three.

BENHAM: You said that you were a woods foreman. Do you remember when you became a woods foreman?

HEDGEPEETH: I don't, I don't. They just hired me to see after the Tib Sauls place down here and get that timber all out of there. And that's what I did. I was there I don't know how long. There was a bunch of it there.

BENHAM: And did you work for Tib Sauls or who did you work for?

HEDGEPEETH: No, no, I was working for the Goots Lumber Company, Just on his place.

BENHAM: Mr. Hedgepeth, what year was it that you became a cattle buyer?

Page Sixteen: Hedgepeth.

HEDGEPEETH: I wouldn't know,

BENHAM: What is a?

HEDGEPEETH: What is a cattle buyer?

BENHAM: Yes,

HEDGEPEETH: It's a man that rides the roads and buys cattle from people and hauls them into the barn and sells them in that barn. That's the cattle buyer.

BENHAM: Did you buy the cattle for yourself or did you buy it for someone else?

HEDGEPEETH: Sometimes I bought for the companies. Three (3) companies.

BENHAM: What companies were they?

HEDGEPEETH: I bought for Prentiss for Poole, C. C. Poole and I bought for Brookhaven Mathis, and I bought for Bill Ivy over here in Beat One. They'd give me so much a head for every one I'd find and tell them where to get them, pick them up. I'd buy them and they'd pick them up.

BENHAM: Well, can you sort of give me a rough idea of what they gave you?

HEDGEPEETH: I know what they gave me.

BENHAM: Well, how much?

HEDGEPEETH: A dollar a head for every one I'd spot. Now, if I hauled it, I got more than that. I've bought seventy-three (73) head in one day. At a dollar a head, I didn't have to haul them; I was just the buyer. They didn't buy them, I bought them, and they hauled them and sold them in the barn.

BENHAM: Well, did you go with someone in a truck to do this?

Page Seventeen: Hedgepeth

HEDGEPEETH: No, I was in my truck my own self. And if I found two (2) or three (3), three (3) or four (4) for sale, I'd buy them, pay for them and haul them myself. Then I'd resell them at the barn in my name.

BENHAM: What kind of cattle did you buy?

HEDGEPEETH: All kinds, all kinds.

BENHAM: Well, what was the most popular breed of cattle in the county at that time?

HEDGEPEETH: Well, there was just all kinds. I couldn't any more describe them.

BENHAM: Well, did they have Herefords?

HEDGEPEETH: They had Herefords, they had Black Angus, and they had Brahms, and they had Holsteins; they had all kinds, I bought some Black Angus from your old man up there.

BENHAM: Yes, I just wondered, Right. My husband asked me to ask you if you remembered him.

HEDGEPEETH: Yes, Lord, I'm the man he introduced you to in the store as the finest man in Lawrence County. He and I always tipped our hats to one another.

BENHAM: Yes, I know. He told me that this morning.

HEDGEPEETH: Every time we meet.

BENHAM: I know it.

HEDGEPEETH: Tipped our hats. That's where he got that I was the only gentleman.

BENHAM: Yes, he said that you two were the most polite men in the whole county.

Page Eighteen: Hedgepeth

HEDGEPEETH: Oh, boy, we tipped our hats anywhere we met.

BENHAM: I know it and somebody said, "What is all this about you tipping your hats to each other?" And Harvey said, "Well, that's because we are the two most polite men in this whole county."

HEDGEPEETH: Well, that's all I could give it for. We knew how to meet people.

BENHAM: That's right. You sure did, didn't you?

HEDGEPEETH: That's right.

BENHAM: Well, did the cattle have to be vaccinated before you bought them?

HEDGEPEETH: No, ma'am. No, ma'am. Buy them as they were in the pasture.

BENHAM: And suppose they got Bangs?

HEDGEPEETH: They found it at the barn. And they were cut down to a different price, you see. Whoever was a Bangs buyer, he bought that cow.

BENHAM: Well, what did they do with those cows?

