

## Clifford Smith Interview

Interviewers: Don Davis, Carl Brasseaux, Roy Kron

Joann Smith: two hundred people are 'round here in this area you could do something about. We - last summer, uh, well past several summers, our son and uh, and his family comes down from Manhattan and they'll bring, uh, one of their nannies with them. Just so happens she's from. You know, Donna?

S: Dionne.

Joanne: Dionne.

S: Not Donna.

Dionne: But she says she loves Grand Isle because she says it's like where she grew up. So we have cast nets. She'll – oh she was in hog heaven going out there and throwing a cast net. Well the kids wanted to throw one but it's too big. So he called this guy that works for us. Who happens to be from uh, Dulac.

S: Dulac.

Dionne: And uh, I need - I want a two foot. So the dad says he comes and they said no. Then the two foot one wasn't quite big enough. They needed three foot ones. So two more days, it - somebody down there makes them. I mean you know, when you just see, uh..

S: Well if you get on the back on the shrimp boat – a double rig, say 65 or 75 foot shrimp boat, offshore shrimp boat, you get on the back on those shrimp boats and go out in the gulf and watch those people operate that shrimp boat. This guy probably didn't finish high school but to run that the back – to run a shrimp boat – try dragging two 60 foot trawls, (inaudible), boards and all the wenches - I mean it's a miracle you don't get killed. And it's rocking and rolling. I mean – and they doing it 24 hours a day.

D: That's what –That's what this project's all about.

D: Roy is Communication Director at Sea Grant. We refer to Carl as in his senior year of employment at ULL. But we both are cut out of the same depression or family molds. We don't know how to stop working. And you know, Clifford we've known each other a long time, and there are stories that we need to capture. And we're very glad that both of – the females are here because we really know who runs the family...

(laughter)

D: But that story – those stories are not told. Do you know of the Corines's in Patterson?

J: No, uh uh.

They built the first Menhaden vessels.

S: Okay.

D: And they rented the first Menhaden vessels. Well, Carl and I, just by mere accident, we started chatting, and the daughters got involved. Now you can appreciate this, now. And understand this. They may be Portuguese, but they've got some Portuguese in them. So we go and there were like nine people that want to make sure we're saying the right things. It was a wonderful interview! A wonderful interview – now what we'd like to do, Clifford, today, is you have some witness trees here that you may be the only person ever who has one. Talk about that. The shrimp business, the oyster business – I have run across a reference to the Clifford Smith Lumber Company – it may have been TB –

S: TB.

Woman: CP smith.

D: Yeah. Lumber company.

D: I've run across Oyster people like the (Gescrimpski's?).

J: (Gescrimpski's?) yeah...

D: Henderson – I've never heard of. The Sinac Company. So there were oyster houses lined up and you're gonna remember stories that's gonna correct these stories. So please just let us know, and this is a family discussion at dinner – Maw Maw just hasn't cooked it yet.

B: But also the fact – Houma's role in the oil industry, you know, and the trawlers – you have to understand a lot of the changes that are taking place in this part of Louisiana. And Houma's usually forgotten – big place.

S: Yeah we uh, we have that problem. I just related that Greg Limskin, who is retired from Louisiana Wildlife and Fisheries, who was a very good client of ours, and we were just reminiscing about a project on the Atchafalaya River how they treat us like we – we orphans or something, and we don't even exist, you know. That's very good. Why don't you go get – and let me go get – wait just one minute?

D: Sure.

S: Get the book that I kind of put together for my father.

D: Now I don't remember your family surname.

J: I was uh, a Toups.

D: Okay.

J: Toups. I grew up - I was born on the Bayou Du Large, my mother was a Henry from Bayou Du Large, I was born on Bayou Du Large – we lived in Galliano. My dad worked for Texaco, my mother taught school.

S: You mind if I give you a copy of what we do?

D: Oh sure.

S: Because uh,

J: And um, we are literally between his family and mine. You can't throw a stick, and he don't hit a relative. My father was one of thirteen – only nine lived. My mother was one of eight. We are related – I am – Toups, Demoinés, LeBlancs. (Inaudible) on both sides – on my mother's side and on my father's side. Guidry's. I mean...

S: One of those – you talking about those Henry's. She is as we can, as near as we can tell, she is the oldest member of the family that was from the Acadians.

W: That came to the...

S: Everybody else – the Toups and my grandmother was a DuPont – A.M and J.C. DuPont. The story of A. M. and J. C. DuPont – my mother was – my grandmother was a lady named Clara DuPont. And her mother was – her mother and father were Jeanne Marie DuPont. And Jeanne Marie DuPont was the parents of A. M. and J. C. DuPont. Clara Smith, and (inaudible) was her sister. They were of - the DuPont's that immigrated, as far as I can tell, from France um, Bardot – Bardot area of France to New Orleans to South Louisiana – probably in the 1840s. Interesting was – I don't know where we're gonna start this, but uh, interesting that uh, that my case – In my case, my father was T. Thomas Baker Smith. And he was born in Terrebonne parish in about 1895 I think. And my mother was Wright, W-R-I-G-H-T, and she was born in Terrebonne parish about, I don't know, about 1910. And both of them were born and raised - the point is that both of them were born and raised in Terrebonne parish and had basically English names which had to be extremely unusual in those days. Also very unusual - my grandmother Smith insisted that my father go to college. And so he finished at Tulane in 1913 in civil engineering. And to get to college, there was a – there was no high school in Terrebonne parish, so she sent my father to a bunch of prep schools around the South. And he had some first cousins – the DuPonts, and they were relatively affluent people – so there were a bunch of cousins, and my daddy went to these prep schools and got their butts run out of every prep school in the South. As near as I can tell. He ended up at Chamberlain High in Port Gibson Mississippi. That's where he got a high school degree from - and she insisted that he go to school – at the time, she insisted that he go to Tulane in New Orleans – closest place. And so he started it in 1908, as near as I can figure, and graduated in 1913 in civil engineering. Happened to graduate the same day as Senator Allen Ellender – graduated in Law. Difference was because Ellender was from Montegut, and my father was from Houma, and they were friends – they were lifelong friends. It's really and that's kind of interesting that they finished the same day. Um...

D: You know as a civil engineering firm with roots that go back to the early part of the 1900s, that really predates asphalt.

S: It does.

D: It really predates what we know as asphalt. So your company played a role in providing important transportation – quick transportation. Can you comment a little bit about how you were getting from A to B...

S: Well, again interesting again – my father finished at Tulane in 1913 and he came back to Houma and began to practice civil engineering and land surveying. Now land surveying was the most unusual in Coastal Louisiana, because again, when you talk about the Louisiana Purchase, that we just celebrated what, the 250 year anniversary of? Most of the habitable land in Terrebonne parish were already in private ownership. And they were in private ownership because of French and Spanish grants. So when you talk about all the millions of acres that was in the Louisiana Purchase, most of the habitable land, as near as I can tell, particularly in Terrebonne, frankly, across Louisiana was already owned by somebody. So only the land in the Louisiana Purchase in Louisiana was basically what we consider to be the wastelands, which was the wetlands – the swamp and the marshes. The property titles prior to the United States getting involved in Louisiana - Louisiana coming in to the United States, the titles of all these properties were based upon French and Spanish grants, and they were maps prepared when somebody would befriend a king or something, or the king would befriend somebody, they would give him a piece of property that is now the city of Houma. And somebody would draw a little map and say this is Bayou Terrebonne, and we giving you all this land from this point in the bayou to this point, and it was a map. And a description written in French or Spanish. Okay? So when the federal government got involved, the United States government, through the Louisiana purchase, they purchased the land that nobody was giving away, which was the wasteland – the land that people couldn't live on and make a living on. So then the U.S. Government said well we gotta go survey Louisiana. And we gotta – we gonna survey Louisiana based upon the rectangular principles of surveying. We're gonna have - every township is gonna have 36 uh, sections in it. Every section is gonna be a mile in square. Okay? Well that's great you do that out in Arizona and uh, New Mexico and you end up with a nice little map, and everything is square and everything you like. Well in Louisiana you can't do that because inside those, you have these grants, so the U.S. surveyor in the 1830s to the 1850s his requirement was to, to adjudicate – not adjudicate – to locate the grants and then to divide the properties around the grants into townships and ranges, okay? So that became uh, and they were paying those poor surveyors – this is from 1830 say to 1850 generally in South Louisiana – they were paying these guys by the mile. And they were working around on horses, okay? And they would sail up and down the bayous on sailboats. Okay? So there was a lot of fraudulent surveyors, to tell you the truth, and accepted. They didn't necessarily match the ground. Well my father and all the titles - frankly all the titles in Terrebonne parish came from those surveys, which came from some of the grants prior to that – it was like putting a jigsaw together. Well my father comes along in the early 1900s, and among other things in civil engineering, you taught land surveying. Okay? So he began to do land surveying work. Besides civil work and you just about know what that's about. And he uh, became somewhat of a – not somewhat, he became an expert in the reconstruction U.S. Government surveys, basically from the Atchafalaya River to the Mississippi River. Uh, pretty much south of the U.S. 90 generally. Across the state. And nobody really – that wasn't a big deal, okay? And he was doing this work, he was doing this work for people who owned the land, for people who were trying to grow crops on the land, he was doing this work for people who owned the marshes – and the marshes by this time had been sold in the swamps had been sold to speculators in

the East Coast, and the only way they could make money off of this property was either with oyster leases or fur at the time, was a big deal. So he began to do some surveys on some of these properties which were very – they had hiatus's in the US Government surveys, some of the U.S. government surveys were actually fraudulent, and even though title s were passed on them.

B: Well, let me stop you at that point and ask you a technical question, Clifford, and it deals with these artifacts over here. When the American (inaudible) Commission was established after the Louisiana purchase to provide proof of ownership of all the surveys were done, um...

S: We call them the US Government surveys.

B: Right. Well I – the surveyors used witness trees because uh, in Louisiana everybody knows there were no rocks or boulders or natural landmarks, permanent landmarks, and so the problem was that after generations or even less with hurricanes coming through, with floods coming through, and even with the natural growth of the trees rings on the trees that have been marked as witness trees, these former boundary markers were gone or covered up. So how did he deal with this...

S: Okay. He - again remember he was in the vicinity from about 1913 till he died in 1962. He – and he became an expert at it to where he became an expert at it, was at first off, he would go and seek out the U.S. Government survey plaques. And the U.S. government survey notes which are pretty difficult to read, very frankly. Uh, very technical. Uh, he would also look at the French and Spanish grants and review the French and Spanish grants – which most of them of course, we have them in this office, but they were recorded pretty much in the State Archives –the State Land Office. Uh, he uh, studied the process that the old surveyors used and of course he was taught surveying at the time in 1913 - finished when he got out of school, the normal surveying instruments was a transit. Okay, by this time. But when the U.S. Government surveyed, they didn't have transits. They used compasses. And they used old - what we call really the chain which was a linked chain. He went and got a linked chain, he went and got a compass. And he would read the notes and the surveyor would say okay I'm using my compass and this is the delineation on the compass. Based upon the, the uh, what is it? Gravity pull at that time. He would go back and research the delineation, he would take the instrument that he thought they were using, he would use the chain that he thought they were using, he would make a recount survey of an area where he thought was either on a grant line, or a section line. Okay? He would also pick up the possession because remember a lot of the properties were acquired by some map that somebody drew in France or Spain, and not necessarily got on the ground and surveyed. Yet people bought land and possessed based upon what they thought was the survey. Okay? And nobody really wanted to pay anybody to do a survey – land wasn't – you know the land was only something to grow some thing to eat on. So crazy we forgot that. I mean that's why they cleared all this land – was to grow things for people needed. Okay? So anyhow, he would go back and do a – then he would also do – and you can't say investigation of the titles, and he and uh, a Mr. Lovell who was an old surveyor – really in the Thibodaux area, would do what they would call a title, um, research of an area to attempt to develop the titles particularly along the bayous. Not only get the grants, not only get the U.S. Government surveys, but then try to piece the titles as people had bought one off and bought that - and so forth and so on, down. And so he had up with charts and we have them here – I call them title charts and let's say

of a section. In fact, there's a lawsuit that somebody's calling me about right now. Where he was in the area the 1920s and he laid out the section as he saw it. And he found certain government corners etc, but he also laid out the titles of the property, and then the possession – because many cases, the possession was different from the title. Okay? Particularly along the bayous. You know, a guy bought - offered a property - conduct to survey. Which might be forty (inaudible) deep – which is what uh, 4000 5000 feet deep. The only good land was along the bayou. Nobody gave a damn about the stuff in the back until they discovered oil. Well the guy would possess the property on the bayou, without the benefit of the survey, and he would not only possess it perpendicular to the bayou wherever it is, okay? Hey man, and the section may not have been that way. Okay? So there was all kinds of screw ups. Um, my father gave us a little - title was important, reconstruction of the government surveys were important, reconstruction of the grants, if that was possible, was important. The way he saw to do it was to look at all the information you had including title information, including survey information, and including physical evidence on the ground. Now, you make a good point. A lot of the government corners were put out as cypress posts. In this area particular. No rocks like anywhere else in the United States and he would uh, he would then do recount surveys based upon all of his research, okay? And if he found a section corner, that was great. But also in the surveys, many of the traverses of the natural features which is bayous, were , and ridges, were in the survey. So besides the manmade monuments that were put on the ground, the actual physical monuments were recorded within the survey maps and actually recorded in the survey notes, so of course the manmade , excuse me, the natural monuments such as bayous and ridges and etcetera like that, were very important in the reconstruction. But in getting into how he knew to determine where a section corner is, okay? If you go out there and you do a recount survey and you think you at the northeast corner of section 77 of township 17 range 18, but you ain't got nothing that's gonna say nothing. Okay? Well you read the notes. And the notes say, well I got to this point, I was so many miles, so many feet from Bayou Terrebonne, so many feet in a curve in Bayou Terrebonne, I think I'm where I'm supposed to be, something gives him some idea – somebody's possessing in section 77, somebody owns a title in 78, there's a line there, well maybe that's the section line. Okay? Right now, in the middle of the swamp, there ain't no corner. Cypress stakes set in 18 say 40. Okay? And he's romping around in 1920. Okay? So he looks in the notes and most of the section corners – the good surveyors would of course reference them, and the good surveyors – the records were legit! I mean some of these, some of these notes were totally fraudulent. Some of these notes were survey notes were made up in a barroom somewhere, and turned into the supervisor and got paid so much a mile, okay? But some of them were not. Some of them hadn't – and he got to know, he got to really one of the greater surveyors in the area in the 1850s was a guy named Galinsky. And another problem in this area was that there were some surveys made in the 1830s that were fraudulent. Somebody proved they were fraudulent between 1830 and 1850s, and so the government sent somebody down to do a resurvey of a township. So you had to know original survey, you had to know if there was a resurvey of a township, and I mean it was like, it was like history - it was like putting a jigsaw together. He's out in the middle of the swamp. I believe I'm – four thousand feet from the bayou, I believe this is where I'm supposed to be, and all that stuff. But he don't see that. So look in the notes and the note says North, 66 degrees West - there was a 12 inch cypress tree that I blazed the tree. And that's a witness tree. And over here to the East, there was another 8 inch cypress tree, and I blazed that. This is in the notes that over here, and generally they did four. A good surveyor would do four witness trees. I'm gonna go over

