TOPOGRAPHICAL / CLIMATOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

WIND AND WATER FLOW WORK AT CROSS PURPOSES: The hydraulics of the river is to move water south, the hydraulics of the Gulf of Mexico and the south wind is to move more water north. That's kind of frustrating, but that's exactly what's happening to us every day. — Clifford Smith

MOST OF TERREBONNE PARISH IS BELOW 5 FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL: Terrebonne Parish, again, has about—I figure, about 1,300,000 acres of surface. Now when I saw surface area, you gotta remember I'm talking about open water, bays, saltwater marsh, freshwater marsh, swamps . . . b: Within the boundaries. S: And about 300,000 acres of land above that five-foot contour. So we have a million three hundred thousand acres of land. . . . S: Five thousand [.0038%] above the 5-foot contour, okay? — Clifford Smith

RAINFALL AND LOCAL HYDROLOGY: drainage was always important. We had a drainage, uh, a gravity drainage tax in this parish. As far as I know, it was put into place in the 1930's. And probably even before that to tell you the truth, but what I know is about the 1930's, there was a millage, a parish-wide millage for drainage—we'd call it gravity drainage improvements. Most of our drainage until my lifetime—my professional lifetime, was gravity drainage. We never had a drainage problem, an influx of water, we always had a gravity drainage problem, again, we get 60 inches of rainfall on average a year. One—1992 we got 100 inches of rain. Uh, we've gotten, some months, 20 inches of rain. In a month! okay? Uh, so drainage is always a big deal, course our drainage system also was drastically affected by the leveeing of Mississippi and the Atchafalaya River. — Clifford Smith

NEGATIVE PERCEPTIONS ABOUT THE VALUE OF THE COASTAL WETLANDS

MARSHLANDS CONSIDERED WASTELANDS: And these marshlands were by and large just considered as wastelands to developers. The only thing they were interested in was land that you could farm — Allen Ensiminger

MARSHLANDS CONSIDERED WASTELANDS: The Watkins family were early investors. And everybody laughed at them buying that old wasteland, "Never gonna amount to nothin', you can't farm that." [Angeline] bore out that hole right there in one day's production and their ancestor had made in the history of the family. — Allen Ensminger

MARSHLANDS CONSIDERED USELESS: And then project a rectangular surveying system out into the marshes, out into the swamp, what they considered the un-valuable areas. — Clifford Smith

GEOGRAPHICALLY CHALLENGED AMERICANS DON'T REALIZE THERE IS A VULNERABLE LOUISIANA COAST AWAY FROM NEW ORLEANS: So I mean that's the—frankly, that is a problem for us, because nobody knows we're here, Man. Hell, half the—90% of people in America think the Mississippi River stops in New Orleans. When I tell them the Mississippi River goes 125 miles south of New Orleans they look at me like I'm nuts. Said, "Man, you think you seen some resources in the Mississippi Valley? Go to New Orleans, get in an airplane or a helicopter and fly to the mouth of the Mississippi River. You ain't seen nothin', Man!" — Clifford Smith

LOUISIANA IS NOT EVEN AN AFTERTHOUGHT; AMERICA'S FAILURE TO SEE THE BIG PICTURE: This is a basin, okay? Love when the Corps talks about the basin. I said, "First off, when you're talking about the basin, the basin that I live in starts in Minnesota and it comes all the way to the Gulf of Mexico. Now I got a little basin where I live, but if you wanna talk about the BASIN, it's the big basin. And I'm part of the big basin! So don't do something in Minnesota and don't think about what the shit you're doing to me in Louisiana." They—lemme tell ya, they don't have a clue. Okay? I've been preaching that for 50 years and it's like, I mean, I just as soon been talkin' to the chair. [INAUDIBLE] gonna change everybody every three years, which you know is a ridiculous process. — Clifford Smith

WETLANDS' ROLE AS A BUFFER

RANCHING AREAS SERVE AS A BUFFER BETWEEN THE COAST AND THE PLEISTOCENE PRAIRIES: But these marshes that we're driving through here now, were all productive cattle areas and still are. There's cattle grazing all over this prairie, up here, and this is kinda the interface between high land that extended south of DeQuincy down to Lake Charles/Sulfur area, and then tapered off into the marsh itself. —

CLIMATE CHANGE

CLIMATE CHANGE: We don't have the winter we used to have. We used to have some serious bad winters. And the winter was really moved our shrimp to the west. — Houston Foret

CRAWFISHING

CRAWFISHING DURING THE GREAT DEPRESSION: [My daddy] he was a fisherman. He fished – he drug crawfish to feed his family at fifty cents a bucket. — Marshall Borel

ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE

ENGINEERING FOCUS ON CHANGING HYDROLOGY TO KEEP THE MISSISSIPPI FROM FLOODING: [During conversation with a leading New Orleans engineer, ca 1958.] And then I said well look I want to tell you about hurricane protection. He said

hurricane protection? We ain't in that business. Man, get out of here! What the shit you talking about? This is before Betsy. We build levees along the Mississippi River. We don't worry about no hurricanes. Okay? And I mean he insulted me all kinds of [ways]. — Clifford Smith

PROBLEMS CAUSED BY CORPS OF ENGINEERS: The New Orleans district is the biggest financial district in the United States of America. Okay? They have more projects, navigation, flood control, levee systems, and etcetera, than any place. So first off, they ought to not have a guy in charge every three years. A guy ought to – somebody ought to stay. Second place, I'm not sure that the New Orleans district ought to be involved in the Louisiana Coastal Plan. Goddammit. The Louisiana Coastal Plan is as big as the New Orleans district. Okay, if you're going to really go after it. So why would you have those people that are running navigation flood control blocks in the levees include the Louisiana Coastal Plan? Alright? So I suggest – again, I'm scared to go through anybody else but through the Corps of Engineers – I suggest through lack of knowledge of the bureaucracy that we create a Louisiana Coastal Command. And we put some general in charge, and we put some general in charge, and we put some general in charge that don't move every three or four years. Now, you really want to make it broad, why don't we create a United States Coastal Command? And why don't we domical it in Louisiana and put a two-star general in charge of the damn thing. And put an appropriation process – like MR&T. That's what happened in MRN&T after the great '27 flood. I don't get too far with that. (laughs) okay, let's get out of here then. Let me get out of here. Okay, and by the way, I suggested that to of course Breaux and Tauzin over the years, and anybody else that would listen to me. By the way I'm pretty impressed with the guy from um, Baton Rouge. Dr. Cassidy. I suggested – if ya'll ever get a chance to talk to that guy. He is a sharp dude. — Clifford Smith

CHANGING REGIONAL HYDROLOGY IN EARLY 20TH CENTURY: western part of Terrebonne was affected by the '27 flood – but a lot of people lived in western Terrebonne, particularly in 1927, so Terrebonne had minimum effect on the '27 storm – the '27 flood. Bayou Lafourche had practically nothing, um, the Mississippi and the Atchafalaya basin in particular were drastically affected. Even the levee system from Baton Rouge to New Orleans was not affected in '27. Primarily because um, Lafourche and Terrebonne, as a matter of fact, because Bayou Lafourche was dammed in about 1904, before 1904, and I do have some slides that show that – most of the flooding in Terrebonne and Lafourche came from Bayou Lafourche. And in Terrebonne from the east – from Bayou Lafourche into Terrebonne. After the damming of the 1904 of Bayou Lafourche, generally Terrebonne and Lafourche had been protected from the Mississippi River. — Clifford Smith

CHANGING REGIONAL HYDROLOGY IN 1928: After the great 1927 flood, the congress proposed a project to build along the lower Mississippi from Cairo, Illinois basically to

the Gulf of Mexico to ensure that they never have a 1927 flood in the Mississippi. Um, they assigned the overview and administration of that project also to the Mississippi River Commission. Again, that project is known as the MR&T project. It um, has been going on since 1928. It's probably appropriated, or spent, about 13.5 billion dollars. Um, it has permitted many floods along the river. It has been designed to prevent the maximum flood, which this particular 2011 has probably been the closest thing to that in the last eighty years. — Clifford Smith

CHANGED HYDROLOGY - NO FLOODING - THANKS TO LEVEE SYSTEM: Actually the last flood that I can find that shows any breaching of the levee between Baton Rouge and New Orleans was prior to 1900, and even in the '27 flood those areas did not breach. And I'm sure that's why there's huge investments along the river. Those people that, frankly, finance those petrochemical plants realize that the levee system functions. — Clifford Smith

ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE WROUGHT BY CHANGE IN NATURAL HYDROLOGY: D: What's gonna happen to Cocodrie? F: My prediction for Cocodrie - When they finish with all these levees they want to build – Cocodrie's gonna be history. When the hurricane comes from the gulf, wherever the water comes from – once you got all these levees – Cocodrie's gonna be history. Where can the water go besides this way here? I'm not saying next year. Ten years, twenty years - it might take fifty years, I don't know, or more, you know. Hard to say. But Cocodrie's gonna be history. F: That's what I always say - it's too late now. If they would've never built any levees in our area, we would've been in a lot better shape. They started with the levees – and they cashed out now. They cashed out. I mean and I'm sure ya'll see what I mean. Even when they build a highway they want to elevate a highway. That's the levee – they stop the flow of the water. I mean look at New Orleans and everything. Even in Houma. They got levees. Where they put a levee there might be a 5 mile area that's on the levee. Where the water goes? They gotta take the water and put it on somebody else's property. These guys right there they got it good Now when the water comes out here, I don't care how much pump you put on the levees- you will never pump the water that that rain's gonna give out. And that's the problem that we have in this world. And today I mean they have to build levees to protect because they screwed it up. Man screwed it up. Man created that problem. It's not mother nature it's man that created that problem. — Houston Foret

MISSISSIPPI RIVER TRIBUTARY PROJECT, CHANGED HYDROLOGY: the Mississippi River Tributary project is to build the Mississippi to protect it from flood, but also to use as a navigation vehicle. The Mississippi River, seventy percent of the grain exported from this country goes down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. And by the way, that navigation is drastically affected. Did you hear about the barges sinking in Baton Rouge on two occasions? Most of those barges were grain barges. I mean corn – I

mean it must've fed those pigs pretty good on the river. But I mean this is a big deal economically. — Clifford Smith

RICE IRRIGATION INFRASTRUCTURE AND EROSION: So in the 30's the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway was conceived and implemented. And throughout its length it utilized some old canal systems that had been building to aid navigation. They enlarged the size of them and the depth of them and [have] continued—right on to today to do that. But, in this basin here, the Calcasieu-Sabine, that connection between the area over there around orange and Lake Charles, allowed for a circulation of higher saline water that was brought up into those basins and to the point where by the 40's, in the case of the Calcasieu area, water in the river itself was being backed up; was being, I guess polluted with salt to the point where the people up around Kinder, to the north of Lake Charles was using that water for rice irrigation and it was too salty for 'em and they were beginning to see some impact to their rice fields. They got busy and got to congressmen in the Louisiana legislature to build a saltwater barrier north of Lake Charles across the Calcasieu River to prevent that salinity from encroaching up that waterway. It wasn't an environmental thing or anything else; it was a bunch of farmers. [Didn't want it]. They also—the group also was instrumental in getting the Corps of Engineers to build a catfish [locks] which are on the Mermentau River north of Little Chenier because it was backing up through the Mermentau getting through to White Lake and White Lake and the Mermentau system was heavily used for rice irrigation and today, almost all of our rice is irrigated with individual wells. And of course back in the 20's and 30's, that was outta the question to drill a ten-inch or 20-inch well to pump for rice, it just wasn't economically viable to do it. But those hydrologic manipulations are gonna be viewed out here after all as probably one of the worst things we've ever done to this whole section of the state. — Allen Ensminger

SEVERE INTERIOR FLOODING RESULTING FROM MARSH EROSION: D: So Ike flooded this? A: Yes, yeah. Ike put water over `that we'll see back there, uh— B: Now is this the first time Gum Cove Ridge has flooded? A: Yes, it is, and as far as the histories of Mr. Odom's family, who have been here since back in the 20's or earlier that they ever had water in the yard at the main house that we'll see over there today as we drive back here on Gum Cove. And Ike—the influence of it in my opinion is just exactly like it has been all along the coast. When you remove all of that storm protection south of you, you are in essence, on the edge of the Gulf, and when you look at this [Petter] Refuge south of this area, it's big open water areas...but that's, uh, the bypass road. — Allen Ensminger

CANAL CONSTRUCTION AND RESULTING SALTWATER INSTRUSION: So they dredged this damn monster and then ended up having to fight it ever since for saltwater intrusion. — Allen Ensminger

HURRICANE TIDAL SURGES DROWNING CATTLE DEEP IN THE INTERIOR AS A RESULT OF EROSION: And those are fairly representative of the—he had about 1,900 head of cattle on the property and Ike got around 8 or 900 of 'em drowned. — Allen Ensminger

SUBSIDENCE RESULTING FROM ALTERED HYDROLOGY: It was properties that they had drained in oxidized and—subsidence and oxidation. Once you dry these marshes up they just turn into a sponge bed. And happened there with the Netherland Corporation. They drained it—1915 Hurricane came through there and flooded it, went over top of those protection levees. One of my wife's first husband's grandfather worked in that swamp at Boutte. And actually, when we bought that Salvador Wildlife Management area from Exxon, the old man was still trapping. And he told me, he says, "Ya'll bought a Eagle [mask] right there." I said, "Whatchu talkin' 'bout?" and he said, "Well there's an eagle that nests on that property." And he took me back there in an airboat—airboat from over here in Rockefeller...guys we may be in trouble. Let's see if the gate is openable...and uh got in there to that thing—and he even took me in the woods where they had some old corrals with barbed-wire fence where they pinned up the mules and oxen that used to drag those logs down here. — Allen Ensminger

EROSION / OPEN WATER RESULTING FROM ALTERED HYDROLOGY: These big open-water areas that we'll see out here today are a direct result of that change in hydrology. — Allen Ensminger

HEIGHTENED HEALTH RISKS / WEST NILE, ETC. RESULTING FROM ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE: Yeah, that's right. Well, my next door neighbor, I talked to her this morning, she's got a little shop in De Ridder, lived in Grand Chenier, she was school teacher down there. And after Rita, they moved up here to their property in De Ridder. She said that she can't remember as a kid—and she was raised in Cameron—said, "I don't remember the mosquitoes being that bad, now I can't go out down there and even visit with our in-laws without the mosquitoes absolutely killing me!" And she may have a point there. It may be that these marshes broke up and what have you. —Allen Ensminger

CATASTROPHIC ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES WROUGHT BY LAND RECLAMATION EFFORTS: It was properties that they had drained in oxidized and—subsidence and oxidation. Once you dry these marshes up they just turn into a sponge bed. And happened there with the Netherland Corporation. They drained it—1915 Hurricane came through there and flooded it, went over top of those protection levees. One of my wife's first husband's grandfather worked in that swamp at Boutte. And actually, when we bought that Salvador Wildlife Management area from Exxon, the old man was still trapping. And he told me, he says, "Ya'll bought a Eagle [mask] right there." I said, "Whatchu talkin' 'bout?" and he said, "Well there's an eagle that nests on

that property." And he took me back there in an airboat—airboat from over here in Rockefeller...guys we may be in trouble. Let's see if the gate is openable...and uh got in there to that thing—and he even took me in the woods where they had some old corrals with barbed-wire fence where they pinned up the mules and oxens that used to drag those logs down here.—Allen Ensminger

CANALS: people began digging canals in the early 1800s in Terrebonne, Madison canal and Minus canal and all these different land owners so they could get their market to New Orleans, their product to New Orleans by boat. — Chris Cenac

IMPACT OF THE CHANGE IN HYDROLOGY: B: Okay, well could you talk a little more about the changes in hydrology and its impact? L: Well, I mean I think the biggest thing of course would be the leveeing of the Mississippi River. Uh, you know started to affect uh, the, you know, the flooding of the river system and all its tributaries, and that of course, you know, because cypress is supposed to have, you know, essentially six months dry, six months wet. And no longer – that pattern was disrupted by the levee and the river, by the construction of other levees, by the construction of the canal systems and those kinds of things, and all of that changed the natural hydrology to where you could have areas of the swamp which were never dry anymore. And it just slowed the growth rate down tremendously. So uh, you know, reforestation project today I think is next to near impossible unless it would be some type of government funded project like a diversion project or something were you kind of have unlimited funds to make it happen because it was something you wanted to do. But from an economic logging point of view, it makes no economic sense at all. — Cokie Rathborne

UNBROKEN SEA OF GRASS, GRAND CHENIERE: It was in an area that was open - the north marsh was um, pretty solid. Solid with plenty Cladium Jamacense or saw grass. And until hurricane Audrey, actually until the drought - probably 1951 to 1953 – caused a lot of that saw grass to die, and Hurricane Aubrey opened that up to where you had areas that were opened up north of Grand Chenier, Pecan Island – that area. Um, the big burn, you know, it was a fire in the twenties that opened up some of the areas between um, between Gibbstown and – between the prairie and the Cheniers, so it opened up that particular area. — David Richard

TRAPPING CANALS / TRAINASSES: R: Orange Cameron County. It's a trapping operation. Do you notice the straight ditches that are dug east and west there. D: Yes. Willow Bayou camp. They call it Buzzard Camp. There's a number of camps out there historically that were used as trapping. It was a trapping company. And uh, that's why the ditches were dug. D: As part of the… R: The trapping operation. — David Richard

ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE WROUGHT BY RECLAMATION DRAINAGE CANALS, ST. BERNARD PARISH: DD: If you go to Yscloskey in Hopedale and you

go due east, there's another area out there that's got a whole rectangular set of canals and the only reason I can think of that... there are two reasons 1) it's a land reclamation project for maybe oranges at one time or 2) it's a muskrat ranch. And I have no record of either, but this is not oil and gas. No. This is either trapping, which I don't think. I tend to think it's a land reclamation project at a time period which we've lost the records. — Dorothy Benge

ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE WROUGHT BY RECLAMATION DRAINAGE CANALS: CAERNARVON: MB: Well, the Caernarvon district that you were referring back to was a land reclamation project and unfortunately when they blew the levee in 1927, they blew the Caernarvon reclamation project. But it did actually go to one phase of completion. Dredged what they call the outer canal. They had the pumping station in there. There's still remnants of that pumping station out there if you know what to look for. And they had some lateral canals and they had some canals that were dug and then there was a bigger picture for a stage 2 that was going to go even further into the marsh, probably all the way into Lake Leary. But that never happened. — Michael Benge

ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGE WROUGHT BY DEATH OF THE TRAPPING INDUSTRY: C: There had to be some kind of environmental impact as a result of the drastic decline in the number of trappers out there removing nutria and muskrats on the environment. E: Yes. Muskrat actually in the early part of the 1900s was very important fur. It probably was the most important, most heavily trapped. They sold upwards, trapped upwards of 10 million muskrat alone a year. And those records are in this older book, fur animals of Louisiana and you can see that the number of fur animals that they trapped back then was phenomenal. Just for example here in 1924-25 just these species alone right here: muskrat, possum, raccoon, mink, skunk, otter and miscellaneous pelts which could be fox, weasel, other fur bearers almost 6,771,265 animals and then the 1924-25 dollars that was almost $6.5 million which was quite a bit back then and it contributed not only to the local economy of those trappers but also the economy of the state. And you can see here some of the records that date back to 1913 all the way to 1930 back then as we mentioned there was a lot more trappers. Here we can see that the numbers from 1917 were a little over 6,000 and then you see here in the 1924-25 season there was 20,000 trappers in the '22-'23 season 26,000 plus trappers and '22-'23 28,000 trappers so it was a big industry back then. — Ed Mouton

ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE WROUGHT BY OVERPOPULATION OF FUR-BEARING ANIMALS IN COASTAL MARSHES: C: And how many tails are they turning in? E: They are turning in an average of over 330,000 plus tails annually. The lowest season was had was '05-'06 was after Hurricanes Katrina and Rita for obvious reasons trappers were dislocated from the area. Some lost equipment, some lost their homes. That was probably the lowest, it was a little over 167,000 tails, somewhere in there and a couple seasons ago in the 2009-2010 season I believe it was they set a record

of 445,000 tails but over the ten years. This program has been operating ten years, we've averaged about 330,000 plus tails per year and at the same token, data from the coast-wide surveys indicate that prior to the start of this control program initiative, incentive program, excuse me, we were looking at damage ranging from 80,000-100,000 acres across the coast, which is an extrapolating number and over the course of ten years, we have reduced that number of acres to a little over 4,000. — Ed Mouton

ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION RESULTING FROM POLLUTION: The crab factory polluted the water and it stink so bad. Some of the guys with the wooden trawl boat used to go park their boat in there, because they had no oxygen in the water. The barnacles didn't grow in there. — Freddie Matherne

DISAPPEARANCE OF CAILLOU ISLAND: 'Course Caillou Island is no island anymore. We used to go sleep in the canal but now it's all water. — Freddie Matherne

DISAPPEARANCE OF BARRIER ISLANDS: This whole island about a mile and a half after one of the hurricanes, the next year, I come looking for my path, see. I couldn't see nothing. I said, "What the heck?" I'm not in the right place. Lucky I had the GPS. I look at the GPS and showed me where it was. I was right in the right place. But there was no island there for me to see. From one year to the other one, a mile and something island just gone. From this cut going toward Lake Barre, all of this is gone. Now, this part of the island, on this side, on the east side of this cut, we go across here with the boats now. Three years ago, you had to go across the land. I say, three years, five years or so maybe. Had to go across (Hayward Lane?). This is, you got Bayou (Dumans?). You can't see it. It's in the water. See all this here? — Freddie Matherne

COASTAL EROSION 1: D: So, you've seen the deterioration of the coast? M: Boy, have I seen the deterioration. All the islands from Timbalier Island to here, all the islands that were here, are gone. Before my time, the guys tell me, Indian guys tell me, that they use to ride their horses all the way up to this island. A horse. Think double rigs trawl in here now. All the way across here, between Terrebonne...Timbalier Bay and Terrebonne Bay, it had a ridge, it had land all the way across. You see this Bayou (Pointe aux Chenes?) here? D: Yep. M: That's what built up all this here. When you're in this lake, Lake Felicity, that's one of the only places you can see big oak trees along here. A line of oak trees here. Runs about a mile, I guess. It's got high land enough. And that's what most of the residents that moved here. When the government gave them this land grant, they can't sell the land or nothing. But they can live on it like they want. They moved away from here. — Freddie Matherne

COASTAL EROSION 2: Bay St. Elaine – that's where my father was raised at. He was just uh, it was all land there, you know. — Houston Foret

COASTAL EROSION 3: At Coon Road they had – one of the biggest platforms in our area was in Coon Road. It belongs to Roland Chauvin - the Chauvin family that built that - and that was a huge platform. Um, you can't get to there - it's all over water right now. — Houston Foret

COASTAL EROSION 4: M: No, right, little over. Old Lady Lake, right here. Now there's another island. See, that was, they had a oil company, big building, all this here. And all this was marsh. And years back, when they were working on the rigs, they had a new kind of trash pipes and stuff like that. They'd go throw it on the marsh. Which was nice. But now the marsh is not there no more. It's all water. So I went into, I wasn't, I didn't pay attention to my GPS then. You learn by your mistakes. So I had went in maybe 15 foot or so. And I turned around right away. It was too late. When I turned around, I caught and tore my net. I mean, tore it bad, too. — Freddie Matherne

COASTAL EROSION 5: D: But if you left Cocodrie going south, how far would you have to go to get to Coon Road? F: Coon Road - About five miles. D: And how about at Seabreeze? F: Sea breeze is about the same thing. All the coastline left is about five miles. D: And was there platforms there too? F: Yeah there were a lot of platforms at Seabreeze. The um, I can't remember the names of everybody but I remember (inaudible) Foret was my father-in- law, he had one there. (Inaudible) Pellegrin had one right there. Um, O'neal Sevin - he had a shrimp drying platform there. They had several down there I just can't think of who's there. Mr. Norris Price's was in that neighborhood too. His daddy, Stanley Price, had a platform in there. — Houston Foret

COASTAL EROSION 6: Yeah, during prohibition. Uh, this is a little interesting thing right there. They uh - the place they used to store it was (Baudoin?) Island, which is totally gone now. They had people living there, oystering and everything else. — Houston Foret

COASTAL EROSION 7: When I was a kid, there was maybe two, three families that was living on this side the bayou – everybody was living on the other side the bayou. Everything was by boat. Where we sitting right here, there was a sugarcane plantation here. Out to the (??) sugarcane plantation, they were raising corn over here. You know , the other side of the you was the same but there was a little refinery which was before my day, that's correct. D: A sugar refinery. F: A little sugar refinery across the bayou right here. When I was a kid we used to go play out in the old building…part of the old wheels from the refinery and everything…right there. **[NOTE: Houston Foret then pointed to a body of open water.]**— Houston Foret

DAMAGE CAUSED BY PETROLEUM EXPLORATION AND DEVELOPMENT: D: You mean to tell me there was a lot of oil field buildings out here. M: Well, they had a whole lot right there passed Barre. I mean a big . . . I don't know how many people. A hundred people could live in there. D: What oil company? M: Texas Company. And then

at Caillou Island, they got the same, they still have theirs. Caillou Island. Timbalier Island, the east end of it. Aw, about halfway really. And uh, but a lot of these places. Like, you see a well, if there's a well standing right here and I'm passing with my boat, I will not go any closer than about 200 feet or so from that well. Because this is where the people that build the rigs, you know, the barges, the cranes, the buildings, put the derrick, that put the well there. The drill for oil. Well, a lot of times they accidentally drop some (line?) or sometimes perfectly they throw their trash right overboard. So we all learned to stay away from the well, go way out there. Now I've already caught some right here. I caught a whole Christmas tree, the big pipe and all those valves and all. Right next to their camp. And I brought it to the man. I tore my trawl boat, brand new trawl boat, but it wasn't tore real bad. I come and tied up to his wharf, you now. I told him I wanted to bring him back the Christmas tree. "What you mean?" I said, "Come take a look." He look out there. I'm lucky to have a bunch of the guys that worked with me and we managed to get it on top of the cabin. Not this cabin, on my crew boat, old crew boat. And we had it across the cabin and he come there, picked it up with the crane, put it on the dock. They...It wasn't far from...Well, we'll make up the charge. No, I'm fixing the trawler. I'm going shrimping. I don't want nothing. So I didn't get nothing then. Later on, I did hook and did tear up and they had to come and un...take my trawler off and pick up. — Freddie Matherne

SUBSIDENCE, LOWER TERREBONNE PARISH 1: … my grandfather told me that – that his daddy used to go to Last Island on horseback. Covered wagon and everything else. — Houston Foret

SUBSIDENCE, LOWER TERREBONNE PARISH 2 — NORTHWARD RETREAT OF THE POPULATION: Well they call, it's called Passe La Poule - It was that area up about it was all land. People living all along that area. And the word Passe La Poule - it might even be on a map - the reason they called it - Poulet is a chicken in French, and the neighbors that were living right here, there was a little (inaudible) that would kind of build across over there, and the chickens would jump over that. That's why they would call it Pass la Poule. Haha That's why it's the name for that. And now well Pass La Poule and if you look from there where you go from one island pass, to where come around across, you got about roughly, of land right there, about 8 miles. That was completely gone. That's all water. D: 8 miles. H: And there were people living right there. D: So there were people living south of Cocodrie? F: Oh, more people people than were living in Cocodrie. D: And you said there were four hundred people maybe living in Cocodrie. F: Yeah. And in my time I was talking about in the forties and the fifties and all that, and the sixties, people started moving out after hurricane Audrey in '57 - that's when people started migrating a little bit farther. But still that time we had a lot…— Houston Foret

ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE WROUGHT BY INVASIVE SPECIES (NUTRIA) 1: So I flew for the Corps. I did some flying for Jean Lafitte Park. They started having nutria

problems. They wanted me to survey the property. So we started flying vegetative surveys in the late eighties. Land companies started saying hey, we're seeing these big muddy spots – just a big round muddy spot on the property that's just solid mud. And we're thinking, could that be nutria? We've got lots of nutria. We're not trapping what we should be trapping. And we're wondering whether they're really eating the marsh up. So we started flying with very limited funding. I think it was like '88. And I realized what was going on. I just flew, I think, just part of Terrebonne, and I said my God. They're eating the place up. — Greg Linscomb

ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE CAUSED BY CANALS ALSO ENGENDERS EXPLOSIVE <u>TEMPORARY</u> GROWTH OF SEAFOOD INDUSTRY: Well – again if, there's so many different ways of it. Number one they blamed everything on when they rerouted the Mississippi river. Which I think it had a lot to do with it and everything else. But we had coastal erosion before that. But when they rerouted the Mississippi River and everything - closed bayou Lafourche and everything else like that…but then the oil field comes down here. They cut canals all kind of ways. There was no environmentalist telling them what to do, you know. If they felt like going to dry land and cutting a canal, they cut it right there. They didn't worry about nothing, you know. They just went over there and cut it. And the first thing you know I mean they just – it exploded to that, you know? And the one thing that I that I can say that they did by cutting the canals and everything else...it made a more place to raise seafood. We didn't have the amount of seafood – now it's starting to decrease – but in the 30s and 40s and all that even in the early 50s we didn't have the shrimp that we got today. People say that's (inaudible) they didn't have that much shrimp in those days. People had a hard time making a living with that. People thought making money selling shrimp – 1957 was the first year people can say in the state of Louisiana that they made money. After that it got better – as all these canals opened up changed your way of current and everything else. It made more estuaries everywhere – so it helped the shrimping and the fish the crabs it helped them tremendously. But now we're starting to see the backside of it. We're losing all our estuaries. Now all of these levees that they built - this is all good. Don't get me wrong. They're caught. They've gotta do something to protect the homeowners and everything – but these levees right now is good. They gotta do that. But all that's gonna backfire one day. I may not see it, my kids will see it. What's gonna happen – you gonna have salt water – you gonna have fresh water. No more brackish water left at all. Without brackish water – you would not have any kind of seafood. But you need that brackish water – that's where all our seafood are raised at. And that's coming. — Houston Foret

ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE WROUGHT BY INVASIVE SPECIES (NUTRIA) 2: And I think what happened as a result – when we got into realizing how much impact and nutria we were having, the press picked it up locally. And then it was associated press. And then all of these contacts that I had made years before popped up. And I learned well

hell, they had a file on that. Linscomb came in and talked about it, so they pulled it up, and boom, boom, boom. We started getting excellent coverage of the tie between coastal erosion and nutria damage. And it – and it helped support. And that's still – that still goes on. — Greg Linscomb

ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE WROUGHT BY INVASIVE SPECIES (NUTRIA) 3: In the forties, so what I'm telling you is all these changes with muskrat and nutria and coastal erosion – that all fit into the formula of what we have today – whatever you think we have. We took, on this property last year, '09 – not this trapping season that's ending up – we took almost sixty thousand nutria tails. The first year, I think the continental trappers took fifty seven thousand. So we still had a lot of nutria. — Greg Linscomb

COASTAL EROSION AND SUBSIDENCE, TERREBONNE PARISH: D: If your family lived in Bay St. Elaine, would they, they survived all the hurricanes? F: Yeah. Well those days it was a lot higher than what it is right now. Land done sank a lot. When I was a kid right here in Cocodrie – we're below sea level right now. We probably was about 4 feet higher there when we was right there and before all went down coming down and everything else, they started digging. Because my father - he was living over in Bay St. Elaine. And from Bay St. Elaine, in other words, and then through coastal erosion and everything else and then hurricanes like he said, and everything else. So they moved a little bit further up. Which further up was probably 2 miles. It's called Bay (inaudible – French) It was a totally enclosed then when it was my grandfather's oyster reef. And it got the name (inaudible – French) because (French word) is a stick. And he had 300 sticks scattered in that pond. It was a closed in bay and all he did was cut a little bayou across it so he could go with the skiff and fish oysters in that area right there. And that's how he got his name if you look on the map - (inaudible) that's how it's got his name. And from there - they moved from there, and then a few years after again the hurricanes moved them a little further up, which is uh, just, you know again probably another 2 miles, maybe not that much you know. And uh, then that and then from there they moved to Cocodrie. — Houston Foret

COASTAL EROSION, COCODRIE, LOWER TERREBONNE AND POPULATION'S NORTHWARD RETREAT: Just, when they leave from Bay St. Elaine and they come to Cocodrie. Like the people from Cocodrie was used to leave and go to, you know, Chauvin. It's amazing how things changed, you know, through all the years. When I was a kid right here in Cocodrie we had about 400 people living here. Only got uh, lets see what we got right now, my nephew and his wife, uh, one of my cousins, and there's another friend of mine, four, you got five – you got about six people in Cocodrie that get their mail and, that I still get my mail in Cocodrie – I shouldn't say that. I don't really live here no more. I live in Chauvin. I used to…(inaudible). My wife lives in Chauvin, my family lives in Chauvin, but I live in Cocodrie. But anyhow that's how the system was in that area right there. And through the years with the hurricanes - people started

moving further up. Just like water, people (FEMA kept moving them up?) Now if we had the regulations that we got today, if you wanna build, you gotta elevate your camp – if they'd have done that forty, fifty years ago, we'd still have a lot of people living in Cocodrie. The answer to that is, elevate you camp, hurricane comes, water goes underneath. In those days people had all small camps. And they're all almost on the ground, 2, 3 feet high. They put them when hurricane would come, well not exactly every time it would wash away. What they would do every one of them rooms, they would cut a hole in the floor 2 feet by 2 feet. When the hurricanes come, you just pull that floor out and the water comes in and the water goes back out. There was no insulation or nothing like in today's world. You know and that's how they survived through all of that. But people they moving going (inaudible). Some went to Houma and everything else. Now these people that are still alive wish they would've stayed in Cocodrie. Because they're in worse shape in Chauvin than they were in Cocodrie. But we would get a hurricane in Cododrie and you could come the day after the hurricane, you could come to Cocodrie - there's no more water. You got a mess – you got mud in your yard, but there's no water. When you get to Chauvin, Houma, stuff like that, it's all on the levee. Once the levee breaks over, you got a bath tub. It takes 3, 4 weeks before it dries up. So they're in worse shape being inside of there than they was outside of there. — Houston Foret

THRIVING AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY AT COCODRIE BEFORE EROSION AND SUBSIDENCE TOOK A TOLL: F: There was a mud road. And then that …mud road and then after that – well you could come I mean there was a again I don't you know I didn't - that was told to me and everything else..like the road would stop at Robinson canal. From Robinson canal coming down there was nothing but a dirt road. And everybody had cattle - all the people raising or farming or whatever they would do, but everybody's property they had a fence - a gate you get out the thing right there, open the gate, go back through, close the gate and come on down. — Houston Foret

AGRICULTURE

VESTIGES OF AGRICULTURAL PAST ENDURE ON CHENIERES: Marceaux Ridge. I still see the rows on Marceaux Ridge from, from when they had agriculture there. The Pines Ridge still has remnants of that farming and what the cattle were on – they had a cattle operation also. — David Richard

RELIANCE ON HORSE AND MULE POWER, 1960s 1: Exactly, even when I was picking cotton I remember some people bringing cotton by horse, you know by mule and wagon. — Hollis Chapman

RELIANCE ON HORSE AND MULE POWER, 1960s 2: H: There used to be a special place behind G. Ardoin's in Ville Platte for wagons and buggies, uh I remember that very well because I tied my saddle horse in that area when I rode into town on him as a kid. It's

very, I mean, still, not one or two buggies but a lot of buggies on Saturday. — Hollis Chapman

TIES BETWEEN FARMERS AND WORKING STOCK, HAND-PICKING COTTON AFTER WORLD WAR II: The guy I picked cotton for, I'll never forget that. We'd show up and we'd pick every morning and we got there and he was crying and I remember, he couldn't speak English and my mother told me what had happened, his mule died and I'm telling you, he was crushed, I mean he loved that mule, and it affected me that how somebody could be so close to a mule cause I mean we'd lose dogs and we'd lose cattle and nobody cried over it. That mule was a different situation that was his partner. — Hollis Chapman

POULTRY: C: Now where did he get his chickens? P: He'd get them from the Midwest, they had some big hatcheries down there. They'd mail them in you know, you'd get them at the post office. I remember picking up 40, 50, 60 boxes of chickens, all live and they needed some water pretty quick so you had to rush and put them in the brooder and get some water for them and they were very, you know they were hungry too. Well he had mainly chickens, we had guineas, a lot people liked guineas too. And then he had ducks and stuff like that but my father, you'd make a lot of money on chickens but it was a big demand thing, everybody in town even had a little brooder, and they'd build those little brooders. You might have seen a brooder and they'd put a light on them and a fresh chicken was what people could afford, you know that even you had a few cows and you butchered a calf and you ate it, but more the meat was more portable with chickens. And I had to babysit those damn chickens in those brooders. And when people wanted to buy them, they'd come in and you know they wanted 50 or 100 you know whatever you had to catch them and that was a big part of what we did and the social background, gathering of that store, it was much more than buying as y'all all know. I mean they always had a big pot of coffee and they'd sit down and talk and they'd visit. The only disadvantage I had and Hollis is bilingual, I wasn't really good at French and they spoke in French all the time so we missed a lot of the stories as children cause that was used as the Language to not communicate to the children you know. The story they didn't want us to know, but by far chickens dominated the feed and the brooders, the waterers, the feeders and then after that it was plants, people started.. — Hollis Chapman

ALLIGATORS

LOUISIANA ALLIGATORS THE MOST INTENSELY MANAGED WILDLIFE RESOURCE IN THE WORLD: So they [alligator] built up enough data to support a very regulated, tightly controlled – probably the most intensively managed wildlife resource in the world. Now if there’s any harvest of elephants for ivory, which is very controversial, or cats in Africa – something like that. They may have taken some of the techniques developed for alligator. But the alligator was so controlled when they cranked

back up in the seventies– and that's when I went to work, and I ended up starting over in Cameron and Vermilion with the first – the first seasons. Um, just very complex. And today, it's all computerized, and you know, essentially on the nest counts when they're flying the surveys. Now they're making a – they're bumping the button on the laptop and saying you counted a nests here. So their ability to see what's going on – and of course they extrapolate this out to the marsh types to parishes – to population numbers, and that's how they come up with the quota. So it evolved dramatically from '72 to what it is today. — Greg Linscomb

HARVESTING ALLIGATOR EGGS AND HIDES: the alligator farmer picks up eggs on this property. He's located up north of Lafayette around Washington. Um, and incubates, and so from a landowner standpoint, the eggs – selling the eggs is probably a bigger part of their income today than the skins. The skins, you harvest thirty to thirty four thousand coast-wide. And they average about seven feet – Continental probably harvests about two thousand in a typical year. And that's a quota given to us by Wildlife and Fisheries. Hard to know what went on prior to '62 or between '62 and '72. I would think not much because you had. — Greg Linscomb

ALLIGATOR FARMS: You know generally, that's the case for the size animal that the farms produce. In other words, if it is successful farmer, he will be successful because he is producing a good skin and so they are producing a nice quality skin. And it will, you can feel the skin, I mean and it will be nice and you can tell it came from a healthy animal for example. And in some cases. the wild skin will be just as good but in some cases the wild skin maybe came from an area where there was a lot of predation. Maybe it's been pecked on a few times by some birds or had its tail eaten off by another alligator or raccoon or a leg is missing. So logically in the wild things can go wrong so buy in large the farmer will produce a very superior skin for the market place. Now in some cases that doesn't happen and if they do that year after year, then they won't be in the business long. I won't tell you that every farmed skin is highly desired, that is a superior skin, no enterprise is going to be a 100% successful all the time. — Mark Staton

