

Norris Price Interview

Interviewers: Carl Brasseaux and Don Davis

Carl Brasseaux: Let me see if I can get them to upload um...I think now if you click right here you can go back and forth you can just start from there.

Don Davis: Okay let's um, we click here? Which one?

Yeah just you see right here? Right and left?

Alright let's do this let's..

Wait I think if you – let's try this. Alright.

D: Okay.

B: Yeah. You just click the arrow. Right and left it should go back and forth.

D: Now you should recognize that individual. That's your son.

Norris Price: Who?

D: That's your son, Norris.

P: Norris Junior? Oh yeah.

D: Right there. Now what we're doing is – I was here in the '70's...

P: Yeah, okay.

D: And - and we're gonna go just through these..

P: Mhmm...Yep. That's in Dulac. Yeah. Yeah.

D: What I want to do is just start right here. This is a beater...

P: It's a beater.

D: And it just explain how a beater works...

P: In those - now we have it hooked up to a, electricity. In those days we had it hooked up on a, with a motor. Carengine. But now we hook it up with an electric motor.

D: And what's the purpose?

P: That's to that's to – that's to uh, break the shells off of the shrimp.

D: And you do that before you boil or after you boil it?

P: Oh no that's done after it's boiled – after it's dry. It's gotta be dried - it's gotta be dried at the right amount of time. You gotta have the feeling to it. If you don't know, you can't by the timing. In other words, you gotta know when that shrimp is dry enough to when you put it in that beater that's it's gonna come clean. Because if you don't dry it enough, you're gonna turn it in that beater and it's just gonna break up to pieces in and you don't gonna have nothing with it. And if it's dried too dry, it's gonna break up again. You gonna lose your product.

B: So how do you tell if it's just right?

P: You have it in your mind. If you don't have it in your mind, you don't know the - about going to it. You can't do it. You gotta know.

B: That – you gotta learn from experience.

P: You gotta learn from experience. I mean uh, you can't go – they had said that they had to boil your shrimp so many minutes. That don't work. You gotta boil your shrimp until you know that the shrimp is ready and cooked. Then you take them out of your boil. And when you come after they're dry, when you come to beat them, it's still you gotta turn that shrimp over every hour. You gotta go in there shovel - with a shovel, turn that shrimp over every hour. Until you know that that shrimp is dry enough to put in that beater. And if you put it out too fast, it's not gonna work. It's not gonna make a good product. If you put it out - you let it dry too much, it's still not gonna be a good product. It's gonna be over dried. And it's gonna break up and you're gonna,

B: It's gonna break up into pieces.

P: Yeah.

B: When did you start using a beater? I'm sure when you were a kid...

P: Yeah they had that when I was a..

B: When you were little?

P: Yeah when I was twelve years old. But uh, I went on platforms - it wasn't like this. It was a big drum like square. Like a square box but it wasn't made out of steel, and it just had some holes in it. Chauvin brothers had one in uh, down uh, on the gulf over there. And they were just - it wasn't a beater like this. Then they come out with this kind of beaters. In those days people learned as they went. It's just like the inside dries. People didn't know that before one of them decides that it could be done. And then they built the dryers to where you wouldn't lose as much shrimp that don't sun dry – if you sun dry it – you lose a lot of shrimp. The weather would get bad, and shrimp is gonna hold up a certain amount of time, that after that it gets sour, gets spoiled, and then uh, you gotta sell it for fish food if you can sell it. And most of the time you have to throw them overboard. There's nothing you can do with it.

B: Well you said you grew up over here on the bayou.

P: Yep.

B: Um, And when were you born, Mr. Price?

P: Right here in Chauvin.

B: Right I know but when?

P: 1930. I'll be 80 years old in February.

B: Well that's great!

D: Congratulations.

B: Yeah, Absolutely.

P: Thank you. I didn't know I was gonna make it to eighty but uh...

(laughter)

P: I'm almost there

D: And you're still working!

P: Oh yeah! I'm almost there.

B: Did your family fish a little?

P: Uh, yeah my daddy did. Yeah, He used to – he used to fish.

B: It was shrimp?

