

TURN OF THE CENTURY SHARE
CROPPING IN PIKE COUNTY

(Interview with a "Merchant
Farmer" Recorded by
Mrs. Margaret Farmer)

ALABAMA

Share-cropping

VERTICAL FILE

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Along about the turn of the century, I guess it must have been, there was a business in this country that was at its peak. It was the farming business. ^{is} This farming business was based, I guess you would call it, on the share cropping system. In other words, a man who was a farmer, a share cropper, worked the crop for a share in it. Sometimes he worked for a half of the crop, sometimes his share was three-fourths of the crop. A share cropper was usually a man with a strong back and I won't say a weak mind, but an undeveloped mind. As a general rule he was uneducated, very illiterate - many of them could neither read nor write, and their method of living was very crude and very primitive. Their knowledge of farming was handed down to them through the generations from father to son and it was the only business that they knew. They pursued that business as a means of making a living, not making money.

Now, along with the share cropping business, there was a ^{who} man that was known as the advancing man, or the furnishing man, usually the landlord, and he was a man of, usually, more than

average intelligence and, ordinarily, more or less educated. He had to be because he had to keep a ~~xxx~~ certain amount of records due to the number of people ^{that} he dealt with. Now a farm or a crop at that time was considered to be forty acres, ^{about} half of it in cotton and half of it in corn. That was before the day of the peanut as a commercial crop. This sharecropper would work this crop and the furnishing man would furnish him the seed, the fertilizer, and food while he was working the crop. Usually on first Saturday of each month, from, we'll say January, until July or August, the first Saturday was known as "draw day." That's when the share cropper would come to the advancing man to get his "draw". His draw was the amount of merchandise - food, clothing, that he could have for that month. It was a month to month proposition. The advancing man usually was a merchant. He was sometimes called a merchant farmer. He usually had a store and in this store was everything that a man would need. There ^{were} ~~was~~ all forms of food that ^{were} ~~was~~ common at that time, mostly lard, flour, meal, meat, sugar, salt, pepper, and always plenty of snuff ^{and} tobacco. The share

cropper would come in and get his monthly draw and the furnishing man was not very free to put out money but he would let him have enough food and the necessities, cloth to make clothes - shirts and so forth - for that month. Then at the end of the month came another first Saturday and another draw day. So it went on while the share cropper was working the crop.

Now, there were several different ways in this territory that you could work a crop. Sometimes it was called "working on ~~the~~ halves," sometimes "working ^{for} the fourth." On halves there were usually two systems. The landlord, or the furnishing man, sometimes would furnish ^{the land,} the seed, and the fertilizer and get half the crop. The share cropper furnished the mules, the necessary plow tools, and did the work. Usually the mule was sold to him on credit by the furnishing man, the landlord. Another method was that the landlord would furnish ^{the land} half the ~~seed~~ ^{fertilizer}, half the seed, the tools, and the mules. The share cropper would do the work, furnish half the ^{fertilizer} ~~seed~~, half the seed, and get half the crop. Then there was the method called the fourth. The landlord, or the furnishing man, we'll call him (I keep saying landlord, he's

not always the owner of the land, sometimes he rented the land, but usually he owned a good bit of land. Sometimes he rented other farms and would put a share cropper on the farm. He would rent the farm for cash rent ^{from the landlord} ~~to the landlord~~ and would put his share cropper there and furnish the sharecropper and take a chance on making enough out of his share of the crop~~x~~ to pay the rent and have some money left.) The fourth, - the landlord furnished the land, a fourth of the seed and a fourth of the fertilizer. The share cropper furnished the work, the tools, the stock, three-fourths of the seed, three-fourths of the fertilizer, and got three-fourths of the crop for his part.

Then there was that very seldom man who was able to rent for standing rent. Standing rent was a cash rent. He was usually a man who had his own mule^s, his own feed, and was able to furnish himself, in other words, he had enough money to get by with his food and his clothing and so forth, to make the crop. Then, at the end of the year he paid the landlord cash money for his rent. They were ~~very few~~ back in the old days.

This business of sharecropping was a development ~~of~~, you might

say, among the people. The man, the share cropper, ~~xxxx~~ usually, ~~xxxx~~ didn't have, you might say, anything ^{except} but a strong back, a willing mind, and a house full of children. The whole family worked in the crop during the spring and early summer when there was plowing and hoeing to be done - they all went to the to the field, men, women, children and all. The babies were placed under a shade tree somewhere and the next in line were the babysitters. They tended the babies while the rest of the family worked the crop. Always there was a water jug and, before the day of the jug there was a gourd, a big gourd filled with water that was taken to the field if there waan't a spring handy, or a branch. That was the water for the day. Food was sometimes prepared and carried along, sometimes it was just passed up until the whole crowd got back to the house that night. The working day was from daylight, or a little before, until dark, or a little after, and the working week was the whole week excepting Sunday. Usually Saturday afternoon was free time, and Sunday. There weren't many churches around to go to. Sometimes they would have Sunday School at somebody's house. Sometimes they would have a monthly meeting at the church in the community.

The share cropper was a man who was possessed, most of them, with a sense of humor. They were children of the soil, and of nature. Their lives were governed by the weather, by nature. They would laugh about hardships because there was nothing else to do about them except laugh. If it rained the crop out, then it *just* rained the crop out and the advancing man didn't get his money back that fall, so, come spring, start another crop. Rarely ever did the share cropper keep very much money if he made any. They were pretty much like children. They could see so many things that they never ~~XXX~~ had that they wanted that ~~as~~ soon as they got hold of a little money they went to ~~buy~~ *buying* ~~them~~. They bought what they saw first to please them and when the money was gone, then they went home with whatever they had. This system lasted on until the era, you might say, the entry, of the tractor. The share cropper, the share cropping business, was strictly mule power and man power. The furnishing man was the boss, pure and simple, absolute. He settled all arguments. His word was the law. Anything that he said, there was no question about it, that was it. If there was any difference in a community, or any difference among the people,

among the share~~croppers~~ croppers, it was settled by the man. He was frequently called just "The Man". He was the furnishing man, the advancing man. If there was a fight, it was settled. If there was a death, the furnishing man buried whoever died. He furnished, usually, the funeral expenses, casket, and so forth, which was charged to the next in line. Usually, if a man who was head of a share cropping household passed away during the time of the crop, the next in line, if they were old enough, if there were any of the children who were old enough, finished up the crop. If not, then sometimes they would have relatives who would come and help finish the crop. Sometimes, if they had no relatives to come and help them, then they would have to move and go and live with some relative somewhere who would give them a shack to live in and a little something to eat. In that case, The Man had to do the best he could about getting his crop finished up and gathered.