ALLIGATOR POACHING, 1960s: James Nunez that was an agent with the days of the alligator poachers when the season was close in the sixties on up until they reopened. He lived right here in Creole. And I spent a few nights out with James trying to understand what that was all about. Um, just dedicated to – I was so – he wanted to catch him as bad as the guy wanted to hunt. And it was – I don't want to say a game – it was a very serious game. But it was, well the poacher would get a little bit faster boat. I mean you could jump across a levee and get going this way, and then James would get a little bit faster boat. And it was a constant battle, and he got to where he knew everyone. He knew where they were likely to go. And as he told me one time after he retired, he said, there's nobody out there doing that anymore. He said, when I'm patrolling the refuge, patrolling now, I'm running into people selling drugs. He said, they can sell drugs. They're not

going to go out and sit in the mosquitoes like that old hunter that I used to catch and try to kill an alligator? They're not going to do that. Those guys are dead. He said, I'm almost dead and they *are* dead. They're gone. Those old guys are gone. Now that's not to say that they don't have people running up and down the bayou and shining a deer or something like that. But the real – the real serious guy, at least in his opinion is gone, and I think he was probably right. It's so controlled now – it's so different between Cameron and here. The – to get into the marsh, you almost have to go by somebody's property if you're coming in from the Grand Chenier ridge. So control there of the property was much easier. — Greg Linscomb

ALLIGATOR HUNTING IN THE 1970s: That changed from the way it was in the seventies. And when it – in the seventies, they might have stayed at the camp more during the season. They had a few barrels out there. They'd skin, salt them or put them in brine, and they'd put them in the barrels and at the end of the season, they brought everything in just like the trapping days, and they – and they sold them all at one time. Now they sell them daily on the hoof, so to speak. Another interesting thing about how just things come to mind – we have quite a few black trappers, and it has something to do – when I first started coming down here, there were families, and a lot of them were black. And they skinned nutria and then they sold the skins to a Richard Domingue or something. See you drive by one of these roads in the seventies, and then be a pile of nutria out in the front yard. They would be – I have pictures. I don't know where they are. That high – just a mountain of dead nutria. And the trappers would sell them on the hoof. That was called "on the hoof", and then these families would skin, scrape, process, maybe dry – or if they weren't dry they were sold green. Green means not put on a stretcher, and then sold to a guy like Richard Domingue or a dealer. And there were three or four places along – along this stretch of bayou black that I remember seeing nutria processors. So we um, this is some unique things about continental. The fact that I never saw any African American trappers anywhere in Louisiana north or south except right on this stretch of highway and on Continental. Now they might have been on some other land companies too, but I just knew Continental. There was a goup of them that lived on Avoca Island, which is up on the northwest corner. You get to it by ferry. And I don't know if those families are still there. Um, but there were some families there that trapped and kind of took care of that island. There was also rice farming on that island. — Greg Linscomb

ALLIGATOR MARKET CHANGING IN THE 2000s: The [alligator] market is changing. Um, we have farmers now that were selling in the last ten years, a three to three and a half foot skin all one strap. There's a demand for an unblemished six and seven. They never could raise that because if you kept them in much above four feet in these pens that they're in, they just, they damage each other. And your growth rate changes, so you're feeding a whole bunch more food to get that extra length. So now, what we've seen in the last few years from a wild standpoint, and it's a great concern to people interested in the

wild population, not a demand for – in the wild, you generally – you average seven feet. If you know what you're doing when you're fishing, you may catch some sixes – you wouldn't catch very many fives because it's always a few you're going to catch. And for a while, people used to think well you pick up your bait higher. That doesn't work at all. In fact, to catch the big one, you may want to put your bait lower, but you want a big hook and a big bait. If you've got a big enough hook and bait, that little guy can't swallow it so he's not going to get caught. So what we've seen in the last couple of years is reluctance on the part of the industry by wild skins, not much interest in fives and sixes. Farmers are now also attempting to raise animals in that larger category. — Greg Linscomb

ATTEMPT TO DEVELOP A LOW-END ALLIGATOR HIDE MARKET: We were trying to develop – in fact they're working on it again – a market for the low end. You know, um, a fur – you can – even though dealers would downgrade it, they had a cut. That's BS, because I watched them make coats. You can take – I mean when you have a drop mink coat or a mink pelt is this high, and you want it to go all the way down. Well you do something called dropping. And you take that skin and you open it up like this, and you cut strips out of that mink that are about that wide. And when you come back to start putting it together, you drop them, so you end up with something that was this wide, and this long. Now it's this wide and this long. It's the length from your shoulders out. So it's all cut up, and when you sew it back together with a machine – so any kind of little damage to the skin, yeah that's a damage. But is it a big deal? No. well the trapper doesn't know that. You know, the trapper didn't know that. And the buyer didn't know that, and the dealer wasn't sure, but it was downgraded. Now with alligator, it's a different ballgame because they're cutting slices, and those things coming out of the flanks and the belly, you know, you're a cut is a – or a blemish of any kind – is a big deal. Is it as big a deal as they make it? Who knows. That's a very difficult thing to talk about – grading, quality of skins, damage – very difficult. But um, it's still used – it's still used against you. And when you have a turndown in the market, that grading is tougher. But you're exactly right. The product never changes. It goes up. And I guess that's like a farmer will get less for some product because if you go to the store, you're never going to pay for any of that thing you bought off the shelf – that price goes – it does not go down. Well, milk might go down. — Greg Linscomb

IMPORTANCE OF ALLIGATOR HUNTING TO LOCAL COASTAL ECONOMIES: And in fact, we have sold it to conservation organizations that alligators bring money back to the local community, into the land company. When they pick up eggs, there's money that comes into Continental and we sell those eggs. There's a little that comes from the skins, but the people who harvest and the people who pick up and all of that benefits coastal restoration. It's money for us to do a little project on our property, but more importantly, it benefits the community because you've got the guy trapping, you've

got a guy helping him, you've got a guy he buys ice from, he's buying bait from somebody. Somebody's working on his outboard. There are some guys that are skinning for the guys that process. There's a tremendous number of people involved when you have an alligator season. There's more people involved in the wild harvest than will ever be involved…. — Greg Linscomb

MARK STATON'S INVOLVEMENT IN ALLIGATOR HIDE PROCESSING 1: The alligator industry, and sort of take the academic side of it and apply it to the industry and help the thing move forward. I mean I didn't do it strictly out of altruistic purposes or anything, but I mean, that's kind of where I saw myself going. Um, so what do I do? I worked for a chicken farm. Now why did I do that? Because the best most efficient farmers in the world are chicken farmers, and I thought I can learn something from these people. I can learn just basic animal management, animal husbandry, nutrition, and health, what do you do, just management and application of agricultural science to um, an animal husbandry setting. And I thought, I'm going to do that and work around this setting for a few years, and then when I'm going to figure out how to apply that to the alligator industry. And that's what I did. Um, I ran this little farm in Douglas, Texas outside of Natchitoches, and I was the manager. I mean, we did everything. It was an egg farm actually. And um, they had a feed mill, and – I just saw the whole thing there on a fairly small scale basically. 125 to 130 thousand hens, which is a lot of animals, but it's not a huge thing, so one guy and six, seven, eight workers. I can't remember. We could run it, and um, learned a whole lot, which later I felt I could fly to um, the alligator farming business. Somewhere in there I got my master's degree. Oh, it was before the chicken farm thing. Anyway, um, I actually um, had a – had a little job that didn't last very long working with a feed company and selling some of their ingredients, but I made an acquaintance there in San Antonio with a little feed mill, and I told him I wanted to develop alligator feeds. Of course, um, if you looked at the scientific literature at that time, basically they said it couldn't be done – that it was pretty much impossibility. And of course that kind of, you know, that looked like a challenge to me. Well I go to this feed mill and I tell then what I want to do and how I wanted to do it, and they said, of course you could do it. What's the problem? So my goal was then to sort of merge the information from two worlds and try to produce something. So we did, um, produce um, a couple batches of feed, which I paid for myself early on, and eventually I got Rockefeller to pay for it. And we've – we- I sent this feed down to Rockefeller, Ted Joanna was there, Larry was there at the time, and we did these little experiments, and they said my golly, these things are growing better than they ever have on any formulated feed – any feed mill type feed. But basically Rockefeller said, look. Go find yourself a school, go get yourself a PHD, and do some animal nutrition research – real alligator nutrition research. Um, and so that was – that fit well at the time. That fit really well. And I didn't want to go to a biology department because the kind of nutrition they do there is not applied. I wanted to go to an agriculture place. So this is where my background with

the chickens helped out. And I wanted to go to an animal nutrition program somewhere. I went to Georgia in 1984 and it took about three and a half years to do the Ph.D. — Mark Staton

MARK STATON'S INVOLVEMENT IN ALLIGATOR HIDE PROCESSING 2: The beautiful thing is, we had um, the um, I guess I don't know if it's beautiful, but from our standpoint it was good. We had to feed these animals. Every day so many chickens die on the – on the chicken farm. And um, what do you do with them? You know, we had breeder farms. And so all these dead chickens got –the crocodile farm had our own little special feeding area that the chicken farm didn't want anything to do with us because we were pretty dirty from their standpoint, but they'd bring all the dead stuff over to us, and I would have, at the feed mill I'd have manufactured a supplement, if you will. And we could mix in with the dead animals and produce sort of what – kind of like ground meat when it came out. It was supplemented. Um, also, we had the poultry processing plant. And actually this is where the bulk of the feed – the raw feed came. We had the poultry processing plant, um, which meant the heads were cut off, the feet were cut off, the guts were extracted – what did they do with all that? In the old days, they'd throw it away. Well we took that and we put it in the crocodile feed. We supplemented all that. We had the nutritional profile of feet. We had the nutritional profile of guts. We had the nutritional profile of heads. And I was able to supplement that – manufacture feed. The crocodile farm did real well, and we did that. Louisiana and Papua New Guinea both ran extremely different but both very successful management programs with regards to their crocodilians, and I was very fortunate to be a part of that. Anyway, we – so we get in these small crocodiles, they were fairly young, and um, but they would get in and they'd you know, exposed to diseases out in the wild, and they'd get out into captivity, which is a stressful situation for them, and some of them would get sick. So we formulated special – we had a vet on staff as well. He was for the croc farm and um, a chicken farm. And so he and I would get together and we'd put antibiotics in there, and we were able to feed – we didn't' have to worry about having license for this or that. I mean he could buy the stuff straight out of Australia, and it was going primarily for the – for the croc - chicken farm, but we could get out hands on it and we could supplement the crocodiles and get them healthy, and that was very successful. I still buy from them. As a matter of fact, I'm very lucky that I worked there, or else they wouldn't sell to me. Their clients are – they could probably – they probably have maybe eight clients and they're people like Louis Vuitton, you know, all the top in the world, and their skins are already earmarked to go to all the major fashion houses. It's because I know them and worked there um, that they even mess around with me. — Mark Staton

MARK STATON'S INVOLVEMENT IN ALLIGATOR HIDE PROCESSING 3: I started the business with the crocodile, and I am happy to carry it as often as I can as long as there's a market for it. But I use that to create a market then from my perspective, for

alligator, so then I was able to just start buying alligator skins – either from farmers or the trappers – and you know, I did all this small basis at first – I got them tanned – sold those. It just turned over and that sort of thing. But yeah. And today, probably 95% of what I do is alligator - 90% maybe. Because I also bring in some Nile crocodile from Africa too for different markets. Actually some of the boot makers like it as well. But that's right. I started with the crocodile because that's what – that's what allowed me to feed my family and get my foot in the door, and um, but I use – and I had built upon. — Mark Staton

DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL ALLIGATOR FEED 1: The research that needed to be done was to understand the – the types of energy and protein that the alligator can use. Um, one of the reasons it had been stated in the nutritional history of the alligator – nutritional literature of the alligator was that it was basically stated that they could not digest carbohydrate – literally, now let alone utilize it. So that pretty much meant that you had to build a diet completely out of protein. And also strictly from a manufacturing standpoint, it was important to get some carbohydrate in the diet because um, the goal was to come up with a pellet, and I – they can't eat a mash – just a meal, and alligators need something to bite into. So we wanted to come up with a pellet. Ideally, one that would float, but certainly we needed a pellet that maybe produced about the end of your thumb or something like that. So to answer your question, what we did – we did put corn and things like that in it, but we also had to rely in the higher protein animal-based feed ingredients like meat and bone mill, and meat mill – that sort of thing. And what we were able to do was to design some experiments where we varied the amount of the various ingredients and look for the ideal um, production, and we used growth rate primarily, as the um, criteria for production in this case – what we were looking for growth in length and growth in weight. Of course, the overall health of the animal. Um, the little things like the vitamins and the minerals – basically we over formulate it. but the thing we had to address was the macronutrients – the protein and the energy – namely the starches. Also the fats – the fats became very important. So we varied fat, protein, carbohydrate, and came up with a diet, and by golly, they actually used carbohydrate – and not in great amounts. We had an alligator industry out there ready to grow, but really with not a very good food supply. Nutria, as you might know, in the early 80s was a good um, a good crop. There was a good crop of it. The animal rights people took hold and killed that market. And all of a sudden, there was no nutria around. And so the alligator people were – they buying trash fish off of trawlers – off the coast, you know, off the coast. They were – they'd go to the glue factories, or I guess all these dead horses, where they would go – just any kind of meat that they could get, they would buy. In some cases, they'd buy a truck of fish from Florida and truck it on – you know, and 18-wheeler and truck it all the way over here. But on our lease it's mostly water, and then you have the transportation charges on top of that. See that's where it became important to have a good source – um, diet that you could call up the feed mill and say hey, send me a ton of alligator feed, and that's what we were trying to get to, but it started with some really

shaky premises about what the alligators could and couldn't use nutritionally. And um, so we had a lot of work to do – it was fun. We learned a lot, we worked out in my barn. Eventually the poultry farm got me out a little room – probably a little bigger than this one easily, but I had two – you know, I had experiments going out of my house, I had experiments going – now, you're living in North Georgia, right? You don't tell your neighbors you got alligators… — Mark Staton

DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL ALLIGATOR FEED 2: It's funny because even though Purina had shown an interest in the industry – and actually interviewed me. They never really got into it till much later. And the um, sorry, I didn't mean to abort, um, omit this. The um, the only company that showed any real interest in this was a little company over in um, eastern Louisiana. Burris Feed Mill [according to Google the mill is in Franklinton]. I'm trying to think of the little town – Franklin. Franklin. And um, Burris showed an interest in it, so they did manufacture a diet, and that went right onto the farms, and it was a big success. And um, but to tell you that they said, okay, this is Mark Staton's diet, no. They didn't do that. I didn't want them to do that because I didn't' want to take responsibility for what they were doing. You know, you bridge the gap between what – what you think is necessary for the animal, and what gets done on a very practical basis at the feed mill. That there's a certain amount of disconnect there, and no. I didn't want to be responsible. Glad to give them all the information I can. If they came ask me today, what do you think about this, I'd tell them. But in reality, these feed mills they have to make a profit, and they couldn't always provide the ideal diet. As a matter of fact I know they didn't. But here's what happened. We found that the animals – we came up with diets that the animals could live on and grow very successfully, but the best diet still remained not nutria and not the manufactured diet, but a combination of them. So by taking this manufactured diet and mixing it in with nutria or chicken or horse or fish or whatever they'd get their hands on, there was something about fresh feed – fresh meat that really turned the alligators on, and once they started eating, they were getting good nutrition from the pellet, but the pellet probably lacked a little bit in terms of the delicious factor and really, you know, really make them hungry. Um, alligators are carnivores, and that's – that's for their system. — Mark Staton

INTERNATIONAL ALLIGATOR HIDE MARKET: Europe and the Far East are the primary markets. US is an extremely small market. Um, Europe and um, we were selling primarily to France – a little into Italy, and a little to Japan. At that time, China was not the economic force it is now, but we sold a lot of skins into Japan that I think probably eventually were shipped off to the elite in China. Um, and nowadays, I think many skins we ship directly into China. — Mark Staton

SCARCITY OF TANNERIES CAPABLE OF COMMERCIALLY TANNING ALLIGATOR HIDE 1: There are a handful of really good tanneries in the world that can tan alligator. Now a lot of tanners can tan, but I mean turning it into the premium

material that it's really capable of being, and from my standpoint, it's a crime not to turn it into the best product it can be. I hate seeing alligators or crocodiles killed and shipped to little tanneries that do a bad job on it. It's just atrocious to me. Um, so they're – at that time, there were probably ten or twelve really, really good crocodilian or alligator and crocodile um, tanneries, and we dealt with the best – people like Louis Vuitton would request skins from our farm. They would tell their tannery, you buy from that farm. That's where the best skins come from. And there were two species that we farmed at that time – saltwater crocodile and the freshwater crocodile. The freshwater crocodile is a – sort of an average run of the mill crocodilian – not the best, not the worst, usable skin – not very expensive. The saltwater crocodile is the crème de la crème. Um, I bought some last year for the raw skins I paid about four times what I have to pay for alligator – just to put it in perspective. — Mark Staton

SCARCITY OF TANNERIES CAPABLE OF COMMERCIALLY TANNING ALLIGATOR HIDE 2: Well what they do is they air freight the skins anywhere in the world. I've had them air freighted to France, to Paris. I've had them air freighted to Singapore. I've had them air freighted here in Georgia. Well here into New Orleans sometimes, or directly to Georgia – there's another tannery they use. Actually I've had them tanned right here at RTL here in Lafayette. So they – they have to air freight them, and it is a um you know, a product that can go bad. It's a perishable. So we have to be careful about that. So it has to be done expeditiously. We always put on the air way bill – Please put in the cool room. Store in a cool room. Don't store it anywhere. Rarely do they do it. — Mark Staton

SCARCITY OF TANNERIES CAPABLE OF COMMERCIALLY TANNING ALLIGATOR HIDE 3: Back in the early 90s there were no tanneries in Louisiana and then eventually the one here in Lafayette got established. RTL as it is called today and was called the same then, though the initials were a little different. It was established again through the help of some state aid and today it is totally owned by .... the French factory, excuse me the French Fashion Leader if you want to call it. So that all the shipping was done out of state back then and today much of it does go through this one tannery here in town but still most are shipped overseas and even the ones that they process typically go overseas. They don't sell a lot of their production here in the United States. — Mark Staton

PRODUCTION CYCLE: Yes. In the fall we start the fall. — Mark Staton

SOURCE OF HIDES: Yeah. We use the farm skins – we can get the wild skins, and um, the farm skins are primarily sold, um, as small skins. Primarily for the watch strap market. that is the biggest single market for alligators, believe it or not. — Mark Staton

HIDE CURING PROCESS 1: The salt actually kills most microbes - most germs, you know, bacteria, except for those that like super hyaline conditions, you know. But it'll kill most bacteria, and the act of sucking the water out of the skin is the first act of preserving it. Um, so under those conditions, if they're kept cool, they can last a good long time. So what we – at the crocodile farm in New Guinea, and they have similar operations here – similar procedures. We would – we would kill the animal, skin it, overnight into a supersaturated salt water bath. You know, we have the pump going so that salt was just penetrating into the skin. Then it would go to tables with salt. You'd put a layer of salt down, put a layer of skin – put a skin. Put a layer of salt, skin. And just back – and that salt sucks the water out. Now these tables are concave, and you could just see the water dripping off of it because they were – salt was literally just – you know, if you put salt out there right now, it'll get wet because it's just sucking the water out of it -out of the air. So after about four or five days, you throw that salt away and put more salt on. That's what – the second salting. And we also actually put antibacterials in the salt. So you do all that, you keep in a nice refrigerated – we keep them at about 40 degrees C. Excuse me – Fahrenheit, not C. and um, they were good to go. They could've probably lasted six months under those conditions, but we obviously don't like to do that. You pack them up – you shake some of the salt off because you don't want to be air freighted all over the world salt – a little expensive. You roll them up and put them in crates – we used to use coffee bags – they had a coffee company, um, we would air freight them wherever they needed them. As soon as they got to that tannery, believe me. They – they worked them because they were expensive, um, and therefore they'd get them in an air-cool room and work them as soon as they could. — Mark Staton

HIDE CURING PROCESS 2: They might re-salt them there. So that's – that's the way it – the skins are handled. Um, now, I do. I mean, I um, when I send them to tanneries – I was on the phone yesterday with this lot I recently bought, they're in Georgia right now. We were talking about the thickness of the skin down to the nearest tenth of a millimeter - because my customers are very demanding. They want a - they want a product that will allow them to make a product that will suit their customers. Don/Carl: Now these you can keep indefinitely? Mark as long as they are refrigerated? Mark: Indefinitely is not a good word, but if you keep them cool and keep them well salted, they will last a long time. But indefinitely, I would not use that word, no. See they are fairly dry right now, but see I have them nice and salted. If I roll this thing up, you would see the entire alligator skin and it looks just like that. It's really so dry that I'm not going to do it. — Mark Staton

MANUFACTURING 1: Now it's not that the rest of, the rest will be used, nothing goes unused or you've lost money. Really the manufacturer in our case, whoever is using the skin has, either has to use all the skin or has to make a whole lot of money off part of the skin or they are not going to do well. We pride ourselves in making full use on all the skin. We actually, again maybe because I'm from South Louisiana and I'm really an alligator guy

and biologist by training and in my heart but I feel like if you're going to take this animal, you have an obligation to send it to the best tanneries and to make full utilization of it. It's just my own personal philosophy. — Mark Staton

MANUFACTURING 2: One thing that we've done a lot of is ladies purses and what we are able to do is talk to a lady and she might bring in a purse and we are able to say this is what we can do in alligator, this is what might look good in alligator, then she can actually pick her skin and pick her color and that works really good for us. So because the ladies market has opened up for us then we're, and not just for us here locally, but to our customers nationwide, we're able to do more with all this variety of colors. — Mark Staton

MANUFACTURING 3: For me the optimal size is a fairly large skin. I like 7.5 - 8 foot skins. But if you are in the watch strap business, you wouldn't want that size. You actually want 3.5 - 4 foot skins because they want small scales. The size of the skin of course determines the size of the scales that are on the animal and the size of the scale pattern will be visible in the product and so if you are making a small product you are going to want to use a small skin. If you are making a larger product, then it depends on what you want it to look like. If, and this is progressively so, from a watch strap to a wallet to a purse to a set of luggage, you know you want a different size for those products. Now some and again you always have to think about what your customer wants. And your customer may want small grain even though it's on a set of luggage, in which case you have to use a lot of small skins. But truthfully there is an ideal size but it's based on who the end user will be. Now there is another factor involved and that is smaller skins costs less but in fact to a manufacturer they cost more. And what I mean by that will pay less for the skin but they get less useable leather out of it and so on a per dollar basis you actually get more useable skin out of a larger skin than a smaller skin. And of course that is a factor. So there is just a variety of factors you have to consider. — Mark Staton

MANUFACTURING 4: I used to have a lot of skins show up. You know, people who hunted their own alligator through um, selling the skin, they put the meat in the refrigerator. Um, they were happy to come sell to me. But even in the short period of time that I've been doing this – about fifteen years, we've moved into this building in '95. In this short period of time, there has been a move away from the – that kind of trapper. And now, we see a lot of sports trappers, a lot of guys who you know, they get a – they get a license I think for three years. You know, they – and then they go off – it's by lottery, and many of them never see an alligator in their life, let alone skin one or anything. Um, and even – even the – the big land companies and their efforts um, to collect their alligators – they have also gotten away from having our own skinners, and they just sell the whole animal to the avatoirs – to the processors, to the Wayne Sagrera's for example. To the American Tanning and Leathers. There's a number of them around that – that staked - early September, that's what they do. They buy a lot of alligators, and they skin them. So I still

get a few that come in here, or in addition to that – I'll just give some people money and say buy you some skins. You know, I'll pay you to skin them. So I get them both ways. — Mark Staton

MANUFACTURING 5: Now when we get wild alligators, we're gonna get animals that maybe two and a half, three feet long , or they might be thirteen, fourteen feet long. Like I said, you don't get a uniform batch. And they're gonna average around seven to seven and a half feet. If you buy them from a farm, they're almost all gonna be the exact same length and the exact same width, which has its appeal, especially if you're a large manufacturer. In my case it's nice if you can buy a certain size of skin that I know this boot maker there's gonna want a pair, and that boot maker over there is gonna want two pairs, and that wallet maker over there might use a couple, you know. Then I can use them like that or I can put them into my own products. Um, that's fine. But I do buy a lot of um, wild skins because on a cost basis, um, not the fact that they're wild, but the fact that they're big makes them a quote unquote better buy. You get a better cutting yield from a bigger skin. — Mark Staton

MANUFACTURING 6: Now if they come in and they're all grade fours and fives, I know they sold the ones twos and threes to someone else, and I just won't buy them. They've just been cherry picked, or you pay them a very low price. But for the most part as a small buyer, I actually try to pay more above market price to get them to bring me these skins. Um, and I don't you know, if I pay a couple bucks um, a foot above everybody else, I'm happy with that. They bring me the skins, and I have to mess with getting the skin. I get to know these people over time. I don't have a huge number of suppliers like that, but I have some that very faithfully bring me skins every year. So that works well for me. But it's – it's not everything I need, so I do work with some of the processors to buy additional skins. — Mark Staton

MANUFACTURING 7: But by processing I was saying what I meant was there are place in the state that are processing facilities for alligators where they skin the animal, take the skin off, treat it just right and alligator skin really needs to be treated right just from the moment it comes off the animal til the time it gets to in this process by the tannery in order to make the finest skin at the end and therefore the best end product whatever that may be. So there are people that salt, tan, excuse me, take, skin the animal, salt it, treat it right, this involves ... solution and then big walk in freezers or coolers at the right temperature, usually a re-salting of the skin. They take care of the skin, that's very important. And so I pay them for that service in order to get the skins that I can't buy here on site. — Mark Staton

MANUFACTURING 8: Now once I have either bought the skin, here on site or bought it off site, then I send them to a tannery and that is all regulated by Wildlife and Fisheries and of course the skin has to have this Cites tag put on it. I don't know if we talked about

Cites before but we can look at some tags. Cites just briefly means Conference on International Trade in Endangered Species, that's the acronym, is that right? And Cites maintains a staff. I think they are mostly centered in Switzerland for whatever reason but every skin that is traded worldwide has a Cites tag on it and it is a unique number to that particular skin. For example, the same number might be used in various places but then the tag will also mention Louisiana and the species name and so every skin has a unique tag on it. That tag is put on the animal at the time it is killed. You may have seen on Swamp People. You know they kill the animal and before they haul it out the marsh, one of the first things they are going to do is put that tag on it because if they don't have that tag on it, they can be fined significantly. And then that tag stays on it throughout the skinning process, all the salting, all the tanning, until it arrives to me in my case or to wherever it is gone and stays on that tag, on that skin until the manufacturing process begins. So in our case, once we start to make a belt strip or start to make something, then we can cut that tag off and but we maintain records of it as well. So this is the way the industry is regulated and Wildlife and Fisheries at the inspection of the skins leaving and going to the tanneries will make a list. Actually we make the list and they check it, make sure that everything is as we say it is, that those skins are being shipped to this tannery or that tannery. If it is shipped internationally, then U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service gets involved and does what they call a Cites inspection and issues a Cites permit. So it's all very regulated and I'll show you some of the tags when we walk through the skin room. — Mark Staton

MANUFACTURING 9: Well, yes I determine the colors but what happens is, and again I'll show you some examples. The tanning process is many involved and complicated and interrelated stages but eventually they reach the point that the skin reaches the point that we call crust. In other words, a crust piece of skin is one that has been tanned, it's turned into leather but it is basically white or cream colored. It is ready for dying and finishing. And so at that point I, in most cases, go to the tannery myself and say to them, "Okay, this one I want to be black, that one I want to be red, and that one I want to be green or purple or whatever," because I like to look at the skins and at that point start to envision either who I am going to sell it to or what can be made out of it and then of course I think about what colors would pertinent for those uses, how many of those colors we have in stock, really I'm not on top of the fashion colors. We do pay attention to what's selling, for example, this year coral is interesting, the color coral. So we pay attention to things like that. We also listen to what the tannery says and they may be developing a new color. So I would then decide, "Yeah, I'm going to take that skin and put into whatever color." They then proceed to dye the skin, finish it and there is a variety of finishes but the two most predominate ones in the industry are the classic glaze shinny finish or what we call a mat finish, its a duller, softer finish. And then they eventually arrive back and go on my shelves. — Mark Staton

MANUFACTURING 10: I probably, all total between wild skins, farm skins, crocodile skins, I probably do about a thousand probably. Some years I've done over a thousand, 1200-1500, but and that's, it's always in a state of flux. It depends on the market, you know and in some years we may buy more than we need if the price is right and in some cases when the price is really high I may shy away and use some of those skins or I may shy away knowing the end users are not going to bare that price, just are not going to pay that price. So it is in a state of flux depending on market conditions and my inventory and that sort of thing. But a thousand skins is something that we manage to sell and pays the bills and part of, and truthfully and I know this is the kind of thing y'all want to talk about but it is truthfully it is part of the utilization of a natural resource right, because what we're doing is using a natural resource in a way that is highly controlled, regulated by the state in a very rational way and we're bringing it to the market place and in such a way that we satisfy demand and the industry is regulated and in fact is the regulatory apparatus if you want to call it that way is in a sense supported by the commercial activity. — Mark Staton

MANUFACTURING 11: Mark: Okay, so we've actually just had a box of skins being shipped to us from the tannery, delivered to us by FedEx. Let's see what's in there. I think (lots of moving around, digging in the box) Well let's see what color this is. Don/Carl: So they all arrive in rolls like this with . . . Mark: Yes, so this is one way the tannery insures that the skin is not damaged in shipment. They are rolled up like this, they actually have in this case, a label showing the tag number, Cites tag still on there. It shows the finished width of the skin, and has a good bit of information, the color. This is a color called ...but this is the matte finish. So this one just came in. This might be typical because it's not beautiful, you know there are going to be problems with a wild skin that has been in a fight somewhere. See there are some marks there, there are some old scars right there, same thing there. To be honest with you, this little guy didn't win many fights. (laughter) He just had a rough life it looks like. Now this skin I am positive that it does not belong to me. This is one that a hunter would have brought to me. I say that because I would have never put this skin in this color. Generally the more damage there is on a skin, the darker you want to go with the color because it will tend to hide some things and it might lead to a little better utilization of the skin. But hey, the skin belongs to the customer and they wanted it that color, and that's what we did. Let's see what else is in here. Here is a big brown one. This is the chocolate brown matte, that's gorgeous. That's a wild skin obviously, again he's big, I don't know how good you can see this. But this is the matte finish but even though it's the matte finish, it has a good shine on it, a good polish to it. You can feel it if you want, the leather is nice and soft and it's easy to, it's easier to manufacture with the matte finish than it is the shiny, glaze finish. This is one reason I was saying there is a, one of the reasons there is a trend toward the matte finish. It's not because the customers like it, but also the people who work with it prefer to work with it.

There are just certain things you can do with it that is very difficult to do with the glaze finished skins. — Mark Staton

MANUFACTURING 12: /Carl: Well I'm hearing something that also has to go into your planning. If you get skins in September, and they go to the tannery in October, it could be March before you see them. Don/Carl: So having an inventory of skins helps you maintain production schedule year round, is that correct? Mark: Really, that's correct. Really means I have to maintain two inventories of skin, the big selling season for alligator is the fall, okay. But the buying season is also September. So, and we can't buy in September and have them back for Christmas, you know in that fall period, so if I buy what I bought in September of last year, what I was actually buying for was for all of this year, and what I sold last year's fall selling opportunity I actually bought the year before. So there is, I mean the cash flow requirements and the investment can be significant, you know for a little guy like me anyway. — Mark Staton

MANUFACTURING 13: Don/Carl: So it sounds to me like you have a very good working relationship with your clients. Mark: You have to, you have to. They have to, you have to understand the situation they are in and they have to understand the situation you are in and you try and work together in such a way that you both make a living off of it. — Mark Staton

VOLATILITY OF INTERNATIONAL ALLIGATOR HIDE MARKET: And the tanners were all saying oh this Gulf War, and you know, it just killed the market, and the fact that they were doing was buying up as many skins as they could as cheap as they could. Um, well, we – we had um, as I told you earlier, we were producing a lot of skins – had 38,000 animals, uh, and we were producing um, a lot of skins, and there were um, somebody's gonna get that. We had skins to sell. We had skins to sell when I left. And there was no buyers. I got back here, started talking – everything was in the doldrums. I did some consultancies, I did some feed work with some people, and I had some clients in Columbia, Africa, you know, they'd contact me, and I was able to generate a few bucks during that sort of thing. But um, you know I kind of thought well the real money in this business is in the skins, and that's kind of – at least some of the money's going to be dedicated, and so I – got back here, and I contacted the farm, and I knew they had several thousand skins sitting there that needed to be sold, and as I told you earlier, they are perishable. And I told them look, you know, send me three or four hundred. I'll get them tanned. I'll sell them. And when I get them tanned, I'll pay you. You know, they had nothing better to do with them, so I said send them to me. D: Air freighted… S: Yeah. Oh yeah, we air freighted them over here. I had them freighted to American Tanning and Leather in Griffin, Georgia who you may want to get to know – Chris Plott – owner of that. I talked to Chris and say Chris I don't have any money, but I have some super skins. So I traded a fourth of the skins to him to get them tanned. And so I had whatever I had leftover, two, three hundred skins. Went out – started knocking on doors.

One of the very first people that contacted was Max Lane, and um, made several trips through Texas, and had a good price on them, sold some, got them all sold. I called him back – here's your money, send me more. And we just kept that going for a while. Well the thing about – there were a lot of alligator skins on the market, but these were saltwater crocodile. And I would sell them at a really good price. Now I wasn't selling the quote, unquote "grade ones". I was selling the twos and threes, but they were still beautiful, beautiful pieces of leather, beautiful skins. And some people would see them and they'd say yeah, what's the price? Great, yeah. I'll buy them. So I started – I had something that nobody else had. And so all of a sudden, I was able to sell some. I was able to you know, generate a little business. — Mark Staton

DOMESTIC MARKET 1: Texas is the leather capital in this, in this country, and it's even more so back then. Leather would just go into that place and it was like would evaporate – it would just get used up so fast. So once I developed him as a customer, he could really use the stuff. I moved a lot of it to him, but in the meantime, I started building up the Max Lane's and the James Reed's, and the small boot makers. Generated – I created um, a market with these skins, and created – and found a customer base. Um, created a customer base. A lot of small business - a lot of moms and pops sort of. Because they are my bread and butter today. There are a few big customers out there who I do cater to. And we're glad to sell to them, but you know, the moms and pops as I call them – little boot makers here, belt makers, wallet makers, they're the ones who appreciate your service. Um, who actually pay a higher price and pay it on time and are happy to get it, and they want a good product, because by and large, they're dealing with a clientele that they want to take care of. The bigger companies – the big companies the big dog companies – they're just producing a product and selling it off to some wholesaler sell who's in for the retailer – some unknown consumer. But these moms and pops – they know their customers – they're friends with them. — Mark Staton

DOMESTIC MARKET 2: Well there is a difference between the cities that we market to and the cities that end up using our products. For example we have a very large customer in Atlanta who sells almost all their products in New York City and so New York City is probably the ultimate user. And then if any, you know, Houston, San Francisco, Chicago, or any of the big cities would be end users. In many cases we really don't know who the end user is because we are selling to manufacturers who sell to them. But I can tell you just based on experience, any big city, any big name retailer, you will have seen products that we, that ran through here, that we cut up, or we just sold them the skin or in some cases made the belt strips. Yeah there are a lot of them right there. — Mark Staton

STATE REGULATION OF THE ALLIGATOR POPULATION: We have the $4 it's actually $4.25 tag fee on each tag and that helps to support the various activates that go into regulation, the inspectors that go out, the wildlife agents that might be taking some of the farm releases back into the marsh. We haven't talked about that but I think you

may know, but some people don't and that is that farms are, they get there animals from wild nests in most cases. So what Wildlife and Fisheries authorizes and permits the collection and harvest of eggs from lands throughout the state, again that is done in a very regulated way. They actually know just from marsh types and from years and years of data and transinsect life, they have a good idea of what the nesting population is and how many can be harvested. And so the farmers are allowed or somebody, the landowner maybe will go out and collect and sell to a farmer. Somebody collects those eggs, then they bring them into captivity and they hatch them in captivity and they will have a much higher success rate in captivity than would be the case in the wild because there is no predation, the raccoons and things aren't there eating them. Also when they hatch in the wild, frequently within a month or two, all the babies would be eaten up perhaps. So in captivity then they get a good hatch rate and there able to grow them in captivity and with good nutrients and you know good feeding and good growing conditions and then at some point what happens is the state says okay well you got to pick up say 100 eggs, but we want a percentage of them returned to the wild to the marsh they came out of and that way it supplements the natural population, it takes the place of natural recruitment into the wild population. And it's something that's been documented and has been fairly successful, the alligator population of the state continues to grow. — Mark Staton

AMERICANIZATION

INSULARITY OF COASTAL COMMUNITIES: I didn't see my first hamburger till I was a sophomore in high school, 1960, '61 probably. — Chris Cenac

INTRODUCTION OF MODERN TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGIES, EARLY 20TH CENTURY / FAIRBANKS MOTORS 1: A gas boat, yeah. Most of the people they had was you know some was called (inaudible) The other was called Fairbank engines. And these Fairbank engines had a big old flywheel. In fact, two double flywheels. That's what gives it is power you know and, just turn that thing in and the flywheel would - the weight of the flywheel just keep throwing it on there so I could get a… — Houston Foret

INTRODUCTION OF MODERN TRANSPORTATION TECHNOLOGIES, EARLY 20TH CENTURY / FAIRBANKS MOTORS 2: Yeah, those were some engines in those days. They left from there, then they went to, I mean, they went to the little bigger. They would come in with the Ford engines, the Model T Ford and everything, and then the 4 cylinder and everything else. And then from there they gradually grew up and they come back with a Fairbank engine which was a little bit more horsepower – these Fairbanks with the big flywheel – they were only three or four horsepower. Then they went up to like 20 horsepower, 30 horsepower, 40 horsepower - that was a big deal in those days. But you talk about, you know, how people use to work in that day, they'd say uh, when I was a kid – I remember that well – there was a guy he had a shrimp boat and he had a little model T, uh, truck – a little truck. He had a boat, and a truck with one engine. B:

He'd move it… F: Yeah well he's go shrimping he'd take the engine out of his truck, put it in his boat, and he'd go shrimp. When he'd come back…— Houston Foret

INTRODUCTION OF MODERN TECHNOLOGICAL AMENITIES, SOUTHWESTERN PRAIRIES: D: Well that leads me to another question. I know in some places, like Pointe Noire, around, between Richard and Church Point, they didn't get electricity, rural electrification didn't reach them until 1950 or 1951. Uh, do you remember electricity or maybe... L: Like uh... D: You lived in town so ya'll probably already had electricity. L: No, not really. Uh, I grew up, you know, we didn't have electricity, okay. Um, we used, I'd study by, when I was young, okay, in elementary school, I used kerosene lamps to study by, okay. That's what we did, okay. So we didn't have refrigeration, you know so I had ...a ice box, not, not a refrigerator, ice boxes. D: So, someone would deliver the ice? L: No I'd go pick it up. I'd go get it and walk it, okay. D: Where would you go get the ice? L: They had a guy, the guy that had the meat market, okay, there in town. Also had the ice house, right adjacent to the, to his meat market. — Levin LeJeune

AMERICANIZATION AFTER WORLD WAR II: And after World War II, Hill-Burton funds became available, like the GI Bill, so that every community could have a community hospital to be on the – to build hospitals in the community, you had to have a certified surgeon, pathologist, anesthesiologist, and interns. So my father, because he was on the staff in general surgery at LSU, and he was head of colon-rectal surgery, and they wanted him to stay and be head of the chairman, head and chairman of the Department of Surgery, and he wanted to come home. So he had that relationship with the university, so the Ellenders had the Ellender Clinic here. But they – they were not really surgeons, if you will – board-certified at all. Sort of on the job trained, Dr. Willard had some surgical training. A little family clinic – the first hospital in Houma Dr. (inaudible) Parker had in 1928, '24 to '28. He left, and then around '28, '29, they had the Ellender Clinic. Excuse me – around '38, '39, the Ellender Clinic. But it was a little private clinic. So my father, with the help of board-certified physicians and the LSU staff, opened Terrebonne General Hospital, St. Joseph in Thibodaux, St. Anne in Raceland, Lady of the Sea in Galiano, and Lakewood in Morgan City. And every Saturday, he had to get in his car and go to different hospitals and sign all the charts because there were doctors practicing in those communities who were on the staff, but all the paperwork had to be signed by board-certified people. — Chris Cenac

