

OH 1979.01.49

An Interview With  
MR. EARLY C. EWING, JR.  
June 5, 1978

Interviewed by  
Roberta Miller

Mississippi  
Department of Archives and History  
and the  
Washington County Library System  
Oral History Project:  
Greenville and Vicinity

AU 348

OH 1979.1.050

Interviewee: Early C. Ewing  
Interviewer: Roberta Miller

Title: An interview with Early C. Ewing, June 5, 1978 /  
interviewed by Roberta Miller

Collection Title: Washington County Oral History Project

Scope Note: The Washington County Library System, with assistance from the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, conducted oral history interviews with local citizens. The project interviews took place between 1976 and 1978. The interviewees included long-term residents of the Greenville-Washington County area in their late 50's and older.

MILLER: June 5, 1978. This is Roberta Miller, interviewing Early C. Ewing, Jr., Vice President and Director of Research of Delta Pine & Land Company, Scott, Mississippi.

EWING: To begin with, let's get the name straight. It is Delta & Pine Land Company. The "and" is in the wrong place.

I will begin at the beginning. My mother and father were living here when I was born in 1921. My daddy came here in 1915 at the request of J. W. Fox, who was General Manager of Delta Pine & Land Company. Maybe I had better go back a little farther than this and mention that the company was organized in 1911. Mr. L. K. Salsbury, of Memphis, who was a hardwood lumberman and promotor of sorts, went to a conference in Belgium and talked with different people over there and sold a group of mills called Fine-spinners and Dubliners, Ltd., on the idea of purchasing a plantation in Mississippi to produce long-staple cotton for their mills. They were anxious to do this because they were worried about the supply of Egyptian cotton, because, even though World War I had not started at this time, it was threatened, and they decided to produce some of their own cotton in Mississippi; and they agreed to buy this property that L. K. Salsbury had gotten options on, provided we would have J. W. Fox, who was Director of the Delta Branch Experiment Station, as General Manager.

When the Company was first set up, it had general offices in Memphis, and L. K. Salsbury, the man who put it together in the beginning, had his office in Memphis, along with W. F. Stout, the Treasurer, and several other administrative officials. Mr. J. W. Fox was General Manager, and he had as an assistant of his Mr. B. J. Young, a Civil Engineer, who did a lot of the work in laying the place out, working on the drainage and things of that nature.

So they got the place going, and every few weeks Mr. Salsbury would come down here on the train, and they would call a meeting, and so forth, and then he'd go back to Memphis, but Mr. Fox ran the place at Scott.

MILLER: They had another place at Deeson, didn't they?

EWING: That wasn't exactly the same place. The ownership was similar, but it was different. That was the Mississippi Delta Planning Company at Deeson. There were about 10,000 acres there, and about 35,000 acres here at Scott, and they also owned about 3000 acres at Estill.

MILLER: That was Empire?

EWING: Yes, the Empire Plantation, and it now belongs to the Bolands, I believe. Anyway, they had a manager and store in each of these three locations; but I'd like to concern myself primarily with Scott, because that

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is the only place I know anything about.

At this particular time, the levee system wasn't very good, and we used to have floods all of the time. The 1927 flood wasn't the only flood they've had in the Mississippi Delta by any means. They had some real bad floods in 1913, and they used to have one, more or less, of serious proportions every five years; but the big thing that happened was that almost as soon as Delta & Pine Land Company began operating, the boll weevil came into this country from Mexico, and entirely changed the cotton production system of this area. The Mississippi Delta produced long staple cotton, and the boll weevil came in and it was necessary to switch to a different type which matured before the generations of the boll weevil increased to the point that they would eat the entire crop. Perhaps the people don't realize this today, but before there was any real chemical control of the insects, why, they would just, more or less, go unchecked until the population became so big that they just ate everything in sight. This was the case with the boll weevil, which had no natural enemies of any consequence. I keep getting off on details!

MILLER: That is really interesting, because a lot of people don't know that.

EWING: But in 1915, Mr. Fox and my father came here to Scott to develop cotton varieties. He was one of the first

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really scientific cotton plant breeders, because the principles of inheritance had been discovered by Gregor Mendel about the time he was in college at Cornell University; so he was one of the first plant breeders whose work was based on the theory of genetics as developed by Mendel.

