

Penland's memories confirm that ownership and presence of slaves on the property continued from the time when Charity Cooper was the landowner until the Civil War and that after the war and their resulting freedom, many of the former slaves remained. This supports the contention that residents of Pond Beat and other the communities were, for the most part, former slaves and their descendants.

Unfortunately, during the interview Walter Penland did not comment on the very small cemetery (one cemetery marker) on the property. It is shown on the Army Cemetery Map as the Penland/Cooper Cemetery. Research pertaining to the cemeteries, which also includes details on the Penland family, can be found in Madison, Alabama historian John P. Rankin's research that he presented to RSA on CD's entitled *The Cemeteries of Redstone Arsenal*.

Walter Joiner Discusses Sam Harris Sr.

Walter Joiner is a very intelligent, outspoken Black man in his eighties (see interview). When the researcher talked with him, he said he'd "tell it like it was" and gave specific examples of unfair acts White people perpetuated against Blacks. He also told of another White man he remembered well.

Sam Harris [Sr.] always had something going in his shop. I'd go there and see him and crank the bellows and watch while he worked the forge. I'd stay maybe half a day. I was curious. On his gristmill he made a spider gear out of wood. [What's a spider gear?] That's a smaller wheel inside to mesh in the larger one. He made whatever he wanted out of wood or steel. He made rakes to smooth ground with. He drug them on the ground to break up clods.

[Can you describe the rakes?] They were 16 feet wide. He'd heat long spikes, have a hole drilled in the timber. The spike would burn itself in and wedge. The spikes would usually stand up or be tilted, but he'd put a lever on it. The spikes are set in a small, 6 x 6 log, with a lever of oak, hardwood. He'd notch so far every other log and stagger the hole, so he wouldn't have two spikes dragging in the same place.

He had another fellow who ran his gristmill sometimes. He treated his help good, so he could depend on them. He had a son, Sam Jr. He was much younger than I.

Sam Harris had a steam engine sawmill. Most old plantation owners had their own. Old man Sam stopped using his and had an old, big tractor with a belt drive. He used the tractor to run the gristmill. Each tractor had a power take off on the side where each wheel was. He could park it and block. Anybody who brought logs, he'd cut for a percentage. Everything was a barter system. People had everything but cash money.