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**VIDS 234 Robert "Teddy Bear" Marshall**  
**Documentaries, Public Events, Lectures (VIDS)**  
**Interviewed by Aliya Miranda, Holland Hall, Ana Alfonso, Ryan Morini, Deborah**  
**Hendrix on Aug 21, 2016**  
**31 pages**



**SAMUEL PROCTOR**  
**ORAL HISTORY**  
**PROGRAM**  
University of Florida

VIDS 234

Interviewee: Robert “Teddy Bear” Marshall

Interviewers: Aliya Miranda, Holland Hall, Ana Alfonso, Ryan Morini, Deborah Hendrix

Date: Aug 21, 2016

[The recordings for this transcript are divided into enumerated clips. Other clips exist, but they are primarily visual or lack sufficient coherent dialogue to be usefully transcribed.]

[Clip 14 – 8 minutes, 18 seconds]

TM: If you going pull something, I got them buckets. You can get you a bucket. That’s right. And then—and when we got started, where you start at? You get everything. You don’t leave nothing. You don’t leave no—going, like, now, I can’t bend over like I used to, so I would get on my knees, and you just—  
[demonstrates]. Roll your hand around like that. But you want to get *everything*.

AM: From the root.

TM: Yeah, it’ll pop right out.

AA: But you don’t pick this.

TM: Yes.

AA: Oh, you do? You get everything?

TM: Yes. Then, when you get this here, like this here? See? So that’ll grow up to grow a pretty purple flower. That’s how you tell in the woods. And you going do this here: see that? Strip that out. And it sound like a—sound like, when you pulling, sound like a hog eating the grass. You hear it? [Snorts]

AM: [Laughter] Yeah.

AA: Got to get your—

TM: You smell it? Got a good smell to it, too. But I know where this big patch was. And I saved it for us. So y'all, once you come, I say, "I know where one good patch at." And we would come, like, my momma and them? They just team up with, they about four or five women, and they go and pull deertongue all the time. And then they take it home, pick all the straw out it, and then dry it out and sell it. It worth more dried than it is green. Like, they was giving you forty cent when it green, and two-fifty dry.

AM: How do you dry it out?

TM: Just scatter it out on the ground in sand. Or on plastic. And you can't let it rain on it. You have to take it in at night if it going rain. If you in charge of doing that, you get whipping if you let your money get wet.

HH: [2:43 Inaudible]

DH: Yeah, this is a *lot* more back here, you're right!

HH: Yeah. [Laughter]

AM: So many!

TM: Just think of them sacks we got, we just go the woods and pull two or three sacks a day. That's a lot of work.

RM: Yeah, it is.

TM: But, when you can stand up and bend over like y'all can, it was easy. Once you know what you were doing. And that's what you had to do. But like I say, you just go through everything and clean it. Because everything—same as picking them berries. You get it all.

RM: You know where your mom and them used to sell it?

TM: Up in Jasper. Plus some of these things, people buying this stuff here, I believe.

RM: You know who they sold it to in Jasper?

TM: One man name was Vasco Hanson. Yeah, he used to come 'round with a truck, come to your house and pick it up. Bring them old scales like they're hanging on my fridge? Weigh it there. See, we had sheets full. Tried to have two hundred pound sheets. Dry it out. It wasn't but twenty-seven cent a pound back then. But, back then that was a lot of money. You'd get two-for-a-penny cookies. You won't get no two-for-a-penny cookies now; maybe two-for-a-dollar cookies. [Laughter]

RM: If you're lucky.

TM: I know y'all saying, "Great! That is a long way we going." "Do he know where he's going?"

DH: I thought you were taking us out in the woods to kill us! [Laughter]

TM: [Laughter] I know we were—I was saying, "They going say, 'Man, this a long ways!'"

AM: Now, everyone that I told where I was going—to get deertongue—they're all like, "So, why don't you just use the rest of the deer, too?" [Laughter]

HH: Just pulling the tongues out of there.

AM: "That seems like a waste of an animal!" [Laughter]

DH: Oh yeah, that's a good spot!

TM: I want some more **window**.

DH: There's a lot right here, too.

TM: Yeah. I'm tell you: when you start, you just got to get it.

DH: Just got to get—yeah.

