

Edward and Brad Robin Interview

Interviewers: Carl Brasseaux and Don Davis

Carl: ...kinds of things and he bragged about you and so I called him and he couldn't remember me. Well I can imagine all the people that come through here sure.

Edward: That's right, he

C: So I reintroduced myself and I told him what we were interested in doing and he said, "Well you have to talk to my daddy." So I said okay we going to come back and chat with you a while. Let me put this here. Don is this yours?

Don: Well the reason we're here today Mr. Robin is as I said to try to pick your brain, try to capture some of your memories for the future because things have changed so much in South Louisiana, especially in since 2005.

Edward: Right

D: We're trying to capture everything we can while there are still people who remember how things used to be and so I'd like for it to start off by simply getting you to say on tape here that its okay to interview you. The interview will be put in at LSU, it will be put at Lafayette, the University of Lafayette and it will be put with the Sea Grant office, both in Baton Rouge and hopefully in Washington, D.C., where the materials will be available for people who want to study life, what the environment was like here both in the past and carrying out to the present. So and basically it's going to be there for you know for the foreseeable future. No one who uses it will ever get rich off of it (laughter) so there is no real, so there's no compensation involved for anybody. But we have no agenda, we're simply interested in is capturing your memories for future generations, keeping them alive. So can we begin by having you give us your full name, and tell us how old you are and where you were born.

E: My full name is Edward John Robin, Sr., I was born 3-9-26, I'm 85 years

D: and you were born here?

E: I was born and raised right here.

C: In Yscloskey?

E: in Yscloskey

C: and at the time you were born can you describe what Yscloskey was like?

E: When I was born and raised up as a kid, this was practically all swamp, marsh lands in the back and uh

C: Swamp as opposed to marshes? I mean there was Cypress?

E: Swamp is marsh land.

C: Okay.

E: in the back then after we developed it then uh that used to be our baseball field there at one time, further over here was our school and the roads weren't uh the road were all shells, they wasn't too many cars on the road, you know, in fact they used to have a train that used to passed right over there where they got going to Fort Beauregard where you see over there. There was a train tracks in fact, this is the train up here. That was the train that used to go from the city all they way out to what we call the lighthouse in the lake and that was where you used to pick up the merchandise and bring stuff in to the parish. Well let me, let me start from my history, from where I started from. I quit school when I was 13. I joined the Navy when I was 17. I spent all my time in the Pacific, I had seven invasions and I've seen quite a bit, I crossed the equator a couple of times. I got a certificate up there and fortunately enough I made it. When I got out, I had been a fisherman all my life, born and raised by Daddy. After I came out of the Navy, I fished for a couple of years and then I decided to be a dealer and that's how I developed Robin's Seafood, which now today my sons run it all. I got off the boats when I was 75, not because I wanted but because my kids took me off of it (laughter) but any how I miss it quite a bit and I still active,

I don't stop of course they don't let me get on a boat. I get on it once and a while when they have problems out there and things that they don't know, I'll show them, so fort and so on.

C: Now when you were born, your father was an oysterman?

E: Yep.

C: How about your grandfather?

E: He was a, my Daddy's grandfather and my daddy was from the Canary Islands. They first settled when they came here, they settled in a section what we call Saint Malo.

C: uh huh

E: That's, that's where they home was when they first came here. They home was made of, the roof was out of palmettos, the flooring was mud and that was they 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 ... 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 and the boats used to sail out and stay two days, three days and they'd get there load and then come back in.

C: Okay when you say they came back in, they would come here or would they go straight to New Orleans?

E: No, no, no, they'd come right here and then they had trucks here they had some, one merchandise, uh salesman used to have a couple trucks and he'd come pick up the merchandise and bring it to the city. So that's the

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.

C: Now one of the things we're interested in, you said sailboats, did they make, where was the sail, where was 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, I I would have to say yes they did because everything else was handmade.

C: Okay

E: In fact estings went on...Hey Boo, yall come back in already? Excuse me, this is my grandson, that's little Brad.

D: Hi, I'm Don Davis

Brad: How you doing?

C: Hi, Carl Brasseaux

...inaudible...

E: They coming in or they in? ...okay they in now

C: Okay

E: So after years gone by, (things come by like) motors which they never had no clutches in the motor, it was straight (dry/drag). When it was start off it was going ahead and

D: There was no reverse

E: there was no reverse in it now they had a timer on it that you had to. The motor had big fly wheels...big... and it was always turning but then to make it backup you'd have to catch it when that wheel was almost about to stop. Then you switch, which they had a (mac needle?) you'd have to switch it and catch it and hope that you catch it to start going back, if not, whatever you were sitting for (laughter)...which happened many times you know so. Alright this boat here now after years, I'm talking about, this was before I went into the Navy. This was my daddy's boat that he built him and other friends of mine. This is my daddy right here and this is the boat that they built after. This boat is made all

out of cypress, now this one here Mac diesel. It was one of the first ones that come out, it was the biggest in the bayou, it was the only one in the bayou, in the canal.

C: This is Bayou La Loutre

E: This is bayou La Loutre.

C: And Terra Boeuf goes to Delacroix

E: Right Terra Boeuf and Delacroix

C: Alright.

D: Now were you ever a trapper?

E: All my life, all my life, see the pirogues and all of that

D: Well can you talk to us a little bit about that

C: Before we start that I have a question before we get too far. You had talked about people sending the stuff off by train. There were brokers who would come down, make arrangements to receive the oysters on this end

E: Yeah

C: How did that work?

E: Yeah well they came and everything worked on percentage

C: But I mean people for 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

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, we had a cannery there where we used to haul and haul with the old man's boat too...load it up, bring it over there and they would shuck 'em and can 'em over there

C: What was the cannery stand?

E: Recently they changed it and it became Bumble Bee

C: Okay

E: That's...now the guy that can tell you more about everything. He's still familiar with the plant. The plant's closed but he's familiar with it. His name is Ricky Norine and he ran the plant for quite some time.

D: Were the Dunbar operation, was that still going when you were active, first became active? The Dunbars had a big floating factory somewhere between New Orleans and...

E: They had, yeah they had some Dunbars, yeah and uh....

D: But you guys, you weren't involved with the Dunbars?

E: We sold, we sold to practically, when I got in business, we sold to everybody...When I got out the Navy and I developed Robin Seafood, oh yeah. Right straight across from here is where I had the shrimp dock. Right here we lost during Katrina we had four big homes here and we lost them all, don't know even where they passed at. We had our plant right straight across... 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.

C: How long were you in the shrimp business, when did you start your shrimp business?

