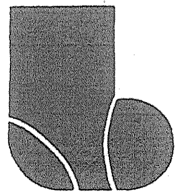

Support the Empty Stocking Fund

'79 drive begins today as volunteers set out to raise $200,000 — 3A

The Atlanta Journal
THE ATLANTA CONSTITUTION

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U.S.: Hostages 'Not Negotiable'

From Wire Reports

UNITED NATIONS — U.S. Ambassador Donald F. McHenry told an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council Saturday night that Americans are seething with anger over the harsh treatment of 50 American hostages at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran and warned again that the United States holds Iran fully responsible for their safety.

McHenry and six members of Congress who joined him warned that United States patience was wearing thin and that swift action by the world body was needed if the hostage crisis was to be resolved peacefully.

McHenry demanded that the hostages in Tehran be released and that the embassy be restored to the American government. "These are not negotiable matters," he declared.

Sen. Frank Church (D-Idaho) told reporters that he and other members of Congress had delivered a warning during a 35-minute meeting Saturday night with Secretary General Kurt Waldheim. Waldheim met the Americans during a break between closed-door consultations and the 9 p.m. opening of the formal meeting.

The purpose of the visit by the members of Congress, Church said, was to demonstrate the solidarity of the American government and strong bipartisan backing of the President by Congress in confronting Iran over the detention of at least 50 American hostages.

"I think the President, Congress and people have shown great restraint in the face of extreme provocation," Church said. "But that cannot go on indefinitely."

For that reason, he said, he hoped the United Nations and the secretary general could help resolve the crisis in time.

Church's warning both to Iran and the United Nations was seconded by his delegation, which included Reps. Peter A. Peyser (D-N.Y.), Larry Winn Jr. (R-Kan.), Clement J. Zablocki (D-Wis.), Benjamin S. Rosenthal (D-N.Y.) and William S. Broomfield (R-Mich.)

Zablocki added that both houses of Congress had adopted resolutions in the last week urging the United

See U.N., 8A

Donald F. McHenry says U.S. angry

2 Quizzed In Slaying Of Girl, 12

• A shock wave ran through the town of Adairsville Saturday when the body of 12-year-old Mary Frances Stoner was found about 19 hours after she was abducted. 8A

By MICHAEL SCHWARTZ
Journal Staff Writer

ADAIRSVILLE, Ga. — A suspect and a possible witness in the bludgeon death of 12-year-old majorette Mary Frances Stoner were being questioned Saturday night by Bartow County sheriff's investigators.

Police said the young girl's skull had been crushed by three or four blows from rocks that weighed 20 pounds or more. The blood-stained stones were found scattered near the body.

Mary Stoner

The girl was fully clothed, police said, but they declined to say if there were any signs that she had been sexually molested.

A patch of blood from the massive head wound stained the bed of pine needles where Mary's body was discovered. Police said there appeared to have been a struggle before the slaying.

The body of the young girl was found at 11 a.m. Saturday by four deerhunters who were walking through an isolated wooded area off a side road seven miles south of Adairsville.

Federal, state and local authorities had conducted a ground and air search for the 8th-grader since the 4 p.m. kidnapping Friday.

Identities of the two men were not released, but an investigator said the suspect was in his 20s and is a resident of a nearby county.

The possible witness was said to be from the Cartersville area.

No criminal charges have been filed against either man, police said.

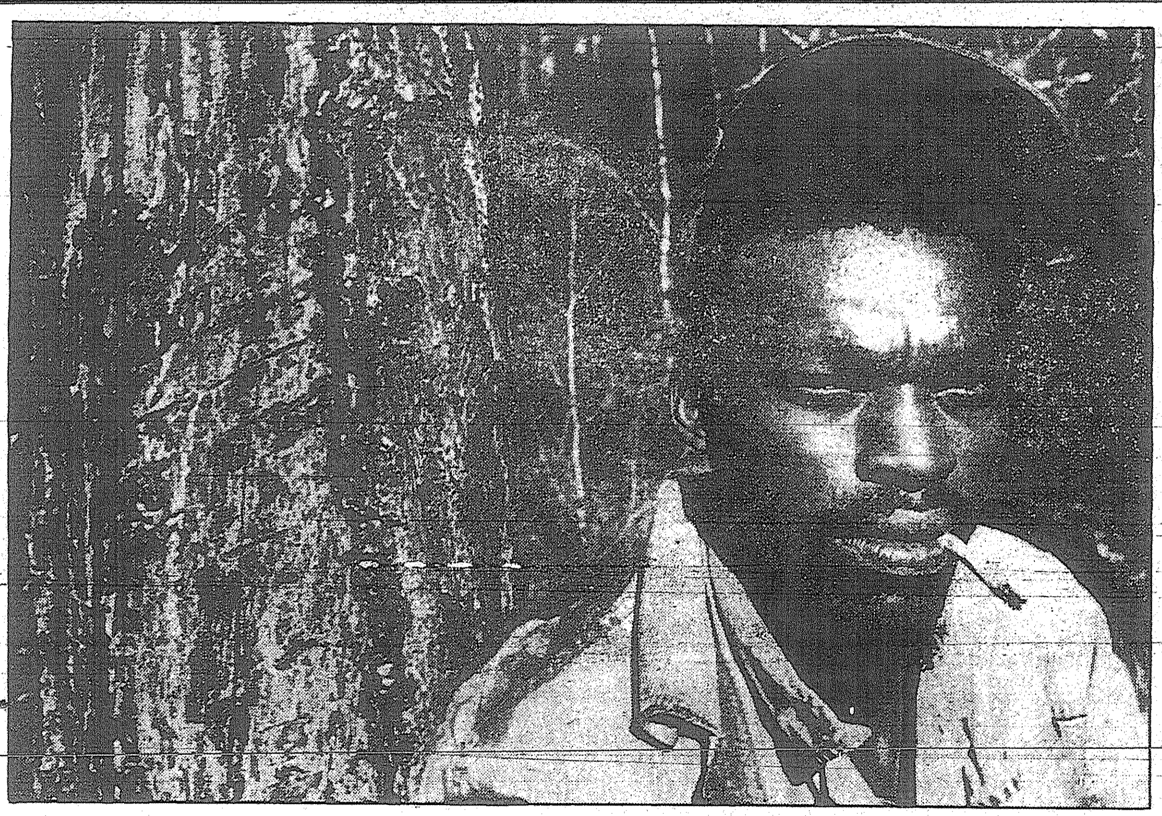
The suspect surfaced in the case within two hours after the girl's body was discovered, investigators said, and police began questioning him at that time.