TM: You work your way. Just try to get it. And you're supposed to get it all, because every pick you get is you're getting your own money. And sometimes, you get in a patch, it be thick, thick. Thicker than this. I mean *real* thick. I mean, and some of it be two foot tall. And certain peoples do same as they do the berries; used to follow you, to see where you're going to pull your deertongue, and get in your patch. They'll come get your patch of deertongue. But my daddy did like I do my berries. You pick aside of the edge of the road, so the people won't see it. And the money be back out deeper in the wood. You just pick right side the road to get the road cleaned where they can't see it. Like we seen this coming? You clean the road off. Every now and then, you walk up on a snake. Or get into some waspses, or yellow jackets. I have got stung. Only time I ever got stung by a bumblebee was doing this. And that weren't easy. That's a big old thing. He hit me—he knocked me *down*. He made me leave my site. But I went back and *got* my site, now. Couldn't let him keep it. But I was scared!

[Group continues picking]

RM: So your mom and them—she went out with a group of women. Who were the other women?

TM: Everybody in town. Shit! [Laughter] My momma, my grandma—my Grandma **Ollie**. She lived to be a hundred years old. And she picked until she was ninety. She delivered—she was a midwife. She delivered seven hundred babies in White Springs.

[End of Clip 14]

[Clip 15 – 4 minutes, 19 seconds]

RM: A lot of deertongue picking.

TM: Yeah. We used to sell. We used to be one of the biggest sellers.

HH: [inaudible background discussion]

RM: Well, what'd you use the money for?

TM: School clothes and eatin'.

RM: Did anyone ever use it as a medicine or anything, or was it just to sell?

TM: Sell. They was saying for medicine, but—they looked it up. They use this to put in they cigarette. Flavor cigarettes. What you going do with the rest of this deer?

[Laughter] But if you look, it just, it look just like a deer tongue, though.

AM: It does, yeah. Like it's folded and curled.

TM: But I did save a patch of deertongue for y'all.

HH: Yeah, this is great.

TM: Surely did. When he called me one day, I told him, "I'm up here now. I just found a patch of deertongue. I know it's there for us to go. And I'll leave it til y'all to get here." I was right here then when I called him.

AM: So how do you find it? Do you drive around and look, or—?

TM: Yeah, I look for berries. I picked berries over here last year and this year. And I just ride with my little truck. Get my little truck and just ride.

AA: Makes a nice little bouquet. [Laughter]

TM: Just imagine, wait til we get some dry, it going smell *real* good. Peppermint-ish. There's plenty of water on the truck. Beer, water. Whatever your heart desire.

AM: Thank you so much!

RM: Thank you.

AA: So, I don't know if you already touched on this, but would you prepare this to eat?

TM: No.

AA: No. It's more—medicinal?

TM: Smoke.

A: —smoking.

TM: Okay.

AA: Not medicinal?

TM: I don't know.

RM: Snake here.

TM: Huh?

HH: Snake.

RM: Just a little snake.

HH: Oh, shoot!

DH: Well—. [Laughter]

AM: Found a mushroom!

DH: Where?

RM: Might be a rattler, though, so...

TM: Huh?

DH: Where?

TM: There's what?

DH: Where was the snake?

RM: Tiny little snake. I mean, he's, like, little guy.

TM: Damn, and I just crawled all over his ass?

DH: Tiny little rattler'll get you.

TM: Damn! You don't kill him? Huh? You don't kill him?

RM: Little guy like that—

[End of Clip 15]

[Clip 26 – 30 seconds]

TM: Right there in Jasper. They got a little plant there, they bound them up. I don't know where they shipping them off. I know they was making a lot of money off us. It just like these berries: they were paying me a dollar and forty, and another guy paying me two-ninety. So, somebody shitting somebody bigtime. Bigtime, ain't it?

[End of Clip 26]

[Clip 31 – 1 minute, 45 seconds]

TM: These sell four or five hundred.

RM: That's a lot of deertongue!

TM: Dang right! We just sell, everybody, every two weeks. It take you—it take sometimes two or three days for it to dry. But we just bag it up, two or three weeks. They come 'round every couple weeks.

RM: Oh, so they'd come to *you*.

TM: Yeah, they come to everybody' house, with a big truck.

RM: Always the same buyer?

TM: There was a couple people trying to buy; all depends on who going pay the most money. Sometimes they give you a dime more than the other man. Like these people doing up here. Who going shit the shitter? [Laughter] Somebody going shit the shitter!

AA: So, do you leave anything, or you take it all?

TM: I get it all.

AA: Yeah.

TM: Leave no stone unturned. Why would we—if that's five dollars, there.

AA: Yeah, if it's being dried.

TM: If there's a five-dollar bill and a ten-dollar bill, you going get the five and leave the ten, or the ten and leave the five? You get it all.

RM: But it's going to grow back here thick next year, you said.

TM: Yeah. Yeah. Because I picked all this last year. That's why I know it was here. What'd I do with them—hand me them cutters.

AM: It's so weird how it's so abundant in places, and then it's like nowhere to be seen.