there and say well yeah, here's a cypress tree and it ain't eight inches anymore. It's twelve inches. Well this can be the tree. So you start chopping into the tree – to try and get where he thought he was. Well what happened his they would stencil the tree. In the 1840s, they made it a witness tree and they had stencils. And they would stencil it into the tree. And they had it in the notes. So they would cut into the tree, and the tree had grown from 1840 to 1920, this is the growth. And as you cut into the tree with an ax, it would peel off where the stencils were. And you're looking at the reference that's in the notes upside down. Up, he said this is a witness tree. So I come with his 66 chain links or uh, 66 feet, or 50 feet or whatever the hell it was, and I'd find another tree over there, and guess what. Pretty soon I'd have reestablished the section corner. Now, he would do this. He started doing this in the 1900s and again, he finished school in 1913, and he was certainly was doing it in the '20s, the '30s, the '40s if anybody would pay him. Nobody paid you, until the Second World War, okay? And somebody discovered that down the corner from his section they drilled an oil well. Okay? Then somebody got very interested in where is the section? Because that's what the title of my property is. Okay? So people started paying him big money to reconstruct some of these townships and ranges and properties and oil and gas fields. Okay so and you're right. I mean there's very, very few people - there was an old surveyor in Lafourche Parish named Lovell. There was an old surveyor in Plaquemines parish named Landry, there was an old surveyor in Calcasieu parish named Schultz, none of them people are left – none of them companies are left. None of those records are left as far as I know. Well Lovell's records is at Nicholls, but you see, now, where the section line corner ends, you can't you might even find evidence that my father put down – except we got the field notes. And by the way, those field notes are not public. So if you want to know where the section corner is, you better come find me, or my people and I come over there and establish it for you if you pay me money. Okay? Now you look at the field notes, you can look at all the research that my father did, but even the natural monuments today have changed drastically. Bayou Terrebonne, which was you know when they traveled Bayou Terrebonne, particularly through Houma, it might've been fifty feet wide. Today it's twenty feet wide. Or down below Houma, there used to be 50 feet wide, now it's 150 feet wide. You found it so, the drastic changes is happened geographically, drastic changes have happened by nature, and drastic changes happened by man, so that the - this evidence is not here anymore. Our notes are available, and I testified many times in the reconstruction of township and ranges – there's a famous survey on Bayou Du Large. Where it was section 16. And the poor coonasses down the bayou began to possess, and they ended up in possession of section 16. And we can reconstruct section 16 – nobody gives a damn about it until they drill a well on section 16, and the liars down there say well we own part of the wells there. No partner, your property is about a mile up the road. You are possessing a piece of property that happens to be owned by the state of Louisiana. Now if it had been owned by you or me and they possess it for 30 years, they own it. But you can't possess against the state. They could not understand that. So they finally found a crazy lawyer to file a suit against the school board and the state, and they lost. We said, this is section 16. I'm sorry Mr. Liner, this is section 16. Mr. Liner, if you are possessing against somebody in 17, you would own the land. You 'd have title to a piece of property, but it ain't in 16, it's in 17, you did not possess that. Somebody else is possessing your property. You do not own this land. This land belongs to the state of Louisiana. A riot. I mean I couldn't go down Bayou Du Large – they done forgot about it now. But, but they have a state stature, they have a constitutional convention. Constitutional amendment to

allow the people to buy the property to possess the surface. And the school board kept the minutes. School board and the state kept the minutes.

D: So that's where Liner's canal comes from?

S: No, no. Liner's- well, it's the same family, but it's a different location than what was section 16.

D: Now did you again, did your –

S: Would you believe I got some of the Liner's working for me?

(laugher)

D: Your father and your grandfather were actively involved – again we'll get back to highways because...

S: That's like the highways.

D: You can't go south of Houma unless you had a sailboat at one time.

S: Yep. Motorboat.

D: Some kind of vessel. And...

S: And the highways – the bayous were the highways.

D: And there was a group including your grandfather who had a place at Seabreeze – of which the people of Houma built very nice and fast wooden boats.

S: Yep. Racing boats.

W: We have some pictures of it.

S: Yep, the race boats. But uh, let's get back to the roads. You want to ask about the roads. In 1913, my father comes back, I just described some of the stuff he did in survey work. Okay but that was my father treated the engineering profession as a profession. And the surveying as a profession. He also often described it to me as a like an attorney, like a doctor, like a CPA, you know we were not contractors, we didn't bid on things, if somebody wanted to get their gallbladder out, they would find a doctor they believed in. If it was a surveyor or an engineer you went and got somebody you believed in. Now he always felt that it was some intrusion coming in from the surveying business. He said man, if you're interested in this, go get a civil engineering degree and be more inclined to do civil engineering work. Not surveying work because everybody's brother is gonna be a surveyor. And pretty soon we're gonna survey everything we need to survey. Okay? So I did that and other things, too, but anyhow, from the engineering standpoint, he came back to Houma in 1913. Did anything to make a living. We got - On the walls we got some steamboats that my daddy designed because they didn't have anything else to do, so somebody was building steamboats, and he designed wooden steamboats for people, okay. But in the 1920s there were no hard surface roads in Terrebonne. There were no – there were probably – no, everything was paved roads, the first work that I know of that he did from a civil engineering standpoint,



was computing the amount of gravel that was put on the roads in Terrebonne parish and again we've got field notes that show where they would bring a barge load of gravel from somewhere and they'd stop at somewhere at Little Caillou or Houma, and start dumping gravel. Okay? Now...

This is in the 1920s?

Probably in the early '20s. Early '20s. And we have the records of that, okay. I haven't looked

J: My mother and them used to go to school – lived on Bayou Du Large.

D: Up the bayou or down the bayou of Bayou Du Large?

S: Up the bayou.

J: Up -yeah. Well, um, they went to school by boat. These children. There was a school boat that people lived along the bayou and they stopped at the dock and picked the kids up and took them because the school was further down.

S: Every bayou had school boats.

D: Now were those run by the school board?

J: You know, I don't even know. Probably not.

S: No, no. They were run by the school board. We always had – look we had a very progressive – obviously program I know of about Terrebonne, we had a pretty progressive school system.

D: While we're on the early - I want Joann to talk about schools later.

S: Well wat – we talk about the school board, hell I was – I finished school in '58, and I was working on the survey either before or right after I finished school on Bayou Black on Gibson, and they still had a school boat then. They were picking up people in the Atchafalaya, Bayou Chene area. Bringing them to school in Gibson. So I mean that – the school boats but they bayous – let's get back. Let's get back to history. Think about when you came to New Orleans in 1830. And you wanted to come to Houma Louisiana. Hell, you come from New Orleans now! In 2009! You want to come to Houma, it's a pain in the ass, right? Just think what it was in...

J: All the bridges..haha

S: Think of what it was in 1830. Man, to get to Houma, Louisiana in 1830 you had to go up the river to Donaldsonville by steamboat, you had to catch a steamboat in Donaldsonville, come down Bayou Lafourche to Thibodaux by steamboat, you had to come down Bayou Terrebonne by steamboat to Houma. Now you had to – I say the only people that came down to Houma and Terrebonne parish in the 1830s were draft dodgers, were convicts, or people that didn't want nobody to ever find them. Just like the Acadians went to West Louisiana, well they were coming from Europe – directly from Europe, not through Nova Scotia, and they didn't want nobody to find them. Terrebonne – it was what – uh, lower Lafourche – and Terrebonne was, was settled as the last parish – surely in South Louisiana. And I think it

was just people that didn't want nobody to ever find them. That's why they came here. The Barras's – the Barras's were prominent people in the, the uh, St. Francisville and that area. They sent the Barras's ass out of that parish – go away – go to Terrebonne – get out of this place! I'm serious, man! That's how the Barras's got here, man! And somebody said, get out! Look at the Bush's! That's what happened to George H. Bush! Okay? He got out of college, he got married, went in the damn Navy and said you gotta be crazy! So when he got back they sent him to Yale – sent him to the middle of Texas. Paid him a million dollars to go to the middle of Texas, we don't want to see you no more! That's a fact! Them people were living great! I mean they made money! Get out of here boy! Go away - Have your marsh back! His buddy in college (inaudible) They gave them each a million dollars to go to the middle of Texas to go do something. I'm serious! So it had to be the same thing that was happening in Terrebonne in the 18- in the 1800s – man if you couldn't make it no where else, you'd go to Terrebonne. Okay...

Annette Huber: Which is pretty scary because most of our relatives are here.

S: Well yeah!

(laugher)

S: We got off the subject! So when we get to Terrebonne, you got – like at Lafourche, you got one bayou. Goes from Leeville basically to uh, Labadieville. Alright? Teche is from uh, Morgan City basically going to Franklin – past Franklin, Jeanerette. One bayou. You get to Terrebonne, man you got five bayous. You got Little Caillou, You got Grand Caillou, you got Bayou Du Large, you got Bayou Terrebonne which is the main stream, and you got uh, Point au Chene. And all of them basically merge – Bayou big bayou Black – all of them basically merge at Houma, okay? Now geographically, uh, a thousand years ago, when the river would overflow, all of these little bayous would overflow, and right where they merge is where you end up with the community of Houma, because that's where you end up with about 500 uh, let's say 100,000 acres of land above the 5 foot contour because of the overflow of the Mississippi River. Okay? Here comes human beings. Okay? They start living – the Acadians even before the Europeans, and they first off they go settle on this high land, and secondly they can traverse the bayous and that was the highways. That's why Houma has always been regional. We only had one city in the parish of Terrebonne. Only had one urban area in the parish of Terrebonne. We got people who live up and down all these little bayous, but all the activity happened here. This is where you had the banks. This is where you resource- Lafourche is spread out. We at one time had two or three banks in Terrebonne – they had six or eight banks. Their resources were scattered. Their people were scattered. Same thing in St. Mary. So we became somewhat of a regional area. The reason we became a regional area was because of the overflow of the river, because of the 100,000 acres of the high land, and because of the bayous being the, the mode of transportation. Now, again about the time my daddy got out of school – they had dirt roads by the time my daddy got out of school . They began to develop the gasoline engine. By the time my daddy got out of school, I think my grandfather had one of the first gasoline boats in Terrebonne. Prior to that, everybody sailed. Everybody walked. I mean, that was a big deal to motor down the bayou – I mean that was what people did. Okay? And, and so DuPonts came to Terrebonne, they built a store in Houma because that's where all the people from up and down the bayou came to Houma to buy merchandise. To buy food. If they bought food. Another interesting thing

– this weekend, this weekend! We go see a family of a friend of ours that died and we were out of town. From little Caillou, people ain't got nothing. You know what they gave me? An ice chest full of shrimp. We go to Grand Isle – we got a friend on Grand Isle - just bought a cow. Half a cow. And he need his freezer. He brings his ice chest full of fish. The people of South Louisiana in the Great Depression didn't have no money. And they lost whatever they had in money, but they survived. And when you think about what's going on in this country, in this world today, that's the biggest resource we got in America is our ability to produce food. All over America – but particularly down here, man. Everything could go to hell – even wash away. We're still gonna find a way to produce food. We really are.

J: My mother always said that with the depression, it never really affected them down Bayou Du Large. Because they grew their own food. They made their clothes. People didn't have as much. She was teaching then, and she said the only thing different was that she got paid in script. For a couple of months. Eventually got the money. So it – you know, it didn't make that much difference in their life. As opposed to people living in town.

S: Getting back to roads – okay. My father I'm telling you right after the – okay in the early 20s, there were mud, probably mud roads parallel in the bayou because you began to have - my grandfather on my other side was in the delivery stable business. So he was running (inaudible) up and down the mud road. He used to run a (inaudible) from Houma to Schriever. To pick up people in ...I tell you some of those stories...and pick them up and bring them to the railroad 'cause the railroad – the South Pacific railroad was built just before the Civil war, basically from Houma to Morgan City then going West, and, and that's where people were coming after the railroad was built, you didn't come by steamboat anymore, you came by rail. Okay? Before highways were built. Anyhow, so the road to the 1920s was probably mud, the first project the local – one of the first local projects was to build, to buy – uh, gravel at the time, they didn't know much – I guess shell. They were buying gravel and putting gravel on the roads. And again we got records from where my father was working for the Terrebonne Parish Police Jury at the time, as a consultant, and helping them figure out how much gravel they bought and how much they needed and where to put it. Okay? So that was the first road project. The second big road projects were after – during the depression. When they had the first stimulus program where they had the WPA. And we have a picture of the first street being paved in Houma which is Church Street which was in 19- well, I was born in '35, it was around the time that I was born that they began through the WPA program to pave roads, and you brought up the point that it wasn't asphalt. My father was never a big, big, uh, what is it – supporter of asphalt in this area. For two reasons – one is Portland's cement at the time and there's a difference between cement and concrete – which was a slight problem in my family explaining...

J: Yeah, yeah...

S: But anyhow, Portland cement was a relative, well wasn't a new project - product, but it was new to the United States of America, and was also new to making it in large quantities. They made concrete, I guess the Romans had made concrete, but they didn't – they made cement, but the production of cement was a very limited thing. So somehow or other I guess in the early 1900s, they began in America to make cement in large quantities, so they began to develop Portland cement. And concrete from that.

Also the soil conditions, again in Terrebonne, uh generally on the ridges are relatively good but they're not like they are in Baton Rouge or any really upper areas of the state. So he was a big advocate of Portland uh, cement concrete. And, and all of the roads that, frankly I don't think he ever was involved in an asphalt project to tell you the truth, uh, but uh, major, major roads were built in this area with concrete, uh, during the uh, Depression that the WPA programs were big in that, uh, Huey Long got big in that, US 90 from basically Houma to Gibson was built by Huey Long. Main Street in Houma was paved by Huey Long because of Allen Ellender. Allen Ellender was a representative from Terrebonne, and one of the deals supposedly cut that welded Ellender to Long which were different people, different philosophies, was Main Street. Supposedly Huey wanted to vote for something from Ellender and Ellender said I'll tell you what – if you pave Main Street in Houma, we're gonna do the deal. They did the deal and then they ended up by being really close people. And they were really different philosophies, believe me, but I didn't know Huey Long, but I knew Allen Ellender. And they – he had to be different from back then, from Long but he was a politician, and he could cut a deal, and supposedly that paved Main Street in Houma initially. Um, so again that's kind of the road uh, but the roads basically followed the bayous, which were the natural uh, highways initially, uh, we began to build roads and canals – the Barras built canals in the East west direction. All the bayous ran generally in the North South direction. So obviously even before roads, there was a need to have some East West transportation. And that's how the Barras canal got built, the Harvey canal in New Orleans got built, the - which was the beginning of the Intracoastal system. But the Barras family were the first people that I know of that were making sugar – they were generating sugar in this area, and they needed it to get to New Orleans, and so you had to go up or down the bayous, you had to go to Donaldsonville, or to the Mississippi River, so he became interested in building actually, I think he built the Harvey canal, and he built the company canal from Lake Salvador going in to Bayou Lafourche, from Bayou Lafourche over to Bayou Terrebonne, over in the East-West direction, and ultimately built a canal because the Barataria Street map was in Houma, and it connected Little Bayou black with Big Bayou Black. Because if I can remember, uh, I can't remember the Barataria Canal being navigable, but I can remember Bayou Terrebonne being navigable, uh up past over to what we call Lafayette Street up to Central Avenue in Houma. So I mean there were boats, in in fact my father kept a boat all his life in Bayou Terrebonne right at Barras Street. And that's another interesting thing that uh, I mentioned the DuPonts – Jeanne Marie DuPont was my grandmother's father. And A. M. and J. C. DuPont were the sons and they needed up with the store. And they lived – my grandparents, Jeanne Marie DuPont, lived above the store. The children made that money and they built houses where the government office is now, the Federal Bank, and the court – the federal Courthouse was Albert DuPont, and where the government office is J.C. DuPont. I can remember those houses, and the Smith house was across the bayou. The story was the DuPont's said the Smiths can't live on this side the bayou, ya'll gotta move over there, so they made the daughter move across the bayou – my grandpa bought a piece of property in 1895. Across the bayou, and he built the first Barras Street bridge, okay? So he could go back and see his mom and dad – his grandma and all, okay? So that's uh, and then the Wrights were right down the street. The Wrights, again came to Terrebonne, the Smiths came to Terrebonne in the cypress business. CP Smith came to Terrebonne – he was running sawmills. He was from Kentucky. And there's a – right along the Ohio River in Kentucky it is a place that's called – Smithsland, what have you - I think that's where he came from. He came to South Louisiana

probably right after – during or right after the Civil War. Came to Terrebonne because there was a big res – cypress was the big resource like oil and gas.

