2002

Pinpoint’s Residential Oral History

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Reference Code (2.1): Student/Class Projects 965 Pinpoint Collection

Name and Location of Repository (2.2): Special Collections, Lane Library, Georgia Southern University, Savannah, GA, 31419

Title (2.3): Pinpoint’s Residential Oral History

Date(s) (2.4): 1926 to 1985 (recorded: 1995 & 1996)

Extent (2.5): 17 videotapes, 0.50 cubic feet box


Scope and Content (3.1): The focus is mostly on the Pinpoint community and their involvement with the A.S. Varn & Son Crab Factory. The interviewees reflect on their experience in the crabbing business and relationship in the Pinpoint community. When referring to the crabbing business, most of the interviewees share their connection with the factory. For example, Viola Martin described the employees in the plant “were mostly family that everyone gets along with one another.” This remark is a continuous theme that is shown when talking about what the experience was working at the factory. Some factory workers also describe and showcase their unique toolmaking skills. Workers such as Deacon Isaac Anderson, John Henry Haynes, Isaac Martin and George Wiggins are essential figures when it comes to identifying the vital tools necessary for conducting a crabber’s daily task. Other topics which also highlight about the factory was the relationship between Mr. Varns and his son, the working conditions, the starting age and the follow up from the factory cancellation.

In regards to the community of Pinpoint, the interviewees express their most simple moments about how the area was then from their childhood to adulthood. One of the more repetitive topic in the interviews is the origin story of each interviewee’s family. When looking into these family origin stories, most of the connections focus on families migrating from Skidaway Island to Pinpoint. Reason being was that a private party bought Skidaway and most of the locals relocated. Within the Pinpoint community, the interviewee reflects on the old cultural traditions that were brought to Pinpoint from Skidaway. Some of these cultural traditions were homemade medical remedies, Christmas community sharing, and religious belief. Another topic that was mention was the contrast between the older generations and the newer generation. Most interviewee expresses their concern for the community since the addition of new road connecting Pinpoint to the highway. They felt that outsiders have been causing a culture shift in which the younger members of the community are not as dedicated and respectable as the
elders. There is this fear that if things do not change then, more crime will continue to spread throughout the Pinpoint area.

The Lorraine Johnson Coleman interview takes a different approach from the traditional topics of the crab factory or Pinpoint. Ms. Coleman instead talks about the power of storytelling and how it can reveal cultural information about an individual origin. She relates this type of philosophy to Dr. Barbara Fertig’s class when preparing for their interview with the interviewees. The Rev. Waterworks Wright also took a different approach in regards to his interview. Rev. Wright forced more on the development of Interstate 16 and his spiritual journey into ministry.

The VHS videotapes were transferred to Lane Library’s special collections by Barbara Fertig in about 2002. The VHS videotapes (except the interview with Lorraine Coleman-Johnson) were copied by the library’s media services to DVD-R in 2009. In 2011 John Henry Hanes interview from 7/25/1995 (Interview 8.0 in the collection) was lost. The DVD copy of Isaac Anderson (Interview 1) was lost. The Videotape copy of Interview 8.3 with Issac Martin does not play. In 2017 as part of a mini-internship project for Archival Studies, Armstrong MA student Matthew Dantzler viewed the videotapes and DVDs. He took notes, as best he could from listening to the tapes, and describes the contents and condition of each interview at the end of this guide.

**Conditions Governing Access (4.1):** The release forms for the interviews were not located with the collections. However, there is video footage that release forms were present to the interviewee during the filming. John Henry Taylor and George Wiggins were not presented with release forms during the interview.
**Language and Scripts of Material (4.5):** English

**Administrative/Biographical History (2.7):** Founded by A.S. Varn Sr., the A.S. Varn & Son Crab Factory was the primary source of income and employment in the Pinpoint community. Crabs and oysters were harvested and shipped to local markets by boat or street car. The factory also provided a sense economic independence for individuals in the community. Men were tasked with catching the crabs or oysters during the season and transporting the catch to the factory. Children and women also played a role in the crabbing process. It was the children’s task to pick the back of the crabs while the women canned and deliver them to the local markets in the city. The first set of videotape recordings were done by Dr. Barbara Fertig’s history class of 1995 to 1996. The names of the interviewers comes from listening to the tapes, but has not been confirmed from other sources.