SCHOOLS AS A VEHICLE FOR AMERICANIZATION: L: I grew up, you know, in...My grandmother lived with us, okay, for I remember that as a young child. But, you know, she died and I was only 2 or 3 years old, okay. And the only thing she spoke was French, okay. So as a result, when I went to school, I knew how to speak, I did not know how to speak English. Okay, when I was in, back then they had, um, a first grade or um kindergarten so the nuns taught me how to speak English, okay. I mean, they seen what happened. — Levin LeJeune

ECONOMIC FORCES DRIVING FRENCH-SPEAKERS TO MIGRATE, ASSIMILATE: L: The economic opportunities were slim or non-existent, basically, okay. So that's probably why I left, okay. Because I left, I graduated in, you know, in '57, okay, in like May of '57. Okay, so I left, you know, shortly thereafter, okay. And, uh, because I had, I moved to Lake Charles to stay with an aunt and uncle, okay. I didn't have transportation, you know, until I got gainfully employed and got some money to get transportation, whatever. Then be out on my own, okay. And so that's why, basically, I left. — Levin LeJeune

COMING OF THE TELEPHONE, ST. BERNARD PARISH: B: I remember walking to uh, well that was the only place that had a phone and we used to hand crank to call and it was a party phone and boy I remember when my daddy, when our house, I have a picture of our house was right here. I remember when he got a phone, you know we got a phone and everybody used to come to our house, in that back room, come make that call you know. E: Oh when that phone came out down here. Aw, man every crank . . . everybody talking at once. You got a phone? I got one too! Boy. B: Its amazing though, you know you take some things for granted. — Edward Robin

AMERICANIZATION THROUGH INFLUENCE OF POPULAR, ELECTRONIC MEDIA: I can only speak for myself but what we listen to in my house was on the Sunday mornings, I think it was maybe Saturdays was the Light Crust Dough Boys from Fort Worth, Texas, uh and then we would hear uh the Shen's program originated in the Shenandoah valley of Kentucky, of Virginia. We would hear a program from there and as I grew older on the radio, my folks never had TV until I was a senior in college and I can remember radio at nighttime we would listen to the voice of XEOK in Monterey, Mexico, uh or some of the, Mexico, on the border of Mexico there were radio stations that actually belonged to Americans but because they could put their towers in Mexico, they got around the FAA regulations about wattage or whatever. C: Clear channel stations. H: But that's what we listened to and as I got older and more influenced by the cowboy shows on Saturday I found Gene Autry program on Saturday nights, I could listen to them on the radio, so those kinds of things. C: Okay. Well we spent a lot of time at my grandparent's house and we didn't listen to the radio. But at my grandparents we did and it was French music. we didn't call it Cajun music, it was French music, so I don't know how the terminology changed over the years, but when we went to listen to music it was a Frenchman playing and we like the French music. The Cajun term I think kind of evolved more and, but I just knew from experience that wasn't something we really dwelled on, you know. A lot of people who speak French and they like French music, but we listen, there was a KVPI radio station in Ville Platte and they did the news in French as Lafayette did television news a lot and they did a whole morning show on Saturday in French and I remember my grandparents and I had to do what they did but we just sit and listen. You didn't say nothing, you there was no dancing going on, it was just listening

and they got pleasure in that, very conservative. All this wild you know partying and all that's not. Now they did that a little bit later at night you know when they need to but just listening to the Saturday morning in the morning, not late. — Hollis Chapman

BUTANE DELIVERIES TO COCODRIE IN THE 1950s: D: Now how did you get butane? I mean you know. F: Well at that time we had trucks coming down and delivering at that time. That was in the fifties. We were living high class right there. We didn't get an electricity company until probably uh,' 51, '52. — Houston Foret

BOAT BUILDING

LOCALLY BUILT BOATS: F: Everybody made their own boats. They had some people that were carpenters, but most everybody built their own boats. D: Did you ever build a boat? F: Yeah. I built a few boats. Small boats. D: Wooden? F: Wooden boats. D: Cypress? F: Cypress. D: Wow. Hand caulked? Yeah. Everything was by hand. Well we had skill saws and stuff like that but we all uh, it was all hand made. D: Wow. F: Biggest one that I built was 47 feet. I built that one in 1963. I built a few skiffs, small skiffs, you know, like 25, 30 feet- stuff like that, you know. For my own use - not to sell, you know. It was my own. — Houston Foret

CANNING

ORIGINS OF CANNING INDUSTRY — I think for ten thousand francs for somebody to come up with a device that you can put food in that's good and edible, you can get this award. Well this guy came up with the idea of a can. So that's how they made the first can, and he won the award. It's made by hand. But they didn't quite have the – they didn't know about the – they knew about spoilage, but they didn't know how and why, and in the 1860s, Louis Pasteur came across the answer – pasteurization. And from that can, and heat and pasteurization process, and subsequently under pressure and a few other developments, they were able to can food and preserve it all in the interest of the military for the army to march on a full stomach. —Chris Cenac

CITRUS

GROWING SATSUMAS ON THE CHENIERE PLAIN: The track of land that Mother and Dad bought had about 8 or 9 acres of satsumas on it when they bought it. And they used those and sold satsumas, and had a early freeze in about 40 or 41 that killed all of her trees. Didn't know and didn't get 'em preserved in time to avoid being killed.—Allen Ensminger

CRABBING

CRABBING, ROLLER LINES / BAYOU TECHE AREA: A roller line is a line – you put your string on a roller, which they use these um, rollers – wooden rollers that the twine

comes on. You could use that – you run a shaft through it. Where it'll turn, and we used um, curtain hooks. put your bait every so often with a little bitty line that's hanging about that far, about seven, eight inches. And we put that curtain hook on there. And I go ahead of him, and I bait the line, and had chains on the line for it to drop. And when I'd flag him, I dropped that line, he'd start running. He'd run in the other boat. And I continue baiting that line. …we'd bait it with catfish heads. My daddy's uncle, Jesse Higgins, ran a fish dock, and we'd go over there and we'd get the heads and we wanted them sawed off with no fins. And every head had a crab. He put twenty two crates in that thing one day when I dropped that last weight in the boat. — Marshall Borel

CRABBING, LARGEST CRABS CAUGHT BY INTERVIEWEE: H: What's the biggest crab you've ever seen? B: I seen um, they told me they took out some of them - one of the people I was um, selling to, and it weighed – it weighed twenty four pounds - sixteen of them. — Marshall Borel

CRABBING, TERREBONNE PARISH: M: No, no, no, no. A crab line. Thought you understood what that was. Crab line might run for a mile this way then you had some that ran across. Sometimes it was in a square. Sometimes you had this from north to south. And we'd start off from the side and run a crab line. First we put it out. You know, you had chain. You went about ten feet and then you would put a chain in it of about four feet or so worth of chain that would weigh the line down. And the line itself would make a knot, a loop in there where you, if you put your bait in there, (cow lips?). That's what we used. Sometimes we'd use the end of the lip. Most of the time we had the [inaudible]. The end of the lip was the best, you know, it's tender. But the one with all the hair on it, we used to cut it in little pieces, little squares about maybe four inches, three or four inches. We used to tie it in there. Sometimes we made a little cut, you know, so it wouldn't come out when the crab was biting on it. But we had those at every, say, four feet or so. Maybe a little closer sometimes. But then we would run a mile and we used to use...Some of them use 36 line. That's pretty small. And some of them use 48. My dad was using 60, because he rigged up a basket that would catch them automatically. You wouldn't have to catch them with this little net. We used to fish with a little net like a tennis racket. But all webbing in it, you know, like a shrimp trawl, you know, made with a little bit bigger holes cuz it was crab. And we used to, crab line used to come up and it was coming up at an angle, 45 degree angle or sometimes less than 45. We used to see them come to. We used to catch it on the back. The force of the water kept the crab against the net. That's why she didn't get away. That was on the back. It was upside down. Then we'd throw it in the basket. My dad took a net, like this, and it was tapered. Right here, it had a steel bar he put. He built it out of reinforcement rod you use in cement. And then he had a smooth one that went across here that the line would go, would fall in. And he had another one that would fall in here. This one was a lot bigger than this back one. The front end, sometimes it would hit, you know, it would weigh down. A lot of crabs it would hit in the

U. Sometimes it just would ride over. Cuz this thing here was about on this angle. — Freddie Matherne

WESTWEGO, CRABBING: Used to go to Westwego, but he went there with his truck. He had two of them paneled trucks. He also had a night club that he could...This would have come in right where the wharf (two?) first started. He had uh these papers like his brothers...His brothers all went into the service. And he was supposed to go too. But when they went to Westwego and told them he wouldn't be able to bring them any more crab, he said, "Well I'm gonna find out about this," the man that ran the crab. Somehow he got in with the Army or whatever the draft board was. And he was bringing in so much crab meat, canning meat, for the soldiers that they give him a deferment. — Freddie Matherne

EXPORTS OF LOUISIANA CRABS: I called Daddy on the phone. And I don't know how I got him, but I got him. And anyway, he was there. He says, "I got a bunch of crabs." He said "I got all females. Every one is a female." I said, "Well I ain't gonna bring that to uh, Lafayette." I said, "Let me talk to Oscar see if he'll take them." And I talked to Oscar Lang, a friend of mine. I said, "You want them?" He said, "How long it's gonna take you to get back here?" I said, "Fifteen minutes to get back after I get over there – I get there first." And I said, "I'll bring them to you." I got – I don't know how many crates he had. And um, I got back over there – the truck waited for me, and they all went to California. I think I had seven boxes. And I fussed at my daddy for hours saying, "Why didn't you go home? You're gonna get stopped back here. You not gonna be able to get home." "Oh, I can get there." So he made it, and I lucked out and I made it, but that old back road was under – under trees, so all of his uncles and stuff after that, they called and they run that fish dock, well they took them away from the levee. They wanted to evacuate. So they left. They come to Jeanerette. They stayed in my dad's house. — Marshall Borel

ECONOMICS / COMMERCE

EXPORTING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCE TO GALVESTON BY SCHOONER: D: Have you ever heard of—I mean, we can make some assumption; I just wanna ask you--have you ever heard why we have the term, "Schooner Bayou"? A: Well, apparently, Don, there was a fairly active commerce attachment with Galveston and that was all done with a schooner that sailed into the mouth of the Mermentau and [took branch there], and I at one time, knew the name of that schooner...I don't think it was the Majestic, I think that was a boat that linked [Pilot Town] in New Orleans and I, for the life of me, have lost the reference to the name of the schooner that serviced it. But the Crane family, Hilda Crane, who's one of my secretaries at Rockefeller who's married to one of the Cranes, Hilda probably could dig out some of that information for you out of the old Crane Family records. Uh, one of her husband's cousins were there Harpers and they have an

engineering company over and they're likely to have more realistic records than anybody and Lonny Glenn Harper would be the engineer there. — Allen Ensminger

HENRY: C: Can you describe what Henry was like when you were growing up? B: There was a church, a store, and a school, and that was it. And well really we had two stores. We had two little stores and that was Henry. That was it. Now we lived out in the country and had to, you know drive to school and all that. C: So Henry was town? B: Henry was town, well kind of yes. Erath was more town but we went to school in Henry. But I guess if you wanted to go shopping shopping you went to Erath which was much bigger then Henry, had at least a department store. — Brenda Bertrand Thibodeaux

GRAND CHENIERE, SHIPPING PRODUCE: R: Trade was with Sea Island cotton, going back to the early part of the century – they had commerce with pecans, commerce with citrus, and probably one of the major, you know, money issues as far as currency is concerned, is trapping. So, um, there were stores, right there along the (Mermentau River) that did the shipping. I actually uh, went through Hurricane Audrey in Creole. And uh, there were cotton gins – the old cotton gins are still there on Old Oak Grove. That was remnant of that cotton period time. Uh, the rows from that cotton and some of the ditching from that cotton is still there today. You know, a hundred years later.

EDUCATION

TRAPPER CHILDREN TRANSPORTED THEMSELVES TO SCHOOL BY SKIFFS: When he used to go to school, he had to row his skiff to school all the way here to Des Allemands. It's about seven miles. — Freddie Matherne

EDUCATION VALUED ON CHENIERE PLAIN: Grand Chenier was a place where we had lots of education – education was very important. — David Richard

HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION IN NEW ORLEANS, BLUE COLLAR EMPLOYMENT AFTERWARD: And I went to school, at one of the MacDonogh schools in New Orleans. And then from there, I went to Eastern to finish my high school. And from there, I went to Delgado. I went first for pipe fitting and then I went for blueprint reading, sketching. Then I went for mechanical drafting, but I didn't stay the whole term. You know, I stayed one year, because I was working ship yards. And most of the men in shipyards couldn't read a print. So then we had layout mints. That's what I was doing. Besides, I worked as a ship fitter and a welder. But then I started working in the layout mint. You know, I laid out from the print, all the lines where the put the bulkhead and all the framework. — Freddie Matherne

END OF THE ROAD COMMUNITIES

END OF THE ROAD COMMUNITIES WERE THE HUB OF LIFE IN THE COASTAL WETLANDS: E: They had shipyards out there. Raise your boat out the water. They had everything ...it was a fishing village, that's where they lived at and they'd come in with their boat to get groceries or whatever they want and then they'd go back out there. — Edward Robin

EMOTIONAL TIES TO THE WETLANDS

COASTAL WETLANDS NATIVE RETURNS TO MARSHES AFTER DECADES BECAUSE HE "WANTED TO TRAP": M: So they stayed up there. They had a camp there. He did that after we had to move to New Orleans. This is after he had left this area 30, 40 years. He came back and he did some trapping again. Felt that he wanted to trap. But then he would crab also. He come back out, like, to the Bayou Gauche and then started the crabbing all over again. — Freddie Matherne

WORK ETHIC AND RESILIENCY INTERCONNECTED: D: And, and, and what what kept you doing it? F: Well that's the way of living, you know, around here. It's the way of living. Nothing else you could to. D: But you've enjoyed every minute of it. I enjoyed everything, yeah. It was – it was a blessing for me – it worked out good for me, you know. But uh, you, you had to work. I mean there was no such thing as not working, you know. I mean if you wanted to work you could survive. D: And wouldn't you say that's true today? F: It is – D: I mean if you want to want to work you… F: If you want to work you're gonna survive. But as far there was no job – you could find something to do. — Houston Foret

ETHNICITY

CAJUNS, FRENCH LANGUAGE, MAINSTREAM ATTITUDES TOWARD FRANCOPHONES: My wife's grandmother would not speak English. She could but she wouldn't. And the only time she would ever talk to me after Meryl and I got married was if we was in the room by ourselves. And she'd carry on a conversation. But boy, you let somebody touch that doorknob and that ended her English. — Allen Ensminger

ETHNIC / LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY IN COASTAL PLAIN: Grand Chenier was a place where we had lots of education – education was very important. But from a coastal standpoint, you know you had Italians, you had Germans, you had Irish, which is Dublin which is my heritage, you had French, and you had at that time Czechoslovakians. Can't hardly say that today because they want to be called Slavs or Czechs. But in any case, um, some time you know, I you know time has worked quickly on our lives, Don. As you know it. — David Richard

PERSISTENCE OF TRADITIONAL MEDICINE, HOUMA TRIBE: So that's why I got a big respect for the Indians. Because I was raised – that the medicine kept me up to talk to

you today. The Indians. They gave me some – somebody said it was good. I said yeah? It's not bad, huh? — Dovie Richard

CAJUN / CREOLE SELF-IDENTIFICATION: … the old folks were more apt to identify themselves as Creole the old folks were more apt to identify themselves as Creoles than they were Cajun. — Hollis Chapman

ROLE OF COFFEE / FRENCH LANGUAGE / STORE AS COMMUNITY GATHERING PLACES IN CAJUN SOCIETY: that was a big part of what we did and the social background, gathering of that store, it was much more than buying as y'all all know. I mean they always had a big pot of coffee and they'd sit down and talk and they'd visit. The only disadvantage I had and Hollis is bilingual, I wasn't really good at French and they spoke in French all the time so we missed a lot of the stories as children cause that was used as the Language to not communicate to the children you know.. — Hollis Chapman

MULTI-GENERATIONAL HOUSEHOLDS, FRENCH LANGUAGE, SCHOOLS AS A VEHICLE FOR AMERICANIZATION: L: I grew up, you know, in...My grandmother lived with us, okay, for I remember that as a young child. But, you know, she died and I was only 2 or 3 years old, okay. And the only thing she spoke was French, okay. So as a result, when I went to school, I knew how to speak, I did not know how to speak English. Okay, when I was in, back then they had, um, a first grade or um kindergarten so the nuns taught me how to speak English, okay. I mean, they seen what happened. — Levin LeJeune

CAJUN FOODWAYS, SOUTHWESTERN PRAIRIES, IOTA / ACADIA PARISH: D: Well tell me a little bit about what else you ate. What would have been a typical meal, weekday meal, when you were a kid growing up? L: Well rice was, you know, pretty prevalent, okay. That was a common, you know, you didn't have a meal without rice, okay. But then you... D: With gravy? L: Oh yeah, rice and gravy, you know. And with, you know, meat normally, okay, of some sort. D: Seasonal vegetables? L: Yeah, seasonal vegetables and then seafood, you know. D: So you had seafood? L: Right, yeah. Because, you know, I had cousins that fished, okay. And you know, they would come by after they had, you know, had caught whatever and they'd sell their fish to my family, okay. So yeah, we had seafood. D: Now was this freshwater fish or saltwater? L: Right, yeah, it was freshwater. Yeah, it was freshwater. D: Catfish? L: Catfish, usually, right. But they also did garfishing too, okay. I don't remember, maybe we bought, probably did, bought some garfish from them. But it was primarily catfish. You know, as I remember. D: What about fried eggs and rice? Did you all eat that? L: Yeah, right, did. Sometimes during the winter, you know, there'd be the rice and fried egg and put it all together. Had some of that also. D: My momma did that too. Um, Sunday dinner? L: Potato salad's commonplace, a common fare, okay. Potato salad. Rice. Um, you know, and probably

chicken or a pork roast, you know. But um, you know, with vegetables, whatever the vegetables were. But yeah, you definitely had rice, but potato salad was commonplace. Always had, you know, always had potato salad. D: What about barbeque for supper? L: Yeah, on Sundays, especially on Sundays, right that was normally, you know, it was a cookout so to speak. With the old barrel, you know, barbeque pit. D: Right, 55 gallon... L: Right, that's right. — Levin LeJeune

CAJUN MUSIC, HOUSE DANCES, SOCIAL LIFE: D: Let's talk a little bit about social life. This is the one question I was going to kick myself for not asking. Did they still have house dances or was that gone by the time you were growing up? L: I don't remember. They probably did but I wasn't aware of them... D: Everyone switched over to neighborhood dance halls. L: Yeah they had the one there in Iota on the main street, they had a dance hall. That's correct, you know. And it was very active on the weekends, on Saturdays, as I recall. D: Right. Uh, local musicians playing what kind of music? L: Well [laughs], well it was, you known, French music. I mean, yeah. There was no other music. — Levin LeJeune

FISHING — COMMERCIAL

FRESHWATER FISHING / BAYOU TECHE: I used to have – run lines in Bayou Teche, and I caught enough money – um, fish to pay for my going to the movies, going to the um, ice cream place, and I didn't have to bother nobody for money. I was getting as much money in them days for the few fish I was catching as they paying today - twenty five cents a pound. — Marshall Borel

FRESHWATER FISHING TECHNIQUES / BUSH LINES / BAYOU TECHE: I did fish bush lines. Describe the bush line for me. What is that? B: You hang it in a tree on a pole. And when that pole and that tree is blowing you know you have a fish on it. And it's got slack in it to where that fish can't hardly break loose. H: What'd you use for bait? B: Anything you could find – worms a lot of times. We used to dig the worms up that big. Big worms. O: Now did you run your lines on the bank, or did you have a boat? B: No, I had a boat. O: What kind? B: I had a little bitty – a little bitty wooden boat about twelve foot long. O: Okay. Um, at what age did you start doing that? B: At what age? Eight or nine - as soon as they let me go by myself. O: Okay. — Marshall Borel

ECONOMIC CHALLENGES FACED BY MODERN FISHERMEN: But you can sell all the crab and shrimp you can catch and you don't have five cents worth of investment in the production of that resource. That resource is a free resource by little old trawl license, and renew it, and what have you, and you go tank up your boat and you get to the [point] where the diesel is four dollars a gallon, you quit trawlin', but [the bible] just said that the shrimper don't own nothin'. . . . [E]ven the dirt under his fingernails belongs to somebody else. That's kinda crude way to put it but, when you get right down to it, it's the only

resource that—very little is done to manage for it, and these deteriorating marshes have been—has produced an abundance of [detrital] material which flows into that food chain—this old plankton and all this that and the other that goes into the production of shrimp and crabs. — Allen Ensminger

MENHADEN / POGY BOATS / USE OF CONVICT LABOR: Years ago, they brought a lot of convicts here from the east coast, the old people up here in the Carolinas had [pogy boats] that worked out here and seasonal, and they'd bring a lot of prisoners down here on those boats and they were in a work release program. D: So, actually had low-risk convicts working the [pogy boats]. A: Yep. B: Low risk, low cost. A: Low risk, low cost. I went on board one of those snapper boats at the mouth of the river one time and I didn't even know it at the time that they were all convicts and got to talkin' to 'em, and one of those old boys said, "I'll tell ya one thing, this may be a bad job out here fishing snapper, but it beats the shit outta stayin' in that cell 24/7. I think that may have been the first time I ever heard that term used. 24/7. No doubt about it to him. That was a good outlet. — Allen Ensminger

FISHING — RECREATIONAL

RECREATIONAL FISHING, HUMBLE CAMP, ST. CHARLES PARISH, 1950s: We lived in the boathouse crabbing and fishing, and we would catch these little shiners, and then sell them to a filling station, huh? For guys going fishing, you know. I think we – I don't know if they gave us a penny a piece or just something like that for them, and um, we have trout line in Humble always had a prize every year – if you'd catch – they wanted to get rid of the garfish because the guys like to go fishing, you know. So the one that caught the biggest garfish and the most were – they had prizes. So my brothers and I – we always caught the most and the biggest. I remember one time we – well we had one on the trout line that was over six feet so dad had to come in the boat with a gun and shoot him in the head – bang, you know. But our trout line – we used to catch a lot of different stuff. A lot of garfish, catfish, um, you know. — Jocelyn Hebert

RECREATIONAL FISHING: And um, we would travel through um, Lake Des Allemands, Lake Salvador, north to Grand Isle. And at Grand Isle we stayed at the Humble camp there. They had like a boarding house, and a mess hall, and well… B: Well can you describe what you remember it looking like? H: Um, the campsite – um, yeah. There were two-story houses there. You know, built, at the camp. Um, we must've got to the boat dock or whatever, and we stayed in the boarding house. It was like a place I guess where the guys offshore stayed or whatever, and they had like a huge kitchen mess hall. And um, I just remember we got there, and um, they fixed all kind of supper and pies and ice cream and all that good stuff. And then the following morning, they – we would board the crew boats, which were maybe four or five. And like I said, they were probably; I took (inaudible) crew boats. And um, we would um – they would pack lunches for us,

and um, we would head on out into the gulf. Um, I don't know exactly where, but off the Grand Isle coast. — Jocelyn Hebert

HUNTING — COMMERCIAL

PERSISTENCE OF COMMERCIAL DUCK HUNTING LONG AFTER PASSAGE OF CONSERVATION LAWS 1: A: Oh, there was commercial duck hunting, Don, when I went to work in the department. There was families that were still pickin' ducks and they happened to have a few extra ducks it wasn't a big deal that they sold 'em to— B: Now they're selling them locally or still transporting them to a railhead? A: They were selling 'em basically locally, and matter of fact, one of my earliest enforcement involvements, we got involved in that sting on—group of guys that were selling ducks to the peanut salesmen and all this that and the other. And U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had pulled that thing off. I would think that that was probably in 68 or 9, a time, or maybe a little earlier than that, maybe 64 or 5, and these peanut salesmen, went all through coastal area and bought ducks and documented them and they went back out after establishing a pattern of buying ducks from individuals and got about 40 or 50 of us in the department together and we all went to our assigned site on that particular morning and arrested I think 125 people. B: Do you have any idea how many ducks were involved? A: Probably a couple thousand or more. And some of those people were guides at these commercial clubs, and what I could gather outta the conversation with some of those guys, they were [extra] birds that the guests or the clients had killed over the bag limit, or they were species that they wasn't interested in—all they wanted was [10-tailed] mallards, the big ducks, [sell 'em out and take 'em home] but the guides had the rest of 'em and they had all the ducks they wanted to eat anyway, so they would just sell 'em, for makin' some extra money. — Allen Ensminger

PERSISTENCE OF COMMERCIAL DUCK HUNTING LONG AFTER PASSAGE OF CONSERVATION LAWS 2: Ovey was also a market hunter, and he told me about that experience, and that was just phenomenal. I guess that was in the twenties. I don't know if they had – I don't know, I'm sure probably he was – it was after they put limits out, and he was, you know, illegal, but I don't' know that for a fact. But he had an old horse. His brother would come to the house – his brother lived at one of the plants, and he had a telephone – one of the oil refineries or something. And there were boats going back and forth between there and Mexico I believe. I don't know if they were bringing oil in and refining it. I'm not sure what this boat was doing, but it had to do with oil activity. And they wanted an order of ducks – pintails and mallards. That's the only thing that you can – that you can use – sell – that's the only thing they wanted. And the brother would drive down and say, I got an order for you. And I think they put them in crocs. I don't know how they preserved them – I got some ideas about that, but I don't think they were refrigerated. I don't know if they were put under something, covered up with grease, and – and if they did that, I often wondered well were they cooked before? I don't think so. I

think they were raw. But I'm not clear on that. But Ovey would get an order. He'd go out – they had a horse. Go out, stake the horse out, and he'd go to the pond, he had double barrel, and I guess the ducks would land and land and land, and of course that shotgun shell was precious. So then you'd whistle and he'd shoot two times, and he'd pick up those and haul them back and tie them on the horse. And you might do that two or three times. And you'd lead the horse back to the house, and he and his wife would start processing – cleaning the birds. And then eventually the brother in law or some relative who gave him the order would come pick up the order, take it over, get the money, bring the money back to him. So that in itself was just an amazing tale with him telling be about that. And I don't' know when that was – I guess that was sometime in the twenties. — Greg Linscomb

PERSISTENCE OF COMMERCIAL DUCK HUNTING LONG AFTER PASSAGE OF CONSERVATION LAWS 3: Well I can just tell you what was told to me and everything else. Before, I can tell you, before my time and everything. You had people from all over that used to come down with freight boats and spent time here just to go hunting in Cocodrie. People would, yeah. There was jobs because there was, I mean beaucoup duck in our area. And they would just come and kill it for the market. I've seen pictures I don't' know what, through the hurricanes we lost, but I mean they had piles of duck. They had them hanging on their boats and you name it. But there was a market for it, you know. It's a funny thing – anything that's got a dollar involved in it - they gonna ruin it. Money corrupts people. — Houston Foret

CONSERVATION EFFORTS THWARTED BY POVERTY: N: And I was born about a mile and a half below here. And in those days, it was very, very sad. Hardly had no money at all – we had enough to eat because my daddy was a good fisherman and a hunter. He would hunt and – as a matter of fact, he got caught by the game warden a couple times. And uh, the second time, the game warden told him, he said look. His name was François. He said François, the money get you out, and the friends get you out. He said I caught you again, you in jail, you go. He said, Mr. Folkes, let me tell you something. His name was John Folkes. He said Mr. Folkes, let me tell you something. I got a family to raise. You got a job. You do your job. You caught me – I can't let my kids cry for food when they got something to eat right by us. You can try to catch me again, but it's fooling me and he never did catch him a third time. Two times, there. And he couldn't make much money in those days. It's sixty dollars I think at one time, and sixty dollars was pretty big. — Dovie Naquin

COMMERCIAL HUNTING / GUIDES / LAND MANAGERS, LAND RENTAL: Um, it was under a land manager, probably 1930, '31. Uh, my grandfather went to that land company in 1930, '31 and basically my family is still on that fourteen thousand acre land in Grand Chenier. And so he had ownership of his own, and Grand Chenier and at Johnson Bayou. And um, they used their house, you know when they were young for

hunting – they had hunting people that came in – they hunted. Basically on the south side of Grand Chenier. — Cokie Rathborne

COMMERCIAL HUNTING IN ST. BERNARD PARISH / NEW ORLEANS FRENCHMARKET: MB: As you look at the history of duck hunting in the corporation, the duck hunting as it evolved was done more by the market hunters in New Orleans in the early days thinking shoot 'em and taking those ducks to the French Market to sell. It wasn't a sporting issue, duck hunting in the early days when it's not like this. — Michael Benge

ISLEÑOS AND DUCK DECOYS: Absolutely, absolutely. All the Isleños in the beginning made their own decoys. They made their own decoys. We have several examples in the museum and they were crude looking, but the ducks didn't know any better. And they worked very well. And then as time went on, it became a folk art and they were more realistic, more polished, more beautiful, and we just had an exhibit. "Ducks to Decoys and Decimas" at the Ducros museum. [Referring to the Louis Alfred Ducros Museum and Research Library in St. Bernard, LA] And we had a wonderful collection of decoys from all over. We had some from Tennessee. They were originally New Orleans, but the guy lives in Tennessee and he gave us three of his ducks to leave in the museum. So, it was, we had over I guess it was over 50 or 60 exhibits. And we even had a cardboard decoy, 'cause at one time they sold these cardboard decoys and Henry Rodriguez had one left. So, we had that in the exhibit, too. And it was great, it really was. — Michael Benge

HUNTING — RECREATIONAL

RECREATIONAL HUNTING (DUCKS), LAKE DES ALLEMANDS AREA: I really enjoyed duck hunting, myself. I hunted when my folks, later on, they went back and they stayed in a camp. You see where it says Bayou Matherne? D: Yeah. M: They stayed in a camp right here on this bayou. It's kinda high. Maybe about five, six foot above the water, which is high to us, you know. D: Yeah. — Freddie Matherne

HURRICANES

HURRICANE AUDREY: Well the morning of Audrey, uh, I got out and went slacked our boats off in the boat house and luckily got a couple of life preservers from the boat house and brought them back over to the house and my wife had fixed breakfast for our son and fed him, and about 8:00 that house went to bumpin' up and down—that's how quick that water came in there and we had a little building out in the back that's a brooder house. It came off the blocks and turned upside down and floated right toward our house and he had a great big picture window on the south side and it broke. And I had just made a dining room table and I nailed it up over that open hole, and about 20 minutes later we left that yard and went across the highway—house and all, and ended up in a big Oak tree. Floated up into that oak tree and got jammed and sunk. And the current held it in

place there, and about 1:00 in the afternoon—that was all about 8:00 in the morning—about 1:00, the sun started shining and we heard and airplane. I told my wife, I said, "Well it's all over with." Oh, about that time, that son-of-bitch went back to the north came back through there and I thought sure it was gonna float us back out of that woods. But it held together and about 4:00 it kindly stopped raining and calmed down and got where I could climb out on the roof. And I could see some people in a two-story house out walkin' around their yard and that was the first indication that there was anybody left alive other than us. So we decided to get out of there. Crawled out the end of the house—I'd kicked the [Louver] out, and got out of there with the life preservers on, and we had a baby bed mattress that was floating and we put our son on it. I was walking over there to that house, I walked off into a hole, dumped him off our [life] to drown the poor little thing. (Laughing Sort of) And uh...but we got on over and spent the night there, and they were in the same shape, they didn't think anybody other than us had survived. And the next morning we started walking the ridges looking for people and finding a few but uh... D: This was at Rockefeller? A: This was at Rockefeller. Grand Chenier, yep. D: Were you walkin' east or west? A: I walked east to go to that house. D: Yep, yep. A: But then the next day, we—Robert Meer, who worked for me forever, and I—got together and we were looking for his wife's family who lived west of the refuge, and we finally got back there to the house and we had found one or two people in trees and got them down on the way and got over there and her family was all okay. And we went on back to the refuge and went to try to get word out. One of the employees had taken one of the department's big old trucks home that evening and it was the only vehicle on the west end of the ridge that they were able to get started from. And he started haulin' people up and down the ridge, lookin' for family members and what have you. But we spent that day there, and my brother came down from Lake Charles about 4:00 in the afternoon—they launched the boat up there south of Lake Charles--I'll show you where he put in—he came across the marsh to Grand Chenier and then out and then came right to the headquarters and found my wife out there in the yard at those people's house, and we loaded up in the boat and went up into one of the [Creams'] houses and spent the night there. And the next morning was kinda the LZ. And the next morning I caught a helicopter from there into Lake Charles. So it...and when we flew across that big debris field north of Little Chenier, there was just hundreds of acres of debris with house pieces and houses and lumber all in it. And of course that's where they found most of the bodies too, so...Up in that area. D: Now, the refuge had to be rebuilt? A: Oh yeah. D: In total? A: In total. It was wiped that yard clean. The house we were in, I think—and I was the only family living there at the time—we had three resident buildings and a kind of a bunkhouse complex. And I think of those four buildings, the one we were in was the only one you could've survived in. The others just went completely to pieces. No sign of 'em.

ICE

ICE BARNS (HOUMA) — There were actually ice barns here in Houma. Um, and they floated ice from the Great Lakes down the Mississippi River, and that guy became the first millionaire in the United States. The first industrial millionaire. That's a hell of a story, but of course in New Orleans with the first commercial production of ice in the 1860s and 1870s – they finally got that process going. —Chris Cenac

MEAT PRESERVATION BEFORE REFRIGERATION: Um, I remember talking to the Roy Hebert who lived on Chenier (inaudible). And my grandfather and them would talk about - they'd kill a hundred fifty geese or so, pack them in lard, so that they would have meat for the year, and uh, they always have a goose gumbo or a roast goose when they went there and they brought the cattle back the next Fall. So you know you learn about the preservation of meat, you now in lard, and you preserve the meat in salt products. Which you know I still – they still did when I was a kid. Butchered hogs in a lard pot. You know, and I did that on the farm. So, um… you used to have to guide me on subjects, you know. — David Richard

INNOVATION

MAKESHIFT PIPELINES MADE WITH BLOCKBUSTER BOMB CASINGS: And on the Vermilion Corporation's property, Exxon, they had found natural gas, but there was a shortage of pipe. So they used the casings of blockbuster bombs. Welded them together, and to date, it's still carrying 3,000 PSI and you think about it, that bomb casing may have been a half inch thick if you think about it. It was solid brass...I mean the line's probably worth more than the natural gas going through it. But it's that kind of innovation that you just can't find — Allen Ensminger

IMMIGRATION

DUST BOWL REFUGEES: We—as I indicated to you guys earlier—our family, my mother, and dad, and family, came to Louisiana in 1936. As the result of a prospectus circulated all through the dust bowl country, up here in the pan-handle—Oklahoma, southwestern Kansas, south eastern Kansas, eastern Colorado—to attract farmers to come down to Louisiana and buy these [cut over] long-leaf pine areas. [In] Colorado, we had milk cows, and mother and dad had milk, and sold cream, and all this, that, and the other, and had draft horses to plow with. Well, we didn't bring any of those on that first immigration, we ended up down here in the T-model truck with our household goods. But, one of my older brothers, who is still alive, came down a couple of years later and brought some bigger horses down—cow horses and one big ole draft horse. 'Course those horses had some utility here, but they didn't climatize very well, it took a lot of feed to keep that big animal going. And I think that that counted for the development of these lesser draft-type horses, and more toward a cow pony type of animal. — Allen Ensminger

MENNONITES: That enclave of Mennonites came down from Kansas and the panhandle of Oklahoma in the 1930's—same time we came down--and probably were encouraged by the prospectus at Long Bell Lumber Company circulated all through that dustbowl country. And I have one of those originals. — Allen Ensminger

MENNONITES: Well, the Mennonites that came down at the same time we did, formed a co-op called "Highland Growers." And Long Bell and all of their solicitation referred to the highlands of Southwest Louisiana. And the land was for sale for $3.50-10.00 an acre and what have you. But that is still in business and that's who we buy our fertilizer from and they apply it for you and all this, that, and the other. Been a very successful business operation. Think we better blow our horn and wake that boy up? Oh he's awake! Got his foot up...But our family was a starvation situation. We had to leave the dust bowl country, all the topsoil was blew away, [Broom Corn] was the main cash crop and—that and cream. We had some milk cows and the apparently the kids all started milking when they was 4/5 years old [they just continued] right on milking and would take the cream cans out into the road and the tomato man would bring 'em to town and haul the empty ones back. All of [INAUDIBLE] lifestyle. Well, we came to Louisiana everything had just—on the heels of the depression. — Allen Ensminger

LUMBER INDUSTRY

CYPRESS AS AN IMPORTANT EARLY RESOURCE, CLEAR CUTTING LEADS TO DEMISE OF INDUSTRY: Obviously the Cypress was the first resource that somebody discovered, particularly in the wetlands—in the swamps. And they literally destroyed 'em. I mean they clear-cutted the cypress. And eventually the cypress business went away because there was no more cypress. — Clifford Smith

LOGGING METHODS EAST OF THE ATCHAFALAYA RIVER: M: Here's what they did. I'll use this as an example. D: Sure. M: All through this here and here, they used to cut loads. You can see where they drug the cypress out. You still can see it. They would ring it first, a bunch of them, one year. Then they waited until the next year. That way it was dead and it was dry. So they would cut it down and then would tow it over here and come all the way to here and go to Harvey. Let's see, Lafitte. From Lafitte. Not Lake Cataouatche, I know where that's at. They went to Lafitte. I mean to Harvey, right here. See this thing? Right along here. — Freddie Matherne

SINKER CYPRESS, LAKE DES ALLEMANDS AREA: M: Sinker cypress. . . . Anyway, they would bring it here and they would saw it up. But, coming across Lake Salvador, used to chain them, from one log, the front of one log to the back end of the first log, you know. They used to have strings of cypress trees, which we call logs. And they used to come across there. But when the weather got real bad, it would break loose these logs on here. Sometimes we would find one, sometimes two or three, sometimes a whole ten or

so, you know, in the back. Just about all these pulled across here. It would sink, sink to the bottom of the lake. It's in most places seven feet. And I think sunk down there. The sand covered it up, you know, dirt, mostly sand. And it wasn't all the way covered up. They had some, where they tied the log, they had some [inaudible] to tie on top of them. And most of the time they were sticking up. So my dad took two small skiffs, could've been (Stratton?) or whatever it is, five, six horsepower. And they tow one of his crab lines and he would put extra chain on it to stay on the bottom. And they would drag a certain area, with their poles, and drag a certain area in the lake. They caught a heck of a lot of them up in this area. But they caught them all over the lake, but a lot of them up in here. And when they got 'em, you know, like I say, they was sunk. When they got 'em, he come there with 34 foot. Same size boat I have. And he had this big, like, ice hook, you know, that could go across this thing. And we used to go down the anchor rope, cuz it's pretty deep. It's hard to swim in. We would lose too much, go faster going down the anchor rope. Also down the hook, could pull us up, down with the hook. Then we had a little sledge hammer and we used to drive those hooks into the tree, into the log. Drive 'em and then he would pull slowly on it. We would watch it until we got, the sand would come up and then the log would float on up. The log dried themselves on the bottom of the lake. The water made them sink to the bottom and then the sand dried 'em off, being they was covered up. And sure enough, once you wiped that off, up popped the log. Some of them had holes, you know, that had gotten bad, the center of it. And we used to find great big catfish, 15, 20, 30 pounds cats that was inside the [inaudible]. And it was quite something, as a young boy, to see this big catfish coming out of there. — Freddie Matherne

DONNER CHACAHOULA SAWMILL: the Donner-Chacahoula area had a huge sawmill. There were 1,000 men employed in that place and there's a lot of books written about Donner-Chacahoula. — Clifford Smith