HEDGEPEETH: They'd kill them and eat them.

BENHAM: And it didn't affect the meat or anything?

HEDGEPEETH: No, not a bit in the world. All it affects is your calves; when they went to bring a calf, the calf would come dead. That's all the things Bangs hurts.

BENHAM: Did the price of beef fluctuate as it does today?

HEDGEPEETH: Lord, price of beef was a heap higher than it is today. I mean cattle now, I don't mean the beef in the store.

BENHAM: Yes, did it go up and down like it does today?

Page Nineteen: Hedgepeth

HEDGEPEETH: Oh, yes. Up and down, up and down. But cattle were high in those days.

BENHAM: Well, about how much were they? To buy a cow way back then, cattle?

HEDGEPEETH: It was just so many different sizes, whatever one you figured out he weighed, that's what you had to figure what you would give for him. You had to do a lot of figuring in that.

BENHAM: Well, can you kind of give me a rough idea about how much it was?

HEDGEPEETH: How much they weighed?

BENHAM: No. How much you paid for them.

HEDGEPEETH: Oh.

BENHAM: Just one.

HEDGEPEETH: Well, I paid high as two hundred and fifty (250) for one.

BENHAM: That's what I mean. Where did you buy the cattle?

HEDGEPEETH: All over. Everywhere in reach of those barns. Those three (3).

BENHAM: Well, where did you go?

HEDGEPEETH: Every county. I've even gone up in Simpson County and bought and brought down here. Up that a-way, Walthall, Jeff Davis, Lincoln. I've been all of them, every one of them in twenty (20) years.

BENHAM: Did you go out of the state?

HEDGEPEETH: No, I never did go out of the state.

BENHAM: Where did you buy your cow feed?

HEDGEPEETH: My cow feed?

Page Twenty: Hedgepeth

BENHAM: Well, you had to feed the cows.

HEDGEPEETH: I didn't feed cows. I bought them one day and sold them the next.

BENHAM: I see. Well, can you tell me if cow feed was put up, well, even if you didn't feed them, can you remember whether cow feed was put up or cattle feed was put in burlap bags or was it sold loose?

HEDGEPEETH: Oh, it was put up in sacks, bags, you call it. Go to the feed house and buy truck loads of it.

BENHAM: Well, what kind? Were they burlap bags, sacks?

HEDGEPEETH: Grass sacks.

BENHAM: Grass sacks?

HEDGEPEETH: Grass sacks.

BENHAM: Made out of grass?

HEDGEPEETH: Yes.

BENHAM: I'd like to see that. I wish they had some around so I could see.

HEDGEPEETH: Well, that's what they called it, a grass sack, those days. Now, they don't make them now. They put everything in paper.

BENHAM: Well, what about burlap? Don't they put them in burlap?

HEDGEPEETH: Well, I think they're using that now, since I quit fooling with it. But I think that's right.

BENHAM: I'd like to see a grass sack though. I'd like to see how it was made.

HEDGEPEETH: Well, an old-time grass sack, you could just wad it up and put it in your hands. Those other you can't do it. They're stiff. But

Page Twenty-one: Hedgepeth

those old grass sacks, that's what we called them, the grass sack. What they're made out of, I didn't know.

BENHAM: I just wondered if they were made out of grass.

HEDGEPEETH: No. It had to be something else.

BENHAM: We are having a cow feed shortage now. Did you ever experience one?

HEDGEPEETH: Never did. I never kept one long enough to feed him.

BENHAM: Did you have cattle shows?

HEDGEPEETH: No.

BENHAM: Where were cattle shows held?

HEDGEPEETH: I don't know that. I never went to one. Jackson's only one I can see over the television.

BENHAM: Were you in World War I?

HEDGEPEETH: No, ma'am. I missed every war. I was on my way to be examined when they adjourned, quit World War I.

BENHAM: Can you remember what year that was?

HEDGEPEETH: I don't remember that.

BENHAM: How old were you when you did that?

