

Steele, comes out and grinds their teeth down so they can eat better. The older mules get, the longer their teeth get, and then they can't bite so well.

Twenty-nine families live on Schiffman land. Some sharecropper houses have no amenities at all, not even an outhouse. Some of them are pitiful, rotting square log cabins. Some houses are in better condition.

Most of the people who live down close to the river are poor. Some of them fish and sell their catch.

The one thing that almost everybody has is a garden. Most people have a chicken house. Most women can food in jars. Many people have their own pigs and a cow for milk. Connie and Collis Lacy live down toward the river, and they have a big garden. They also have a two-decker chicken house with a slanted tin roof out behind their house. It's got a wire mesh fence around it.

Mrs. Lacy cans her vegetables and makes everything herself. Probably the only thing she doesn't sew for the family is bib overalls, and those are bought at Terry's Department Store in Huntsville.

Like many other women, Mrs. Lacy uses flour, feed, and fertilizer sacks to make clothes, even underwear. The fertilizer bags have to be washed over and over to get all the fertilizer out, and that surely is rough on the hands. This reminds me of what a white boy who lives up by the mountain east of the Chaney plantation says. His mother uses the fertilizer bags to make his underwear, and sometimes she doesn't get all the numbers bleached out, so he is "4-10-7."

The Lacy house, surrounded by pine trees, is up on stilts. It has two rooms in front and a kitchen in the back. The kids sleep on pallets on the floor. Their nearest neighbors are Frank Durham and his family, across the way and up by the mountain. The Durhams are white, have four or five children, and are very poor. They fish and sell fish in the neighborhood.

When they come to the Lacy house to borrow something, Mrs. Lacy always gives them some food. That's what neighbors do. Apparently, the Durhams don't mind Mrs. Lacy being black, and she doesn't mind them being white. Down here in the woods, with no one to observe or comment on proprieties based on race, they are neighbors who get along. Young Cleophus Lacy considers his own home as being like a shack, and he knows his family is poor, but he sees the Durhams as being "more poor than we are."

When the river gets high, there is always some flooding down here in the bottomland, and fish swim into the ponds. Some of the men put chicken wire over the channels into the ponds to keep the fish from swimming back out. There are all sizes of ponds. You can tell when the river is high, because the water rises in the blue holes (sink holes). They usually go dry about August. Some of the boys seine them. Walter Joiner always seines Rock Pond up by his mother Parthenia's house. He takes fish home to eat, and he shares some with the elderly people he knows.

While moonshine stills are hidden away up north of the Farley-Triana Road and over near Horton's Ford, it wouldn't be surprising to find one down this way.