

The home and home life at Carmona are fairly typical of Southern sawmill towns. Workmen rent from the company dwellings which are supplied with water piped from a deep well, and are lighted by electricity generated at the mill. Staple foodstuffs are purchased from the company store at reasonable prices. Fresh vegetables, including tomatoes, sweet and Irish potatoes, watermelons, cantaloupes, and various sorts of peas are purchased from farmers who peddle produce in the village. Farmers also slaughter cattle and hogs raised on the free range, and market meat in Carmona. Foods obtained in the forest include blackberries, Mayhaws, nuts, muscadines (a variety of wild grape), and persimmons.

Fish, squirrels, rabbits, deer, quail, and wild ducks and geese contribute to the meat supply. Firewood for cooking and heating is made chiefly from scraps of wood obtained at the mill, altho some oak wood is purchased from farmers for use in heating. Many families own automobiles, and frequently drive to Groveton, the nearest important retail center. Here they shop and make contacts with the life of that small city.

Little is done to increase the attractiveness and beauty of the home and community. All buildings except the church and school are owned by the lumber company. None of them are painted, and their weather-beaten aspect is an expression of declining value and increasing neglect as timber reserves approach exhaustion. Employees move so frequently that they have small incentive to improve their rented homes by planting trees, cultivating shrubs, repairing fences, and developing the lawn. Deterioration is the inevitable result of temporary interest in the residences by both their owners and tenants. It is notable that virgin forest trees were not spared to shade homes from the unrelenting sunshine of this subtropical land. Men seem to develop antipathy for trees in regions where forest occupies the land. Farm homes in the section are also commonly placed in treeless clearings altho most of the land is still in woods.

Salaried employees, skilled workmen, and their families compose the local aristocracy. The superintendent of the mill is the highest paid man in the community and heads this group. It includes managers of the different departments of the mill, the commissary manager, saw filer, blacksmith and mechanic, engineer, log sealer, sawyer and physician. The ministers and teachers of the community are also admitted; This group has a relatively high standard of living because it possesses greater earning power and, excepting ministers and teachers, its members purchase supplies at cost from the commissary. These people have rather well furnished homes, possess radios, drive good automobiles, and employ help with the household work. As a group they are better educated than their fellows. Their work is less tiresome, they read the Houston Post Dispatch, subscribe to a few magazines, and have higher educational and social standards than other members of the community.

RECREATION AND COMMUNITY LIFE

Recreational life at Carmona is intimately related to the forest environment. The wild game of the area includes deer, squirrels, foxes, wolves, turkeys, quail, and rabbits. It attracts men to spend much of their leisure hunting in season and practicing to develop marksmanship. Ducks and geese are hunted on the mill ponds during autumn and spring. The supply pond from which boiler water is obtained affords favorable places for swimming. Fish are caught here and in the log pond, and trips are also made to the Trinity and Neches rivers. Loafing and chatting with neighbors are other popular pastimes, baseball games and motoring are important attractions, and some families have a radio or one or more musical instruments.

Community life is well organized at Carmona. The commissary is a community store. There is a community or mill physician. The company deducts \$1.50 a month from the earnings of married men and \$1.00 from those of single men to use in employing a doctor, and his medical services are available to the people without additional charge. The company purchases group accident insurance for its employees, the policies being payable to the latter or their heirs in case of maturity. The church is a community institution. Methodist and Baptist ministers conduct services on alternate Sundays, and there is a Methodist Sunday school and a Baptist Young Peoples Union. Services are attended by the religious people of the community irrespective of denominational membership. The public school has grades from one to six inclusively, and pupils who wish to continue their work further are transferred to the school in Groveton. The white and Negro sections of Carmona are very distinct. They are situated some distance apart on opposite sides of the railroad track; and each has its own church, school, and self-contained social life.

FUTURE OF THE COMMUNITY

What will succeed the era of forest exploitation which is drawing to a close at Carmona? Timber reserves now held by the company will soon be exhausted; and, altho some additional stumpage may be purchased, increasing scarcity of mature timber in the district indicates that ere long the mill must close down. Trees are growing on the cut-over land in spite of its use as free range and the ravages of fire, but they are too small and scattered to make good saw material. Utilization of this timber in making boxes, crates, laths, or paper would extend the life of the village. If the land were offered for sale to farmers, Carmona might become an agricultural community; but poor sandy soil, continued agricultural depression, steady urbanization of American society, and meager development obtained by this means in neighboring areas indicate that occupation of the land by farmers would occur slowly if at all. Staple field crops do not thrive without heavy fertilization and intelligent soil building. Melons, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, peanuts, and several varieties of peas grow well; but commercial production would involve marketing in competition with established producers, most of whom have the advantages of better transportation services and greater proximity to large markets than Carmona. Given protection from fire, a dense stand of young trees would soon spring up, and if hogs were kept off the range, longleaf pines would grow [2] yielding a harvest of naval stores as well as poles, posts, and logs. The land might be fenced to exclude the livestock of the free range, and grazed continuously while another stand of timber develops. Used in this way it would yield an income while trees were growing, and rather close grazing of the grass would greatly reduce fire hazards.

These at least are some of the possibilities. Whether any of them will be realized in the near future is uncertain. In any case the land and its mineral right [3] are considered much too valuable to admit abandonment and reversion to the state for non-payment of taxes. In the meantime the fate of Carmona is uncertain. Will it successfully develop another economic base; or must it become, as many other Southern sawmill towns have, merely a few rows of rotting abandoned buildings along silent deserted streets in an expanse of sparsely peopled woodland.