Mary's body was found in some underbrush about 30 feet from an open area used as a garbage dump and a target practice field.

The slaying scene is down a trail and known by local residents, leading investigators to believe the kidnapper was someone who may have been familiar with the area and had visited the spot before.

Mary was the daughter of Roy and Mary Stoner, who also have a pre-school aged daughter. Her father is a parts manager for the Ward Tractor Co. in Marietta.

See GIRL, 8A



Staff Photo—Calvin Cruce

Charles Pope: the turpentine worker who talks of leaving

Endless Debt Haunts Turpentiners

The Underpaid And Under-Protected

Second in a Series

By PAUL LIEBERMAN and CHESTER GOOLRICK
Constitution Staff Writers

HOBOKEN, Ga. — One of the laborers may be leaving the turpentine camp here — at least, that is the talk among the other men Monday morning.

Like most of the black men who work collecting the thick gum which flows from the pine trees of south Georgia, Charles Pope, 32, can say he has been a turpentiner "on and off all my life." So if he were to leave turpentining, it would be a touch of news in a world of little change.

Oscar Sears Jr., the white man running the turpentine operation, gives the first indication there may be a vacancy soon in the "quarters," the cluster of faded red wooden shacks which house 15 laborers and their families. "He's not working," Sears says, referring to Pope. "Every day he has another excuse. It's either this or that."

And the boss adds: "If you don't work, you don't live here."

Pope, a wiry six-footer, tells it a different way. If he leaves, it will be because he wants to, he says, because he is fed up with life as a turpentine man. "I don't like workin' these hours for the money they pay," he says. "So I told the man he could have his place Wednesday."

The money paid in turpentining is not much when matched against contemporary pay standards, even the minimum wage. Turpentining is one of America's oldest industries — started soon after colonization, then flourishing in the woods of the Southeast under slavery — and, to a remarkable degree, the industry has resisted both mechanization and social change.

Reporters for The Atlanta Constitution spent six months examining the $25 million-a-year industry centered in the South Georgia woods. As part of the inquiry, editorial writer Lee May worked for two weeks in late July and early August alongside the other laborers in one of the region's 700 turpentine operations.

During his first week, May had worked two days — 18 hours in all — dipping gum from metal cups attached to some of the 80,000 trees worked in Hoboken, a town of 600, about 35 miles north of the Florida border.

He had earned $10 by collecting slightly more than one 435-pound barrel of gum, at $8 per barrel. Clifford Giles, a veteran "dipper" who worked as May's partner and who showed May the ropes, had filled seven barrels in four days and made $56. Three others doing the same job had earned $104, $72 and $40 that week.

Much as Charles Pope indicated, the pay was not good. But Pope's complaint and his possible departure contrasted to the attitudes of the other laborers, who work with few complaints. And during this, May's second week on the job, it was only the talk of Pope leaving that raised a question of why so many stay, why they keep toiling in the woods despite wages which clearly place them among the nation's underpaid.

The week starts on this particular Monday morning much as every week starts in the quarters. One by one, the laborers emerge from their decaying shacks, caps on their heads, feed sacks

See UNDERPAID, 32A

Iranians Claim Hostage Says He's With CIA

From Wire Reports

TEHRAN, Iran — The militant Moslem students holding 50 Americans hostage in the U.S. Embassy singled out U.S. Charge d'Affaires Bruce Laingen and two others as spies Saturday and claimed one of the Americans had confessed to being a CIA agent.

The radicals said the Americans would be tried before an Islamic court unless the shah is returned to Iran.

As the embassy siege dragged into its 28th day, the students occupying the compound summoned reporters to show them copies of a cable they said supported their claims that the hostages were spies.

The cable, marked "secret" and dated Aug. 9, 1979, purportedly was written by Laingen and dealt with the assignment of two alleged CIA officers to the Tehran Embassy under diplomatic cover.

The students said that one of the two officers cited in the cable, William Daugherty, was interrogated and "has confessed to being a CIA officer."

The militants showed the reporters a message they say was sent from the embassy to Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance in August concerning the arrival at the embassy of a William Daugherty and Malcolm Kalp on "SRF assignments" and indicating that this involved the Central Intelligence Agency. The students did not appear to know what "SRF" signified, telling reporters, "Ask the CIA."

