

DVD Number 37

TIMBER INDUSTRY OF OLD DORCHESTER, by Bill Spicer, 5 May 2004

The featured speaker is Bill Spicer who will discuss timber operations prior to the advent of modern log trucks and lumber mills.

In South Dorchester, the Spicer name has been closely associated with the timber industry for several generations. When horses and oxen served as the only power to transport logs in the woods, most mills were small and moved from location to location to process lumber close to stands of timber. Several members of the Spicer family owned such portable mills, often called peckerwood mills. A permanent mill had to be constructed on the water so logs could be rafted to it. Lingan T. Spicer, Bill's grandfather, constructed the family's first stationary mill on Spicer's Creek at the head of the Honga River. When Arthur Spicer, Bill's uncle, was discharged from the service he went into the piling business with a horse, a crosscut saw and block and tackle to load his pickup truck. In 1950 he founded Spicer Lumber Company at Golden Hill. The company was later owned and operated by Bill. Spicer Lumber became one of two major mills in Dorchester County.

Mr. Spicer began his career as an auto mechanic in Bramble's Garage in Woolford and was later employed as a mechanic for the Massey Harris Farm Machinery Agency (later Massey-Ferguson) when it opened in Cambridge. During the latter part of World War II he served with the Merchant Marine and after the war returned to farming. In 1955 he went into the lumber business. He is now retired and raises horses at his home near Church Creek.