

they put you under. It really wound some of the people up,” Harris recalls.

Further, he continued, the price of farm land elsewhere in the county went up as much as 20 percent as a result of the seller’s market created by the Army transactions and those who had to move off the arsenal had to pay inflated prices when they bought new farms.

Harris acknowledges that he’s “a little bitter” because the family land “that they ran us off of” is being put to no use that he can see. “In my humble opinion the bulk of that old place is being wasted,” the farmer said.

He hopes though, that the Army will preserve his old home. “It has sentimental value to me. I was physically born in that house,” he said.

### **James Long Discusses the Harris Farm**

James Long said:

Millburn Lassiter lived there [in the big house/Lee House]. He grew lots of sweet potatoes. The problem was he didn’t know how to keep them. When you pick one up, you’re supposed to use it. Picking it and storing it dislocates the sugar in it. They got potato houses now. Millburn put them in the basement. The basement ran all the way under the house, and he put them on one end, filled it up, with sweet potatoes. He put in a heater run by coal oil, run at a certain temperature, until the sweet potatoes dried out. Then he’d take them to the market. He’d dig in September or October then have them ready to go by Thanksgiving.

Long remembered that John Blackburn (a White man) worked for Sam Sr. Blackburn was a sharecropper. Sam furnished him mules and he got half what he grew. (It has been said that Sam split the cost of seed and fertilizer with the sharecropper.) Blackburn had eleven children. Long’s sister Inez married one of the boys, Jessie, in about 1940.

Long said the house the Blackburns lived in was rough lumber, plank, about 12 inches wide. The planks went up and down, and 3-inch strips were nailed over the crack between the boards. The roof was tin. Inside the house, the walls were papered with heavy wallpaper. It was a heavy color, and it had no pattern. The house where Blackburns lived had five rooms.

Long said the landlord put up the paper. Once the walls in a sharecropper house were papered, it was there for awhile. They didn’t put up new paper in sharecropper houses when families moved in and out. Sharecropper houses were usually two-room shotgun house. Sometimes rooms were added on. They had a front porch. People slept in the