RM: You still find those really thick fields of it like you were describing?

TM: No. No. I can't go out in the woods and walk like I used to.

RM: Oh, *that's* what it is.

[End of Clip 31]

[Clips 49 and 50 – 8 minutes, 43 seconds]

TM: My name is Robert Mike Floyd Marshall. And they call me Teddy Bear. I was born August the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1955. Walking in the—my momma walking down the road, had me right in front of the **steamwork force from down the road**. She lived a quarter mile down the road, she made it home, and I was born. And the *great one was born!* Thank God for me!

[Break in recording]

TM: Okay. Well, he called me up the last week. He called me up about a month ago, and he asked me, can he—he want to do the document on deertongue and another few things. I told him okay. So I went out searching, and I found a patch. Then I called him and told him where it was. So, he told me—we had it planned on a Wednesday. It was storming here that week, and I told him, “It don’t seem like good to go out there while during that stormy weather.” And it would’ve been bad, because that road was *real* messy. But I went and found a patch. And then I called him, and then he called me saying, “Will Sunday work out?” I *thought* he was talking about last Sunday. But it was this Sunday. And I said, “Yes.” So. And so we went, and we drove all the way down Woodpecker Route to the end of the road, crossed over Six, and we went towards Jasper, towards Georgia and Jasper. We were near about in Georgia. We were just about at the Georgia line. One road turn right went to Georgia. We stopped at the old bridge, wooden bridge—the lady was scared to pull on the bridge with me. I’m just telling what we did: I was waving her, “Come on!” She say, “No, two people don’t go on the same bridge!” [Laughter] Anyway, we went and pulled deertongue, had a good time. We saw a little old snake, I know I hate—I can’t stand snakes. I crawled around

on my knees, and a little snake was there. I had to kill him. I don't play. But we had picked deertongue, then we went and ate dinner, and I asked them, did they want to come see Disappearing Creek? And that's where we sitting at now. We got a couple more places to go, so they walking the woods, and we just adventuring out in the wilderness today. Oh, we start off early this morning beating palmetto berries. *That's* what we started off with, first thing this morning: picking off palmetto berries. Out there in the woods, we found a few where we was, just to see what it's like, how to do that. And that's the cultural life, what I was telling them that, when back in the day we were making our living off pulling deertongue, palmetto berries. They even ask me do we eat? I eat some of the palmetto berries, they good for prostate cancer, and we ate the berries and stuff out the woods. You could pull the center stalk out the palmetto and eat it for food, too. It just, they call "swamp cabbage." In the center of the palmetto—they eat it out the palm trees, call it swamp cabbage, but the center of the palmetto, the very stem is swamp cabbage, too.

DH: That's some good eating!

TM: Yeah, it is! Walking through the woods, you pull out the center and eat while you working. That—

DH: Oh, just eat it right on the spot!

TM: Yes! Just pull one out and eat it right on the spot. The center, 'til it get tough, then you quit. Yeah, you cook it, or you take it and—I was taught, if your butter knife don't cut it, don't eat it. So, you take a butter knife, and you cut it with a butter knife. When it get too hard for the butter knife, you supposed to quit cutting.

That's on the big swamp cabbage. But I didn't know about palmettos. I ain't never cooked palmettos. I just pull them—out in the woods, I just pull the center out and eat it. Same as I do out there picking berries, I just eat straight out the woods.

Whatever you found, just eat. Try anything. I ain't died yet. [Laughter]

DH: Try anything! Okay.

TM: I never harvest Spanish moss.

DH: I know they used to.

TM: Not that way, we didn't. When you out in the woods working, you use Spanish moss for paper. Wipe paper, you use the bathroom in the woods. Only thing about it, you get red buds on you. [Laughter] *But*, you clean! I ain't want to say it, but you have a clean ass! [Laughter] I'm just speaking the truth.

DH: That *is* the truth. I've never heard that one.

TM: And you could take the Spanish moss—like the bugs, love bugs out on your car—you get dish detergent, and Spanish moss will clean your car better than any other stuff you use. You can take, pull the little sticks out: the moss will wash your car and stuff, even your pans outside, better than any equipment you can use. Windshield and all. It like a rug that scrape the bugs off.

DH: Do you put—just put water on it, or soap or anything?

TM: Dish detergent.

DH: Detergent.

TM: Dish detergent and water. Like in a five-gallon bucket. It will clean it better than anything, the Spanish moss.

