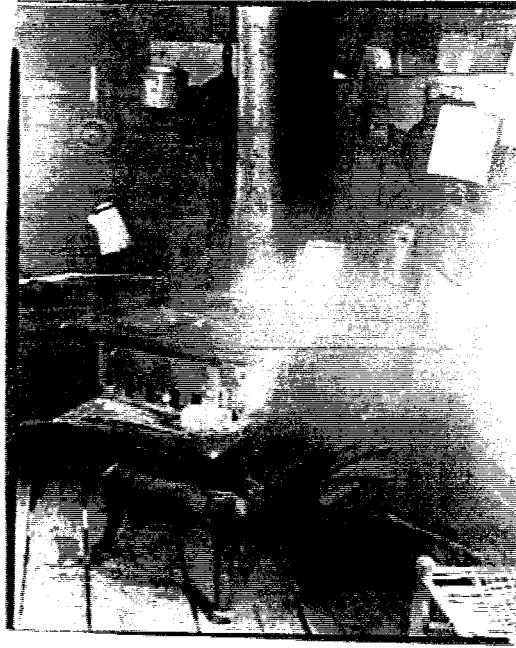


automatic settings, electric cooking stoves with automatic timers, electric or gas dryers , fabric that need no ironing, laundry shoots, laundry room, detergents with pleasing fragrance, clorox , downey, or softner, in this household.

After arising in the mornings to prepare for the days toil the first thing that became evident or heard was that, of an old, loud, coffee grinder that was nailed to the kitchen wall, mama, grinding the parched coffee beans she parched on the stove the night before. She would be sure to pack a lunch for papa heading out to make shingles deep into the Edisto River Swamps, consisting, mostly of corn meal, fatback [salt pork] and coffee. When he would be gone for a week he would supplement these rations with fish from which, he would trap in the Edisto River with wire traps, and with the game and wildlife, the Swamp and dense woods could provide.

I can understand now, and comprehend, the isolation and loneliness he endured during those long weeks of exhaustion, making shingles, fighting off the elements of cold winter nights, the mosquito's and insects during



Wood burning cook stove

the hot summer months. He worked very hard cutting down the tall cypress trees from which the shingles were made, and special, for their long lasting durability, these trees only survived in the deep river swamps. He then, cutting them into blocks from which the shingles were made and for five dollars [\$5.00] per thousand. On Fridays he would bundle the shingles, load them into his boat and with previous orders, Kenney and Carl would meet him at the Davis's landing with mule and wagon for loading.

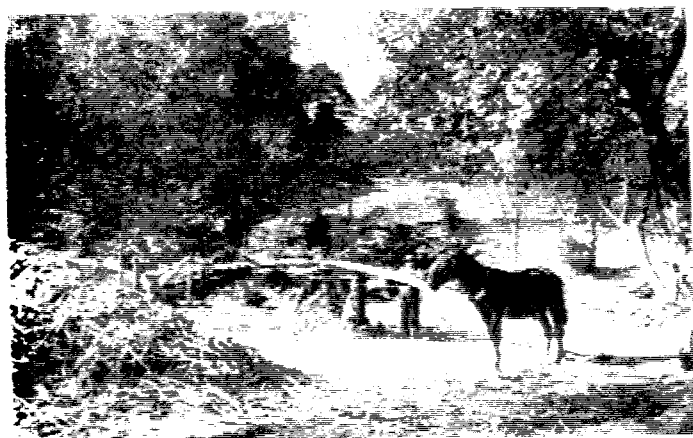
Kenney taken over the operation of the farm in papa's absent, along with the help of brother Carl, Joe and the two hired hands. [He paid the two hired hands fifty cents a day]. When papa returned from the swamps they usually had a conversation concerning the altercation with Mr Bob Walker, the landowner with the division of crops or other grown commodities raised or grown on the farm, papa would, [as it was told] confront Mr. Walker head on, [as no sharecropper would ever think of doing], informing him he would not tolerate any cheating what-so-ever in the division of crops or anything else grown or raised on his farm.

