

**INTERVIEW WITH RUBEN 'BEE' TAYLOR ON SPRING ISLAND,  
FEBRUARY 22ND, 1994.**

Date of Birth: November 11th, 1938.

Place of Birth: At home, Ridgeland, South Carolina.

Father's Name: Freddie Taylor

Mother's Name : Queenie Taylor

Siblings: 5 Brothers and 2 Sisters.

Married to Estelle with 2 Children : Ronald and Ruben Jr.

Q: Can you tell me about what time you can remember that Spring Island was a part of your life?

I was not born on the island but I was real young when I used to come over here, last I can remember I was about fourteen with old man Lucas.

Q: How long have you been associated with Spring Island?

From fourteen until forty some years now. I live on the island for about 10 years, Mr. Walker build a house for me.

Q: Who lived in your house with you?

I and another fellow Anderson, Ruben Anderson and after that Joe Johnson used to live in there.

Q: Can you go back and remember when you were about fourteen and you used to come over here Bee and tell me what your day was like when you used to come over to the island?

I used to come over and take care of the dogs for Mr. Lucas, work about 2 or 3 hours then take the row boat and go on back across and next day we would come back across and take care of the dogs.

Q: Were these the hunting dogs?

No they were not hunting over here, these were Lucas dogs. This place was nothing but woods. When I came over here aint nobody was here.

Nobody was living on the island, I and James used to come over and take care of the dogs but no one was living on the island, there was them old houses but no houses to live in. The two of us would come on to the island and do the dogs and go back across again. Everything was wild, mostly hogs. Mr. Lucas lived in Charleston and he leave us to come and feed the dogs. The dogs were in cages down by the barn. For the rest of the time nobody was taking care of them.

Q: Do you remember anything that was growing on the island then?

Aint nothing but pecans, one fruit tree I know was one old fig tree down by the old house down there, there was wild grapes growing, blueberries. There was wild hogs and wild cows, plenty wild hogs. We would go riding around the island sometime, hunting, We could go riding around on a little old tractor hunting coons. One horse on the island, a tame horse.

We'd go fishing on the island, we catch whiting, crocus, crabbing, shrimps, oysters, plenty of seafood, people would eat a lot of seafood around here.

Q: Can you remember anything that was growing on this island that people would use for medicine?

I used to take mistletoe for my uncle, he would bathe with it for pain, arthritis pain. I used to take some "sadirax" (sassafras) for tea, home for my Mother for cold and fever.

Q: How about your parents, Freddie and Queenie, did they come across to Spring at all?

Later my Daddy used to work over here, he used to rip pulp wood, he used to come and go back home again on the barge.

Q: Do you remember anything that may have happened over here that you especially remember, accidents etc.

No ma'am.

Q: Did you like to come to Spring Island?

Oh, yes ma'am, I love to come to see it here.

Q: What did you like most about the island, Bee?

Well this place you can enjoy yourself, you can be right with the law and there is

plenty of fun over here, you get no bother from nobody.

Q: Did they have moonshine stills over here?

That's what they said, but I never done see any, I see the drum that they had down in Goose Bone and I see a lot of rotten kegs. Yea they done make moonshine (laughing).

Q: What else did they do over here Bee?

They used to have lumber over here, they used to farm over here, my Daddy's time they used to have tomatoes over here - people used to come over here and pick tomatoes and white potatoes and ship it off. I remember tomatoes when I was small I used to come with them when I was maybe 5 or 6 years I remember that.

Q : What about the water on the island, where did they get the water from?

They had a pump the time I was here with Mr. Lucas, down to the barn. They had a spring, the water come clear and cold it was good water oh yes.

Q: What else can you remember when you would come over here, any hunting?

I just started hunting with Gordon.

A lot of people used to come over here and hunt and stuff. They only stayed down at the Copps House and live in there two or three days then they go back across the river.

Interviewed by Beryl LaMotte.