[Break in recording]

TM: I told him a lot in the car about things. Man, it was talking. Ten cent a pound. Ninety, that's a big raise! That's two dollars and eighty cents a pound raise. Like I said, I picked thirteen—one day, I made a hundred and thirty dollar. I picked thirteen hundred pound. And I got a hundred and thirty dollars. You take that hundred and thirty, and do it by two-ninety, how much money would that would've been. Where the math at? Where the girl with the calculator? I don't know if she can hook that one up. Do a hundred and thirty—hundred and thirty dollars times two-ninety. How much?

AM: Three hundred and seventy—

TM: No no no. Three *thousand*.

AM: Thousand—did you say two point nine, or two-ninety?

TM: I said a hundred and thirty dollars.

AM: A hundred and thirty dollars.

TM: Time—hundred and thirty dollars, time—wait a minute, let me start over.

DH: It was how many pounds?

TM: Thirteen hundred. Thirteen hundred time two-ninety.

AM: Three thousand, seven hundred seventy.

TM: That's what you said, that's what I said a while ago, that's what it was. That's what I would've made that day, with me and Momma.

DH: Now, what year was that again? Can you remember?

TM: No, no, no, it was—I started working that bridge in [19]84, [19]85. I build that bridge in—I was building a bridge at **Lapper Hall**. Outside—**Lapper Hall**, going outside of Statenville. And I was working for four dollars and fifteen cent an hour.

And I told that bossman, “I’m not coming to work tomorrow,” because when I was going, I seen all of them yellow berries, gold out there. I say, “I can make more money tomorrow than you can pay me!” And I told Momma, “Come on, let’s go.” My momma used to make fifteen, twenty dollars. My momma made seventy dollars, but I was the man told her now. She build a bucketful—we beat them in the woods, we didn’t do it like I did then. If we’d’ve did that, ain’t no telling *how* much we’d’ve made. But I beated off thirteen hundred pound. Momma had seven hundred pound. Momma made seventy dollars, and I made a hundred and thirty dollar. But if you change it up, you see how much it’d have been? God Almighty Dang, that one day picking, and that was six hours. And they weren’t giving me—I was working eight hours a day for four dollars? Thirty-two dollars? Eight times four is thirty-two. And I went and I made a hundred and thirty? Shit, I made a week’s pay on him! But I had to keep the job, because I had to pay child support. And I had to pay child support for thirty years. But I took care of my children. I got twenty-three grandchildren. I’m a happy man. I’m a happy man. I live a good life. I drink good cold beer. [Laughter] All the time! That’s what I’m working for: beer. I work for beer, now! I *used* to work for the kids, but now I work for *beer*!

AA: You’re in a good place right now.

TM: But long as I don’t get too drunk and flip off this damn hill—I done told him, man, we got to come and get him. We got to go to two more hole. Let’s go.

[End of Clips 49 and 50]

[Clip 64 – 1 minute, 57 seconds]

TM: Got it?

AA: Mm, I like that.

RM: Try this one, it might be a little sweeter.

TM: You got to get the reddest—the darkest one is the best one.

AM: That's good.

TM: That's what I'm saying: when you in the woods, you can always live off the woods. If I get lost in the woods, don't afraid to eat. Eat! Pick you some; I'm eating all the time around here.

AA: It's really good. What kind of berry?

TM: Grapes.

AA: [Laughter] Oh, they're grapes.

DH: My grandmother used to call those scuppernong. Or maybe the—

TM: Yeah, that's it.

DH: Or maybe even muscadines.

TM: There we go, y'all.

DH: That's a good use. [Laughter]

TM: Bring it here. Pull you some off with the other hand. Because they all over your head.

AA: Real juicy.

X: Almost like cranberries.

DH: Like them?

X: Yeah. [Laughter]

AA: Oh yeah, they're definitely grapes.

TM: Let's ride. **Frost cost** some more where we going, some bullets. They got another kind call "bullets." That's what I was looking for, true grapes. Try a grape. Fresh grapes.

A: Yeah. Thank you.

TM: Eating out the woods; you got to eat while you working!

[End of Clip 64]

[Clip 65 – 6 minutes, 24 seconds]

DH: It *is* a long way.

TM: Well, it's a long way down here. Have you ever been here?

DH: Yes, sir, I have. A lot.

TM: I figured you have.

DH: Yeah, I—

TM: Have *you* ever been here?

AM: I've never been here.

TM: That's why I stopped. [Laughter]

DH: That's right!

AM: Should be interesting.

TM: Y'all walking me more in a day than I do working the berry fields!

DH: Uh-oh!

TM: But I can handle it! You see that, don't you?

DH: Yes, I can.

TM: Yes ma'am, I was signed up for this day.

AM: You are—

TM: I put this day off to the side for this purpose.

DH: Well, we appreciate it!