One instant comes too mind, for example, during the harvesting of corn in the fall, we did what was called, "breaking the corn", with a burlap sack and a piece of the same material about three inches wide and thirty six or forty inches long tied to each side of the sack and hung around your neck, you go down the corn row and you break the corn off the stalk and put it into the sack, when the sack is full you empty the corn on the ground in piles about twenty yards apart. When the harvesting is completed and the corn is piled, we fetch the mule and wagon for loading to be hauled to the barn. [Now here is where the cheating begins] when loading our share, the wagon would be normally loaded and carried to the barn. When Mr Bob Walker's share was loaded on the wagon he would instruct Kenney, Carl, or one of the hired hands to climb on the wagon and pack the corn down by stomping up and down with their feet, whereby you could get another third more corn on the wagon. He would only pull these shenanigans in the absents of my father.

One year a friend of papa's, a Mr Ross, who lived and own his own farm about three miles away, decided not to plant as much seed cane, [sugar cane] than he did the year before and had enough seed cane to plant about an acre or more left over, he ask papa if he wanted it. Papa said he had some bottom land down close to the woods, an ideal place to grow sugar cane and he would accept with the most gratitude. Papa thought if he used the mule and wagon, which belonged to Mr. Bob Walker, to haul the seed cane, Mr Walker would definitely and positively without a doubt want his share. Papa and Mr

Ross come to an agreement, Papa would trade him shingles in return for hauling the seed cane. During this time Papa would prepare the land for planting until the seed cane is delivered, As stated before seed cane is regular sugarcane stalks about six feet long, divided in joints, each about five or six inches long with about two or three buds at each joint. The seed cane is laid end to end into furrows about eight inches deep, and when matured you'll have rows of sugarcane ready for harvesting.

Another problem my father was facing, when it was time to harvest the sugarcane, the nearest syrup mill was approximately five or six miles away



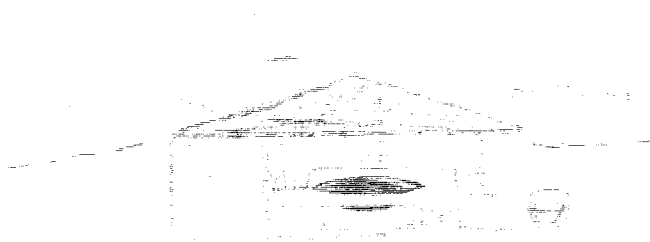
Cane Mill on the Walker Place

and by using the mules and wagon, Mr Walker was still in the picture and after all the hard work and labor, Papa was determined to have all the profits himself from the final processing of the sugarcane into several gallons of syrup.

In order to get around sharing with Mr. Walker, he knew the only way was to acquire a syrup mill to grind the sugarcane into juice and a cast iron kettle to make the syrup and by doing so he could process the other farmers crops and make additional profits, and so he did.

Mr Walker kept coming around during all this maneuvering and knew what was going on but very little he could about it and during the syrup making he actually purchased a few gallons of syrup from Papa, and for

that moment, Papa was the "big Rooster on the barn yard". And to further Papa's satisfaction, Mr. Walker informed him he was planting a sugarcane crop the next year and wanted Papa to handle the syrup making. I think this



Syrup Shed
With 200 Gal. syrup kettle

was the first and the beginning of Papa's many successful and exciting enterprises.

In the fall when it was time to harvest the sugarcane, it was a memorial occasion for us kids. We would begin going down to the cane patch, cutting stalks down, peeling it, cutting it into bite size pieces and chewing, getting all that good sweet juice. When the cane was stripped of it's fodder it was cut down and hauled to the cane mill to be ground into juice from which the syrup was made. When that first batch of juice poured from the cane mill, we kids were there to fill our cups. When the big barrel from which the juice poured from the cane mill was full it was taken to the syrup shed, poured into the large kettle and boiled into syrup. It was very

interesting to watch Papa with the long pole in hand, a tin pan fastened to the end with holes punched in the bottom, this allowed the juice to run back into the kettle and the foam stayed in the pan.. He would put the foam into another barrel and when full

he would tie a burlap cloth over the top and let it ferment into beer,[this concoction we called sue cat] too much and you would definitely think you were kicked by a mule. At times when they were not grinding we kids would catch the pole on the syrup mill and pull it around and ground out our own juice. This cane grinder was that of the smaller verison and would allow only two stalks of sugarcane to be ground simultaneously. This is one time of the year we kids would look forward too with the most anticipation and enthusiasm.