NORTHERNERS MIGRATE TO LOUISIANA AFTER UPPER MIDWESTERN FORESTS ARE CLEAR-CUT: B: Well what got your family involved in the cypress industry to begin with? R: Well this is all from folklore, but uh, my great grandfather came over here from – came over in the United States from Ireland in the 1860s. And then uh, went to Chicago – went to work for a box company. And uh, eventually ended up owning the box company. And of course boxes come from wood, so he decided to go into the lumber business in the Midwest. Back in Paul Bunyan days. And uh, he uh, eventually they cut out. And uh, there was a number of them there – Weyerhaeuser was one of them, uh, there were three or four other families that either – that either came South, or went West – there was a cutout of timber in the Midwest. — Cokie Rathborne

FLOATING RAFTS OF LOGS, DEVIL DOGS: They – since logs were now floating, they would chain them together, I actually got some old pieces of lumber that have the

borehole in it from when they'd take them together and they'd just float them. They'd pull them. — Cokie Rathborne

FLOATING RAFTS OF LOGS: I mean it was a - it was quite a sight when to go down – we had a mill in Choctaw, which I used to uh, go to and we used to shoot snakes. Because you're on these floats the logs. And so it was my little .22 – and we'd we had a good time. And uh, I mean you can get logs as what you see in those pictures, close to 100 yards long. And uh, they would be – when they decided to cut an area, they put a levee around it with huge pumps that would then put water into the, into the (inaudible) area. Logs would be cut – trees would be cut, cut into logs, and manhandled over to the levee at the side of – pulled over the levee into the canal, then it would be these metal boats we had. We'd then bring them to the mill. — Cokie Rathborne

SAWMILLS, END OF CYPRESS LUMBERING: R: Well we got lucky I think. We cut out in 1926. And I think my grandfather died about – my great-grandfather died about that stage in the game. So it wasn't the depression with all cash and no debt. And uh, and we paid for the property – property taxes were three ways they were. Um, trapping, um, railroad ties, when people come in, let them cut ties out of some of the, you know, the remaining trees. And the third was uh, uh, moss. Moss was used for mattresses. That was the low end mattresses were made out of moss, and the high end was made out of horse hair. So that's what uh, saved us during the depression, and then my father- when my aunt turned twenty one, the uh, her part of the estate became hers, and so then she and my father capitalized – recapitalized a company, and came down here in the late thirties and try to build Harvey up around the lake primarily as a center of the oil industry. And uh, then um, we went from there, we had a - my father had a mill up in uh, Roseland. A pine mill. Roseland, Louisiana. And uh, um, and we had a, a planing mill and stuff here, but that wasn't successful. So we got out of that. And it's just primary a real estate company ever since. — Cokie Rathborne

MILITARY

WORLD WAR II, GUNNERY RANGE, ST. BERNARD PARISH: E: Alright, you go right straight where the canal is, that's the same Bayou La Loutre going out. The Navy base was on the right. D: Alright . . . E: in '42, well they started building in '41. D: And what did they do at that Navy Base? E: That was the gunnery school. They used to have a 40 mm, they had, I think the biggest, the biggest shell the had there was I think a 3" . They had 50 caliber bullets. I mean machine guns and all that. A plane would, the plane would be, they had a plane flying with a big target behind it. The target must have been maybe 20 feet long, all red made out of silk and that plane would be towing it and they would be shooting at that target. They used to close the Lake Borgne from Proctor's Point to what we call Point Aux Marchettes. It's a point on the left is Proctor's Point and one on the right is Point Aux Marchettes. Certain time of the day you couldn't get in between them

two points because that's when the plane was passing and they were practicing. That was the gunnery school there. It was nice, it was really, really nice. — Edward Robin

MOSS GATHERING AND PROCESSING

LOUISIANA SPANISH MOSS SHIPPED TO FORD MOTOR COMPANY: My grandfather would have to pack that in a certain size uh, wooden container and ship that to the Ford Motor Company. Okay? On the train. And the reason why they had to be a certain size container was not only were they stuffing the seats and the model T fords with the uh, with the moss, those little cartons, they used that to make the seats with. The backs of the seats. They had to have a certain size. — Louis Blum

NATIVE AMERICANS

TEMPLE MOUND: So then, we trapped there [Lafitte] for a while, but then we moved back to where my father was from, Bayou des Allemands, cuz he owned the western end of the lake, northwestern end. And see where it says Carmadelle Village? Now this was a village where they raised and all back here. And we lived in a place called Tete de Mort. It was the head of the dead. Anyway, Indians had lived there before and it was their burial ground. The biggest burial ground they had was the Temple Bay, right here, at the end of this bayou. And uh yeah. At the end of this bayou here. And it was about 35, 40 feet high, 120 feet around, you know. So, they wound up moving all the way down off. I think most of them moved to this area, somewhere around here. So my dad was born and raised right here. — Freddie Matherne

NAVAL STORES

TURPENTINE PRODUCTION: A: Yeah, diggin' holes around 'em and dynamitin' 'em. They'd dig down long in the base of the old stump and bore a hole down in 'em with a big ole logger—A hand logger. And then they'd put dynamite down in there and blow 'em up out of the ground and bust 'em in the process. And then they'd load 'em on the truck by hand, haul 'em to a turpentine mill, Hercules power had a plant in DeQuincy. And then the Prolosby family from over in Picayune built a mill in De Ridder.—Allen Ensminger

NEW ORLEANS

EVERYDAY LIFE, NEW ORLEANS, GREAT DEPRESSION: We’d ride the trolley car every evening to cool off, and take a round trip ticket. It cost a nickel. Me and Mama would ride the trolley car to cool off. It’s so hot, and they didn’t have air conditioning in them days. And we uh, we’d come back home, and Daddy stayed – we ate more bananas than I ever seen in my life. Because he would work right there on them docks and they’d drop them off. They don’t pick that up. And they gather them up for him and they’d bring them home. — Marshall Borel

OUTMIGRATION

POST-RITA MIGRATION FROM CAMERON PARISH TO HIGHER GROUND: Yeah, that's right. Well, my next door neighbor, I talked to her this morning, she's got a little shop in De Ridder, lived in Grand Chenier, she was school teacher down there. And after Rita, they moved up here to their property in De Ridder. She said that she can't remember as a kid—and she was raised in Cameron—said, "I don't remember the mosquitoes being that bad, now I can't go out down there and even visit with our in-laws without the mosquitoes absolutely killing me!" And she may have a point there. It may be that these marshes broke up and what have you. — Allen Ensminger

OYSTERS

MIGRATION OF THE OYSTER INDUSTRY FROM THE EAST COAST TO THE GULF COAST: So the "Oyster Navy" began and the Virginia Navy was fighting the Maryland Navy protecting their sea shores and their oyster beds and the big blow believe it or not was the hot dog at Coney Island. The invention of the hot dog was the final blow to the oyster industry on the East coast at the time because it became the craze and replacing the oyster craze, the oyster saloon as the fast food of the day. So with the Typhoid fever and the oyster, I mean the sickness of eating a raw oyster, the depleting resources, the hot dog, the whole industry came south. — Chris Cenac

OYSTERS ARE FIRST AMERICAN FAST FOOD: But after the Civil War in 1865, what happened from 1865 to the 1880s on the New England coast from Connecticut, New York, down to the lower Chesapeake Bay besides a huge population increase you had the industrial revolution, you had tremendous resource on the Eastern shore of protein, a natural resource, oyster. An oyster was unlike a cow or a chicken or a pig or a goat, you didn't have to feed it, you didn't have to raise it, you didn't have to take care of it. All you had to do was go pick it up. You could pick it up and eat it. It was the first fast food of the day. — Chris Cenac

REFRIGERATION AND NATIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF OYSTERS — So with ice and the westward expansion, the first fast food in the nation was the oyster, because you only had to pick it up – you didn’t have to grow it. And you pick it up, and it’s protein. And it was a – there was a spurge of the day. Oyster taverns and oyster saloons. And what was interesting with that – in the 1860s was when Tabasco started. And the Mcllhenny family has some correspondence where they were promoting the use of Tabasco on the seafood so they sort of rode on the back of the oyster to get national recognition. And they promoted things like one drop, two drops, and what happened, and they have this documented – somebody put a cup, and put the oyster in the cup and ate it, and made the news because it blistered his tongue. So Tabasco rode the back of the oyster west. And

the use of Tabasco and the invention of cocktail sauce was to hide the smell of the seafood – the further west you went, the less refrigeration you had. —Chris Cenac

SCHOONERS USED IN NEW ORLEANS OYSTER INDUSTRY: M: No, but in Harvey itself, at Southern Shellfish, they oyster boat come in. And it was goélettes. That's a schooner, French name for a schooner. D: What's the French name? M: Goélettes. D: Goélette. M: Goélette. Anyway, these goélettes was made, like the bow come way out. Some of them was pretty. Some had the clipper bow, you know, like France [inaudible] and all. And they made, this guy made one out of fiberglass down here. You know, it wasn't the biggest, but they had used a [inaudible] boat that was 50, 60 foot long. You know, the big sail boat. It wasn't using sails any more. It was using diesel-powered engines. — Freddie Matherne

PREVALENCE OF WOODEN BOATS: "all wooden boats. There ain't no steel then." — Freddie Matherne

BARTERING WITH CANNERIES: So you did a lot of bartering. And the canneries did the same thing. Used to have a lot of canneries bartering... — Freddie Matherne

SLOVINIANS / CROATIANS IN LOUISIANA OYSTER INDUSTRY: The Croatian, Slovenians got to the lower Plaquemines area around 1820s and they brought with them several things from their coastal living in Croatia. The Leuti was shallow draft boat that they used in the sardine fishery there, single-masted shallow draft and they were building these boats in Plaquemines and they were living off the land like everybody else, oysters and wild game, etc. New Orleans was an established city before the war and ... times before the Civil War there was a market there all you had to do was by (cardel), go up river, couldn't sail against the river, so they had something pulling you called the (cardel) on the banks, then the steam engine came and they could pull it by steam, but they had a market on the levee Mississippi River in downtown New Orleans and traditionally that's where the oyster fishermen brought their oysters for sale and you really didn't need ice because an oyster did well during the winter months for 5, 6, 7 days and so that was the first real market that was occurring in Louisiana, only in New Orleans where they had a population that could utilize the oysters and you had the resource, St. Bernard and Plaquemines, those parishes. — Chris Cenac

RECREATIONAL TONGING FOR OYSTERS: I remember we got off the boats and then we would all go um, try to – I don't know what you call it. Is it tonging for oysters? But we had these big old tongs and I remember pulling up some of the – these oysters were huge. I would say about a foot long. We couldn't even eat them they were too big. — Jocelyn Hebert

LIVING CONDITIONS OF EARLY OYSTERMEN, ST. BERNARD PARISH: That's, that's where their home was when they first came here. Their home was made of, the roof

was out of palmettos, the flooring was mud and that was their home. Uh they didn't have any boats, what they had at the time when was sailboats and that's how they used to fish. They'd sail in and sail out and this ... — Edward Robin

HARVESTING ONLY DURING MONTHS WITH "R" IN THE NAME: I know that you heard that they say Oysters is only good with the of month of R in it and the reason for that is because the month of R in it is when its cold . . . — Edward Robin

ROUTINE FOR HARVESTING OYSTERS WITH SAILBOATS, ST. BERNARD PARISH: the boats used to sail out and stay two days, three days and they'd get there load and then come back in. — Edward Robin

SHIPMENT OF OYSTERS FROM ST. BERNARD PARISH TO NEW ORLEANS BY RAILROAD: C: Did they ever ship by train? E: Oh yeah! Oh yeah. Yeah they shipped, most of the stuff went by train and they shipped it to New Orleans and from New Orleans then to.. as much as I know now okay. — Edward Robin

OYSTER-RELATED BOATBUILDING IN ST. BERNARD PARISH: C: Now one of the things we're interested in, you said sailboats, did they make sails, where the boat made? E: The boat was made here. The boats were made here and the reason why it was sailboats because they never had motors. Everything was by sails. C: Did they make the sails here as well? E: That, I would have to say yes they did because everything else was handmade. — Edward Robin

MOST HARVESTED ST. BERNARD OYSTERS SOLD TO CANNERIES: D: Now was all of your oysters originally sold as countertrade? E: No. D: Okay E: No our oysters were not only for counter, but the majority of them was for cannery. We used to have a factory in Violet, which are you familiar with Violet? C: Yes sir E: Okay. — Edward Robin

OPERATIONS OF SCHOONERS INVOLVED IN OYSTER BUSINESS: The little oysters that he'd throw overboard, that's his crop for next year. That's the same way we do it right now. We're doing the same thing, the only thing we working out was hydraulics. B: Providing that that boat didn't work for the state factory, that canning factory cause if you worked for that canning factory, one of these ones that you mentioned, Rigolets, they wanted the schooner filled went directly to a canning factory. C: They didn't put them in sacks? B: No. They put them in what we called loose and then we'd, we called it barrels and now we always say it was three sacks to a barrel. Now the state is choosing the figure of 2 sacks to the barrel. For our purposes as when we do things, cultivating and regulating, we say we've got uh 400 barrels, how many sacks is that, roughly 1200 sacks, the state says. — Edward Robin

SYSTEM FOR MEASURING OYSTER CATCH — SACKS, BARRELS 1: C: They didn't put them in sacks? B: No. They put them in what we called loose and then we'd, we called it barrels and now we always say it was three sacks to a barrel. Now the state is choosing the figure of 2 sacks to the barrel. For our purposes as when we do things, cultivating and regulating, we say we've got uh 400 barrels, how many sacks is that, roughly 1200 sacks, the state says. E: (interrupts) 3 sacks to a barrel. B: roughly. A big boat might hold 700 barrels...I mean 2100 sacks, so we cultivating 2100 barrels or 1400 barrels, 1200 barrels a day . . . D: So you still use the term "barrel" B: We still use on our basic, we still use the term "barrel" on our boats.— Edward Robin

SYSTEM FOR MEASURING OYSTER CATCH — SACKS, BARRELS, KETTLES 2: B: La Tour, before that, I remember them two, going to....(inaudible)...opening it...And they measure by barrel also, and it was 3 sacks to a barrel. You know you had four hundred barrels on your boat, whatever it was and you had exactly how many kettles. They took the barrel, it was 22 or 24, I believe one was 22 and the other one was 24 kettles, 24 barrels to a kettle. You measured, that's how you measured you boat that day. D: A kettle was a steam kettle? E: A steam kettle. — Edward Robin

SYSTEM FOR MEASURING OYSTER CATCH — SACKS, BARRELS 3: B: A basket, well it's a standard measure for one sack. It's actually an oyster basket and the standard. E: It holds a 100 pounds. B: and the standard measure for a basket is a 100 pounds, 105 pounds roughly, it's called...it has no certification for that basket and the difference in and then you might hear stage of a bushel. A bushel is 60 pounds; a bushel is a small sack. Nowadays you have stages of box oysters and shucking oysters. A box oyster goes by a 100 count - 105 a mini sack is a 105. A sack, a standard is 105 oysters, not the box of oysters. A mini sack is 105 oysters. A sack is 105 pounds. — Edward Robin

OYSTER DREDGES: They were the original dredges, they were the real . . . Bailey named the dredges. Bailey made the dredges in Mississippi and the dredge can go from 14 feet to 26 feet or from 12 to 26 and a dredge can weigh from 60 pounds to a 120 pounds. We pull our dredge from the bottom of the, like a farmer pulls his hayfield, to plow his field, we do the same thing. That, a dredge is made out of, it's got, normally the ones we use is standard by 20T/teeth and they got an angle on them and they made out of steel with a rope back. And that dredge pulls along the bottom of the water where the bag fills up and all day you turn in circles and that dredge might come up a 100 times a day and every five minutes, it's up. E: And then it comes back together again by the tongs, the rake tongs. Alright, you got two so one guy got smart and divided them in half, now you got two, one on each side...come from each side the boat.** It folds on two, two rakes so they took one rake and divided it, now they made two, that's where one on each side of the boat. D; You use something like 12T or . . . B: No, we use 20T. D: What does that mean? B: The average, our dredges average around 69 inches in length. D: Okay. B: They roughly about 22 teeth to 24 teeth in that space. D: Teeth!! — Edward Robin

MOTHER SHIPS / OYSTER HARVESTING: E: . . . at one time, we had . . . we had twelve oyster boats. We used to stay on the outside and the old man used to come in everyday, anywhere from 800 to a 1,000 sacks of oysters on that boat, everyday, he'd go, he'd haul her in, we'd stay out there. Around 11 o'clock in the day, he was loaded up, he's coming home and then we stay on the anchor. — Edward Robin

OYSTER CAMPS, ST. BERNARD PARISH: D: Did you stay in a boat out there or did you have a little hut? B: Well, we did have huts, we had our own camps. E: We had big, We had our own camps, but most all of us stood on our own boats. Before we built the camps, we stood all on our own boats, we'd all tie up together in the evening and cook and everything and stay everything. The next morning before daylight we was up. — Edward Robin

OYSTER WARS — LOUISIANA VS. MISSISSIPPI — ORAL TRADITION REGARDING VIOLENCE, KILLINGS, ST. BERNARD PARISH: Now you said about the, not a war, there is a few of them that got shot and killed out there in the marsh from Mississippi. . . . I remember one guy that they shot, he was in the cabin and he was stealing oysters from them in the night time and from Mississippi. When he put the light out, they put the lights out on him. When he put the light on in the cabin, they put it out for him. That I remember like today. They didn't fool around out there. — Edward Robin

WORK ROUTINE, SACKING AND MOVING OYSTERS, ST. BERNARD PARISH (PRE-1960s): B: When we started, everything was done the hard way. On the ground shoveling, probably until maybe the '60s when we moved to putting them on tables, and then the table you are standing up and culling and throwing them, now you still had to sack, ...throwing in the sack, the oysters in baskets now and when the baskets gets full, dump! And then, when you coming in, you get to that 18 wheeler, now we got palettes, conveys...on palettes, forklifts them and runs them in the truck. When we started off, the truck backed up to the conveyer and you started that 40 foot with a sack and walk all the way, 40 foot, drop it, stack it 6 high and work your way back. — Edward Robin

SALE OF ST. BERNARD OYSTERS IN FRENCH QUARTER: But I can remember going with my father to, to the French Quarter with our product and sitting there till we sold the product and then come home. I can remember that. — Edward Robin

IMPACT OF REFRIGERATION — YEAR-ROUND OYSTER HARVESTING: B: Nowadays with no more seasons, we are at, we are at the stage we do it year-round because now, years ago the theory was you never fished the months without R. C: Right. B: But I really don't think that, I think its just because refrigeration. Nowadays we have refrigeration. We've move to the, to the advanced world where we have some of the best coolers in the world on our boats, we have some of the best equipment in the, so people's getting to feel more comfortable with the product and actually now private sector like I

am, sell more product in the summer months than the winter months because the winter months we compete with the wild reefs. Everybody got oysters, in the summer months, we have oysters. Louisiana right now I think we supply 75% of the oysters on the market in Louisiana, its from private sector. And there is 400,000, 392,000 private acres in the state of Louisiana now under lease. — Edward Robin

ORIGINS OF DUPUY'S OYSTER HOUSE, ABBEVILLE (1869): A: Really, I'm really not sure of that history of it, but from what I heard, when he started out he had a boat here docked in the back, and he would take the Vermilion River, go all the way down the bays—to the natural reefs that they had back there and he would dredge it himself, put 'em on the boat, and come back up the river, you know, and then, of course, shuck 'em and sell 'em to the public here for five cents a dozen, until eventually it came up, you know, where they wanted more and more and more and they started getting into other seafood items back then—from what I was told. — Manager, Dupuy's Restaurant, Abbeville

CONCENTRATION OF THE POPULATION ALONG THE TERREBONNE PARISH COAST: The majority of the people in Terrebonne parish lived in Dulac. It was the hub, the economic hub. Still in 1880, they probably had, well in 1860 when he [his ancestor] got to Houma, they had about 450 people in the village and surrounding area of Houma and by 1880 or 1890 they had about 1,500. Most of the people lived on the coast. — Chris Cenac

DEMOGRAPHIC GROWTH AND POPULATION SHIFT AS A RESULT OF THE TERREBONNE PARISH OYSTER INDUSTRY: Anyway, the tremendous population increase was all due to the oyster industry. We doubled, then tripled in size from 1890 to 1910, the city of Houma. — Chris Cenac

SIZE OF THE TERREBONNE PARISH OYSTER FLEET: We had 600 canotes. A canote is a French word for what you call a lugger today. A lugger is a water-born oyster transporter if you will. The word lugger comes from the Croatian word lugr, which is the word in their language for the square sail that went on a one masted leuti sailing vessel and its called a lugr sail and of course you know today luggers are still here today because that’s the word we use for a small, shallow draft, slow moving vessel used in the oil field comes from the original word for a lugr sail. We had 600 Canotes in the oyster industry in Terrebonne parish, 1900. — Chris Cenac

ORIGINS OF TERREBONNE PARISH’S OYSTER INDUSTRY: Sold all of his property in St. Mary's parish, moved to Houma, reorganized and started Houma Fish and Oyster Company Limited in 1893 as the owner. First step for the Cenac family, commercial, large scale oyster business. Couple of other people at the time, all local consumption. ...*Mr. Geaux, Francios Geaux* also from France, little small things. To bring it all

together, here we are 1890, 1893, from the east coast here comes Robert J. Younger from Chesapeake, Baltimore. He comes to Terrebonne, okay. Here comes Mr. C.C. Miller from Connecticut. Mr. Miller is the guy that invented the shipping container. it's on the front over here, the Scealshipt System Scealshipt. It was a wooden shipping container held together with rings, metal rings and they shucked the oysters and 2.5 and 5 gallon cans to put them in the containers, iced them and put them on the railroad. So he brought the Scealshipt System to Terrebonne. He stated C.C. Miller & Company. Robert Younger started R.J. Younger & Company, all on Bayou Terrebonne. Tophio Cenac had Houma Fish & Oyster Company. 1896 remember them leaving the east coast, Biloxi, Gulfport, the market's happening, the business is getting organized, we got some commercialization, we got ice. — Chris Cenac

WORK ROUTINE, TERREBONNE OYSTER INDUSTRY PROCESSORS: They got rid of the kerosene lamps cause they had to get up early in the morning, 2, 3:00 in the morning, shuck oysters in the morning because during the day you had to ship them. Remember everything is being pulled with wagons, horses, oxen, there's no vehicles, you could only do that during the day so you shuck them early morning and you transport it in daylight. So we in 1900, we got electricity, we got ice, refrigeration, we got the railroad transportation, and we got the resources. — Chris Cenac

BOHEMIANS: Dr. Jeff Skrimpski opened the . . . Pelican Lake Oyster & Packing Company, got it off the label. Anyway that started about 1908, 1906. He imported 1,500 Bohemians from Baltimore and the east coast. Bohemians were basically Romanian and people of eastern origin working in factories there, got them to Houma and they doubled them up the population. D: And he did this own his own? C: On his own? D: Brought in 1,500 people. C: In two waves, two or three waves for the Pelican Lake Oyster & Packing Company. Interestingly enough in the '20s and '30s Pelican Lake Oyster & Packing Company was the largest pumpkin canning company in the United States and I actually have pictures of wooden barges of pumpkins in Bayou Terrebonne here and they still can pumpkins. I can't remember, I don't know if I ever bought one a can of canned pumpkin but its still popular on the east coast. But it was the largest pumpkin canning company in the United States. But he was a doctor, he quit medicine in 1900 when he had the ice company, Houma Ice & Manufacturing Company and he was just selling electricity and he had the packing company so he got out of medicine. So Houma's got 5,000 people now, and we're in 1910, everything is good. Sugarcane business is going pretty good. The '20s, well in 1906 Theophile Cenac, he was the thinker, acquired the Ford agency. He had the first subsequently dealership, Ford dealership in this part of south Louisiana and he bought it so that they could have access to engines to put engines convert to sailing fishing fleet to motors, the engines. And he was instrumental in doing that, the sailing fleet was basically all motorized by 1930. — Chris Cenac

TERREBONNE PARISH CANNERIES: C: The St. Martins had a factory at Daspit or Boudreaux Canal and their shipping, they would bring them up the Bayou Chauvin. I'm tell these people where we talking about, we in Chauvin, Louisiana, Bayou Little Caillou, bring them up the bayou to Bayou Terrebonne and the present day Water Life Museum on Park Avenue was Jean-Pierre Cenac's storage facility at one time and he sold it to Mr. Armond St. Martin around 1910 so the St. Martin's would have a storage facility here to label the oysters and what have you and bring them right up the street by Lafayette Street to put them on the railroad. So the St. Martins were down in Chauvin, the *Maries* are down in Chauvin, the *Lockgners* are in Grand Caillou, Chauvin Brothers are in Chauvin, C. Cenac & Company, Houma Fish & Oyster, R.J. Younger, C.C. Miller, Flechian Guidry, *Dr. Jastrempski the Henrys .... , on Bayou Terrebonne. The major players maybe twenty big factories then. — Chris Cenac

SOURCE OF CANS FOR TERREBONNE PARISH CANNERIES: C: Yeah, our cans came from New Orleans, C Cenac & Company came from New Orleans, only thing Houma ever had Mr. Teles Babin invented the Babin Pump. He invented that pump in the early 1900s and he did it all by hand, it was all local tinsmiths, we had no manufacturing capabilities at all to this day none in Terrebonne parish, Lafourche, or St. Mary relative to canning things, none. American Can in New Orleans I'm sure was the source. I also know that the labels and the stationary were made in New Orleans, the calling cards I have one right here for C Cenac & Company in 1906. I even have the man's name and his place of business in the French Quarter is a lithograph, it’s a precursor to silent movies, you moved it back and forth and it's a calling card, I don't know if you saw it up there. But I have him and he was in business up until 1910 in New Orleans in the French Quarter. The labels of course were paper labels put on by hand. Then the canning process you could imprint upon the can itself and you see some of the cans here earlier with no colors to them, there is just a common can and it's imprinted and then they developed through advertising, colors and it all came out at one time and you didn't have to put the labels on by hand anymore but that's all done in New Orleans. — Chris Cenac

BALTIMORE AS THE EPICENTER OF EARLY AMERICAN CANNING: Okay the cans and I have it written right there. In the 1860s they were producing about 5 million cans in the Baltimore area and by 1890, I hate to say the number but it was like 30 million cans because it was also Baltimore was canning us vegetables too. It was the first city in the United States to can seafood and vegetables in the same year, corn and oysters, okay they the first city to do that. I mean because they had the cans, they had the manufacturing. — Chris Cenac

USE OF TOKENS IN TERREBONNE CANNERIES: C; …we have Civil War currency and then after the Civil War nobody had any money, everybody's busted so we have reconstruction happening, still not a lot of economy business commerce, very rural, I'm talking about Terrebonne now, Terrebonne, Lafourche, below New Orleans, very rural

but they did have merchants so the merchants developed a barter system trade tokens. They printed their own tokens. I have tokens from ... Bakery, I have tokens for the elementary school, Dupont Grocery Store, Angeron Lake Fish & Oyster Company, Houma Fish & Oyster Company. People if you shucked oysters you were paid with a Houma Fish & Oyster Company token and they got cent values 20 cents, 10 cents, whatever and then you could go to A M J Dupont or Mr. Jean-Marie Dupont then. You could go to Dupont's and use that token to get 10 cents worth of flour and then he if somebody needed change he would use that token to give you the change for an Ordone Plantation dollar token. The plantations had their own tokens and everybody was paid in tokens. They still never had a significant amount of national currency of course the banks did have national currency but the local people had the U.S. dollars, the local people trade old barter system in tokens. — Chris Cenac

TABASCO AND THE EXPORT OF LOUISIANA OYSTERS: So with ice and the westward expansion, the first fast food in the nation was the oyster, because you only had to pick it up – you didn't have to grow it. And you pick it up, and it's protein. And it was a – there was a spurge of the day. Oyster taverns and oyster saloons. And what was interesting with that – in the 1860s was when Tabasco started. And the Mcllhenny family has some correspondence where they were promoting the use of Tabasco on the seafood so they sort of rode on the back of the oyster to get national recognition. And they promoted things like one drop, two drops, and what happened, and they have this documented – somebody put a cup, and put the oyster in the cup and ate it, and made the news because it blistered his tongue. So Tabasco rode the back of the oyster west. And the use of Tabasco and the invention of cocktail sauce was to hide the smell of the seafood – the further west you went, the less refrigeration you had. And I think that's a fabulous story too. So if you – if you look at the history of Tabasco, and you see how oysters got started, everything went great until the late 1880s when they started to have pollution problems on the east coast. Too many people were running out of seafood because they were not replanting the reefs – they were harvesting, but there was no um, what's the word I want to use? There was no, um, replenishment, in other words. — Chris Cenac

OYSTER COMMISSION: So they started coming over here. So that made them form the oyster commission, which is the forerunner of the present day Wildlife and Fisheries, and then before that, Conservation Department. They all – they were having oyster wars in the Chesapeake Bay, between Maryland, Virginia – they were having wars. There were actually boats and they had a Navy. Each state had a Navy to protect their reefs. They formed the oyster commission, and the first failed attempt to regulate the industry and protect the reefs was parish-wide, parish controlled. And that didn't work, so the state took over, and they actually built four gunboats. —Chris Cenac

RAILROADS AND EXPORT OF TERREBONNE OYSTERS: The largest community was in Dulac. The second largest was in Shriever and Gibson. Because in the 1850s, the railroad came through there. Caillouville, if you will, and Thibodauxville, Shriever. So Mr. Morgan had, of the Morgan Steamship Company, and his association with the Vanderbilts, had the steamships and the railroad. Um, there were a couple individuals in Morgan City that were harvesting oysters and putting them on the steamships, because you could ride the train from New Orleans to Morgan City – (inaudible). But you had to take the boat to Texas. So they were selling seafood, oysters in particular, because all you had to do was keep them wet. You didn't have to have any ice, and they were good for a few days. And the Cenac brothers were sailing with luggers, oysters from their reefs to sell in Morgan City. And buy goods from the end of the train – the end of the road at the end of the train. But you could get things in Morgan City that you can get in New Orleans without having to go to New Orleans. So they were bringing oysters to Morgan City, and then from Morgan City they'd come back with groceries in the store they had in Dulac. — Chris Cenac

OYSTERS AS THE BACKBONE OF THE REGIONAL ECONOMY: And up until the forties, the early forties, from 1900 to 1940, the backbone of the economy in this area was seafood - oysters initially. In the late twenties, with the advent of the seine and motor power – I mean, not the seine. The trawl and motor power, which really didn't get going until the early thirties, shrimp, and we had all the other associated things, moss, frogs, market hunting, the crab, crabmeat in the early 1900s - mostly in Morgan City, not so much in Terrebonne. There were seven or eight places where they were producing crabmeat in 1910 or so in St. Mary parish. This area rode the first forty years of the twentieth century on the back of the oyster and the shrimp. —Chris Cenac

SEASONAL CANNING IN TERREBONNE BEFORE OYSTERS—WITH BALTIMORE CONNECTION: Believe it or not, there's a well, if you talk about canning, remember, I said Baltimore, they had the can and they were the first people to do corn and seafood. And what that did, that meant that it was seasonal. So you had to adapt the process that you could work year-round. They had seafood in the winter and they had vegetables in the summer, and they brought that down here in the largest pumpkin canning facility in the world was right here in Houma. Dr. (Jestremski). And I actually have wooden barges in Bayou Terrebonne full of pumpkins, right here in Houma. Um, the canning – the process is later on than we talking about packing and shipping fresh oysters. That was a little later. Um, and of course it goes hand in hand with the Bohemians, the ancient European people from the Baltimore area. We had over a thousand of those individuals working here in the canning business in the early 1900s. We were living here —Chris Cenac

EARLY DISTRIBUTION OF TERREBONNE PARISH OYSTERS — But you had to take the boat to Texas. So they were selling seafood, oysters in particular, because all you had

to do was keep them wet. You didn't have to have any ice, and they were good for a few days. And the Cenac brothers were sailing with luggers, oysters from their reefs to sell in Morgan City. And buy goods from the end of the train – the end of the road at the end of the train. But you could get things in Morgan City that you can get in New Orleans without having to go to New Orleans. So they were bringing oysters to Morgan City, and then from Morgan City they'd come back with groceries in the store they had in Dulac. —Chris Cenac

ORIGINS OF OYSTER INDUSTRY IN TERREBONNE PARISH, CENAC FAMILY OPERATION: C. Cenac and Company, and they jointly began what we consider the modern seafood business here in Terrebonne. Um, and it all started – they all started – they all started um, when there was a transition from sail to mechanization. We had refrigeration. We had electricity, and we had communication and transportation - communication via telegraph on the railroad. —Chris Cenac

OYSTER OPERATIONS AROUND COCODRIE, OYSTERMEN LIVE ON LEASE SITES: Well, my family, like my father, he had, he wasn't uh, a shrimper you know. He didn't start shrimping until the late forties. He was an oysterman. His daddy was an oysterman. They lived in, like I said over there in Bay St. Elaine like I talked about. And they would go there and they would fish oysters - it was all oyster time and they would live like that I mean that was their home. And they would go over there and they would fish oysters for maybe 4, 5 days, and they had a reef they called it, a cleaner reef where there were no oysters – and they had a cleaner reef, and after they catch the oysters, instead of leaving on boat – because the oysters were gonna die - every day they would go back and put them on there, and what they would do is to the drum big drums and leave the oysters out there. They would take some wire like all white and everything else and they'll make a fence all in the reef - something like maybe 50 by 50, 60 by, 60, something like that. They would throw back that oyster on that reef right there. And when they would get ready to go back to the market with it, they would go back and put the boat next to it right there, get the oysters up again and put them back in their boat again. — Houston Foret

BULK SHIPMENTS OF TERREBONNE OYSTERS TO CANNERIES: Movement of oysters in bulk to Houma…Alright, and then he…now where did he take those oysters? These oysters would leave and go all the way to Bateau Cheramie in Houma. All the way to Houma. That was a day's ride to go to Houma. D: And he, and no bigoneaux, and he gets to Houma now what does he do- does he sell it in the bag or does he sell it… F: No he sells it in bulk. He sell it - put them in baskets or when they were steaming oysters, in other words, then you would go ahead and pay them on the yield – whatever the yield would come out in the end. D: So he wasn't putting them in sacks. He was just putting them… F: They were all in bulk on the boat. It was all in bulk – they had to shovel them back out. When they get to Houma they would shovel them back. Either they were in

baskets or whatever - they were all in baskets they had to put them in baskets to bring them to the steamer and everything, you know. B: About how much – how many pounds in a load? F: Well we'll have to go in to sacks - probably in those days, like 4 – 500 sacks, you know,100 pound sacks. B: Boat was pretty low in the water… Yeah well you know the way they would load that, in those boats you had that much water in the deck. I was low – it was on the water. The cabin and that and everything else - they would uh, where that hole was that and everything else - they had boards that comes up probably 2 ft boards that for the cabin and everything the cabin was probably 2 feet above the deck and everything so the water was on the deck. The way the boat was made – not the whole boat was under water – what was madethe middle of the boat - that was under water. — Houston Foret

IT WOULD TAKE A DAY TO TRANSPORT OYSTERS FROM REEFS TO HOUMA CANNERIES: D: That's a lot of shrimp – that's a lot of oysters. And you're just , putt putt putt putt putt putt putt putt F: Like I said, it would take them a day to go to Houma. — Houston Foret

EDWARD ROBIN'S SHRIMP AND OYSTER DAILY OUTPUT, ST. BERNARD PARISH: I used to handle anywhere from 80 to 100 thousand pounds of shrimp a day. I used to ship out three and four tractor loads of oysters a day, each tractor holds 400 sacks and I'd ship them all over, where they used to open them up by hand and some of them went to the cannery and so forth. — Edward Robin

LOSS OF OYSTER PROCESSORS AFTER 2005: D: Now these are . . . I call them counter oysters. You know these are in the shell? B: Yes. We ship all over and now Louisiana does not have the processors. We lost probably 30 processors since Katrina. We lost in this little town, we lost myself and four other competitors to me. I was the biggest out of all of them. We lost them. In Houma area where the hurricane hit, we lost gangs of them there. Then you move over to the Biloxi coast you lost almost, that back bay area, you almost lost all them...casinos... You don't have, the problem is you don't have, you didn't have the product, right now you don't have the product to service the industry so the industry can't get back running and I kind of debating the state because it's putting the horse behind the cart instead of putting it in front. You want to promote seafood and grant it, I want to promote my seafood but when you promote it, where are you going to get it from? You got to build your resources first. Get your resources up building, then get your promotion going with it. — Edward Robin

OYSTER DRILLS / BIGARNEAUX: Well the bigorneaux - well what they would do with the bigorneaux is they would go to the other the reef and uh, what they would do is like, the time like March, April, May, that area right there they would take palmettos and they would tie them up on some poles and dry that in that reef. And then bigorneauxs they would climb up there and lay their eggs. So what they would do they would go our there

in their skiff and they would pull the pole out and shake that in the boat and get the bigoneaux's out of there, and pull them on there so they could dry, you know. They weren't that stupid. — Houston Foret

NEGATIVE IMPACT OF BP OIL SPILL ON LOUISIANA OYSTER INDUSTRY: You still have restaurants that says on their label, "We do not serve Gulf seafood". We need to work on that. It's something we need to work on so that way I can sit here with people, your next generation with my kids and be asking the questions "What his daddy did in this business?" because we have a great business and a great state....we have like I tell everybody Louisiana has the best of all worlds. We have the best seafood, we have the best recreation, we have the best restaurants. People who visit in New Orleans is one of the best cities to visit. Put it all together, we couldn't handle the people who would come in. — Edward Robin

PETROLEUM INDUSTRY

EARLY FIELDS CONSISTED OF CLUSTERS OF SHALLOW WELLS: All those domes were then looked on as a cookbook to be able to drill relatively shallow wells. I mean you talk about a thousand to four thousand foot wells. Relatively shallow – all done in wooden derricks. — David Richard

LOUISIANA'S STATE BUDGET PEGGED TO PRICE OF OIL AND GAS: We could talk about income taxes, we could talk about sales taxes, we could talk about smaller government, we could talk about bigger government, we could talk about education, but Louisiana's budget depends on the price of oil and gas. — Clifford Smith

OIL CAMPS EAST OF THE ATCHAFALAYA BASIN / HUMBLE CAMP: I grew up in a Humble camp in Paradis – which is St. Charles Parish. Um, my dad worked for Humble Oil, and um, I guess there were maybe forty or fifty houses there. There was an old road. There was a Texaco, um, campsite just had like three or four houses on the right side. We were across the railroad track to get to the Humble Campsite. There was a big Indian mound to the left. There was like a pond in the front, and then you went into the camp. And um, immediately to the um, to the left was a – a huge office, and then there were like maybe thirty or forty houses. There was a boathouse in the back that housed some crew boats. And um, there were also – a lot of um, electric pirogues, because all the guys would go fishing late in the afternoon. There might've been twenty, um, electric pirogues plugged into a battery or something, and the guys would go fly-fishing in the afternoon down the canal. And um, ha ha. We grew up on the canal, you know. There was an old road. There was a Texaco, um, campsite just had like three or four houses on the right side. We were across the railroad track to get to the Humble Campsite. There was a big Indian mound to the left. There was like a pond in the front, and then you went into the camp. And um, immediately to the um, to the left was a – a huge office, and then there

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PROHIBITION

SMUGGLING, BOOTLEGGING, ST. BERNARD PARISH 1: MB: Manuel Molero. DD: Okay. MB: Yes and he was a bootlegger. We were sort of proud of that. — Michael Benge

SMUGGLING, BOOTLEGGING, ST. BERNARD PARISH 2: They used to come and bootleg at night time out there and when I was a kid I remember. — Edward Robin