E: 47

C: Right after WWII

E: Right

C: And did you can shrimp?

E: No, all I'd done was supply them with it. I supplied them with the merchandise, they canned it.

C: Edward, you ever heard of the Louisiana Oyster Company?

E: Yeah

C: In New Orleans

E: Yeah

C: Did you deal with them?

E: Yeah

C: How about Shamrock Oyster Company?

E: Right, right

D: P&J

C: Right P&J

E: Right

C: Now one of the things that we are having a hard time finding are cans you know an oyster can, a shrimp can. We don't want the can, we want to photograph it. They're very hard to locate and yet we know these names, like Louisiana, like P & J, like Shamrock, Dunbar, Ducote, what's another one? Kennedy, another one and so any of that kind of thing you can remember helps us tell the story.

(Long pause – Edward calling someone)

E: Ricky, when you get a chance; give me a call, get a chance give me call...Thank you. This is Ricky. He may, he may have some cans, I don't know.

C: Well it's just something we're trying to get a better understanding

E: He may have, that's why I tried to call him to see, he may have some cans where you could uh

C: Just photograph

E: photograph them, alright. Uh in the stores,... trying to find out uh it's...they want to get some pictures of uh the oysters in a can. All they want to do is take pictures of the can of oysters all the different companies and all of that

B: That does it now?

E: huh?

Brad: That does it now?

ALL: No, no, no

E: From back, way back and I'm trying to get a hold of Ricky, maybe Ricky might have some at the plant (Inaudible)

D: I want you to look at this, Brad. Those are the individuals involved in the oyster industry that were licensed in Louisiana in 1906-1910, okay. And if you look there it says Dixie Oyster Company, we have no idea who or what. You know the importance of the Dunbar name right, we've been able to find a barge operation. There was a community called Dunbar where there were a lot of oyster boats another one called (Regale/Rigalee's) on the railroad, a lot of oyster boats. English Lookout, which was almost in Mississippi, a lot of oyster boats, a place called Nicholls, sometimes spelled with one "L" sometimes spelled with 2, cannot find it anywhere yet, they claimed they lived there. So these are like mysteries to us and I'll show you. Here it is a very good picture, same period in an oyster line

E: That's the sail boat

D: Okay, now we would call it a luger also known as a sail boat, sometimes called a schooner, okay. Alright here's, here's the kind of questions we want you to help us answer: Was all these built from cypress? Were they built in people's backyards? Where were the sails? Carl and I know that they were registered in 2000, no in 1908, 2,300 vessels, almost all of them sail, only 49 were gas. That's a big industry and...what?

E: Excuse me, alright now you see how he was catching oysters? That's how they it started catching oysters, they didn't have the dredges that we got today. See where he's at right there right now?

D: Yes

E: Alright, that's this two handle with the rake and then you'd break your wrist and then pick it up. That's how he's putting the oysters on that boat. It's not like you see the oyster boats today, today they all have hydraulic and all of that. And we have a dredge that goes on each side the boat. This is the hard way.

D: Well can you tell us

E: That is the hard way!

D: Well these are the kinds of memories we are trying to preserve for the future generations. Tell us, can you tell us about exactly how you went about getting the oysters using the hard way?

E: It's just like a rake, but put two rakes together

D: Okay

E: And you put two rakes together alright with a bolt, and all you do is rake like that and pick it up with the oysters, put it on the back of the boat. See you look at it and you see that's what he's doing.

D: So to fill up a boat like that, how long would that take, I see there are two men in the boat, how long would it take to fill up the haul like to that

E: I'd say maybe a couple of days. Now after he got them on the boat, say if you were going to sack them, then he had to count all of them alright. If he had a big oyster, they had to know how many little bitty ones. They had to cull the little ones off and save the big ones and that's the ones that go in the sack. 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 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, Regale/ Rigalee's, 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

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.

D: Wow

B: We still use the term of uh when we loaded in the reefs in the areas of the sea boat (inaudible) only did about a 100 barrels, 200 barrels. And that's the way we do it, we base, I put out little figures in our books to know where we cultivate by barrels and then if I need to I turn it over to sacks.

C: Now let, what they do is exactly the same way on west side of the Mississippi?

B: Yes

D: Can I stop and interrupt you? You had mentioned about them going straight to the factories

B: Right

D: Do you either of you have any idea about what percentage we are talking about going to the factories as opposed to what when to the countertrade?

B: Well I mean back when he

E: When the factory was open, practically all the boats went to the factory, a few of them would make sacks but majority of them would go directly to the factory. Now, you see he's loading them up with the rakes. As he rakes right here, see the two poles (Mhm), let's see is that a padna, his too. This guy over here, he's the one that's steering the boat which way he wants to go (Mhm). When your dredging oysters, you find a reef and you shove a pole, you find that head what we call of the reef, which is the heart, you shove a pole and then you keep going around, all day long, you go around and around.

Alright, when you clean

B: Now I can show you from that today, by on my computer, on our computer, what we do in the present world by what we call one of our boats.... deposits on our reefs, what we call valves and I can send you pictures of that based on what we do now, we, our own purpose and other purposes. It uses it in case somebody destroys the reefs. You have a picture and you have a document showing what you do and that I can show you from that to the present time how its done

D: Well back just after that information there were a lot of Mississippi oyster pirates coming in and raiding rigs. Wildlife and Fisheries mounted guns on their vessels and basically chased them off. We didn't have an oyster war. Chesapeake Bay had an oyster war, but we finally came to peace with Mississippi. Now one of the things we're interested in is and we can't, it's hard for Carl and Roy and I to figure out if you're, if you're hand tonging and note there, most of those leases are 10 or 20 acres, not all of them but seems like 10 and 20 is a constant number, average is 16 alright and it looks to me like it takes three men to run a boat

(all talking at once)

B: not necessarily on the smaller boats, there were what they call the boats like they using right now in Alabama and they doing a little bit in the Houma area is really two men on a boat. It's

C: We're talking about, we want to go back to that period, that early period, and there is a reason for that. Okay let's say there's three men a boat. We know there is 2000 boats, technically there could be as many as 6000 people. Okay now our concern is how many acres can three men tong... and the reason we ask that is let's say you can do 20 acres, at a time period when you had no roads so you had to live at your reef, does that mean that every 20 acre plot had 3 men living there?

E: Some villages used to have more. Like across the river (Mhm um) They still got, what they call it. It was uh oyster village

(all talking at once)

Allstricker, the whole family used to stay out there. The whole family would stay right on the reef, all the way around them, where the oysters were around the reef

C: How...much did they stay out there, they built houses on stilts?