They said both men were among their hostages and that Daugherty had confessed to being a CIA officer. Kalp had not yet been asked, they said.

In Washington, State Department spokesman David Passage would not comment on the allegation that Daugherty was a CIA agent, but said the Iranian militants "have an ample record of forgery, misrepresentation and fabrication."

Because no list of the remaining hostages has been released, it could not be determined whether the two men were, indeed, among the captives.

The militants said the document helped prove their allegation that the embassy was an espionage center.

Students said the telex message, allegedly from Laingen, one of the three senior diplomats being held separately at the Foreign Ministry, agreed to the stationing of Kalp and Daugherty in Tehran, "as assigned."

In the message as displayed, Laingen purportedly insisted that because of the "great sensitivity locally to any hint of CIA activity, it is of the highest importance that the cover be the best we can come up with."

It is common practice for major countries to use some diplomatic positions as covers for spies. Iranians, recalling CIA involvement in the shah's restoration to the throne in 1953, are particularly sensitive to

See IRAN, 20A

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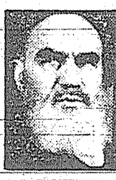
Vengeance Burns Behind Khomeini's Detachment

• The Ayatollah Khomeini condemns progress and innovation as the work of Satan, yet he uses enough of the devil's tools — sophisticated electronics — for a space shot. The satanic devices spread his message all over Iran. He is proud of the detachment that allowed him to quietly accept the death of a favorite younger daughter, yet his very eyes burn with vengeance and he thirsts for blood. In this first of an exclusive five-part series, Georgie Anne Geyer examines who the ayatollah is, where he came from and how he exerts his awesome power, turning millions into fanatics. Series continues Monday in The Atlanta Journal.

By GEORGIE ANNE GEYER
The Los Angeles Times

For the last 12 months, a 79-year-old, bearded, black-robed caricature of a carnival swami has dominated world events, making the most powerful nations jump at his whim.

The ailing old leader, bathed in blood now, lit from inside with an eerie and abiding



Who is Khomeini?

flame and fired with an Old Testament self-righteousness, is the Ayatollah Khomeini.

Who is he? Where did this figure so alien to the time and space we know come from? How did he get where he is? What formed the man who can hold America ransom for lives and the world ransom for oil?

Physically, he appears to Western eyes like an avenging angel from the Old Testament. An enormous, bulky man, bundled always in his black robes and the circular black turban that looks like a reverse halo from a black mass, he moves with youth and grace, with the lightness of a spectre. His eyes are his most arresting and sinister faculty, staring unsmilingly not at the people around him but at some unknown point beyond them.

When I talked to him last winter, for instance, he sat with me and now-deposed Foreign Minister Ibrahim Yazdi, who was then certain that heaven itself was at hand, and stared beyond us, as if he were seeing some vision unseen by us. In retrospect . . . he was.

He is also that rare creature, a true man of detachment. When his infant daughter drowned some 35 years ago, while his wife was grieving her heart out, Khomeini only prayed quietly over the body, showing no emotion for his adored youngest child. "God gave me the child, and now he has taken her back," his friends quote him as saying at the time. That's detachment.

Yet, when I sat with him — and when I studied him afterwards — the "detachment syndrome" simply didn't satisfy me. Was he not, instead, one of those men whose surface detachment hid his inner passions and even rage? I now think that.

Indeed, his whole life, which appears if anything so one of a piece, closer examination shows is far more mysterious and contradictory than one would think:

• He was born around May 17, 1900, in the town of Khomein (from which he takes his name), and they say his hatred for the shah's "line" emerged from his father's murder, supposedly at the hand of the shah's father. Yet, history shows that Khomeini's mother, Hajar Saghafi, herself testified at the trial of the father's murderer, another landlord with whom her husband had fought over irrigation water.

• After becoming an Islamic sage and holy man, Khomeini lectured at the Madresseh Faizieh on ethics and political science. In discussion that went on into the early morning with his avid students, he urged not only that the clergy must involve themselves in politics to help those who were hungry and oppressed

See KHOMEINI, 10A

Naval Stores Ages-Old, but Few Like Living in Past

By PAUL LIEBERMAN and CHESTER GOOLRICK
Constitution Staff Writers

When English explorers first surveyed the shores of North America, they found wild game in abundance, rivers teeming with fish, a temperate climate and — everywhere they looked — pine trees. A report to Sir Walter Raleigh in 1586 told excitedly of the trees, which might yield "pitch, tar, rosin and turpentine."

"There are those kinds of trees which yield them in great store," the report said.

In colonial times, there were few substances as important as the products made from the gum of pine trees — they were used to caulk and maintain the fragile wooden sailing ships which carried men and goods from port to port.

Because of their maritime uses, the products were called "naval stores."

With vast pine forests, the American colonies had the natural resources to produce naval stores. And after the importation of slaves began in 1619, the colonies also had the abundant cheap labor needed to collect gum from the trees.

Nearly 400 years later, pine tree gum still is being collected in the pine woods of a handful of Southeastern states. Georgia is the chief producer.

The "naval stores" now are used as ingredients in scores of products from paint thinner and wood stains to medicated soaps and liquid floor wax, crayons and flypaper.

The uses of the gum have changed. But to a remarkable degree, the naval stores or turpentining industry has not changed. Centuries after its founding in the colonies, the industry still is virtually without mechanization and almost totally dependent on hand labor. The laborers, almost all of them still black, work for pay often far below current standards.