P: Yeah, shrimping. It was shrimp, and uh, he worked on dried shrimp platforms. And then when I was old enough, I started working on dried shrimp platforms as a young man.

B: Where were they? I mean who had the platforms in this area?

P: That was on the gulf out there.

B: Okay.

P: That was on the gulf. They started Lake Barre, you had platforms, uh, Bayou Terrebonne, and then from Bayou Terrebonne we moved to uh, Bayou (Herot?) in the West worked Bayou Herot, in 1953. That's when I started – 1953. Uh, on my own.

B: Well before you started on your own, about how many platforms were there?

P: You take uh, along Bayou Terrebonne they you had uh, one, two...you had four- four platforms and one section or bayou Terrebonne, and in the South Bayou Terrebonne over there you had two of them,

and then on the north end of Lake Barre they had two - two platforms. And then going to the West at the end of uh, from Cocodrie they had one at Cocodrie and they had uh, further south they had two of them, and then going back to the further west, got uh, Bayou Grand Caillou, like uh, Red Fish Bayou had two -three. Three platforms at Red Fish Bayou. And then in 1959 they - when I bought across from red fish bayou in Bayou Grand Caillou. And one there - and then you go farther west Bayou Du Large. You had had three platforms in Bayou Du Large. And from there, they had one in uh, (inaudible) and from there and uh, Bayou Herot, they had uh, either six or seven in Bayou Hero. And then Oyster Bayou they had three, four, four I remember in oyster bayou they had. And then in uh, (inaudible) that's at the end of uh, at the end of the Atchafalaya river over there - that's at the end of uh, the...

B: Terrebonne parish?

P: Terrebonne Parish. They had one there. But that's how many they had that I remember.

B: About how big were the platforms there?

P: About 200 - about 200 feet. 200 feet one way, 200 feet the other. This one I had right there - that's where I worked. And some of them were about that size and they had some were bigger than that. And then when we broke in the uh, when the storm broke us down there's pictures that we got in that corner over there - that's when we were broken after the storm. So we just picked up the lumber and we came here in Dulac they had a uh, they had a wharf for sale so I bought the wharf, and then we built back uh, the platform there. And then the kids uh - Junior was still going to school at that time. And Steve, my oldest son, was trawling. And then uh, when they finished school, Junior finished school, and they wanted to build this factory over here. And I told him I said let me tell ya'll something. I said, I'm fifty years old. I said ya'll are gonna be sure that this is what ya'll want to do for a living. Because I don't want ya'll to leave me building with a factory and leave that on my hands at fifty years old. I don't know how long I'm gonna live. And I don't want to be stuck with that by myself. Oh no daddy, that's what we wanna do. We want we want a factory. We want a factory and we want to make our living out of that. And the two boys stuck with it. And they still with me. One of them is cripple, but he still do what he can, you know.

B: How high were the platforms off the water?

About five, six feet.

B: How did they put the piling down when they built the first platforms?

P: That's by hand. They do that by hand.

D: How far down in the mud do you put that?

P: Uh, three or four feet, I guess. About six feet up. Just take the - the that you take the land down there on the gulf - that was soft mud. And you had to stick it at the height you wanted it. And then you had to take some pieces. You had your posts like this and then you had to put some cross pieces on the ground like that.

D: Okay.

P: Where they can't sink. They can't sink down.

D: Mmhmm. Those were two by fours?

P: Uh, no. just one by four.

D: One by four.

P: One by four cypress. All cypress trees.

D: Platforms are cypress?

P: All cypress.

D: When you first started in the industry, out in the gulf, near the gulf, what did they use to fire the boilers? Wood?

P: Uh, when I started it was diesel, but they started with wood years before my time. It was wood. They'd bring wood uh, down there. And uh, when I started, they had hooked that up with diesel and some blowers – well what I used to use were some little airplane blowers - you buy that in the surplus, uh, army surplus. But the little airplane blower, you can run it with a 32 motor, and you had a pipe- you had a pipe coming with your diesel at the end of the, you had like a 2 inch pipe - that blower's hooked up to that. And you had your diesel with fold in and you pour the diesel underneath the blowers.

D: Hmmhmm.

P: And that boiler would be diesel.

D: They had to haul the diesel out.