On Bob Walker's place, sharecrop farming was hard work, long days and short nights, but life on the farm wasn't all work and no play. Recreation for us was a very different experience than to-day . No television, electronics or modern technology that we have today and always a part of our everyday lives, in both business and pleasure.

In spite of all the hard work on the farm we always found the time to participate in family activities, or if desired, in each individual's own choosing. In the spring mostly around Easter time mama would send us kids out wild Violet hunting in the woods. There were white ones and blue ones, the blue ones mostly located in the bottom near the branch where it was moist all the time.

We especially liked to go in the low lined areas where the underbrush were burned in the winter for Rabbit hunting where maneuvering around and visibility in finding the bigger Violets and other wild spring flowers was much easier. Some times too, we would find the little blue and white Easter Lilies. They may have been small wild iris, but we called them Easter Lilies. We roamed the woods looking for them until we each had a handful apiece, almost too many for our little hands to hold. Three kids me, H.D. and Chris roaming the woods in the early warm spring sunshine with not a care in the world or a thought in our heads, except searching for those little blue and white flowers blooming there and half hidden by leaves and grass and protected by scrub oaks and pine trees. In early spring and getting warmer the snakes would be coming out from hibernation and Mama would warn us to be very careful as to where we step. And after returning home safe, made Mama very proud.

My mothers recreation , well you might say more work. She taken pride in her vegetable and flower garden. Well not exactly a flower garden, her flowers were planted in a manner to any area or spot that came available. Four o-clocks and periwinkle was scattered everywhere and this pleased Papa most, because these flowers would furnish some of the nectar needed to make their honey in his beehives. Mama would have these flowers

growing in the spring on all sides of the house and the edges of the field until it was hardly a place left for her vegetable garden, the four o'clock would grow very tall and have the most beautiful flowers. Mama's vegetable garden. She would pick out a spot near the edge of the field near the house where the land had already been plowed and prepared for spring planting. She would pick a spot where she could have a view from the kitchen window, whereby she could be aware of any and all varmints that invaded her territory. It seemed as though Mama was continuously running in and out the kitchen high tailing it toward her garden with anything she could get in her hands, yelling "shoo, shoo, git, git" the chickens, ducks, birds and other varmints would scatter in all directions. I think at some point, Mama was ready to give in and admit defeat, but with her continued perseverance she always succeeded and the end results always produced an abundance of healthy vegetables for her family.

The Edisto river was about, one fourth mile from the house and a branch or creek in between, originating from the Edisto river and running along The binderies of the Bamberg and Barnwell county lines and also running between the house and Mr. Bob Walkers home. In this creek, my brother H.D. and myself would make fish traps out of chicken wire and catch all kinds of fish, redbreast, war-mouth, grass perch, cat fish, etc. Forging this creek especially after a rain was very difficult, the wagon would float and drift down stream and the mules had to struggle to keep the wagon intact until reaching the other side. At times some of the load would drift out the wagon and float down stream which had to be recovered and brought back. Most of the time though the creek was normal and crossing was made with no problems.

My father cut a road through the woods to the Edisto river and called it the Davis's landing. At this location was our favorite swimming hole. Across where the river made a left turn made an ideal sand bar, perfect for swimming and horse playing, those of us who couldn't swim crossed the river to the sand bar by Papa's fishing boat. I being one who couldn't swim, climbed a tree hanging over the sand bar. After reaching the top, my brother Carl, climbed behind me, not letting me back down, threw me from the top of that tree into the water and needless to say, I have been swimming ever since. On the downside we had a rope hanging across the river, tied to a tree on both sides, when swimming in the middle of the river and had difficulty reaching the sand bar, the swift current would take us down stream and we would catch hold the rope and pull ourselves back to the hill [shore]. On

days when we would have visiting kin, we kids would head for the river and such hoop and hollowing ,Mama said she could hear us all way back to the house.

Fondling, was a word that I couldn't spell or even knew the meaning or existed, until after thought and reminiscing about that gorgeous, beautiful and summer spring after noon, this being a weekend, we had relatives and friends visiting and of course we kids, headed for our special swimming hole.

After swimming and horse playing for awhile, we all gathered on the rope stretched across the river, one next to the other. Beside me on my right was a pretty little thing [girl], naturally, about my same age. This is where my first experience in fondling taken place. She began fondling me in places familiar to me but definitely un-familiar to her. Well ,I didn't know what the hell or tarnation was going on, I didn't know if I should reciprocate, stay in place, play it out and see where this thing is going or turn loose the rope and risk drowning myself in the swift river current. I chose the latter and ended up three bends down the river and barely could pulled myself onto the bank.