One of the first things he did was to introduce into this area a variety of cotton from Texas, called "Express". It was called this because it would mature before the population of boll weevils increased and ate up the whole crop.

MILLER: Is this what we call short-staple cotton?

EWING: It was shorter than what they usually grew. Actually, "Express" didn't have a very short staple, and subsequent varieties we did develop did have a shorter staple even than "Express", and ran to about one inch in staple length; and then as the years went by and insect control became better and the need for extreme measures became less, why then the varieties we developed had a longer staple, about an inch and a sixteenth. In the beginning, they had a staple length of an inch and an eighth and an inch and five thirty-seconds. Then they dropped back down to about an inch, and then they increased to about an inch and a sixteenth, and now Delta varieties generally have a staple of one inch and three thirty-seconds.

MILLER: And the long staple - what was the length on that?

EWING: That was the cotton we grew here originally that was an inch and one-eighth.

MILLER: And what you are growing now is -

EWING: An inch and three thirty-seconds.

MILLER: What did you all do about controlling the boll weevil other than developing the cotton varieties? What kind of chemical control did you use?

EWING: The only thing that could be done that was effective was in the late 1920's, and then the first experiment was with dusting cotton from airplanes. Let me go back a little before that. Before airplanes came on the scene, cotton was dusted by men who carried a little blower on their backs and dusted it; then it was dusted a little later with ground machines that they pulled through the cotton. They were really high platforms on wheels. They had the blower and the fan - the blower and the engine - and put out the dust this way. They were pulled by mules through the field. Finally, about 1926 and thereafter the Army Air Corps tried the first experiments in dusting cotton by plane. And some of the very first of these were done here at Scott and at Tallula, Louisiana, and as a result of this Delta & Pine Land Company was one of the first to use airlines to apply insecticides to cotton. And the firm that

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did this under contract - I can't think of the exact name - but it was Delta Aero Corporation, and this was the forerunner of today's Delta Airlines. In fact, there were a couple of men here a few weeks ago, who came back to see what the place was like. They had once dusted cotton here, and they said that Mr. Woolman, President of Delta Airlines, had hired them as airline pilots to come to Scott and dust cotton, because he could hire all the airline pilots he wanted, but he wasn't able to get crop-dusters. So all of our dusting and aerial application has been done under contract ever since. Delta Airlines is not in this business any more, but we have some direct connections. The people who have the contract now are related to the same individuals who used to work for Delta Airlines and dust our cotton.

MILLER: Now, which chemicals did you use when you first started out, and how did they change?

EWING: My recollection is that the only chemical we used for boll weevil control was calcium arsenate. It was just about the time of World War II when we began using such things as DDT and benzine hexachloride.

MILLER: And then you changed from that because, of course, DDT was taken off the market, wasn't it?

EWING: Well, there were lots of developments in that, but when we start talking about insecticides, we are almost up to where we are right now. But the boll weevil scout

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was the early job that young white boys had around here. Young black people picked cotton. But my contemporaries and I worked on something called "The Boll Weevil Squad". It is common now to have what they call "Insect Scouting". Insect Scouts back in those days checked the fields once or twice a week for the boll weevil infestations. We were called "The Boll Weevil Boys". And Mr. Young would evaluate these counts that we would make, and the poisoning would be done on the basis of this scouting, just as it is done today. And the "Boll Weevil Boys" got paid anywhere from a dollar a day up to the most I think any of them ever got was \$3.00 a day.

MILLER: Now, this would have been in the '30's?

EWING: This was in 1942. That's right. The "Boll Weevil Boys" had a fringe benefit, though, that nobody has today. Back in the early days, everything was on the tenant system, and we had share-croppers all over the place, and each share-cropper and his wife could handle about ten acres of cotton, and then another five acres for about every able-bodied person they had in the family, and each one of these families always planted a water melon patch in connection with their cotton, and so one of the fringe benefits the "Boll Weevil Boys" had was that they were in a position to steal all the watermelons which they might need. Now, we had a sort of code of honor that we wouldn't steal any more melons than we could eat, and we wouldn't bust any melons in the

field; but we would be counting boll weevils, and we'd start out early in the season and spot in each field where all the watermelon patches were, and, later on, as the watermelons ripened, we'd know right where to go to find them. And people would see the "Boll Weevil Boys" when they'd come to the field, and they'd rush out with their hoes and start chopping cotton next to the watermelon patch right quick to keep the "Boll Weevil Boys" out. The "Boll Weevil Boys" would get in the edge of the field, and then they'd get down in the cotton and crawl underneath the cotton over to the watermelons, and pick a watermelon and kick it down the row ahead of them until they got out in the field so they could appear to be standing up counting boll weevils. And we would kick the watermelon down the patch, and would bring the watermelons in and put them in the ice house overnight so we'd have cold melons for the next day. So we'd steal a new watermelon the next day, and we always had a good supply of cold watermelon.