P: Yeah, you had to haul all the diesel in your boats. In drums . Haul all that diesel in drums. You used a lot of diesel – you had to load up your boat with drums.

D: Fifty gallon?

P: Yeah. Fifty gallon drums.

D: Okay.

P: And when uh, when we that – if you can't see the wharf – that picture shows it. We that on the wharf. Had a big wharf on the bayou side. And we put them drums on the side of the wharf. And then you need the diesel, just put in your tank – they had a special tank for the boiler to – for the boiler.

B: Now you set your own boats to get the diesel or did they...

P: Yeah.

B: Did the wholesaler just send...

P: No, we had to bring our own diesel. We had our boats, with like um, pictures of boats and...on the bottom – that bottom one? That was my boat. That last little picture on the bottom.

D: On the right?

P: Yeah.

D: Mmhmm.

D: Alright.

P: And we'd load that with diesel - in fact my daddy had a little boat too.

D: Now how did you get your dried shrimp product to market? I mean you dried it, you have put it in a ..

P: We put them in those burlap bags. In those days, they come out with this later, but uh, at the beginning it was some coffee bags. Burlap coffee bags. That uh, pick that up in New Orleans up there. And that's what we'd put our shrimp in. And then we bring that to uh, Hoy and Hung on St. Louis St.

D: Now you took it there? Or they came and pick it up?

P: No they had a truck – Mr. Stringer. Mr. Stringer had a truck and he'd pick it up and bring it over there.

B: Now he had a platform too didn't he? The Stringers?

P: The stringers had a platform uh, when they was young. But when they uh, he got out of the business, he started hauling shrimp. For Hoy.

D: And how long did you work with the people on St. Louis street?

P: On St. Louis Street? Until I built over here - until I started in '53 and uh, we built here in uh, '80. 1980

D: 27 years.

P: Yep.

D: So it was a good relationship.

P: Oh yeah. In other words, when the old man when they was uh, in business, I'd go over there and they'd tell me what the price of the shrimp was, and how much we would pay the trawlers, and then the shrimp every once in a while, the shrimp would go down. Until one year I told the old man I told Mr. Stringer they wanted some shrimp bad. It was in September. I said look, I said I cannot go dry shrimp and bring it in and lose money every time I bring it in. We gonna need some insurance on this. He said I tell you what. We're gonna go see Hoy – I want you to come and see Hoy. And talk to him. I said okay. I went over the and I told him I said look I said I need to have some insurance when I go down there and dry you some shrimp. Or I'm not gonna dry no shrimp. He say well he said, uh, what you - how much

