

[Woodcutter Slavery]

48 yrs old now

Fred Walters, a woodcutter for 35 years *pres Gulf Coast Pulpwood Assn*

"A lot of people say that slavery is over. Here's what I say: All that was done was that people were taken out of the field and put in the factory.

"We're trying to organize white and colored where we can get a better price for what we do. You hear a lot (about white and colored getting together) but this is the real thing. We get a better understanding between the white man and the colored man. There's a lot of bosh in everything you hear that's going on but this is not bosh.

"They're (mill owners) coming up/ The reason they're coming up is that we're getting strong. The wood dealers know we're having these meetings. What they're doing now now is giving us a little bait. But at the same time he can take it away from us with his scales or standards.

"The unit system varies from place to place. It's 7180 pounds at Moss. Then at Columbus you've got to get 7600 pounds for a unit and at Port Gibson 8800 pounds. When you're talking about the unit, you're talking about anything they want to make it.

"When it all started, a colored man couldn't get a wood truck. They had big contractors. ~~They would supply him with all the trucks he needed. Then these colored people would work for these big contractors for whatever they could get.~~ They would supply him with all the trucks he needed. Then these colored people would work for these big contractors for whatever they could get.

"Back in '67, when they had the strike at the Masonite factory, they would let a few of the colored men have the trucks. There was a little bit of friction between the white and colored men.

"In '71, when we had the woodcutters strike, they gave the colored man the truck to run over the picket line to break the strike. But he was as smart as they and that didn't work either.

"So they had to give us \$2 and \$3 more. So that was colored and white on the picket line then and this is colored and white now.

"There are one million workers from Texas through ^{to} Virginia but only in Mississippi and Alabama are they organized. We have 24 locals in the two states.

"Some colored believe this contractor who give them the old truck and saw is still their friend. Some of them you're not going to get (in the union).

"What we're trying to do is give parties, bar-b-qs, chicken and fish fries to get these white and colored families together. This is getting people together beautifully.

"In Mississippi this thing between the white and colored man is not over with but we're trying to do our best to get this over with. We have to get together to get this thing done where they'll both be the same. This is what we're working on."

"They're still putting up these paper mills. In Jackson, Ala., they're building the world's biggest."