One government forestry publication estimated that in 1971, approximately 5,800 people in Georgia worked producing naval stores. The report matter-of-factly totaled the workers' annual wages at $7 million — about $1,200 a person.

Largely because working conditions have changed too little, the turpentine industry now faces an uncertain future. Production has dropped off in the last decade, but not because of reduced demand for the products. Industry officials, producers and the workers themselves agree the problem is labor — finding a new generation of workers to do the job and live a life of the past.

* * *

South Georgia turpentine producers have been known to say that their products were used in the construction of Noah's ark. That claim is hard to prove, but historical records do trace the extraction of gum or oleoresin from pine trees back at least to the ancient Egyptians, who used pine tar to make a preservative enamel applied to mummies.

Before the birth of Christ, shipbuilders along the banks of the Mediterranean burned pine trees to extract tar, which they used to seal the hulls of primitive sailing vessels.

The British Parliament, aware of the forests in the New World, passed a "Naval Stores Act" in 1705 to subsidize production of naval stores in the colonies. The British thus hoped make their empire more self-sufficient by ending a long dependence on Scandinavia for supplies of the pine tree products essential to a powerful navy.

Naval stores were produced at first by "tar burning" — the cooking of pine fragments in a kiln. Later, a superior product was obtained by chipping into a live long-leafed or slash pine and collecting the gum which flowed from the wound. As the gum would flow only in hot, humid weather, turpentining quickly settled in the southern colonies, primarily in North Carolina.

During a journey through the deep South in 1853, writer Eugene L. Schwaab noticed a bustling industry almost hidden in the Cape Fear region of North Carolina, then the source of most of the nation's yearly output of 619,000 barrels of naval stores.

Schwaab wrote of "a dark wilderness of pines. So dense . . . it seemed as if we had entered a realm of sighing and moaning. . . . All was solitude.

"But, as we progressed, we soon discovered that man had left his 'footprints' even here. These immense pine forests had been allotted into 'plantations,' which are devoted exclusively to the production of tar and turpentine. Here and there by the wayside appeared a small cabin, or factory, where the turpentine, put up in barrels, is collected."

Schwaab noticed the scarred faces of the trees where workers had dug "boxes" for the gum to collect. He continued: "The somber appearance which is given to the country by its extensive pine forests is by no means cheered by the tar kilns which meet the eye here and there as you pass, and which resemble burning volcanoes on a small scale . . . surrounded by an unearthly set of black figures in human shape, thrusting long pikes into the agonizing structure.

"In this branch of industry, slave labor is made very profitable, much more so than in cultivating the soil, poor as it generally is in North Carolina," Schwaab wrote.

The journalist and historian Frederick Law Olmsted, perhaps the most diligent recorder of the look of the South in the 1850s, also toured Carolina turpentine lands where "the road was a mere opening through a forest of long-leafed pines.

"Every tree, on one, two or three sides, was scarified for turpentine. In 10 miles, I passed half a dozen cabins, one or two small clearings, in which corn had been planted, and one turpentine distillery, with a dozen sheds and cabins clustered about it."

While similar forests spread through other Southern states, Olmstead wrote that the inferiority of cotton planting in North Carolina meant Negroes were "in rather less demand; and their owners oftener see their profit in employing them in turpentine orchards than in the cotton fields."

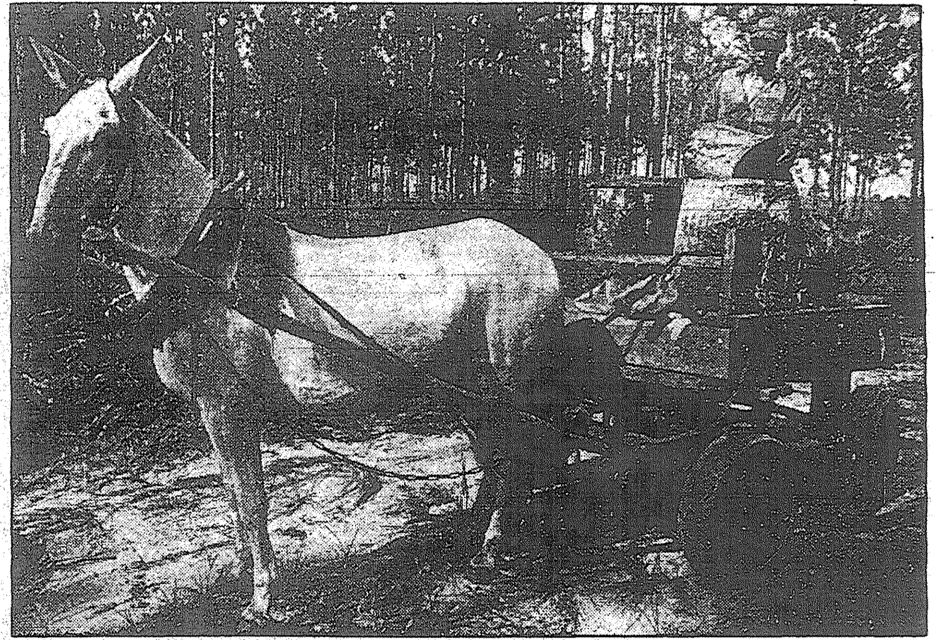
Olmstead found the white turpentine farmers of "a grade superior" to the "great mass of white people inhabiting the turpentine forest," most of whom were "entirely uneducated, poverty-stricken vagabonds."