While we were counting the boll weevils, about once every two weeks they'd send us to Deeson or to Estill, and when we would go to these places, we'd be there past lunch time, so we'd eat sardines and crackers in the store, and after we got through eating we'd go out on the walk in front of the store and shoot craps, and whoever won all the money was supposed to buy everybody a bottle of beer and a cigar, which we smoked on the way home - drank the beer and smoked

the cigar on the way home in the afternoon.

But one day, the head of the "Boll Weevil Boys", Irvin Pogue, won all the money, This was down at Estill. A drummer came along and won all the money off him, so we had to go home without any beer and without our cigars, and from that day on I've known all about gambling. I can go to Las Vegas and stay a week and not gamble a nickel.

We did a lot of things in those days that people just wouldn't let their kids do these days. We used to roam around at night and go to honkey tonks and watch them shoot craps and all that stuff, and we'd drink a bottle of beer every once in a while, and we made wine out of grapes. There's a new winery here in the Delta. It's called "Rushing Winery", and their wine is made from grapes which are related to muscadines, and the minute I first smelled this wine, it took me right back to the muscadine wine that my brother Battle and Asa Royal and I used to make in the kitchen, back in the pantry in a stone jug - stone churn - and I'm sure that no young people make wine in the Delta today.

Swimming and diving was a great thing at Scott. Mr. Young was a great promoter of swimming, and Mrs. Louise Young, his first wife, was very fond of tennis. We had a tennis court and a swimming pool in Scott years and years before they had anything like this anywhere; and, of course, we used to go out in blue holes and swim in the river, and all that sort of thing,

and I don't suppose kids would be allowed to swim in the river now. But, anyway, Mr. Young set up a fund - and it is still in existence; he left money for that fund and all - but if a person learns how to swim in the Scott Swimming Pool, they'll give him a silver dollar.

Another thing they used to have here and don't have any more was baptizings. Usually in August the black churches would baptise all of the people that they had converted during the several months previously - I guess it was twelve months previous, because they didn't have baptizing certainly in the winter time, and there were no facilities in the church for baptizing, so they would baptize people in Deer Creek, and right where the creek and lake joined together, nearly every Sunday morning in August they would have a baptizing.

The preacher and his assistant would stand about waist deep out in the creek, and there would be a big audience and a choir and everything on the creek bank, and they would then lead the candidates out and baptize them in the creek.

What was unusual is that there was always a great demonstration by persons receiving the holy spirit in the baptismal ceremony. There would be a lot of screaming and hollering and thrashing around in the water, and quite often the candidate would manage to drag the preacher and his assistant under the water, too.

So baptizing was really thoroughly accomplished in those days, and the person who had been baptized probably

wouldn't forget it, and certain people who watched it wouldn't forget it either; but now we have swimming pools and other facilities for baptizing people, so it is not nearly the occasion it used to be, except sometimes in the summertime you hear the choir singing when they baptize in a swimming pool.

MILLER: What did the candidates wear? And the preacher?

EWING: They wore white robes and a white cap.

MILLER: And sometimes the people on the shore got excited.

EWING: And fell in the water!

MILLER: Do people still swim down at the mouth of the creek? We used to swim there when we were children.

EWING: No, there's not much swimming in the streams now. When we were growing up - before the swimming pool opened - we always went swimming in the lake. Now, Deer Creek has always gotten sewage from Scott, and I don't know how many people it has turned off, but we used to do most of our swimming in the lake, and we would go out there and turn the boat over. Somehow or other, early swimming usually took the form of "falling in".

MILLER: Lake Bolivar was a deeper lake before the 1827 flood, was it not?

EWING: I don't remember, but it was quite deep. The 1927 flood filled it up. It's only about five feet deep now.

MILLER: It is one of the most beautiful lakes I think we have in the Delta.