E: They built their homes. They had homes... I think I might have some pictures of them somewhere

D: We have some pictures, but didn't they do it out here by us too?

Delutes over there by what's it called, uh by the Bayou De Soto and all that area didn't they have shipyards out there

(everybody talking at the same time)

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. 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. They used to come and bootleg at night time out there and when I was a kid I remember, 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.

C: Well there was a big competition between Mississippi and Louisiana

B: cause its actually closer to land in Mississippi than it is to land here. We are four hours and Mississippi is an hour and a half. We actually, the line of Mississippi, if you take uh a radio or anything and you move, you actually in Mississippi waves in Louisiana waters, so you can actually see the lights from Mississippi from our reefs

E: That's a nice picture

B: So I mean that's the problem. The problem is it's ... Mississippi is an hour away, we're five hours from, it's a big difference. It's still a problem, nowhere near as bad. You hear the state saying, why plant in certain areas because Mississippi benefits not Louisiana, not at all but I mean as it's getting better and better as it goes along in life. The laws are getting stricter, problem with the law is Louisiana gets caught in Mississippi it's probably around a \$5,000 - \$10,000 fine. If Mississippi gets caught in Louisiana it's a \$450 fine. So the laws are a little bit different and just don't protect the innocent.

C: Before we go any further Brad, we've been recording this and we tell you dad that we are going to put this at the University of Lafayette, at LSU, and at Sea Grant and ultimately in Washington, D.C. We don't have any agenda, we want to try and preserve the institutional memory of the industry for future generations, that's all. So we want to get you to say on the tape it's okay if we record you and make these available for researchers.

B: That is no problem. I am here to say what I know and anything to help the industry, we here to work with it.

D: We're interested in its history because we think in that period, 1890 to 1910, when your father and grandfather were active. Your, the oyster industry in Louisiana may have been larger than Chesapeake Bay. Yet everybody thinks it's Chesapeake Bay and I'm not convinced of that, we just don't have the history written like they do in Chesapeake, that's why we're here. I can find out everything in the period 1960 forward, I just have to come chat with you.

B: Right

D: But the time prior to that, I have to find your father.

B: Exactly, because you're not going to find it in a library

D: That doesn't mean that you don't know it...(all talking at once)...But you've heard some of the stories.

B: I mean I don't know but I listened to you know as a kid and so young, but being on the water with my grandpa, which is his daddy and then my daddy I learned a lot and I learned I mean back from my time 50 years ago when we were kids going out there with them, I remember the way...the villages of the...where the Plaisance's used to live and Bayou De Soto in that area where what he told me, I said what was that as a kid he asked a lot of questions, "What was that? Why that's over there? Why?" and now we use those places to fish where those camps were. Go fish by that such and such camp that was out there. The Laperouses and Raccoon Island, they had a camp there, that was where they stood.

E: **someone's name**

B: (repeated that name) that's another family that was back then that we stood there. So there was a lot of people

D: Who would be the oldest family that you can recall that was in here while you were a kid?

E: I think LouSorne

D: You don't think the Deridders?

E: The Deridders too yeah the Deridders

B: And I mean the Dixie..something of Dixie rings a bell Dixie Canning Company but the Deridders were. Now another old family that was in here that I can remember. **We bought grease from these people as they moved on in life is the Plaisance. The Plaisance was here.

E: The Plaisance was from across the river.

B: But they owned

E: But they owned over here where we were

(all jumbled, everyone at once)

B: 100-150 years ago families like that

E: What you see there, that's the way they started dredging oysters with them tongs. Now that is the hard way. That's why most of the old timers there, they were all humpbacks and that's because of them tongs. But they were nothing but muscles. So most of them were all humpback from that, that is the hard way! And then they got moderate, alright. They got moderate and they, we got dredges on each side, alright. And we had air cool motors to pick the dredges up but then you had to use the shovel. That's what you call shovel back. After you put them on deck, then you have to shovel them back and get the lower ones. Now when you got to the factory, you had to shovel them off the boat into the conveyer or if you went and plant your oysters, you had to take your shovel back. You shovel them on and you'd shovel them off the hard way that was hard. So then it got more modern, alright, now we got hydraulic.

D: Well when did things start to change?

E: I'd say, I'd say about 50-60 years ago maybe

B: I would say I remember, I remember when I started

(all talking at once)

E: I'd say 60-70 years ago

(all talking at once)

B: That it started to, we uh...in the early...I'd say fifty years ago, we started with the, from being off the deck of the boat to being on tables. Putting on, now you see us working on, before we always worked on bare ground, the dredge come up on the floor and we'd always be with our heads down and culling and then

E: They used to say that your head to the deck and your ass to the sun

(all laughing)

E: That's the way it was. You'd get them on deck and then you'd cull them, alright. You take the big ones and you cull the little ones off, and throw them back

Now the ones that are cull, you put them in a separate section?

B: Yeah you pile them in the middle of the boat and the rest of the stuff goes back on the reefs and then you sack that at the end of the day or you have them days when we started coming in with three men on the boat, we had a captain...captain and one on each table and we worked all day and then sacked all night, sacked not...sacked them up in the evening time. As the old timers say, "you make as much hay while the lights are on", you throw everything in that sack, and then that night you start shoveling, sacking 'em, and make 'em and then 10 o'clock you glide in that bed.

Now how long would you stay out?

B: Three days at that time

D: Now the oysters would stay okay for three days without a problem?

E: That's when it was cold

D: Okay

E: That's when it was cold, alright. Now today everything is so modern today that now we got refrigeration on the boat and everything is hydraulic now. All they do is grab the handle and push it down and the dredge comes up and it comes on top the table. One thing didn't get modern, they still do it today, you still have to cull 'em. You got to take the big oyster and take the little one off. There ain't nothing else that didn't change but that, you still got to do the same, but supposed that we didn't, we cultivating our oysters with bedding, now you press the handle and dredge come on top the table and now we got a water hose and we wash them off the table and now when we get the boats loaded down

and we get to our destination to plant them, then we wash them off, see how easy that is? (laughing)
Before you had to shovel then and when you got over there you had to shovel them overboard again

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. So back then, we still say it, the easiest thing about oysters is eating them with a fork.