Then there was lay-by time. Lay-by time was when the crop ~~was~~ had grown to a size where you couldn't work it any more without doing it more damage than was doing it good, so it was considered to be "laid by" until it was matured, then it was gathered. Now,

at lay by time The Man usually came and passed the word around among all his people for a certain number of the men to come with axes, saws, and so forth if they had them, if they didn't he would furnish them, and that was the time when the cribs were patched and the barns and the house. That was the time of odd jobs. Then, that didn't last too long, for during the summer there was wood to be piled for the winter, at the house, - you had to have wood for everything for the only way to heat was with wood fires, the only way to cook was with a wood fire - there was no electricity, there was no gas. What little bit of light they had was from a kerosene lamp, if they had a lamp. Sometimes they had lanterns, sometimes candles. There was one time a man who was passing out through one of these share cropping areas and it was almost dark and he had trouble and he went to a house and he asked the man if he could borrow his flashlight. The man said, "I have no flashlight." The stranger said, "Well, could I borrow your lantern?"

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~ "Haven't got a lantern."

"Lamp?"

"No lamp."

"Well, what do you do when it gets dark?"

"Go to bed."

And that was just about the way of it. At about good dark everybody ~~was gone~~^{went} to bed and about good daylight or a little before daylight, everybody was up. They had to get up early to feed the mule while the womenfolks got breakfast and about good light everybody ate breakfast and by the time it was light enough to see the whole works were in the field. By sun-up the work was well under way.

It was a hard life but it filled the gap in this area down in here and, I imagine, most of the South, because if it hadn't been for the share cropper there just wasn't any other labor that could be had to amount to anything to work the farmlands in this area.

There were a few people who worked as wage hands. These were just hands working for a set wage. He got so much money at the end of the month and that was all that he had. He didn't have any share in the crop at all, it didn't make any difference if it were a good crop or bumper or what not, he still just got his wages.

The furnishing man, as I said, was usually also a merchant.

He usually had a store and his fertilizer was usually kept in a

warehouse or barn. It was ~~usually~~ shipped in by rail, ordinarily.

If his store wasn't anywhere close to a rail then it was hauled by wagons from the railhead to the warehouse. Then, as each man came, after Christmas and began to get his draw, everytime he came in he would haul back a certain amount of fertilizer in his wagon.

The roads were nothing but trails, most of them. Some of them were maintained by the county, some of them weren't maintained at all, they were just wagon ruts through the woods and fields. The houses were, according to standards of this day and time, they weren't even a good shack. They were just strictly shacks. Screen wire was a luxury. In the winter you closed all the doors and all the windows and built up a big fire, if the weather was real cold. If not, then you built up a big fire in the fireplace and left whatever you wanted to leave, open, door, window, what not. You wore as many clothes as you had to keep you as warm as you could in the winter. In the summer time you wore just as few as possible so they wouldn't be in your way when you were working. Overalls and either a denim shirt or a shirt made out of a fertilizer sack - oh, by the way, fertilizer at that time was referred to as guano, and

it was put up in two hundred pound bags, a rough cotton cloth bag, and the bag was usually something in the form of a asnebury or heavy sheeting. Some of the shirts were made of blue denim, some of them were made from these sacks, these fertilizer sacks. Everything was saved. Nothing was wasted. If there was a piece of plow or something that was broken, it wasn't discarded or thrown away. It was laid aside, maybe to be used later in the repair of some other part. The mule was the master of power. He did everything. He plowed. He pulled the wagon. He was just a general handyman, and all he got for his work was a little something to eat, and plenty of work to do, and water to drink. I don't know who had the best end of the deal, the share cropper or the mule.

But anyway, let's get back to this furnishing man, this advancing man, this merchant farmer, whatever you want to call him. He kept his books. Each man's items that he took up on draw day, that he got on draw day, were entered on his account, plus his part of the fertilizer, seed, feed, anything that he ^{had} used - if the ~~mules were sold to him on credit, they~~ mules were sold to him on credit, they were charged to him, and if his plow tools were sold to him on

credit, they were charged. So you can see that a share cropper, if he was just starting out, if he attempted to buy a pair of mules, or even a mule, and a wagon, and a plow, and then his food for himself and his family, if he had to buy his $\frac{1}{2}$ mule feed, - his corn and his hay - when he got through with the crop, when he got through making his crop, he would have to make a mighty good crop to pay his debt, plus his interest, ^{plus} his goods that he used - that's what they called his run - plus his run, for the year. His "run" was anything that he took up or was charged to him during the year plus the interest that The Man put on there. Interest was usually by the furnishing man - the furnishing man that was an honest man - the share cropper's interest rate was usually around eight per cent. It was rarely ever under that and sometimes it was over. Sometimes the share cropper was taken advantage of by the furnishing man, but that was a case of personalities and localities. There was a time when the share cropper would make a crop and have a little money that was supposed to come to him and the furnishing man would take ^{the} a pencil and figure him out of it. That was done, but not as a general rule. The

As a general rule the furnishing man, the advancing man, the merchant farmer, was an honest man. He knew that he was taking a long chance on these share croppers. He knew the chances that he was taking, so he generally made arrangements to get around to each fellow's farm about once a week. Now if the advancing man didn't have the time to stay in his store, and attend to his other affairs, and still ride his farms, he would sometimes employ what was called "a rider." This rider was more or less a foreman. He would go from farm to farm, talk with the sharecroppers, see if they had any trouble that needed to be straightened out, see if there was a sick mule or if they needed a few more seeds, or maybe an extra plow point - that was his job, to go from farm to farm until he made the rounds and generally it would take him a week or ten days to get around from place to place. Some of the farms were pretty well scattered. Some of them were as much as twelve or fifteen miles apart. Now I am told that in the delta country, and in some of the other better farming countries, that the man's plantation was all in one body, and that he could afford to have his share croppers living closer together which made it much easier on him. Generally the advancing

There was usually a cane mill and syrup kettle. Mill to squeeze juice from cane and kettle to cook juice into syrup. Mill pulled by mule hitched to long wooden beam - mule walking round and round in circle about 30 ft in diameter. Kettle would hold from 50 to 150 gallon juice, it looked like huge (15) iron salad bowl

Man had a blacksmith shop to repair the tools. He usually had a gin to gin the cotton. He usually had a gristmill to grind the corn into meal, and it was more or less a cradle to the grave proposition. The share cropper was a very - I don't know how to say it ~~X~~ - he didn't stay in one place too long. Now there is an exception to that rule, of course. Some of them would stay on one farm for years and years. Some of them would stay as much as fifteen or twenty years, some of them even longer, but most of them would move every few years. Every few years they would move. Part of this was because they thought that if they stayed too long then the advancing man would find out too much about how they operated and they would ~~X~~ get everything, and some of them thought that when they paid The Man up, if they had made a good crop, and paid him up and had a little money, they might better take their little money and get away before he got it. And then some of them just plain wanted to move. I think that as a general rule that was the main thing that caused them to move, because frequently they would stay with the same advancing man and they would go to him and say, "Mr. Sam, I want to move to such and such a farm. So and so is going

to move, and I want to move on his farm."