H: : And his father was also T. Baker Smith.

S: Yeah. His father was T. Baker, yeah.

H: Mmmhmm.

S: And, and he uh, he came to uh, to Houma either during or right after the Civil War, and he married Clara - he eventually married Clara DuPont. And they had – they actually had two sons and three daughters. The first son was named Harry Baker Smith who died at birth, then my father was the oldest child – the oldest living child. And the only son, T. Baker Smith again was named after CP Smith's father. CP Smith ran sawmills around Terrebonne, and he had a sawmill on the property where he built his house. It was in the back toward the swamp, and he was pulling cypress in, and cutting cypress, and he built a house on the front, and he would select cypress that was going into the house. He was living right on the site. And uh, uh, then my mother's family was Wright, W-R-I-G-H-T, and I think they came to Terrebonne about 1830. And there was a guy named Holden Wright who had four sons – William, and I can't remember their names now, but William Wright was my great-grandfather. Holden Wright's sons – four of them. At the beginning of the Civil War, they were living in St An – St. Anthony Plantation on Bayou Black. Four of them packed their bags and went to northern Virginia to fight with the army in Northern Virginia. Now can you imagine in 1860 – and I gotta figure they were from Virginia - they probably I mean somebody wrote them and said, ya'll send them boys up here. And them boys got on – now I don't know how the hell they got from Bayou Black...

J: (inaudible) haha

S: How they got from Bayou Black – well the first thing you gotta do is just swim the river, you know.

H: haha

S: but how they got from Bayou Black to Northern Virginia – one of them was killed in Yorktown in the Civil War battle of Yorktown, and another one got shot or something and came home, another one got sick and came out the – and the other one deserted and came back after about two years up there. Well William Wright was my great-grandfather. Well he – Holden's son – and they had the plantation out there, but you know everybody used to lose the plantations every time they had a disease, or every time they had a early freeze, and so – he owned to or three plantations on Bayou Black, and William Wright Sr. got into the mule business – and the livery stable business – starting being a mule trainer. And he ran ultimately a livery stable in downtown Houma. And, and William Wright's oldest son was a guy named William Wright Jr. William Wright was called Buck Wright, and he actually was the sheriff of Terrebonne Parish right after the carpetbaggers. And his oldest son was William Wright Jr., and they called him Billy. That was my grandfather. So William Wright died and his son took over the livery stable running the livery stable. And they had a livery stable, mules, they were mule trainers, and

J: And a funeral home.

S: And yeah, they had the only hearse in town, so it became the...

J: Ran the cards up at the...

S: Yeah and then they had a - my grandpa was a big gambler.

F: He ran the card...

S: And they used to give, they had the, the blacks loved them, uh, we had very few slaves in Terrebonne. See that's another interesting thing. We still have only 16% blacks by population in Terrebonne Parish. And I think it's historically we always had very few slaves in this area. But after the Civil War, obviously the blacks, particularly the ones that worked for my grandfather, man they thought the world of him – they'd die for him. My mother got attacked one time by a black person about thirty years ago at her house, and uh, the story was she told me she said that just shows you how the world's going to Hell. She said uh, they lived on Park Ave. right down the street from the Smiths. They had a fenced in yard. They had chickens, they had pigs, they had hogs, they had geese, they had horses in the yard. When the children would get up in the morning, somebody was there in the garden, somebody was there to saddle the horses for the kids. They had a - put them in the – rig up the buggy and everything. The guy that was doing that was a convicted murderer from Terrebonne Parish. And he had been sent to Angola. My grandfather went up there and employed him to work in the yard. And she said, that show's you how the world has changed, and of course my grandfather, I mean he'd ride down the street in Houma, Louisiana, and I did - and he died in '52, and I did ride down the street with him....and he'd go by black people, and they'd been down, like he was the king. I'm serious! I mean I – what he did for...he did everything for anybody, you know.

B: Before we move on another subject, I want to ask you a quick question about the mules because in the sugar areas on our side of the Atchafalaya, they were bringing in Missouri mules.

S: Yeah.

B: And is that's what they're like?

S: Oh yeah. My grandpa - he had a Missouri mule - he had, I was his oldest – I was his youngest grandchild in Houma. He spoiled everybody, but he really spoiled me.

J: That's why he is like he is...

S: He also had a little...

J: I can tell you.

S: He had a little problem with my mother. See my grandfather didn't like my mom. Okay? And so he'd go pick me up every day to get me out of my momma. Get me away from my momma – and take me to the delivery stable. And I was three or four years old, man. I was riding horses. And he had a Missouri mule. And he – the Missouri mule looked at me like he was about eight, ten feet tall. And he used to put me on that mule and hit the mule. He used to bet people that he could put Clifford on that mule and the

mule wouldn't throw him – if I hit that mule on the butt with a bull whip, okay? He'd put me on that damn mule without a saddle. And the mule ain't got no mange. You – God knows what I was hanging on to. And he'd hit that – and everybody would put their money out. Haha. Same thing - did that the same thing for my momma. Oh yeah, but they had any kind of mule you can think of. Now this is another funny story. My grandfather and the mules – he had the hearse, he had – he had jitneys. He had buggies. All kind of crap. Wagons, everything, okay? And here comes the automobile. So I don't know, he made a deal with Ford. He became the first Ford dealer in the area. So they sent them a damn – they sent him a couple of Ford automobiles, and he never could learn how to drive. So he – and he said this stuff man, the gasonline engines, so he (in audible) mule, a gasoline engine, no, a white mule, a red and a white, a gasoline engine, he ain't got crap, okay? So he gives the damn Ford to a Ford dealer – the one he called.

J: To somebody else.

S: And they're exactly identical, and he became Trapp Ford Company. So uh, they you know he was – he was a character. I mean he would tell me stories about how – I mean when he was a kid, he was in the Civil War, and they used to have a man in Thibodaux that would bring him – any black you brought him dead, he'd give him money. He told me one time about the carpetbaggers. And uh, oh man I got a picture that nobody believes, but I got a picture on main street. Smokey Road, mainstreet. Right next to the courthouse. They got a wagon. They got a and my – the livery stable's right next, almost next door. They got a wagon, they got a mule out - a live, a live elephant in a wagon with the mule pulling it. And they got a rooster on the top of the...haha...a rooster on the top of the damn, uh, on top of the uh, elephant in a cage. And I said that was the – that's he, the what is it - 1870. That's the democratic - carpetbagging republicans out in Terrebonne.

B: But if he had mules, you know one of the ways you got up and down the bayous was with the (Cordeaux) – that is the tow (inaudible). But if you had mules. Was he actively serving as...

S: I never heard of that. I never heard of that in Terrebonne. Okay? There could be uh, again the bayou – the roads, the roads even today follow the bayou pretty close. But I never heard of that. As far as I know, everybody traversed up and down the bayou pretty much with sailboats and oars. And my grandfather, my father and my grandfather were lost in the storm, and they were rescued by a guy coming down the bayou with oars. I mean you didn't have gasoline engines or nothing, you know. See uh, I was testifying a case one time in Plaquemines Parish about navigable waters. And they had a guy that test – an old man that testified that his father developed the first trawl in Terrebonne – in Louisiana. And he brought up the point before you had a gasoline engine, before you had a constant movement of the boat, you couldn't have a trawl. Before that, everybody seined. Now can you imagine what the trip was like in the Gulf of Mexico when you seined??

B: Well there..

S: Everybody seined, okay.. Well when they got a gasoline engine, and they finally figured out that, you know it ain't the sailboat. It ain't depending upon the wind. The you know, this thing is gonna chug,

chug, chug along, and we can take that same, and make it a trawl. And the coonass from Plaquemine parish supposedly developed the first trawl.

D: Well one of the things Carl and I are trying to sort out is the whole shrimp drying business. It's not recorded well. We're gonna talk to Louis Blum later today – it's not recorded well. But...

S: You gonna talk to Louis Blum Jr.

D: Junior, yeah.

J: Yeah, but Tommy, uh...

S: Yeah Tommy's gone, Louis Sr. is gone...

J: You know Tommy's son Michael, who I think is in the business over there, but he may be able to, and I mean he would have more access – Tommy had access to so much pictures and stuff.

D: Oh it's just fascinating, but the thing that Clifford mentioned to Carl and I earlier was something called the wood boat. Apparently there was a big business taking some um, boiler wood – wood that was to a particular size out to the platforms where they could use it to fire a boiler or some place to cook shrimp, well that had to be a huge business because you were bringing shrimp in, boiling them in salt water, and then put – wait a minute. This is not natural gas. This is not oil. This is not propane. It's not butane. This is wood. Now, we've been able to figure out that there's probably eighty of these platforms. Well start doing the math.

J: Yeah.

D: If it took a cord a day, that's eighty cords times 365 – I mean we're talking forests of lumber. Clifford, you're the only person that's ever mentioned to us a wood boat. Do you actually remember when they were...

S: No, but I can imagine that there was a – the same thing we built with the sugar mill. We used to buy a plantation, and half of the plantation was woods. Not cultivatable land. But you wanted that and that's where the grants came from. Again when you got a grant, you got a grant not only of the high land, but you got a grant of the wooded area around the high land, and the wooded area was the swamp. And that's where you would go cut the trees for the boilers in the sugar mill. Now, another interesting thing – You go ride up Bayou Black. Wow, today, of course they got houses all the way up the bayou – two interesting things about - riding up along Bayou black. You look to the left where you go past the houses, and they got a wood line. That wood line is at a +5. Everything into the woods is below +5. Everything above the wood line from, from the wood line to the bayou is +5 to probably +10. Now, 300 years ago, 400 years ago, from the bayou, there was no wood line. Everything was woods. The poor SOB's that came down here started clearing the land, which they didn't have no dozers by the way, they had mules and slaves and axes and cross cut saws, they only cleared land that they thought was cultivatable. And if they couldn't drain, they weren't gonna clear the land. So they stopped at the five foot contour. But when the guy that knew what he was doing in France said, look man, I wanna, I wanna



grant a land over here in Terrebonne parish, okay? And I do want the high land but I want enough woods that I can go cut the woods for fuel. The woods. First map I ever saw of this area – Terrebonne – is I think 1836. Was a map drawn by the, the Navy department out of Annapolis sent a, a basically a timber cruiser group from Annapolis to find oak trees to build warships for, for Annapolis for the United States from oak because in those days, before steel, that was the strongest thing there was. Was oak, live oak in particular. And they were looking to cut down all the damn oak trees and ship them somewhere to make, to make warships. So It, so but getting – that’s another – talk about natural resources. The first natural resource that was extracted from this area was timber. This is what you talking about. Both of the platforms, and etcetera. who called me up the other day and was asking me about, uh, immigrants or something, how South Louisiana – was it you? They called me about how was south Louisiana, or no. something about whether it was dope or um, bootlegging. How was, how was south Louisiana affected by bootlegging. I believe it was you that called me.

D: I, I asked the question once.

S: Yeah. So, the bootlegging, I said man, South Louisiana has been handling contraband since the uh, the uh, the pirate – what’s his name – Lafitte.

J: Yeah, Lafitte.

S: I said man, he was stealing everything off the ships going up the Mississippi river bringing them to Laf – to Barataria, go up Bayou Barrataria, and sell it back to the people in New Orleans as the ships came up the river! This bastard was doing it – nobody could track him because then nobody knew the way of Barataria! Okay? That was Lafitte. I said then t hey had the Chinese. The Chinese the people would bring the Chinese somehow to get to the Gulf of Mexico up the Louisiana Coast, they would put them in a barrel and throw them overboard. The ones that got to the damn shore, built the Chinese platforms. Chinaman platforms everywhere all over South Louisiana. Chinaman plat – they’re the ones that took the little shrimp and said, don’t waste that. We’re gonna make dried shimp with that and sent that back to China. We’re still doing that, okay? A little different process, but we’re still doing that. Then bootlegging of course, man, they were bringing whiskey in here. You know you got, just in Terrebonne parish, you got about eight ends of the roads at Terrebonne. I mean they were bringing whiskey in for years in this place. I mean I know people that were making millions of dollars in this area bringing whiskey in. Then they - now we got narcotics. I mean, you know, the deputy and sheriff in Terrebonne parish are making 35,000 dollars a year riding around the parish from 8 o’clock at night to 8 o’clock in the morning. He goes down the – the goes down bayou Du Large, not Cocodrie, Bayou Du Large, which is basically, here comes a boat and you know, a boat that came from Venezuela can get up behind the barge –I know some guys who could do that, okay? And they unloaded a load of marijuana or cocaine or whatever they have, and the deputy pulls up and says, what ya’ll doing? He said well partner, let me tell you something. Here’s 10,000 dollars, and you go back to Houma and forget about what we doing, or we’ll shoot you. So the guy takes the 10,000 dollars and goes back to Houma. That’s going on – I can guarantee you that’s going on three times a week in Terrebonne parish, man!

D: But there's a couple of land companies in Louisiana that paid a significant amount of money during prohibition – we won't go there.

(laughter)

S: But people around here made a significant amount of money. Of course the, the – and one of the, of course, in America, one of the prominent people were – we were at their home the other day in the high end sport is the canning. I mean they made a fortune.

D: And they admit it!

S: They're still doing it as a matter of fact.

B: Let me see guys. Let me just check.

S: So where we at.

(laughter)

J: There's one thing I want to say. I remember your daddy talking about how he got started and everything. That he nearly gave up civil engineering – 'cause he would get poison ivy so bad, that he couldn't and he, and Greg Norman is a pharmacist...

S: Tulane graduate. He developed a...

J: They concocted - it was the worst looking bottle of medicine I have ever seen in my – we kept – we had one for years and years.

H : Yeah, mm mmm.

J: And because together they, they did this, and it was like muddy gook that he put on but it kept him in the business. And get rid of his poison ivy.

D: Well clearly, clearly in your family, education is not insignificant. I mean, if you – okay. As I recall, there was a private school here in Houma - Laughten. That may have been the baseline of education, I mean that'd be fair.

J: Uh, no.

S: Actually, education in my family had to start with my grandmother Smith. And she was obviously uh, impressed with education. And she again, insisted, again my father was the oldest in the clan, sort of speak of that generation.

J: And your aunts too. All of them got college degrees.

S: And yeah but I mean, my father was the oldest and she absolutely insisted on educating him. Now he went to school and he was pretty much I think as near as I can remember that maybe not really inclined to be a student, and...