The turpentine farmers' property consisted "mainly of slaves," but these blacks had far more intimate contact with their masters than Negroes in other slave industries, such as cotton. Accordingly, Olmstead found the turpentine slaves "unusually intelligent and cheerful."

A prominent Southern soil chemist, Edmund Ruffin, observed that slaves set many fires to the pine forests in North Carolina because they disliked turpentining. Ruffin thought the labor easy, and attributed the arson to the relatively solitary nature of the work. "A Negro cannot abide being alone," Ruffin said.

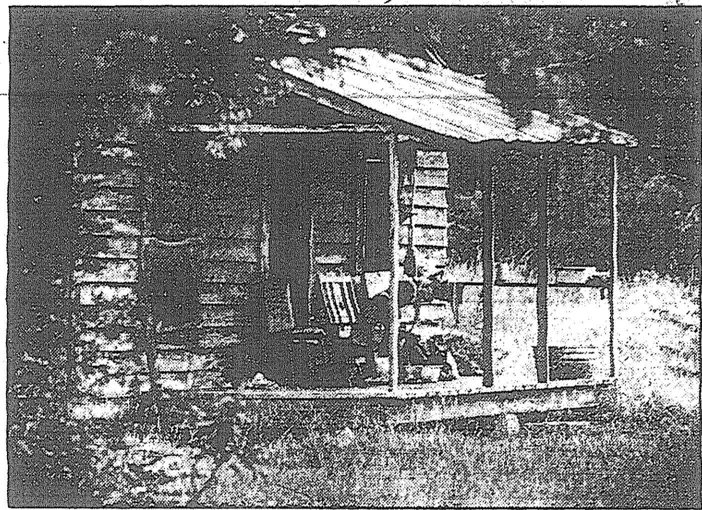
Despite such purported displeasure of the slaves, the southern United States by the mid-19th century was accounting for more than half the world's production of naval stores. The products, both crude and distilled, were a major export from the region.

See NAVAL, 35A



Staff Photo—Calvin Cruce

Turpentiner Sammy Lee Pritchett loads a full bucket of gum into the barrel



Staff Photo—Calvin Cruce

Faded shacks called the 'quarters' are home for the 15 workers

Staff Photo—Calvin Cruce

The workers look to the boss, Junior Sears, for most of their needs

Staff Photo—Calvin Cruce

Sammy Lee Pritchett handles barrel of gum

Underpaid

Continued from 1A

carrying supplies slung over their shoulders.

Several of the men set out directly into the pine forest; others walk slowly to the stable not far from their own wooden shacks. At the stable, five mules learn quickly that for them too, a weekend's rest is over. The mules are hitched to four simple wooden carts, and the carts are driven into the woods. There, for the next five days, the carts carry the heavy barrels of gum from the tall, thin pines.

Both the mules and the men are following a routine established over generations, and part of the routine is that Monday is a slow day. Leading the mules into the woods kills part of the morning, and the men move carefully, as some are recovering from a weekend of drinking. Sometimes a turpentine man will not even emerge from his shack Monday. No one will force him out, not even Artis Lee Gaskins, commonly called "Rev," the portly, energetic black man who serves as foreman of the turpentine camp.

Twelve men are at work here this Monday. Lee May and Clifford Giles ride into the pines on a cart drawn by two mules. There is plenty of gum in the area of the woods they will work; the cups attached to the trees are quite full. But it is not an easy day. The brush and briars are thick, and in places the trees are far apart. The men have to carry heavy metal buckets into which they scoop the gum as far as 40 yards to get from one tree to another. It is hot, with the temperature in the mid-90s, and humid.

Giles, a muscular 6-footer of 42 with short hair cut almost to the scalp, works with the power and agility of a football halfback. A deep metal bucket at his side, he quickly makes his way from tree to tree, deftly using a "dipping iron" to scoop the gum from the cups attached to each one. When his bucket is full, he empties it into one of the barrels on the mule cart. Then he returns to the trees.

Between the gum and the sweat which pours off his body, Giles' trousers soon stick to his legs like a second layer of skin.

At 11 a.m., the men take a short break. Clifford Giles rolls a cigarette and drinks some water, which he carries in two old glass bottles. The sounds of the woods are in the background: a slight breeze blowing through the pines, an occasional bird, and, at this moment, the grinding of logging machines in the distance.

Giles could probably get lumbering work and earn more money. But he doesn't want such a structured job, he says. In turpentining, the men are on their own most of the time, except for an occasional visit from Rev, who rides on a horse through the woods. "I can work like I wanna," Giles says simply of his life's work.

Though the heat and the humidity do not ease in the afternoon, Giles manages to fill two barrels by the end of the day. His newcomer-partner fills one barrel. "We're going to a better place tomorrow," Giles promises.

Tuesday, however, is not better. Not only is it steamy-hot again, but horseflies and mosquitos are out in force. And the newcomer finds a tick in his hair.

"Get plenty of them," Giles says, "but ain't never got one in my hair."

There are hazards worse than ticks facing the turpentine men. Some days the men work in swamp water above their ankles, and Giles has had to kill some rattlesnakes in his time.

The work tools themselves can be dangerous. By a shed in the woods, Giles comes across an old, discarded work shirt. He can guess what kind of worker used it. "See them holes?" he says, pointing to a number of dime-sized spaces in the faded garment, "That shirt belongs to a puller. Look at them holes."