"Well, why do you want to move over there?"

"I just want to move. I've been on this one two or three years now and I want to get me a new one."

He liked to change a little bit once in a while. After he learned every terrace and every rock, you might say, every hard place, every soft place on his farm, he got tired of looking at the same old fields over and over again, so he wanted to move.

So, generally, he could load up a one-horse wagon in one trip and move. He didn't have very much to move, sometimes a little furniture and his cooking tools and such as that. Now, if he were fortunate and had his mule feed he would have to make maybe two trips, and sometimes he had a pig. They would make a box out of some poles, and load the pig up, and the dogs (always there was a dog), and the cat, ~~and the mule feed~~ and everything, and they would move maybe five, six, eight, ten miles to another farm. And the first thing that was done when they got there, the womenfolks got out, got the wash pot out of the wagon, fired up, got ~~every~~ bit of lye soap, went in the house, and proceeded to scour it. And

generally they scoured it from the ceiling down. A lot of times, if they could splash some water up on the ceiling, they would scour it a little bit. It was just a shuck mop, and some sand, a little bit of lye soap, and a lot of elbow grease, and when they moved in the house it was scoured out, washed out, and it was clean. ~~THEY~~ The bedding that was used back then was a mattress, most of them homemade, and most of them stuffed with linters from the gin - that was a by-product of the cotton. Some of the lint was too badly pulled to sell and they would make linters out of it and stuff the mattresses and pillows. Some of the mattresses were ^{stuffed} filled with shucks. If you want to sleep on something some time, stuff your mattress with shucks and try it, especially when you've got a cold wind blowing up through ^{cracks in} the floor and through the walls and the windows and everything else - that's sleeping!

Now, the advancing man. Usually, he was a man with enough money to back up his crop and make his crop, or he had credit and could get the necessary money for his use. The advancing man ordinarily, ~~W~~ one who was really in the business, would run anywhere from one hundred to two hundred plows, that is, in this area. We'll

just say a hundred plows. A hundred plows generally took a minimum of fifty families for you very seldom found a family with over two plows to the family - sometimes four if there were some pretty good sized children that stayed at home. A four horse farm ~~was~~ was a pretty good-sized farm. It consisted generally of, - as I said, a plow was considered to be forty acres and a mule - if you had four mules, you had one hundred and sixty acres, and you ~~had~~ had to start breaking that land just as soon after Christmas as the weather would permit because you had to get it all broke in time to plant it, and if the weather held ~~you~~ you up then you had to work to get it in shape. Now the advancing man, to furnish enough fertilizer, seed, what money the people used, and the merchandise that they used, had to have a pretty good credit, as you can see, because that many families took a pretty good investment.

Now as I said, this was a cradle to the grave proposition. If somebody got sick, they didn't go for the doctor, they went for The Man. The Man got the doctor. And usually the advancing man had a trade with some particular doctor ~~that~~ that he used exclusively and, when

one of his men would get sick he would go to ~~XXXXXXXXXXXX~~

~~So~~ So and So's house, or if he had a telephone he might call him,

and tell him to go out to such/a farmer's house. Well, this doctor

usually knew where the croppers that were working, ^{with the Man} he usually

knew where they lived and he knew about what he was going to run

into. If the roads were bad then the share cropper would meet him

with a mule and a wagon. The doctor would go as far as he could

on his conveyance. If it was a buggy or a saddle horse he would

go right on, if he had a Model T he would have to stop at the

branch if the branch was up. If the creek was up he would have to

stop and get on the wagon with the cropper and go the rest of the

way on the wagon. K

As I said, if there was a death in any of the ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

croppers' families, they didn't go for the undertaker, they went to

The Man. The Man got the necessary coffin and so forth and made

arrangements with the undertaker and the preacher came from where-

ever they could get him, and the man was duly buried. Most of the

families had ^{their} burying grounds at some church out in the country

and sometimes they would be living many miles from there but they

usually buried in a certain burying ground where their people had been buried before them.

The social life of these share croppers - it was rather simple but they had a good time. They would have dances at somebody's house, and there was usually someone in the community who could play a violin, "fiddle," they called it, or a guitar, "box" they called it, some of them a harmonica, called a "harp," and then there was a little tool called a Jew's harp. I don't know if it was a jewharp or a juiceharp, but anyhow, it was called a jew's harp and it was one of the tools ^{used} in making the music they danced to. The children usually were married off at an early age, and they usually married off because once a couple was married they generally went to The Man, made arrangements for a mule, plow, tools, and so forth to start a crop of their own and a family of their own. Thus, share cropping went from family to family.

Now these people were, as a rule, they were a moral people. They worked hard, and some of their ways were crude, and their language was crude, due to no education, but on the whole they

were a fairly, I would say above the average in their morality.

There wasn't too much immoral stuff that went on in the community.

It was frowned upon and if a man in the community who wasn't right,

it wasn't long until he was moved. They either went and complained

to The Man or else they made arrangements to have this man moved

in some other kind of way. Sometimes there would be a group of

them go to him and tell him that the best thing he could do was to

move.

I will touch very lightly on this very modern day thing they call integration. The share cropping system was not a segregated

system. There were white share croppers and there were colored

share croppers. Many of them lived as neighbors. There would be

a white family living on ~~the~~ farm and maybe a mile down the road,

or maybe two hundred yards, on the same plantation, there would be

a family of colored people. Each family stayed in his own sphere,

you might say, of society. Ganerally they worked together. In the

fields they would help each other, and work in the fields, but still

they were white people and colored people. I heard one man, one time,

say that he got on his wagon in the morning and he went and got a

XX a load of colored people, and some white people, on his wagon, and he would bring them to his field, and they would work together all day and they would sit down, and drink water out of the same spring, and they would talk among themselves and laugh. But, when the work was over, the white man went to his hut, the colored man went to his hut, and that was the end of the social association. So ~~xxxx~~ there were both white share croppers and colored share croppers.