HEDGEPEETH: I was about twenty-five (25).

BENHAM: Well, that will help us. We can check back through the years, you know, and find out about it.

HEDGEPEETH: Yes. I was married and had one (1) child. And they called me and I was on my way and I met up with somebody and they asked me if I heard the news. Told them "no." They said, "The war ended." And I got to town, they told me I didn't have to sign up. I was proud of that.

Page Twenty-two: Hedgepeth

BENHAM: Well, how many children do you have, Mr. Hedgepeth?

HEDGEPEETH: Seven (7).

BENHAM: You want to give me their names?

HEDGEPEETH: Well, yes, ma'am. Ozzie Lee's the oldest, Edward's the next, and Mattie Lou's the next. A. C.'s the next, Ellen's the next, and Clifton the last. Willie Jay's in there; I forgot him. Yes, I forgot Willie Jay. Willie Jay and A. C. right together.

BENHAM: Are they all living?

HEDGEPEETH: All living.

BENHAM: Well, that's nice.

HEDGEPEETH: That's what I told you - all the four (4) boys, every one of them's a supervisor.

BENHAM: That's right. You did tell me that yesterday.

HEDGEPEETH: I did. Two (2) of them are railroad supervisors and the other one is road supervisor here in Beat One and the other one's finishing up his little schooling at Gulfport right now. He's been teaching it and now he'll be supervisor, he told me Sunday. He will be superintendent over the whole outfit.

BENHAM: Well, you just raised up your sons to work, didn't you?

HEDGEPEETH: I raised them to work, I sure did.

BENHAM: And that helped to keep them out of a lot of trouble too, didn't it?

HEDGEPEETH: I kept them a lot of meanness down, yes. I never spent one minute, I can say a whole lot. Now, I raised seven (7), but I had, let's see, three (3) my first wife and four (4) my last. That's seven (7), isn't it?

Page Twenty-three: Hedgepeth

BENHAM: Yes,

HEDGEPEETH: And then I raised Lloyd Powell, had taken him in before we were married - his mother, you know. I've been married three (3) times.

BENHAM: Well, what was your first wife's name?

HEDGEPEETH: Ellen.

BENHAM: Ellen what?

HEDGEPEETH: Smith.

BENHAM: All right. And what was your second wife's name?

HEDGEPEETH: Inez Boyd.

BENHAM: And your third wife?

HEDGEPEETH: She was, oh, let me see, Duncan,

BENHAM: What's her first name?

HEDGEPEETH: That's been always the hardest thing for me to keep up with, her name.

BENHAM: Can you remember it?

HEDGEPEETH: I'm trying.

BENHAM: Oh, all right. Well, if you can't remember it, that's all right.

HEDGEPEETH: I just can't think right now.

BENHAM: All right. Well, that's all right. Have you done much traveling around?

HEDGEPEETH: Never had time. Always had to work. I've been as far as New Orleans and high as Chicago.

BENHAM: Oh, well, you've done quite a lot of traveling then if you did that much.

HEDGEPEETH: I've been to those two (2) places,

Page Twenty-four: Hedgepeth

BENHAM: Well, let's see. I don't think I've ever been to Chicago.

HEDGEPEETH: I've been to Chicago two (2) or three (3) trips.

BENHAM: How did you go?

HEDGEPEETH: Through the country, automobile.

BENHAM: Oh, I see. Well, what are your hobbies?

HEDGEPEETH: I just haven't got any. Just play, television all I got.

BENHAM: Well, what were your hobbies years ago?

HEDGEPEETH: Never had them but squirrel hunting. If I wasn't working, I was squirrel hunting. But never anything else. I never liked to fish; I couldn't be still long enough. If he wouldn't bite, I was gone somewhere else. And then I was walking all the time in place of fishing. But I liked to squirrel hunt.

BENHAM: Can you tell me something about squirrel hunting, where you always got your squirrel?