(laughing)

B: Now back to what you were saying about refrigeration, you know I can remember, I can remember in my time in the summer months, we had never had a problem with oysters as much as they saying now. Back in the time we, where you talking about, in our time, those boats used to go down on the river, get it loaded and go down the river and go down to the French Quarters and park at the French Quarters and sell their oysters and they would sell at the French Quarter for two or three days. Never had a problem, it was during the winter, sometimes but not always...problem like it is now. Now a days, now a days they, as I always say, there's more scientists and less problems, and more problems. but I think it's mainly how nowadays how people handle problems and not aware of how they handle them. You taking, creating a lot of problems by you taking something real cold off something like what our boat is and moving it from one cold to hot to cold to hot, it changes. It's going to be a blob before we get this system leveled off and everybody will be comfortable. Back then, you couldn't, back in those times when you talking about in Chesapeake Bay and the times of the market, you never heard of the problems you having now. What is the problem? Well we don't know. It might be something coming down the river that's creating problems. It's not...an old theory behind all these old fishermen is that you never hear any fisherman, you never heard of any fisherman getting sick off of their product and they eat it all the time. It's always when they leave their product and go elsewhere and someone handles it, they get sick, you know. But I can remember going with my father to, to the French Quarter with our product and sitting there til we sold the product and then come home. I can remember that

C: Now you went by boat or by truck?

B: By truck (all talking at once) By boat and by truck

D: Tell us a bit more about that, what you remember about the whole process...getting everything ready, going

B: going to the, going to it I remember the most, most of all I always talk about, I guess he's dead now, but my theory was I was always excited because when I'd go there, the old man, Mr. Piazle, he was a Piazle. I was a young kid at that time...and he went there... I remember them seafood in the market, I remember the boxes, the stalls, sort of what they trying to introduce into these little farmer's markets. They trying to bring it back where people can go sell some of their product. So that's why

E: ... no refrigeration

That's where it originally started

E: Somebody would ice over their merchandise with a... no refrigeration, never did they have any problems. The restaurant would be, the restaurant owners would be lining up in the French market waiting for us to get there with our trucks because they know it was fresh and one day's catch. We never had no problems

B: They had no problems, they trying to bring it back. I remember that, I remember the big boats and the oysters was abundance of oysters, you know I mean...all the oysters you ever wanted, but and we used to load our boats and go to the stable and that's what you are talking about. The one in violet was named umm, umm Mr. Louie Diaz.

E: What's the name of the...

B: I don't know but the one in violet was the white, by the white kitchen was named uhh, uhh

E: That's when Louie closed down

B: No we used to go to both of them

E: Yeah

B: We used to go to both of them, both of them, we would run both sides and the other one was named

E: What was Mr. Louie's before, what was the name, you remember? At last it was the Bubble Bee

B: Before it was Diaz and then it was Violet Packing Company

E: Violet Packing Company

B: and the one in uh (Regulies) was called uh, uh La Tour, Jim La

E: It was Jimmy La Tour, but what was the name of the company?

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 your boat that day.

D: A kettle was a steam kettle

E: A steam kettle

B: Steam, and at that time it was shoveled in, shoveled off the boat again, shoveled in conveyers, shoveled off the boat, and then all of a sudden they brought in the sucking system to suck them off of the boats and that was, that was unbelievable. Still had to shovel them a little bit but not.

D: When did that come in?

B: That came in in the, I would say the 60s. I would say it came in the 60s. Definitely in the 60s. It was in the main...

E: When it first started off when you bring them to the factory, you used to open them up by hand, it was by hand and then they got wise they put them in kettles

B: Steam 'em

E: and steam them. Then they were able to make..called the tumbler. After they steamed them, they put them in a big tumbler made out of steel and they would tumble and that's so the meat would fall out and fall into a big tank, a conveyer. The conveyer, the water was pure, pure salt and they had a conveyer, one going this way and the other one going that way. The one that was on the bottom, where the shells was, would go this way and they had so much grind that the meat would float to the top and that's the way it would come out of the conveyer on this side, but the shells would go to the bottom and it would come out to the other side. That's what separated it. That..started getting more modern.

C: You've used to two terms that I think we know, but you need to remember that the people who will see this do not. What's a basket?

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 sack, a standard is 105 oysters, not the box of oysters. A mini sack is 105 oysters. A sack is 105 pounds.

D: Now

C: Excuse me, Roy are we picking up on... Sorry

D: The other thing is you have a basket, I assume it's made out of metal. Where do you buy it?

B: Well, they used to, uh the place that we used to buy everything from, across the river uh Alario Brothers.

E: Alario Brothers

B: was probably the oldest place and we used to buy all our supplies from them. Alario Brothers across the river. Mr. John Alario

E: They had a place right here

D: In Westwego?

B: In Westwego

E: Right and then we had a big place here on Decatur Street uh

B: Dixie, Dixie Supply off..used to go down something like that right off of Dixie Street. I know exactly where it is. Beacon Supply

E: Beacon Supply

B: That's the businesses that's been in that tradition

D: Are they still there?

B: Yes, Beacon Supply is, Alario Brothers still is

D: Now again you talk about the dredge

B: The dredge is what designed Biloxi. It's Bailey, Bailey dredges

E: Bailey dredges is still operating

B: still operating, Day and Bailey's grandfather and grandfather

D: in Mississippi

B: In Mississippi in Bay St. Louis. 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.

C: Brad, can you describe what that is because a 100 years from now people listening to this

B: A dredge is a is a rake and that is the form of a... you know, uh uh, I like to say is, are, we farmers, we usually fishermen, technology put us into the farming business, but our tractor is our boat and we pull a rake like a tractor pulls a... 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 12 T 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!!

B: Teeth.

D: I got it!! Teeth!!

B: and it pulls on the bottom and that's the tool of the trade. And that was built, we build our own now, but the first one came from... and we used to call it Biloxi Schooners around there Mississippi schooners, that's what we called them boats. They got into a little modern, called them Biloxi schooners and then Biloxi came out with a round bottom boat, similar to my grandpa's boat that's right there. And that's called a Biloxi boat, you can tell, you ask anybody in, on the canal or the bayou, they say what kind of boat is that, that's a Biloxi boat, oh that's the skiff type boat. Well now we use mostly our skiff-type

boats when we get in shallow water and working...a little rough to work in rougher seas but it's more of your skiff-type boat is something that draws less water, it doesn't, I think actually the first ones to come out with the skiff-type was the Frenchmen, was the French.

C: In a flat bottom

B: Flat bottom, we call them knuckle bottoms

E: The old man 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.

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.

C: And what would yall cook and eat out of on the boats when yall were out?

E: Huh?

C: When you were on the water, what would yall eat?

E: Oh we ate now!

C: What did yall eat?

E: We ate the best! Look one thing, if you went hungry, it was your fault.