The system lasted up until, I would say, up until the event of the tractor, of machinery. As the mule went out, the share cropper went out. I don't know if it was good or bad, but anyhow, the small farms began to be consolidated into larger farms so that they could be worked with machinery, with tractors, so the share croppers began to be replaced with machinery. The land that was not good for machinery farming, for mechanized farming, was gradually put into something else, either timber farms or cattle, and the share cropping business gradually played out. Today there is very little of it that goes on in this area. There is some, but very little. The cotton, which was the backbone of the share cropping

system, it was the money crop & - it was the only crop that could be counted on to bring in any money - the corn was used to feed the mules, to feed the pigs, to feed what few cows, to feed the people themselves, ground into meal and made into corn bread - the cotton was the mainstay, it was the money crop, it was about the only thing that you could get any money out of. Now the cotton seed. Back at the earliest there was no market for the cotton seed. It was taken back to the farm and used as fertilizer or, - of course enough was saved for planting seed for another crop, and it was either used for fertilizer or fed to the stock. The peanuts, as a money crop, came in later. ^{When} Peanuts first began to move into this country there were just a few acres planted for the people to eat, parched, and for the pigs to eat. Usually, each share cropping family raised enough hogs to make its meat for the coming year. He had a smoke house, and he would kill his hogs in the winter time, salt them down, take them out of the salt and hang them up and smoke them and cure them out and usually would have enough meat and enough & grease, hog lard, to last him through the coming crop. Always he had what he called a "'tater patch," sweet potatoes. These

'taters were hilled before frost, in other words, a 'tater hill

is a place where the potatoes were stored ~~usually, usually, usually, usually~~

~~usually, usually, usually, usually~~ Usually, this was a circular pit, dug into the ground

about two feet deep, dug ~~ing~~ into well-drained soil, so that the

water wouldn't puddle. Then this pit was lined with pine straw,

fresh, clean pine straw, then the potatoes were dug out of the

ground and, usually, dried, air-dried, for a day or two, before

they were put into the hill. They were put into the hill, oh, I

would say, three or four bushels to the hill, maybe five, different

size hills - they were put into this 'tater hill on top of this

clean pine straw and then they were covered with more pine straw,

and, if a fellow could find him a few boards he would set them up

tepee fashion over his 'tater hill to keep out the rain as much

as he could. If he didn't have any boards, or ~~max~~ if he was far

^{around down South} enough to get him some palmettos, he would cut palmetto leaves and

cover his 'tater hill. If not, he covered his 'tater hill with pine

tops to hold out as much moisture and as much ~~max~~ water as he could.

He never put all of his 'taters in one hill. In the first place, he

would have to have too big a 'tater hill and in the second place,

if one hill spoiled, he didn't want all of his 'taters to spoil.

Then, next spring, he would go into his 'tater~~K~~ hill and get out enough stringy potatoes to make a bed - in other words these potatoes were planted and then they were planted very thick, and as ~~the~~ potato vines came up they were called "draws," "'tater draws."

So then he went to his ^{'tater} hill, he got his 'tater draws, and ~~xxxx~~ he went and set him out another 'tater patch. He would poke these draws down ~~K~~into the ready-prepared soil that he had plowed up

and raked up into rows, poke those draws down into it - a draw was about two feet long, ^{a vine looking thing} ~~K~~ it was kind of a vine looking thing -

he would poke it down into the ground with a stick, then one of the kids would come along and ^{lap} ~~drop~~ a little water on it to settle the dirt around it, and if there was moisture in the ground the potatoes would go to growing and there was another 'tater patch

on the way. And ~~and~~ incidentally, I heard an old man say one time, ^{that} right after the Civil War if it hadn't been for parched corn

and baked 'taters this country would have starved to death ~~xxxx~~ ^{when} the Yankees/^{got through}getting everything that was laying loose that they could

haul off, tear up, burn, and one thing and another. So the sweet

potato has been with us, and has been a mighty safe and stable item.

Then, the humor of these people. I heard a tale one time of an old man, we'll call him Jim. He ran a cross-roads country store. He could read a little bit and write very, very little, but he was a pretty good piney woods artist. He could draw. He kept his books - if there was a man who came and bought an article and Jim couldn't spell it, he would draw a picture of it. So there an old man named Buck who had a pretty good-sized share cropping operation and he was furnishing his hands out of old man Jim's store. So that fall he was settling up and Old Man Buck couldn't read at all and couldn't write at all but he had a mind like a buzz saw. It was sharp. He didn't forget anything. You'd be surprised at how those people could remember, those who couldn't read and write. They ~~hardly~~ ^{rarely} even forgot. So Old Man Jim was going through his books, calling out the items that Buck had got, and they were slowly, both of them, adding the figures. He came to an item and he said, "Now here, Buck, along about the time the hickories budded, that's the time it was for here's a hickory bud that I drew on the page right here, you got a cheese."

Buck said, "Whoa. Didn't git no cheese. I ^{aint} never bought no cheese. That's wrong, Jim. That's wrong."

Well, they had quite an argument. "Here's the cheese," Jim said. "Look, I drew the cheese. It was the time the hickories budded for here's a hickory bud. I know it's a hickory bud for here's a leaf I put on it. It's a hickory leaf, ain't it?"

"Yep, that's a hickory leaf."

"Well, that's a cheese."

"Nope. That ain't no cheese."

"Well, doggone it, Buck, it it ain't a cheese, what is it?"

"Don't know, but I didn't ~~ai~~ get no cheese."

They argued a little while and finally ~~Jim says, "Now, Buck,~~

Buck says, "Now, Jim, I know what it twas. It was a grind rock but you forgot to draw the square hole in it."

So that's the way the thing went along. There were different kinds of tales and sayings that developed among the people. For instance, there was one saying that two of the croppers would be talking and one of them would say, "I'll see yuh next draw day,

the Lord willin' and the creek don't rise." So he went on home.

He meant that if he was alive and well and the creek wasn't too high/to get across to come to the store to get his monthly draw for him they'd meet again and have another bull session.

Usually the Man

had a few milk cows. He usually had a pasture, and he kept a few cows, a few milk cows. A young man would come in, a young share cropper, and he would say, "I want to get a milk cow. The baby needs some milk." The advancing man would say, "All right George (or Jim or whatever his name was). Go down to Joe's house. I got some cows down there and get you a milk cow." The sharecropper would go down there and pick him out a milk cow and take her on home. It was an understanding that the advancing man would loan this cow to the sharecropper. The share cropper got the milk. The advancing man got the calf. The share cropper would feed the cow and raise the calf up until the advancing man got ready to sell the calf, and the ~~advancing man~~ *share cropper* would also 'tend

to bringing the cow back to the bull to get her bred for another calf. It never occurred to him to own his own cow. If it did occur to him he didn't want a cow. Anyway, he could always get a cow. And that was the way the cow trade went. Sometimes ~~the~~ the advancing man would loan a man a sow. The man got the sow, ~~bred~~ *fed* the sow, tended to her when she had ~~picks~~ pigs, and he got half the pigs and the advancing man got half the pigs. Sometimes the pig crop was shared in a different manner. Usually the share cropper had his own pigs, but if he ^{happened to} ~~run~~ out of stock he could usually borrow a sow from the advancing man and get half the pigs and he'd take his half in female pigs so that he could raise some sows to get back in the meat business again.