HEDGEPEETH: You don't get them every time. But you get your bag limit sometimes. They have passed late days of bag limits, you know. And I've got that, but sometimes I wouldn't get nary a one. But I enjoyed it though.

BENHAM: What kind of weather did you have to have to go squirrel hunting?

HEDGEPEETH: Mostly still weather and early every morning. That's the time to squirrel hunt. Because they really stirred early every morning.

BENHAM: When was the season open for squirrel hunting?

HEDGEPEETH: They didn't have it those days. Since I've been out, I don't pay it any attention.

BENHAM: Well, when did you go squirrel hunting?

Page Twenty-five: Hedgepeth

HEDGEPEETH: That was when I was young.

BENHAM: I mean, when did you go? Did you go in the fall?

HEDGEPEETH: I told you, they didn't have any squirrel season when I was coming along.

BENHAM: Oh, you mean you just went out in the woods in the summertime?

HEDGEPEETH: When I'd come time for me, I had an hour or two to spend, I was in the woods. I don't care, there wasn't any season then.

BENHAM: Oh, you could even shoot a squirrel in the summertime?

HEDGEPEETH: Oh, Lord, any time you found one in my days. That's right.

BENHAM: I see.

HEDGEPEETH: There wasn't any such a thing as a squirrel season on - nothing, even the stock law or anything, you see.

BENHAM: Do you remember when that was? What year was that?

HEDGEPEETH: No, it was, long as backwards when I was born to here a few years back they had it to coming in to all that after I got where I had to work, didn't have time to do anything. I never bought one license in my life to squirrel hunt. I never did see it or took it home.

BENHAM: You never did what?

HEDGEPEETH: I never bought but one set of hunting licenses in my life. And I went home and laid them up and never have seen them anymore. That's been thirty (30) years ago, I know. I just have never had time. When I went to buying cattle, it was from daylight until dark.

BENHAM: It just kept you on your toes all the time.

HEDGEPEETH: Just kept me on the road all the time, all the time.

BENHAM: Well, let's see now, how old did you say you were?

Page Twenty-six: Hedgepeth

HEDGEPEETH: Eighty-seven (87).

BENHAM: Well, you don't look that old.

HEDGEPEETH: Well, I am though, unless Pa and Ma and the government made a mistake.

BENHAM: Well, I think that's very good. Well, is there anything else that you would like to say?

HEDGEPEETH: Not anything that I can think of.

BENHAM: Well, thank you, Mr. Hedgepeth, for talking with me.

HEDGEPEETH: Why, you're plumb welcome.

BENHAM: And it has been very interesting and very enlightening.

HEDGEPEETH: I've enjoyed it. Didn't get tired a bit.

BENHAM: You didn't? I'm glad.

HEDGEPEETH: I can just sit and talk all day. That's the reason I hate to be tied up here.

BENHAM: I know. There're not too many people to talk to, are there?

HEDGEPEETH: No, they're hard of hearing or they can't talk, one. That's the trouble. Nobody here that I can talk to very much.

BENHAM: Well, what about Mrs. Foster?

HEDGEPEETH: Well, I never met her. I don't know.

BENHAM: Oh, you're going to have to meet Miss Joysie.

HEDGEPEETH: I heard them talking about her a while ago. She came to the table this morning.

BENHAM: Oh, she's darling.

HEDGEPEETH: Oh, Lord, yes. I met that woman, what am I talking about?

BENHAM: Yes, and she talks and talks.

Page Twenty-seven: Hedgepeth

HEDGEPEETH: Yes, we sat out there and talked.

BENHAM: Yes, you two will have to get together on this talking.

HEDGEPEETH: Yes, I've talked to her a lot. She's been in the bed now for two (2) or three (3) days and hasn't come to the table.

BENHAM: Yes, she hasn't felt well.

HEDGEPEETH: But she came this morning. Yes, she came this morning.

BENHAM: Well, this is the end of the interview.

HEDGEPEETH: All over with.

(End of Interview)

(Transcribed by Evelyn Benham)