C: So what did yall fix yallselves when yall were over there? What did yall eat?

E: Oh we had fish, we had stuff that we brought out there, but mostly oysters and fish and crab and ducks and

(all talking at once)

E: We ate the best

B: I never knew that until I sent my son to work on the boats that there we that many kinds of beans. There's green beans, there's white beans,

E: Every day we had beans

B: Red beans. I said, "I never knew they had that many kinds of beans." (laughter) But beans is a boat dish because it's something that stood with you.

E: It stays with you

B: It filled you and you worked and a lot of uh like ****corn beefs**** stuff like that, corn, beef, and onions and corn, beef, and spaghetti is a boat dish and

E: Its a boat dish...oysters and spaghetti, shrimp and spaghetti

B: Yeah I don't remember a lot of meats, steaks wise, maybe pork chops or something like that. Until the modern world came and

(all talking at once)

E: wild ducks, wild geese

C: Did you ever make a gumbo

E: Ohh Ohh I would say that's number one!

C: How about a fricassee?

E: And we take, we put everything in that pot except the dishrag (laughter)

B: We uh, we uh, a crab stew, which we called a crab stew, fortunately we caught crabs in the dredge on the reef and uh put them on the side and then we broke them, cut them in half and sautéed them in onions and smothered them down and that's what you call a sauté'. We smothered them down and stuff like that. Let me tell you, if it landed in the dredge, it was going to be ate that evening. If the boat caught the fish, he ate his fish, you know but normally, the normal thing is what we call uh like my father

or one of them, at that time life was so much nicer than it is now. They had a lot of wild animals and if we seen a geese land in the, somebody go kill the

E: Wild geese

B: geese and we eat geese that night or we see Clarry hens, marsh hens you know back then

E: Ducks

B: Coons, alligators

E: Sometimes our little podna

(laughter)

C: That's a real alligator (more laughing) You had that hidden under there (more laughing)

B: Sometimes, we never. One thing about a fisherman, you will never starve because you eat oyster stew, you eat oysters

E: Everyday you eat oysters. If you on a boat, you're going to eat oysters everyday especially if they salty. Man if they got salt on them, oh man you going to eat oysters every day, I tell you. But thank God, never have I ever heard of anyone getting sick from eating oysters.

C: Now there's, I'm hearing kind of a seasonal cycle. I'm hearing, "Well we're oystermen." but I also heard your daddy say that you trapped. So that meant during winter months: September, October, November, maybe into February, it was trapping. Now when you trapped, did you trap a lease you know like the Delacroix Cooperation or

E: Yeah the Delacroix Cooperation had leases where you trap and pay them a percentage. We still own, we still own 300 acres that's our own. But quite a bit of the times, we trapped for the Delacroix Corporation and there was another old guy, he was from across the river by the name of a big family Comadela. I think he is a mayor of one place or another.

B: Meal Time, but Meal Time is gone but I mean that, that came out, that broke out in probably the 70s. I would say maybe, I don't know, I might even go to the 80s.

E: I'd say so.

B: In that time, I bought the nutria meat, the rat meat, the coon meat and sold it for me and my three brothers when we came home from school when other kids were playing ball, we were hustling and my older brother, he's 63, and it's three of us down and my youngest brother went down, he was too young to do anything, I don't know, too young to do anything at the time. But me and Chris used to go around all of loop, all down here and all down Crowley, and come to Albany, all of them, Bayou Demit.

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

B: Sell it to the government at the time. When we were selling it to the guy across the river that was raising flies to go kill other flies. And we went around me and Don, me and Chris go around, load the big truck up, at that time we never had licenses or nothing, you know we had a pickup truck go in the back, we used to go hustle with pitch forks and load all of the meat up, come back and load my brother up with his big truck and he'd go sell it. And we made, he made enough when he got married he built his own Just stuff like that by, when I was a kid, coming from school, we used to go trap you know and I graduated in '72 and it was before then. So it had to be the 70s when...

C: Let me ask you a quick question about this because most of the oyster business, oyster work is taking place in the winter months, trapping is taking place in the cold months too, how are you managing to juggle

B: At that time, at that time, see Texas used to be a big competitor to Louisiana, certain time of the year, you couldn't sell Louisiana oysters. Texas just dominated the market and it got so bad in those times that he went a bought a place in Texas, we moved our fleet to Texas at that time because their market, their oysters were better than ours

E: We could give ours away

B: We could give them away so we go to Texas

E: Certain time of the year in winter time, we have to go to Flor, uh Texas to catch oysters and then when we got there, there were conservations, they was bastards and we couldn't find no place to unload and finally what happened, I found an old fella, hell of a nice old guy and I bought him off. I bought his place out and that's where we'd bring our boats and unload over there

C: What part of Texas?

(inaudible)

B: But now its year round and since the, the 80s I think um its more, its a year round business, it ain't

E: You talking about Chesapeake Bay, we supplied Chesapeake Bay, Virginia. We supplied them with oysters for I don't know how many years

B: We still supply

E: We still supply them

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 of 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.

E: We can work 12 months out the year, year round. When the wild reef is open, we put so many of our boats at major sites... and we put a couple of oysters, a couple of boats just bedding from the wild reef, take them off the wild reef, bait them on our ground. When the wild reef closes, then we get all on our ground. That's why we can work 12 months out the year.

B: And nowadays thought, nowadays we in the crisis where we are now that today I brought one of the professors from UNO out and I brought a professor from, from um, from Ocean Springs and actually brought a photographer and a free lance writer from the Middle East to speak along British Petroleum what's going on. Right now because the state is not managing the resources, it's... , it's going down. The private sector is so strong because we need management on what we doing and we always saying the best theory of all would be to say of you go to your bank, you keep drawing money out and draw money out and don't put none in there, it's going to run out. The problem with the state, they take and they take and they not putting enough cultural material back in and its running out, it's starting to show. It's starting to rely on public sources, on private sources. Right now in this town in this history, this will be the worst year in the history of the oyster business because of all the devastation between all the freshwater, the dispersant they sprayed, and opening the Bonnet Carré so the market will not do 10% of the product we have done..(inaudible)...Last week, week before last week...(inaudible)...sit on the task force with a few... and I, last year we sold, (cell phone ringing) last year we sold 2.9 million tags, this year we sold less than 600

D: How many?

B: 6, I mean less than 6,000, uh 600,000. Okay. 600 thousand. 2.9 million, right now 600,000.

D: How long will it take to re... in a perfect world.