shrimp your platform can hold? And then I told him. But I said it's not how much it can hold. Because sometimes we dry them, but it's not dry enough to beat them, so we put them in sacks and put them in camps, and when the weather's good we put them back out and beat them. He said well I tell you what. He said uh, how soon can you find out when the shrimp price goes down? I said three days. Two, three days. I said I've gotta radio at my house can my wife can tell me through the radio. He said well, well I'll tell you what. We make a deal on five thousand pounds. When you leave them, this is the price. And he said, whatever you have over five thousand pounds, he said, I'm gonna pay the price up to five thousand pounds. And if they price goes down, what you got after, he said, it's gonna be yours. Well I said, I've been I can find out by that time I get five thousand pounds at that price, I'll know if the shrimp went down. He said, okay. He said well we'll make a deal like that. And Stringer was there, listening. And they uh, Mr. Hoy and Mr. Hung had (inaudible) that day. Mr. Stringer said, um, look Hoy. If they tell you something, I'm gonna put the price of shrimp at one price in my truck. And if I got two - some other shrimp that I'm picking up on the bayou that went down, there's gonna be two different prices on that shrimp. You gotta realize that you're making a deal with this man. And I'm gonna pay this man. Up to five thousand pounds. He said, okay. We're gonna do it like that. I said, I'm gonna dry some shrimp, and that's the only way I'm gonna dry them. The thing of keep on losing money I can't keep on losing money. So, we went when we came in Dulac, uh, Bob had took over and he wanted in that new place. So uh, he called me up, and the Stringer had died, and his son took over. And when he came there I had a bunch of dried shrimp. And I told him I gotta get this price. He said well, he said, you're gonna have to talk to Bob about it. I called Bob called and he said, I can't pay those prices. If I buy them in Grand Isle it's cheaper than that. I said Bob, let me tell you one thing. Grand Isle's gotta price. I've got 17 shrimp buyers on this - in Dulac. And I've gotta meet the price of those 17 shrimp buyers. Or I'm out of business. Oh he said, we can get it cheaper than that in Grand Isle. I said I can't sell it to you for that price. I said just like I'm talking to you on this telephone, I'll never forget that - it cost me 8 dollars that telephone cost. I said just like I'm talking to you on that telephone, I can talk to New York and I can talk to California - where that shrimp is going at. Oh, he said uh, I hope you don't feel like that. He said I said Bob, I'm out of business! If I gotta take the price that you're gonna give me, I'm out of business! I've gotta cut the price at the boat - I can't buy new shrimp. Seventeen shrimp buyers over here. They're gonna buy the shrimp. Or I'm gonna sit here and not buy no shrimp. Well they said we can't pay the price. I said, okay. So uh, Bobby Joe some of their - I would bring them my baby shrimp to Semanie Packing. And uh, they got two Chinese that came to buy peeled shrimp. And Bobby Joe called me he said, you still got that dried shrimp? I said yeah I still got it. How you gotta - how much you gotta get for it? I said I gotta get four dollars a pound for it. Chinese came he said you got time to come eat dinner over here? I said yeah. He said come eat dinner. I went over there, and the Chinese asked me he said, how long you think you can have that packed - shrimp shipped to New York? So I told him, about a week, I can have it all packed - hire a bunch of ladies and I got a building at the house that they could pack it in. So uh, we packed it, and we sent that over there. I can never forget that. 70 thousand dollars worth of shrimp. I sent them over there. And then uh, I started shipping to New York over there. And then uh, it got to where the shrimp got too small, and they didn't want the shrimp that was too small - and then after that I just started selling elsewhere, all over - whoever called me on the phone that needed a case of shrimp or two cases - this many pounds - I just send it by UPS or by freight line. I started shipping my

shrimp myself. And uh, Hoy they didn't want to meet the price, so I had to give up. I had to go and sell it so I can stay in business. That's the only way I could stay in Business. And I stayed in business.

D: Well I was in Chinatown in New York this year. Louisiana shrimp selling for 29 dollars a pound.

P: 29.

D: I was in California this year; Louisiana shrimp selling for 22 dollars a pound. So, when you look at this photograph and this is the modern means of packaging. It's not a coffeebag. How much shrimp could you put in a bag?

P: That – you put a hundred pounds. Hundred, hundred 20 pounds.

D: Alright. Now this is a photograph where we're actually looking at the boiler. How does that work? I mean what's the step? We bring shrimp to your platform. What do you do to make it a product?

P: We uh, we boil them, we wash them down, after they're washed, we boil them, and after they uh...

D: And you boil them in fresh water or salt water or...

P: Well no. we uh, boil them with city water. We got city water.

D: Okay.

P: Uh, now. When they'd to in the gulf, it was sea water. And on the gulf it was sea water. Now up here it's uh, city water.

D : Okay. And how many pounds could you boil in one of these big...

P: We put uh, 800 pounds.

D: Wow.

P: You saw them boxes? Them blue boxes?

D: Yes.

P: The ones like when they was crossing the road with them...

D: Yes.

P: Yeah, eight uh, eight boxes to the batch.

D: So each box is 100 pounds?

P: 100 pounds.

D: Heads on?

P: Heads on. 800 pounds to the batch. We put four sacks of salt – four sacks of salt to start.

B: This is sea salt? Or rock salt?

P: No that's uh, that's a fine salt. Table salt. That's table salt.

D: You buy that locally?

P: No, we got that, we buy that from uh, Texas.

B: Hmm

P: There – we got a company that bring that from Texas.

D: You know if the shrimp drying industry was ever in Texas?

P: Not that I know of.

D: Okay. So we finish boiling, we boil 800 pounds. Then what do you do with the shrimp?

P: After we boil 800 pounds we dump it in our dryers.