J: He's a great athlete. Haha

S: But he loved, he loved the outdoors. Again he grew up in Terrebonne with his father hunting and fishing. He and his father were um, avid um, uh, dove hunters and quail hunters. They had quail dogs and they, they really loved the outdoors, and I think the reason my father studied civil engineering again was because of the land surveying aspect of it and the aspect that you don't end up – you don't end up in an office kind of setting - you're out in the field. Out in the area, and he literally loved the area. Again that's – and the area is so unique – Terrebonne again is unique – it's unique with the five bayous, but it's extremely unique with the ecology of the area. I mean it's different – Terrebonne's different than west Louisiana. I mean, I've been all over West Louisiana, and I, I can go out in the marsh and the swamp in West Louisiana, and I'd get dirty. You cannot go out in the marsh and the swamp in Terrebonne parish and stay clean. There ain't no way. It's a dirty place.

B: While we're on the subject of education, you said your mother was a teacher.

J: My mother was a teacher, and, let's see. Everybody else in her family except one – one was a nurse – became a nurse. Everybody else...

S: And that

J: They, they lived down Bayou Du Large, they took the boat to school, when they got to high school, they had to come and they would stay in Houma. They stayed with relatives in Houma.

D: That was a public high school?

J: Public High school.

S: And this was in the thirties. Early thirties.

J: Um...

S: Twenties. And Thirties.

J: Twenties.

S: Twenties. Her mother, uh, her mother and her sisters all went to school at SLI.

J: Yeah. They went – they did gotta go for two years, and then you could get a....

H: A teaching certificate.

J: A teaching certificate. And then they come out – whoever was there came back home and the next one could go on and go. And they would teach and then when mother – when we were in uh, mother taught school all those years when we were in high school, my brother and I were in high school, she started going back to school. She wanted to get her degree. And she started taking correspondence courses. This is before Nicholls. Because we lived in Shriever. And then she would go to summer school. Can you imagine - my father worked seven and seven. And she would leave my brother and I – and he

was one year old and I was.... In the summer – and go to summer school in Lafayette – ULL. SLI then. And I'd come home on the weekends. And then she finally had to take a sabbatical I think that was extreme test of my brother and I because my dad would be gone for a week, you know. Mother was gone, it was just carrying out certain things. We had to do. But there was never any doubt. Everybody was gonna go to school. All my sisters went to school.

D: But you can remember school boats.

J: No, my mother.

D: Your mother.

J: My mother did school boats.

S: And I saw school boats.

J: Well you saw them. And I would – we lived in Galiano. Now that was a different country. When we moved down there when I was about two or three years old, and mother taught school. My dad worked the graveyard shift in the nighttime. My brother and I – she taught at a little um, school in Cutoff. Two room school. She taught first, second, and third; the other lady taught fourth fifth and sixth. And was the principal. There was no day care. My brother and I went to school and we sat in the back of the room while she taught school in there. Then um, I mean, all my life she taught me in the first grade, the second grade, she was still at the school when I was in third, all through – she taught me catechism – in those days, the priests - believe this – would come to the public school and teach catechism – you'd have it at recess – you know. I mean God knows now that would never be... I go to high school, my uncle's the principal. I never went to school without a relative there until I went to college.

D: Well, if you, you know what a Marmonde ridge is.

J: Marmonde ridge.

D: Alright the Marmonde family had a little plantation there.

S: Mmhmm.

D: One of the things we're trying to sort out is that's an isolated community that is - the only way you can get to it is by boat essentially.

S: Before the road, yeah.

D: Before the roads – so you had alright...now. Did you grow up with and of the young people?

J: Those were my relatives. The Marmonde's. I forgot the (inaudible) My father and Antoinette Marmonde were brother and sister.

D: Okay.

S: And Antoinette is uh, Marvin, Marvin Sr.

J: And Billy and Pat and...

D: Now here's an interesting situation. That's a settlement site.

S: St. Michel.

J: Yeah.

D: Alright.

S: What used to be owned by the Wright family, by the way.

D: Okay. And it was settlement site growing sugarcane.

S: Yeah.

D: If you go out there today, you can still see the little ridges. Now it's primarily deer hunters.

J: Mmhmm. Yeah.

D: Well, what prompted them to give up the agriculture aspect of that, and it was abandoned. People went – it's sort of like if you look at, um, uh, (inaudible). Clearly those folks may have to move. Okay, well we have an example already that they moved.

S: Well yeah. They got that all over. I mean, all over the place you got that.

B: But just tell us about it.

J: Well the Marmonde they had uh, they had a store. One of the brothers had the store. Uncle Doc had a dairy – he was a dentist. By profession – I never knew he practiced – I guess he did. He had a dairy.

D: Now, the dairy south of Houma.

J: Yeah, yeah. On Bayou Du Large. On St. Michel

D: St. Michel.

J: The goldenrod Dairy.

D: Now what is St. Michel.

J: Plantation.

S: Marmonde plant - that's Marmonde. St. Michel is the name of the plantation. And actually St. Michel was owned by William Wright Sr., and William Wright Sr. traded it to the Marmonde's for a piece of property in Houma where he ended up building his livery stable, okay. Now, you ask about – let's say William Wright Sr. or the Marmonde ended up with the property – this is even – when Doc Wright – Doc

Marmonde generation; before Doc Marmonde, they were, they were, they had sugarcane primarily on the property –or other crops, but primarily sugarcane. And they might've had let's say 500 acres. Well today you might have 300 acres down there that's cultivatable. Two reasons: one is the marginal land has become more marginal – it can't - you can't drain it anymore. It's backing up, water backing up, subsiding, whatever the problem is. It ain't drainable like it was 200 years ago. Alright? The other slight problem is what's happening with sugarcane. It's so mechanical. You go to Fiji, we went to Fiji on a world trip. They plant sugarcane everywhere in Fiji - in somebody's front yard. You can't do that today because of the mechanization. If you don't have 1000 acres of land to cultivate sugarcane on, you ain't in the sugarcane business. I mean we got friends of ours that now you know the McCullens telling me the other day. They still, they still use, they still work Ellendale, which is maybe 1000 acres, okay? But they lease another thousand acres on another place because they got equipment they have to buy, they can't hardly make it with a thousand acres. And it ain't the people – they might only have five people working for them at the most, but they can run two thousand acres of sugarcane, but they can't run another fifty acres over here that's below water and in some little patch. Comprehends? I got a piece of property in Bourg that for years that grew sugarcane on it – about a hundred fifty acres of cultivatable land. You can't find nobody that wants to do that now. I mean they – you can the neighbor who runs a thousand acres don't even want to come over and do the hundred fifty acres because it ain't worth it. They got a guy that was making hay on it. He quit making hay because he can't make enough hay. So I mean that you know the tractors, the equipment that you gotta just bring to the site – the guy owns the tractors, somebody gotta bring it over there to only end up with, you know, two truckloads of hay, I don't wanna go over there. I wanna go somewhere I can pick up fifty truckloads of hay.

D: Yeah, but we'd like for all of you to talk a little bit more about the movement because clearly I heard Bayou Du Large, to Galiano, to Cutoff, to Shriever,

S: Dulac...

D: I'm gonna make an assumption that Stevie lives in the family home in Shriever.

D: So you know we've seen in your own family, you go to your office in Thibodaux, man you get a nosebleed going to that puppy!

S: Yeah...

(laughter)

S: What has happened though, what's happened is, Don is that you know, if you go through the history of Terrebonne parish, you look at some historical maps, Dulac was a very productive sugar plantation. Dulac! There was a sugar mill at Dulac. There ain't no sugar mill in Dulac now because then all the fields are under water. I mean there's place down there you could literally walk on the bottom of a bay and feel the damn uh, feel the damn roads. Okay? I mean the, the drainage is deteriorating. The drainage is deteriorating because of the coastal erosion. The drainage is deteriorating because of subsidence or what have you. So if you can't drain property, you can't grow sugarcane. And that's happening - you can just see it across the area. This area in particular. Say from the Atchafalaya River to Bayou Lafourche.

You could – well even east of course – east of Bayou Lafourche you can see that that's happening. I mean, uh, all the reclamation projects – you know, all of the reclamation projects except (inaudible) has failed. Because of the same – they go in and try to reclaim a piece of land, not only the natural but they go and expand it into the marshes, the delta farm and all those places, you can't drain them. The, you can't build levees, you can't produce enough product from the land to make it possible to use the land – that's the bottom line. Now, uh, and so people are moving when the cure all the coast is a tremendous example of that is family, I mean we were down there to – but that's in Terrebonne too. In 1909 there was a major storm my father was involved in – 2 to 300 people drowned on Terrebonne coast. Okay? 1926 there was a major storm, two to three hundred people drowned on the Terrebonne coast. But people lived below Boudreaux canal. People lived below Cocodrie. People lived at Felicity Island. People lived around Last Esland. Okay, and they lived there. Okay? And they ain't living there no more. I mean you can't live there no more. Our life is changed. Uh, the geography's changed, but the people have changed. That's a slight problem. You know, there ain't nobody gonna go put their ass out there on the island and stay there for the next – unless you're crazy and stay out there for the next twenty years. They got a crazy guy on Elmer's Island – when the revitalized Elmer's Island, you know which I get a kick out of. We go ride down there in Grand Isle. And they got a guy - got him a shack on the side of a pipeline canal back there. He's got him a rebel flag and a pirate's flag flying. He don't have a power line.

J: (Inaudible)

S: You can't – you cant get there. You gotta go by boat...he got a pirate's flag and a rebel flag, he don't got no electricity, he's got a tv and an antenna. He's probably got a little generator to run his tv. And he's got a cistern to catch the water.

J: And you can't..you can't..

S: He sued to be three, four hundred people...

J: You don't see the, I mean you have to really go down the road to almost where you get right to the beach before you even see this.

S: Yeah he's a recluse. There's no doubt he's a recluse. But uh...But there used to be a lot of that – the people around here don't do that. Well I can remember trappers camps. You know I'd go out in the wintertime with my daddy and go run up and down the bayou, you know and, in some damn boat and they got some poor people sitting on the side the damn bank on the trapper's camp. And I mean I'm talking about maybe two rooms, okay. No electricity. No, no screens on the windows, man. And I'm talking about cold. I don't know how them people survived. And what they were doing catching rats and all day long and skinning them all night long. And the family was there – the wife...we had kids that were going to high school – we had one great athlete going to high school with us. And every winter – every November his daddy would say come on boy. You're going to trappers camp. He'd come back in April.

J: I grew up with that....

S: And how....

J: In Galiano but I just happened to go to Chauvin just yesterday – I said you know I had a picture of one of my class – they used to – Coca-Cola and all used to come to the schools and take a picture class by class, and uh, this uh, friend of mine gave me one – he said look at that. He said you notice half of them don't have shoes on. I said I didn't even remember that! It was such a thing I didn't even notice.

S: They had...

J: He said, I you know he said my momma made me wear shoes to school but as soon as we got to school we took them off because we could run faster barefoot.

S: This guy, this guy – he's dead now. He was our age. He was in high school with us. He goes trapping with his daddy. He comes back and we had a football coach that was an extremely competitive guy. He was about a Junior, maybe a Sophomore in high school. The football coach is standing in the gym one April. And this kid comes back from trapping, okay? And he's playing basketball, he's got some intramural basketball game on. He's got a khaki shirt on, khaki – I can remember the khaki shirt, khaki pants, and he took his socks and shoes off to play basketball in the gym – running up and down the hall full court playing basketball. And the football coach goes out there and he was also the track coach. And he sees this guy running up and down and I was – I believe I was in the damn gym. He said, boy, come here. He said uh, you know how to run? He says yeah, I run all the time. He said okay, now we have a cinder track – a goddamn black cinder track. 440 yards around that track. I hated that thing. He said go out there and run around the track. This kid goes out there in his bare feet and he runs around the track and there's the coach checking him and he says, mmmm, but he made it as the track star. He makes this kid the track star. This is the junior – we were juniors in high school and we go to the state track meet. This guy wins at the – we won AA or whatever the hell we were - we were a big school for this state in those days. He ran – he runs the – he runs the uh, 440, he wins the 440 at the state track meet, he runs the half mile, he wins the half mile, and he runs the mile, he wins the mile. And he's the anchorman for the 440 relay team. Wins everything, okay? So the coach - I mean this kid was slender. He wasn't big or anything like that. And he never played football. Never. He never played football. So the coach is licking his chops, man he was like next year we're gonna wipe them out. We're gonna clean them out. He quits school and gets married.

J: But you have – when we were in high school, um, there was only two high schools in Terrebonne parish. Either Terrebonne high, or St. Francis, which was a very small school. So we went to school with people all over the parish. You went by buses to - came by buses to school you know from Shriever to Central

S: We had really you know probably the first at the time the only central school system in the par- in the state.

J: Yeah, and so we know people from all over. When the boys first started working - old enough to go out with the crews and they'd come back, and say, how many people did ya'll go to school with? He said, I don't care where we go. Somebody said that. Tell you mom and dad I was in school with them. They say, you couldn't have that many people. I said yeah we did it was all over, you know. Uh...



S: Just getting back to education, my mother finished at LSU in 1924. And five of her, seven children have six degrees from LSU and I finished in '58. I've never been fond – I've never been fond uh, what is it. I've never been fond of LSU because I always thought it was too big. Particular for somebody from Terrebonne parish, I was just starstruck. I wouldn't have gotten out of high school if I hadn't have met Joann. I didn't meet her in High school, but it – she hadn't taken me under her wing in high school, I never would've gotten out of high school. And then when I went to LSU, Ray Authement was working on his masters and PHD in math, and I bumped into his class, really, and if it wasn't for Authement, I don't think I would've ever got out of LSU. I tell him that all the time, and I said after I got out of LSU I ended up falling upon 15 million dollars, and the government made me take a post graduate course on how to pay it back. But uh, education for thank God, was really priorities in both of our families. Which was very unusual at that time, particularly in my parent's case, but then her parents, her parents case was the same thing. It was extremely unusual. I mean people throw rocks at you because you have a college degree. I got out of LSU in '58. And I was working on a major survey project for the Northern Line of Continental Land and Fur Company, and everybody in the crew, three or four people, went to high school with me. And I'd go out there in the swamp in January and I'd fall in that damn hole, get all sopping wet, and them guys said that's what you went to college for? To learn how to do that? So education though was, was important. Education was uh, was paramount in my family. The one really uh, void that we're all had was that none of us learned how to talk French – which was really stupid. But her parents spoke French, but my parents didn't.

J: Well they said we were.

S: And that was really; and you know when we grew up, if we talked French, they'd punish you in school.

J: yeah, I was gonna say that. In school, you know, you couldn't talk French – and everybody talked French. Didn't grandma Smith go to Laughton?

S: oh yeah, my mother went to – my mother went to Laughton - there was three old maids that were Winder – W-I-N-D-E-R. They were kin to Francis T. Nicholls. Actually some kind of way. And they were Civil War (inaudible) and all. Well they were three old maids in Houma. And they started a grammar school in Houma – a private school. It evolved into a – from grammar to high school. And it became a preparatory school for the, the Academies. Matter of fact, Doc Laborde, Odioco, and now Gulf Island came to Houma, he was from Marksville, Louisiana, he went to school at Laughton as a preparatory class or year to take the exam to go to Annapolis. And uh, and this was three old maids, my mother went to school there, my sister went to school there, they closed the school around the time my brother and I uh, were going to school because we'd have gone there. Uh, but they were three old maids and they ran a private school and they ran where Terrebonne General...

S: Where the hospital is.

S: Is right now, and uh, it was an outstanding school – I mean outstanding. I mean it was again, it was a preparatory school, known as a preparatory school for the academies at the time. In those days, that was a big deal. To be able to pass those tests.

(inaudible)

(laughter)

D: But it..the education becomes really important.