AM: We really appreciate it!

DH: Yeah, I've seen this when it—the water's almost—

TM: Water was on top.

DH: Yeah.

TM: So *you* been coming to White Springs a *long* time.

DH: Yeah. I like to go shooting, you know, video.

TM: You ever dove off it?

DH: No. [Laughter]

TM: I did.

DH: You did?

TM: Yes! I have dove off of this here, *in* the water. It wasn't—see, now, look here: this *was* a swimming pool.

DH: Oh, *really*?

TM: Yeah. This was the swimming pool.

DH: Oh! I didn't know that!

TM: You didn't know that? You see it?

DH: No, I didn't know that. I *do* see it!

AM: Oh!

DH: Yeah, it's got tile. See, look: it's still got the—

AM: Yeah!

TM: Didn't I tell ya? They didn't want the Black folks to swim in it. They were prejudiced here. This was the swimming pool. And they ain't want the Black folks to swim in it, and after the [1:50 Inaudible] finally started swimming in it, they just covered it up.

DH: Really?

TM: Yeah. That's the swimming pool. And then, another truck came around that curve, and fell off of there with a bunch of horsemeat, too. You know how they working selling horsemeat?

RM: Where would they sell horsemeat?

TM: Son, you eating—many times, you thought you eating beef, you eat horsemeat.

DH: So, that story I didn't know before.

TM: This thing *always* used to run. And the water stayed way up here. See them steps yonder? And they'd block it, like a dam, to control the water. And it was so pretty. And I stand right here, and dove off in there. A *heap* of times. I was one of the first Blacks to dove off in it. Because they didn't allow us Blacks in certain places. **Never had us in there and** everything.

RM: When was that you were able to jump in?

TM: Shit! I was about eighteen. I'm sixty now. Forty-some years ago. Can they—they **rescushelled** this, but—you notice—right there, see them pillars there?

RM: Mmhm.

TM: There was something else there, for inside walls. See them—see right there? There was a walkway.

AM: Yeah.

TM: See them?

AM: Mhm.

TM: Because the **poles** sit in the—two **poles** sit in them holes. See them? Every eight feet. And then, if the water go low, you had a stair you could go down and walk around it, lower to the water. You could—if you ever go to the city hall, they got a thing they'll show you with all the people with their pictures in it. Even at Telford Hotel. They got some pictures of all this in there, showing about all these peoples and things standing around—I mean, *hundreds* of people. And everybody came to this spring, because this called Sulphur Spring, for the healing water. White Springs was the healing town. They come from all the way around the world to get to this water right here. Sulphur Spring, White Springs.

AM: It's huge.

TM: Now, you can down—if you want to, you can go down, and go around yonder, and come around, and come up in that hole, you want to.

DH: Yeah, you can.

TM: You get down here? Y'all go down and go around and come through that hole, y'all, if you want to go inside.

HH: Take a window.

[Long break with walking]

TM: There she is, look!

DH: Hey, you don't get to do this very often!

TM: Huh?

DH: You don't get to do this very often!

TM: That's what I was saying! I said, look at the concrete rock behind you, might like to sit on it. Right behind you there. The bricks.

DH: Mmhm.

TM: Right there on the ground.

DH: Oh, yeah!

TM: Down there, I tried to **do what play was it**. Make one of that.

[End of Clip 65]

[Clip 69 – 6 minutes]

TM: You can lead—you can lead the horse to the water. But you can't make him drink! You can lead the horse to the water, but you just can't make him *drink*! He get dead and won't drink shit. But if he get down the road and be thirsty, it won't be *your* fault. This is Blue Sink. This where we used to really swim at. Right here was the diving board. Before they **cut they brains** and all, it always pumped like that spring up yonder, where we just left them. That right there, see the layer? That was a diving board. And the water stayed right there, bottom of the diving board. This thing is eighty feet deep or deeper. It supposed to be a 1949 Model-A car in the bottom of that thing somewhere, that there's somebody that drove up in it. And, right here, it was another big old tree. And way up yonder was a cable that run across to this tree. And we get right there, we climb this tree here, right yonder where the steps at, and we set on a limb, and we swing. And it'll take you *waaayy* out yonder up in there. [Laughter] And, when you come—and it was crystal blue. It ain't pumping, that's why I liked that. **The allen just** sitting there.

