

ADDENDA

OLD GIN-HOUSE AND GIN

DATE: 02/08/1937

SOURCE: **MISS NANCY IVEY**: UNION, S.C.

INTERVIEWER: **CALDWELL SIMS**

On the place of the **Ivey** sisters may still be seen not only an old gin-house, but also the old gin which is an interesting and quaint sight to passersby today. The **Ivey** sisters are **Misses: Nancy, Minnie and Leda**.

Their father, **Mr. Smith Ivey** built the gin-house and the press and gin sixty-five years ago. The logs are hand-hewn, mortised and pinned. The gin-house is built of oak logs and covered with white oak shingles split by hand. The gin-house is boarded up with wide oak board planks. It has a gable roof and the building is rectangular in shape.

The big gin wheel has 138 pins in all. They are white oak, mortised, pinned and kiln dried. They are one and a half inches

long. The big wheel is also made by hand and out of solid oak, the tree being cut in the woods and dressed on the ground for that purpose. Then it was kiln dried. The homemade kiln used to stand in the yard between the house and the lot. The wheel looks to be about twelve or fifteen feet high.

The sweep went in a large hole in the wheel about a foot above the ground. Joist posts held the wheel in place as it was being propelled by a trained mule. The joists posts have been removed since the wheel is not used and upright supports have been placed on the outer rim of the wheel at regular intervals to keep it from sagging.

The mule that was used to propel the gin was usually trained by a young negro boy. One mule could work a half day easily as a good days work was four bales of cotton. Today country gins average from eight to twelve bales of cotton and city gins average twenty five or thirty where they are run by electricity.

The shaft rolls on pins of the big wheel and the shaft has hand made grooves in it to fit the pins. The pulley wheel carried the belt up into the gin-house, where the cotton was ginned and loaded again into the wagons in bales. A large double door with hammered hinges that were made in the black smith shop still hold the door in place. This method was in vogue until twenty-five or thirty years ago.

The cotton press was also made by **Mr. Ivey** and an old **Mr. Cudd** helped him with the press. After a new gin was built that ran by steam up on the Lockhart road this same press was moved there and used at the new gin. The press has been torn to pieces and lost.

The ginners were, **Ivey Smith** and his sons: **Hudson, Cager** and **Clifford** and old **Mr. Cudd**. **Mr. Tom Clark** and **Charlie Ivey** worked upstairs at the press. They used the gin all night. People from the neighboring townships of Pinkney and Santuc used to have all of their ginning done here. All of the people in union Township on this side of town brought their cotton here also. Our pasture was the camping ground where the mules and wagons were fed awaiting their turn to gin. Sometimes a breakdown would delay for hours and maybe for a whole day. The campers brought their own tents and spent the night in case they could not get their cotton ginned earlier. They brought pots, kettles, frying pans and skillets to cook in. They brought boiled and baked hams and homemade light bread and rolls made from "hop" yeast and smoke cured bacon. Fodder, oats and corn were brought along for the mules to feed upon. Hound dogs and sometimes bird dogs were brought along to protect them at night and to hunt with in the day. For the entire ginning season the camp ground was full and a lively center. Landlords would come on their fine saddle horses to exchange hunting and fishing tales and to predict for the new crop year. At night the landlords would participate in big fox

and 'possum chases. In those days many edible animals inhabited the woods all along both Big and Little Brown's Creek. Late in the ginning season wild turkey were bagged and carried home for Thanksgiving.

Old **Mr. Billy Oxner** in Goshen Hill Township had a gin in those days. **Mr. Albert Means** in Jonesville Township had one and **Col. Robert Beaty** had one in upper Goshen Hill that the people from Bogansville and Cross Keys came to. Of course the same customs were carried on at each ginning place.

Things that were two or three months old would be news to the men who would go home and tell it to their wives two, three days and maybe a week later.

Location: 6 miles east of Union; over Lockhart Road for 5 miles; left over a dirt road; travel 1 mile. Gin-house sits under a large red oak tree not 20 feet from the road and in the yard of the **Ivey** residence. The **Ivey** residence is about 150 yards from the famous old Brown's Creek Church.