EWING: Yes, because those big, old cypress trees still grow all around it.

MILLER: I think maybe your mother is responsible for that, isn't she?

EWING: Maybe - but I don't know that any particular individual is, but it has always been the policy of the company to preserve its natural and human resources, so that some of those things are similar to the way they were when the company bought the property.

MILLER: All right, what do you want to talk about next?

EWING: I've already said that we used the share-cropping system in the beginning of Delta & Pine Land Company, and everybody in the Delta did; and, for the purposes of management, the Delta & Pine Land Company was divided up into a number of units, and these different units had names. These plantation units had maybe a thousand acres in each one, and each one of these would have it's tenants who farmed the cotton, and oats for the mules, and corn for the tenants and the tenants' pigs. You see, they were the only crops that we grew in those days. Really, the only cash crop was cotton. Any other crop but cotton was either to feed the mules and pigs or the tenants.

MILLER: You didn't plant any soy beans then?

EWING: No. Maybe in 1939 or 1940 they planted a few soy beans for hay, but cotton was grown by the tenants, and the tenants would furnish the labor, and the landlord would furnish everything else. He furnished the land, he furnished the seed, he furnished the ginning, and the tenant would furnish the labor to plant and hoe the crop and cultivate and harvest the crop; and the landlord would furnish the tenant with his cash that he would need to live on until about the first of March, and every week or every two weeks he would draw a "furnish" which he would spend at the company store, more than likely. Of course, the furnish might be in terms of credit at the company store rather than in cash, although a little cash was advanced for special occasions. He could get anything he needed at the store. In other words, clothes, shoes, groceries, meat, flour. He didn't buy much groceries as we think of them today. They bought flour and they bought bacon. We didn't have pizzas and we didn't have any frozen food, of course. We had canned vegetables and canned fruit.

MILLER: And then you had a drug store here, too, didn't you?

EWING: Oh, yes, ma'am. We had at one time fourteen hundred tenant families here, and we had as many as three medical doctors and two veterinarians to look after the mules, which furnished the power for our farm operation. One of the doctors was your father, Hugh R. Miller, and then there was Dr. Love

and Dr. I. I. Pogue.

MILLER: And Dr. Lane?

EWING: I don't remember Dr. Lane.

MILLER: He was there when my father was. Do you remember when the hospital was built - I mean, do you know?

EWING: I don't have any idea. It must have been built about the same time everything else was built here.

MILLER: I think so.

EWING: My understanding is that most of these buildings in Scott were built around 1918, 1919 or 1920 - along in there. Certainly they had to build a lot of buildings - or built some buildings when they first took over the place. But, getting back to the farming system, we had these plantations, and each one had a name, and some are the names they had when the company bought them. For example, Triumph and Lake Vista and Belmont, and others were named for officials of the company and directors of the company in England. For example, one is named Fox. Mr. Fox's great-grand daughter visited here not long ago, and she was really thrilled to see "Fox Place" and hear people talking about her grandfather and her mother; and another was named "Young" for B. J. Young, and "Salsbury" was named for Mr. Salsbury, and then for the English directors there was "Dixon" and "McConnell" most of which are still preserved today. We have a solid

flavor of the beginning of this thing when the Englishmen would come over here, and, incidentally, we used to have two Pullman cars a day that went to Chicago through Scott. They would come over here and be toured around by the managers and so forth.

These managers then supervised their tenants on units, and each unit had the manager's house, and then he had a big barn for the mules. In this barn they kept the hay, and had a corn crib in there, and stored oats in the barn, because oats were one of the main foods for the mules. Mules worked better on oats than they would on a richer food, such as corn. Really, most of the corn was fed to hogs, because each tenant would have a little corn patch for his hogs, and every tenant had several hogs, and this is where the expression "Hog-killing time" came from, because the first cold weather that came along in the Fall was the signal to butcher some hogs, when the weather was cool enough to store meat properly. After a long period of not having much in the way of meat, why, it was really a celebration to have some fresh meat, and there's no better fresh meat than pork anyway.

MILLER: That is right.

EWING: All of these plantations had a bell, and they would ring the plantation bell, and it would be the signal for the men in the families to come to the lot and catch the mules, and each tenant had mules that he would work all the time. In other words, he would have a pair of mules or a

single mule and he would use the same mules every day.