D: Now before the dryers. You put it in a wheel barrel and...

P: Oh yeah we put them in the wheel barrel. We put it in the wheel barrel and they go and they dump them in the dryer.

D: And before that you would put them outside like this.

P: Like this. We just wheel barrel them out and dump them on the platform.

D: And how many...

And you see there you have to have a top holding on there– which we have in those pictures over there you can see them. You got a tarp over them – at night you had to pile that up and then put a tarp over them, and underneath and when you had bad weather, to stop the – because once they're on the in the sun, and uh, if they're wet, you can go overboard with them. You can't save them after.

B: Okay. We talked about the tarp holding. That's when you have...those spikes in the middle?

P: Yeah.

B: The...

P: Yeah that's the – in other words, you put your shrimp you put your shrimp underneath there, and your tarp holding would fit this way and you have some rings all along the side, and you have some rope on that top pole and you tie that where it would stay like – you keep peeling there.

D: Hmm. How many shrimp could you put on your platform?

P: On the platform we can put like 200 boxes.

D: 200 - that's 2000 pounds.

P: No that would be more than that. 2000 pounds that would be -

D: Yeah that's

P: 200 times 100. 20,000 pounds.

D: Twenty thousand pounds. Ten tons. That's a lot of shrimp.

P: Yep. But that was easy to dry them

D: It was easy?

P: Hmm.

D: Now...

P: That was just one day's work.

D : One day's work?

P: Yeah. It was easy to have 200 tubs at one time. In one day.

B: Now is that because of the breezes out there that help dry it?

P: No it's uh, the best time to dry shrimp is in the winter with the wind – the north wind. But in summer it's so hot. I mean the temperature will get so hot that it dries up. It takes in the summer a day and a half, then you put them in your beater.

D: So you could

P: But now, in eight hours you put them in your beater. That's the difference.

D : Wow.

P: From a day and a half to eight hours.

D: So let me get this right. In a day and a half you could, running at maximum capacity, dry 10 tons of shrimp.

P: Mmhmm.

D: And there were at least thirty platforms that you mentioned.

P: Oh yeah they had plenty of them.

D: So with each platform be – operating similar?

P: Yeah. Oh yeah. Because they had some boats on that water - there and I mean they had some uh, it was a lot of dried shrimp.

D: Yes!

P: A lot of dried shrimp.

D: Yes.

B: Let me ask you Mr. Norris. How much of the shrimp being taken in the gulf was dried?

P: How much?

B: Yeah I mean do you have any idea? Ten percent? A quarter?

P: In those days almost everything. Uh, then they came out the packing - the canning plant was using the small shrimp, but that went down too a few years back. Uh, they stopped uh, canning. They started with the uh, the peeled shrimp and everything – everybody was peeling and dry- I mean uh, peeling and packing frozen.

B: About how when did that change take place?

P: Uh, uh I wouldn't know exactly how...well in - when we was in Dulac, in 1974, I think the canning plant was going down pretty fast in that time. Because they uh, I don't believe they got any more canning – they might have one or two canning plants left. Besides that like we do over here – peel them and freeze them in 5 pound boxes. That's our brand right there. We peel and freeze them in 5 pound boxes.

D: Is that the same with the Indian Ridge?

P: Yep.

D: Same way?

P: Indian Ridge. That went down still open but they're bankrupt and some company from California bought that.

D: Now one of the things we're fascinated with are the cans that were used in the canning process.

P: That's what I was – yes.

D: Do you have one of those cans?

P: No. we never did that.

D: They're hard to find.,

We never did it. The only place that maybe – maybe Calvin Authement's place – which is high seas now. Because he bought his uncle – it was his uncle that had that. Calvin. And uh, Raymond bought the place. They might have some cans left over in some of them sheds.

D: At high seas.

P: At high seas.

D: Okay.

P: That would be the only place that I think that you could maybe see them cans. Or they had a company out in New Orleans that was still canning. I think it was (Rury?) Canning Company. I think it was named that. I think they had one canning – still had one canning out in New Orleans if I could remember.

D: Okay. Now explain what's happening here. This is your son...

P: Yep. He's taking it off of the uh, out of the beaters. And put hem in bags to put them on the side and ready to sell them.