But it always, it used to be right here, right where that boat at. When you stepped there, you see how far you going drop down? You dropping down eight feet. From that boat yonder, you go yonder, stand right there, that thing like that diving board way over—you see how far it is? Look at the diving board way over his head. You automatic *got* to swim. You *automatic got* to swim, from where he at. The water stayed that high. Averaged, averaged. Averaged that high. Pumping, I mean *running*. Pretty like—Silver Springs? It was just like Silver Springs. That pretty. That cold, all the time. And, right here. You look at the level. Look at the step: look like a monkey face looking at you. Something about monkey. But look, look—you climb up there. And you get right down off that limb. And I *dove* off it headfirst. You talking ‘bout a *drop*. It parted *my* nappy hair. That’s why I ain’t got hair on it now. But we used to *swim* this thing! I was a great swimmer. I was a great swimmer. I left nobody behind, I had to go get a few people.

HH: Yeah. Did you witness anybody drown?

TM: Never witnessed nobody drowning because I went and got them and saved them. I couldn’t *let* them go down! I had a couple like to drown; I even liked to drown my *damn* self! [Laughter] But I scuffled for that bank! “Please, Lord, don’t take me!”

HH: Yeah, this is—what a great dam to have.

DH: How did you learn to swim?

TM: My daddy take your ass and *throw* you in the water! Daddy taught most peoples in this town how to swim. My daddy. Many people—that why I asked y’all, “Can y’all swim?” because that girl walking way up high on the bank, I said, “Can you

swim?" Because I know I have to look out for and protect, because I might be crippled, but if somebody in there, I'm going have to come get you. Might have to go, myself. But the good Lord always provided me to get somebody and help somebody. He gave me extra strength; I don't know where—sometimes, I ain't know what *happened*, but I had to do it. That pavement, right where we crossed the bridge in White Springs, we just swim there. The park closed it off for some reason, because—same thing with the berries, Florida Water Management. They wouldn't be letting them swim there no more, because Steamfort North, talking about the dangers and that. Because people got drowned. *Yeah*, people going get drowned! People get drowned everywhere. *Everywhere*, people get drowned. *Ev-'ry-where*, every state in the world.

AM: So, why isn't this an active swimming hole anymore?

TM: Because the—look at it.

AM: They can't pump—they can't get to the spring?

M: Pump, what you mean "pump"? Ain't nothing out here, woman! We out here in the woods! Ain't nothing you could pump. No, they cut the aquifer.

AM: *Oh*.

M: It was a company called "Occidental PCS." When they dug the phosphate mine, they cut all the springs. The main spring.

A: So that's why this is—this is not—

M: That's why that thing up yonder's like—just **yank on the wall or y'all**, it ain't pumping. But it used to stay right there, I'm telling you! See yonder? Right up under that boat. Stayed that high. Look how deep that is from yonder. You talking

about twelve feet deep! But, listen: without Occidental, this town wouldn't been here no way. They saved and made everybody around here rich. Some of them—gots to take the good with the bad. You got to wash me out or wash your hands. Without Occidental, this town wouldn't've been shit. White Springs, Lake City, Jasper, nothing. That was the most biggest company that helped everybody there from **grandaltha**, come from Gainesville, everybody wanted a job from PCS Occidental. The best-paying money. They can say what they want; you knock one way, or knock the other way, doesn't matter. You got to *live* your life. You going be all right, as long as you can do it. Might as well carve your name in like somebody else did. I'm going go get me a beer. I just coming to show you. But we got to go one more spot, but, this is, now, this a made—look at that monkey looking at you, laughing!

AM: [Laughter] Yes, he is!

AA: It's a nail in there.

HH: Yeah, he's got a nail for a nose.

TM: Them are *old* nails.

AA: Yeah, there's nails all the way up.

TM: Is it—yeah, that's what I'm saying, where the stair was. You climb up there to dive. You used to climb this here. I'm talking about when I was eighteen years old—

AM: [Pointing] Rainbow! Rainbow.

TM: —And that's when I was fifteen, twelve, eighteen years old. I'm sixty-one.

[End of Clip 69]

[Clip 70 – 1 minute, 10 seconds]

RM: See—I see.

TM: I was like that way—I'll show you the way my daddy how. Remember me and you were talking? I told you I was fixing to tell them; I told you we was out there in Black Bay. I couldn't go nowhere! Out with Daddy. We couldn't even get to town, where I live right now. I couldn't go down there! We had no car. We didn't have lights. I told you, I was eight years old before we had lights, so how the hell am I going get to town? Like now, I can go to town and come back. We done been to Jasper and all that! Hell, we had to *walk* them damn miles from out there where that bridge was. From where we—know where that was? We used to walk down the way we went down the river there—disappearing creek—I used to walk there fishing. And hunting deertongue, gophers, and berries, and stuff. To live with. Walk. Every evening, I'd get off the school bus, either got to go do that—go get some firewood for the house, and to *cook* with! Not *only* for the house; we ain't had no gas. Shit, we had firewood. Had to cook on the wooden stove. Back in the days, now. Y'all born—they say y'all was born with a silver spoon. I had a goddamn *wooden* spoon, and then sometime I used *that* to cook the fire with!