S: Well now my mother – let me get back to my mother. My mother you see was uh, again from a relatively affluent family, uh, in uh, in Houma, and she again went off to college. When she finished high school, she was the oldest daughter in that family. She actually has an older brother who went to LSU who was the uh, colonel of the cadet corps at LSU. Then at LSU just before the Civ – just before the first world war, my mother finished at LSU about 1922-1924. She actually graduated at the new campus. She actually graduated at the Parker uh, building.

B: Coliseum?

S: She went to school at the old campus, but they had bought the new campus and they built the Parker building, and that was where the graduation ceremony was. But she – well she finished highschool – she finished at LSU when she was eighteen or nineteen years old. She started teaching around Louisiana. Another thing is she taught at Newman. And she told me that Newman uh, you know she says that if you're an intelligent Jewish person, you're really something. But she says if you're a dumb Jewish person, you're really something.

(laughter)

S: But uh, she ended up teaching all over. She would go back...

J: In Morgan City.

S: Yeah, she taught at Morgan city. She was teaching senior English in Morgan city, and the guys in the class were older than her. And that was and my mother weighed about a hundred pounds soaking wet. But she was, she was hell on wheels. But uh,

D: Apparently your uncle thought so.

S: Yeah, but uh, he was too, though. But uh, but uh, she uh, my grandpa they uh, but my mother went to Natchitoches to school, and then transferred to LSU. And at Natchitoches, my mother met people like Allen Ellender's wife, and uh, another...family who was a brother to – Thelma Bickam from uh, from St. Francisville, who all ended up in Houma teaching. In those days, obviously, and it is today, Terrebonne had a good education system. Terrebonne had a good pay scale. And there's a lot of people, the (inaudible) ..a lot of people came to Terrebonne to teach school from all over the state primarily because they obviously had a good uh, good pay scale, frankly. I have an aunt that came to Houma from Jackson, Mississippi to teach music. Because obviously they had a good pay scale, obviously. So education, now that's another interesting thing. You could go around Terrebonne parish, and somebody ought to write a book about this. I was in a school the other day that was built, I figure about 1920. Uh, elementary school in Terrebonne parish right now built about 1920. By Bayou Black.

D: Coming up the bayou (inaudible) toward the left.

S: Yeah. Ten miles, fifteen miles from Houma. On the bayou. Beautiful live oak trees in the yard. Trees are two hundred years old. School was built about 1920 I figure. School was built first off 6 feet off the ground, okay? The bottom was no school, it is now, but it was not they built four rooms at the top and big doors of cypress, pitched roof, uh, transoms, okay? No air conditioning. Built probably before electricity, to tell you the truth. And they built I figure they built about ten schools around Terrebonne parish out of the same model. That are still there today. You go to that school today, you go to that school today and it's been added on to. Gibson is the oldest.

J: They have one in Bayou Du Large. Gibson. Bourg. Shriever.

S: But it's been added on to a lot. But the same four rooms are still there. They've taken the raised cottage to keep it from flooding, and then they finished the bottom floor, which floods. Haha, that's how stupid we are, okay?

D: But,

S: Now, you go into the first four rooms, they got the wooden floors, they got the transoms on the wooden doors, they got the wooden doors, all air conditioning. All lighted. One of those rooms in that school in that room that school from first to fourth grade. One of those rooms in that school is four computers. So I came home and I said you know, and we bitch about the school board. I do. I do – I bitch. I am a problem with the school board in Terrebonne Parish right now. But I'm gonna tell you – this was before oil and gas was discovered – somebody in this parish said we're gonna go borrow money. We're gonna buy money and we're gonna build a school system in this parish. And it's accredited that somebody did that, and it's a credit that the damn things are still functional. Okay? It really is.

D: You know that brings back some of the - all of you who (inaudible), that I can't remember, you brought up plantation names that I've never seen anywhere.

S: Oh, yeah.

D: So has anybody ever sat down and sort of looked at bayou for bayou, land to land and come up with a master scheme of plantations like one that comes to mind is Ashland.

S: Yep.

J: Oh.

D: And then, superimpose the schools because somebody gave them the property.

S: Oh, yeah.

D: Have you ever seen a map...

S: And then the same thing about the communities – every plantation was a community.

D: Yes.

S: Now we have, for instance, we have a map in here of the uh, alignment of the Southern Pacific Railroad from Shriever to Houma. That was 1909. Again, South Pacific Railroad, Shriever was built before around the Civil War. But there was a branch built from Houma - from Shriever to Houma in 1909. I have the alignment sheet of that. And it's interesting to watch as you go through each Plantation there was a stop, you see. And every plantation was a community. I don't know of uh, I wouldn't uh, I seems like I heard ...maybe we talked about with different people. Because the way to do that - you can still do it - and you oughta - somebody oughta do it - because the names are going away fast as the development is going on, but not so much the names - the history of those plantations are going away fast. Uh, the way they do it is really through the conveyance records of Terrebonne parish, because again, again, to get back to title - the titles of those plantations basically came from French and Spanish grants. And then the plantations developed, because of the five bayous. And you see we just got one strip of plantations - I mean we got them on every bayou. Dulac was a plantation. The guy that - there's a bayou - there's a lake down there just south of Boudreaux we call Lake Whitman. Whitman was the commander of the marines at the halls of Montezuma, Whitman owned the northernmost plantation in Terrebonne - St. Bridgets, and owned the southernmost plantation in Terrebonne called Dulac. And that was General Whitman. There was a guy named uh, Sowakowski. Who was a surveyor after Gallinski. Not a U.S. Government surveyor, but a surveyor came from St. Francisville. I think the Barras brought him down there. We have a lot of Sowakowski's records in this office. He made the first map of Terrebonne parish. No - first map of the city of Houma, which we actually have the map. Not a copy - *the* map. Uh, Sowakowski was the commander of the confederate troops at Port Hudson. And he was a surveyor in Terrebonne Parish before the Civil War, and was a surveyor after the Civil War. And of course he managed to lose the Battle at Port Hudson. Haha But uh, um, getting back to the a map of the - they should be Don - a map of Terr - just like you have the map of the Mississippi with the plantations, somebody didn't do a map of Terrebonne - somebody needs to do a map of Terrebonne parish which then could evolve into a book of the history of the plantations. Because everybody in - Houma was a plantation. I mean that Houma is a grant - what they call a hatch - a H-A-T-C-H grant. Is the Houma. In fact there's a Hatch...

D: Lake Hatch.

S: Lake Hatch.

J: Hatch Street

S: Hatch Street. The grant of Houma is the Hatching Grant - I wanna say Hatching Grant. I got a the Grant writing in his office somewhere e- and I could show you the Grant lines on the map. I mean - which became the section lines.

B: Well, we also need to try to record those old the areas that uh, the place stands outside the plantations to because those are disappearing fast too. At least in our part of it.

S: What you mean outside of the plantations?

B: Well outside the plantation belt – those areas that didn't have plantations. But the old traditional....

S: The real coastal areas?

B: Well, yeah.

D: You know, that there's the whole discussion of the recreation on land. The Chain of Islands. We'll call it the Last Island chain.

S: Yeah.

D: You've already mentioned the shrimp drying platforms. We already know that there are eighty of those at least. Again if you start running the numbers, a hundred people per platform, that's eight thousand people. That's not insignificant. You mentioned trappers and people going out and coming back. Carl and I have been trying to stitch together the - these transient trapper communities – they would come in but they'd (inaudible). We think that we can use a number of thirty thousand - records seem to suggest – so let's say twenty thousand. But entire families went out. Twenty times four – well let's bump it up – that's a hundred thousand people in a wasteland. For those are the kinds of things – we're just trying to get a handle....

J: Merlin Prosperie – he has a – what's the name of his place – they play the Cajun music – used to be that but it's um, right down Barras street um, there's a lunch place – lunch there every day.

H: I know his daughter, Sonia, yeah. Um,...

J: His grandson

H: Straight...

J: It's terrible!

S: Big Al's family – maybe that...

J: This guy was in school with us...

S: When I grew up, when I grew up there was a family in...

J: Every year he went out of school...

D: Is he still living?

J: Oh yeah! Yeah!

S: He's our age. He's our age.

D: Young in –

S: Merland prosperie. Was the name of the place. But anyhow, Bayou Cane dance hall – it used to be. But uh...

Still have Cajun – he plays music too. And they have – on Sunday nights he...

S: I can tell you a crazy guy you oughta talk to – his name is Doctor Jimmy Sothern. He's at Nicholls.

J: Is he dead now?

S: I saw something in he was...going to the public meeting and he was Dr. Jamie Sothern – now this guy's from Texas, but he knows a lot about Terrebonne.

J: He's really...

S: Kind of like you. He's an out of town guy.

D: Well I taught with him.

S: You know him? Haha You know him? I didn't realize you...I didn't realize he had a PHD. I guess he does he....Sothern and I used to go to LSU together.

(laughter)

S: Man we used to be...

D: But you know, where your mom's looking...

J: I'm just trying to see what the...

D: Clifford, help Carl and I – we have an issue that we can't quite understand. And I my preference is that we've been trying to find the cans – the original cans used by either the shrimp industry or the oyster industry. And there's a reason we're looking for the cans. There's never been a history in South Louisiana of collecting – and let's call it a (inaudible) material.

S: Yeah, yeah.

D: So we've been looking, and a can recently came up on Ebay. I'm gonna turn this over to Carl in just a moment. And we were bidding on it.

B: So ultimately for 27...

D: 27 thous... 27

B: 27 hundred and fifty dollars.

J: Wow.

D: For one can. Now.

S: What was it – was it a shrimp can?

J: Oyster can? Oysters or shrimp?

D: Yes.

B: Shrimp can.

D: From Houma. Now think about this for a moment. A can. Now that gets us thinking – okay. We've never had a steel making tradition in Louisiana. Well being inquisitive sorts, where did the steel come from?

S: Well another thing with the can company...

B: Because you have to understand that Houma at one time had some of the world's biggest canneries – those seafood canneries.

S: We had big oyster and shrimp.

J: It hadn't been that long – I still frying there.

S: Terrebonne parish. Terrebonne.

D: So, in the market with the railroads, went beyond Terrebonne, you had a way you could distribute; now we've got a can. Now we're just inquisitive enough – did they ship steel planks?

S: Oh no, they shipped the cans.

D: But now, we know that one company in New Orleans, the (inaudible) company which also had facilities in Biloxi, in one year, we have the records – they shipped 200+, I think the number is 252 or 3. Railroad cars of canned shrimp. Now – how many cans can you put in a railroad car?

S: Haha.

J: Call Richard Focke. Rickie Focke.

D: Alright.

J: He was the last one that ran the Indian Ridge Canning Company.

D: Alright.

J: Canning Company. I'm telling you – (inaudible) he lives here in town. He good friend of ours. He could tell you the history – you might even maybe get you a can.

D: But you know it seems simple! But if you start thinking of the market, and beginning with dried shrimp moving into a canned product, and we're sitting here – this is one company, there's a hundred companies, that means we're shipping a thousand train cars. Now how many boxes of cans? Whoah,

now this is a number that's starting to get really large. We know that in linear feet, not board feet, linear feet, in the construction of shrimp drying platforms, we think we can go to Chicago. Where did it come from? What is your family? Was it this family? Did they use cypress? Did they use pine? What did they use? How'd they do it?

S: I would bet they used cypress.

D: I would! But you see it's..

S: I can remember – I can show you...

D: But that's not important in – until you start doing the multipliers.

B: Well let's get back – well if you remember the canning farms, uh, based on the number of residents, residential buildings on these platforms, about how many people you think would have been living on the platforms when they were active?

S: Hmm.

J: God I don't know.

S: I guess they lived with families.

H: Yeah I was about to say that.

S: Uh, I would think – I would say...

D: Not just the workers – the total number.

S: I would say there were at least – let's say there was at least five or six workers on the platform – now, the other thing that people would get off the boat and work on the platforms too – but let's say there was at least five or six workers on a platform, and uh, and that would be families, so you would end up with uh, let's say three kids per family, that would be eighteen and another for spouse so what is that – that's twenty five, thirty people. Now, of course the boats would come in with the shrimp and people would get – I'm talking about little boats, you know, and they get off and do anything they wanted to do – had to do. But uh, yeah, I can remember, yeah I remember the platform at Seabreeze, I remember the platform at Bayou Decade, (inaudible) platform at Seabreeze was Pellegrin. Another I remember the platforms just north of Grand Isle where we used to go water skiing – that thing was ...

J: Well I was gonna say that was the one I remember the most.

S: Huh?

D: At (inaudible)?

J: Yeah, yeah. Right across there.



I don't remember that, but I remember the one the BP Island – the I can tell you right where it was. I guess I can tell you – probably no more land...but uh, again the one at Seabreeze I know exactly where it was, even though it's under water, and another one at bayou Decade.

B: Well we've seen materials that indicate some of them were as large as three acres and their surface area on average –

S: I would say that's about right. Depends upon who and what and what it was – uh, you know what they all had on them – they had a boiler. They all had a brick – not a boiler, but they had a brick – somebody built a brick uh, chimney like. Well that was the boiler. That's where you threw the wood in to heat the water. And I bet you go find those – I bet they might be crumbled but they were brick. You find them and they were made out of brick. The other, um, I was just thinking about – I...oh, we were talking about my father – one thing that he did get into is the oil business. And uh, you mentioned earlier, and again my father evolved into the oil business – he got involved in the oil business because they reconstructed the U.S. Government surveyors. And, and we have – I mean it's unbelievable the, the volume of work that we have done in the oil and gas business.

B: Well let's talk a little bit about that – because we have basically taken the story of the family business up to eh WWII, but let's talk about WWII and the coming of the oil industry.