Access Points:
African Americans—Savannah (Ga.)
Anderson, Deacon Isaac (1926-1996)
Armstrong State University
A.S. Varns & Son Crab (Firm)
Coleman, Lorraine Johnson
Crabbing—Fisheries
Cuyler/Brownville neighborhood
Famble, Odessa (1942--)
Haynes, John Henry (1913—2001)
Haynes, John Henry, Jr.
Martin, Isaac
Martin, Viola (1948--)
McKiver, Carolyn (1915—2000)
Pinpoint—Savannah (Ga.)
Taylor, John Henry
United States— History—20th century
Wiggins, George
Wiggins-Osbourne, Wilhelmina
Wright, Rev. Waterworks

Arrangement: Series are alphabetical by subject. Within series records are in chronological order by year.

1. Series: Pinpoint Native
   Date(s) (2.4): 1995-1996
   Extent (2.5): 15 tapes & 14 DVDS, 0.50 cubic feet box
   Scope & Content (3.1): These series represent the interviewees who were residents of the Pinpoint community. Within the series, there are three types of subject that relations each interviewee’s position during the interview.
   Technical Access (4.3): To access this videotape you are required to have a VHR tape player.

1.1. Subseries: Factory Worker of A.S. Varns & Son Crab Factory
   Date(s) (2.4): 1995
   Extent (2.5): 4 tapes & 4 DVDS, 0.50 cubic feet box
   Scope & Content (3.1): This subseries focus on the experience of factory workers within the A.S. Varn & Son Crab Factory. In this interview, information such working conditions, job positions, payment average and scheduling are present in the course of this video. For example, Odessa Famble describes her experience as “fun times” and enjoyed the memories of working closely with friends and family members.
   Technical Access (4.3): To access this videotape you are required to have a VHR tape player.

   Interview 1: Viola Martin, 7/26/1995: Videotape & DVD

   Interview 2: Carolyn McKiver, 7/28/1995: Videotape & DVD

   Interview 3: Odessa Famble, 7/31/1995: Videotape & DVD
Interview 4: Wilhelmina Wiggins-Osbourne, 8/01/1995: Videotape & DVD

1.2. Subseries: Crabbing Tool Creators
Date(s) (2.4): 1995-1996
Extent (2.5): 9 tapes and 8 DVDS, 0.50 cubic feet box
Scope & Content (3.1): This subseries focus on the individuals who contribute to the factory by making crabbing tools. In some interviews, the interviewee might reflect on their journey of how they receive the knowledge to make a particular instrument. For example, John Henry Haynes would tell of the experience he learned from his father on how to construct a net. Which he stated was a hobby that later turns into a career. During his time at the factory, his main priority was to be a lead boatman, which in sea terms is known as the frog ship. He would help other boatman go and collect crabs. Well, other interviews will showcase the process of how to make some of these tools. For example, Isaac Martin’s collection will show the proper way of creating a crab net.
Technical Access (4.3): To access these videotapes you are required to have a VHR tape player. To access these DVDs, you are required to have a DVD player. In Isaac Martin’s collection, videotape three was unable to work, but the DVD version did work.


Interview 6: John Henry Haynes
6.2. 7/28/1995: Videotape & DVD (41:11)


Interview 8: Isaac Martin
8.1. 8/2/1995: Videotape & DVD (2:02:04)
8.2. 8/2/1995: Videotape & DVD (20:13)
8.3. 8/2/1995: Videotape & DVD (15:57)
8.4. 8/15/1995: Videotape & DVD (1:59:26)

1.3. Subseries: Non Factory Workers

Date(s) (2.4): 1995
Extent (2.5): 2 tapes & 2 DVDS, 0.50 cubic feet box
Scope & Content (3.1): This subseries focus on Pinpoint natives who were not employed in the A.S. Varn & Crab Factory. What they provided was more of their own experience within the community. One topic that both John Henry Taylor and John Henry Haynes Jr. shared is the transition of how the newer generation is lacking in good skills. They both express their deep love of Pinpoint and how older generation in the community was able to move them into the individual they are today.

