



William Massey and James "Potty" Carter

Mills County History

**By William Massey,
recounted by James "Potty" Carter**

James "Potty" Carter was born on June 2, 1928. He grew up in a poor family. Coming home from school, he and his siblings would gather around a single kerosene lantern to do their homework. Mr. Carter has lived in Mills County for 82 years.

During The Great Depression, living was tough. There was very little currency exchange. Most items were obtained by bargaining or trading food and item stamps. Another way that people made a living was to swap labor, which meant that you could help your neighbor harvest his crops or tend his livestock and you would get a small share of what you helped with. Farmers would take their corn to one of the several mills that were around and had the corn ground up into meal, part of which was used to pay the miller. The main cash crops were corn and cotton. Cotton dotted the fields for as far as the eye could see. School would let out for two to three weeks so the children could help with the harvest.

There were many stores in Mills County. Several variety stores provided supplies to citizens in the area. There was a Yarborough's dry good store and Barnes & McCullough. There were many more businesses in Mills County than there are today. Mr. Carter worked at Hudson's Drugstore for 30 years.

During World War II, everyone was patriotic. All of Mills County was ready and happy to give up having some provisions, such as sugar, so that troops could have supplies. The people wanted to do their part to win the war.

For fun, the kids of Mills County would do whatever they could. There was an activity called "chunkin'" that involved someone to run by a wasp nest and knock it out of a tree. Needless to say, no matter how fast you would run, at least one wasp would get to you. There also used to be a movie theater where people could go enjoy a Coke and some popcorn while relaxing and watching a movie. Mr. Carter told me of a pastime of his where he would go find a forked sapling and nail boards between the forks. Then he would tie a rope to his horse and have his own sled to ride around in.

Although times were rough during the Depression and the war, Mills County was a great home for many people to live and raise families. Even though times were rough, the people of Mills County always pulled together to help each other out.