S: Okay, the uh, up to WWII, again, the business uh, the utilities in the city of Houma were always owned by the city of Houma including the electrical distribution and generation. Because you had the normal sewage and water systems and what have you, and my father was always involved in that. Both WPA monies and, and then after the Second World War monies, but primarily before the Second World War, most of the public projects were in the thirties, twenties again was the first gravel roads, uh, in the thirties were primarily WPA projects, sewage, water, what have you. Houma had a sewage collection system in the twenties. Houma had a gas system in the twenties. Actually there was gas discovered in Lehet Field in Terrebonne parish, they built a pipeline to Houma. The gas played out, and it went from gas back to coal and wood and everything else. I can remember that. Um, the uh, so my father was involved – my father designed a natural gas system in Houma that they built out of cast iron in those days – which is rather unusual. Um, it functioned for a long time. My father designed a sewage treatment plant for Houma that never got built because the Second World War. But he did a lot of – a lot of movable bridges – there's a couple bridges that were demolished – one of them, we redesigned the bridge, but the foundation for the bridge is still there. But he, aesthetic covering of the bridge is different because it went from a navigable stream to a non-navigable stream. The first swing span bridge in Terrebonne –and they got – they still got fifty of them around – built out of steel, my father designed a swing span bridge out of wood. And later as steel became available, he took that wood design, and adapted it to a steel bridge. And there's hundreds – not hundreds, but there's probably ten or twelve of them in the parish that are still around. Um, but okay. After the second uh, I've got you through the depression. During the Second World War, my father – everybody could see – still made a living in surveying. And they had discovered oil in Terrebonne in the twenties. Uh, but it began to multiply in the, in the uh, during the war because of Texaco. Again, this is a Texaco building. Uh, Texaco came to Louisiana uh, in the thirties, when Louisiana land who had bought all the land from the Atchafalaya

Levee District, which is another story. Uh, began explore for oil and gas on their property, and on state leases. And Louisiana Land in the thirties, went bankrupt. Um, drilling wells. They drilled eight or nine dry holes on their property and on state leases. Um, which they had gotten through The Win or Lose Oil Company, which had gotten through Huey Long, okay. All in this area – big, big time. Texaco – alright. So Louisiana land is broke. They can't raise money, they can't pay people. They were paying - Louisiana Land was paying people with script. My daddy was working for Louisiana Land as a surveyor – again Louisiana Land owns 600,000 acres of uh, wetlands in South Louisiana primarily between the Mississippi River and the Atchafalaya River. My daddy – their lawyer was a Mr. Robert Milling – the Milling firm – still around. Uh, premier lawyer. I didn't know Mr. Millings. He died before I was born – died before I got to know him. Um, among other things, Mr. Milling was one of the - not founders, but he was a big pillar in the Whitney Bank. Okay? My grandfather was a great investor. My grandfather bought stock in steam car companies. My grandfather bought a Colorado coal mine in 1900, things like that. My daddy's in New Orleans with Mr. Robert Milling working on alitigation for Louisiana Land – some of their property titles and such. And Mr. Millings says, Baker, he says you better go buy stock in Louisiana Land. And my daddy says oh man, you know, what do you mean buy stock in Louisiana Land? He says it's selling for fifty cents a share – you oughta go buy some. He says okay, Mr. Milling. He leaves New Orleans, he comes back to Houma. Story of my daddy – goes across the street to my grandpa's house – his office was right across the street. He says, I wanna borrow a hundred dollars from you. He said what you want a hundred dollars for? He said I wanna buy some stock in Louisiana Land. My grandpa says, you gotta be out of your freaking mind. He said, that stuff ain't no good – it ain't worth the papers – I ain't lending you no hundred dollars for that. He said okay. My daddy picked up fifty dollars and he bought a hundred shares of stock at fifty cents a share, okay? He died in 1962 – and it was worth 18,500 dollars. Mr. Milling bought 3000 shares. Haha. Okay? But anyhow, uh, Louisiana Land is broke, okay? Texaco, which was a very small company in Shreveport, Louisiana, it was called The Texas Company, okay? Her father worked for them for 35 years. Before then, I mean before they started, Texaco comes down here and says well, we can probably raise about a hundred million dollars to drill some wells. I know I think they could raise enough money in those days to drill six wells. So Texaco goes to New York and raises enough money to drill six wells and drill six successful wells. And Louisiana Land on Louisiana Land's leases. And Louisiana Land kept the twenty two and a half percent override. The, the Win or Lose had about a five percent override, okay? Louisiana Land has a twenty two percent override, and Texaco had the rest, okay? That made Texaco. That made Texaco. It made Louisiana Land, and it made the Win or Lose Oil Company, okay? They still got wells producing from that deal, okay? Uh, so my daddy working for Louisiana Land, Texaco comes in to Houma and, not only my daddy but a lot of other people really provided a lot of services to Texaco. Texaco and Allen Ellender's brother was a lawyer, and they were close, a guy named Claude Ellender. Texaco comes to town about 19- after the Second World War. Cause they were struggling to find anything to drill with during the war, okay? And building pipelines and what have you. After the Second World War in 1945, it was, uh, Texaco comes to town and meets with my daddy and Claude Ellender, and he says look – we wanna buy a piece of property to build an office in Houma. We're gonna build one in New Iberia, we're gonna build one in Harvey, an office in New Orleans – we want an operation office in Houma. And so they said okay, we wanna be on the water. So they looked around, and they said now we want ya'll to go buy it - we want ya'll to go look around – ya'll find a piece of property you think we'd like and come tell us – we want ya'll to buy it – we don't want to

buy it because the price is gonna go up. So my dad and Claude Ellender bought this piece of property for Texaco, okay in 1945. And then they built – Texaco built actually - this is the first building they built – they built a wing back there then they built a building across the street, and they built this slip in here. And one time, Texaco had about 50 drilling rigs running out of this office. Texaco had a 250 million dollar budget in this office alone. Uh, interesting – we get back to the fur business, there was a family in Terrebonne parish that were fur buyers – that’s when you really come into money. The Maulers. And the Maulers – I can remember when I was in high school, and knew the people, my daddy knew the people because they were – they were surveying trapping leases in the marsh okay? There were very few people who wanted to buy the land because they didn’t want to pay the taxes. So they would lease the land for fur and they’d get big pipes over who’s lease was there and all of this BS.

J: They were right down the bayou...

S: SO my daddy – my daddy got to know the Maulers pretty well, and the Maulers at one time were making two and three hundred thousand dollars a year profit in buying and selling furs.

D: Are any of their relatives still...

S: one, one of them – the youngest generation is alive – he probably don’t know as much about it as I know, but he runs Big Al’s restaurant, down the road.

D: Really.

S: Yeah. His name is Al Mauler. And his daddy just died. His daddy was the kind of the kid brother in the family, but his daddy just died. But uh, he’s a big alligator trapper now. But anyhow, he knows a little bit about him. And he don’t know as much as I know – I mean I – but that was a big huge business in Terrebonne parish – the fur business. It’s like the – you see, you, you bring up the sugarcane and how it’s receding. But you see the cypress business was huge in this parish. Thousand people working in sawmills. Uh, the - now we’re going through this ritual with the oysters. We going through this ritual with shrimp. I think pretty soon we ain’t gonna have no shrimpers in Terrebonne. Okay, not because there ain’t no shrimp, but they can’t make any money. You know, that’s horrible. But getting back to the seine and the trawl, can you imagine how much shrimp they had in this parish two hundred years ago? They must’ve had shrimp out there this big!

(laughter)

J: You need to get this book – *Madam Toussaint’s Wedding Day* – it’s written by Dr. T. I. St. Martin, who lived here in Houma, was a doctor here. He wrote this book and it is about life at the end of the bayou.

S: At the platforms.

J: Where people – they would seine for their shrimp and all. And this book was published in I guess, oh I know, ’35 or something like that. It was *the* scandal of the world. The people in Houma did not want it to be said that this is how people lived down the muddy waters. I mean he was a doctor. He went out

there. This is actually, you know, some of the book is written as fiction, but this is the way life was there. You know. Jumping the broom...

D: Oh yes!

J: ...all this stuff, and was a, a

S: At the platform.

J: I mean really it was a – I read the book periodically, and every time I read it, I get some more enjoyment out of it in there. It's not a (inaudible) book, but I recommend it.

S: Again in the, in the business, after the, after the war of course and it was all kind of expansion – oil and gas expansion, pipeline expansion – interesting, we're working on a pipeline project now that happens to be in Mississippi. But uh, the pipeline was laid in 1941, and we were involved in that project, and now we're in the project of replacing that 1941 project - pipeline.

D: That would be an oil and gas?

S: Yes. That was a United Gas line - my daddy was working for United Gas. When I was born. 1935. United Gas came into the area even before the Second World War. And uh, but after the Second World War, United Gas, Tennessee Gas Transmission Company - I mean there's huge projects that we worked on. Uh, we uh, since that time, of course we've done things in recent years – built a pipeline – survey, engineering, permitting a pipeline from uh, from Paincourtville, basically to Bayou La Batre, Alabama across Lake Ponchartrain down parallel to pretty much the interstate to Bayou La Batre. And we've evolved into the offshore surveying business. And uh, of course we still do engineering work. We still design roads and bridges and subdivisions and uh, and uh, golf courses and uh, mitigation work now. We got involved into the permitting – everything in the business has been an evolution. Again in 1958 when I got out of school, my father was sixty eight years old. And the only reason he had the place open was because of me, and he had one employee. And uh, by the time he died five years later, we had about fifteen employees. In 1982, and of course my father, and everything we do my father had done, okay? We just do it a bigger pace, we do different methods. We do different volume of business. I mean we do more business in 30 days than he did in 30 years because he made more money in 30 days than we do in 30 years. But uh, I mean you know, we put – I was in the business, we had to have five employees to have hospitalization. And I remember I became the fifth employee to get the hospitalization program. And we've been having hospitalization since then. And interesting – my mother and father never had hospitalization. My mother and father's whole attitude in life was that they were gonna work hard, and save their resources –save their assets, so they never would be dependent on anybody – not government or anybody. I mean so that philosophy don't exist anymore. In 1965 Betsy hit in '65, there was no FEMA. There was no flood insurance in '65. All of a sudden, we got all this stuff that, I mean it is insanity. It really is. I got a place in Grand Isle two hundred feet from the beach on Grand Isle. Got flood insurance – (inaudible) for forty years. That's ridiculous. Nobody oughta be insured at that damn place! Because the federal government (inaudible) that, and you ride around America, and they got two, ten million dollar houses built on the edge of the ocean insured, you could bet. So anyhow, uh, but the

business uh, evolved uh, again we were basically survey company working primarily in the oil and gas industry for major property owners. We were uh, we were a civil engineering design firm – we've never built anything, although we had a construction license for years, but we never really want to be in the contracting business. We think we provide a professional service – not only as a civil engineering but as a land surveyor. Because we've been getting permits on navigable waters to the United States of America since 1913. Now in 1972 they expanded it into the wetlands. 404 – I do not understand the process, we get 200 to 300 permits a year, for clients, and I do not understand the process. Because the process changes every trip. Okay? Uh I think it's a- I personally think we need a permitting process, I think what we have is, is arbitrary caprices. They got one guy with marine fish and he calls me Arbitrary Caprices Smith all the time. Haha. But we've evolved into it and what I call an environmental service company. We get 404 permitting, we do, uh, city river permits, we do, of course we do feasibility studies, we do cost estimates, we do for construction projects, we do feasibility, um, estimates um, prepare plan specifications and then supervise the construction for clients - public and private clients. We do, we do more and more industrial work, uh, in civil engineering – we've always done tremendous industrial work in surveying, but we do a tremendous amount of industrial work now in civil engineering, which is very, is very positive in my opinion because it's different from working for the government. The government is horrible to work for. The local government, the state government, and the federal government. The - working for business, working for clients that have money and they know what they want. They have professional people involved to tell you what they want, uh, most of the companies now outsource, and so we – that's good for us. And you know again – Exxon, Texaco, everybody had big staffs – surveyors and engineers. Don't have it anymore. So that's been very good for us, very frankly, uh, environmental people have expanded – we even have a group now that do oyster evaluations. Again for particularly for pipeline companies, oysters – big oil and gas companies, oysters is a big problem – nobody understands it. Uh, we ended up with a group out of, out of Wildlife and Fisheries who don't want to work for Wildlife and Fisheries anymore. They came to work for us. We've did that because our clients suggested it. Again, we have all the insurance, the liability insurance – we could testify in court that here historically, that used to come from academia, uh, that kind of getting few and far between, that frankly. Um, so we, we have a staff that do that. We're actually doing some projects in Texas which are kind of unbelievable to me. I'm talking about from the oyster evaluation. We're doing a lot of survey work in Texas, but uh – and a lot of engineering work, but we're doing a lot of uh, environmental things. Uh, so we have an environmental service company. And to do all that, we have a hundred vehicles. We probably have about forty boats. So sometimes I think we are an equipment rental company. So we work for different clients uh, in different ways. We think we have a "one stop shop" if they want that, some of them do, some of them don't – some of them say yeah, we want you to do the survey work, the permit work, but we don't want you to do the engineering work – that's fine. Some of them say we want you to do the engineering work, but we're gonna get somebody else to do the permitting work. We gonna say some of them say you do the environmental work and don't do nothing else. That's fine – we do that. We do anything you want, and if somebody slips, let us know, we're gonna work for them. We don't, we sign contracts, we're not wild about contracts, but we sign contracts every day. We have professional liability. We have all the workman's comp. programs, safety programs for the major companies are major things, if you don't have a safety program, they won't even talk to you. Um, if you don't have a liability insurance program, they don't talk to you. We got all that – it covers the whole

spectrum. We did some work for one major client up in Illinois, and I kept saying why you sending us to Illinois? They said, we can't get nobody in Illinois to get the insurance. I said well, and we talked to people in Illinois and said why don't ya'll sub this for us – here's the insurance. They said, we ain't buying insurance for that job, the hell with ya'll. So the fact that we got all this work is good, uh, in Katrina and what we've gone through in the last four or five years and we've lived here all our lives, and we know about hurricanes and frankly we know about preparing for hurricanes. In '04 we built a 50,000 dollar generator out here to run this whole office. Air conditioning, everything. '05 hits, and Katrina puts electricity and telephones out of this office for five, six days. We have clients – we have clients in Houston, Texas – we think we have a lot invested here. We got clients in Texas that got billions of dollars invested in this parish - in this coastal area. Uh, they could talk to us through our internet because we have electricity. Uh, we couldn't talk to us on the phone, but they could talk to us on our satellite phone. We did a million dollars worth of business in five days because we could communicate with Houston. Now this is through my IT people, but it occurred yesterday, and we now have teleconferencing in all the offices, and I said that's fine, and I've been bringing this up since Katrina. I said I want teleconferencing on satellite. I don't want teleconferencing on land line. Teleconferencing, if we have a disaster like we're gonna have, we're gonna lose the land lines and the teleconferencing ain't gonna work. Now we're gonna be able to talk satellite, and hopefully our internet will stay up, but I want to explore teleconferencing on satellite. Every time I said this, they said it's not commercial. It's not available. It costs too much money. I said I see the guy flying around in the damn uh, spaceship, has got it. How come I can't have it? You know, tell me! It costs too much. I said how much is too much? Tell me how much it is. Nobody's ever come about - I threw that to Adam yesterday – I said ya'll did a wonderful job with my personal computer – let me tell ya'll something else to think about. But I've been asking that question for four years.

H: But it's interesting to know – we are – we have – this is our corporate office – T. Baker Smith – this is our corporate office. And this is where we plan on staying our corporate office. But we realize we're not stupid. We realize that they've got, you know – we're twenty miles getting closer to the gulf, we're on the east side of Houma...

S: Eleven feet above sea level.

H: Yeah, we know it's gonna happen. So we've – we know we're gonna get destroyed in some form or another. Every time we leave, every time we have a storm come this way, we go out with the idea that we could come back and we have ten feet of water in this building, you know. Ten inches of water, ten feet of water. So we've - especially since Hurricane Katrina in 2005, we've started making uh, ultimate plans. Uh, we've opened up offices in different areas of the country. We have a great extensive disaster plan that we have in place, it's so funny because I go to meetings now, looking – you know, learning what other companies are doing, and we're so far advanced it's just like – and we're like – I mean we just thought of this stuff on our own guys. You know, it's not you know this is survival you know.

S: Starting in '05, we spent a bunch of money..but go ahead.

H: But it's uh, we, we had to put things in place for Gustav and that's what – when Hurricane Gustav hit Houma, this office was closed. We were closed for five days – for a full week we were closed. But our other – and our office in Thibodaux was closed, our office in Baton Rouge was closed – well they were without electricity for five days also. Um, but our Houston office was still open – still blowing and going, still sending out survey crews, our Lafayette office was still open, still sending out survey crews, still working, so it was very comforting to our employees to know that their company had never – we never shut down. Ten days later, we had Hurricane Ike come through. Our Houston office got affected by that, our Lafayette office got affected by that, but we still had people out working – we were still, so we – our business never shut down, you know. And that's just uh, and that's what we plan on doing. I mean we're still going, you know?

S: The uh, not only our employees feel secure about it, but more importantly our clients.

H: Right, right, right.