Technical Access (4.3): To access these videotapes you are required to have a VHR tape player. To access these DVDs, you are required to have a DVD player.


2. Series: Other Interviewees

Date(s) (2.4): 1995
Extent (2.5): 2 tapes & 1 DVD, 0.50 cubic feet box
Scope & Content (3.1): These series focus on interviewees who are not members of the Pinpoint community or have no work experience at A.S. Varns & Son Crab Factory. One interviewee, Ms. Lorraine Johnson Coleman, is an instructor. During her interview, she presents a lecture session for Dr. Barbara Fertig’s class. The topic of the lecture was based on the idea how storytelling can be utilized to help discover cultural subjects such as traditions, family legacy, and history. The other interviewee, Rev. Waterworks Wright is a reverend who is employed as a Death Doula. Within this interview, he talks about the development of Interstate 16 and his spiritual conquest that brought him into ministry.

Technical Access (4.3): To access these videotapes you are required to have a VHR tape player. To access these DVDs, you are required to have a DVD player.

Interview 11: Lorraine Johnson Coleman, 8/8/1995: Videotape (1:52:00)

Interview 12: Rev. Waterworks Wright, Videotape & DVD (43:40)

Descriptions of interviews:

Interview 1:
Martin, Viola (1995)
Interviewer(s): Unknown
Date(s): 7/26/1995
Brief Note: Viola Martin is the eldest sister of Isaac Martin. She is native of Pinpoint and remains in Pinpoint since the recording of the interview. Ms. Martin officially started working at the crab factory at the age of sixteen. Her position there was a picker where she would pick at least twenty pounds of crab a day. In her interview she speaks highly about how working at the factory was like a big family. Majority of the workers were local in the community. This connection between Pinpoint and crab factory made everyone closer. She also talks about the
traditions that have been passed down from her family member. An example is seen in 21:07 where she mentions the ingredients for “everlasting” tea. In regards to her family, she makes sure to mention her mother and grandmother. Viola saw both of these ladies as the significant contributors for her skills of cooking and net building. She also refers to her favorite recipe that includes crab.

Length: 1:01:56
Format: Videotape & DVD

Interview 2:
Mckiver, Carolyn (1995)
Interviewer(s): Barbara Fertig, Missy Smith, Rose Williams, Janice Hunt, Adele Dominique, Anna Laywright, Sharon Wiggins, Mia Duncan and Kin Goldman
Date(s): 7/28/1995
Brief Note: Carolyn McKiver is native of Pinpoint who was a crab picker at the A.S. Varn & Crab Factory. In the interview, she talks about her father Peter J. Famble who was the preacher at Sandclade Church. She mentions how baptism was one of the most critical elements in her life. Another interesting topic was her husband. She talks about how excellent his cooking skills were and also how he became a preacher. Some side information that was included was her hobbies, family traditions and her experience working in the factory.
Length: 1:00:26
Format: Videotape & DVD

Interview 3:
Famble, Odessa (1995)
Interviewer(s): Teresa Larson, Ginger Brown, Doris Lickings and Sharon Wiggins
Date: 7/31/1995
Brief Note: Mrs. Famble was a factory worker at A.S. Varn & Son Crab Factory. Her positions at the factory range from a picker, the weigher, and packer. She started working at the age of 13 but was not fully employed until after her high school graduation. She inherited the passion of crabbing from her father and stepmother who both worked at the factory.
Length: 1:09:45
Format: Videotape & DVD