Incidentally, the Delta & Pine Land Company at one time had a full-time mule buyer. A man from Missouri, called "Ole Man Mac", bought the mules in Missouri and he shipped these young mules down here, and there would be great confusion while they were being unloaded and until they finally got them broken to the plow. But, anyway, the tenants would come to their headquarters and get their mules and hook them up to the plow or the planter, or whatever sort of implement they were going to use, and then they would take this back to their own ten acres and work the field.

In the early days, the field had to be prepared with a disc that was drawn by mules, and then a middle buster - a one-bottom plow - was used to set up the rows, and then you came along with a harrow, also pulled by mules, and harrowed the beds down, and then the one-row ploughing would go over this; and my father has mentioned a number of times how long it took and what a terrific job this was to get the land prepared and get the cotton planted. It was long before they had tractors and so forth that can cover many acres in a day. We had to use these mules and these one-row implements, and it seemed that it would take forever to get all this done. And this is true.

MILLER: Yes, and they were dealing with the weather, too.

EWING: Well, we're still dealing with the weather. We haven't done a thing about the weather. It's just like it was.

MILLER: Yes, yes.

EWING: We have leveled some of the land so that it drains a lot more expeditiously and dries out better, and that kind of thing, but a mule could go into land that was wetter than a tractor could go into.

But, anyway, the tenant would come and get his planter - a one-row planter - and would plant the undelinted seed, and this planter would go down and plant the crop, and then later on, as soon as the crop came up, the rest of the family would take hoes and thin the cotton, because it was planted too thick. As an insurance of getting a good stand, you'd plant the cotton too thick and then chop some of it out. A lot of people don't remember how grassy cotton could be before herbicides came in, but it wouldn't be anything unusual at all to lose a crop to weeds and grass if the weather didn't cooperate. In the tenant system you had enough labor to work a crop, because if you were prudent you wouldn't give people more cotton than they could look after, and this place usually had no trouble in getting tenants because the company had a reputation for being fair, and the land was good and it was well managed.

We have had some white tenants here, but the tradition has been that our tenants have always been black. I don't know any reason for this one way or another. It was just that they were thought to be better and less shiftless and so forth than some white tenants would have been.

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When the cotton came up, it was necessary to hoe the grass and the weeds out of it. One of the worst grasses was crab grass, and they really didn't have too much trouble with Johnson Grass, according to my father, until after the flood. Johnson Grass was introduced into the United States as a hay crop, and, of course, we used to have to get a lot of hay for the mules. We used to grow some alfalfa in those days. I mentioned oats. A significant part of the acreage at that time was given up to growing food for the mules and food for the pigs that the tenants had. Each tenant - say he'd have ten acres of cotton, he'd be allowed a half acre to grow corn on for his hogs. And then they'd hoe this cotton, and along about the middle of July, why the cotton would get too big to be hoed or plowed, and it would be laid by, and there'd be nothing to do then until cotton picking started around the first or middle part of August. We don't pick nowadays until a month or six weeks later, because when you pick it with machines, you have to wait until a good part of the crop gets open. But in the early days - well, as soon as any crop got open, you could start picking it by hand.

MILLER: You have to defoliate it now, too, don't you?

EWING: Yes, that, too - until the frost or something like that. And then in some places they do pick it without defoliation and let the bolls mature, but, generally

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speaking, that's what is done.

There was always a big rush to start picking cotton. When you picked a bale of cotton, the tenants in each field had a cotton house, and each house had a beam scale, and the tenants would pick cotton, and then in the afternoon whenever they filled up their sack - maybe one in the morning and one in the afternoon - they would weigh this cotton and put it in the cotton house, and when they got a certain amount, why they would bring a wagon there with two mules, and they would take a woven oak basket that was about three feet in diameter and about two feet deep, and they'd use this basket then to fill up the trailer with seed cotton, and then they'd haul it to the gin. Of course, when a person was busy hauling cotton to the gin he didn't have to pick; and then when you brought your cotton to the gin, you got a cash advance then, called "seed money", and they used the seed money as cash; and so there was a big incentive to get out there and start picking this cotton as soon as you could to start getting this cash.

Of course, this early-picked cotton was the cleanest and best of the cotton of all the year. It hadn't been weathered, and so forth, and so it was to the advantage of the tenant as well as the landlord to pick cotton as fast as they could. And it's the same thing with cotton picking that used to be as there is with the other mechanized operations - the time required is very much reduced.