[Laughter] We got one more hole, then I got to go!"

[End of Clip 70]

[Clip 72 – 4 minutes, 12 seconds]

X: Here?

TM: No, ma'am. Fill them up to here.

RM: What, to put them—oh, these guys?

TM: Them logs. Yeah.

RM: Okay.

TM: Over there one, but we ain't walking there. Yeah, over that way be fine.

RM: Yeah, okay. Well, I can put it—

TM: No, this way. Because I'll go that way fishing, too. Right that side of the bank.

Right there. Yeah. When I come, I want us to walk over these. That's good.

Because what it is, whoever did that, did it right there camping. That's campfire wood.

DH: Ah.

RM: So it is.

TM: Yeah. No, that there's a root. That's campfire wood. A'ight? That's good. Way—now it done rose. I can't show you really; I can show you *part* of it. I know my toe hurting now. No, I'm talking about—walking, pushing, walking these hills? We done *did* some walking today.

RM: That we did. That we did.

TM: It done rose, but look here, I want to show you something: look at this breaking off. The other part underwater. Look right here, how they's looking—see them there? Them are sand dollars. See if you can pop one up with that. What about this one?

DH: Sure are!

TM: There you go. But, you ever—you can't see how *thick* that is. How thick this is. I mean, used to go way out here on a ledge, but it done broke off. This ledge here—see it right there, how thick that is? Look at how thick this yonder. Look out there, see that ledge? This like the volcano erupted, and the lava ran out a long years ago. And now it breaking off. And that thing we were looking at is right yonder, that creek is right yonder. This—the blue sink? That the drain out there them tree at right yonder. But this thing here was thick. Let me see—I don't want to slip on this shit, slippery shit. Right there the bottom. Right there, it that thick. That's how thick it is. It's that thick! And it was a ledge on there, that thick. See, the other day I came in, and that there, back there is a special tree. Right here? This is an old hickory tree. Not hickory, but pine. It done floated there. Now, that's the kind them people getting that wood off the thing, coming in the river get in, came in and got. That's one of them right there. They could sell them for so much money; that's one of them trees there. Right there. Now, I got a friend going come get that one. He'll make something out of that. And I know what he's cone at on the river. The river—every time I come here, most time I come, I sit on that rock right yonder and fish. And I catch so many fish. One day, I caught a catfish, but I *had* him; he took my rod. But I had a rod that'll float. So I had to get the rod afloat. So, I went and got my rod, and, but he got off. But I come back the next day, I got that. **Paid the towner, town catch.** I said, "I'm going get him." When we come back next day, and I yoked his ass out of here! [Laughter]

[End of Clip 72]

[Clip 84 – 15 minutes, 30 seconds]

[Transcriber's note: in this clip, the group is cleaning the deertongue that they harvested earlier in the day. During the long silences, everyone is focused on the task at hand.]

DH: All right, here we go. Okay.

TM: When you do deer tongue, you come home with it, it got all this straw in it. You grab the straw, throw the straw down—don't throw no leaves down. When you get through throwing the straw down, if leaves on the ground, you got to turn around, pick them up again.

[Singing]

Picking up the pom-pom

Putting them in the pocket

Picking up the pom-pom—

[End of singing]

—and you got to separate it. Grab it by the end and shake it; grab that end, and you turn it loose, and leaves fall, the straw fall out. That's what you do: you shake it, and get the straw out. If the man get a lot of straw, he going knock your poundage. See, I'm going give you no straw, you know what you got. And write your name—go get you a marker and write your name on it. I don't think I got one, I might have one.

[Singing]

And you picking up pom-pom,

You put 'em in the pocket

[End of singing]

Want to—bring it here—yeah. Then I'm'a do it different, because I want to put the berries with it there, because it's different medicine. But you supposed to take out all the straw. And you got to—see them run all through your fingers? You got to run it through your finger, and then look: if it isn't there, you throw it down. Lay it down, you check it later. This hard work, but when you get home, you sit down like we did the berries. Lot of time, my daddy would pick his off out there in the woods. Pretty much when you, how you rake it off before you grab it; my daddy had got good. He was good enough that when you get home, you didn't have to do it. But, be a *little* bit of straw. And then, you go lay it on the ground, you going get straw anyway. But you [signing] picking up the pom-pom, putting them in the pocket. [End of singing] And then you sit down, you say, "Oh, my Lord, I'm *tiiiired!*" [Laughter] Same we were doing—it look like same we were doing the berries, ain't it? It "**pomelia.**" That what Gomer Pyle said: "**pomelia.**" Leaving no room for sergeant. Best you get them in together.