B: In a perfect world, 3-4 years

D: So people like the Collin's family on

C: the west side

D: Right, P&J Oysters

B: Yes

D: Both have said publically they're hurting. You're saying 4 to 5 years before we might be able to get back into the business. Why don't we start now?

E: Maybe

B: But you see what

E: ...after the hurricane, we've had hurricane on top of hurricane. After we've always come back in 3 or 4 years... Before BP hit, that would have been our best year since the hurricanes. Now that BP hit, what happen, we don't know, the biologists don't know, but they don't have any spat. The oysters that we got there don't have no little spat, no little oysters on them. Certain time of the year which is in May, they through that milk out. The milk that they through out, that's what makes, that's the spat that makes the oysters. But there is nothing catching out there now. The oysters that we are picking up right now, we picking up don't have no little ones on them. So when you take that oyster out, that's it.

B: We in a crisis (phone rings) that I explained to him, we in one of the worst crisis in the history of our business.

E: (on the phone) Hello, hey.

B: since 1947

E: Yeah, Oh no no I wouldn't. I'd be calling the big chief. I got some friends of mine here from LSU. It seems you might have some extra cans of uh, just empty cans of oysters that you used to have, all they want to do is take pictures of them you know. You lost everything too? They all went with Katrina huh, uh huh?

(everybody talking low at once)

(Edward gets off the phone)

E: He don't have any. He had it til the hurricane. He says, the hurricane took everything he had.

D: You know they use a bucket. They would shuck and fill a bucket. We found a bucket by luck. Now let me explain why we think cans are important. Uhh 2010 I wrote a book, or I finished writing a book with Carl on Coastal Louisiana, its people, etc. We kept running across the oyster packing business. We couldn't find anything that documented it visually. So I find a can on eBay. I'm going to bid on this can. They \$25, somebody bid \$35, I bid \$50, \$60, \$75. I took it to \$110 and I though my wife would get a little mad (laughter. It sold for \$2275 and it took two bidders to get it there. Why? They're not available. So if we find one we can take a photograph of it as Carl points out to you, it documents that Shamrock whatever, this is a real company.

C: But also is the canning that lead that oyster get to a clientele beyond the coastal..

B: Now I'll tell you another one who maybe might have one, uh J, J & M Supply in Bogalusa. Now they were in New Orleans and they moved to Bogalusa. They might have some old cans cause they weren't affected by the hurricane. They moved everything off Parish Avenue in New Orleans, they might have something.

D: You see even labels, even the old labels. We interviewed a fella that's been in the shrimp drying business for a 100 years. We asked him if he had any labels and he brought out labels.

B: Its amazing you know, after the, I mean we had cans. I remember the cans in my shop and we, I went to my accounting in Mississippi. At that time we used to control part of our business. I went to his backyard to drink a beer and he had some of those old cans and the buckets. Man that brings some serious memories. Things you just don't know that you've should have kept.

C: Its things like that that are never kept, that's really so rare now.

B: That's right. It is. You know something like that is a crisis. Saying back to what I was saying about the sea and the problem with the state is now ... We at one time my father and his family controlled 30,000 acres of oyster grounds and his family they'd split it up and divide it up and right now we took all of our investment and put it to 10,000 acres and cultivated some 10,000 acres of the best grounds and in this farms, we had areas that, like back in what we call Lake Robin and this area here where I'm looking on

that map that I own some of these passes in that area. Treasure Pass, and Lake **Elmadee**, Lake Robin, and Lake Boudreaux, and we have that, we own that. Some of the oldest farms in this we own. But ... where we at we had areas that produced the best seed that we didn't have to compete with the state seed because we have farms that produced good seed and we moved our seed to better grounds, to higher grounds, grounds that we say almost look like put miracle grow on them. You move them to an environment that they got so much competing for the same food, abundance of them, you take those and bring them out where there's not a lot of competing and they just go unbelievably. You take trash and bring it over there and it makes the best market sized oysters, but in saying that, now due to opening the Bonnet Carré, opening the Carnarvon diversion, and the stuff that they put, sprayed in the Mid Biloxi marsh killed it all. In the history of our business, between me and him and his family and our family in 120 years we have never seen this. Killed everything. That's what I was telling these biologists, these guys just now. I said its like if you take all of one species off the earth, what's going to produce? You can take all the women and the men ain't going to produce, you can take all of the men, the women ain't going to produce and that's what's going on out there. Because the babies, the big oysters that are left, after that there is none. The ones that grow the majority of the oysters is the small ones, the spat and the juvenile and as the guy said today, once they get to a certain size, its not an adult, it' a marketable oyster, we catch them, but the ones that produce the millions of new babies and seeds are the small ones and we don't have any. And we hope that we putting, we investing in \$150,000 - \$200,000 into putting seeds and hoping that that seed can catch because going back in history like what yall writing, we know when they open the Bonnet Carré, 2 years later, the seed came. When we opened the Freshwater, 2 years later the seed came. But its been a year and whatever and we just been monitoring some reefs in Lake Robin that's closest to one of our best producing seed ground. Today is the first time we've seen some spat in a year and a half to years that we've seen not a lot, but you need a lot because all of them don't survive with the other things they compete with. So we at a crisis when the state says where we going to get it from? Where we going to get this stuff from? They trying things like LSU with John Supan and Dr. Earl Melancon is going out there and dumping that spat in Hackberry Bay and you ask them how they made out, well they really don't know cause there is no way to detect if it caught or if it's stuff that came there last time. And I'm not knocking them, we are trying, the industry is trying but everybody is pulling up all thoughts saying hey let's try this, let's do this, let's do that.... But if we don't this industry, get it up running fast. Let's say Chesapeake Bay or Texas comes up with an abundance of product. They going to dominate the market, where we can't get back in the market cause once you fall off the market; it's hard to get back in the market.

D: In the post Katrina world, where was your market?

B: My market was, my market was unbelievable. We had some of the best, up until 2009 we controlled the market. Louisiana controlled the market.