RUM RUNNING, TERREBONNE PARISH: Yeah, during prohibition. Uh, this is a little interesting thing right there. They uh - the place they used to store it was (Baudoin?) Island, which is totally gone now. They had people living there, oystering and everything else, at that time whiskey pass was a very small pass. And these people would come in, and they would go ahead and they couldn't bring it in - they'd hide their whiskey on Baudoin Island. And all these Cajuns around here, they would do all that and they would go at night and everything else and get all together with the people that were watching and everything else and they'd go and steal their whiskey.. Houston Foret

RUM RUNNING, SHIP SHOALS: Well you had all these freight boats that was traveling all the time you know, I mean from all over the area that would come we had a lot of people that used to be like um, the - years ago they used to travel all the way from Mexico all the way to Spain – that's the area they would travel this area right here and really they would travel this area over here because there's an island we have, well it's not an island anymore but, which was called uh, Ship Shore. Which was a big ol' island they tell me, years ago, and you had your barrier islands over here which was pass – I it was a deep pass in between and there was a shelf that they get a lot of (inaudible) and ship shore itself is probably, by looking at the map of how wide it was and everything where the sandbars are and everything, it's probably 15, 20 miles long. That was an island right there. And they would come right there and that's where all the trading was made and everything else. — Houston Foret

BOOTLEGGING, LAKE FAUSSE POINTE: And my grand – my grandfather was the best bootlegger they had in Louisiana – in this area. And he did not sell that much alcohol. He did not sell it. He traded it. So people would bring him um, corn, beans, cucumbers, carrots, everything you need to cook with, so he made that money with that in food. I don't see nothing wrong with it really. But um, I know where the still's at. I still know where it's at. And I – unless it's um, park that they're building on Lake Fausse Pointe tore it out, it's still there. That foundation is still there. — Marshall Borel

RANCHING

EARLIEST STRAINS OF LOUISIANA CATTLE / LONGHORNS: R: We uh, I can tell you about my youngest experiences – we had lots of longhorns influence, and lots of those cattle were um, in my vernacular we'd say chisel backs. They didn't have uh, they did not have the meat. They did not have the quarters. They were thinner cattle, um, and I mean, still today, we have what we call Dulong cattle, uh, cattle that you know, I mean the Franch names are Dulong and (Muskaret?) – the different French names that I grew up with in regard to the types of cattle and how they would be identified by. When you would part cattle out. Um, then you had the Brahman influence, you had the Angus influence, you had uh, later on you had you know some Hereford influence but it had to be in a cross bred situation, you know. Now marsh cattle, my preference, is another one, Brahman Hereford. And then you make a three way cross – and that's prevalent in cattle mentality with black hoofs. Uh, because today the black market it – the market for angus cattle bought market for cattle – really in tune to black cattle. I mean it's we went through this period of Exotics, Charolais, and Charolais you're gonna find that it's southwest Louisiana also. Uh, Brahman – my earliest remembrance of cattle – of woods cattle – cattle that we call came out of the woods – woods cattle. Cattle came out of the woods all had Brahman influence and those were cattle that were tough. You've gotta have the Brahman influence because they have pores that are in their skin that can take the heat. — David Richard

PIONEER CATTLEMEN: Perry Ridge is the one that's right north of there. It was named Perry Ridge – Perry's an old name. they had a grave on our property from Perry who was given a consolation acrage after the civil war. And he wanted to be buried in the gate of this cowpen. That grave is sill there today maintainted by overeseers. On that piece of property. — David Richard

CATTLE TRAILS THROUGH THE MARSH: Cattle had trails in the marsh that are still visible today. Where they couldn't push through the mud and the muck and the grass. But if they could make a trail where they could half swim, half touch the bottom, they were able to navigate across bad areas. So you don't get out of that cow trail. — David Richard

GUM COVE, BRAHMAN CATTLE: That's all his property, over here [on out to] Gum Cove Ridge. And that's cattle-raising areas. And those are fairly representative of the—he had about 1,900 head of cattle on the property and Ike got around 8 or 900 of 'em drowned. D: How many bulls? A: Peuh! Lot's of 'em. One for every 30. That's about the ratio . . . — Allen Ensminger

CREOLE PONIES: Well I think because the Creole ponies dimensioned again when these remount stallions came in and started to breed a better type of horse. Uhh horses had, had a little more durability if they, if they were from these remount stallions, bred and durability. The strength of the Creole pony was and this, this is not only in Louisiana, this is all over Latin America where there is, every country you go to has its own Creole pony. Uh durability, stamina those little horses could work from daylight to dawn and they were there where some of the improved horse breeds would play out on you in early afternoon but these little horses were, they didn't have, they were smaller and shorter and they didn't have to fight the tree limbs as much. They were really very durable and that was not necessarily fast but quick and so they lasted, when I was, when I was a child, I had, my father bought a mare when I was uh 5 years old and bred her to what I call my saddle horse, so I've been horsing since uh I guess since 7 or 8 years old pretty well and this horse was from a remount stallion, the saddle horse, my saddle horse was from a remount stallion and all they kids I rode with was still riding Creole ponies, but very old, very contrary, very hard headed, very durable. — Hollis Chapman

CATTLE DRIVES, COASTAL PLAIN: R: I remember the - talking about the cattle drives in Chenier (inaudible). You gotta understand a lot of those cattle were moved up and down the coast. To different ranges. They were also moved from North to South. . . . They brought the cattle back the next Fall. — David Richard

IMPORTANCE OF BRAHMA CATTLE: Ken LeDoux: Um, I know uh, the particular area from Ged south to Johnson Bayou , um, probably is different in some marsh areas that you see. David's had more experience in many different areas than I have, but, but I can tell you about some of those um, so called marshes uh, and it takes a Brahman influenced cow to navigate and want to explore and find better grasses. Uh, they, they must maintain some Brahman influence. But in doing so those cattle travel out in areas you would think are totally impassable. And uh, we do still use whips. We do use dogs on certain occasions. Some places they're not applicable but certain pennings in certain areas they do use dogs. But what I noticed or what I learned from the old cowboys, I was fortunate enough to go to Gray Ranch when Mr. Pete Henderson was still alive. He had been retired by the String family. And his son was the current ranch foreman at that time. Uh, when I went to farm, but here were guys like Bud Trahan who lived in one of the ranch houses in Johnson Bayou. He and his wife uh, lived on the ranch property in Johnson bayou. So I got to know him and his old stories. Dennis birch, Um lived at what we call the Pines, and I'm sure we'll talk about that more later. But uh, I got to hear those stories

of those were cowboys and uh, Dennis was a trapper as well as a cowboy. Uh, and up at headquarters in Ged, um, the guys that have ranched for Mr. Pete Henderson early on are now in their later years, and have taken jobs in the oil field. I' m not sure we'll talk about the Ged Oil Field more, but those guys were MS. Everybody called him Bud Johnson. Buster Singleton, uh, Shelby Broussard, those guys that have all lived and worked on the ranch in their early years, but they've now taken jobs in the oil field. And uh, of course I got to work with them and they worked seven and seven, so on their seven days off, they were working at the ranch. And – I got to work with those guys and hear those stories. Uh, um, Bud Johnson was - all of them were good cowmen - or cowboys. Let me put it to you that way. And I remember several of them who were excellent with handling whips, and Bud Johnson was one of them. And uh, for our purposes at the ranch, David can expound on this more, but the whips were used more just to make a little noise. You could ride out on the ridge in the marsh and see some cows grazing on the marsh – sit there and pop the whip a time or two and those cows start coming out on their own. You go out there and try to 'hoo rah', get rough with them, you'd bog something down. That was our experience with whips used in the marsh. So that's uh, it was more for, for just making a little noise. — David Richard

HORSE CULTURE: Louisiana horse breeding is very interesting subject to me and uh again it's another thing that I neglected to study in depth, but I think you could pretty well summarize that it improved horse breeding going from the Creole pony that was just a native horse running wild on the prairie so you could go from there to the uh to the release of the um to the release of the army stallions and the transport of those stallions in into Louisiana. The remount stallions has a whole history of those you'd, you'd find it on the computer ... the history of horse racing in Louisiana and the history of better horses developed in Louisiana primarily goes back to the remount stallions that people were able to attain when the Calvary decided they weren't, the U.S. Calvary decided they weren't going to be in the horse, horse business anymore. Many got it. it goes from there in to again because of the influence that Paul's and his people have had over time uh you got 4-H kids interested in horse projects and you see more of the quarter horses that have come in. Louisiana people were early on into what the, what, what contributed to the quarter horse industry as we know it today at least on the race horse side because Cajuns were always famous for having race horses and some of those horses were, were originally what we referred to as good race horses and some people called them quarter horses and they went into the make up of the quarter horse breed, but inevitably uh the good race horses go back to the remount stallions that came down to the country. — Hollis Chapman

BRUCELLOSIS: R: Okay when I came to the ranch, I came to the ranch in 1972. There was a total herd depopulation in 1971 due to brucellosis and TB. Quarantined and had been inactive for many years. Okay so uh, powers to be decided it was best to just depopulate.

Leave the ranch vacant for one year, and that was according to government regulations, and then repopulate. But before my time, uh, and this is well documented in the Louisiana Cowboy Book, uh, Mr. Henry Gray uh, John Geddings Gray's son, who it's my understanding was the true stock person. Cow person, horse person. And uh, must've had a true love for Gray Ranch. He knew of grasses in Johnson Bayou. And wanted to find the direct route to get his cattle form Ged, South of Venton, to Johnson Bayou. And they rode that marsh horseback – which I can't even imagine what that must've been like. The few times I've been bogged down, I always think about Henry Gray riding from the first time from Vinton to Johnson Bayou, and I can't even imagine what he must've gone through. But he did - he found the he found a, a route and with the help of building some what we call dumps, small levees, to go for a real bad - go across the worst parts of the marsh. He was able to drive cattle from Benton down to Johnson bayou. They wintered down there. Now I'm telling you stories that I've heard. — David Richard

EXPORT OF CATTLE FROM CHENIÈRE RANCHES: We also had cattle that were shipped by sea out of Cameron. We also that - and that's documented in regard to moving steers or whatever. The same thing um, out of Johnson bayou. Where you had cattle that were moved by boat. And marketed in that way. — David Richard

GOVERNMENT EFFORT TO STAMP OUT BRUCELLOSIS (1960S): L: Well the way that transpired was the government stepped in and said if you will depopulate, leave the land idle for one year, you've got - correct me if I'm wrong - you've got a year from that date to reinvest that money in livestock. Or I'm assuming there would be some tax disadvantages. Okay so one year left idle for one year and then you had one year to repopulate. Okay. — Kent LeDoux

IMPORTANCE OF HAVING BRAHMA STRAIN IN COASTAL CATTLE: L: And I was there at that time and uh, the gentleman that was in charge of land management uh, purchased a thousand heifers at one time. So that got us pretty well on the road. D: But these aren't – these have to be cattle that can work the marsh? So if I'm - and you always said that there has to be a little Brahman? L: Brahman influence. D: Where do you go find cattle that have the right Brahman influence to work South Louisiana's marshes? L: These cattle happen to be involved around New Roads, so they were South Louisiana cattle. Uh, but I would tell you that is a very uh, critical decision for me. As to raise my own heifers versus buying heifers. Because economically, I can show you where it's cheaper to go buy a bred cow than it is to raise a heifer. But it takes so long for a cow that's brought in from another area to acclimate to our country, that I'm still currently raising our own replacements. For that very reason. — Kent LeDoux

HURRICANES (RITA & IKE): R: Not everything but you look at them from another standpoint, um, we went from uh, probably 700 mama cows to less than 100. And a lot of those rescued them in the marsh marsh – in air boats, shrimp boats tied to barges and uh,

lots of things that went on here during Rita that uh, I worked at that for almost thirty days, Kent worked with it for the same amount of time here on the western side. Uh, trying to salvage the cattle, but we couldn't – because there were lots of cattle that were stuck in the marsh - there was no fresh water, and nothing to eat. So um, and there are some records to that you'd probably, you know, somebody needs to save. I can't hardly bring myself to that period of time to take photographs, but… No and it's gotta be tough, David. R: It was tough. It was a tough deal, and it's tough bringing back the cattle because I worked for thirty years to get a population of cattle that - I had a little herd of registered Herefords that we used in the show ring with my kids. I (inaudible) Brahman bulls. I raised some of my own bulls. I raised my own heifers. To replace that herd, it's gonna take me a long time. And uh, it's been a tough deal. And it's been a tough deal you know I estimate we lost 20,000 head for hurricane Rita. For hurricane Ike, it hadn't been repopulated. A lot of those cattle have not been repopulated. And most of those cattle moved out of there. I actually lost some for hurricane Ike for some extenuating circumstances, but I was able to save um, a little less than a hundred head. I lost about 50 head. But um, it was I was not able to get them out because smaller circumstances, in any case, it's been a tough deal in that country for cattle. — David Richard

MODERN RANCHING TECHNIQUES: R: Identification of cattle um, is done by branding and earmark. Now, we've got a lot of sophisticated things today about implanting, you know, ships that you can read with a reader, whatever, cattle are done by, by branding an ear mark, and still today. You have a cow outside to identify – I served eight years on the Louisiana Brand Commission. Here in Louisiana. From – as a representative of the Louisiana Land Owner's Association. We were brand inspectors. We still have brand inspectors at the sale barns that check the brand on those cattle as they come through the sale barn. So identification of cattle – I use different methods of branding. There's all kinds of things. This is the impart brand – the Gray brand is the impart brand. That's – we still brand the cattle today. Now, when you want to part out the herd, there's people that are just, like marsh biologists. I've had lots of students – masters and PHD students that work on the big boat professionally when I was with wildlife and fisheries, and actually still working with students today through different universities. But some people learn the marsh, and some people never understand the marsh. Some people understand cattle and understand the behavior of cattle, and some people never do understand the behavior of cattle. People that understand the behavior of cattle will understand that this cow belongs with this calf. The smell, the look, the activities of that calf, prime example sitting next to me here. And he'll verify what I'm telling you, but that man would also have you could call him the trail boss, you could call him whatever you want to call him. The foreman– you can call him – he's a leader. He'll go in the herd, he'll probably bring a man or two with him in a big herd. And now I actually part out the cattle for different ownerships, or in our case, you might part out the heifer calves with the mamas in this herd, the beef calves that you're gonna castrate and put them in this herd, and uh, it's down to a system

to where you hold the cattle, and then the guy – the guy or guys, probably two or three, will actually part out the cattle. And that's where the horse training comes in. and that's where the quarter horses are so valuable. And I really should let Kent talk about all that. — David Richard

CREOLE PONIES: B: And the Creole ponies too if they're still around if you can… I'm so excited - I am interested that you know that. I grew up with the wild Creole ponies on the range in Creole. They were pink horses. And they were wild. And uh, and I can't tell you about the origin of the pissel tails. But I've heard, I've heard as a kid. B: I'd like to hear you talk more about the Creole ponies, because … R: Do you know what they brought the Creole ponies for? We catch the Creole ponies and we cut the hair off the tai – I can remember it just like it was yesterday. Cut the hair off the tails and cut off the mane and make – made bridle reins inside of that. You had plaited bridle reins out of the hair from those Creole ponies. — David Richard

DISTINCTION MADE BETWEEN MILK AND BEEF CATTLE: I'm thinking because of early settlers coming with families, that the milk cow probably followed pretty closely and all through the Colonial development period and it would be the basis of the early beef cattle industry. In fact my grandfather, when I asked him as a young man, I'd asked him about, we called my grandfather, papa, how many cows did you have? And he would always differentiate. he would say I have (in French) fourteen milk cows and bêtes a corne and that last description bothered me a long time because as, Carl, you probably know that corne is also means horns, so my immediate thought was that he was talking about cattle with horns and that doesn't differentiate them from any cattle because most of the cattle had horns in those days. And then I realized later on as I got more familiar with the Latin countries that corne probably meant carne which means beef or ... and that's how he was dividing his cows. Again going back to the fact that he separated milk cows from other cows I'm thinking milk cows and other types of milk cows were probably prominent. And I would guess the most prominent breed would be those from the British Isles, probably Jersey cattle predominate in that particular group of cows. And also I would say from England, probably the Durham. They were a breed of cattle and I think you can still find them if you do some research. They called Durham cattle. — Hollis Chapman

INTRODUCTION OF PUREBRED CATTLE INTO LOWER LOUISIANA: I think in Southwest Louisiana that probably the first impact of the purebred were realized when the Midwesterners came down to grow rice in the Vermilion country, Vermilion country of Louisiana and brought their black angus cattle as they referred to them to them then I think was the first evidence that we have of pure bred cattle coming into the country, and of course as time changed and people got more particular about the kind of cattle, um that they raised, then you saw other breeds like the American Brahman creeping in and up till the present day, probably Louisiana, Southwest Louisiana has a representation of mostly

the pure bred cattle. There is something interesting that crept into my mind that I didn't realize until I was uh fully grown and doing some private contracting throughout a good part of the Latin American world and that is that wealthy people, the world over, I have found tend to be the people that have pure bred cattle and horses. And it's kind of, as I see it, it's kind of a social thing so I think . . . C: A status symbol? H: A status symbol and I think as we, as we saw the black cattle come with the very progressive rice farmers that brought them here, we saw a little bit more socialization maybe moving into the cattle industry along with the purebreds. — Hollis Chapman

MERITS OF PUREBREDS VS. HYBRIDS: C: Is pure bred stock actually an asset or a liability here, given climatic conditions and the amount of insects? H: It would depend on the breed of course. And aside from the social aspects of being beneficial. The Brahman breed is a breed that is unique. Its origins are in India, uh it's a very heat tolerant breed and to some extent, uh a little bit more disease resistant than a lot of breeds so we can say that early on that breed had an economic impact that was worth considering. And the Brahman breed is a bases of most of the synthetic breeds that have developed in the south and the southwest. By the synthetic I mean, uh a new breed based on older breed, Brangus for example had its origin at the experiment station in Jeanerette when it was under USDA control. Its 3/8's Brahman and 5/8's Angus. — Hollis Chapman

QUALITY OF LOUISIANA'S COASTAL GRASSES FOR LIVESTOCK: The biggest difference if we're looking for differences between grasses the biggest difference between the grasses that we had on the prairie are still here today. Those grasses are, all of our grasses in Louisiana, especially the southern part are very high in moisture content compared to the grasses you would find in the Mid-west and Northwest and in order for cattle to do real well they've got to eat much more of that and they have to do uh eat...uh...if they would if they had access to the to the drier grasses. — Hollis Chapman

WHIPS: Yeah and most of the guys that, the old cattlemen always wanted to get a bois d'arc tree to make their whip handles, beautiful whip handles, it’s a beautiful wood and they aren't as common now down there in fact I talked to people recently that said they don't see any bois d'arc down there, but when I bought my property in (Grand Chenier?) I had four trees on it and those big ole fruit you know they would fall and everything and they're a nuisance. But I had several people offer to buy those trees from me. I said "ohh I got a little asset here" so I didn't cut them but for some reason they love that for their whip handle. — Hollis Chapman

CHALLENGES INVOLVED IN TRANSPORTING CATTLE TO MARKET: A lot of them were more about not so much moving cattle from grazing pasture to grazing pasture or marsh to marsh was moving to market and how hard that was to have to swim those rivers. And most of the stories I heard both from Evangeline and Cameron is going west and having to cross the Sabine and Calcasieu and Mermentau and umm they said it took

weeks of activity they had a lot of planning and they had to have a lot a lot of resources to go there. The horses were very critical and that's why they had a lot of interest in horses that could tolerate a trip like that. Umm they all carried guns I mean there was a lot of challenges along the way. I know my great- great-grandfather had a gun and that was the cattle drive gun. It was a big long pistol, a little ball pistol that he had to pack. My, my brother still has it and huh they had a lot of cattle rustlers they had to deal with and renegades along the way just like I guess you see in some of the more accurate depictions of moving cattle along in the west but the issue was insects, mosquitoes, and uhh those the currents in those rivers. They had to really think about how they were going to do it and where they were going to do it. There were certain places they knew they had a little bit of a better chance of walking those cattle and swimming them across. — Hollis Chapman

BEEF AS A PRIMARY SOURCE OF SUMMERTIME PROTEIN: Well in the summer time it was beef and chickens was the primary sources of protein. Uh in winter time of course we also had hogs to supplement that but um I would say as, as a society, and to document that I'd point to the neighborhood boucheries organizations. We would have to say that beef was a prominent source of protein in the families in area that I grew up in part because obviously if you formed a boucherie that lived off of slaughter beef, it's an important thing to have. — Hollis Chapman

BOUCHERIES: Well that's why you got 5 pounds or 10 pounds, depending on how much you could use. The reason for the boucheries was because you had no refrigeration, you got fresh meat, you used it, next week you got fresh meat, you used it again. Um its um...other than that I guess if you go back far enough before refrigeration, you all know the term packing house. A packing house refers to process of packing meat into barrels with salt to keep it safe and back in the early days of meat transport, uh way back in history, of course that's where the term packers came from because meat was packed in salt to preserve it and shipped by rail, by water, or whatever to the points of destination. — Hollis Chapman

AUCTION BARNS: Yeah, in um in our part of the world there was (Jultate? [Jules Tate?]) livestock auction barn. Uh when those barns got a little more sophisticated, they were called commissions. Uh over in the Lafayette Opelousas area they were the Dominiques had the uh a barn actually in Opelousas, Carencro, um somewhere else. And then you went to the west and there was one in Deridder I know of and they were some in Lake Charles area. They were pretty uh pretty common in that area. What they really were was, I got Fort Worth on my mind because I just visited recently the old historic stock yards there. What these were you could say was a break up of a big commission site where there would be ten commission representatives on the yards of Fort Worth where you would have only one commission guy in your neighborhood so you really unless you were able to go from spot to spot, you'd basically all charged the same price, I think the

difference in them was their ability to draw buyers from a wider range of territory one versus the other. — Hollis Chapman

IMPACT OF COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE: I think the cooperative extension service in those days had a tremendous impact on improvement in milk production and improvement in beef production. I think at the point they came on to the scene, you started seeing more emphasis, I remember some of the early beef cattle's specialists in the extension service that now that I know a little more about that kind a thing. Um I think they, they had a little scientific information but we're still lending towards the artistic aspects of animal breeding or animal improvement, but they would tell you things like, you really need a pure bred bull and that meant go to somebody who is raising registered stock for a bull that could uh could produce calves with more market appeal, more beef appeal. In the dairy industry about the time the extension people really got powerful on the scene, or really got recognized for their valuable information. Artificial insemination trailed behind that so the dairy industry I think was the first, the first of the cattle industries that was heavily influenced by artificial insemination. It's today totally dependent on artificial insemination with the beef cattle industry trails at it. — Hollis Chapman

HERDING CATTLE ON FOOT: Daddy talked about horses, he'd say we can't afford a horse y'all young, y'all go work the cattle. We'd go round the damn cattle up on foot, no 4-wheelers, no nothing. I mean they didn't have them back then but, uh you weren't working thousands of acres, but everybody, nobody, a lot of those cattlemen around where we were in Chataignier and Point Blue in that area you didn't see them on horseback, they were working on foot. — Hollis Chapman

REFORESTATION

RATHBORNE REFORESTATION EFFORTS POST-WORLD WAR II: And after World War II, Hill-Burton funds became available, like the GI Bill, so that every community could have a community hospital to be on the – to build hospitals in the community, you had to have a certified surgeon, pathologist, anesthesiologist, and interns. So my father, because he was on the staff in general surgery at LSU, and he was head of colon-rectal surgery, and they wanted him to stay and be head of the chairman, head and chairman of the Department of Surgery, and he wanted to come home. So he had that relationship with the university, so the Ellenders had the Ellender Clinic here. But they – they were not really surgeons, if you will – board-certified at all. Sort of on the job trained, Dr. Willard had some surgical training. A little family clinic – the first hospital in Houma Dr. (inaudible) Parker had in 1928, '24 to '28. He left, and then around '28, '29, they had the Ellender Clinic. Excuse me – around '38, '39, the Ellender Clinic. But it was a little private clinic. So my father, with the help of board-certified physicians and the LSU staff, opened Terrebonne General Hospital, St. Joseph in Thibodaux, St. Anne in Raceland,

Lady of the Sea in Galiano, and Lakewood in Morgan City. And every Saturday, he had to get in his car and go to different hospitals and sign all the charts because there were doctors practicing in those communities who were on the staff, but all the paperwork had to be signed by board-certified people. — Cokie Rathborne

REFRIGERATION

ICE IN THE 19TH CENTURY: There were actually ice barns here in Houma, and they floated ice from the Great Lakes down the Mississippi River, and that guy became the first millionaire in the United States. The first industrial millionaire. That's a hell of a story, but of course in New Orleans with the first commercial production of ice in the 1860s and 1870s – they finally got that process going.

RESILIENCY

RESILIENCY OF THE COASTAL POPULATION: I think the French um, language was the common reason that they were able to get together and make plans and adapt over time, if you will. But they adapted, and changed with every one of the major events that occurred to the location down here, and they adapted initially from higher mountains to lowlands, and um, they carved out the wilderness. They settled the area. They raised their families, and they were sustenance people. They grew and raised everything that they ate and wore. Um, and as technology improved, they adapted to that. Um, they, they adapted to the beginning of the seafood industry as an economic backbone of this old southeast Louisiana with the technology of ice, electricity, light, engines, and they made that transfer from sail power to motor power, from local consumption of seafood to marketing seafood. — Chris Cenac

TREMENDOUS ABILITY TO SURVIVE: We have tremendous ability to survive. That is the only way you can live in Terrebonne Parish man. — Clifford Smith

RESILIENCY DURING HURRICANES, ISLEÑOS, ST. BERNARD PARISH: DB: Oh the 1915 storm, I have a story about that. That was one of my bedtime stories that my grandmother used to tell. I lived on Esplanade Avenue. It was August and it was very hot. And she would sit in her rocking chair with a fan. I would be in bed laying down and she would tell me stories and fan me 'til I got to sleep. She was a wonderful person, and one of her favorite stories was the 1915 storm. She said that in those days, there was no warning. There was no warning and so she said that my grandfather had gone, taken stuff to the French Market, so he wasn't there and she was at the... they had a grocery store in Delacroix Island. And she was at the grocery store with the two children. My mother was 5. My aunt was 3. And she said the weather got bad and the water was coming up. And her brother had a fishing boat and he came by the store to get her and the kids. And she told him, I don't wanna leave, because Manuel won't know where I am when he comes back. And he, my brother, told her "If you don't leave, he won't know where you are,

because you'll be dead. You've got to come with me. You've got to get on the boat." Well, in the meantime, and he had a big boat, shrimping boat, and a lot of people had gathered on the porch, because it was elevated and the water was coming up. And so she said, well I can't leave all these people here, you know, I'm not gonna leave without all these people. And he looked at her and shook his head, because she was a very, you know, when she set her mind to something, that was it. And he said, "Okay, put 'em in the boat. Let's go." And so they got everybody in the boat and as they pulled away, the store collapsed. The store collapsed as they pulled away. And they went out as the Isleños still do. They go out in the boat and tie up, usually in the trees and ride out the storm. And she said it was terrible, because the snakes were in the trees, because they were getting away from the water too and they were just dropping into the boat. And everybody, when they dropped, they were stunned, and we would just pick 'em up and throw 'em overboard. Get rid of 'em and her brother told her, "You know, if we hadn't had all those people in the boat, we might not have made it." — Dorothy Benge

RESILIENCY AFTER HURRICANES — CLIFFORD SMITH: S: Well yeah! And even today, I go down the bayou, I've been down this parish after a storm so many times, you know? I stay in Terrebonne for a storm because I felt protected. Truly did. Didn't feel like I was in peril, and as an engineer I wanted to see the effect of the storm. So after the storm soon as the wind stops blowing, okay, I'm down the bayou. I'm in an airboat, I'm in a helicopter, I'm in something. You go down the bayou and see the people at Dulac. Partner, they in their boat, turned to the south! The way people lived! And you know, I'm talking about 30 year old guys, partner, and they know what the hell to do down there! — Clifford Smith

RESILIENCY AFTER HURRICANES — DAVID RICHARD: L: I'd like to add something . . . D: Sure. Please. L: David's not gonna tell you, but David was in that airboat – I'm sorry. D: No it's a – remember I got family that lost cattle. And I – I don't hurt because I grew up in California. L: Yeah. D: But I know the herd. And it's a tough story we have to tell. When you feel right… L: Yeah. D: Chime in. L: Well, David was out there helping everybody else. Uh, he lost his home. It was easy for me to go help my neighbors. I didn't lose my home. David didn't have anything left. No home, no furniture, nothing. And he was out there every day helping friends, relatives, people he didn't even know. The other cattle – I'm sorry guys. D: No no no. No. Don't be because – we're L: We saw things, uh, it's a – hard for me to talk about it. I can't even imagine what he went through. I, you know I sat on the porch at the ranch by myself for three days, and looked at the devastation, and had my little pity party. And uh, had found out what he'd gone through and it was easy for me to get up and go, go pen cows for other people. I was very fortunate that I had been cautioned by the older guys about leaving cattle in Johnson Bayou during the storms. I was only seven years old for Hurricane Audrey, so I remember photographs. I remember the stress on my parents faces. But I – I didn't

understand what hurricane Audrey was about. But it had scared me enough to where when the old timers said don't leave your cows in Johnson Bayou for the summer, I took heed to that. And I tried to make it my business to get all the strange cattle up to Ged , you know for the summer. Thirty years rocks along I guess I'm the laughing stock of the cattle industry of Southwest Louisiana, because I'm trying to get every cow out and we got guys that were leaving the herds down there for summer you know. Why are you going through such an expense to get those cattle north? Because I was told to. Because I – that impacted me – the stories I heard about hurricane Audrey. The ranches cattle for the most part were out of harm's way. D: Well, you know these are . . . L: I'm sorry David. R: No! Aint no problem! — Kent LeDoux

RESILIENCY OF COASTAL PLAIN IMMIGRANTS— I think the French um, language was the common reason that they were able to get together and make plans and adapt over time, if you will. But they adapted, and changed with every one of the major events that occurred to the location down here, and they adapted initially from higher mountains to lowlands, and um, they carved out the wilderness. They settled the area. They raised their families, and they were sustenance people. They grew and raised everything that they ate and wore. Um, and as technology improved, they adapted to that. Um, they, they adapted to the beginning of the seafood industry as an economic backbone of this old southeast Louisiana with the technology of ice, electricity, light, engines, and they made that transfer from sail power to motor power, from local consumption of seafood to marketing seafood. — Chris Cenac

RESILIENCY OF COASTAL PLAIN RESIDENTS — ADAPTATION TO CONSTANT THREAT OF FLOODING: D: Ya'll had a lot of flooding here F: Yeah we had a lot of flooding for - well we had not that much down because the way the camps were built, like I said, everybody had that hole in, and then water would come in and go back out, you know. The worst thing we got out of hurricane Audrey - I was young in those days and everything, you know – everybody had butane bottles, and that was a big thing. Where we got that. Was all of that floated away, if you look up there they got a a bunch of trees gone, almost to Dulac over there - well that was, you know, you had to go back and pick up all these bottles and stuff.. — Houston Foret

RESILIENCY AFTER HURRICANE RITA (2005): R: Not everything but you look at them from another standpoint, um, we went from uh, probably 700 mama cows to less than 100. And a lot of those rescued them in the marsh-marsh – in air boats, shrimp boats tied to barges and uh, lots of things that went on here during Rita that uh, I worked at that for almost thirty days, Kent worked with it for the same amount of time here on the western side. Uh, trying to salvage the cattle, but we couldn't – because there were lots of cattle that were stuck in the marsh - there was no fresh water, and nothing to eat. So um, and there are some records to that you'd probably, you know, somebody needs to save. I can't hardly bring myself to that period of time to take photographs, but… No and it's gotta be

tough, David. R: It was tough. It was a tough deal, and it's tough bringing back the cattle because I worked for thirty years to get a population of cattle that - I had a little herd of registered Herefords that we used in the show ring with my kids. I (inaudible) Brahman bulls. I raised some of my own bulls. I raised my own heifers. To replace that herd, it's gonna take me a long time. And uh, it's been a tough deal. And it's been a tough deal you know I estimate we lost 20,000 head for hurricane Rita. For hurricane Ike, it hadn't been repopulated. A lot of those cattle have not been repopulated. And most of those cattle moved out of there. I actually lost some for hurricane Ike for some extenuating circumstances, but I was able to save um, a little less than a hundred head. I lost about 50 head. But um, it was I was not able to get them out because smaller circumstances, in any case, it's been a tough deal in that country for cattle. — David Richard

RESILIENCY — FEMA AND 21ST CENTURY RECOVERY: D: But, I gave a little presentation recently, David, to a group in – I've heard all the stories about how fast people came back form hurricane Audrey. And I wanted to make sure people understood that there wasn't a FEMA - they probably didn't even have a house note. They just did what they did. And I reminded people that in my mind, and this is just my mind – your property is your 401 K, and your herd is your interest. When you lose both, it's a lot different than the mentality of the people who aren't cattle people. We want to know you know, it's in your blood. You know and my family lost cattle in storms in Oklahoma, you went back to the business. It's in your blood – and now you've got maybe to be a tad cautious. And we would really like to know – I mean you lost a lot. Are you coming back? R: Am I coming back? D: Sure. R: Sure I got a hundred head of cattle right now. L: But you gotta understand the values of the animals that we're talking about today. You know he's not going to a sale barn and buying two hundred dollar cows. He's buying those thousand dollar cows because he's a cowboy. He knows through trial and error and through education what it takes to be productive in the cattle business. And that's what madam housewife that's going down there and buying a little package of hamburger or buying the ribeye doesn't understand. A cow is not just a cow, you know. And uh, and it's a costly nature to repopulate and I – I eluded earlier to the fact that I have to raise replacements. I don't have to raise replacements. The easy way out for me – working for this organization, would be to sell every calf and go buy bred cows every year. I 'm just not sure that is the most economically feasible for the company I work for. You know, . . . R: There was a program – um, Livestock Indemnity Program. D: Mmhmm. R: You know with our government, we had to give it an acronym. Called LIP. D: Mmhmm. R: That was able – to reimburse cattlemen 75,000 dollars for losses that you could document. So let's just take the case of my uncle that lost, um, four hundred head. You know, 150,000 dollars for him and his wife ain't covering four hundred heads and fifty years of breeding, but they did do that. So you were able to put some cattle back in there, but it discouraged an awful lot of people from going back in the cattle business after these

stroms. And actions by FEMA had been the biggest deterrent to the repopulation of that coastal culture. It is an absolute farce. It has been a farce. — David Richard

RESILIENCY, CAMERON PARISH, FEMA, POST-HURRICANE RITA: R: Cameron Creole Levee – 17 mile levee – built what we call 566 fonts. From, in RCS. They had periods of time we did some augmentation that we call 646 fonts. Which is (inaudible). It was done under the sponsorship of RCS under the brave boards of Cameron who are ultimately under Cameron Parish Police Jury. We are 2009 as we're speaking today. Four years after hurricane Rita. FEMA had yet to settle in regard to that rebuilding of that particular area. People were kept out of their homes after hurricane Rita for months – weren't allowed in Cameron parish. In lots of cases because of devastation, but FEMA has been a cause in my estimation, of the destruction of that culture. Of their rules and regulations and the destruction of some of that industry. So I mean, I had a call yesterday in regard to funding Cameron Creole that is in jeopardy from the state because they want to wait on FEMA to pay. That's not an option. That is not an option. FEMA has put a huge requirement in regard to elevation and construction. But what you did was after hurricane Rita you kept people away from their homes and their land for months. And they had to find a place to go, Don. They had to find a place to live. And they to find pieces of land – I mean there's land all over this praire country. Because people needed a place that was theirs underneath their feet. At that point, you have a lot of people that gave up. The delay, and FEMA recovery was incredible. So you had a lot of migration from that so the heritage of some of that area had been irreparably damaged. You go look at the pictures of hurricane Audrey in Cameron six months after hurricane Audrey – I spent hurricane Audrey you know, twelve - a sixteen foot wooden boat tied to a tree. My dad and my uncles were tying trees with whipping ropes called (inaudible) – in west Texas. Tied to trees with life jackets on. That Fall, I was a kid - I was six years old. And I was kid and we rebuilt my grandmother's house. We had you know, people were back in there but we didn't have the government. And we didn't have government telling you how to eat, how to drink, how to sleep. How to get healthcare. How to retire. How to buy an automobile, and who you buy it from. So that FEMA deterrent had been a real issue in my estimation in regard to destruction of culture. — David Richard

FEMA AS A DAMPER ON RESILIENCY 1: R: Cameron Creole Levee – 17 mile levee – built what we call 566 fonts. From, in RCS. They had periods of time we did some augmentation that we call 646 fonts. Which is (inaudible). It was done under the sponsorship of RCS under the brave boards of Cameron who are ultimately under Cameron Parish Police Jury. We are 2009 as we're speaking today. Four years after hurricane Rita. FEMA had yet to settle in regard to that rebuilding of that particular area. People were kept out of their homes after hurricane Rita for months – weren't allowed in Cameron parish. In lots of cases because of devastation, but FEMA has been a cause in my estimation, of the destruction of that culture. Of their rules and regulations and the

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FEMA AS A DAMPER ON RESILIENCY 2: And I'll never forget J.C. Reno from Creole one of the FEMA meetings after Rita says; I don't want your insurance. I just want to go build my house, and if it floods, it floods. If he doesn't build to their elevation, he does not get electricity. So he'll be there on a generator in a civilized world – you know the highway in front of them. And so those kinds of government mandates have been a real cultural problem, and I know you're interested culture and so am I, but it has affected my family and my heritage in regard to that country. So uh, I know you hear about New Orleans and I know you hear about violence and I know you hear about money. But you know for Hurricane Ike, where you did not have to strike a majority, minority population – you don't hear anything about Hurricane Ike. You know, you don't hear a lot about rebuilding that goes on in that country. — David Richard

FEMA AS A DAMPER ON RESILIENCY 3: FEMA has not been - it – um, had been advantageous in repopulation of the coast. And as far as I'm concerned, has contributed to the destruction of the culture. — David Richard

RESILIENCY, ABBEVILLE AFTER RITA: T: Have been here for a year with different organizations in the Methodist church and so forth, helping to rebuild, so it's been a real mix of—I don't know, I'm not an economist, I was told that part of the reason we're doing as well as we are right now, as a city is that because of the hurricanes people are rebuilding, and because the rebuilding is going on the construction is just staying up because people won't necessarily build a house in a slow economy, but they're gonna

rebuild their house in a slow economy and the construction—I don't know any of this, this is what I heard--the construction is one of the leading factors as far as your economic development goes, so it's been kind of a blessing in disguise in some ways, as far as—economically. Because it's brought some money in, and it's brought a lot of work in, and it's brought a lot of people in, and with the people come the money and the business, so—A: True. T: It's been almost a positive thing in a lot of ways economically, but I can also say that emotionally it's been devastating. I mean I literally have sat with people I don't even know and watched them cry in the middle of the restaurant because they just finished rebuilding their house and it just got wiped out again and that kind of stuff. So, you know, I would say definitely both, Emotionally, it's really taken a toll on the people, and you know, it has brought a lot of work but that work can be kind of a mixed . . . — Manager, Dupuy's, Abbeville

SEDENTARY POPULATION / TIES TO THE LAND

POPULATION REFUSED TO RELOCATE: "Why you live down there? Your house flooded for Rita?" "Yep." "Your house flooded for Ike?" She said, "Yeah, but we had built everything up and [wasn't flooded, we figured we was gonna flood anyhow]." I said, "Oh, okay. Why the hell you live down there?" She said, "Well I married a So & So Leray. He used to work for you, Clifford." I said, "Oh yeah?" "Yeah, worked in a survey crew." I said, "Well why do you live down there?" She said, "He's a fisherman. He makes a good living a fisherman. And we live here and right across the road is the boat, and that's where he goes, gets in his boat every morning and goes crabbing or trawling and he makes a good living. And you know, if he didn't do that we wouldn't live there, Goddammit, I mean I would live somewhere else, but that's what he does! That's where we were born, what the hell! you know?" I said, "But that's getting confused again, I get confused. Now here's nice people, obviously this lady has got a pretty good formal education, her husband has got him a way to make a good living and he ain't going to Napoleonville, or he ain't going—that's where he is, I mean, this is the dilemma, okay? . . . — Clifford Smith