S: Again after Katrina, we were running around South Louisiana doing things for clients that had nothing to do with engineering or survey. And everything to do with closing valves. And plugging up pipelines and things like that. So - and they know that now. They know that. Uh, I left – I never left Houma for a hurricane until Gustav, I ain't never leaving Houma again. I'm totally convinced – this building is eleven feet above sea level – I think you could have ten feet of water in this building, but we got an upstairs of this building. I live – my house is five and a half feet above sea level, but I built a house next door that's twenty feet above sea level. Okay? I left for Gustav- I went all the way to the Sunshine Bridge, okay? I was too far – I ain't going there no more.

J: It's so hard to get back in.

S: And that is thirty – that is thirty feet above sea level, and that's a hundred miles north of here. That's safe. The problem is you can't get back. And it ain't the damn government. The government's got all kinds of crap and things about how you're gonna get back. That don't bother me. It's the physical things you can't get back. So I don't know about Joann, but I ain't leaving. I got life vests, I got, I got axes, I got boats that will all be at my house, I got boats that are on trailers, they ain't gonna be in the trailers. They're gonna be in the yard tied to a tree. I mean that's the thing. So if you live here, you gotta have a hurricane preparedness plan – you should have a hurricane evacuation plan, although I don't ever intend to ever use it. And, and you have to have an after disaster plan. And I'm gonna tell you – I don't think we got that. Now we got it and she said, we have worked very hard – we spent a fortune. We have a redundant computer system in Houston, Texas. We have a redundant computer system in Lafayette that can – every file in this office is in that system. They tell me, okay. So we can operate. And uh, and all of our equipment is basically portable. All of our vehicles and all of our boats are basically portable, so they will be somewhere that they don't get flooded – but they're gonna be readily available to us.

B: What about your old historic records?

S: We have um, scanned them all now...

H: about eighty perc – ninety percent of them are all actually scanned.

S: Yeah. We're in the process, and we've been in that process for two years. But we're scanning everything. And again, my idea was after Katrina I was gonna buy and 18 wheeler and set it up to put particularly the computer equipment in. and of course my children – my son, in particular, said that's crazy. We're gonna get an office in Houston. Office in Houston's 35 feet above sea level. Now for Ike, it had an electrical problem. So we put a generator in there, and we have a generator here, we have a generator next door, we have a generator in Thibodaux, and I just ran across the guy who wanted to sell me two generators yesterday cheap, so I might buy two more. And I just sit here thinking, what would I do, what I don't (inaudible). We put one over there on Glen Street. So we, we are very, very knowledgeable where we live. Again, you can't be a civil engineer and land surveyor and live on the land and the water like I have basically for 74 years. Not only do I see what happening to us, but I should've – I've seen it for years! I mean we got five million pieces of paper in this office, okay? I supposedly have a formal education from LSU, but uh, I also see it! I mean I live here! You know? I mean we were in Grand Isle this weekend. You know, and you see - look. We were in Miami Beach three weeks ago. Miami Beach. 118. US 118. Riding down, getting as close to the ocean as you can get. Guess what they had on the road. They had water from the Atlantic Ocean. From the Atlantic Ocean. And again we go along, we made a, a what - fifty five, ten thousand mile trip within the last two months – and everywhere we were we were on the coast – from the Great Lakes all the way to the Key West. And you know it's - we do live in a very unique place. I mean it's not northern Maine, it's not Key West, it's not the coast of Florida. We live in a very unusual place. We have very - because of that we have very unusual problems. Uh, but, see I get back to the solution – the major solution to our problems is to manage to the Mississippi River. The, the major solutions to our problems is the resource that built the country in the first place. Over the last thousand, two thousand years. Okay?

D: I want to – I wanna back step to World War II. Because – and I could be wrong- besides T. Baker Smith that has one business model, Waldemar Nelson in New Orleans has another business model – both are engineers. Timelines are close – not exactly. There is a connectivity between this New Orleans mentality and - let's just call it the Terrebonne mentality.

J: The country. Haha

D: ...and if you look at, at Post-World War II, and you look at Bayou Lafourche, you find peoples whose last names, Schouest, Theriot, Orgeron, not on Bayou Lafourche, but close – Candies, we could add some others.

S: Plaisance

D: Plaisance. Who are connected to the oil business and got involved in, generally, boats. You don't find that necessarily in Terrebonne. Well we had people who got involved in fabrication in Terrebonne. Now was all of that local? I mean when you look at (inaudible) Theriot. I mean of course he was broke a couple of times, but that was a Bayou Lafourche person, came out of WWII, the Orgeron family, Otto Candies was associated with Exxon, well on both.



J: Yeah.

D: Okay. What about here in Terrebonne?

S: Well first off, the navigation people in Terrebonne was Cenacs. Then you go back to Texaco. Uh, the, the Cenacs were big people with Texaco, and all kinds of Cenacs. There was one major company – there *is* one major company called Cenacs Towing Company. But there's a number of other Cenacs involved.

D: Is that Benny Cenac?

S: Yeah. That's Benny. That's Benny's grandfather that founded the company.

D: Okay.

S: And uh, but there were spinoffs from that – there was a lot of other Cenacs in the boat business today. Marlin Towing Company is one of them, uh, I could look through the phone book. There's another group called Lebeouf Brothers, which was uh, actually founded by a Gosselin family. Uh, Lebeouf was an in-law, and actually Lebeouf – Gosselin was working for Texaco. His brother in law was named Lebeouf. So Gosselin worked at the Texaco to go get all the boat business (inaudible). Then they called the company Lebeouf Brothers and so now Lebeoufs are all out of it and Gosselin owns it. Big company. Big company right now in Terrebonne. Uh, what they evolved into – all those companies of course have evolved into the fabrication because their do their own – a lot of their own work instead of going to a shipyard to build something and some families shipyard ain't got time – they go build their own boats. Um, uh...

D: So the boat building trade – we don't want to overlook because a lot of the boats were built by people who did not have a formal....

J: Oh no.

D: Mariner education. They just went out there and they did it!

S: Yep. They're still doing it. Um, the, again they evolved. They were first building wooden boats. They were building wooden boats for seafood industry – shrimpers. They were shrimpers. A shrimper builds the damn, boat, okay. Uh, built a boat on the tree, throw it in the bayou, and start shrimping, you know. They still do that today out of wood, okay. But now there are also they became welders so they could buy some steel and weld the steel. They forget they had welders in water (inaudible). That's another part of my life. I was on the board of Entergy and I was on the (inaudible) committee – like I knew what I was doing. (inaudible) they were building a (inaudible) in St. Charles parish, and they had to wrap that damn dome in a steel blanket, you know. Special steel. And they had some coonasses over there stealing the steel and building their shrimp boats – borrowing the steel from (inaudible).

D: And they were busted!

S: Yeah. They went and got a detective to go find him and they ended up seizing the boat – they got it sitting over there in the yard. But anyhow, the uh, so they, they start first off, you get back to boat

building – all of these people started building boats, and you're talking about in the twenties and thirties, they were building boats out of cypress and wood to go shrimping with. Fishing. Shrimp, anything. Oysters, whatever. Then it evolved – when they found oil, they took the wooden boats and started bringing them to the oil companies – (inaudible) – it was the biggest catfish in the – in bayou – in Bayou Des Allemands. These guys didn't know nothing about the oil business – he was the catfisherman. And (inaudible). They wanted to drill a well in Lake Salvador, and they said we wanna rent you a boat to take up people because they didn't know how to do that. He said aw man, he said I got catfish. He said, we're gonna pay you more than catfishing. It took them a while to figure all that out, and the same thing with the Cenacs. And the Cenacs – were in the – was in the seafood business, my grandpa used to rent them a house to live in! I mean people were – I mean these are native people that they came here because the – I don't know - somebody was chasing them, and they came here and started making a living off the water on the land. Okay?

J: Like the Cenacs because Woodsy – I know Woodsy had his own barge when we were in high school...

S: Yeah, but anyhow...

J: ...the only kid we knew in high school that had his own barge.

S: But anyhow, they uh, they, they uh, they evolved into that because of their knowledge of the area – the geographic knowledge first off, I mean Texaco didn't know where Lake Bartrai was until some coonass brought them to Lake Bartrai! Now Texaco could look at a map, and say ooh there oughta be oil there – and the geological map, but they don't know how to get that. So they got to Houma and said could you take us to Lake Bartrai? Somebody took them there, and said could you take me tomorrow, and could you take me tomorrow, and pretty soon they said yeah! I'll take you every day – they could use the money, so that's the boat business, okay. And they were building boats out of wood, steel evolved up to – after the Second World War. Somebody taught somebody how to weld down here – nobody knew how to weld. I mean, shit. You know, they don't teach you that in France. They started welding, and other people welded, and then somebody said well we're gonna bring some aluminum. They said what is that. They taught them how to weld the aluminum, we got people in South Louisiana that can weld aluminum better than anybody in the world. Except New Zealand and Australia. I thought that with New Zealand and Australia, I started looking at some of them boats, and the way them people build boats, probably the welders in Louisiana look bad. But uh, aluminum welders in South Louisiana are better than anybody surely in America. Okay. The Breaux people over there in Breaux Bridge, and

J: We saw a Breaux boat...somewhere in Florida.

S: In uh, what's somewhere, no we saw them in Key West! That boat that was running up and down with those people. But anyhow, uh, so that's how they evolved in – you talk about boat building business. They were all involved in the boat building business because of uh, because of the oil and gas industry, and because they knew about building boats because of the fishing and what have you. Now nobody see – my daddy had a 36 foot cruiser. Tied at Bartrai Street in Houma. All my life, he sold it in 1955 after he had his first heart attack. That boat was built in 1926. That boat was 36 feet long. It slept eight people. It had a head, a galley, and a bridge on the boat. And that's what he would use to go fishing. Every

weekend. He grew up on the water before '26, but that's the boat he built – he built it from virgin plank cypress. It came out of my grandpa's lumberyard, okay. That was built down the bayou in Madison Canal, by some boat builders - Borne family, okay. The storm came in '26, the boat- the hull was built, the cabin wasn't in – the engine wasn't in it – he sunk the boat in '26 to keep the, the salt to save the boat from the storm – popped the boat up, finished the boat, had a gas engine long as this table. Haha. Six cylinder's Wisconsin engine! Biggest Wisconsin engine I ever saw in my life! And I mean boo, boo, boo, boo, you know. And we'd go out on that boat – he had three anchors – one on the bow, one on the stern, and one on the build. I said daddy, if you throw them anchors overboard, we'll go faster. He said, boy, I'm gonna tell you about the 1909 storm. SO anyhow, So anyhow, anyhow, they, they were boat builders, they were starting renting the boat. Nobody in my Daddy's 19 –36 foot boat built in 1926 never went past the islands. Nobody went in the Gulf of Mexico. No shrimper went in the Gulf of Mexico. Nobody went in the Gulf of Mexico. You had to be insane to go past them islands, okay – until they discovered oil and gas. Then my kids - she grew up on a boat in Grand Isle. She went so far in the Gulf of Mexico, my parents that's the only time they went out there was on a cruise ship going to South America! But the oil and gas industry evolved that. Not only did the coonass build wooden boats and sold them to the oil companies, they began to build steel boats and then the oil companies said we going past the islands after 1950, '45. And partner, now they going all over the damn world! Okay? Same people. So that's an evolution of ingenuity. It's an evolution of opportunites. And again we have the same thing. That's the way we evolved in this business. I mean my daddy would come back here and say, you gotta be out of your mind doing this. Man, what are you doing? Why you doing these things for these people? Well, they pay money. You know, they, you know, Schouest – Old Man Schouest just died. I'm sure he says, you going to Brazil? You going to Antartica? You all must be out of your mind! You damn lucky to get out of Barataria Pass! Haha

D: Well the Schouest family's done well.

S: Oh yeah.

D: But at the same time you know, one of the things we found in (inaudible) 1932 I'm sure you have it in your office. Map of Seabreeze. And what's interesting – in 1932, the (inaudible) got in the middle of the water. Now arpins were built along a ridge. But here's the one visual example that we can show about landlines. But you go to Cocodrie and you talk to anybody, they've never – most of them know up the bayou there's a sign that says Seabreeze Recreation Site. I have no idea that Seabreeze – we know that was an oyster shucking house there.

S: Oh, my daddy had the cans.

D: And it was the cans and yet, it is – we have two photographs.

S: It was a Cenac! You know the oyster shucking place in Seabreeze was Cenac! One of the Cenacs! And my grandfather, you see he had a camp in Seabreeze. My grandfather bought piece of property down the bayou – in Little Seabreeze called Bayou Jose. J-O-S-E from the Government Survey (inaudible) okay? And the – you talk about the arpins and the section lines, that's a U.S. Government Survey. They said they had land down there. In say, 1840 let's say. I don't know exactly. By the way, we surveyed that

township. We have an official government resurvey of that township by me. Okay, because it's an oil and gas activity. But anyhow, my grandpa had a camp at Seabreeze. He bought a piece of property to build a camp. He goes down and builds the camp. The trouble is he builds the camp - this is before my daddy got out of college - he builds the camp on the property - the property was further down.

(laughter)

S: He builds the camp at the property is further south of that. So among other things, 1909 my daddy's going to Tulane. They decide they were gonna go fishing in September. Now you can imagine what it took to go from New Orleans to Houma in 1909, okay. So they got a fishing trip planned. My grandpa, my daddy, and my grandpa's brother. Go fishing in Seabreeze in September, okay? First of September - first week in September. They come to Houma and they get - my daddy dragged his ass from New Orleans - my uncle came from New Iberia. They get him a grandpa's boat in Houma and they go chug chug chug down the bayou. All the coonasses that are coming up the bayou in their sailboats, oaring up the bayou, and they said, what you doing? He said well, we coming up the bayou. Why? Gonna be some bad weather. He said, how you know that? He said well, the tide - we watching the tide. And the wind he said aw man we've been planning this trip - chug chug chug. They get to the camp, they cook their damn supper and the roof blows off the camp. The damn camp blows off the pilings - I tell you the camp had to be ten feet off the ground, okay. So the roof was twenty feet off the ground. The roof blows off the camp. Then the water blows the camp off the pilings. They end up on the roof drifting to the west. Okay? They - my grandpa and my daddy and my uncle - my great uncle - so they hanging on the roof - heard it through my great uncle. He said I can't hang on no more. He dropped off and drowned. My grandpa says, he can't hang on no more, so my dad said to - my daddy was about nineteen, twenty years old, he said I'm gonna hold you. So he hold him and they end up on what they call Rabbit Bayou on Little Caillou which about five, ten miles from where they were, and then they get into an oak tree and they get to sit in the tree so they could - my grandpa could get off the damn roof and get - and sit in the tree. About three days later, here comes a black man coming down Bayou Little Caillou, coming down with his oar boat, picks them out the damn tree, brings them back to Houma. And we know this because there's an article in the Times Picayune says somebody out look into the storm, you know, three days later. And that's where they talk about those three hundred people drowning, but they're sitting there interviewing my grandpa in his house right there on Barras street, and he's talking about the water and he's...

H: And I think the uncle...

S: He told - he told...

H: Yeah but he was the mayor or something.

S: Yeah, he was the mayor of New Iberia. And he - he bought my grandpa tells my daddy - he said look, I'm gonna fall off this thing and drown, and he says you tell - take care of your, your mama and your sisters and all this crap - and my daddy says no! But uh, uh, so anyhow, that was - you talking about the boat business and how it evolved, and the oil business and we did the same thing - we started working

for the oil companies. On land. In tidal problems, on land. For the state – the first location we drilled – first oil, gas location, drilled in Terrebonne parish in 19 – I bet 1927. I believe...

D: You were at number 1?