The houses, as I said, they weren't too good back then. Some of them were better than others, but there was a lot of them that were ~~just~~ nothing but shacks, usually made of wooden boards on framing, with just as little framing used as possible. Some of them didn't even have a ceiling in them, just had a roof on them, but always a big fire place and a kitchen with a flu^e so that a stove could be used. Now that was after the day of the stove.

Before that, the cooking was done on a fireplace, but the stove, it didn't take it long to get in, and nearly everybody had a range stove, a wooden range stove. The wood was cut off the landlord's land at no expense to the share cropper other than cutting ^{of} it, and every share cropper had his cross cut saw and an axe or two, his wedges to split the logs were made of persimmon or dogwood and his maul was made of hickory. The maul was a big wooden hammer-like arrangement that was used to drive in the wedges to split the logs, and some of the prettiest timber that every grew in this ^{whole} country was worked up into firewood by the share croppers. They would always pick out a clean, straight-grained tree because it would split easy, unless, that is, The Man came along and designated the tree himself, which he frequently did to keep them from cutting up his best trees. However, at that time, it was before the day of the timber boom and timber wasn't worth a whole lot.

Now, speaking of timber gets around to clearing up land. This country was originally piney woods, most of it, and some of

the land was, naturally, better than others, some of it wasn't so good, but the advancing man would have a streak of timber that was on some good land and he would want to get the timber off so he could farm the land, so he would have what was called a "log rolling." He would get all of his people, all of his men, and he would go all over the community, and he would invite his friends and his neighbors to bring all of their men and have a log rolling. A log rolling was the cutting down of the big virgin timber, rolling the logs up into piles, piling the tops on top of the piles of logs, setting them afire and burning them. There is no telling how many million feet of virgin pine timber was burned in this country at those log rollings. It was a big affair, a big eating. The man whose land they were having the log rolling on, he had plenty of food to feed the whole crowd and usually some other refreshments that went along with it. Some times there would be several hundred people at a log rolling, cutting down trees, trimming them up, rolling the logs up into piles, piling the tops on them, and burning them up.

That piece of

~~In that case the~~ land, then, was cleared of trees, but the stumps were still there. There wasn't any such thing as getting rid ~~ngx~~ of all

the stumps so they just ignored the stumps and plowed around them.

If a man was plowing along with his mule, and the mule came to a stump, he sidestepped the stump, the plow sideswiped the stump, and the man sidestepped the stump, so the row had a slight bend in it around the stump, but they went right on and worked in and out among the stumps. *Gradually* ~~Practically~~ all of the stumps would

rot away excepting the ~~xxx~~ heart pine and they were just there

~~and they were just there~~ until the era of the bulldozer. Some-

times they would dig around them and dig down ^{10 or 12} ~~six or eight~~ inches

around them under the surface and cut them off down under the

ground and get them out of the way that way because the ordinary

two-horse plow, even the breaking plow, didn't go too deep - a

foot or a foot and a half would ^{usually} ~~ordinarily~~ clear any plow that

wanted to come along, any mule-drawn plow. So, sometimes, they

would go to that trouble and cut the stumps off, but usually they

just plowed around them, and left them.

Now the communities that developed around this share cropping system. As I said, the advancing man was also usually a merchant

and he was frequently a ginner and also a miller, and also a blacksmith. He settled in a community and started his operation and it wasn't long until other people began to come to his store. They would have a little money to spend. Then it wasn't long ^{until} ~~before~~ some of his neighbors who didn't have a store would come and they would make arrangements to furnish - maybe they didn't have a big enough operation to have a store so they would furnish their ~~share~~ share croppers out of Mr. John's store. They would bring their corn to Mr. John's ~~mill~~ mill to get it ground into meal and Mr. John would get a toll, a certain percentage of the corn, for the work of his mill. He had a miller, a man who 'tended the mill, and his neighbors would bring their wagons to be repaired, and plows, and buggies and so forth to Mr. John's blacksmith shop. So, a community developed, and it developed around this share cropping system. Now where the share cropping system came from I don't know. I ~~xx~~ never have heard of anybody who did know. I don't think it came from anywhere. I think it just developed, it just grew. It was just a system of doing business that people could understand back in those days and could afford, but you take a man and his

wife with nothing, no money, no mule, no wagon, no nothing except just themselves, and their hands, they had to go and work with somebody who would give them the tools to work with, and then after the land was cropped down so that they had to have fertilizer, guano, they called it, somebody had to get up some guano or the crop wouldn't make. So it just developed as a matter of course, and these people who were share croppers - as I have said, some of them were a high type people, they were mostly, as a whole, as a large percentage they weren't educated but most of them were a fairly good sort of people and it was just a question of having the opportunity to do, and something to do with as ~~an~~ means of making a living. And as I said a while ago, ~~an~~ a share cropper wasn't in the business for the money. He was in the business for the bread and clothing and shelter. Food, shelter, and clothing, those were his items, and anything else was sort of a side line. Now some of the croppers developed trades. Some of them would get to be pretty good carpenters. They would wiggle around, over a period of time, and maybe buy a handsaw, or maybe Grandpaw would leave them a handsaw, or Paw would

would have had a handsaw, and Paw was a carpenter and he taught son John to be a carpenter, ^{well} ~~or~~ maybe son George didn't want to be a carpenter and he wouldn't fool with carpentering, but son John would learn to saw and to hammer and to drive a nail and to hew a piece of timber, and the use of the drawing knives, the foot adze, the broad axe - the tools that they used back in those days, old ^{the} twist auger - the tools that they used to build with - ~~and~~ this boy would learn from his father, and ^{so} he had a trade, and when he wasn't working his crop usually the advancing man had work for him to do. The same way with the blacksmith, it was a handed down proposition, for the share cropper who was also a blacksmith had a trade that usually would bring him some meat and bread when, if he hadn't had that trade he would ^{either} have had to depend on his 'tater patch and his pig, ~~and~~ ^{and} or he might get hungry, ~~or~~ ^{or} his old cow. So the trades were handed down, usually from father to son, ^{or} ~~but~~ from one man to another, anyway, and they were trades that went right along in keeping with the times. For instance, the broad axe. I doubt if there is a broad axe to be bought in this country today.