RESILIENCY IN LOWER TERREBONNE PARISH: D: So you're born in Cocodrie, worked in Cocodrie, and reluctantly live in Chauvin? F: But when I built in Chauvin, well um, I just moved to Chauvin myself just a few years ago in fact then I got out of ...I got out of the shrimp business in 2000 I turned it over to my kids. But at that time I used to live …right here. Camp right there. That was my home. You know I had a house where my family was raised in Chauvin there I'm a build another house in 2000, but I built it a little further up in Chauvin but on the opposite side by in between the bayou and the road but what I did – didn't go up on pilings – I pulled 400 loads of dirt on a slab but I am…like this last – like Hurricane Katrina and all of that stuff.. and Rita and everything else - I could've gone another five feet before I get water in my house. So I - I was born and raised – I knew what water could do you know. And then it comes to put the

elevation and everything you know – when they started and everything – I told them to see that the blacktop road right there - where it goes this one here –I said, throw a line on that thing see how high that is. So he said even with that road right there. I said, I'm gonna go a foot and a half higher than that. He said, why you wanna do that? In case we get a surge of water I don't want that to hit that levee over there. I don't want it to come back in my house – I want it to go right on through it. — Houston Foret

SHIPYARDS

ST. BERNARD PARISH: E: They had shipyards out there. Raise your boat out the water. They had everything ...it was a fishing village, that's where they lived at and they'd come in with their boat to get groceries or whatever they want and then they'd go back out there. — Edward Robin

SHORT-TERM GAINS, LONG-TERM PROBLEMS

DAMMING DISTRIBUTARIES TO PREVENT FLOODING FROM ONE DIRECTION WILL INEVITABLY ILL INEVITABLY RESULT IN FLOODING PROBLEMS FROM ANOTHER: I make the point all the time that my grandparents built houses in downtown Houma on lots eleven feet above sea level and they built their house six feet off the ground in about 1900 before Bayou Lafourche was dammed. And they built it because they didn't want their houses to flood. They didn't like to go six foot of steps. They built it – they didn't want their houses to flood. Now ironically, I'm may see their houses flood from the Gulf of Mexico because we dammed Bayou Lafourche, we've protected ourselves from the Mississippi, but we've caused this horrible coastal erosion problem, which is causing the Gulf of Mexico to back up on us. — Clifford Smith — Clifford Smith

PROBLEMS CAUSED BY FAILURE TO ANTICIPATE LONG-TERM PROBLEMS: my grandparents, in the interim, started building houses in Houma. The lots 11 feet above sea level, they built about 1900, they built the houses 6 feet off the ground. Not because they liked to go up steps, but because they thought their houses would flood from the Mississippi River. Now I may see the damn houses flood from the Gulf of Mexico. I was showing somebody the other day, [Big Ole Bird]. He owns a piece of property. House flooded for Ike, never flooded before, lived on a little ridge down there, so he's building up his mound—pod. In highland they build pods. We build mounds now. He done it up to plus 8, that's the FEMA elevation. I said, "Okay, you got 100 year flood protection?" "Yeah, yeah 100 years." I said, "If you wanna build your house ten feet up above that you'll have 500 years." And that's what people used to do. Okay? They don't go to get certified levees and all this other B.S. That's what they did! That's what they did in New Orleans, that's what they did across South Louisiana. That's what they did in Terrebonne

Parish. I can remember going down the bayou--Bayou Lafourche--and everything was raised. — Clifford Smith

HOUSES BUILT ON SLABS: And some fool came along in 1945 and built something on a slab! I mean that was—that's the guy that oughta go to jail! You know, they wanna put the [coin] in jail, they wanna put these people in jail, the guy that build the first house of the first slab in Louisiana oughta be the one going to jail! Whoever that was. — Clifford Smith

SHRIMP DRYING — DRIED SHRIMP

CHINESE ROLE IN LOUISIANA SHRIMP DRYING INDUSTRY (HISTORICAL SKETCH): Well, uh, the Chinese - when they first came to the United States, Chinese had been a very secretive about who they are what they are or anything about it because they'd been oppressed so harshly in their countries – not just uh, recently, but for the whole history of it. And uh, when they first came to United States, a lot of them had to come here illegally. And uh, you know they would take the you know - a name or some kind and stuff like this, and nobody knew how many Chinese were here or anything like that.. And uh, still to this day, some of the Chinese people are very, very particular about who they you know if they don't know you real good, they won't trust you enough to let you take their picture or anything like this. And even if they're regular citizens of the United States and to some extent, I understand that happens. I think the younger generation is a little bit more lenient. But some of the old people are a little bit more, particular. But it stems back to the early days when they first coming to the us they had to smuggle them in and uh, when they started doing that they wanted to come to the United States to work on railroads when they were coming across, you know, when they were trying to get them to join each other, and they were very good workers and such, and they could get into tight places because they weren't as big as the, the uh, Irish men that were there. And they worked hard and stuff like that. But they didn't like to eat too much uh, of the American food. They like their own food. Rice and shrimp and seafood, and uh certain vegetables and stuff like that. And when they first came to us in the San Francisco Bay that's where really - I think was the first dried shrimp operation in the United States. And if you go to San Francisco and you go out on the water, there's an old boat that's sitting out there, where they used to catch shrimp in the bay of - the San Francisco Bay, and the guy the uh, it's a uh, it's a (inaudible) will tell you about the drying of the shrimp. That the Chinese when they got there. And uh, the Chinese in San Francisco uh, on the top of San Francisco, you have one area. But below San Francisco, they made tunnels, and there's tunnels all over underneath San Francisco and stuff like this and they keep it keep a lot of food stuff and things like that and uh, my grandfather had gone to Chinatown uh, probably in 1930s and 1940s and stuff like that and uh, he went to see some of the people he was selling shrimp to in Chinatown with this broker and they brought him underneath down there. And not only were they uh, selling dried shrimp and

they had food stuff down there they had other things that were for sale, opium dens and stuff like that. A lot of people were down there sleeping and doing stuff that's kind of against the law, but it's not jut the Chinese, they had a lot of people doing that opium. It was a little bit under - the under the cover, but um, uh, the uh, when they started uh, coming here to work on the railroads, and such uh, they needed something to eat, and so they spread out trying to look for certain areas and Louisiana happened to be similar to the climate they had in China. With the uh, marshes and bays and fresh water, marshes and bays and stuff like this and they came here and they started rice farming here. And with the rice farming they also started drying shrimp. And uh, while they did that they had a lot of Acadian people where who was trapping furs and they were drying they had come from uh, Acadia, and they had been drying fish and stuff up in Acadia and uh, so they knew the natural match. So the Chinese showed them how to make those platforms and stuff like this, build them up on the marsh and things like this. And the Acadians and them, they all you know work together and they learned how to make their livings together and uh, which was good, you know. And so the Chinese got the dried shrimp to eat while they were building those railroads I think, and uh, the uh, Americans learned how to make a living - so it was all pretty good. And uh, when my grandfather had got into it, they had been preserving dried shrimp and fish and stuff like this. They had some Chinese that lived here, and they had Acadian people and lived here and stuff like that, and Philippines was like you were telling me uh, not saying but telling me uh, manila village and you and all that's in and that was the Philippines and Chinese together. And uh, so there's a population of Philippines in New Orleans uh, that that uh, their family's in dried shrimp and that's what I was trying to get you to do with uh, Robert Hoy, and their family was Mr. Hoy and Mr. Hall and they were in New Orleans on St. Louis Street. And they have a big complex down St. Louis Street, and I think it's across the street from the mint. And uh, they had apartments there where the Chinese were staying in the uh, I call it the quad but you know it was all open air and stuff like that - they used to haul the shrimp there and he would work the shrimp and people lived in apartments would work for him. They would ship their shrimp all over the place and, but of course I you know that's just my idea about it. You have to talk to Robert he could tell you that. But I remember those people when I was little and going there with my daddy to get some shrimp from him, and later on as I got older, Mr. Hoy and Mr. Hall had passed away and Ms. Chi was there, and that was their - either sister or, aunt or, somebody. And then Robert Hoy's mother was there. And but uh, they have a really interesting history. And uh, Robert was a physics teacher at UNO. And uh, he's got a lot of knowledge about his family and stuff and that's a really interesting uh, history probably as well. You could probably get some good information on them. — Louis Blum

SIZE AND OPERATION OF DRIED SHRIMP PLATFORMS AND SUPPLY BOATS: He went to New Orleans because he started working for Gulf Seafood Corporation with his boat. It was a wide 56 foot boat he had gotten with a big charter engine, paddle wheel.

And he started working for them, but it went so slow to go from Harvey all the way to Grand Isle. You know, and alongside the Manila Village and (Ahi) and (George Lung?). You know, that's all different platforms. So they put a big 471 D (curler?). That was big to them. I have a 871, that's exactly double in my boat. And uh anyway, he was making those runs. He would bring in diesel. He would bring in lumber to repair these big platforms, cuz these platforms were about more than a block square. I'd say they're more than almost two blocks square, you know. And it was made, you know, way above the marsh, about 7, 8, 10 feet above the marsh. And we uh, it was made with these board-type; you know the frame that we would make it. Imagine an air base, like a bunch of hills on the top. That's what [inaudible]. We had the place where they used to boil it, the big steam boiler. And then they would take 'em and spread 'em out over the whole platform. When the rain come, they had to hurry up and brush 'em toward the top of the hill, top of the wooden hill, now. And then put the tarps on top of it. All it was a wooden deck. Imagine when we build a lot of wood up, a block and a half square. That was a lot of lumber. In fact, we worked on 'em. I worked in the mud [inaudible], salt water mud. Anyway, he did that. That's why he moved to New Orleans, cuz he used to go. It was on...St. Louis Street — Freddie Matherne

UNDULATING PLATFORM, MANILA VILLAGE: Well, I remember we got off the boats. Um, we got up on the platform. Um, I remember the plat – some of the platforms were wavy, like you know, like um, I just remember they had barrels full of shrimp. — Jocelyn Hebert

DISTRIBUTION OF DRIED SHRIMP FROM CHINESE BUSINESSES IN NEW ORLEANS: But it was Mr. Hong and somebody else there. Har and Hong, I think. I know one definitely was Hong. And you know, they would...Daddy would have the truck down there. Then they used their own truck. He used his truck when he's going out with the men they used to pick up. But when we got in with the shrimp, they would send their truck from the office, from St. Louis Street to Harvey. And then they would bring it in to them. And then they had that warehouse there. And then they would send it to Chicago. — Freddie Matherne

LABOR FORCE ON SOME PLATFORMS: D: Now, when your dad was working in New Orleans Shanghaiing individuals, that meant that the platform had a lot of people on it. M: Oh yeah, they had, yeah. They had seven, eight, nine people each platform. All together, they had a heck of a lot of people. — Freddie Matherne

SHRIMP AND FISH DRYING ON CHINESE PLATFORMS: They had much, that 16 foot open hauled skiff. It was full when they come back. I seen they all...I said, "Boy, they gonna sink." You know, at the bar...They had so much fish in there. Fish was that plentiful. Now, the shrimp they used to boil, like I said. They had this straw basket. And it was made like in a cone, like ice cream cone except the bottom is maybe 15 inches in

diameter or so and 24 inches up there at the top. And it was about three foot high. That was seven dollars' worth of shrimp. That's how cheap the shrimp was then. But, you know, that's small shrimp. 70, 80, 80, 100, you know, that size shrimp. The big shrimp, they got more for it. I forgot how much it was. . . . But those trouts we used to clean. We used to gut 'em, I mean cut 'em to do gut 'em. Half of the intestines were still in there. They used to just dry them like that and salt them. I wouldn't eat that for nothing in the world. — Freddie Matherne

SUPPLY BOATS FOR DRYING PLATFORMS: But we were shrimping besides bringing the boat out there and we brought the ice. That was a ways for them to come so we used to pick up the shrimp and bring them their food, some groceries. So, uh, that's, like I said, that's what we used to do. Bring them their fuel and the ice, whatever. . . . D: And you were bringing diesel? M: Diesel. D: Food? M: Food. D: And ice? M: And ice. — Freddie Matherne

PILINGS FOR PLATFORMS 1: D: How did you put the pilings down? M: I don't think there was pilings. There was posts. D: Alright. And you just ... M: I don't know. They just pushed, we just pushed them down, you know. And they had boards to push your piling. And you nailed your board, like this, on the side. D: Alright. M: That way you, it wouldn't keep on going down. M: All hand-labor. No pile driver outfit, nothing like that. — Freddie Matherne

PILINGS FOR PLATFORMS 2: We put in the piling by hand. Well it wasn't no big piling – it was just a little bitty stake – we just cut a board - that was our stake, you know. — Houston Foret

WOOD SOURCE FOR PILINGS AND BOILERS: D: The other thing is we know that the first boilers were wood fire. Again if you got 80 platforms, somebody is delivering lots of wood. We can't find anything out about who was involved in delivering the cypress in platforms and wood for the boilers. H: Well, we had a lot of saw mills. Most of that lumber came from Raceland, uh, Chacahoula, that area right there – that was a lot of cypress. Cypress wasn't no problem. You can get all the cypress you wanna get. That was no problem to us. Even had - before my day and everything – Lake Boudreaux, all around Lake Boudreaux - that was all cypress in that area so. So that was no problem. And a lot of the wood they would use to boil was mostly oak. We had oak trees all over the area. I mean, we had oak trees in Cocodrie at one time, you know. There's only two or three of them left you know, so that's where the lumber came from. You had trees all over. The barrier islands were full of trees years ago and everything, so lumber never was a problem. — Houston Foret

DESCRIPTION OF A PLATFORM AND MECHANIZED DRYING PROCESS: D: So if you were trying to, tell me how many buildings would be around. M: Oh, there's a large

building where they used to put them in this big granulated. It's a big cage about 8 by 8 or 10 by 19. It was real big. And maybe about 15, 16 foot long. They would dump the shrimp after it dried on the platform. They would dump it in there and this thing would keep turning and the shrimp would be bouncing almost like a regular clothes drying, except it would (sweat?). And all the peelings would fall out. Now, the shrimp peelings and the head, when they fall down, they used to sack those up. You know, great big sacks, and bigger than the dried shrimp. Dried shrimp had a 100 pound limit. These here were bigger, I don't they were quite 100 pounds, but it was hard to handle. I was handling those when I was 12 years old. That and sacks of salt. I remember how heavy it was. My dad wanted us to get two of us to carry about three or four hundred foot from the dock where we had the boat to where the house was where they kept the salt. And, like I said, about 300 hundred, 400 hundred feet. And two men trying to carry a sack of salt, you know how it would bend in the middle, uh two boys, that is. My brother's smaller than me. I used to get him to help me put it on my shoulders then I would bring it. You know, all you needed was help to put it on there. That was a load for me. At 12 years old, a hundred pound sack of salt. That's a lot. — Freddie Matherne

FREIGHT BOATS FOR DRIED SHRIMP PLATFORMS 1: The boat that had the flag was the freight boat. And you had several different companies that would do that. Every company had a different type of flag – you know, which flag, which boat, which one you were doing business with. That’s what the flags were all about. — Houston Foret

FREIGHT BOATS FOR DRIED SHRIMP PLATFORMS 1: They were not as big as what they sound like they was. You had some of them that probably were – I remember some freight boats in my day they’re probably was you now 70, 80 feet long, you know. They were flat boats - they wouldn’t draw much water and everything else. They had big cabins and everything else. What these freight boats would do and everything they would a lot of them freight boats would leave from New Orleans. And they’d come down Bayou Lafourche and everything else, and they would bring a lot of the um, the groceries and everything else and they would sell the groceries to people on the canals. — Houston Foret

FLAGS USED FOR FREIGHT BOATS: A lot of flags were never made because the salt used to come in sacks and stuff and that’s what use for flags, you know. And they’d make a little decoration on it, you know. That’s all that was. It wasn’t nothing fancy. — Houston Foret

USE OF “CHINESE BASKETS” TO MEASURE SHRIMP: Those days they used to call them uh, Chinese baskets, you know. It wasn’t like tubs - just big ol’ - when they first started it was made out of palmetto stuff like that. And then they come back and went to metal baskets. — Houston Foret

ICE FOR COASTAL SHRIMP OPERATIONS: They used to come in 330 pound blocks of ice. And they would put that inside that hold. And they had some little um, little flat boats kind of made out of cypress you know it would be maybe 2 feet wide, maybe 4, 5 feet long and everything else, and they would take that ice pick and break that ice to smaller pieces, maybe like 25, 50 pound blocks and they would put them in there and they had a little, whatever you call it, it was like a crusher, and you take like hammer and you just crush it up just like you do with an ice pick, you know. And that's the ice they would use to ice up their shrimp. It wasn't these… — Houston Foret

DANCING THE SHRIMP 1: Oh I would think you're looking at communities like that, with families and all involved, you'd probably have 150-200 people! And all of 'em were part of the process. Didn't make any difference if it was three-year-old feet that was mashing that shrimp or a 80-year-old man, long as they could break that shell off there. — Allen Ensminger

DANCING THE SHRIMP 2: B: So they were still dancing the shrimp when— A: Oh yeah, they was walkin' that stuff. B: Now, people generally wore special boots for this? A: I think they wore tough feet! They wasn't a bunch of candy-asses like us today! I seen that down in the tropics in those coffee operations. All the families that Ted Joanna and I worked with down in El Salvador in the 70's had big coffee [fingers] and they had big concrete platforms out there that they'd put their coffee on, and then they'd turn that with their little hand-made shovel-lookin' thing. It was a plow and it just pushed it through there and made little wind rolls and then the sun dried it and then they'd go back the other direction and make a fourth. And in the process that pulp shattered off of it and they just had the coffee bean and [psyched] that all up by hand, and ship it to Germany and France and everywhere else in the world. — Allen Ensminger

SIZE OF WESTERN SHRIMP DRYING PLATFORMS: Well they started on a small scale. But then they got to a point some of these platforms, like the one we're talking about to the west of us, around Oyster Bayou, some of these platforms were probably um, hard to say exactly, I'd probably have to say um, uh, a hundred thousand square feet. I mean huge things. Huge things. They could go there and put – those days it wouldn't go by the pound – they would go by the tub all the time and everything - and some of these platforms would hold like two thousand tubs of shrimp if it was a hundred thousand pounds, you know. That's just some serious shrimp there. And you know a lot of times you know, in the condition of the weather, you could dry shrimp to a certain extent, and then the condition of weather comes and, like during the summer months you could boil shrimp in the morning and go ahead and peel them in the afternoon. But sometimes you get cloudy weather then well you just, or you get rain – you start drying, and you have to pick them back up, then spread them back out – so sometimes it would take them two or three days. And during winter months, you never could make it one day. Sometimes it was two days, sometimes a week before you could do all that. But you could say that they

were cured with that salt boiling and that salt and everything else. The shrimp is cured. So once you got enough sun in to get some of the moisture… — Houston Foret

SHANGHAIING NEW ORLEANS ALCOHOLICS AS SHRIMP PLATFORM LABORERS: That's where the office was. You know, they used to ship to Chicago from there. But anyway, he used to go there and he had a big paneled truck. And he used to go and pick up the men that worked on these platforms. Mostly, alcoholics, you know, down on their luck and what have you. All [inaudible] what's out in the street and all. He used to go there and he would have a couple of cases or a case of wine and he used to tell them if they get in the truck, he'd give 'em a, one of them bottles of wine. So they used to get in the truck. He told some of them that hadn't went before that's he taking them to the Chinese platform. And then he would go to Harvey, where he had his boat parked, with the truck, from New Orleans to Harvey. And anyway, from there, he would give them another bottle of wine if they get on the boat. Once they got on the boat, that's it, they was going onto that platform. So, in a way, he sort of Shanghaied them, but it did them good cuz they used to eat real good. We ate breakfast. They used to eat at 10 o'clock and at two o'clock. That's how the Chinese did that. They had eggs and all. Most of them gained weight when they out there even though they worked. And uh some of them was looking forward to going back out, you know, after coming in and staying in New Orleans for a while and getting bad off again, you know. So they would. But when they got out there, they couldn't get no wine, no nothing. — Freddie Matherne

CHINESE DRIED SHRIMP PLATFORMS: Ping Wing was the name of the platform, by the way. Ping was a little short man, skinny, with wooden shoes. You could hear him a half a block away coming. He was a ornery type of guy. Wing was just the opposite. Man about your size. And he was a friendly as could be, you know. But Ping, Daddy, my father used to give him all kind of trouble, you know, used to mess with him, because he'd get so frustrated right away, you know. — Freddie Matherne

SHRIMPING OPERATIONS IN TERREBONNE PARISH: D: And one other thing, when you go out shrimping, do you go by yourself or do you go with your wife? M: I used to go with my wife, and then I went by myself often. And sometimes I'd take a friend of mine. Now, I take a relative, young guy, just starting off. And he'll go with me. Or someone that's out of work, you know, I'll take them with me. And they get 1/3 of whatever I'll get, after expenses. The boat gets a third, I get a third, and he get a third. A lot of guys give them 1/4, 25%. I give them 33, you know. Cuz I was sole [inaudible] from Bayou Lafourche. Most of them boats will give 1/3. Now, all this is different sized boat. That's for the size boat that I have, 35, 40 foot. The big boats, you might get 1/8 of the share, but they catch so much more. 1/8 of the share could be a good bit of money, you know. Like I said, they got four nets back there. They trawling 24 hours, night and day. Some sleep while others pull. So they wind up bringing in, you know, a lot of shrimp. Now, I figure my shrimp better than their shrimp for these two reasons. One, they

out in the Gulf. They got saltier water. Salt water iodine. That don't taste as good. Second, I'll go out there. Right now I been going two nights then coming in. They might go a week, ten days. They'll ice up and everything, but I seen their shrimp at Rouse's and different places. The shrimp don't look nothing like our shrimp that we just caught, say last night, this morning or night before last. And naturally I got pumps on there. I was them real good. And you heard what I said about my ice. I carry a lot of ice. And I re-ice when I come in. It's a lot of extra work but it's a better quality of shrimp. The guys used to say, "Oh I like his shrimp." "Then buy it [inaudible].” He said, "I bought some from a man little further down the bayou, but he didn't have no nice shrimp like yours. I guess you caught 'em different place." I said, "That man caught 'em right next to me. He was in Lake Salvador." And I said, "He caught 'em right next to me." If you leave 'em on the deck too long, you can't leave them on the deck too long, like this one was trawling. Because the sun, you know, the sun would make them get bad. And you ice up with a lot of ice. Just don't put a little bit of ice, because when you come back, if you don't ice up with a lot of ice, they can be turning on you. Now, shrimping at night is better for the shrimp too. The sun don't hit you. But we still try to clean it as fast as we can. 20 minutes, half hour at the most. Then we wash a lot. That's something else. How much do you wash? We wash, you know, in a full container of water with the basket going down in it. Naturally put salts in it to make the small fish come up. And we use like a tennis racket to throw the fish away. And then we'll bring the water up. Bring it in. Shake it just a little bit. Then we dump some fish and mostly shrimp into the cleaning table I have back there. So there's a lot to shrimping. Now where you going shrimping, when you go shrimping, which way the wind is blowing, how was the current last night. All that makes a lot of difference, you know, the way the shrimp will be. Literally, they'll stay [inaudible]. And wherever the current is. But then you got favorite places that the shrimp travel. Now the GPS, like we can't see the islands a lot of places. They got passes that go through the lake. The lake is not all one depth and neither is the bay. You know, that's why they got buoys in the bay for the big deep draft boats to pass. In the bay they have, you see green buoys and red buoys. So, on my GPS, I can look and see. See, there's the lake. This would be the lake. And I can see where that bayou had passes here and went this way and went that way. I got an arrow on my GPS. It shows where I'm at and I'll stay right where that pass is in the deepest part. Cuz when the shrimp leave to go out in so many fathoms of water and lay their eggs, I go exactly where they went. I been following them through the lake. The lake's so much deeper there. There's so many things about it, you know. And sometimes the shrimp will go in between waters, not all the way to the top. That's what's good about skimmers. We catch from the top all the way to the bottom. With our bottom net, we used to catch in deep water, it's real important. We used to catch, about, say, four foot from the bottom, our net would come. It had [inaudible] on it, you know. It didn't come all the way to the top. So we knew that. We tried to get it to come higher. We used to put these jacks-ups on our trawl boats, an extension to make

them go up higher. And then we used to put extra heavy floats on our net to pull it up. So, you know, there are so many things we did. Now, one guy's trying to get where he...He's trying to stay off of the top, just the...The jellyfish, when hit, they almost, if they real bad you can't trawl. They'll load up your net and you'll never pick it up. They'll stay on the top. So if you can get in between, say, two, three feet from the top on down, you'll catch the shrimp. So he's trying to get one that'll be in between. And fish, you know, you gotta watch in the passes close to the Gulf. Lot of times, I already hit fish with my whole 50 foot net, from one end to the other one is full. I don't know how many times you gotta load it up a big dump truck with the amount of fish I had in there. What I could do? No way to pick it up. I had to dive and pull by the tail. Open it up and slowly pull [inaudible] 'til the fish come up...and the shrimp and whatever I had in it. You lose everything. — Freddie Matherne

CHINESE SHRIMP DRIERS ALSO DRY FISH FOR CHINESE MARKET: Well a lot of the fish was sold again to the Chinese. Chinese would buy that. Mr. Blum's dad, Leopold and all that - they were all doing that. B: Hmm. But it's mostly for the Chinese market. — Houston Foret

HOUSTON FORET ESTABLISHES DRIED SHRIMP BUSINESS, PLATFORMS AT SEABREEZE: Well the shrimp drying - I started the business in 1968. And from there it just kind of grew up. But my father in law was in the uh, dry shrimp business over water. He had shrimp drying platforms like around Seabreeze area. And from there it just kind of filled in and as a kid we had a uh, just this little area we had in Cocodrie . I mean when I started in business we had like about ten shrimp drying platforms around in this little area right here – and even when I was young, you know out of school or vacation stuff like that going in the afternoon I would go and help but I just got into it and what can you do you know I was and you know as I got out of school, in other words, I started shrimping with my father and I got a business of my own with shrimping. What can I say, uh, in 1968 there was friend of my that I did business with all the time and he offered me his place and I took the place over and from there it just gradually grew little by little. — Houston Foret

PRESUMED EVOLUTION OF LOUISIANA DRIED SHRIMP INDUSTRY, CHINESE, FILIPINOS, NATIVE AMERICANS: Well when I was – when I was starting in the business, there was no ice – that was just - everything was drying. And uh, you would just go out without any ice in the morning and come back in around 10, 11, 12 o'clock and they could cook the shrimp and dry them – that's how the process was. And through the years after that you know like probably in the uh late 40s early 50s they started having some people that started coming with trucks and started trucking shrimp to some of the processing plants you see. We always had some processing plant – but it wasn't the way they do it right now. People would go out with their boats, and they would camp out and you would have another freight boat that would go out there with ice and you would

trawl like 9, 10, 11, 12 o'clock, and you sell the shrimp to the boat, and they would ice it up, and when they had their load, they would bring it in and to the processing plant. And that's how the process really started. And in the uh on the ice business - but the uh system of dry shrimp is uh, a whole different ballgame. There's a lot of people that take credit for something down the line and you always forget one part. The American Indians were the first ones who really started all of that. And you really never hear about that, you know. It's - really blows my mind why they don't talk about that. They give all the credit to the Chinese and the Philippines and everything else – which you know what they did a big part on it. They didn't come over here and show the Cajuns how to dry shrimp. The Cajuns learned from the American Indians. And It was not in a process of selling – all they were doing was on the way of – there was no ice those days. They would catch shrimp – they would dry them in their yard with some boards or whatever they could find, or the porch, whatever they could find – they would dry their shrimp and they would keep that for their own use or they would trade with somebody else in other words - for their grocery bill – at that's just a chain reaction – that's how they survived with that. And they'd get along with the Chinese and the Philippines and everything else, and they started building big ol' platforms, and they started buying shrimp from the Cajuns – actually what they did, the Philippines and the Chinese – they started a market for it. That's when the market really started, they started by -it was really cheap in those days - they would (inaudible) the men and everything else – and they uh, as they went on it kind of grew by itself – and then some of the American people started building our own shrimp drying platforms, and again they'd come back – we were talking about Mr. Louis Blum, uh, his dad Leopold was one of the big wheels of buying a lot of – a lot of dried shrimp, and if just went on and on. And then uh, a few years after that we had another old man by the name of Mr Roy Picoult – which he's played a uh, a big role there in...the other one — Houston Foret

ORIGINS OF BLUM AND BERGERON: Around 1900 or so, my grandfather was in an orphanage in New Orleans. And got out of the orphanage, and … went to work for his uncle at J.H. Baking Company. It was a bakery and dry good company … and they gave him a sales territory, which was the lower part of Terrebonne, Lafourche parish, and St. Mary parish, all of South Louisiana. [His] rounds … probably took him 2 weeks to make all his rounds by horse and buggy or whatever – whatever type of transportation he had at that time. …one of his places he used to stop is down in Houma where they … told him he needed to go down Montegut, Little Caillou and Grand Caillou and stuff like that, and visit those people down there. And uh, because the communities were developing and they needed some uh you know, goods to sell down there, so that's what he did. He just followed the little path that brought him down the bayous and … he would make his sales to different little grocery stores or different people he would run into and stuff like this. But they didn't have any money because .., they were very poor. But they had dried shrimp and furs and whatever else. My grandfather would say, "well I need to sell my

stuff. Why don't you give me your dried shrimp – it looks like something I could sell in New Orleans and at Chinatown." And he would take the shrimp back to New Orleans and sell it in the little Chinatown they had in New Orleans … And uh, he would bring it to his uncle and say, "here uncle. Here's what I produced this month or whatever, you know, and uh, his uncle said, "well you're doing real good down there. He said you need to go and uh, start your own business with the dried shrimp." He said, "that looks like a pretty nice little business." So while he was in Houma he visited a barroom [owned] by Shelly Bergeron, who … kind of took my grandfather under his wing. …after a couple years he told my grandfather - "…, why don't we go into business together – you take the shrimp and you sell it in New Orleans" and he says, "and we'll become partners and stuff like this. He says I got all my cousins and relatives and things like that run business down there and we can do well together. So at the same time he told him that there was a man in Houma by the name of Dr. Leon Jastremski who was owned a canning company. He was canning shrimp, large shrimp. My grandfather went to visit with Dr. Jastremski who gave him the name of his broker in California. His broker's name was Henry Loose. And Mr. Loose was a man of some stature in California because he was in the San Francisco earthquake. And if you survived the San Francisco earthquake, and you were there you were someone of stature. Plus the fact that he was six foot five and he wore one of these great big old hats that make you look taller – but he was an old lumber jack. He had moved to San Francisco and had a little brokerage business working selling different kinds of products, selling all over in Chinatown and all over the place. Grandfather got in touch with him by letter, and sent him some samples of the dried shrimp,. He said he was going off to Hawaii and China on a sales trip, and that he was going to take that product with him to see if he could sell it. So lo and behold, when he got back to my grandfather, he said "Leopold, I have sold a half a boatload of dried shrimp in Hawaii and another half of a boatload of shrimp in China." My grandfather was kind of amazed. It took him several months to get enough dried shrimp to send over there, but he did it. And that's what started our dried shrimp business. Over the years, up till about 193,6 my grandfather and Henry Loose sold up to two million pounds of dried shrimp a year to China and Hawaii. Okay. They started selling dried shrimp, but the process had to evolve. They had to get enough production in order to get to 2 million pounds of dried shrimp a year. So, my grandfather, and his partner, bought boats. They bought platforms that existed already and had some built, and some that were already in production. And some of these platforms were located offshore. What we call offshore up in the marsh grasses and stuff like this and a little bit you know at the end of these bayous like uh, like (Epolie?) bay uh, Bayou Carencro, uh, (Bassa Bassa?), uh, Seabreeze, uh, you know and all along the coast of Louisiana. And uh, I think my grandfather and his partner owned three or four platforms at one time plus other people owned platforms including the Philippines who were in um, Grand Isle. And uh, they had uh Grand Isle of course that was called the Manila Village. And they were there for some time before my grandfather

had started his business. . . . When he started in his business, he needed to have money to finance to pay the people for their shrimp. There was bank in Houma called the Peoples Bank and Trust Company, and my grandfather went over there one day and asked them if he could borrow ten thousand dollars. And they said "Mr. Blum, can you come back in a few days? We'll let you know." He went back in a couple days and they told him "Mr. Blum, we met with the board of directors and everything and agreed to lend you the ten thousand dollars." And my grandfather says, "I surely thank you for doing that." He says, "I know at this time it's a pretty large sum of money." And they said, "I know it is a large sum of money. It's the whole money that we have to run the bank." They lent him all the money in the bank to uh, to buy shrimp and ship it to China. And that was I guess about 1920, 1918.— Louis Blum

DRIED SHRIMP PLATFORM NEAR COCODRIE: At Coon Road they had – one of the biggest platforms in our area was in Coon Road. It belongs to Roland Chauvin - the Chauvin family that built that - and that was a huge platform. Um, you can't get to there - it's all over water right now. — Houston Foret

BARTERING, CHINESE, DRIED SHRIMP WAREHOUSES, SUPPLY BOATS: Well, he was . . . he started at um selling vegetables and what he did with the vegetables and everything else and you know – people didn't have any money, so what he would trade vegetables for shrimp and he goes and sell shrimp – and he was selling to the Chinese and everything else – to Mr. Howard and everything else – and it gradually through the years so that building up to where he started on his own. You know I used to call him the king of the dried shrimp, Mr. Roy I mean. Without him I wouldn't be nothing today. I mean he really made me – him and I were real good friends. And uh, he bought, I mean thousands of pounds of shrimp (inaudible). And he had, like all these platforms over water – they were all selling shrimp to Mr. Roy. I mean, they would dry them for him, and everything was brought by boat, I mean there was no vehicles. He had a little warehouse uh, I guess about 17 miles from here. And all this probably was by boat – they would bring them up, and he probably had about 20 or 30 shrimp drying platforms selling shrimp for him over water. And we would go over there and uh, he would finally – people didn't have no money – so they'd just go ahead and these shrimp drying platforms – when they go out to buy the shrimp, he would give money for them to start buying shrimp, and they'd come in and after that they'd sell the dried shrimp to him and he'd come and take his money back. It was a family uh, thing what it was. These guys over water like they'd leave all their families – and they would go sometimes two or three months without even coming in – they'd just stay at their shrimp drying platform – they had all the food they wanted right there. ROY MAY BE HOY. — Houston Foret

SHRIMP DRYING PLATFORMS WEST OF BAYOU LAFOURCHE: Both seasons, yeah. Well you had like your brown shrimp season, the brown shrimp season was always in our area over here. And then these same people that own shrimp dry platforms in our area

over the coast had some little further to the west – like you go toward Morgan City, uh, not exactly Morgan City - before you get to the Atchafalaya river which is called um, Point au Fer? Well right there they had a bunch of them right there. An there you had Oyster Bayou – Oyster Bayou had uh, I don't know - 8, 10 shrimp drying platforms. They had (Bayou Heron?) right there – it was like a city over there you had so many – I don't even know how many platforms, but it was a city - I mean a lot of people that was right here. And like I said they all worked together. — Houston Foret

RISE AND FALL OF ISOLATED SHRIMP DRYING PLATFORM VILLAGES: They were probably there in the 1860s, 1870s, around that era. But in the Terrebonne and Lafourche parish my grandfather had started most of the drying of the shrimp and stuff like that. And those platforms uh, were built on little stilts floating in the marsh. And the way they made them float in the marsh and be able to have support themselves was that they would drive some little pilings down in the ground, maybe six or seven foot down in to the ground and six or seven feet about the ground. And in between the two little uh, poles, or the hundreds of poles they would put a little board, and it would support enough weight on those the little boards that attach those pilings together to have it just float on the marsh. And above that they would get cypress and you know and uh, pine and stuff like this and they would make uh, the platform on top of it and it was made in waves. It would have a peak and it would come down to another valley and it would come on up to a peak again and down to a valley. And some of those platforms were maybe uh, a football uh, or two football fields uh, big. And they made villages around. And the people lived out on those platforms and they could catch oysters and they would catch shrimp and they would trap furs and they would make lives out there on those platforms. And uh, some people would be born and die out there on those platforms. The priests, they had to go out there and make them jump the broom to get married. And stuff like that over the years. D: Now when your grandfather was in the business you know, he had to boil the shrimp. L: Sure. D: Was it a brick [boiler]? L: It was a uh, sort of a brick boiler that they made at first and uh, they later on out of metal. And uh you know they had a blacksmith making big metal pots and stuff. I guess it was some of those bit boiling pots that they used in sugarcane. And they would ship cords of wood out there on those platforms in order to make the fire. And uh, those platforms uh you know, when they were full of shrimp, you know quite heavy and they, would sink a little bit in the marsh, but at the same time, plus the boilers were heavy and the houses that were on, and so they had to keep building them because they kept sinking but uh, they would do it and it was you know that's how they got along. And uh, some of the - as time went by, and after the uh, World War II was over with, they started building roads and schools and the communities started to really get bigger and bigger and down on the coast. They built roads down there, and so the platforms came to the end of the roads. And uh, the shrimpers got boats and they used to – by the way I forgot to tell ya'll that – they had very few boats in those times. People would go and (inaudible) those shrimp by hand. And uh, um, they would

catch uh, enough shrimp to fill up the platforms, so it was quite extensive and the shrimp were very plentiful in those days. Uh, and uh, so you know, I don't know exactly how hard it was for them to do it but it was a pretty hard life. So… — Louis Blum

ROLE OF HURRICANES IN HASTENING DEMISE OF SHRIMP DRYING PLATORM VILLAGES: in 1926 uh, a hurricane came and uh, right through Terrebonne parish and blew away a lot of the platforms, and my grandfather and his partner had a boat, and I forgot the name of the boat. I wish I could remember the name of it. And they sent the boat to go get the people on a platform out by Seabreeze. And uh, the boat broke down. And they had nine people left out of the platform including a little boy that had gone fishing with his daddy. And uh, they got caught on that platform, and uh nine people drowned, and my grandfather and his partner decided that at that that time they were gonna try to get rid of those platforms because they didn't want to have that responsibility on them. If people wanted to dry the shrimp they could do it on their own you know, and we would buy it from them, and uh, you know instead of having all that responsibility, and they parked the boats and stuff behind the shop. — Louis Blum

EXPORT OF LOUISIANA DRIED SHRIMP 1: The dried shrimp industry got so big, they were shipping the stuff in these 200 pound barrels made by the Mancuso Box and Barrel Company. The company sent one of their men here. Next door we have a little old stable where he made barrels for my grandfather and his partner, so they could ship the dried shrimp. And what they used to do is they used to get the shrimp from down on the coast – a lot of times the boats would bring the dried shrimp – to the shop here in the back and it all floated in the back and my grandfather would take them out of the sacks or however they transported them to him, and whatever they would transport - and he would place it in these 200 pound barrels. The guy would make a hundred of them a week or, you know so a week. And uh, my grandfather would ship probably once every couple weeks or so on the little ferry - the paddlewheel boats that were going up and down the bayous here, and they would go through a Barataria Canal and go to New Orleans . Then they would catch the steamboat in New Orleans and either pass through the Panama Canal or wherever they had to go to get to Hawaii, China and down to Brazil and Argentina and Cuba and Central America. And uh, they probably, those steam ships went down before they didn't go through the um, Panama Canal to get to China. I'm thinking he probably railroaded... put the stuff on the railroad…barrels on the railroad go to uh, California, and then form California they would catch the boat going to Hawaii and China. But the stuff that was going to Central America would go down through New Orleans on those steam ships or those paddle wheel boats. — Louis Blum