[Long silence]

Ain't no such thing as getting tired. You got to keep getting it 'til it over.

Sometime, you be sitting there picking that deertongue back in the day; you'd be sitting there like— [pantomimes exhaustion]. [Laughter]

AA: Dozing off.

TM: [Laughter] You had to get it. Got to catch school bus in the morning. *Got* to get on that school bus. If'n you don't go on that school bus, you *sure* going pick deertongue the next day! Wash clothes or something. Ain't talking about no damn washing machine, neither. We ain't have no electricity. You out there with

a damn stick, beating in a tub. You ain't had electricity, so how you think you washed your clothes? [Pantomimes scrubbing and sings]

Row, row, row your boat

Gently in the pot.

Beat it, beat, beat the suds out

And hope it ain't hot

[End of singing]

[Inaudible background discussion between HH, AA, and AM]

AA: Think people make it more complicated than it is. [Laughter]

AM: They think of all the other singers.

AA: [Laughter] Yeah.

HH: Yeah, that's what I was thinking of.

TM: Now don't worry about them on the ground, I will go back. Same I do my berries.

Hey—I found that down there when we went to the Blue Springs. And it favored that same rattlesnake, didn't it? I seen it hanging in the bush, I say, "Look it there." It kind of favored him. Hanging up in a bush like that. I say, "It kind of 'bout the same color, same size, there about." I said, "Dang! Now, look good! Oh, that's a bungee cord!" And I picked that up. I meant to mention that down there, but I thought I'd leave it 'til I get back. But I didn't. Because I might've be forgotten. So I put it in a bucket.

[Long silence]

Do you know that this where we got started at this morning, same spot? Merry-go-round in circles.

[Long silence]

When you stack it, if you catch it and you stack it all, that's when you can hold it like this and do this here. If it's stacked. You grab them ends— [Demonstrates]— and get your straw. That's if, once you stacking it in your sight. Like, grab it here, shake it; grab end. Once you out there and you got to learn, you had to learn how to make it easy on *you*. How to make the money faster and quicker. And my daddy perfected that. Because he whipped my ass! [Laughter] Told me, "You pick it out!" And I learned how to pick it out faster. Y'all excuse my little cussing I do. I just speaking the truth. I apologize if I offend anybody. I try not to.

AA: Not at all.

TM: I just spoke the truth.

RM: That's all we'd ask.

TM: How many bags we need? [Background answers partly audible] Need two.

[Long silence]

Don't look at the other person' bag like people do they food, say, "They got more than me!" Don't be like that! "I picked more than him!" I just hand bags and say write names on them, don't say, "Well, you should've wrote it on mine." I ain't did none of that, all I did was bagged and handed. I might as well ought to put some more in yours, ought to, because—"He going get more than me!"

AA: So I want to dry these. Where—just find a spot? On the sidewalk?

TM: Yeah. Anywhere.

AA: It won't blow away?

TM: All depend.

AA: Yeah.

TM: It all depend. And you could leave it in that bag, it'd dry out. But, it going get hot.

HH: I think we're good, we all got one.

AA: I want you to keep the berries; money.

TM: They be all right. It be all right. It be all right; there more coin in **Egypt**. Just keep them closed, because we got antses in them.

[Long silence]

Throw it in there.

[Long silence; inaudible background conversation]

That'll work.

RM: All right!

TM: Let me get my, find my—where my water? Now, we go to school. [Laughter]

DH: Well, we had a great day!

TM: Yes, ma'am! Yes, sir! Yes, ma'am.

HH: Thank you so much.

AA: Thank you.

TM: Yes, ma'am. Oh—watch your back with beer. Yes, ma'am.

AM: Thank you!

TM: I got to get a double hug! [Laughter] Thank you.

DH: [Laughter] You're welcome.

AM: It was so nice to meet you.

TM: It was a beautiful day for me. Beautiful day. I wouldn't trade it for nothing in the world. I wouldn't trade it for nothing. Welcome. And make sure you let me know ahead of time, and I'll cook.

AM: Yes!

M: I will cook. I *will* cook. That was what Ms. Miller say—we talked while y'all were walking, we talked on the X-mail. She say she know she coming, she wish she were here, and we will have a barbecue for us all ready.

[A lot of approvals, but intermingled and hard to hear]

RM: We got to come back and interview some of the—

[End of Clip 84]

[End of excerpted sections of interview]

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