It was an axe that was just like they said. It was ~~a~~ broad axe. Oh, the blade on the thing had an edge six or eight inches long, ~~and~~ you might say it was six or eight inches wide. It had a short neck and a big eye for a big handle, and usually the handle was short, and ~~usually~~ the man who could handle the broad axe, who could use the broad axe, could take a piece of timber, take a tree, cut it down, saw it down, he could take that broad axe and square that tree up and make a square of timber out of it, and some of them were good enough with that broad axe to leave hardly ~~any~~ any marks on that piece of timber. It would look as though it had been trimmed down with the draw knife. And then the old foot adze, which is still used quite a bit. *In place* ~~Instead~~ of doing so much sawing they used the foot adze to shape the timber, and a man who could use an adze -well, back in time, they were known as adzemen. They were good with an adze. They could trim out a piece of timber with an adze and leave no markings on the timber, it would be perfectly smooth, just like the broad axe man. So there were trades that developed along with the share cropping system that are just out, *about*

now. I don't know if you could find a man who could handle a broad axe, swing a broad axe, I don't know if you could find one in this country or not. The same with the old cow drivers, the ox driver, the ox handler, the ox man, the teamster, I guess you would call him. The logging, the little bit that was done in the days of the share cropper, the commercial logging was done with oxen and the men who drove the oxen had a different language that they talked. They talked with those - they called them "cows" - they talked to ^{those} ~~the~~ cows so that they would understand what they would mean, and they could handle them, and move them about and drive them through the woods by just talking to them. It was a gibberish that nobody could understand except the man and the cows, but they got the work done. ~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

The Basket Maker

He usually worked for the advancing man. The cotton was picked in sacks and handled in baskets. The baskets were generally made out of white oak, made of strips, interwoven, and were of

different sizes, of course, but the common cotton basket was -

I don't know just how much it would hold but it was a pretty good sized basket, had a couple of handholds on the side and would hold enough cotton for two men to pick up with ease. The cotton was picked, weighed on a steelyard ^{steelyard} and handled in cotton baskets. I'll get back to steelyards ^{steelyard} in a minute. ~~xxxxxx~~ The basket maker was a man who went ~~into~~ the woods, picked out his timber, cut it down, brought it in to his home, to his house where he lived, and usually under a shade tree, and in lay by time he was making baskets for The Man, cotton baskets, and he would receive a compensation for his baskets. The timber was furnished by The Man, the landlord, and the basket maker was paid a little bit for his baskets. Then there was the handle maker. Hammer handles, axe handles, and saw handles, any other kind of handles. Sometimes the basket maker was also the handle maker. Sometimes the handle ~~maker~~ was strictly the handle maker. He didn't make ~~anything~~ baskets, he made handles. You would be surprised at the quality of merchandise that these people would turn out with the kind of tools

that they had to use. Those fellows who made handles could make axe handles, hammer handles, saw handles, mauls, wedges, they could make most anything along that line and they could do it with very few tools and turn out mighty good work and generally the advancing man had a good stock of handles in his store.

The ~~steel yard~~ ^{stilyard} was an implement used, generally, back in those days, generally in the weighing of cotton. Of course, it would weigh anything that you hung to it. It operated on the principle. balance ~~system~~. There was a set of hooks that hung the stilyard up to anything you wanted to hang it to, a tree ~~branch~~ limb, a beam on a wagon, or anything, and there was another set of hooks that you hung your cotton sacks on, or whatever you wanted to weigh. On the end of the beam, the beam was graduated into weights, pounds, so many notches to the pound. There was a ~~steel yard~~ ^{stilyard} pea, which was a weight, and which you moved out on the end of that beam, and was a counterbalance, and when it reached a counterbalance, when the beam would balance with the weight that you had on it, either cotton or corn or whatever you were weighing, then you read on your beam the number of pounds and you had your correct weight. That was

called ~~steelyard~~[✓] weight, and they were a fairly accurate means of weighing. I haven't seen any ~~steelyards~~[✓] for sale in a long time, I don't know if they are still made or not. I ~~km~~ think that the correct name, originally, was ~~steelyard~~[✓]. It was later modified, or moderated, or degenerated into ~~stillyard~~[✓],. As I say, the language that was spoken by the share cropper was a little bit different from ordinary English. He could get up some things that he was about the only one that could under~~st~~and it.

Let me see, now. We've gone over the mercantile end of the thing, the gin, the blacksmith shop, the grist mill, the funeral expenses, the cows, and the hogs - now, the money. Money back then was, you might say, in short supply. It was mighty high. It wasn't plentiful like it is today. The advancing man knew that most of the share croppers were mighty childish. They were very much like children. I won't say that they were childish, but they were child-like.~~km~~ In their mental capacities they were very much like kids. If he happened to have some money in his pocket and he saw some gadget of no worth that pleased him, he would buy it. Tomorrow

never did worry him very much. In fact, it didn't worry him at all. So the advancing man, while the crop was being made, while the cropper was getting his draw, the advancing man didn't believe in putting out much cash money. He would let them have food items, staple items, snuff and tobacco, cloth, turpentine, kerosene, stuff that he knew they had a use for, why that would be included in the draw, but not much money. If a share cropper got hold of any cash money from the advancing X man during draw time he had to talk, had *to* put up a pretty good spiel. He had to show the advancing man just where he needed that money and what he was going to do with it, because he wouldn't turn loose with very much money. Then in the fall of the year, at settlement timeX, if he paid his debt and had some money left out of his crop, then it was his money and he could do what he pleased with it and most of them got rid of it just as fast as they could, just about like it was going out of style. They would buy some of the doggondest gadgets that you ever saw, just *because* ~~according as~~ it was something that they happened to want, they would buy it, and I reckon that most anybody that had as little as they did to live

on, and no luxuries at all, I reckon that when they saw a little something ^{unusual} that pleased them they would buy it. ~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

Christmas time. Now at Christmas the share cropper usually made his arrangements before Christmas, a little before Christmas. If he was going to move, he would move before Christmas. He went to his new Man before Christmas. Then he would come in and want some Christmas money, or some Christmas goods. Usually the advancing man had apples, oranges, and candy, striped stick candy, raisins (most of them in bulk), and stuff like that, Christmas stuff that he knew the share croppers would want so that when he came in after Christmas money instead of getting money, he would get a little bit of money but he would usually wind up by letting the advancing man letting him have some Christmas stuff out of his stock of merchandise. Then, as I said, the share cropper, you rarely ^{ever} heard him say that he lived anywhere. He would say, "I stay with Mr. George so and so," or, "I stay on Mr. so and so's place." Rarely ever did he use the words, "I live" at any particular place unless he owned the land himself, and then he would say, "I live" ~~in~~ ^{at} such and such a community. The share cropper

knew that he was very temporary. He couldn't claim ^{any} ~~the~~ right to say that he "lived" anywhere. He just "stayed". Of course, he was just as apt to be gone the next year as he was to be there, either by his own desire or maybe The Man would move him out.