EXPORT OF LOUISIANA DRIED SHRIMP 2: Well when we first started, as I understand it, the first international shipment of seafood from the United States anywhere to any foreign country was my grandfather's business - that he sent to China. Back in 19 early 1900s or something as far as seafood is concerned. And uh, at least that's what we

understand. But uh, before the 19 - before World War II, I'm assuming that probably most of the shrimp that my grandfather sent out of here went overseas. Because it was very inexpensive. And uh, during the depression especially, uh, because our - we didn't have any money here. And in China they were on the gold standard. And uh, remnants of the (Dow?)Empress. And uh, their money was good and ours wasn't, so we had a good product to sell to China and so it was very inexpensive and it was good. Uh, shrimp is red in color from Louisiana and it's something to eat. And so red in China is good luck. And it's also something to eat because they had a lot of families over there so it was a very good product of them. Plus it was preserved and it never went bad and so they could use it anytime - anytime they wanted. And uh, so I'm assuming that probably most of the shrimp prior to World War II, uh, went overseas. You either went to South America, uh, Cuba, or um, China or Hawaii or somewhere like that. — Louis Blum

EXPORT OF LOUISIANA DRIED SHRIMP 3: They would ship food stuff down to Central America including dried shrimp to the plantations where they grew the fruit and vegetables and they would ship the fruit and vegetables back and then uh, dried shrimp and stuff like that were used on those plantations. I think they also used to use a lot of codfish from Maine and stuff at the same time. It was a cheap way to feed people that worked on the plantations. I would think they would buy probably a ton or so at a time. — Louis Blum

EXPORT OF LOUISIANA DRIED SHRIMP 4: My dad went to LSU in 1933 I think. And uh when he got there everybody was in the ROTC staying in the stadium, in the dorms of the stadium. And LSU was an agricultural college at that time. But anyway uh, the uh, guy that was the head of the ROTC uh, was, I think he was a captain or a major or something like that. And my daddy was a little intimidated by him being a young man and everything like this. One day he had forgot his hat at home in Houma, and my grandfather packed up his hat in a box and wrote on there the address and stuff like that and put a sticker on the box and shipped it off to LSU. And uh, the captain of ROTC got it. And he called my dad out of class. And uh, my dad, man, feet across the quad as fast as he could go. He was nervous as could be, you know, and he got in his office the uh, head of, captain of whatever it was told him he says uh, "you Louis Blum?" He says uh, "yes sir." And uh, he says "this your hat right here?" he says "yes sir." He says "well," he says, "uh, I was looking at this label on the box he says uh, Blum and Bergeron. Red Bug Brand Shrimp. Is that related to you?" and my dad says "yes sir." "Well let me tell you a story." He says, "When I was a young officer uh, I was stationed in Shanghai at the harbor in Shanghai, China. And he says I used to watch those coolies unloading barrels of shrimp from Houma, Louisiana. And he said Red Bug Brand, Blum and Bergeron." He says, "I often wondered where that shrimp came from and who had sent that shrimp over here, and said it always made me a little homesick." And he said, "it was a little touch of

home." And he had a tear in his eye. And my daddy saw that tear coming down his cheek like that and he says, oh. He said "I got it alright now." — Louis Blum

EXPORT OF LOUISIANA DRIED SHRIMP 5: SOME SHRIMP ONLY MARGINALLY FIT FOR HUMAN CONSUMPTION, SHRIMP EXPORTS: B: Well, how often did that happen? How did people lose shrimp? F: Oh it happens. It happens a lot of time. Shrimp was cheap those days. They really didn't make that much. And they lost a lot of shrimp um, but really throw them, completely throw them away — it wasn't that bad. What they did – if it was an all gray shrimp, in other words they wouldn't come out it would have a black looking color to them and they had a little odor in it, and that was always sold on the market – on a different scale on the markets. Um, it most of the people that would use that kind of shrimp were, even it was sold in Mexico. A lot of the stuff was sold in Cuba. Cuba was buying the garbage. And they would sell all the Cubans stuff like that. So yes – they lost shrimp, but not on a big, big scale. Never lost a whole platform. They would lose maybe a couple hundred tubs, let's say you know - ten thousand pounds. B: So it was a small percentage. F: It was a small percentage in that time. And shrimp was so cheap in those days – they were buying shrimp like a dollar a tub, you know. Uh, a hundred pounds of shrimp you know so… — Houston Foret

DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION OF DRIED SHRIMP / ACADIANA: B: When I was a kid, the Catholic population ate dried shrimp regularly in the Lenten season every year. About when did dried shrimp start to become a real commodity for something of importance here? Do you have any… L: Oh it's always been because it was because they didn't have any way to preserve meats and stuff like this. They would - they would preserve like uh, stuff they would soak it in lard and stuff you know big vats and stuff. But as far as dried fish and dried shrimp, was concerned, it was something that they could preserve and they could keep all year long. They was like beef jerky or something like that - those guys out west would carry beef jerky with them and eat them like that – but the same thing here – the Chinese would eat dried shrimp just like, like, uh, beef jerky. — Louis Blum

BLUM AND BERGERON DRIED SHRIMP BRANDS: We had uh, several different names for our stuff we had uh Red Bug brand, we had Baby Brand, we had uh, Houma Brand, uh, and each - there were lots of people who were shipping dried shrimp as well as we were. Each one of them had their own brand names and stuff like this. And they were all trying to ship in barrels and stuff like that. — Louis Blum

HARSH WINTERS MOVED SHRIMP WESTWARD, CLIMATE CHANGE: We don't have the winter we used to have. We used to have some serious bad winters. And the winter was really moved our shrimp to the west. — Houston Foret

RATIO OF FRESH SHRIMP TO DRIED SHRIMP: You know and it takes about 7 pounds - actually to make a good quality it takes about 8 pounds of fresh shrimp to make you a

pound of dry shrimp. And so it - the percentage of it was very small for them to (inaudible) at that point, you know. And we would put that in 100 pound burlap sacks and he would bring it to his warehouse and from there he would take it and run it to his – well the first thing he would do he would take them out run them through a blower to and pick out all these - we only had some of the trash in there left, and from there, then he would bring them to different (inaudible) and he would pack them in boxes and ship them all over, you know. — Houston Foret

ORIGIN OF COFFEE SACKS USED BY SHRIMP DRIERS: B: And do you have any idea how you got them? They just bought them the leftovers from the coffee dealers and the owners or… F: Well they used to um, come in, in pallets. You know all new sacks. B: Oh. F: Yeah, they were all new sacks…and I'm sure there were some of them had the – I did see some of them that I had that had some coffee beans in it. — Houston Foret

TRANSFORMATION OF THE SHRIMP DRYING INDUSTRY IN THE 1960s: D: Well now how did the industry change when you know, you don't sun dry them anymore. L: I would think around 1962, '63. The price of shrimp doubled. In fact it actually tripled, and uh, before that when my grandfather first started in business, he was paying uh, the people down on the coast 6 cents a pound to 8 cents a pound for dried shrimp, and he was selling it for 10 cents a pound. And uh, so if they had uh, around of shrimp the whole platform of shrimp that went bad, uh, because they couldn't dry it because of weather or for some reason or another it just got rotten sitting on the platform, waiting for it to dry, they would shovel a whole thing overboard and they'd just go back to work again. It was costly and it cost them a lot of labor and everything like this, but overall, they were catching a lot of shrimp and stuff like this so they would just replace it. But when the price of shrimp got up to uh, over uh, a dollar a dollar fifty a pound, they couldn't afford to uh, throw it away anymore. So my dad, in about 1948 or so like that came from New Orleans after working for Higgins industries in New Orleans during the war and a little bit after the war, uh came and helped my grandfather in the shrimp industry. And uh, he took uh an old heater out the bathroom and made himself a drying machine. And he was drying shrimp and all the fish in drying machines here in the shop for about 15, 20 years and after that he had developed a method of doing it and he knew what he had to do. He had all the test run on it and found out it was even better than the sun drying shrimp. And uh, so the about 1962, '63, when the price tripled, those people said, we don't know what to do. We're gonna really have to be careful about how we're drying shrimp. And so my dad says well I got an idea. I got a drying machine that I've been drying shrimp with. Why don't I come down here and put a drying machine in each one of the platforms and ya'll can try it out and see how ya'll like. It. And it probably cost him about maybe a 150, 200 dollars apiece at the time to put a drying machine on the platforms. What they would do they would get some little old industrial-type heaters and my daddy hooked them up and he put a blower on the back of them. And he built a box uh, about uh, six or eight by

ten foot or six by ten foot wide and uh, with the heater bellowing underneath in the box and he had a screen sitting up on the top of the box, and they would pour the uh, the boiled shrimp on top of that screen and the air would be forced through the shrimp and it would dry it. Anywhere from 4 to 6 hours depending on uh, the time of year it was. And how much humidity or rain or whatever was going on, it could dry a batch of shrimp. In that thing - they could put 3 barrels of shrimp about 640 pounds or something like that and uh, so at first, they were still had they, they had a drying machine and they had their platform. And when the weather would get bad they would try to put as much, you know they would take the stuff off the platform and would dry it in the drying machine. But a lot of people who were selling dried shrimp at the time didn't want their shrimp that was coming out of the dryer because they didn't know about it. They didn't know if it was gonna be good or it was gonna be accepted or anything like this. But my dad knew because he dad been doing it for a long time. And uh, so we got a lot of that dried shrimp that came out of those drying machines. And uh so as time went on, the Board of Health would come, and said "Oh, we can't have ya'll drying shrimp on platforms like that. You know birds coming and dropping their stuff on it and uh, nutra, raccoons eating the shrimp and during what they gotta do and the maggots are coming and getting in the dried shrimp and everything like that and it's not sanitary." So eventually they would uh, you know new laws and new you know, safety regulations and stuff lite this, they all started using drying machines. And the price of shrimp kept going up and going and going up. So it saved all you know, you don't lose any shrimp today with drying machines. — Louis Blum

USE OF BEATERS TO REMOVE SHRIMP BRAN: What happened was that the - in the old days, uh, before they had their beater, the people on the platforms would do what was known as the shrimp dance. And they would - when the shrimp were dry they would put their moccasins on or thick shoes, or thick something with thick soles on it, and they would get out on that platform and they would dance over the shrimp in a little line and they would call that the shrimp dance. And they were crushing up the shells off the shrimp. And what they would they do after they had all of that done, they would take a shovel and throw the shrimp up in the air, and the shells would go one way, and the shrimp would fall back in the shovel. They would put that in their, in their sacks or barrels or whatever they transported it in. And so one day my uh, father's – my grandfather's partner and them were out there on the platform and one of the little boys was running around with a barrel. And he had some dried shrimp in the barrel. And uh, the more he bounced the barrel around on the platform, the more shells came off the shrimp so it gave him an idea. So that's where they went to make the tumbler to tumble the dried shrimp. And uh, they have the patent they made and uh, that dried shrimp tumbler machine that beats the shells off the shrimp. — Louis Blum

SALE OF DRIED SHRIMP BRAN: We grind it - we it's a lot of it is just basically shell and heads of the shrimp and what have you and what we do from there is we have these hammer mills that we grind it up into a fine power and stuff like this and it's used as bird and animal food. Uh, and also my tropical fish foods and stuff like that and I sell it to zoos and aquariums all over the United States. And if you've ever seen pink flamingos, uh, shrimp meal is something in there that makes the called carotenoid, that makes the flamingoes turn pink. And uh, that's the - really what makes them really pink. And uh, today I - not long ago I went to Audubon Zoo, and they were using some other kind of formula – probably some kind of beet meal or something like that – and the flamingoes are a little bit orange. Ha ha - And they're not eat shrimp meal at the Audubon zoo. — Louis Blum

CONVERSION FROM BARRELS TO BOXES: I think it was in the 1950s that they maybe started using wooden boxes. In probably 1955 that they moved over to the cardboard boxes. Because I could remember when I was a little boy, we used to come and help my grandfather either put the cards on - you know putting up the little cards of shrimp to sell locally in the grocery stores, or making boxes. And we used to have used to get the glue from the Swift and Company. And it would be some horse hoof glue. And as a little boy we'd take a paint brush and we'd paint the bottom of those boxes, and we had some bricks - I still got bricks by the way - and we'd just put those bricks in those boxes and let them sit there until they dry. I used to make seventeen at a time. I can remember like that because that's all the bricks I had. I used to wear myself out on Saturday or Sunday - try and make boxes to put dried shrimp in. and I'd make probably 150 or 100 or so at a time. And they would ship that. — Louis Blum

SHRIMP INDUSTRY — SHRIMPING

NET MAKING AND NET MAINTANANCE: Well, we always made our own nets, but when I started making that it was easy. Because you could go buy your…whatever amount of webbing you want. Already made you know. If you want you know most of them come 200 mats deep and whatever inches you want, and you just cut your net whatever shape you want to make your net. But before I started, you would go buy some string and just it wouldn't roll it was just string would come and you had to take the string and a needle and started with a needle and a string. And you had to make all these holes. You had to make everything. And then after it was all made you had to go back and re-cut it. So ti was time for them – time consuming. D: Now did the men to that or did the women? F: The women and the men – both of them did that – and the children. D: And the children. F: Everybody was there doing that. They'd just take – it was made out of cotton. These- they wouldn't last you had to dip them… B: Well that's what I wanted to ask you about.. F: Yeah it was all cotton webbing. And they wouldn't last at all. I mean you really had to take care of them. I mean you had to dip them…and you know. B: Dip them in what? F: In tar….it was mostly tar in those days, and then you cut it with gasoline so it wouldn't

be too thick. But then you had to watch you know,if you put them in the sun too long before you use it, the sun would burn them. So they – it was a mess. Then all of a sudden nylon comes in. That was, I mean that was a blessing that. B: About when, do you remember when that change took place? F: To nylon? It changed to nylon in the mid 50's. By the mid 50s it changed to nylon. — Houston Foret

EDWARD ROBIN'S SHRIMP AND OYSTER DAILY OUTPUT, ST. BERNARD PARISH: I used to handle anywhere from 80 to 100 thousand pounds of shrimp a day. I used to ship out three and four tractor loads of oysters a day, each tractor holds 400 sacks and I'd ship them all over, where they used to open them up by hand and some of them went to the cannery and so forth. — Edward Robin

SHRIMP CANNERIES AFFORDED EARLY SHRIMPERS A VITAL SECOND OPTION: But the, there was only one way when they started with the canned shrimp – that was a big deal and you know. Growing up. You know there was another way that you could get rid of your product. Wasn't just dried shrimp. In other words you had the canning plant. That's what all these boats were doing, you know, bringing up to Indian Ridge and by brother was canning it, and after they were canned, you know they would cure it. And that went on – there was a lot of canning plants – but that started going sour in the early eighties. That's when our price of shrimp started gradually – I mean it went sky high. And... B: So that's what put the canners out of business… F: Put them out of business, yeah. What happened there – you could get imported shrimp at that time, canned shrimp cheaper than what they could put them in the cans. So, they didn't even have the price. I remember well, uh, at that time, shrimp was like, a case of shrimp, huh, canned shrimp, was 7 for 42 dollars a case. That's what it would sell for. And the uh, that's our people - it would cost them 42 dollars to put them in the case, like 48 cans. The Chinese. When they started coming in with the canned goods – started putting them on the market like for 21 dollars a case. So they were putting them half the price what it was costing the people and they – I mean they have a lot of shrimp - ..so they lost a lot of money. They never could regroup that. — Houston Foret

SHRIMP CANNERIES VS SHRIMP DRYERS: The industry changed they were always canning shrimp at about the same time that my grandfather went into the business as well. But drying shrimp was a way to preserve the shrimp for years and months and for God knows how long dried shrimp will last. It's supposed to be the safest product in the world – as far as what the biologists told me at one time. And uh, and it has no harmful oils or resins or anything in it that get rancid or anything like that so it stays almost forever, because the moisture content is so low bacteria cannot grow. — Louis Blum

SHRIMP CANNERIES PAID IN SCRIP 1: F: Little slip of paper and everything, they would give out a little slip of paper, you know," x" amount of pounds of shrimp you peel and then you take that little slip and then you go in and they'll pay you with that slip. They

would doing to that right there just a little just like(inaudible) insurance. They take a bucket probably uh, you know, 2 gallon bucket, 2 1/2 gallon bucket and everything else and they were paid why a pound had so much per bucket..so you bring your paper to them , and you always have somebody – I did that myself too…would do that, you know. And you only had somebody that had one of them who would have the, like knock like a little, like a hole into your paper, you know. And every — Houston Foret

TERREBONNE SHRIMP CANNERIES PAID IN SCRIP 2: [Each] time you give them a bucket of shrimp, headless, you take that and you popped a hole in it, and after they was finished all they had to do is count those little holes, you know how many buckets they uh, shrimp you had. Yeah. That's how they would – I remember that part. Which for the coins, though, I don't remember the coins. D: The tokens, but the paper you remember. — Houston Foret

TOKENS AND COMPANY STORES: As far as the, you know, just like when I was a kid, like across the bayou, the kids would get back to the shoreline - they had us if you go to Cocodrie toward the end they got one camp right there that still belongs to some family in Chauvin - well right there the Chauvins had a shrimp drying platform they had a oyster house, they had a fish house, and their grocery store was right there. I remember that well because I mean I was born probably within 200 feet of where that camp is at. I was born I was raised right there. And as a kid I remember we used to go over there and buy candies and cookies and whatever we wanted as a kid. We didn't have nickels – we didn't have quarter s- we had tokens. What it takes 5 tokens to get a penny – 5 pennies to get a nickel. Well I remember that – token was, again, it was a little round thing. It was made it was rust – it was a little metal and they had a little hole in the middle. And we could go out with tokens with two tokens I could get me a candy. — Houston Foret

RAPID DECLINE IN THE NUMBER OF ACTIVE SHRIMPERS: Last eight, ten years, the amount of boats went way down. We don't have nowhere near the amount of boats that we had before. So we can talk to each other. If you're on a boat and you might be two lakes away from me. And I'm catching good and I want to tell you. But I don't want to tell everybody else, so I'm not going to say it on the radio. I'll use my cell phone and call you direct. That way...Now, if we have any breakdown, I can call over here, to my neighbors, [inaudible], to my friends, wife, you know. I can get in touch with them so it's very important to have one of these. My GPS tell me where all this land was. See what I can show you on this while we're talking about the land. — Freddie Matherne

PERSONAL RECORD CATCHES: I caught 2,500 pounds of 21/25 side shrimp in six hours. I mean, everything was full. I come back and sold it. I had never caught that much shrimp, you know, before. No way near that much. And then once in Lake Felicity, I had caught, not quite that much, but almost. About 1500 pound or so in a day. — Freddie Matherne

SMALL TOWN LIFE

SMALL TOWN LIFE, 1940s AND ‘50s, PRAIRIES, IOTA: Well the population's 1,200 thereabouts at that time. You know, everyone knew everyone else, you know. You knew everybody so life was, as I recall it, rather slow. But enjoyable, you know. Went to a Catholic school during elementary school then I went to the high school. And so I would walk to school, you know from, you know to the high school, you know. . . L: Yeah, they had, they um, the groceries, they had a couple of, three, probably three major grocery stores, okay, during that period, you know. But you got to remember when grew up, I was born in '38, you know, so I grew up in the 50s, in the 40s and the 50s, you know, so they had three grocery stores. They had one movie theatre for a period of time. D: How many doctors were there in town? L: There was one. There was one doctor, okay. And you know, well I guess maybe... there probably... When I was growing up there was one doctor, okay. And he lived in Iota and he had a little office, okay. And he drove, and he drove to his office in a buggy, okay, horse and buggy. And he'd tie up, you know, his buggy behind his office, okay so that was common practice for him, okay. And so you had one doctor and you had one dentist also. Okay, and so for any other major health issues you had to go to Crowley, as a rule. I think Crowley was the choice for some reason. I don't know why Crowley was the choice versus Jennings or Eunice. I don't know why that was. — Levin LeJeune

SURVEYING

COASTAL LOUISIANA'S DISTINCTIVE SURVEY SYSTEM: developed an “expertise” in the reconstruction of the U.S. government surveys, which are probably different in South Louisiana than anywhere in America because believe it or not, in the Louisiana Purchase, when they talk about all that acreage that was purchased by the United States from France, much of the usable surface areas of coastal Louisiana were already owned by people because of the French and Spanish grants that were given, and most of the ridges or high land along the bayous and rivers were already owned by people and the only part that the United States acquired was undeveloped lands between the ridges and the bayous. And then the U.S. government came in and surveyed, and had to recognize—the U.S. Government surveyors had to recognize previous French and Spanish grants. — Clifford Smith

EARLY SURVEYORS: And then project a rectangular surveying system out into the marshes, out into the swamp, what they considered the un-valuable areas. And they were great [heights], they surveyors were paid by the mile. Can you imagine in the 1830's/1850's they were on horse and buggies and pirogues and what have you. Um, but my father became an expert in reviewing the field notes and the maps of these U.S. government surveyors, even acquired the instruments that they used so he could follow in their footsteps. They were—in his time they had developed a transit, but in the—U.S.

government surveyors, they didn't have transits, they had compasses and chains and so he—and we have, in our collection around here, the compasses and the chains that he used in an attempt to reconstruct the U.S. government surveys. Those are examples of Witness Trees that came out of the woods around Terrebonne Parish. Witness Trees from U.S. government surveys and my father, reconstructed. — Clifford Smith

SURVEY MARKERS AND WITNESS TREES: if we follow the notes, which are very difficult to do, but if you followed the field notes, they would set a government corner, section corner, township corner, range corner, and they would usually—they were using Cypress stakes, they weren't using anything more permanent, hell concrete had not been invented, much less steel, or cast-iron. They were using primarily Cypress stakes and when they would set the corner then they would reference the corner. Normally they would have four or five trees that was so many degrees, so many feet from the corner, and they would go to the tree and they would etch into the tree with a stencil that this is a Witness Tree. — Clifford Smith

SURVEYS BECOME IMPORTANT FOLLOWING THE DISCOVERY OF OIL AND GAS IN THE COASTAL PLAIN: Nobody really cared about that until about 1930 when they discovered oil in South Louisiana, particularly in Terrebonne Parish and everybody decide, "Well maybe we wanna know how many acres they are from the [Lee Red] field in Terrebonne Parish, over the Lapeyrouse field in Little Caillou. Okay? Because the government surveys might have said they were three miles, and guess what. They ain't three miles. It might be 2 and a half miles. So all the sudden everybody got very concerned about how many acres and how many—ownership of who owned what. — Clifford Smith

TOURISM — ENVIRONMENTAL

ENVIRONMENTAL TOURISM, COASTAL TERREBONNE PARISH: I got a lady coming help me out when I got the big tourists who was coming in? And uh, her name is Jean Vardin. And she brought along one of her little grandchild – he was, I don’t know, about six maybe? And that little son of a gun, he can talk three languages. I said, how in the hell he learned that? She said you learn French, you learn English, you learn um, Espanol. And I said, look, I can talk four languages too. I know no school, she said, yeah, tell me what you can say. I said, I can talk a little bit English, a little bit French, and a whole lot of ducks and alligators. I said alligator you got to do, (Aw! Aw!) and duck, (Quack Quack!) I said, that’s what it is. I’ve got to talk to them. It’s true. — Dovie Naquin

TRANSPORTATION

BAYOUS AND RIVERS AS TRANSPORTATION ARTERIES: The bayous 200 years ago were the highways. The bayous were the area where the high land developed adjacent to it. — Clifford Smith

SCHOONERS: D: Have you ever heard of—I mean, we can make some assumption; I just wanna ask you--have you ever heard why we have the term, "Schooner Bayou"? A: Well, apparently, Don, there was a fairly active commerce attachment with Galveston and that was all done with a schooner that sailed into the mouth of the Mermentau and [took branch there], and I at one time, knew the name of that schooner...I don't think it was the Majestic, I think that was a boat that linked [Pilot Town] in New Orleans and I, for the life of me, have lost the reference to the name of the schooner that serviced it. But the Crane family, Hilda Crane, who's one of my secretaries at Rockefeller who's married to one of the Cranes, Hilda probably could dig out some of that information for you out of the old Crane Family records. Uh, one of her husband's cousins were there Harpers and they have an engineering company over and they're likely to have more realistic records than anybody and Lonny Glenn Harper would be the engineer there. — Allen Ensminger

TRANSPORTATION BY BOAT, ISLE À JEAN-CHARLES: But um, my youngest days, that's the reason I didn't have a school to go to school. We didn't have no bayou here. No road here to get to the doctor anywhere. You had to go by boat and follow the water – go to Seabreeze and then come back Terrebonne Bayou to Houma, from here, go fight to get to Larose - Larose from here was okay. Long – it was not in the summer – summer you had the water lilies that was floating the canal – you could get in there. No motor. Very few motors if you had any. It was rowboats and sailboats. — Dovie Naquin

TRANSPORTATION BY BOAT FOR STUDENTS: R: Um, my mother went to school in Grand Chenier from a boat. In Grand Chenier to go get on a train in Lake Arthur and go Louisiana north to Natchitoches is how she was educated. My grandmother, those people were actually sent to Grand Coteau. — David Richard

TRANSPORTATION BY WATER BEFORE ROADS: The, the way to get from grand Chenier to Pecan Island was Pecan Island ditches was built with crooked shovels. Off the front end of a boat.

OVERLAND COMMUNICATIONS WITH GRAND CHENIER: R: When I dated my wife, I went across a ferry from Grand Chenier to pick her up in Lake Charles. Now I'm not talking about – we're talking about 1975. There's no road between Grand Chenier and Pecan Island till the late 50s. Was no road to Southern Cameron parish. East of the channel until either the forties or the fifties. I mean, you know, I guess it was the forties. So you know that isolation um, was apparent. But I have to get back to a little story of the horses. I was somewhere in the last week and somehow saw – when I was a kid I could remember going to – especially in the prairie country – is where you had those little two-

horse, those little two horse gates. Where they'd put them head to head, partner. It always seemed like it was a head to head deal. You put two horses head to head there – a match race. And you have a – you see the cars parked there and they'd be watching. Oh I mean I just remember it like it was yesterday. But I mean what I'm trying to tell you is that those remnant pieces of quilt are still there. I actually saw one last week somewhere my travels around here. — David Richard

OVERLAND COMMUNICATIONS IN ST. BERNARD PARISH: And I know as a child we would go to visit relatives in Delacroix Island and I can remember it was such a long trip. Oh god, it took forever. And it was a gravel road, a shell road. And it seemed like it took forever, like 3 hours or something like that. And it was a narrow road and the bayou on the side of the road, Bayou Terreboeuf was beautiful. It was flowing all the way from Chalmette all the way to wherever all the way to Delacroix Island to Lake Leary. It was just beautiful. And then, I don't remember who was in office, but they allowed people to build mud bridges across that bayou and put a culvert underneath 'em. And if you go there today and look at Bayou Terre aux Boeuf, it's not a bayou. It's a mess. — Michael Benge

EVOLUTION OF LEASES: DB: The first leases were handshakes and that continued until I became president and I said well you know, we gotta have written leases, because we've gotta secure the property for one thing. We've got to be able to settle disputes over leases so in '93 I instigated written hunting leases. And everybody was thrilled, 'cause it gave them a sense of security as well, because the lease was theirs and it said on the lease where they were gonna hunt and they got a map and everything. Everyone except Chalin and Perez signed a lease. And that was in 1993. And that's how we ended up in court, because he didn't want to sign a lease and he was... He thought well I can pull the wool over this little girl's eyes and so we went back and forth and then I had in my file a note, 'cause Adam and (inaudible) used to call in his reports to the office. — Michael Benge

TRAPPING — FUR

ORIGINS OF LOUISIANA COMMERCIAL TRAPPING INDUSTRY: The rat thing based on information from Ted and historical stuff – Lowery's book where he put the whole thing together – took off in the early 1900s, maybe 1912. The New York market started using the pelts and essentially cutting the belly and the back, which were totally different - kind of silver belly and a dark longer haired back, and those were separate coats. They went in separate directions where the – and so it took off, and I guess the peak of that, and I just know a little of that history. It was in the forties, and that was the days of some of the muskrat wars in St. Bernard and it looked like the muskrats were produced in waves. And a lot of trappers told me this. I don't know if I totally understand that, but they would – they would start producing maybe east of the river, and um, and then kind of a wave of muskrat production coming to Terrebonne. And there were rats in Cameron

Parish. In fact, the most valuable rats were always in the Chenier plain. Darker, thicker fur. Same thing with nutria – I spent many years trying to study that. I even got into raising nutria in captivity in New Iberia. The pens are still there, with um, physiologists and feeding trace minerals and stuff to try to figure out – can we do something? Can we do something in southeast to increase the value of the nutria? The rat thing had kind of gone – that was going away in the eighties, but um, so we were – nutria was still booming through the seventies and early eighties, and we wanted to make them more valuable, so I fooled with that a lot. But really back to the historical thing, when I started coming over here, probably in the seventies, I was meeting with three individuals – Herman Crawford, who lived in that house, and his son Dwayne is there now, and is the surface manager. Gerald Voissin at LL&E, and John Woodard was at um, Le Terre, but I was really talking with Leroy Sevin because he handled the trappers. So I went in the marsh probably some with Herman, not as much. I went in the marsh I think more with LL&E because they had way over a hundred trappers. — Greg Linscomb

TRAPPERS AND THEIR FAMILIES LIVING ON HOUSEBOATS: M: Lafitte. Bayou Perot or I went too far. We lived right here. D: Alright, perfect. And it was a houseboat? M: And it was a houseboat. Pulled up on the marsh. D: And how old were you when you lived in that? M: All the way from about one to about six years old. Then we moved to Lafitte. D: Alright. You moved the houseboat to Lafitte? M: Yeah. We were living on the houseboat. — Freddie Matherne

TRAPPERS ALSO USE HOUSEBOATS AS CAMPS FOR OTHER SEASONAL PURSUITS: D: Now did they take the houseboat, when they got to Bayou Gauche, and just pull it up on the land and that was your house? M: No. They, in fact, they did pull it up, but then my father gave it to my grandmother. D: Okay. M: She stayed in it. And he built a house right over here. A pretty big house, you know. And he was crabbing then and fishing. You know, he would crab during the summer and all. And sometimes during the winter but during the winter he went trapping, trap Golden Ranch. — Freddie Matherne

ORIGINS OF DELACROIX CORPORATION: MB: It was '27/'28 actually this... the Delacroix Corporation was the predecessor or the predecessor or processor... successor of the Acme Land and Fur Corporation, which was a company that my great-grandfather, my mother's grandfather started. And actually it was the Southern Fur Company before that, so he was a fur buyer; owned a store down in Delacroix Island and through the trapper's war, which you undoubtedly heard of. MB: That's really the basis of how the corporation started from the land side. The Delacroix Corporation I believe was already pretty much here, but then on the property, didn't own very much property. And the merger between the Acme Land and Fur and the Delacroix Corporation, which my great-grandfather sold the land that he had acquired to the Delacroix Corporation for money and for stock. And through the years we've managed to maintain the corporation. We've

actually managed to do fairly, fairly well. I think my great-grandfather spent a lot of time if you look at the records of this corporation keeping this company afloat. He borrowed money to pay taxes. He always, you know, he invested heavily in the infrastructure borrowing gifts and the state and the Plaquemines and St. Bernard parishes primarily but, uh, you know he struggled to keep the company afloat. But getting back to this corporation, when my great-grandfather died, my grandmother became president and you know she had been very, very active I think as the son of my great-grandfather never had, you know, being part of the business. She had came in and she made it a point that we were not gonna live hand to fist anymore, that we were going to set some reserves aside and she had a goal of setting aside about a million dollars in reserve, just to save. And I'll tell you this that when she became sick and my mother took over, there was more than that end reserves in this corporation. In addition, we had a great, great run of oil and gas activity through the years. We had great people working for us in the field. We were able to defend our property rights in suits like that or with the state even. But she worked hard to learn this business. She had nobody to fall back on. To see her kind of relinquish some of that control, because... and invite mom in to start learning and working to be the treasurer and unfortunately it wasn't very long after that that she suffered a stroke.— Michael Benge

ACQUISITION OF LAND BY DELACROIX CORPORATION: MB: This corporation, as he amassed the amount of property that he amassed with the fur trapper's war, he was paying the taxes on the property. People gave him the property to pay the taxes and they were able to, part of this corporation, to buy their property back if they so chose. Or they could work it themselves. Some people and you'll see if you look at our maps, you'll see that we have a lot of land. A lot of it is contiguous, but a lot of it's broken up. And the broken up is where people bought their property back from the corporation for what they sold it for to begin with. Never a charge up or a markup. DB: Never interest. MB: You know, and as I said when we were taking about (inaudible)and paid the taxes well one time is 150,000 acres, but of course to pay the taxes sometimes you had to sell off property. And of course we sold off the less productive fur trapping property. That 50,000 acres turned into be the Morgan City Plaquemines Parish where all the oil and gas.... It turned out to be the much more profitable oil and gas section of the property even though we've been very blessed with the mineral rights that we have found. But going back to what you said about it, you know, he put those trappers first and towards the end, he was basically to his death from '59 to '62, he was basically bank rolling the trappers. He was losing money. — Michael Benge

DELACROIX CORPORATION AGENTS: Well, this building right here was a center. They would bring the furs here. One time the buyers did it and the buyers shipped it. When they started the Delacroix Corporation and the idea was to eliminate some of the middlemen and we became the buyer. They bought the furs here. They brought 'em

upstairs. They sorted 'em. They graded ‘em; in some cases they even still dried 'em more. They shipped 'em to New York to be processed. So this was a complete operation. DB: And the Delacroix buyers would go into the communities and they had a schedule and they would meet the trappers with their furs on the porches of the grocery stores, and you know in Delacroix in the area. And they would buy the furs there. The furs came bundled in bundles of 50 and they would go through 'em. They’d spread 'em out and negotiate a price. And rebundle 'em, bring 'em up here to the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th floors and that's when they would grade them. And we can take you up there. You can still see there’s remnants of that up there. — Michael Benge

FUR BROKERS, JEWS 1: Steinberg was the old original fur company. Maradona Brothers had a fur house a block from my office in New Orleans and over in this end of the state, it was the Sagreras. Present-day, Wayne Sagrera's still alive and buying fur and what have you. One of his sons is on the Wildlife and Fisheries Board—Steven Sagrera is on the Wildlife and Fisheries Commission but Wayne's still alive. And they were the big fur company when I was employed. D: What about Mahler in Houma? A: Mahler was a Houma man. He was from down there in the Houma area, and they each had their contacts in Europe. And when that aged group of men died out, their children became doctors, lawyers, and Indian chiefs. None of 'em became fur buyers. So I broke that chain—Yarborough was a "North of Louisiana" guy. He's from up here around Sicily Island and primarily dealt with upland—coyote, bobcat, and what have you. — Allen Ensminger

FUR BROKERS, JEWS 2: Gerald went with his grandfather, and I think this may have been back in the forties, I guess he had been old enough in 1940 if he’s eight years older than I am, or something like that. And his grandfather was working for Steinburg. His grandfather had three hundred plus trapping families that he collected fur from. — Greg Linscomb

FUR BROKERS, JEWS 3 - DIVERSIFICATION OF BUSINESS INTERESTS: My grandfather, the entrepreneur got in touch with a company in Chicago and St. Louis to sell furs for them. They had a big fur business. In the wintertime seasons they [marshdwellers] would trap furs and stuff like this and we were in the fur business. And he also was in the canning business and cigar business and anything he could sell - dry goods and stuff like this and uh, they owned a farm and all to. At that time the company was Blum and Bergeron Dried Shrimp and Fur Company. They were in the moss business too. They used to sell moss and stuff like that to the Ford Motor Company. I tell you that story? . . . Oh yeah he had trappers and stuff like this and what have you he had that would come here and bring furs and they would buy - sometimes they would go out and pick up the furs and they would bring them here and grade the furs and stuff they used to fill up this building with furs – you know, with muskrats. They must’ve baled them up and shipped them. — Louis Blum

FUR BROKERS, JEWS 4 - GREAT DEPRESSION: When the stock market crashed, the banks failed, but my grandfather didn't deposit his money in the bank. He went to see his fur buyer who was Mr. (inaudible) Mauler (Mahler?), who was in his kitchen. He had his head in his hands and he looked at my grandfather and he says, "Leopold," he says, "I don't know what you're gonna do. I got all these people working for us you know with the furs and everything like that." He says, "We don't have any money we can't pay them. The banks have failed." My grandpa looked at him and he says, well, don't worry too much. He says I didn't put the money in the bank. And he gave him ten thousand dollars. He had 20 thousand dollars. And then he went down the bayou and saw Mr. Gustav Lapeyrouse who was a shrimp man down there for us. He gave him 10 thousand dollars, and he said "tell those people just to keep working." And so they were able to keep their business afloat because my grandfather kept his money. — Louis Blum

TRAPPER LEASES, LL&E PROPERTY: LL&E had a unique setup. The guy came – the trapper came into the office annually and signed his lease. Then a copy of that lease was taken by these patrolmen to the camp. And he signed that one on that property. And I suspect that had to do with maintaining ownership. I'm on your property, I acknowledge that, I'm leasing - I'm trapping for you. Because I often wondered why, but one lease in the office, another lease on the property. And I'm sure that there were issues further back about well, my dad or my grandfather always trapped this, you know there were some of those. But I think most of those – there were actually some issues when we were issuing tags down here in probably in the eighties where an individual would come in and say, this piece of property is mine. I want the tags on it. And LL&E said no, this is LL&E's property. And when we had issues like that, we didn't – there were no tags issued. We weren't getting in the middle of that. Because it wasn't about alligator tags. It was about minerals. — Greg Linscomb

TRAPPER FIELD SUPERVISORS: He managed about eight or ten trappers who trapped on the property. — Greg Linscomb

RESISTANCE TO RELEASE OF NUTRIA: And I don't' know when that was – I guess that was sometime in the twenties. So he did some of that, he trapped rats, sold vegetables, and this old man Broussard – when the time that the nutria thing was getting cranked up with McIlhenny had some nutria. And he brought them over there, and he said, I think we really need to really release these on the property. I think since we were - so – he gave him instructions, because Ovey took care of the property. He managed about eight or ten trappers who trapped on the property. And old man Broussard said, I want you to let these go. You put them where you think the best place is. And when he left, Ovey went out there and shot them all. Didn't let them go, which is the best thing he could've ever done. Later, months later, how did those nutria do? He said, you know, I took them out there, and I haven't seen them since. I don't – you know. They didn't make it. — Greg Linscomb

LEASEHOLDER AGENTS WORKING AMONG TRAPPERS: I was trying to learn the property and learn about the trappers, so they went . . . they would visit every camp because they were getting that lease signed and checking with them and seeing what was going on. So man, I really got to visit a lot of people. Some of the camps, in addition to a camp, had a big shrimp boat tied up. And those people were shrimpers slash trappers. Shrimp season, the boat was outside, probably in the bays or even offshore, and then in the winter, they'd bring it in, set it up next to the camp. — Greg Linscomb

FUR DEMAND PEAKS IN THE 1970s & '80s: So, through the seventies and into the early eighties, we had a – probably the peak – the most valuable time . . . modern time. It's hard to say what the industry was worth because it was supposedly twelve million dollars in the mid forties, and you had these thousands of families, but when I was here in the seventies, you really had about eleven thousand trappers based on the ones that were buying licenses. — Greg Linscomb

FUR PROCESSING IN NEW ORLEANS — FUR PRESSES, FUR BALES: And you could go up – there were times when I went up on the top floors on their building and they were pressing – had these big presses and packaging muskrat and nutria into these huge bales. It looked like a cotton bale, but it was filled with muskrat and nutria. So I saw some of that. Richard shipped out of here, um, probably baled his stuff here, big burlap bundles, and I remember there was a weight to them, and you had so many nutria, and the number of that count had a lot to do with the quality of what you were sending to them. — Greg Linscomb

EDUCATION OF TRAPPER CHILDREN, WHO WERE STILL IN FIELD CAMPS IN THE 1970s: G: There were trappers all over um, Terrebonne parish when I started, and I think through the seventies. C: Right, but I mean the families were still accompanying them? G: Absolutely. Absolutely. There were some pictures, and I took a guy out there. And there's a booklet where I think that – I don't know if he took the picture or I took the picture, but there's a lady standing over a kid at a table. It's kind of dark because it's in a dark camp. And there's a folder bigger than this though. And it's got the kids name and his homework assignment for about two weeks. And she's looking over his shoulder, and he's doing it. And I ask, I say how's that work? She said, well when my husband takes the fur in, he'll take this folder and the teacher has got another one for him. This is all of his stuff. He turns it in, and she's got one for him for the next two weeks. So they were totally – and based on what I was told, they kept up fairly well in school. You can imagine – how the heck does a kid hang on when he's gone for three – it was November, December, January, and it may have gone – the season changed during the time that I was – there was always extensions. Always extensions. And I tried to get away from that – I said hell, well one dealer wanted an extension. Another dealer who already had a supply and there weren't that many on the market – he didn't want an extension because then the other guy could go and get some, and that would make the – it was supply and demand.