Having a little pair of shorts on and rest bare body and bare foot, treading through the woods, bog, briars and under brush, finally reaching the landing and hauling ass, home. I could still hear all the kids having the time of their lives. When I reached home Mama wanted to know what happen, I was scratched from head to toe and she started rubbing me down with kerosene to kill the infection. When Papa came home that evening he also wanted to know what happen and passed it off as a boy thing, Yeah!, boy thing, If he only knew what had happened he would have dis-owned me for degrading the Davis's name. It seemed to me that I should have been more advanced and more educated in the anatomy of the human, female species, whereby living on a farm watching the animals and fowl, go about their daily activities making bacon, biddies , kid goats and puppies. The hogs with their keen and solitude expression on their snoot, as the saying goes "In hogs heaven",[pardon the pun], and Mama watching me watching the hogs, yelling, Swift! Get away from there, me with a low voice saying "Ow-Sh***". Main-while over on the other side of the yard, the old red rooster chasing the Dominique hen and strutting his stuff as if he just finish servicing the whole damn hen house. And then there's the old Drake,[male duck] chasing the female duck, I don't know why, but the female duck's always head for and under the house, she wants absolute privacy I guess. sometimes before reaching the house she'd just stop and squat, like what the hell, the old fellow is getting old and I'll just wait. he rocks back and forth, undecided which way to go. after all the fireworks and butterflies he walks away, dragging his most

important tool in the sand, retracting and repressing until his hormones comes to life again, signaling him to start chasing again. In the pin, beside the barn, there's old Billy [Billy Goat] and the nanny goat, you never heard such hollowing and bellowing in all your life, I guess this comes natural to both human and goats. Old spot? The pit bull? He had so many puppies, hell, he even had a couple of female pigs on the side.

So now you know why I should have been more conversant and experienced in casual exploration of the opposite sex.

We kids had many ways to entertain ourselves in our own way, growing up in our adolescent years we had no toys or bicycles, my toy was a convertible made out of a sardine can open at one end and two sides, and the lid curved in such a manner that made a perfect convertible top. I would have roads with bridges, streams and tunnels stretching from one side of the yard to the other. I would have another sardine can buried into the ground full of insects pretending they were my cows and goats. I could go on and on with all the inventions that my little imaginative mind could muster. Later on, especially when our kin come visiting, we would play many other games, some made up, and others such as the sock race, leap frog, jump rope, hopscotch, walking on stilts, playing marbles, mumble peg, hey-over and many more, already forgotten. The only place and time we couldn't play was in front of the window where Papa was taking his siesta after returning from the swamps making shingles. The windows stayed open all summer and the flies and insects would fly in and out disturbing Papa to a point where he would get up and go to the barn too sleep. The window was located in the living room, where I mention before, between their bed and the fire place. We used this window for many things, climbing out for shortcuts, throwing scraps of food out to feed the chickens and at times the chickens would jump up onto the window and just wait or even try and roost there at night. The most useful and convenient time it was used, when Papa had to go, peeing through and Mama emptying her chamber pot. One night while Papa was trying to sleep, we had a very good friend, a black man named Lee, to whom, lived a few miles down the road, and he came to see Papa, and Papa didn't want to be bothered and told him to go away and he would see him in the morning. Lee had a little to much to drink and instead of going home he just went to sleep outside the window and on the ground, well it wasn't long before daybreak and Mama and Papa always got out of bed before we kids and as usual ,Papa when getting up he would turn a little to the right and let it go, right out the window, with Mama right behind him

with her chamber pot, when Lee stood up from Papa's ordeal he met Mama's full night of relief and satisfaction, in liquid form, head on. I never heard such going on's in all my born days. Lee never approached that window again and after that, always came knocking at the door.

After going to bed we kids would lie awake at night, listening to Mama and Papa discussing and contemplating their future endeavors in order to provide a decent living for their family. Some hilarious and others . With our little minds we knew their discussions were serious and troublesome. Before going to sleep, Mama, being a big woman, would get up to use the chamber pot and we could hear Papa, Annie! what are you doing?, I'm using the chamber pot!, well I can't see it, are you peeing through the cracks in the floor? Both the humor and the seriousness of their conversations would continue until we kids would fall to sleep.