Interview 4:
Interviewer: Barbara Fertig, Missy Smith, Rose Williams, Janice Hunt, Adele Dominique, Anna Laywright, Sharon Wiggins, Mia Duncan and Kin Goldman
Date(s): 8/1/1995
Brief Note: Wilhelmina Wiggins- Osbourne is the middle sister of George Wiggins and Odessa Famble. Her father, Samuel Wiggins was the supervisor of the A.S. Varns & Crab Factory. In her interview she mentions how she works as a crab picker. She reflects on her early childhood and how everyone in the community was family. She also talks about her father’s leadership throughout the community. For example on 15:12, she mention how proud her father was about his positon at the factory and how his impact could have transfer over if the factory did not close. There were other questions that were asked that correlates with the other interviewees. Questions
like her favorite hobbies, how Mr. Varns as an owner, favorite recipe was and what was there most important moment at Pinpoint.
Length: 1:04:05
Format: Videotape & DVD

**Interview 5:**
Interviewer(s): Teresa Larson, Ginger Brown, Doris Lickings and Sharon Wiggins
Date: 7/25/1995
Brief Note: Mr. Anderson was a field worker at A.S. Varn & Son Crab Factory. He was the local boat builder for the many crabbers in Pinpoint. During the interview, he explains the evolution of boats, his heritage and his role as a deacon.
Length: 27:19
Format: Videotape

**Interview 6:**
Interviewer(s): 1995: Teresa Larson, Ginger Brown, Doris Lickings and Sharon Wiggins
1996: Paul Marshall and Brain Hallway
Brief Note: Mr. Haynes was a field worker at A.S. Varn & Crab Factory. He is the oldest interviewee with the collection. In Pinpoint, Mr. Haynes was the local net builder and lead boatman within the factory. In his first interview, he talks about the history of his family roots, his experience with crabbing and the evolution of netting. In his second interview, accompanied by Isaac Martin, the focus was his life before and after the factory and the meaning of the “Brotherhood.” His third interview is a recap of the previous discussions from 1995, where new interview revisit the same questions about Haynes experience in Pinpoint. If you had to select one video to watch, video two would be a better selection. Video two has outstanding audio, and it also gives you a better look of how the living community connects with one another.
Format: Videotape and DVD

**Interview 7:**
Wiggins, George (1995)
Interviewer: Barbara Fertig, Missy Smith, Rose Williams, Janice Hunt, Adele Dominique, Anna Laywright, Sharon Wiggins, Mia Duncan and Kin Goldman
Date(s): 7/27/1995
Brief Note: George Wiggins is the brother of Odessa Famble and Wilhelmina Wiggins-Osbourne. Mr. Wiggins is a Pinpoint Native and is currently living there during the interview. His father was the supervisor of the A.S. Varns & Crab Factory and was able to run operation in the production of business. In his interview, George mentions his family origin and how he began working at the factory. Some essential elements that he talks about were his construction of crab traps and how famous his father was in the development of his crabbing skill.
Length: 31:34
Format: Videotape & DVD
Interview 8:
Interviewer(s): 1995: Teresa Larson, Ginger Brown, Doris Lickings and Sharon Wiggins
Brief Note: Mr. Martin is the local crabbing net maker. The first interview his shows Dr. Fertig’s
class how to construct a crabbing net. During the interview, Isaac talks about the types of
materials that are needed to make the net. In 43:32 to 1:00:54, Dr. Fertig’s class is participating
in constructing the crabbing net. In the second interview, he continues his process of forming the
net. In this part of the process, Isaac is applying the wire to the net. In the third interview, he has
the same footage for the second interview. However, the angle of the camera is more focus on
the net than Isaac. In his fourth interview, the first half of the film takes place in the Pinpoint
Museum where he demonstrates how to create a crab net. On 36:01, the footage transfers to his
home. It is for the remainder of interview where Isaac talks about his family origin, favorite
recipe and his experience as a net builder. The best video to refer to about Isaac Martin is
interview four. It is in this discussion where you get to witness Isaac net knitting skills as well as
learn about his background and his relationship to Pinpoint.
Length:8.0 39.04 (lost) 8.1. 2:02:04 8.2. 20:13 8.3. 15:57 8.4. 1:59:26
Format: Videotape and DVD