"Pullers" or "chippers" are the workers who go from tree to tree scraping off a row of bark with a long metal tool. The wound forces the gum to run down the pine trunk. To aid the process, the puller sprays a solution of sulfuric acid on the bare tree face. The use of acid is one of the few innovations in turpentining in this century, but sometimes the acid blows or sprays at the worker — thus the holes in the shirt, and the marks on some of the workers' faces.

Giles takes good care of his own work tool, his dipping iron. This afternoon, despite the heat, he builds a fire and holds the iron over the flame until all the accumulated gum burns off. He shows similar care for the mules and cart given to him for his work, feeding the animals and checking over the cart at the end of each day.

The stifling summer weather Tuesday makes dipping exhausting. A gurgling occasionally comes from the dippers' rubber work gloves, the sound of accumulated sweat that has run down their arms.

Still, the dipping is productive. The trees are closer together than Monday, the brush not as thick and the gum freely flowing. By late afternoon, the mule cart carries four full barrels, three the work of Giles, one the newcomer's.

The mules and carts stay out in the woods weekday evenings, locked in a corral covered by a tin roof. As the carts are not available for transportation to and from the quarters on these days, Rev drives a pickup truck to meet the men at several clearings on the outskirts of the woods.

Early in the morning, about 6 a.m., Rev drives the pickup from shack to shack, collecting men again for another day among the trees.

Charles Pope does not make the trip Monday or Tuesday. On Wednesday, the day Pope has said he would leave, his small wood frame shack is still occupied, but he again does not appear when the foreman's truck pulls in front with a curt beep of the horn.

"He ain't goin' agin today," says one of the men crowded on the back of the truck.

"Yeah, he jus' don' wanna work," mutters another.

Like their boss, Junior Sears, most of the veteran turpentiners see Pope as one of a breed of youngsters less and less willing to do hard work. Clifford Giles has disdainfully observed that Pope gets "them free stamps," meaning food stamps. Also, unlike most of the others, Pope sometimes complains about white people making all the money from the turpentine.

The industry has suffered in recent years, in large part because of the difficulty of keeping younger workers like Pope. Both the older, veteran workers and the turpentine bosses agree that many of the younger men simply seem to prefer welfare, or life in the cities.

In one sense, some of the other turpentiners suggest that Pope is lucky to be getting out. A new worker is warned several times by veterans that he should be careful not to get into debt to the turpentine boss. Extending credit is part of the life, and workers tell of struggling for years to get back even. They tell of colleagues having to sneak out in the middle of the night to get away.

Jim Palmer, in his 70s, one of the oldest men in the quarters, tells of a turpentine boss an hour away whose laborers always stay in debt. "I won't trust a man who won't let you pay back," he says.

"There's two kinds of white men," Palmer says, sitting back in a chair in his shack and gesturing to his side. "There's one who will give you this pee pot and there's one who will take this pee pot away from you." Junior Sears, who runs this place, is one of the good ones, Palmer indicates.

If a new worker shows up at a turpentine camp, he must be asked about his debt. When a newcomer inquires about work here, one of the first questions asked by Rev is, "Do you owe anything?"

The industry practice, workers say, is for the new boss to pay off a worker's debt to the old boss. Then the worker starts his new job in debt.

Charles Pope had been one of the first workers to warn Lee May to stay clear of this system. "You ain't gonna make nothin' here," he said. "Get the hell out."

Now Pope seems to be following his own advice. He has told the others he plans to head to another south Georgia community, Homerville, and work in a saw mill.

Actually, it almost happens that none of the other men work Wednesday. It is gloomy and threatening to rain, and turpentining stops when it rains. Rev, the gung-ho foreman, is 15 minutes late getting to the quarters in the morning, apparently having waited for the latest weather report.

"See any rain, Rev?" someone asks when the truck finally arrives about 6:15 a.m.

"I don't believe so," Rev says, although it is drizzling at the moment. He means they will try to work.

Canvas is draped over the heads of the men in the open back of Rev's pickup, but it does not cover the back foot or two of the truck, and several of the men are exposed. Among these are two of the older workers, "Uncle Charlie," and "Charlie Peg Leg." Uncle Charlie, almost 75, is a onetime railroad man who works here as a puller. He is almost never seen without his favorite white hard hat, and now, in the rain, he takes out some clear plastic and puts it over himself, too. Charlie Peg Leg, sitting next to him, is a grizzled character in his 60s whose artifical leg does not prevent him from working in the woods. He rides on the truck with that leg sticking out over the back.

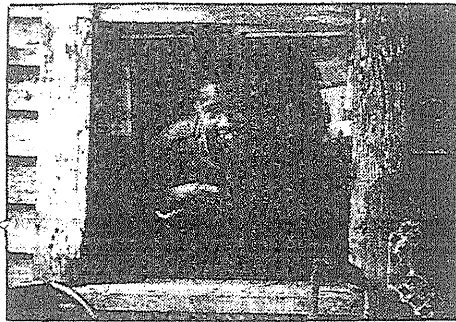
Several pairs of hands try to contain the flapping canvas, but the rain sprays over the men as the truck rocks along at about 60 mph. Yet, the motley truckload of men does not draw stares on the roads around Hoboken. Turpentine men are as much a part of the landscape as the small post office, the grocery store and the large turpentine still which line one side of the tiny town's main street.