So it was – I got all kinds of controversies with extensions. If you had good trapping weather, and if a guy like Gerald Voisin said, I want my guys to keep trapping. We need to take more rats – they're eating up the marsh. Well I wanted to go with an extension. But that didn't mean the dealers wanted that. And it was a lot of heated – because it was all – if I got them and this guys got less, I'm in the driver's seat. So you got into a lot of that over extensions, but we tried to make decisions based on the marsh. If the guys are out there – they want to trip – it's still cold enough and we don't have an early spring, it looks like we're going to keep trapping. Let them go. And eventually I try to get it – and now, it runs through um, the end of March. And that's – that's the nutria – the nutria program where they pay for tails, and I got that going right before I left I guess. That was cranked up in '01 or '02, because I failed their market, and so I said, the damn nutria are eating up the place. We've got to get something, and I – after going to corporate two or three years and showing them some of the damage from aerial surveys and extrapolating by flying around and (inaudible) measuring damage, I said, they're eating up more than ya'll are fixing. And those guys in those agencies didn't want to hear that – wait a munute. I said well, this can be I think an easy fix. I think this'll work. When you had a price, you didn't have any nutria damage. There's no market – there's no price. Let's create a market even though it's just going to be for tails. If they can sell the fur that's fine, but I don't think they can, and if they can't, let's control these things. "Well, why don't we just eradicate them." I said, if there was a red button on my desk and I could push it, I'd be the first one to do that, but I said, that's not in the cards. They're in east Texas, they're in Arkansas, they're all over the state – in Mississippi. Well what are we going to do? And I had all kinds of evaluations. I had a company out of Colorado – in the business of controlling animals. Nuisance control all over the world. And I said I want y'all to do an exhaustive – in fact we had the state government – you've got to get proposals request for proposals. I wanted somebody to do a complete evaluation of what's out there. Is there any evidence that we can do something better than what I think we should do – and it's an incentive. I don't like to call it a bounty. Bounties have a bad connotation to me. Um, and there are some problems. This is a little bit different because we're going to measure the results of what we're doing with aerial surveys with acreage and we're going to know exactly where they're coming from. It's going to be very controlled, and um, it's worked out great. I mean last year they went over four hundred thousand. I think that was most ever. And the target… — Greg Linscomb

SPECULATIVE NATURE OF TRAPPING: The fur trapper was the wildcatter of his day. In the 20s, during the Depression. . . . — Michael Benge

BURNING MARSHES TO RENEW GRASS FOR MUSRATS: Oh yeah! Sure! Burn it in October when you get that first little cool snap in the fall of the year, set that marsh on fire and burn—and don't burn 100,000 acres. Burn thirty or forty acres here, a little patch

there, there, there, and there. And you can rotate your cattle grazing in that process and grow back. — Allen Ensminger

NUTRIA, TRAPPING AS A SEASONAL PURSUIT BY ST. BERNARD OYSTERMEN: E: We used to handle . . . we used to skin 500 nutrias a day here. 500 a day, we'd skin them, and dry the pelt and sell the pelt just like you say. After so much...would bid on it. And the meat, we'd sell it to mink farms or whatever. — Edward Robin

NUTRIA, WALKING THE MARSH: Oh yeah, sure! Yeah. We had a few trappers my first winter I worked for the department, first or second, that's confusing my mind. I spent about a month and half in a trapping camp and in Oyster Bayou on Marsh Island with a bunch of guys. And there was one guy in that group of four that could speak English well enough for me to carry on a conversation with 'im. The other guys all spoke French continuously. And that was right when nutria were coming on the scene and they were insistent upon walking that marsh and trapping just like they'd always done from the time they were little kids for muskrat. And I kept harassing them, "Why don't ya'll trap along the bayou?" "Oh, no you got to walk along that marsh." So I finally got 'em to give me about a dozen traps and I'd set 'em along the bayou bank and they'd go in the marsh and they'd catch nutria and skin 'em out there in the marsh. And when they'd come in from running their trap line at 3 or 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon, I'd have 15 or 20 nutria skinned and on the drying rack because the nutria were everywhere. You'd go running traps, reset 'em, go back to the camp, go back and run 'em and you'd have nutria again. And them old men couldn't get over that Yankee catching all them nutria. Skin 'em and dry 'em and everything else while they was fartin' around walkin'. — Allen Ensminger

MUSKRATS, DRYING FURS / PELTS: D: Do you remember any of these drying racks that were out in the marsh you know? A: Yes, sure. They were extensive things and they were all associated with muskrat. They hangin' [breath] those muskrat on those big ole wires, the spring type— B: To stress them? A: Yeah. And they would hold 'em open where they could dry good inside and dry the leather side and then hang 'em up out there with the wind blowing and they'd dry in no time. And there was an art to that drying because if you left 'em out there too long, they'd turn into almost like parchment paper. Real real thin, and then they'd break, and they were worthless. So you had to have 'em just exactly right for that fur-buyer to be able to turn it without breaking it to look at the fur on the inside of it. So the person that was running that rack there was just about as important as the trapper and the skinner. And a lot of those were the women the camps. That was their job, to take care of that, cook, take care of the kids, and try to teach 'em a little bit while they was—in their spare time. — Allen Ensminger

MAKESHIFT PORTABLE GARDENS AT TRAPPER CAMPS: B: To stretch them? A: Yeah. And they would hold 'em open where they could dry good inside and dry the leather side and then hang 'em up out there with the wind blowing and they'd dry in no

time. And there was an art to that drying because if you left 'em out there too long, they'd turn into almost like parchment paper. Real real thin, and then they'd break, and they were worthless. So you had to have 'em just exactly right for that fur-buyer to be able to turn it without breaking it to look at the fur on the inside of it. So the person that was running that rack there was just about as important as the trapper and the skinner. And a lot of those were the women the camps. That was their job, to take care of that, cook, take care of the kids, and try to teach 'em a little bit while they was—in their spare time. B: I've heard that some people grew some few vegetables and potted plants. A: Yep! Have any old pirogue, got to where it's leaking too bad to stay afloat, that became a family garden. — Allen Ensminger

FUR AUCTIONS AT END OF TRAPPING SEASON: R: Well this is just from what my memory of it is. I used to go down - every year there'd be a uh, an auction. And all the trappers would come to one place, and then the northern buyers would come down. And they would basically buy the pelts. And we got a royalty or a percentage of the uh, with whatever the trapper trapped using our property. And I forgot what the percentage was. But it was quite a sight to see these guys and you know out in the swamps, and these were true trappers. And uh, lived out there. — Cokie Rathborne

TRAPPERS HITCH RIDES ON LOGGING TRAINS: D: Well we know that on your property on the Maurepas, because you were logging by train, that often the trappers would hitch a ride on the train and go into the swamp. R: Yeah. D: Yeah, it's an interesting story. That it was just these two industries that worked together. You would go in and you would allow the trappers to go on the train, and you would go into the swamp, and I assume — Cokie Rathborne

TRAPPING, CAMERON PARISH, TRAINASSES: R: Orange Cameron County. It's a trapping operation. Do you notice the straight ditches that are dug east and west there. D: Yes. Willow Bayou camp. They call it Buzzard Camp. There's a number of camps out there historically that were used as trapping. It was a trapping company. And uh, that's why the ditches were dug. — David Richard

DECLINE OF TRAPPPING INDUSTRY LINKED TO OIL ROYALTIES: DB: I remember I was in 8th grade at St. Rose de Lima and in our history book, Louisiana history book, talked about the muskrat industry in Louisiana. And I was so proud because I was part of that and it was always, it was the thing. That was one of the reasons that my grandfather was very committed to the trappers, the trapping, and the Isleño trappers. And that's one of the reasons that he did what he did with the corporation. In 1952 I think it was, they, the Delacroix board of directors did not want to lease land any more to the trappers, because they were making a lot of money with the oil and gas, and they felt like it was peddling. But my grandfather leased those lands from Delacroix and leased them to the trappers so they could continue to trap. So that was about 10 years that, uh, that

happened. And of course you saw the fur industry change, especially when PETA came on the scene. And not only PETA, but the nutria just decimated the muskrat industry, because the nutria ate the grass that the muskrat ate and they not only ate the grass, they ate the roots, too. So, there was no feed and, uh, so anyway I've seen it from almost from the beginning that I remember until its demise. The fur industry- MB: The corporation was started as I said Acme Land and Fur. This was the largest fur trapping ranch under single ownership in the North America. DD: Really? MB: It was considered to be the King Ranch of nutria. — Michael Benge

SETTLEMENT WITH THE STATE GOVERNMENT BEFORE CAERNARVON CREVASSE: Now let me tell you something. Okay, Mr. Wilkinson was my grandfather's... Hugh Wilkinson Sr. was my grandfather's attorney. And he negotiated a deal with the state to, um, for a settlement, because they were gonna blow up the levee at Caernarvon. And this was going to kill the business; the fur trade. And so he negotiated a deal with the state. I think he got . . . money to cover the loss for the company. What my grandfather did with the money was to buy barges and he sent his trappers out to collect muskrat pairs, put them in cages on the barges and fed them until the grass… It was, the water was gone and it was safe to let 'em loose again. Is he something or is he something? — Michael Benge

INDEPENDENCE VALUED BY SELF-EMPLOYED TRAPPERS: One you're free. You know you got to do it. You ain't got no boss to get him something. You got to hustle. But I make like a good – not a lot of money. I just survive. And then my wife will go trawling, we come here, tie up the boat - the little boat I got on the right there. And then we was back about ten, to eleven o'clock every day. And I had people all over on the telephone to - I want so many bushels of shrimp, every, every time I goes out. And then we would make a pretty good, and in those days, pretty good money. So she passed away in '85. I had a good woman. Once you talk about good women, that's the one save you to start. 40 cents an hour, and she raised me seven children, and no one on the side was coming. She had the - she had no job. We had to fund – fight with that. so my daddy and – part of my life but not much. But my daddy's life, before they had to have um, a place to trap to survive. And then, if you got a hurricane down here, fast, you wipe out all the muskrat. You leave on the credit - the store man knows you, everything you would take, you mark it down. When you was taught to make money with the fur, that's the first money that you had to pay – that's grocery. — Dovie Naquin

DAILY ROUTINES OF TRAPPERS: To start trapping, he'd get on the bank and start walking, and coming back at eight o'clock at night, and though we uh, too small to help him out yet. And then after while, I come back to help him out, and after while I got married, and my biggest catch was a hundred and fourteen muskrat. Come that dark, and the only light – we had a kerosene light. And we had to sit down on the floor and skin that, pull them straight, and then the smell you say, you had to hook that in your living

room. You even smell that on the string if you're walking door, it was bounce - so smell is so strong. — Dovie Naquin

INDUSTRIOUSNESS OF TRAPPERS: And what amazed me about the man was how much he trapped, and he would leave his house, walk down the back of the ridge for some distance, and head out in the marsh, and rat trappers had their traps in a circle. You'd circle a piece of marsh, and as you trapped, you kind of – you surrounded them and you moved in on them. You moved in, and finally you got that, picked up everything on your cane pole with your traps, and you went to another spot, and you went in a big circle. So you were walking in a big circle running your traps and coming back to the point that you started. But you may have two or three of those circles in a day that you walked to. Between the distance he walked in the marsh and the distance he walked down the ridge, and then back - on his way back home, he walked eight miles every day. Now not all of it was marsh, but I think probably six miles of it was marsh. It was fairly good Chenier plan marsh. Not like this stuff – you know, you float your hat walking in any of this out here. You can't even get out of the boat right here, but it was that mineral based marsh, but it just amazed me because the old man was in good shape for years and years. — Greg Linscomb

TRAPPING INDUSTRY DYING: R: So now he's passing on this tradition to his children. Do you know of anybody else in Point aux Chene that's doing this? N: Uh, not too many. The – word in French, on the other side, you got more. — Dovie Naquin

FIRST EMERGENCE OF NUTRIA WEST OF THE ATCHAFALAYA BASIN: E: The fur trapping record in this office under the offices of Greg Linscombe and some of his predecessors. Actually they kept records here since the 1943-44 trapping season and that was basically because that's the season that nutria, which is an introduced species first was recorded in the Louisiana trapping records. Prior to that there was some record keeping, it was a little bit sketchy according to some of the annual reports. There is some data that actually dates back all the way to the early 1900s on trapping. I think some of the records was around 1910 and up and through the early '30s. And that's kind of where nutria showed up on the since, mid to late '30s whether they were introduced for fur farming. Eventually these fur farms collapsed, that's when they were released into the coastal wetlands, whether it was intentionally or not intentionally and as I mentioned earlier, they first showed up in the record in '43-'44. — Ed Mouton

WOMEN PROCESSING FURS IN THE FIELD: C: Were the females still processing the furs? G: You saw a combination of that. I took pictures of a lot of women processing fur. I was always told by the trapper and by the buyer that the women put up the best nutria. Muskrats were not difficult to put up. You skin them out quickly. You ran them through an old clothes ringer – hand ringer, and the fat came off and the pelt came out the other side. And you just – you didn't have to do a lot of scraping. Flip them, put them on a wire

stretcher. Just make sure that you put them outside and a lot of them – a lot of the drying was done outside at these camps, but they did have a fur shed, and had some heat. Nutria was different because it was a lot more difficult to skin. Um, you had to do a lot more cleaning up. You couldn't do much with running it through a ringer, and you had to put it up with the right dimensions, and finish it up, and before they'd sell, you know, they would be flipped with fur inside, and before they'd sell, a lot of them had a brush coming off the table. Just a rough brush, and before if that guy was coming to your camp to sell, you'd take those – and that brush would stick way out, and you'd take the nutria pelts and you'd do this to fluff up that fur on the inside because they were feeling for the thickness of the fur, and you wanted the best you could get. The dealer, or not dealer but the buyer – the buyer was the guy who dealt directly with the trapper. Most of them were resonant buyers. I was looking at some figures last night, and we had some twenty thousand trappers in Louisiana. I think there were nine hundred to a thousand resonant buyers. — Greg Linscomb

INFLUENCE OF WOMEN IN TRAPPER FAMILIES: And he said, you know, my wife taught me to read. And he knew what was going on in the world as much as anybody anywhere. But here was a man who went like through the fourth or fifth grade and he was a trapper. He ended up living – he and his wife lived at um, Sabine Pass on the Texas side for many, many years. They raised watermelons and cantaloupe on the beach. — Greg Linscomb

DECLINE OF THE LOUISIANA FUR TRAPPING INDUSTRY 1: In my tenure here I came kind of on the cusp of when the trapping season was probably in its worst decline. In most recent years in the mid to late '70s was probably the peak of the trapping season in more recent time and that is indicated by a graph here that kind of follows the trend of nutria harvest in coastal Louisiana from the early '40s to present time. And the rest of fur trapping kind of followed this same scenario. The highest prices were found in the late '70s. Some of the situations that contributed to the decline of the fur prices was the saturation of the market. They had warmer winters in Eastern Europe and Russia where a lot of the fur was shipped to and utilized for garments. Also there was a shift in fashion to more leather goods than away from fur because of animal welfare movements that was in the late '70s early '80s. There was a lot of movement within the animal welfare group and eventually in the early part of 2000 the harvest was actually reduced to very few if any fur that was harvested and the price was very depressed. Also you see that same trend in the number of trappers that were bought trapping licenses which usually is another indicator of the activity of the fur business and we have actual data that dates back to the 1950s on licenses sold to present and if you look through here in the mid '70s like in '75 and '76, actually '74- '75 you had over 7,000 licenses sold, '75-'76 6,400, '76-'77 9,300, 1977-'78 12,000 or so, '78-'79 11,000, 1979-'80 12,000, and it stayed up there until the early '80s and right around the mid to late '80s is when they really started to decline. You

can see a sharp drop from the 1987-88 season from 5,000 plus licenses to a little less than 3,000 and further decline down to less than 2,000 and actually in the year 2001-2002 it actually declined to 871. Since then it has picked up some, there has been some increases of fur prices and presently, this past year, 2011-12 there was a little over 2,000 licenses sold. — Ed Mouton

DECLINE OF THE LOUISIANA FUR TRAPPING INDUSTRY 2: but down here I think what I picked up more than anything was the culture, and it was coming to an end probably by the early eighties, because the price of nutria was declining, but I took pictures, and there were pictures around and going out to these camps. There were still a tremendous number of rats produced in the late seventies. I want to say one year, and it was ’78 or ’79 – there might’ve been a half million rats, and at one point 8 million nutria in one year. I think the value of the fur in that year was like 25 million. But most of the – most of that was um, nutria. Prices for nutria in Cameron went crazy – went up to - I want to say twelve to fifteen dollars. They were selling muskrats – what they call nose count – they’d throw out the kids. But everything else without grading – muskrats – eleven dollars just nose count. Just throwing them down, and there were pickup trucks bought in Cameron parish from a guy trapping one season. And I’m sure the same thing happened over here, but um, the entire family was involved. There were young boys that I saw going out and there was this one – Gerald told me about this boy, and I cannot think of his name. He looked like to me was about, I don’t know, thirteen, fourteen, couldn’t have been much older than that – trapping, and you knowhow you get warm days in the winter, and then you get a cold day. And I remember walking with him, and he was trapping and his dad had been killed or died or something. He was kind of supporting. The whole family was out there, but this guy had his own muskrat trapping lease. Or maybe he was on the family’s lease. But he was trapping to maintain the family. — Greg Linscomb

FAILURE OF A NEW GENERATION TO ENTER THE TRAPPING INDUSTRY: A lot of those trappers were older individuals that were getting up in age but that's the old trappers that would go out and spend the winters in the marsh or potentially dedicate their time during the winter months for trapping. These individuals that may do other type of work for example crab or shrimp or work construction, more seasonal work and trapping to those individuals was just some supplemental income during the winter months when there wasn’t much else going on. A lot of those trappers when muskrat was big, a lot of those trappers were trapping muskrat and a lot of those older trappers basically started dying off or became a lot less active because of their age and there was not another new breed of individuals that followed these. So there is a large gap, age gap between some of the older trappers and some of the newer trappers that are out there. In another words, there are not that many die-heart trappers left out there. — Ed Mouton

PHENOMENAL SIZE OF THE FUR HARVEST IN THE 1920s: Right so you had this whole community of people out there in the coastal wetlands that was out there working and trapping so the numbers are fairly phenomenal the amount of fur they harvested back then. You can see some of these numbers here of just muskrat alone over 3 million here, over 2 million here in '26-'27 and just the amount of fur that was harvested in those early years. — Ed Mouton

TRANSITION FROM MUSKRAT TO NUTRIA HARVESTING IN THE 1960s: C: So basically you have a downward trend for muskrat, and upward trend . . . E: Upward trend of nutria, like for example. Right here in the 1961-62 season they harvested 912,890 nutria where muskrat they only harvested 632,558 and that was the transition where nutria surpassed the muskrat prior to that though muskrat harvest was anywhere from a million and a half to over 2 million in the years did fluctuate all the way back until the records we have in the '43-'44 season. — Ed Mouton

NUTRIA TRAPPING, DECLINE IN NUMBER OF ACTIVE FUR TRAPPERS: Actually there is not a whole lot of nutria that are harvested today for the fur and it's mostly because of price. The muskrat pelt is in high demand but unfortunately there is not many muskrat trappers left out there trapping muskrat. And the difference being that nutria can be trapped along bayous and canals and small banks where the trapper just riding down his boat setting traps up and down the bayou bank or small bank depending on what type of marsh he's in, where as to trap muskrat you have to be out there walking in the marsh amongst the muskrat mounds setting traps on the perimeter of the mounds. It's a different type of trapping and there is not many, if any, of those trappers that are left. So the reason why muskrat fur is not as prominent in most recent years is because it wasn't that many muskrat trappers out there. — Ed Mouton

FAILURE OF FUR INDUSTRY TO TRANSITION TO A YOUNGER GENERATION 1: But there is very few of those die-hard trappers that are left in that type of situation. But I know Continental has 48 trappers and some of those other properties but some of the trappers I've mentioned, they're getting up in their 80s. — Ed Mouton

FAILURE OF FUR INDUSTRY TO TRANSITION TO A YOUNGER GENERATION 2: But Because if you look, if you would take all the trappers that work for all the major land companies, Continental, Conaco Philips, Patchy, all these land companies and take an average age, I think you would be up there pushing upper 60s to 70 years old. That's just for speculation but I think if you looked at that data, except for a few younger guys that have stepped in and taken over their dad or uncle's lease; a lot of that has happened because of the nutria control program. But still in all I think if you look at the average or median age of those trappers it's going to be up there. And once they're gone, who is going to step in and take their place? — Ed Mouton

SEASONAL ECONOMIC PURSUITS OF TRAPPERS 1: C: That's amazing. The trappers that are out there now or at least over the course of your career, since there is a declining demand obviously this can't, I wouldn't imagine that trapping isn't their primary source of income. E: No, in fact most individuals, most of the determined people the ones that trap part of that 30% that harvest the 70% do have other jobs and again they may be crabbers, they may fish, they may do carpentry work, they may be self-employed in some other way, handyman work but the program has been going on for ten years and a lot of those individuals kind of attributed it to when trapping was very profitable that they kind of depend on this time frame for the supplement of their income and they treat it as a job. So that group of individuals is some serious, die-heart trappers. There is not many of those left around and then the rest of the individuals that participate may do it just for fun and earn a few dollars or what have you. — Ed Mouton

SEASONAL ECONOMIC PURSUITS OF TRAPPERS 2: C: Are many people, I know at one time it was thought that people who worked offshore—you know, on a 7-7 and 14-14 basis and so forth—would engage in a seasonal pursuit when they were onshore . . . E: Yeah there is you know we have an application package and a lot of these individuals you know come from all different walks of life. I mean we had a city judge that was in the program (laughter). We have an old guy around Houma that's a shrimper. So it's all calibers. We have individuals who work offshore so right in their 7 days off or 14 depending what schedule they work, they will enroll in the program. And most of it goes back to historically is that these individuals used this time of year when there wasn't much else going on to attempt to supplement their income. Now obviously there is hardly any of those individuals that pack up their family and their belongings and move out in the marsh for the winter time. In fact there are very few of those left. There are some individuals that do for example stay at their camp like Continental Land and Fur for example. They have 48 or so trappers and there is an old gentleman, Mr. Sterling Freyoux, he's 80 something years old. There is another guy, Mr. Willy who is 80 something. He runs like 175 traps a day, something I probably couldn't do (laughter). So there is still a few of those die-hearts out there and those guys may go out to their camp and spend several days out there trapping but very few people will do that anymore. Most people just come and go on a daily basis because transportation now is so dependable where as historically if you were at Marsh Island or some other place deep in the marsh in the '40s and '30s and in that time frame, just to get to point A to point B was a task so that is another reason they actually moved out there because they didn't want to waste all kind of time traveling back and forth. — Ed Mouton

DECLINING INFLUENCE OF FUR BROKERS: C: fashion industry. Is that still the case where there are a few major players who have national or international connections? E: No and unfortunately that's kind of what transitioned in the trapping industry is that those individuals you mentioned in New Orleans had enough capital to buy a lot of fur and sit

on it for a while, sit on it until maybe the end of the summer or so and when the prices were good they could sell it. Well these days capital is a, is not something the fur dealers have to work with. So they are very reluctant to buy too much fur that they know they can't sell. So they like to do as quick of a turn around as they can. And you see that nowadays you see buyers from China or Turkey or from wherever will come in and actually bankroll a dealer to where if he wants to sell X number of nutria for example or raccoons or what have you, that way his only guarantee to get that number of fur from the dealer is that he'll actually bank roll this guy to buy this fur to where the dealer doesn't have to take the chance so because of the economy and the price, the rapid changes in fur prices, there is not a whole lot of stability if you will in the fur markets. So it is kind of a go as you can. — Ed Mouton

FUR BROKERAGES ARE FAMILY BUSINESSES: Then there is another gentleman Tab Pitre who is in the Galliano - Cut Off area with Pitre Fur Company. His father just recently passed away. He was 90 something years old and he had been involved in the fur business since he was a young man. So most of them are family handed down businesses. Now historically there were a lot more dealers than that but basically at this point and time in Louisiana there is only three licensed dealers.— Ed Mouton

INTERNATIONAL MARKETS FOR LOUISIANA FURS: E: And some of it may make its way back to the United States, but the Eastern Rim is a big market for the fur. In fact every year in Beijing there is Beijing fur and leather show which our contractor attends because there is a big interest in you know China and also in Russia. So historically when the nutria harvest was very high that is where a lot of the nutria fur went to, Eastern Europe and Russia. Obviously because of the climate is very cold over there and but there were many garments made with nutria. And then there are some specialty garments like in China. They're always after otter because they make a ceremonial robe for when they young children go through puberty and mature. There is a ceremonial robe and the collar is lined with otter. So there is a demand for otter for that one specialty garment so there is a lot of demand in China for, at this time because the economy is good. — Ed Mouton

DEPRESSED FUR PRICES: Yeah and it varies from a $1.50 to $2.00 and some of this $2.79 is because few of the trappers that did harvest these animals actually pelted them and sold them green so they were already pelted and they get a little more money for that and that's what kind of artificially inflates this. The actual average price right now is around $1.00 to $1.50 and really economically these days that's why the harvest of nutria is so low for the fur because it's not worth the trapper's effort to process. And once it's processed and dried, that pelt right there is worth only $5 if it is a #1. So there is a lot of work. — Ed Mouton

FUTURE OF THE LOUISIANA TRAPPING INDUSTRY: C: Um in view of that fact, what is the future of the fur harvesting industry? E: Well that is a good question and that some

individuals think that the fur industry is a dying industry. It is hanging on just barely with individuals that are still interested enough to go out and trap. But counter to that we have an increase in nuisance animals and nuisance species because you know in this day and age when we sprawl out in these urban areas and we move in to what used to be sugarcane fields and areas of woods and fragment the habitat you basically invading habitat that once housed a lot of these fur bearers and other species of animals. So you are seeing a decrease in trapping but on the same token you may be seeing an increase in nuisance animal control so just because trapping and its history may go away, it doesn't alleviate the problem of all the fur bearer species that are out on the landscape and that's something that I need to remind some of our administrators sometimes because we see it now. We see it now, we see it now increasing amount of nuisance animal calls and it's because of the limited trapping. — Ed Mouton

DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS FOR SALE OF ST. BERNARD FURS TO NEW ORLEANS MERCHANTS: C: But I mean people from New Orleans would come over here and make arrangements with the fisherman? E: Oh yeah! yeah, yeah they'd come in and, well just like if the merchandise that you had they'd come inspect the shrimp and the fish and the muskrats and all of that, well they'd come and muskrats, never had no nutria at that time, it was muskrats, coons, and otters and uh you'd trap them, and naturally you'd dry pelt and then you'd put them up for bid. There would be I don't know how many guys would come down, you'd bid, he'd bid, everybody would bid on them and naturally the guy that had the highest bid would stay with the lot, with the rats, minks or whatever it was . . . — Edward Robin

TRAPPER WARS, ST. BERNARD PARISH, 1920s: E: He was the ring leader of everything. He'd let the grass grow then feed the...He didn't take shit from nobody and what happened..just like you say ...the Biloxi Boys, all of that well what happened that they moved them some outsiders from Lafourche Parish or different other parishes. They moved them in here and took the grounds away from them from trapping, that's where the war came in at because naturally all of them down here was born and raised and that's all they've ever done is trap and this and that so they hired, say a bunch of Mexicans and they brought them in here so naturally put, threw them out the bleachers, that's where the war came in at. But it was only, I think it was only about 1 person that got killed..but what they were doing out in the marsh. They'd have camps where they had the families in there and they moved all the outsiders into them camps so the gang from here, the locals, they went out there, turned all the camps upside down and naturally the poor people, you to put it this way, they were trying to make a $1 too. So they Shang High or get hurt, that’s where the war came in at. I remember that. — Edward Robin

MUSKRAT PELTS PEAK IN PRICES SHORTLY AFTER WORLD WAR II: I was working the whole coast mainly just trying to get a feel for the trapping industry on the coast, and it was a great time to do it because prices were going up. I mean you had the

era of the, of the muskrats in the forties – ’45, ’46, where it went up to supposedly nine million pelts worth twelve million dollars to these rat trappers across the coast. I don’t know if those figures are right, but that’s the stuff we have in the comparative take. So that was a phenomenal time. — Greg Linscomb

INTERNATIONAL FACTORS, ANTI-TRAP ATTITUDES AFFECT LOUISIANA FUR TRAPPING: C: Well one of the questions I was going to ask you – how does this number compare to the number being taken out during the trapping – golden era of trapping in the seventies and eighties? G: Well, it’s dramatically less. But – because I told you 1.8 is the peak. But there was no damage. The market started declining during the eighties for lots of reasons. And that’s why I ended up going to Argentina and Germany and trying to figure out what we could do – spent a lot of time, and we created something called the Louisiana Fur and Alligator advisory Council. That split off when I was gone – after I left into – alligator people wanted to do their thing, and they didn’t want to have anything to do with the fur people, so it split. Which, it was okay. But there was money generated from a couple of sources to try to address problems associated with both of those industries. And I was a liaison between secretary of the department and the council. And I fooled with that thing for twenty years and got involved in marketing, and to a great extent, nationally got involved in trying to defend trapping. We were essentially – we, the United States, Russia, and Canada were the fur producers of the world. I mean Argentina had nutria, but for the most part the big producers were those three. And the Europeans, where the animal rights movement grew up, decided that the leg hold trap was inhumane – barbaric, and they were just going to stop buying fur. And so we negotiated with those characters in Brussels. Most of the time it was in Brussels. A few times Paris, a couple of trips to St. Petersburg, because that was the Russians, a lot of trips to Canada, and between ’91 and ’97 I was going to Europe four or five times a year for a week or so at a time. And everybody – oh, what a great – what a great – I said, I sat in a room from about nine o’clock in the morning till about seven o’clock at night with people across the table who were nice, but had no concept of trapping or the culture or anything about the United States, and how it’s regulated, and they were being pressured by people who thought it was inhumane. And I learned a great deal about the Europeans during that experience. They’re paper tigers. They have regulations all across Europe to regulate – I don’t know about other things, but I know about trapping. There’s nobody to enforce it. — Greg Linscomb

NUTRIA PELT PRODUCTION PEAKED IN THE 1960s: They [nutria] peaked out in the sixties with twenty million nutria on the coast. I don’t know if we ever had twenty million nutria. It’s hard to believe. The other thing that I couldn’t figure out is how could we take two million and control the population? Now we didn’t take two million most years. Hard to understand, and that was all brought out in this document that was developed on contract for Wildlife and Fisheries by a company out of um, Colorado

Springs – not Colorado Springs. Um, some place in Colorado called Genesis. The guy that owns the company is originally from around, um, Breaux Bridge or somewhere out there - a Poche. And he's involved in controlling animals and developing herbicides and pesticides and all kinds of chemicals, and they – they wrote the document to justify whether there was a way that eradicate or better way to control or in fact do this thing that Lindscomb is suggesting, an incentive payment. We had to have something like that that was a little bit of suspect that I – being an old fur guy – trying to save the industry. I just wanted an incentive payment to keep the guys going, and I said, well yeah, I would like to see them, but that's not what this is about. I told you that if I had a red button on my desk and it said end of the nutria, I'd push it. Well those guys would've all been history anyway. The rats went down for a number of reasons. — Greg Linscomb

LOUISIANA FUR BROKERS SURVIVED BECAUSE THEY WERE ABLE TO KEEP FURS IN COLD STORAGE UNTIL MARKET PRICES REACHED TARGETED LEVELS: And probably when he died, he was in his eighties. So that tells you a little bit – but those guys were key to the success of the – of the fur industry because they set on in New Orleans or in cold storage in New Orleans – they set on millions and millions of dollars of fur. And they didn't sell it like boom, and it was gone. They sold it to dealers in Europe and New York – maybe a broker through New York and across into Germany a little at a time. And they hope by the time they got around the November, they were clean. So they had lots and lots of money wrapped up in it. Most of them had probably gone belly up once or twice in life. And they stayed in the business. The family money was in the business. When those guys started dying out, their sons and daughters were doctors or lawyers or something. They weren't fur people. So we lost that ability to have those big pockets – millions and millions of dollars that somebody would speculate and have in cold storage or up in a warehouse in the middle of the French Quarter and they had the connections, and they sold it. And so that – that went by the wayside. So we became more dependent on trying to find somebody that would come over here. We lost our dealer base. Our buyers didn't have any money. Our buyers were the local guys. You know, they bought with money from the dealer. That was as much of an impact as market changes in the world. The loss of that, that um, ability to buy and hold, and you're dealing with millions and millions of dollars, and we lost that. — Greg Linscomb

ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE CAUSED BY NUTRIA AFTER PRECIPITOUS DECLINE OF LOUISIANA FUR INDUSTRY IN THE 1980s 1: So I flew for the Corps. I did some flying for um, Jean Lafitte Park. They started having nutria problems. They wanted me to survey the property. So we started flying vegetative surveys in the late eighties. Land companies started saying hey, we're seeing these big muddy spots – just a big round muddy spot on the property that's just solid mud. And we're thinking, could that be nutria? We've got lots of nutria. We're not trapping what we should be trapping. And we're wondering whether they're really eating the marsh up. So we started

flying with very limited funding. I think it was like '88. And I realized what was going on. I just flew, I think, just part of Terrebonne, and I said my God. They're eating the place up. — Greg Linscomb

ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE CAUSED BY NUTRIA AFTER PRECIPITOUS DECLINE OF LOUISIANA FUR INDUSTRY IN THE 1980s 2: And I think what happened as a result – when we got into realizing how much impact and nutria we were having, the press picked it up locally. And then it was associated press. And then all of these contacts that I had made years before popped up. And I learned well hell, they had a file on that. Linscomb came in and talked about it, so they pulled it up, and boom, boom, boom. We started getting excellent coverage of the tie between coastal erosion and nutria damage. And it – and it helped support. And that's still – that still goes on. — Greg Linscomb

ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE WROUGHT BY INVASIVE SPECIES (NUTRIA): In the forties, so what I'm telling you is all these changes with muskrat and nutria and coastal erosion – that all fit into the formula of what we have today – whatever you think we have. We took, on this property last year, '09 – not this trapping season that's ending up – we took almost sixty thousand nutria tails. The first year, I think the continental trappers took fifty seven thousand. So we still had a lot of nutria. — Greg Linscomb

ATTEMPT TO REESTABLISH A FUR MARKET, 1980s & '90s: So all during the nineties, late eighties, I'm out there on the road trying to reestablish a market. And we had some – we had some positive things and we had some setbacks, but again, very complicated. The whole fur market in the world was changing. Mink, ranch mink, was the benchmark of the price of furs. Um, you had the animal rights and you had all the other factors in Europe affecting, not just nutria, the whole fur market. You had – you had these old sources of purchasing power in Louisiana elsewhere, but mainly in Louisiana disappearing. So the entire – the entire fur industry in the world was in a state of flux. It was changing forever. I didn't realize at the time, but – because there had been ups and downs. They said, oh they'll come back. But it wasn't ever going to come back. It would never be the same. There were too many things going on throughout the world. Dressed large tanneries and factories that were in Montreal, when I was there, do not exist today. We're talking about huge plants with forty and fifty people. Ladies sewing coats. Tanneries with maybe fifty or sixty people tanning. Hundreds of thousands of pelts. They're not in business today. That all changed during the eighties and nineties. — Greg Linscomb

MUSKRAT TRAPPING WAS LUCRATIVE, DATE OF NUTRIA'S ARRIVAL IN LOWER TERREBONNE PARISH: Some of the people made some serious money trapping. The rat was money those days. And they were catching a lot of rats. The

(inaudible) rats. Nutria they didn't start catching neutral till the mid-forties over here. — Houston Foret

TRUCK FARMING

WATERMELONS, CHENIERE PLAIN: And those people that came down with us, they all were dirt farmers, scratched out of subsistence living, they'd raise watermelons. That was their one cash crop that they sell. — Allen Ensminger

URBANIZATION

HOUMA— There were just, I believe, twenty four buildings in the whole community. Half of them were barrooms and doctor's and lawyer's offices. —Chris Cenac

WOMEN

WOMEN'S LIFE EXPECTATIONS: C: Now a woman of your mother's generation was expected to marry soon and become a housewife and more or less that was the extent of her prospects? B; Yes, she was the caregiver. My mother, her role was a caregiver and she quit school in 4th or 5th grade to care for her grandmother. — Brenda Bertrand Thibodeaux

THRIFTINESS: C: Okay, she also grew up during the depression. B: She grew up during the depression and that was the main focus of our lives. Very conservative, very thrifty, you don't waste, you don't spend because you never know when you're next. — Brenda Bertrand Thibodeaux

WIFE'S SOCIETAL ROLE: C: But I assume your mother's main focus in life was the house and her family B: The house and the family, that's it. C: Am I putting words into your mouth? B: No, you are not putting any words into my mouth, that was my mother's role: the house and the family and she took care of our education. You know like making sure our homework was done and that we would get a good education because she felt she had kind of been robbed of an education. You know so she and she was a big proponent of education. — Brenda Bertrand Thibodeaux

WOMAN'S ROLE IN A FARM FAMILY: C: I assume had some responsibilities outside the house too. B: Yes she did, yes she helped my dad if he needed help. She helped him. You know like when they put out hay, she would help with that and whatever else needed to be done. The feeding. C: She cooked meals, I'm assuming. B: All three meals were cooked, hot meals, all three meals, you know yes. B: That was my mother's domain. Yes the poultry and she killed the chickens and plucked them and did all that, yes. C: Okay and for, I don't know about your mother's generation, I know one generation older than that, the women would have used the eggs to buy stuff and barter. B: They did, they bartered with eggs. Then we would take our eggs to the little country store, Mr. Ralph's

and she would buy flour, sugar, whatever with the eggs and all that. Yes, it was mostly like, not just eggs, it was eggs and money. You know what I mean there was. C: Right. B: there was a combination there. It had moved to that point where it wasn't just goods that were being used to barter, it was then goods and . . . C: and money. B: and a little bit of money, yes. And my mother picked cotton. She helped my dad with the cotton and all that. We had a beautiful big garden that was Momma's garden. C: Okay, that leads to another question. Preserving food. B: Yes. C: How did your mom preserve food for her family? B: Momma canned the food. Now it was in jars and put in a little outhouse thing that we had, and she had all that in there. They would can in jars you know. — Brenda Bertrand Thibodeaux

WOMEN IN CORPORATIONS: But getting back to this corporation, when my great-grandfather died, my grandmother became president and you know she had been very, very active I think as the son of my great-grandfather never had, you know, being part of the business. She had came in and she made it a point that we were not gonna live hand to fist anymore, that we were going to set some reserves aside and she had a goal of setting aside about a million dollars in reserve, just to save. And I'll tell you this that when she became sick and my mother took over, there was more than that end reserves in this corporation. In addition, we had a great, great run of oil and gas activity through the years. We had great people working for us in the field. We were able to defend our property rights in suits like that or with the state even. But she worked hard to learn this business. She had nobody to fall back on. To see her kind of relinquish some of that control, because... and invite mom in to start learning and working to be the treasurer and unfortunately it wasn't very long after that that she suffered a stroke. — Michael Benge