As a rule the storekeeper was

uneducated. And the reason for that was because when he was a child he should have been going to school but he had to stay out of school to help his family make a crop. So his chances of education were pretty slim. On the other hand, the advancing man, usually, his kids had a chance to go to school, and then if they got up with a little age on them and finished high school, and didn't want to go to college, then they came on in the store or in the gin or at the mill or at the blacksmith shop, or out on the farm, they started learning the business from their father. The advancing man was a pretty shrewd duck. He had to be. He had to be a mule trader and he had to be a man trader. He had to be able to look at a mule and just about tell what the mule was worth, whether he would

work or not, whether he was mean or not, whether he could ~~even~~
 be handled or not. And he had to be able to look at a share cropper
 and be able to tell just about the same thing, because even though
 a man was willing to work, and loved to work, and intended to work
 his crops real good, along in the summertime when the days got long
 and the hot weather got hot, the corn got up about head high and
~~max~~ he's trying to lay it by, he'd have a tendency then to ^{sort of} slack
 off on his work, because as I've said before, they were child-like,
 in
~~and~~ their thinking and their emotions, and when the going got rough
 they would have a tendency to slack off a little bit and the ad-
 vancing man would have to know just exactly how to handle them to
 get them to go on and work. Some of them he would have to fuss at.
 Some of them he would have to kid along. Some of them he would have
 to baby them a little bit. He used every psychological trick that
 he knew on his men as well as his mules. Not only that, but he
 had to be a pretty good merchant and he had to be a bookkeeper.

He had to keep these fellows' records pretty straight because as
~~with~~ ^{little education as} they had, they still, most of them, would know pretty close to
 how much debt they were supposed to ^{owe} ~~know~~. They never asked a

question, they never questioned The Man's prices on anything.

Fertilizer, seed, or anything in his store, they didn't question the price, as long as it was going to be put on the books, as long as they were getting it on credit, but, if he began to get their accounts out of balance, if they were a little bit more than they thought they should be, then they would question, and most of them had a pretty good idea ^{as to} ~~of~~ how much they were ~~mm~~ supposed to owe.

So the advancing man ~~had~~ had to be a bookkeeper, or he had to have a bookkeeper in his business. Most of them kept their own books.

Then he had to be a pretty good blacksmith himself to know ^{whether} ~~if~~ his blacksmith was turning out the right kind of work or not. He had to know a good basket when he saw it. He had to be able to figure out how much corn was in a crib, ~~xxxxx~~ it makes no difference what the size of the crib was, or the shape, I'd say, if the crib were square, ^{which} ~~and~~ most of them were reasonably square and easy to figure, or a little big wop sided then he had to be a pretty good mathematician. He had to be a pretty good timber cruiser. He had to know, to be a pretty good agronomist. He had to know soils, different soil types, so that he would know whether to plant corn

in this field or whether to plant cotton. He was a pretty shrewd duck, any way you'd take it. He had to stay right on his toes every minute. It was very easy for him to go broke. It happened time and time again. It was a risky business, and a dangerous business, because say that you have a hundred or a hundred and fifty plows, and you make a bad crop. Your croppers go into debt to you, and you, in turn, go into debt to somebody else. Well, there's no insurance, no guarantee that the next crop won't be bad. I have seen as many as three and four, ~~xi~~ one right behind the other. That broke many a good man, ^{many} a man who was trying to do a good, straight, honest business. He couldn't stand the pressure. And then, too, it was mighty easy for the advancing man, out of the goodness of his heart, to let his croppers owe him too much money. He had to know about what that man's crop was going to bring him in the fall, and he ~~had~~ had to hold that man down, irregardless of what he wanted, or what he needed. He had to hold him down to about what his crop would pay or else he, the advancing man, ^{stood} ~~took~~ a chance on losing his shirt. Some of the croppers would get everything that they could get. They would think up a lot of things to ask for

that they really didn't intend, that they really didn't think they were going to get, but they would ask for them, anyway, X just like kids, knowing that they aren't going to get them, but then, if they do get them, why they figure they are that much ahead of the game. Some of the shareX croppers thought along the same lines.

An advancing man had to be a pretty smooth boy and at times he had to be pretty rough. He had to know when to say "No," and when to put his foot down, and keep it down. Of course, sickness, and things X like that had to be reckoned with because although the share croppers were generally a pretty, hardy bunch *but* once in a while you could have sickness in the family and it would cost a lot of money, as sickness does now.

The share croppers had a language more or less their own and was very

hard to understand, for instance, winter time. "From the first frost until the hickories bud." "Time," "I haven't seen you since Buck was a yearlin'" or, "I haven't seen you since they burnt the woods." "I'll be there, the Lord willing and the creek don't rise."

This explanation of the Dog Days was really a mockery. The old Dog Days began July 28th and ended thru September 5th - a period of 40 days. Something to do with the Dog Star. Usually the pressing spell of the year. The old saying if the Dog Days came in wet it would be wet all the Dog Days and usually ruin a cotton crop - if they came in dry, then dry Dog Days & good
cotton crop 49

Time again. Sun-up, quartering time. High sun, quartering time,

sun-down. Quartering time is mid-morning and mid-afternoon.

Night is moon-up. Midnight is moon-set. Dog days, -from the

last draw day to the first bale of seed. That means the first bale

of cotton seed. The cotton seed in the fall of the year, the

share croppers' ^{part} ~~share~~ of the cotton seed was not put against his

debt, it was given to him to buy him some food with. "Slick

as an eel." "Straight as a string." "Crooked as a rail fence."

Distance, so many miles, "as the crow flies." Anything in

clear weather, "clear as a bell," or "clear as a frosty morning."

Distance, "A right smart piece and not so far either."

Suppose he was doing his own riding, and he went out to George Jones' farm. We'll say that the advancing man is a man named Mr. Lewis. So he gets there, and he says:

"HelloX George."

"Howdy, Mr. Lewis."

"How's everything going?"

"Well, it's going pretty well, I reckon. ^{along} Hey, Mr. Lewis,

I want you to come over here and look at this old house. The chimney is about to fall loose from it some sort of way. Looks like it's sunk down over there on one side."