D: And what did you do with the shrimp hulls?

P: Shrimp hulls? Blum picks it up – he came to pick up a load this morning.

D: Mmhmm.

P: When that truck - was I don't know if it was still there when ya'll came –

D: I don't know. I don't remember, no.

P: They came and load up uh, in about

D: So did he picks up the dust.

P: Yeah.

D: But you market the shrimp.

P: I market the shrimp.

D: Alright. Now one of the things we found – Carl and I have been doing this for about four years. And one of the things we found is there's a lot of dried shrimp that went to Chinatowns – San Francisco, New York, some went to Hawaii; we know some went to Singapore, we're pretty sure some went to central America to Brazil, um, Nicaragua, we know some went to Germany, does that sound right?

P: Could be.

D: Okay. Alright.

P: Because uh, I send some to Hawaii through a company out of California. They wanted it packed in a one pound bag, and they send it to Hawaii.

D: Mmhmm.

P: I don't remember which company it was out of Hawaii but the company which was a company out of California. It was a company like uh, I can't remember the name of the company right off hand because that was about ten, fifteen years ago. And uh, it was a company like Wal-Mart. Big company.

D: Hmm. Alright now we're still taking it out of the beaters, this is the dried shrimp, now we're - we're cleaning up. I don't know the young man here.

P: He had a couple young men from up here from up the bayou I don't remember which one it was. They grow so fast now that the...

D: alright. Here's the platform. We have the tarps, you said that there were places there that you could tie off the tarps?

P: Yeah right on the edge right here.

D: Alright.

P: On the side right here.

D: Okay.

P: With maybe some rope - some rings right here.

D: Alright. And you built that?

P: Yeah.

D: Hmm. Now, when you look at the ones in the gulf, you know it, at Lake Barre, or South Terrebonne, Cocodrie, all of the lumber had to come by boat.

P: Oh yeah.

D: Do you remember any stories about that?

P: Just load your boat with your lumber and you go and you build your platform wherever you wanted to build it.

B: Did they pile up the lumber in Houma you believe?

P: I bought mine in uh, in Raceland. Raceland uh...

You went to a mill out there?

P: Yeah. That's where I buy it.

B: Okay.

D: Robichaux?

P: Robichaux Lumber.

D: Okay. Uh huh. All cypress.?

P: All cypress. Oh yeah, all cypress. No pine, no nothing. The only thing - the only pine they had it's like that trough that you saw them shoveling - that was the only pine they had. And that might have been cypress too because we buy cypress. But it's all cypress.

D: Hmm. Now, remembering in the past all this was done by hand..

P: Yep.

D: How do you think it took them to build a platform not with road access. I mean in the marsh.

P: In the marsh.

D: Yeah. How long do you think it took them to build?

P: Uh, I wouldn't remember. It took a good while for sure.

D: Okay

P: Because we uh, the storm broke us up.

D: Which storm? Betsy?

P: No, this - it was uh,

B: '56 storm?

P: It was before Betsy. We came in '74. That was in '74 when we came to Dulac.

D: Huh.

P: But we uh, Hilda. Hilda had cleaned up completely. Only one old camp they had left.. That old camp that's on the side you can see it like that. That's the only camp that was left. On the 200 foot square platform. I don't remember which uh, which month it was when that storm hit...

B: Well it was September

P: Well we had - we went back - we got some lumber, and uh, the fellows at the shipyard down the bayou told me that he could build me a beater with steel. The one I got in the back. That's the same picture that you - what you got on the picture. Well, he could build it if I wanted to build my platform back, that he could build me that beater. He said, I can build you your beater. The only thing is you'll have to send some man to put your screen on the where you put your screen on. I said that's not

problem if you wanna do that I'm gonna build the platform. So he started building the beater by the time the winter wasn't over. And we had about half the platform made already. That we could start working. And that was in September, October. In November we was working. By November we was working. That was starting from scratch. We didn't have nothing left. But I had a young bunch of young boys – jump in there and keep on going.

D: Now did you work a platform year round?

P: No.

D: Okay.