We were talking about farming. When you get that first bale of cotton, you get an order for the seed money, which is the first cash you've had in nearly ten months. Before that, why, the manager would authorize the issuance of an order for so much money. We are still using that same order blank right now - the same one that we've always used here. The manager would authorize the charging of a certain amount to the tenant's account, and then he would draw that from the store for whatever he needed it for - the doctor, or anything like that. And, a funny thing about it, is that there is not room on there to write much - any sum much bigger than five dollars.

MILLER: Now this would go to the store or the drug store?

EWING: Anywhere, yes. Or he'd write an order to the doctor.

MILLER: To the doctor or to the hospital?

EWING: A person couldn't just go see the doctor whenever he wanted to. He would have to have an order to the doctor from his manager before he would be authorized to charge these medical expenses. So all of these charges built up all through the year, and then after the cotton was harvested and sold, they would have a settlement, and the tenant got half of the value of the bale of cotton and the landlord got half, and then there would be subtracted from the tenant's half, of course,

those advances that had been made to him through the year, and the balance would be paid to him in cash right there. Years ago the payrolls and everything were all paid in silver dollars, and the car dealers from Greenville, and everybody else, would just descend on Scott. There would be twenty or thirty of them, and Scott would be full of these old second-hand cars that they would be selling to these tenants on settlement day. And they'd be selling other things, too, like maybe a refrigerator, stove, or something like that, except most of the houses in those days didn't have electricity, so the sale of appliances was sort of limited, and, of course, you couldn't buy a television or radio or anything like that. A car was the only big purchase that you could spend your money for, and lots of the cars were in very poor shape and that sort of thing. There would be a lot of drinking of beer and stuff going on. Settlement was really a big time, and people used to come -- digressing a bit, on Saturdays they'd come to Scott in a wagon, put their chairs in a wagon - have you ever heard the expression, when it's time to leave somebody's house, you'd say, "Well, mama, it's time to put the chairs in the wagon."

MILLER: I have never heard that.

EWING: You'd bring your chairs with you when you were visiting. You'd sit in them, and when you got ready to go home, you'd put the chairs in the wagon and ride back home. These cars wouldn't run very long, so most of the tripping

around was done in wagons, and every unit would send a wagon into Scott on Saturday, and it would have the chairs and just be loaded up with all the people on that unit that wanted to come to Scott.

MILLER: Now, this would be every Saturday people would come.

EWING: A typical Saturday. This place has always paid it's payroll every other Saturday. Now, in the tenant days, why, the payroll wasn't quite so important. A person might be on the payroll for doing some work around the lot, or something like that, but, of course, he didn't get any pay for working on the crop, although he would draw one of these orders for groceries or something like that. So there was some money to spend on pay day when they would come in and spend this money. They had tent picture shows and things like that in Scott.

MILLER: Carnivals?

EWING: We never had a carnival that I remember, but one thing we used to have - I don't know whether they had one in Scott, or not - but I know they used to have them in Benoit - a minstrel show.

MILLER: Yes.

EWING: "Brer Rabbit Minstrel Show" and "Silas Green" used to come through here every Fall, I guess, because that is when people had a little money.

MILLER: Now, settlement day would be late in the Fall?

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EWING: They usually had two.

MILLER: Yes.

EWING: They'd have one before Christmas, and possibly the crop wouldn't all be sold, and maybe it would be just an advance, and then they'd have another one - a small one - later on.

MILLER: Yes. Everybody came to Scott for that settlement.

EWING: They had to come to the office for their money.

MILLER: Yes, they had to come to the office.

EWING: There was never any money paid out on the plantation. In the '50's, when we used to have labor come out from Greenville to do chopping and picking, they'd pay them in the fields, but you see, when you had share-croppers, you didn't pay anybody for picking, because the tenants picked their cotton.

MILLER: All of your share-croppers were on halves? You didn't have other arrangements?

EWING: A few third hands and fourth hands, but I'd say 99 percent were half-hands.

MILLER: How much money did an average family make, say, in a good year?

EWING: It all depended on the price of cotton and everything. I just really can't say. Saying an "average" family is bad, too. You had families who would spend a lot of

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money, maybe had a big family, and so forth, and might make a good crop, why they wouldn't draw anything. But let us say a successful family might draw anywhere from \$200.00 - and I guess there have been some exceptional cases where they'd draw a thousand dollars in cash.