So, they go over there and they look ^{up} at the chimney. The chimney is ^{trying to} pulled away from the house and cracked down the middle. So, Mr. Lewis has got to be able to figure out something to do for the chimney. He he will tell George, "All right, George at lay by time we'll make us up some mud and get us up some rocks and we'll get us a pole and we'll push the old chimney back to the house. Now in the meantime, you get you some clay ^{and mix it up} and dab them cracks with it until we get this crop laid by and then we'll fix it."

"Yassuh. All right,. Now Mr. Lewis, my old mule looks like he got the thrash. I want you to come look at his foot and see what you think, see if he don't need some linament."

So Mr. Lewis has got to go look at the mule's foot and see what's the matter with it. Maybe it's thrash and maybe it's something ^{else}

Anyway, he's got to diagnose the ailment, make a little note, and the next time he comes out to George's place he'll bring him some mule linament.

Then, "Mr. Lewis, I want to get me some poles, and make me a pig pen out of, I want to get them out of that branch ~~there~~ head right down there by the spring."

"All right, George, get your poles and make your pig pen now but don't waste no time out of your crop fo^oling with them pigs. This grass is growin'."

"Nawsuh. I ain't gonna do that. I'm gonna do that Saturday evenin'."

"All right. Well, I believe that I'll get on, ^{now} George. You about got everything going along. Where is that oldest boy of yours?"

"He ain't here today. He had to go the cross roads over there to see about something. I think he's got a girl friend over there."

"Uh, huh. So he's goin' a-courtin'. He ought to be plowin'."

"Nawsuh, he said he wasn't courtin'. He's just goin' over there to see and he'll be back about sundown. He'll be here all right. He's going to plow."

"Well, you ~~git~~ git him on back here now and in this crop.

We gotta ~~ga~~ git this grass outta here. We can't ~~afford~~ fool around. If it goes to rainin' this stuff will outgrow you and you'll have the biggest mess you ever saw."

"Yassuh, I know that is the truth."

"Now looka here, George, what about that ^{terrace} ~~pasture~~ up there.
What ~~Wxxx~~ are you going to do ^{wish} You haven't plowed it up yet?"

"I'm saving that, Mr. Lewis, to plant me some late peas on if it's all right. That's the reason I didn't plant nothing on it."

"Well, that's all right. You got some seed peas?"

"Yassuh, I got some hung up in a sack up there in the crib if the rats ain't ^{at} ~~eat~~ 'em."

"If the rats ain't ^{at} ~~eat~~ 'em! What do you mean if the rats ain't ^{at} ~~eat~~ 'em. You'd better have some seed peas if you intend to plant any."

"Oh, I got some. If I ain't, Willie over there across the branch, he's got some, he'd let me have some."

so Mr. Lewis leaves George. George was one of the kind that usually saved up a lot of complaints to "dump" on Mr. Lewis whenever he had the opportunity, thinking, maybe, it would cause Mr. Lewis not to notice the terrace that hadn't been plowed or the fact that the oldest boy wasn't on hand. Mr. Lewis had to be sharp.

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So Mr. Lewis goes on to another farm - -

He stops there and he says, "Good evenin', ^{Vernon} ~~Barnum~~."

"Good evenin', Mr. Lewis."

"How's everything going?"

"Well, looks like we're gettin' along pretty good. We got everything pretty well shaped up. It seems that we're pretty well ahead of the grass. The crop's fairly clean. I didn't get up too good a stand down there on that low field. I wish you'd walk down here with me and look at it. It looks like those seeds didn't come up or something. I don't know . . ."

Well, they go down there and they look at the broken stand, maybe it's cotton - well, it would be cotton, because nobody paid too much attention to a broken stand of corn.

"Now Mr. Lewis, you reckon I got enough cotton to go with there, or you reckon I'd better plow it up and plant it over."

"Well, don't you reckon you got about a half a stand?"

I figure
"Yessuh, /by the time I get through hoeing and get it sided
up I believe I'll have as much as half a stand."

"Well, let's go with that. I'd rather risk half a stand
now than to plow it up this late and plant it over. X What do you
think about it?"

"I believe I'd rather risk it too, Mr. Lewis. And another
thing, if you don't mind, next time you come by I need a few nails.
I need ^{sort-of} to/patch up my crib. It looks like the planks are comin'
off of the back side of it, but I've got some old boards layin'
around here and I can cut me some poles to ^{put} ~~lay~~ in there and nail
'em to it."

"Well, all right. I'll bring you some nails. Is there anything
else you need?"

"Nosuh. I reckon that's about all."

"Well, I'll get along up the road. I'll see you again
later."

Now there's two different types right there. You got one
fellow who's got this and that and the other the matter, and the
other one is a pretty level-headed sort of man and his stuff goes

along. The only thing that was worrying him, particularly, was that broken stand of cotton, which would worry anybody, but after he got the advancing man's o.k. on it he was willing to go ahead and work the broken stand as hard as he would have worked a good stand. He was a different type man.

And then we go on up the road further and we come to one that is different to either one of those two. The advancing man stops and nobody's in sight. Well, he knows they are all in the field. He listens and he hears them singing and laughing. He goes ^{on} down in the field.

"Hello, Buck."

"Hi, Mr. Lewis. How's everything going with you?"

"Well, it's goin' pretty good, I reckon. How's it by you?"

"Oh, we got this thing by the tail on a downhill drag. I tell you now. Me and the boys have been laying with it. We been gittin' it, ever time a piece of grass pops its head up we cut it off with a hoe or plow it up with a plow. We're gonna git it enayhow. I tell you right now, if the rain'll just hold off a few more days I'm gonna have this thing wrapped up where I can

say grace over it. I mean. I'm gonna get the gravy out of it too!
jabber, jabber, jabber, jabber " and that goes on until
Mr. Lewis leaves and while he's walking across the field Old Buck is
still laughing and jabbering. That kind. *But a worker from
the word go.*

*The share cropping business or the advancing
man*
or the furnishing business, or the merchant farming business,
whatever they want to call it, it was something that developed
in a country, among a people. ~~that~~ **I** It came from no set pattern,
it developed its own patterns. It moved in with the era of mule
power and man power and it moved out with the advance of the times
and the education of the people. There was a young fellow plowing
one day, and it was hot, and he was plowing a pair of mules and they
were stepping fast, and they were lathered all over and he was
sweating and a man stopped, and he said, "Son, if you don't get you
a hat, plowing out there as hot as that sun is, ^{it's} ~~you're~~ gonna cook
your brains."

He said, "Mister, if I had any grains, I wouldn't be out

Get up
here. ~~Gidnap~~, mule."