P: We'd work that we'd work that in May. And then uh, after the storm season. Like October we'd start October first to Christmastime. Then that would start – we went in January. Sometime in January – but by that time the shrimp season was – everything was almost finished. So we'd shut down.

D: So you would dry if you could get them - white shrimp, brown shrimp, and sea bob?

P: Yeah.

D: Okay. Alright.

P: Yep.

D: What are these wooden boxes used for?

P: That's what we used to use to put the shrimp in.

D: Okay.

P: You see now what we used now we use them uh, plastic boxes. But in those days it was all wooden boxes.

D: Now did you...

P: Changed from wooden to plastic.

D: Did you make those of did you...

P: No you had to buy them already made. They had companies selling that. We'd buy -The last one I bought was through a Nola Box in New Orleans. Nola Boxes in New Orleans. They use that for crabs too. Sometimes they call it crab boxes, but you use that for crab and you use that for shrimp.

D: Alright. So, you had a camp next to your platform.

P: Mmhmm

D: Alright. Would you say that when you're talking about Lake Barre and (inaudible) bayou and Oyster Bayou and other places that – Bayou Dulac...

P: Yeah

D: And Lake (inaudible), all of those places - did people live on a platform year round?

P: I wouldn't say year round. Uh, on the seasons. They might have people that would live year round. When some of those platforms. I don't know. But we wouldn't live year round.

B: Okay.

P: We'd make our shrimp season and then we'd come back home.

B: Well when you go out -

P: But they had camps, you see, them platforms had seven, eight camps around there. This platform here had seven or eight camps around that. And people would live in their camps. Their whole family. You take when the shrimp season – when the school would uh, close, I'd bring my whole family. And then the vacation, like they'd have some vacation around Christmastime, around Thanksgiving, you know, I'd pick up my family and bring them down.

B: Normally, how many people are we talking about? When you move out there do you go down with just some workers?

P: Yeah

B: About how many people are we talking about?

P: About four, five of them.

B: Okay. And you so you have at least four, five people there in the season.

P: Yeah.

D: Well in the seven camps how many people would there be?

P: Well I wouldn't know exactly how many – depends on what kind of family they had.

D: At least four.

P: Yeah. At least.

D: Right that'd be 28. So 30 plus your workers, you can easily have 35 people close to the...

P: Yep.

D: Alright.

P: Yep.

D: Now the people that lived in the camps – did they shrimp? The shrimp season and then go and trap?

P: Most of them would – but you see in the winter season, in the winter season the uh, I was a trapper. In other words, when I quit trapping, that's when I started um, on the platform. But you see, your winter season for shrimping is the same time as trapping.

D: Mmhmm

P: So you either have to do one or the other. Because when I when I went trapping the last two years we trapped, we trapped at Point au Faire over there. And that was when you was trapping. Well that was there - we'd come for Christmas. We'd go there in November, and we'd come back - at the beginning of November, I think it was – when the trapping season would open. And we'd come back Christmas, couple days around Christmas and then we'd go back after Christmas until the trapping season was over. And we would stay there with our families.

D: For the whole trapping season?

P: The whole trapping season.

D: Now was that a lease? Were you trapping on a lease?

P: Yeah, that was a lease.

D: For (LL and E?) a school section?

P: A school section.

D: Mmhmm.

P: School section of Point au Faire.

D: That's a lot of shrimp.

P: Oh, we had some shrimp. I've seen a lot of shrimp in my – haha. I'd like to see them all in the pile what I went through, and see what kind of pile we'd have.

(Laughter)

D: Lot of shrimp.

P: Yep.

D: Now when did you establish the Ocean Blue label for your own (inaudible?)

P: 1982. We built the place over here in 1980. And then in 82 we started peeling. In other words, in 1980 uh, main stage was running this and Junior was running Dulac. And then we sold that to who was gonna

put the peeling machines and Junior, I said Junior, we gonna bring everything we got in Dulac and we gonna bring that all the way here. To where we have everything together. What we want to dry we dry, and what we want to peel, we peel.

D: So you have mechanical peelers...

P: Oh yeah, them uh, electric machines.

D: Hmm. And then you hand pack?

P: Yeah.

B: Now, you ship to Canada?