D: Now when you say, are we talking, you're sending product to Seattle, Detroit, New York, Tampa,

B: All over. We sell product, Louisiana controls the market. Louisiana dominates the market. I would say Louisiana sold 3/4 of market, oysters in the world

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 processes. We lost probably 30 processes 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. Or work one hand in hand; don't spend \$50 million on promoting it. I think \$50 million on resources; you could have spent \$5 million on resources to help the industry and \$30 million on promotion. So if you get the promotion going, where are you going to get the product to sell it? It don't...you need both of them but like I explained to the other guys. The restaurant has the ability to go buy seafood from someone else. I have no...changing my business to move on to something else. What can I do with my business if I can't catch oysters? What can I do with these ten boats we have that's you know. The smallest boat is \$150,000 and the biggest boat is half a million dollars. What can I do to my boat? Can I go to a farmer and say I have ten beautiful boats, what am I going to do with them? We cannot, the industry is desperate need, we have to in this state and we are the number 1 provider in the state of seafood ...out of all of them. I think we are pretty close to being the leader right under tourism... but the state needs to concentrate, Sea Grant needs to concentrate on getting our resources priority, getting our resources as fast as they can. In fact the longer we wait, the later we are. We missed the first spat, we missing the second spat, if we miss next year, we going to add one more year to the program, we said 5 years, it's 6. Five years to get the industry up running in a perfect world and then five more years to get you to believe that my product is safe. You still have restaurants in New Orleans that don't buy Gulf seafood. 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.

D: You know when we were on your boat, I asked you a question. Where do you get your sacks?

B: I get them from Steve Bur, it's called Steve's Burlap Company out of Mississippi and his name is Steve Airhart and I'll get his number from my brother...He buys all the sacks from the coffee beans.

D: Perfect.

C: And he's in Biloxi?

B: He's in Waveland.

D: Right.

B: He used to be in New Orleans and he moved. He got hit by the hurricane.

C: I have a few questions. First one is we talked about all processes closing. I know something similar like that happened in the sugar industry a generation ago. Those processes that survived were able to handle, they expanded when the market came back and the product was there. Are the survivors going to be able to do that here? Are they going to be able to take up the slack?

B: They can't.

C: So what's going to happen?

B: The market is going to jam itself and someone like myself; before the hurricane, I mean before BP I could have caught more product than I sold but I regulated the market. When the gentleman that I sell to tells me, Brad, Friday I need a 1,000 sacks. I'll tell my boats...let the dogs out for the weekend and come on in with a 1,000 sacks. He could have processed that. He's the only one. Now if you got five big ones that's gone, five bigger ones that are way bigger than me who are off this market that probably do 3-500 sacks a day. That is 3-500 sacks that can't be produced. Now what they going to do? They going to move them to other states and see if they can get them from other states. Everybody is going to be competing for that little bit of market. The market is not expanding, the market is still bad. The process (everybody talking at once) normally weather regulated a lot. Winter months...Northwestern come and clear the market up. Northwestern comes in three or four days clear the market up or hey guys, Northwestern coming so let's fish harder and shut it down. Market always weighs to work itself out. The real people in this business would not drop the price. The younger people say let's drop the price and it

will keep the market up. I don't care if you give it away, you still can't process it. Let it work its way out. Catch what you need and limit what you catch to keep the market going and you keep the price up. Private industry does that. Public industry don't that. We ask the state hey regulate on what you catch because, or this year might be the big hit. If we have the product, this year might be the biggest total of everything. I said guys you realize if we got 500 boats fishing a day then we catch a hundred sacks a day, that's 5,000 sacks a day. If we don't fish Saturday and Sunday. That's a 1,000 sacks, that's 2,000 sacks we don't put on the market. If we don't fish that it clears the market. We have to do something to regulate what you're talking about. We can't just sit and let these oysters keep coming in. We just say we going hunting or fishing or just take the boat, let the boats off and that's what you have to do with this industry and as it is right now, it's spinning so fast no one realizes it but once we get back to the normal basis, it's going to be a problem with these processes can't get in there but the trade of all of this what I explained to everybody that I speak to you know the people that work with me have been work for us with me since the '70s or the people that's been with me, some are 20 years experience captain's experience. My deckhand has 10 years experience, 15 years, 10 years. If I lose those guys, first thing, where are they going to get a job at? They might be able to go get a crew boat job oilfield if that would pick up, they could probably go do that. But when it cranks back up, who am I going to get to do that? That processes through open oysters. These people if he loses them, where is he going to get them when he opens back? He's not going to get them. They going to find eventually these people are starving, they will find something to do. It might be working at McDonalds but when that industry gets up, it's going to take years before they can get there clientele back to opening. Its going affect, we going to feel for a while because when you lose your trend of thought and your trend of tradition, truck drivers, truck drivers might be able to go get a dump truck and do that but then okay now hey Joe I'm back in business, Well where were you for two years? I'd like to starve why didn't you help me or you could have helped me. Well I couldn't help you and now I'm here and that's the thought that's going on. The women that work in the processing that work handling meat, the labors that work the forklift, all these people are gone. They gone now. They moving on and it's going to take a while to get back. The labor law for the immigrations came in and just went up sky high. We find a gap in the early '70s the Vietnamese, I mean the Catholic Charities came brought in the Vietnamese and the Vietnamese worked for us. We paid half their salary and Catholic Charities paid half their salary until we built them to do you know what they were doing. That worked fine, they moved on. The industry, that moved on. Now we brought in Mexicans to come in to work these plants. This plant that I'm servicing, I made a deal with plant after the hurricane. I had my own plants, my own 18 wheelers, we had our own plants, our own 18 wheelers, everything and I said listen Joe. You had the trucking company, now you got the plant. I'll service you, give you my routes for people I dealt with, you buy all my product until I build, rebuild, get back to what, I might never get back into shucking again but you get... Right now he has 150 Mexicans. They just passed this new law that labor is going to go up sky high. He's not going to be able to afford it. To do this plus the price of seafood went up plus the labor is going up. Can you afford to spend \$75 for a gallon of oysters? You know the consumer ain't going to do it. The market is going to go so high...the average family this economy sucks right now. We have a choice, go to the seafood market and buy \$75 gallon of oysters to feed their family or go buy a \$15 bucket of chicken. We losing it, we losing the, we losing some of the, we losing gain on what we doing and until we can get it to go all together, its going to be it's just going to run...as they say the strong will survive

D: You had a couple other questions Carl?

C: Well you talked earlier, you talked earlier about the fight with Biloxi. There was a trapper war here too, that must have been your daddy's time.

E: Right.

C: Did he talk much about that?

E: No, not too much. That one happened at Delaco Island. It happened here too. In fact to tell you the truth about it. My daddy served time and my uncle served time with him but he was a big honcho so he spent more time.

C: Ohh Lord (laughing)

E: Well what happened to that...

B: My grandfather was the ring leader

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.

C: Did they call the people that came in here goats? What's the French word for goats?

E: In Spanish the goat is a "chivo".

C: That's what they were called.