There seems to be a fondness for the turpentine men. White men who pass in automobiles while the laborers are gathered by the side of the road or in Rev's pickup often will give a standard south Georgia greeting, an index finger slowly raised

See UNDERPAID, 33A

Staff Photo—Calvin Cruce

Drinking is a common weekend pastime for many of the workers



Staff Photo—Calvin Cruce

Cora Giles smiles from the window

Underpaid

Continued from 32A

from the steering wheel.

The weather does not clear much Wednesday morning. The dippers have time to fill just a bucket or two before a shower sends them scurrying to their mule cart. They drive quickly to a small shanty in the woods, usually used just to store a few supplies. Men who work alone or in pairs spread out among acres of pines gather there and crowd inside.

The men, now drenched, build a fire by the small shed after stacking some wood and pouring some gum over it. They talk while they try to dry their drab clothes.

By the fire, Giles resumes the conversation started earlier in the week by noting that the lumbermen who work the region have to keep going in the rain. The son and grandson of turpentine men, Giles recites the advantage of the work which is in his blood.

"You could be traveling around without money," he says. "You come to a town and say, 'Where's the turpentine man?'

"They show you, and he say, 'Can you chip?' And you say, 'Yessuh!'

"He say, 'Can you dip?' And you say, 'Yessuh!'

"Then he say, 'Well, I need some dippers.' So you get a job and you get your money."

Although he has lived here 15 years, Giles concludes proudly: "You can go anywhere and get a turpentine job, make some money and move on."

Half an hour later, the rain eases and the men head back to work. Giles is having a good week on the job; the dipping is going well. He is filling three barrels again today. There is one other dipper who does somewhat better — Sam, who glides from tree to tree almost at a trot.

Giles, in an uncharacteristic comment, says it doesn't make sense for a turpentiner to kill himself to impress the boss: "The white man don' give a damn about him. Don't care no more 'bout him than he do 'bout you or me. When you get old, the white man will say so-and-so use to be a real good worker, but he got old now. So I ain't gon' run."

Thursday morning brings a surprise.

As usual, Rev's truck makes two rounds of the quarters, once beeping to wake up the men, the second time for pickup. This day, 13 workers filter out of the shacks into the morning dampness. Among them, carrying a feed sack over his back, is Charles Pope.

None of the other turpentiners says anything to Pope during the truck ride to the clearings in the woods where they meet the mules. It is as though nothing has happened, as though there were nothing unusual.

Later, however, when Charles is not around, the others do talk about him. "Yeah, Charles ain't goin' nowhere. He ain't got nowhere to go," one laborer says. Most men believe the boss probably gave Pope a good talking to, and one jokes that Pope probably will be working hard today, "Yeah, I bet he stays out there all day long."

"Yeah, he might be out there all night," says a third.

Indeed, late that afternoon, on the truck ride back from the woods, Charles himself talks with enthusiasm about the work. "There's a lot of gum in there," he says. "Some of them cups jus' runnin' over. If it runs on the ground it ain't doin' me no good."

So Pope remains a turpentine man, still a resident of the Hoboken quarters.

Twenty shacks are in the quarters. Only 15 are habitable; the others are burned out or caved in. The shacks are spread over a patchwork of dirt roads, about five square blocks in all. Nearby is the barn where the mules are kept weekends, and the "acid house" in which pullers keep the solution they spray on tree faces.

The shacks are made from rough wood, once painted red but with the natural brown color now pushing through. They have tin roofs and one or two chimneys. Fireplaces supply the heat in winter. Covered porches in varying states of decay are in front of the shacks. On one porch, a 17-year-old girl brushes flies away from her 6-month-old baby. Above another porch, off the edge of the roof, hangs a dead squirrel. On some porches, junk — automobile tires and rims, boxes, old chairs — leaves little room for sitting.

A small wooden, tin-roofed outhouse is behind each shack. The outhouse behind the Gileses' four-room shack is overrun with maggots.

Several small pigs root their way around one shack. Dogs, most of them scrawny and constantly scratching themselves, have free run of the quarters.

The quarters, the workers and the trees which yield the turpentine are all part of one package. The property is owned by the Varn family of Waycross, which also owns the sawmill and the turpentine still in Hoboken. When Junior Sears or another man leases rights to extract turpentine from the trees, the men and the quarters go along.

The workers and their families look to the boss to take care of most of their basic needs. He will take them to a doctor when sick, bail them out if they are arrested. He may advance loans

See UNDERPAID, 36A

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Underpaid Continued from 33A

to the workers, especially during the winter, when gum doesn't flow readily from the pines and the main work is scraping crusted gum off the tree trunks. Costs will later appear as deductions on their weekly pay sheets. Water and electricity bills also are deducted from the pay, but laborers pay no rent on the shacks.

Most workdays begin for the men at about 6:15 a.m., when they are picked up at their shacks. Although they often finish working the trees by 3 p.m., they then must drive their mule carts back to the corral, unhitch and feed the animals, and wait for Rev's pickup. They may not be back at the quarters until 5 or 6 p.m. Sometimes, Giles and several other men then head off to do odd jobs such as haying.

The turpentiners do not compute the hours they work, for their pay. Talk of hours and amounts invariably is in the vaguest terms. How long have you done this? "A long time." How many hours? "Oh, a long time." Make much? "You can make a lot." Only when the time of day is asked does the tone change. Two or three men likely will pull out watches and argue over the minute of the day.