P: We used to ship to Canada. A lot to Canada but we don't ship them no more. When we first started, we had a – you see well even the brokers got out of that. Take Tommy (Bush?). Tommy Bush was our broker out of New Orleans. And uh, he went out. After a storm I called him after the storm, and uh, he was out of business.

D: Hmm.

(phone ringing)

P: I thought they were gonna pick it up in the back. Hello? Senior? This is he. Okay, and you? Mmhmm. What this is all about? No, thank you. We don't need it. Thank you. Bye bye.

Don't need the (inaudible).

(laughter)

D: Now, the wheel barrels you used, were those hand made?

P: Yeah. We make that.

D: You made them here?

P: Mmhmm.

D: Did you have a, a template or something or you just figured it out?

P: Figured it out in our head. You see it's how it's made this way? With an angle on it? What you do there. You put all your weight on there. The weight is on the wheel. The wheel would take the weight.

D: Those are boxes.

P: Yep.

(phone ringing)

P: Hello? Yeah. Okay go ahead. Okay. Bye.

D: Now, what was the brand used for? The shrimp dust? I heard you mentioned...

P: Uh, they make fertilizer out of there, and they mix that in uh, with some other stuff to, to feed hogs and things like that.

D: Alright. But I think you mentioned fish food.

P: Fish food, yeah.

D: Okay.

P: They make fish food.

D: Alright. Here's one of the coffee sacks.

P: Yep.

D: And there's one of the wheel barrels.

P: Yeah.

D: Alright. Now what we'd like to do is give you these pictures, alright? But we've gotta burn a disk – unless you gotta computer we can download it to. So we're gonna do that tonight – and we're gonna leave them for you tomorrow.

P: Okay.

D: Because these are, I took them in about 1978 or 9.

P: Junior would've liked to see that. Haha

D: You're gonna have them to be able to show them to him. In fact we're gonna...

B: What you're gonna do is you just take the disk to Wal-mart or some place and they'll print them.

D: But it uh, we thought you'd like those.

B: How's the industry doing after the storms the last few years?

P: Uh, it's gone down and down. There's hardly no more (inaudible) trawling. You take over here I had a few big boats. And uh, they all tied up. The fuel went up to four dollars a gallon. When the fuel went up to four dollars a gallon, they started tying up the boats. They couldn't make it. And uh, I got...

(phone ringing)

P: I got two big, big steel hulls tied up. They all rotting up. Nobody's moving them. They went on jobs, and they just uh, stayed on jobs. Hello? Yeah. Yep. Uh, what size you looking for? We got 12 dollars a

pound, on the small – yeah. Uh, twelve fifty. Twelve fifty. Yeah. Uh, thirteen fifty. Uh, fifteen fifty. Okay. Uh, that's the way they came. Haha. Everything's getting small now. Well, they was making the count when we dried them. Yeah. Okay? Give me your phone number and I'll have my son call you later. Okay? Yeah. 985-892-0578. Okay. Okay – I'll take care of this soon? Nope. 985 – 892-0578. Okay? My son's gonna call you later. Yeah. Okay? Thank you. Bye Bye.

D: Recognize the person?

P: They didn't say.

D: Haha. That was a while ago. While I was teaching at Nicholls, and you all let me take some photographs . So we're gonna – we're gonna download these, and...

B: We gonna burn them on to a disk, and drop them off to ya'll tomorrow.

D: But you can see...

B: What we're trying to do today is just record the history of the industry and your family's participation

P: alright.

P: Who's with you?

Unidentified person: I don't know I had Teddy..

P: You had Teddy and uh..

U: Harry.

Man you had a bunch of little Lehrets right here.

U: Timmy

P: You had Timmy at one time.

U: Yeah, I think so.

Him and Teddy.

I can't see good enough to piece it out? Like you said teddy was – when he crashed –

P: he ran through the trees in the –

U: Yeah that's gotta be him because that's the only one that uh...the only uh...that looks like Barry over there. That's some good pictures.

B: I have here - what grade?

(laughter)

D: Now it just sort of polished. I don't want to watch.

Haha

P: Yes.

D: Why don't you sit here. They're bringing lunch.

B: Yeah well we're going get out of your hair...

D: We'll get out of your hair.