



Amos Baylor

Interviewed by Anne Kimzey

1. Making molasses (00:33)

Baylor: When I started making molasses I- I was thirty, twenty-five years ago. [Between [?]] twenty-five and thirty years ago, [cause [?]] my uncle first started [unintelligible [?]].

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Baylor: [And [?]] uh, he made 'lasses. And after he died, I took it over.

Kimzey: Is that his mill?

Baylor: Huh?

Kimzey: Is that his mill or is that- one he used?

Baylor: No, he give- he give the mill to me after his wife died. He decided that he wasn't able to, you know, make 'lasses [on [?]] so he give the mill to me. So the mill is mine.

2. More on molasses (02:15)

Baylor: You first got to fix your land up good, lay your rows out and then you drop your seeds. And they'll come up- if you get a good seed and [unintelligible [?]] cane is not hard to grow, you get a good seed, and when it gross up, [toss [?]] it out. When the head begins to turn brown, you know it's ready to cut. You have to cut it down, strip it.

Kimzey: How tall is it when-

Baylor: Oh, it get seven feet, six-seven feet tall. Sometimes taller. And you cut it down, and then you strip it, and then cut it down- cut the heads off, pile it, then you haul it to the mill. Then you have to get it to the mill, and then you grind it, take it about two to- you know the [unintelligible [?]] or one got to put in the mill, where the, you know, we used to have mules turn it.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Baylor: Pull it, but after the mule people quit handling mules, you have to stick a tractor to it and pull it around.

Kimzey: Just drive it around and around?

Baylor: Yeah, round and round. And after we get the- measure a barrel of juice, a barrel weighs about- juice hold about 60, 50-60 gallons, and we put the [pad [?]] on and strain the juice in a barrel before we, you know, when it come out the mill.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Baylor: And we cook it. And we'll get done, we know about when it gets done, it begin to drip like jelly, you know it getting done. [Lump, lump [?]] kind of like you making preserves, you know. Then you take the [pad [?]] off, now some pans- called evaporator, they don't take them off, they just run it out [all the time [?]], you know, it'll just be running, making 'lasses, cooking it all the time. But the pan that we have you have to take it off. And you strain all the 'lasses again, through the white cloth, you know, [so won't [?]] no trash go through there. When they hot now, you can't wait till they get cold, you have to do it while it's hot.

3. Benefits of brick furnace (00:44)

Baylor: [Unintelligible [?]] take bricks, or you could use cement blocks, but they cracks up, but bricks are whole.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Baylor: And you mostly build them then fill them with mud. Some people, you know, I have seen built them with, uh, mud. We used to move the mill around, you know, and take the mud and brick, takes a lot of money to do that. So you just take red mud and make it up, you know, and lay your brick, it'll stand, that way used lay chimneys long time ago, with red mud.

Kimzey: So you could move it if you had to, just-

Baylor: Yeah.

Kimzey: Wash off all the bricks.

Baylor: Tear it down and move it and [unintelligible [?]] going to come right off with it.

4. On his wife's quilting (00:53)

Kimzey: You said you quilted yourself?

Baylor: Yeah, I used to help.

Kimzey: Who were you helping? You help the women or....?

Baylor: Yeah, uh-huh. Yeah, [unintelligible [?]] quilt some.

Kimzey: That's nice of you. Is that something many men did or- ?

Baylor: Well, anybody that smart enough would do it, you know.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Baylor: <Laughs> When they didn't have nothing else to do. Course, quilting was no hard job. All you got to do is get that big needle, you know, and just- just run it through that, kind of curve it 'round, you know.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Baylor: And [unintelligible [?]]

Kimzey: And you get- ?

Baylor: Yeah, your cotton. At that time, well some of them used to [tear [?]] their cotton, you know, [they'd [?]] roll out, just bed it some kind of way, flatten it out then some, and just get [unintelligible [?]] and things, you know, and lay in there and sew it up.

Kimzey: Coats?

Baylor: Yeah.

Other voice: [unintelligible [?]] Blankets.

Kimzey: And blankets.

5. Planting by the almanac (00:31)

Baylor: I didn't pay that no attention, [till a good while [?]] I had planted some [oats [?]] and my [oats [?]] didn't do nothing and the other fellow right close to me asked me, said, say "Well, you must have been holding that bloom," I said "I don't know if she holding that bloom or what," I said, "But the [oat [?]]," he said "Well, next time you plant it, you don't, you watch the almanac, you know, [planting [?]], [once she over the moon [?]] and I know that's a good sign. But see, other stuff, I don't go by the sign of that because if you wait on the signs, sometimes [it might be too wet [?]].

6. Home remedy (00:40)

Baylor: [unintelligible [?]] grass is good for your, you know, you bowels. Just like you want to take oil or something like that, you take something for your bowel, you know.

Kizmey: Um-hum.

Baylor: Now, my momma used to get- take that fieldgrass, well she'd take it, cook it for the kids, you know, and that was uh, still [unintelligible [?]] she'd get that fieldgrass.

Kimzey: What does it look like? I've tried to figure out what- if it has another name. Do you....

Baylor: Well, that's, that's a weed-

Kimzey: Uh-huh.

Baylor: So it look like a little, little thin grass, you know, growing up. But it's been so long since I seen some, I wouldn't- I don't think I'd know it if I was to see it.