MILLER: Yes, in good years.

EWING: And that doesn't seem like much necessarily, but that is a thousand dollars free and clear after all expenses at the end of the year. There are a lot of families that don't do that well now.

MILLER: Yes. That would be back when cotton was selling for a really good price.

EWING: Well, cotton was selling for different prices. Sometimes it has been high and sometimes it has been low all along. In the '20's, I think it got to be nearly a dollar.

MILLER: And right back down to five cents!

EWING: That's right. In the Depression, it was five cents and ten cents and so forth. In the '50's it was about twenty-five cents, and right now it's about sixty cents, but that's no benefit, particularly because inflation has increased costs.

Anyway, after they settled, then there wouldn't be much for them to do; and after settlement is when there would be some shifting around - not so much here, but in a lot of

places, a tenant would be dissatisfied, and he'd move somewhere else after settlement, supposing he wasn't satisfied with his settlement - thought he ought to get more, or something, so he'd move to another place. But there was less of that here at Delta & Pine Land Company than at the other places. My daddy said at one time that every Negro and white man in the Delta at one time or another had worked for Delta & Pine Land Company, and certainly a lot of people have gotten a start and experience in farming and so forth right here.

MILLER: Yes.

EWING: You can go to Greenville now, and a lot of times you run across a number of people whose parents lived up here when they were children, or something like that.

MILLER: Yes, I know of a good many. Some are teaching in Greenville whose parents had been managers up here.

Now, what about illness on the plantation. They have always had medical aid?

EWING: Well, this place has always been at the forefront of rural medical centers, you might say. Like when your father, Dr. H. R. Miller, was here, and Dr. Love and Dr. S. L. Lane and Dr. Irvin Pogue, they had this hospital over here, and this was one of the first places where rural people really had any kind of hospital care, and it was set up in a right unusual way. If somebody got sick, they got an order from the manager and went in to see the doctor. They got an order

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to the doctor, and if they really needed any medical attention, why he would put them in the hospital. He didn't make house calls all over the place. He put his patients in the hospital, and then they attended to them in the hospital until they were well enough to go home, so they got the proper care and that sort of thing.

And they had an ambulance here all the time, driven by Will Campbell, as I remember. He was running the ambulance ever since I can remember. So, if somebody got sick and it was an emergency, Will would take the ambulance and go get them and bring them in to the hospital, and then they'd stay there until they were well. And babies and all that. They were delivered at the hospital instead of being delivered in the home by a midwife. I guess we had midwives in the hospital, too.

MILLER: Probably.

EWING: And nurses. We always had a registered nurse and several practical nurses.

MILLER: Pauline Hendricks was a registered nurse when she was here.

EWING: That's right. And they did a lot. Years ago they had a problem with pellagra, which was due to not having enough green vegetables and so forth, and a lot of work was done by the doctors here in discovering the cause of this, and then when they found out what was causing it, they cured it. And they had a lot of trouble with syphilis and that sort of thing, and they made great strides in curing that up.

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MILLER: And also with malaria, didn't they?

EWING: Yes. You know nearly everybody had malaria. I had malaria, and in recent years this is one of the things that DDT helped eliminate.

MILLER: Yes, even though it did other things.

EWING: Now, DDT - there's not one recorded case of anybody dying from DDT, from an overdose, or anything else. About 25,000 people a year die from over-doses of aspirin, and things likethat, but nobody has ever died from DDT.

MILLER: What about the residue in the soil?

EWING: DDT has saved thousands of lives from malaria and other diseases like that.

MILLER: Yes, I know that it --

EWING: -- breakdown has existed in the soil, but as far as it being any direct threat to humans, it has saved thousands and thousands, and, all over the world, millions of lives, and not a single person has died as a result of having had DDT, or eaten animals that had DDT, or anything else. In fact, at one time I was concerned about how much DDT there was in the lake, because Lake Bolivar drains strictly off farm land, and so forth, so I hired somebody by the hour to fish. Now, you know how people like to fish, and our cook was no exception, so I hired her by the hour to fish. So she caught me some fish, and then I caught some out of the lake over here by the river, and sent them to Jackson to be analyzed, and they were such nice looking fish that the people at Water Pollution Control