No one works quite as long as Rev, the foreman. Rev, who lives in a small modern white house, is up before 3 a.m. most mornings to prepare for his wake-up ride through the quarters.

Rev draws his name from the fact that he preaches on Sunday. He is a bulky man in his 50s, serious-minded but gregarious, and is a father figure to some of the turpentiners.

Rev once was quite a dipper himself. It is said he once dipped seven barrels in a day out of a swamp area of woods. As the story goes, Rev's boss then told him, "If you hadn't taken so much time at lunch, you could have dipped eight."

Rev is as important to the turpentine operation as the boss, whom the workers see far less often. In addition to transporting the men to and from the pine forest, and riding his horse from work site to work site, Rev also makes a point of stopping by the shacks to chat with the laborers and their families, making sure everything is in order.

Rev is paid $100 a week.

Clifford Giles may do that well himself this week. By mid-Friday, it is evident he should be able to fill 13 barrels, enough to earn $104.

It rained the night before, and the mosquitos and horse flies are out again. Once more it's hot and steamy. But anticipation of the weekend is in the air. Even the mules seem to know Friday is a special day, quickening their pace on the rutted dirt roads through the pines.

Giles cuts off dipping early to head out for the road. Regularly on Friday, he helps the boss load the barrels of gum collected throughout the week. Indeed, Sears pulls up in his large trailer truck.

"Clifford, I need you to load some gum," he says.

"Oooo-kay," Giles answers in drawn-out voice.

Later, Sears drives the week's barrels to the old turpentine still, where he will be paid about $80 per barrel.

For Lee May, this is the end of his second week of turpentining. By midday, his arms feel leaden. His back is sore. His body has broken out in heat rash which itches and burns. He is losing two toenails, his hands are blistered, and he smells of pine gum.

But May has improved as a dipper. He has filled 5¼ barrels of gum this week. Later, at the pay house, this will earn him $42.

The top dipper, as usual, is Sam. He has filled 16 barrels to gross $128.

One of the other dippers has done little better than May, however, filling only six barrels, earning $48 for the week. And the man's brother, also a dipper, doesn't even care to report how he did. "Didn't have time to add it up," he claims.

There is an hour's break between the end of work and pay time. Some of the men crouch by faucets outside their shacks, trying to clean off. Others break out the weekend's first bottles, gathering on porches and around someone's old auto to drink and gossip.

Pay time goes smoothly at the turpentine office in an old white wood building on Hoboken's main street. Junior Sears hands his newest worker a pay slip and $39.43 cash, what's left after Social Security is taken out.

The pay slip has a space to list hours, but it is left blank. Only the number of barrels is listed.

"You catch on, it gets easier," Sears says.

A third of the newcomer's earnings is spent quickly. He buys a church lunch, then he and Clifford Giles make a liquor run. Giles' wife, Cora, turns 54 this weekend, and there will be a party for her.

Cora, like most of the turpentiners' wives, works when she can. Sometimes a tobacco man will come by, pick up a few of the women and have them pull the plants for the day. "If the white folks want you, they'll come and get you," she explains.

This week she worked two days "breaking okra," breaking off stalks of the vegetable and placing them in bushel baskets. She made $9 for the two days work.

The quarters seem ready to let loose. So the partying begins Friday afternoon and continues.

By Sunday, residents of the enclave are worn and edgy, and there almost is trouble.

A woman wants another drink, but the supply is gone and the liquor store closed. She sends her husband out to buy some lemon extract, which will be mixed with Coca-Cola as a liquor substitute. The incident starts when he comes back with the wrong product, vanilla extract.

The woman begins screaming. She is so angry she walks to the police station. There she asks the town's one policeman to come get her husband, to take him away.

The officer comes, and the couple argues. The policeman tells the woman, "You're drunk, too."

"I've been drinking," she says, "but I'm not drunk."

In the end, no one is arrested.

Another weekend is drawing to a close.

In just a handful of hours, the men must get up again. They must wake by dawn, in time to make their appointment with the mules, in time to start another week of work in the pine forest.

POSTSCRIPT: Photographs for this story were taken two weeks later. Follow-up interviews with the turpentine workers and supervisors also were conducted at that time.

One change had taken place in the quarters — Charles Pope was gone. It was not an argument over his work, however, but a family dispute which finally prompted Pope's departure. And he did not go north to the sawmill he had spoken of weeks earlier. He headed south to a small town by the Florida border, first taking a job at a small turpentine operation — again a turpentine man — then going to work as a logger. One of the other workers, whose shack in the quarters had a hole in the roof, quickly moved into Pope's shack.

Several weeks after the interviews, there was a second change. Junior Sears transferred his lease of turpentine rights to the woods around Hoboken to another white man, Carlton Lee. "I'm not interested in worrying about it anymore," Sears said later. He would devote his energies to a trucking business, he said.

Lee, a prominent tobacco grower in the area, said Sears had approached him offering to sell the business. "He said he's got something I need," Lee recalled. "I always did like the woods," he added.

Lee said he would raise the price per barrel paid to workers. "I want to treat them better," he said.

With the onset of cooler weather, the work for turpentine men changes. In Hoboken, the laborers began the cool weather work of scraping gum crusted onto the pines. From the small community last week, Rev, the foreman, reported that except for the departed Charles Pope the population of the quarters remained unchanged. "Everyone still working," Rev said.

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