E: They were calling them the chivos. Well a chivo is a Billy goat in Spanish alright and the reason for that. You look at a Billy goat, the highest, the highest thing in the yard, he's going to climb to the top of. If they got a shed, you were to say where the Billy goats at? He's going to be up there. The highest part so people would come from the city and they'd take them out fishing on a boat and the minute they would get out on that boat, they would look for the highest thing on the boat, like the cabin, they would get on top of the boat you see the mask, they'd get to the top, that's how they call them chivos. (laughter) That's where the chivo come in at. So today whenever the city person comes in here that hasn't been over here, we'll always say he's a chivo. (laughter)

B: Part of our business that we did for years..rent accommodation space for sports...we always tell them, he's like yeah I'm a chivo, we tell him well not no more, you fished three days a week. If you fish three times a week, you ain't a chivo, you a sport. You fish once a month you a chivo. (laughter) Two of these guys are good friends of mine. They would come (all talking at once)

E: He comes in that he hadn't been down here fishing, he's a chivo (laughter)

B: You see in the last three months we had two fatalities in Louisiana with boats, that is a guide that don't have experience of a boat or brand new boats and they got out there and we trying to change the law for the local one is that if you buy a boat, you have to get some kind of education...and we said this, closing the MR GO you're going to have this more and more, you have boats traveling so fast and don't have a clue where they going and don't have a clue what's going on. In the last two months, we've had two people die and that's people

E: Anybody can own a boat, but that don't mean anybody can run a boat. They just don't know nothing about a boat. But the minute they get it they just think they just get in it and take a ride with it and know everything about it, it don't work like that and the couple that got killed, that little girl that recently got killed at Shell Beach, her uncle just had bought that boat two days. They had three little girls, four little girls and him and they brought them to Shell Beach and he's coming around the turn and this other guy is coming around the turn too. He was in the wrong because operating a boat is just like operating a car. You got the right side and left side, boats the same way, but they don't go over that and naturally they coming around the turn making 40-50, them boats that they got making 40-50-60 miles

an hour. That's what happened. The ones that really got killed is because of lack of experience on the boat.

D: On the early maps, where is the Alluvial city?

E: Alright, that's a good question.

B: Right where you're sitting at.

E: Right where you're sitting at. Years ago this old fella by the name of Younger. He wanted from here to Alluvial city alright. My uncle lived from here to the bridge, he wanted it Yscloskey so that's where the argument come in. Alluvial City and Yscloskey so here was the dividing line, right about here where we at right now. My uncle owned the, everything, the dock and everything, from here to the bridge and his home too where we got the oyster... that was his. This old fella here was, he had more power because he was the Clerk of Courts, so he from here to his place going that way, that's Alluvial City.

C: So you have Alluvial City, Yscloskey,

B: Yscloskey on the other side of the bridge, Shell Beach

C: Hopedale

E: and Hopedale, all the way out, when you cross the bridge, you go all the way down, that's Hopedale

D: And then you're at Shell Beach

E: Then if you go straight, that's Shell Beach

D: And Camp Beauregard, is that

B: Fort Beauregard

C: Fort Beauregard, it was never called ****Martelo**** Castle?

B: No, that's the other one, the other one is called Martelo's Castle

D: But that's Fort Beauregard

E: Fort Beauregard

B: They got one called ****Cateslander**** over here. That's your two big

E: Hurricane knocked that one down.

D: Now where was that one at?

B: Proctor's Landing is still there

E: Proctor's Landing is right here. The one you looking at. That's Proctor's Landing. Alright, the little subdivision that they just built over there, that's Proctor's Landing.

D: Alright then you would have crossed what we know as the MR. GO and go into the ... and then Shell Beach

E: Right, right. You had to cross the ship channel and that was classified as Shell Beach.

C: Okay now, the railroad ran where? Did it Shell Beach

E: Yeah, well the railroad used to cross here and go through Proctor's Landing, Proctor's Marina. That's where it used to go right straight. The canal Bayou La Loutre, the railroad used to run straight like that all the way to the light house. Now the light house, it's got to be, I'd say a couple thousand feet out into the lake now. That's how much it's ate up and everything, but that's where we used to go, I remember that very well.

D: Where did the railroad cross the bayou?

E: Right here

D: Right here, okay.

E: Right here where the road is at, that's the canal. Where this canal here. It used to go across and then it would follow, take behind them trees, those going up, take behind the trees and then when you to the junction alright, used to cross that canal there and then go up.

C: The train ran everyday?

E: No, not exactly, that I know of you know.

C: How often would it run to New Orleans?

E: Aww that's something I don't know. I was pretty young, just a kid then but I remember it very well. I remember it very well.

D: Now what Naval Facility was out here?

E: Okay that was a Navy Base that was on the other side the ship channel

D: Yes

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.

D: And you also mentioned to us that there was a camp where the nuns went.

B: Priest's camp.

D: Christian camp

B: Yeah, Catholic

E: Catholic priest's camp... The pilings are still out there. The pilings of the camp are still out there. The camp, Betsy, Betsy took the camp away.

B: Camille took it away.

E: Camille

B: Camille. Betsy took the nuns camp and Camille came in and took the priest's camp. The priest's camp was huge. It was three stories. It was beautiful camp.

E: The pilings are still there. We still call it the priest's camp.

B: I don't know if anyone has pictures of it but it was absolutely beautiful and they abandoned it.

C: Well Don we've been at this for

D: Yeah, we just, first of all we want to thank both of you. Thank you so much. We have learned a great deal. We would probably like to come back again. Let us digest what we've done. We would certainly like to come back with scanners to scan these.

C: These are amazing

D: These are just, and anything like this. I mean for us to talk about Alluvial City and for you to show me this. I've never seen... this is what we dream of. This is like you dreaming about oysters, this is what we dream of.

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. Aww 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

E: But the road, this highway goes, go all the way right to the gunnery school and then it follows all the way to what we call St. Malu

B: That's what I showed you.

E: You got to see that.

B: And you know one day like today was absolutely gorgeous. The lake was slick and go see that and take pictures of it, I mean I'd be glad to set up.

D: We want to come back because you're going to think of things, you're going to find a picture or something

C: and also think about what's important that we didn't think to ask you about because we want to document everything we can for the future.

D: And we would stay another two hours, but its four and half hours for him to get home and

B: Where you live?

C: I Live in Lafayette

D: and its Friday and New Orleans traffic is going to be nuts

B: Baton Rouge, We got a place in Gross Tete and we got another place there that we bought in 1980? and its crawfish and we go hunting. Baton Rouge is crazy to go through. It's the wildest city next to New Orleans (laughing)

C: Come drive through Lafayette at 5 o'clock

D: Thank you so much and wherever your going to go dancing tonight

END OF TAPE!