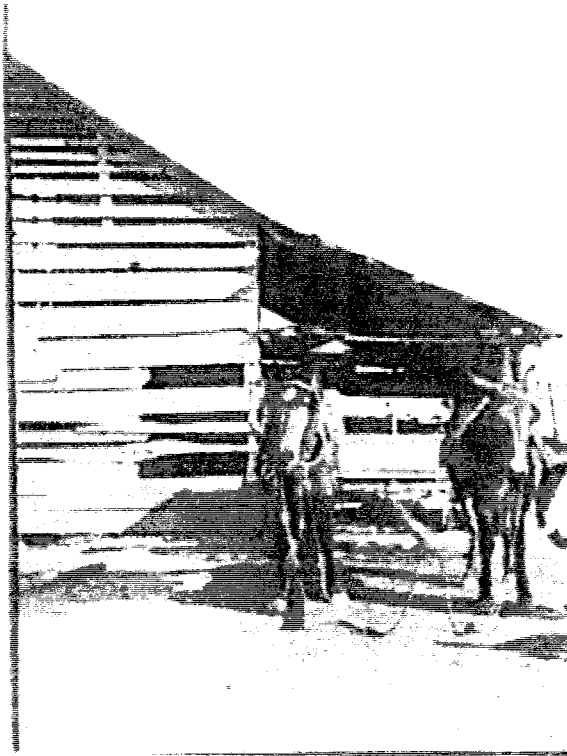
The cracks in the floor as I mention before, served many purposes.

In the fall and winter, when the crops were harvested, farmers would release their animals from being penned in all summer and let them fend for themselves, grazing and foraging in the empty fields whereby, reducing their feed supply one hundred percent. Late evening they would slowly and dilatory [moving in a slow pace] toward the house, congregating beneath the living room where the fireplace were located too keep warm and where Mama and Papa's bed were located. The noise and stench coming up through the cracks into the house was unbearable. Mama in the winter time, kept an iron kettle pot, full of hot water next to the fire in the fireplace. When the stench became so strong, and she couldn't stand it any longer, she would get out of bed, reach for the kettle of hot water and pour it through the cracks. Those hogs would scatter in all directions. From the old house shaking one would think that an earthquake had suddenly appeared and the old house would be destroyed or demolished at any moment. Several minutes later the hogs would return and the same action would be repeated over and over through out the night.

When anyone saw any hogs rambling through the country side with bare skin spots with no hair, knew they had met Mama with her hot water kettle in hand.

Sweeping the floor was an easy task for Mama, "no dust pan". She swept the floor with a broom made of broom straw and when sweeping ,the dirt and trash would fall through the cracks. When raining, we kids would play beneath the house and knew exactly when Mama was sweeping the floor. The broom straw was found and gathered from the sage fields. Late fall, Mama would have us kids , hitch the mule to the wagon and send us out

looking for
would ride all
for the tallest
located the
wagon and
ground as
it into the
be cleaned
that were
string. We
day, leaving
we'd explore
with fox fire,
nearest creek,
from one to
ripe
and filling
hickory nuts.
the making.”



the broom straw. We
across the fields hunting
and best straw. When we
tallest, we'd jump out the
break it off as near the
possible, carefully loading
wagon, brought home to
and made into brooms
wrapped and tied with
would be gone most of the
the old mules to graze,
the nearby woods, playing
skinny dipping in the
climbing trees, swinging
the other, eating big red
persimmons, Maypop's
our pockets with big
“Happy memories in

Pete and Red

Whenever possible, excluding chores, we children would be gone from early morning until, exploring, discovering and examining what ever the environment, nature and the Edisto river swamps had too offer. Our parents knew our capabilities and had no thought or desire for any parental strict discipline or any supervision . The swamps held many mysterious and dangerous, perilous and evil residents, those of which could cause instant death or save ones life from starvation. Each day we would adventure further and further into the wilderness, discovering new and more exciting experiences, in plant growth, wildlife and non-game species. We were raised from youngsters to be well attentive and cognizant in the wilds. My father with his expertise in living the outdoors, taught us well in helping to supplement our family table with fish and game from the Black Creek swamps in lower Georgia to the North and South Edisto River Swamps in