Interview 9:
Interviewer(s): Barbara Fertig, Missy Smith, Rose Williams, Janice Hunt, Adele Dominique,
Anna Laywright, Sharon Wiggins, Mia Duncan and Kin Goldman
Date(s): 8/10/1995
Brief Note: John Henry Taylor is a Pinpoint native who mother worked in the A.S. Varn & Crab
Factory. During the interview, he talks about how his most significant influence came from Mr.
Malcom. Mr. Taylor was able to learn how to become a respectable person with his guidance. He
also talks about the difficulties that this generation faces regarding not being productive and
lacking the morals that the older generation represented. For example, he talks about how his
baby’s mother had been preventing him from seeing his daughter. He also refers to time working
at Bluffton Oyster factory where he would crack open oysters. Overall he did not work in
Pinpoint, but his family was members of the community.
Length: 56:11
Format: Videotape & DVD

Interview 10:
Interviewer(s): Teresa Larson, Ginger Brown, Doris Lickings and Sharon Wiggins
Date(s): 8/11/1995
Brief Note: Mr. Haynes Jr. is the son of John Henry Haynes. He is also a Pinpoint native. During
the interview, Mr. Haynes, Jr., speaks profoundly about the decline of the newer generation’s
perspective on hard work. He also reflects on how unified the community was during his youth
and how everyone was seen as a family member.
Length: 11:31
Format: Videotape & DVD
Interview 11:
Coleman, Lorraine Johnson
Interviewer(s): Dr. Barbara Fertig’s Class
Date(s): 8/11/1995
Brief Note: Mrs. Coleman is an instructor in the Pinpoint community. During her interview, she presented a lecture that focuses on the concept of storytelling. With storytelling, an individual was able to gain knowledge of a person’s culture, experience, and purpose. She also provides several illustrations of storytelling such as This Is My Child, Call Me By My Name: So I Can Remember Who I Am, Mr. Moon Bell: In Sunday Hat and Afro Tina.
Length: 1:52:00
Format: Videotape

Interview 12:
Wright, Rev. Waterworks
Interviewer(s): Unknown
Date(s): Unknown
Brief Note: Rev. Waterworks Wright is a Death Doula from the Cuyler/Brownville neighborhood. The position of a Death Doula is to help the individual have a peaceful transition from reality to the afterlife. During his interview, he describes his journey from being a troublesome young man into a man of faith. Another topic that he mentions is the construction of Interstate 16. When discussing this topic, Rev. Waterworks identified a neighborhood called Carver Heights that was once there before Interstate development took place. When asked how people felt about the Interstate replacing their town, he stated: “that no one felt bad about it; the town was already causing trouble due to massive flooding.” Rev. Waterworks did acknowledge the difficulty of jobs relocating to different towns in which many citizens could not travel due to lack of transportation. Some side topics that were brought up was his involvement in the Civil Rights Movement and when his town was about to receive city sewage line.
Length: 43:40
Format: Videotape & DVD

Box Listing:

Box 965 Pinpoint
Interview 1 V. Martin videotape & DVD
Interview 2 C. McKiver Videotape & DVD
Interview 3 O. Famble Videotape & DVD
Interview 4 W. Wiggins Videotape & DVD
Interview 5 I. Anderson Videotape
Interview 6.1 J.H. Haynes Videotape & DVD
Interview 6.2 J. H. Haynes Videotape & DVD
Interview 6.3 J.H. Haynes Videotape & DVD
Interview 7. G. Wiggins Videotape & DVD
Interview 8.1 I. Martin Videotape & DVD
Interview 8.2 I. Martin Videotape & DVD
Interview 8.3 I. Martin Videotape (does not play) & DVD
Interview 8.4 I. Martin Videotape & DVD
Interview 9 J.H. Taylor Videotape & DVD
Interview 10 J.H. Haynes Jr. Videotape & DVD
Interview 11 L. Johnson-Coleman Videotape
Interview 12 W. Wright Videotape & DVD