S: We were at number 1. And we got it in the file. And, and so we worked for those companies, we began to work for the pipeline companies as they began to build pipelines into the area, uh, we began to work on the bays and lakes as uh, as Texaco, again we got a relationship that goes back to Texaco – unbelievable. And testify and all kind of litigation – all kinds of crazy stuff. Um, we, uh we work for Placid for the Hunt family, uh, and all their different companies, United Gas of course was the prime here, they had a sister company called Union Producers – Humble – we do a lot of work for Humble and Exxon, we uh, we evolved and as they began to move further out, we just continue to work for them – I'm talking about in the surveying industry. We got about, well six, maybe 60% of our business today is – even today is in the oil and gas industry. Now eighteen months ago it was even more – um, we're now working all over Texas...

J: Alaska – we do work in Alaska.

S: We built some work uh...

H: New Jersey.

S: ...we're doing some work there – we're doing some work off the coast of New Jersey, see we're doing some work – we were doing a big project in Illinois. uh, we doing – we have an office in Shreveport where we're working on Angel Shale project for some people. Uh, so it's like an evolution. And that's the same thing that happened in the boat business and all of the other – all of the other businesses. People came to Terrebonne and they still today – people are the coming to Terrebonne – in fact I just bumped into a kid working for me from Indiana this morning. They come to Terrebonne right now because they can't find any jobs anywhere else, and they get involved in the oil and gas industry, and if they have any - even today, if they have any ingenuity, even without much formal education, if they have any personal drive or ingenuity, there's big opportunities. There truly are. I mean you gotta work your ass off, and you gotta have a little - I got a - I got a partner of mine who was born literally that's when people say, I was born with a silver spoon. I got a partner of mine who was literally born with a silver spoon in his mouth. And he keeps telling me he don't have the opportunities like you used to have when his daddy was younger, when I was young. That's BS! You got the opportunity. You gotta get out and hustle. Particularly in the oil and gas industry – you got opportunities you can't believe. (inaudible) Wouldn't be here if it hadn't been for some ingenuity, the price of the product going up, and some ingenuity. Now they think they got gas everywhere in the damn world! All you gotta do is go crack it, you know, whatever that means. But I mean they – I'm going through Pennsylvania the other day. Alright? The argument in Pennsylvania is, does Pennsylvania have a severance tax. They don't have a severance tax and they got a big – they think they got a big shale discovery up there. The argument is – should Pennsylvania have a severance tax – I can't believe they still (inaudible) to have a severance tax! Well, and the companies up there are lobbying not to have one. So you know how screwed up the country is, they're up there paying - oil companies are paying a fortune up there to PNR to try and make sure they

don't have a severance tax. And anybody with any sense would say, well goddamn we're gonna get something out of it. You'd think we're still (inaudible). Haha

D: You know, go back to your companies and, and oil companies have evolved. And I'll use LLME. You know, Tempgin, LLME became Burlington – Burlington became ConocoPhillips. There is no tax superlative involved. Half went to Shell, half went to Chevron. That being said, do you still have working relationships with Shell...

S: We even have more. We even have more because - as they, as they dev - as they changed ownership, they, they downsized. And as they, they go around getting everybody to retire, which I don't really understand. And what happens is they don't have any knowledge of what the hell they bought! I mean United – United Gas which was from a horrible problem – I was on the Entergy board. And Entergy's gonna buy United Gas. Okay that's fine. Ya'll gonna buy United Gas. I'm gonna tell ya'll need to do diligence the project? Well what do you mean? I said, I'm gonna tell you. United Gas got the pipes down in Terrebonne Parish with the they were laid in the 1950s maybe. They were sixteen-inch lines. You oughta go dig a goddamn hole, 'cause I don't think they got any pipe. I think it's just the hole and then the pileup. He said what do you mean? I said we got a piece of pipe or steel pipe you lay it in the ground in Terrebonne parish fifty years ago with the damn soil conditions we got in this parish, you think you got any pipe left? And you looking to pay those people money? I said, ya'll better do a diligence.

D: Well that – I'm glad you brought that up because one of the things that we've been trying to sort out – because we're interested in trying to be human side. We think there's a lot about the physical side. We look at the human side. I'm trying to find Texaco's records.

S: Haha.

D: Okay? I mean this is a company that...prided itself, (inaudible) New York, of keeping good records! Let me call and find. I don't know where they are.

S: I can tell you...

D: I don't know where they are.

S: I can tell you where some of them are. Texaco had a company called Lee Texas Pipeline Company. Okay? Kind of worked for these people for years! Okay? I mean we still working on the lines. The lines are still there. I don't know who in the hell would go in a planes or somebody, but anyhow, about – hell this must've been fifteen years ago - we got a call from a friend at Texas Pipeline Company in Houston Texas, and he said look, we're about to move out the office and he said the guy told me they get rid of these has-been pipeline drawings. He said you want them? I said well, they don't go to Houma. You don't want them – you oughta be out of your freaking mind! Haha so I said, yeah I'm gonna send a truck over there and get them! Same thing with South Coast – the old company South Coast - uh, in South Coast they had a guy who – they hired a surveyor. They hired a civil engineer to work for them – who used to work for my daddy, but my daddy told him go work for South Coast. Just to survey (inaudible) probably oh, I - let's say – I don't know maybe, five, I would say ten thousand acres of land around

South Louisiana – primarily in Terrebonne and Lafourche. Well what about – one of the land grading buddies bought. bought the damn company from Prudential, okay? So then he ends up with the damn company. And he called me one day – he said, they got a bunch of field notes over here, and maps, he said why don't you come get them? Okay, come get them! I mean I got them in this office I mean these people don't know what they got...

D: No.

S: They either fired or they retired but I ...you know, they died...they don't know – I'm telling ya – we can make a survey right now for a levee or something in Terrebonne parish across the pipeline, hell it'll take us six weeks to take out along the line! Almost gotta go cut it. Haha

D: Now that's really important. You worked on a project looking at pipeline crossings.

S: Yeah.

D: Alright. We've been involved – before I retired from LSU documenting pipelines statewide. And, and one year, in one pipeline changed ownership three times.

J: Oh, I could believe it, yeah.

S: Oh yeah...

D: Here we are interested in trying to reconstructing the two of us – with Sea Grant. I don't know where the Texaco, uh, and you say why. Well they had such a dramatic influence...

S: Oh, definitely.

D: ...on the Houma region.

S: Oh, the state!

D: Lake Barrais, out of state, sitting down the bayou here is their floating headquarters which is now ConocoPhillips, and I bet in that building somewhere there's something I can look at, but you don't have those contacts anymore.

S: They used to – let me tell you what the um, thirty, ya'll say, thirty years ago, thirty years ago, you know, Texaco I mean they – thirty years ago, the state budget of Louisiana was maybe sixty percent oil and gas revenue.

D: Okay.

S: Alright? I guarantee you Texaco was fifty percent of that.

D: Oh I don't doubt that. Texaco made the Win or Lose Oil Company.

S: Made Louisiana!

D: Made Louisiana...

S: Made Louisiana!

D: Yes, yes.

S: Uh, Texaco okay. Let me see what I'm know. I know the guy that used to be the sup – he grew up here. He used to be the Superintendent of Texaco in the Houma district. He ended up in New Orleans as the Vice President of the Texaco in Louisiana. Okay, a guy named Jimmy Gibbins.

D: You saw...

S: I happened to bump into him at a funeral the other day and I had no idea he was still alive. And I told – I went up and talked to him and I said Mr. Gibbins, I'm Clifford Smith. I'm T. Baker's son. He said, and we were in – we were in the church. He says, I'll be damn. He said oh my God! This guy – this guy – this guy you oughta go find this guy. I'll find him for you. This guy was the – he was the - after 1945, he was the superintendent in this office for Texaco.

D: Yep.

S: In the Houma district. built over – fifty drilling rigs out...

D: I know!

S: I guarantee you there's 500,000 people in the oil industry that came through this office. Went through this office.

H: That I know of...

S: They, the uh, yeah they got people (inaudible) people running (inaudible)? They all worked for Texaco in Houma. Okay? But, but wait. Gibbons is the guy you need to go find. Because you're talking about the history of the oil business. He knows all about the oil business, and Texaco – Texaco is the most notorious company on Earth..

D: Oh yeah! Well...

S: Yeah Texaco – they got, they had, they used to have platforms out there producing oil for Texaco, you ride around Terrebonne parish and there would be a platform next to Houma Superior. *The Superior* oil company. That was like a Cadillac. That Texaco is like a bunch of crap. Okay? These – anybody, anybody – anybody builds nice stuff, okay? Texaco built crappy stuff, okay? And they had more people right there – they had – In Louisiana they had to have a half a million people working for them at one time. They were big.

D: I wouldn't doubt it. I think you're gonna see the same thing that they had in the (inaudible).

S: Jimmy Gibbons – you what?



D: The (inaudible).

S: Oh yeah! That you see – you'll see - you see that in, in every place I mean, you know, British Petroleum. BP. We never think about BP - we always did the little work for Amaco – we did a little work for something called Pan America before Amaco. And uh, um, and then BP- BP came in and bought Amaco totally out, and then they started their big project in the Gulf of Mexico and had – one of our biggest clients now. Of course the biggest client we've got – and have – is (inaudible) is Shell. Another interesting – Shell Oil Company is, is just a – in my opinion is just a wonderful uh, citizen of our state. I mean they really are. And they like (inaudible). Um, we used to think Texaco was the (inaudible). I had a friend of mine – built a building the other day – well not the other day, um – two or three years ago for something called Woods Petroleum. Woods Petroleum is a service company out of England. Big company. They got a guy gonna build him a million dollar building and here's our balance sheet and all this stuff. I said, who's gonna sign on the leases. He said nobody. He said nobody gonna sign off. He said the company guarantee. He says look partner, he says I built a building for Enron five years ago – there ain't no such thing. And said you want me to build a million dollar building – he says you go get a letter of credit, payable to me. That could decrease as the rent goes down, but you guys will come up with my money. Some guaranteed bank. He says yeah, that's a good idea. And that has gone on forever because you're gonna lose your deal. I mean these guys are trading these things in New York like, you know, like you don't know nothing. Around the world.

D: BP is Mardi Gras Pipeline and then from there Thunder Horse Field. And then they got the monsters sitting out in the deep waters. Nobody quite knows how to move it onshore yet. And then you have Shell starting with the (inaudible) platform and that pipeline.

S: You see what happened with BP is – Shell and Chevron and Texaco – they were exploring on land, and they continued to move offshore. And as they did they continued to build and expand their system basically from their land system out into the gulf. And they continued to do that. They'll loop those systems onshore and increase the public taxes and all that stuff, but they had a system. BP goes out there and they discovered that there's around two or three horrendous fields, and they go to Shell and to Texaco and said okay. We want to cut a deal – we want to get into your system. Shell and Texaco said we'd love to have you in the system, but we ain't got no room. So that's how the company ended up building a vivacious system from Thunderhorse basically to a new system. And that's gonna happen a lot. As a matter of fact, you know the latest deal in China. They just bought that outfit out of Norway. State Oil. And they don't – I mean they gonna be the – in fact we went to Key West – I kept after them guys in Key West – they drilling right from China and (inaudible). They ain't seen it just yet. But, but uh, um, that – BP has been a wonderful help. BP has spent ten billion dollars in Louisiana in the last five years, ten years. Ten billion!

J: (inaudible)

S: They drilling – they drilling damn wells down the Gulf of Mexico that cost a hundred million dollars a well.

D: Yeah off a platform they cost over a billion.

S: Yeah. Seven hundred – in one time they had 750 men on that platform. They don't have it now, but when they were building it and they were – they ended up being about 36 months late on that thing. Like to broke the company. And they had 750 men on that platform. But I – yesterday I had to go down the bayou yesterday, you can't get to it – this helicopter operation is unbelievable. Even today, with fifty percent of the rigs laid off, man they – if the price – if they blow up that crap in Iran, man you talk about some business. And if they keep building that thing in Iran. Them people - those people in the Taliban gonna blow that up, yeah! That's the best thing we got going for us!

D: Haha

J: It seems like what first – thirty five, forty years in the business that all they ever did was look for people ...

S: To work.

B: Now there's a question I want to ask

J: Just keep going and going and going.

B: It is finding labor today is still as big a problem? A bigger problem?

H: Actually it's no - now, now since the recession in the United States it's, it's really switched. Uh, you know, I mean I'm from Houma, lived here all my life, um, worked at – recruited for – I've been at T. Baker now for five years but I worked and did recruiting for healthcare prior to that – and to try to entice people to come and move to Houma Louisiana was just unbelievable. I mean you know. Nobody want – even people who are from here don't even want to live here. You know now, it's amazing even when I - so when I switched over to T. Baker, I've been here five years, to try to recruit a uh, a civil engineer to come and work in Houma Louisiana, and that's one of the reasons we have offices in, in Baton Rouge. It's one of the main reasons we opened up in Baton Rouge office was because LSU graduates civil engineers, young people live in Baton Rouge, they want to be in Baton Rouge. So that's what we did. But now, in the last year, it – the tide has turned dramatically, and it's really quite fun because now it's like we get to pick and choose. It's like before we were like, we were begging, begging people and you know we've been doing and making deals and now, and now it's just so great because you like pick and choose, and uh when T. Baker is a different kind of company. We want – we – peoOple come to work with us. They're working with us. And it's – it's still got that old mentality – well it's not really old I don't think, but – you know this is it. This is – you're working with us, this is an investment. We're making an investment in you – you're investing in us, we're investing in you. We don't go into a short term. So we don't hire people for a year, we don't want people to come work for us for one year, two years. We don't want people listed as you working with us till you retire, you know. And um, so it's – well now that we're interviewing people, I mean we take that into consideration. I mean yesterday we just had someone – I hired a professional engineer – a PE . with thirty years of experience. He's a professional engineer and a land surveyor from Tennessee, and he is relocating his wife and his three kids to work in our Prairieville office. So it's just really cool to go through that. We just decided – another case we hired an engineer to work in our Thibodaux office from Pensacola, Florida. So it's uh, it's

different now because we're on the map, you know. As far as the United States. South Louisiana is where the only place that's doing any kind of hiring. So it's fun to, to be on the other side now. Not having to pick and choose.

B: You talk about placing people like that. I would think for the design aspect of it – a lot of these people can just telecommute...

H: Right. We do a lot of that. We do a lot of that. We have uh, in our Baton Rouge office, I have engineers in the Baton Rouge office, but they're actually supervised by um, an engineer that's in our Thibodaux office – who actually his supervisor is here in Houma. So we have – he actually – the engineer in Thibodaux also supervises an engineer that works in our Lafayette office. I have uh, a professional environmental person that supervi – that works in our Lafayette office that actually supervises someone in our Houston office. So we have teleconferencing, we've got – we've all got cameras on our computers, we do a lot of webcasting, once every quarter – we do it now. We used to do it once a month. We would do an organization safety meeting. Once every quarter, uh the meeting is actually held here in our Houma office, but it is webcasted to all of our facilities, so it's a mandatory meeting that all 220 people need to attend. And that's how we attend it because we feel – we stress integration yearly, we stress integration with our clients. You know, it's to say we're a one stop shop that we can offer our you know environmental, engineering, land surveying, offshore surveying, marine positioning, to them, but we stress integration amongst ourselves. Uh, whereas we're not – we don't collect records uh, moneywise as far as – how's the Houston office doing – how's the – you know we don't have a competition between offices. Uh, because we all work – we work together. So uh, yesterday I was – I do human resources for the whole organization. Yesterday I was in um, in Baton Rouge, today there's a – Kenny our president is in – he and his other staff were in Houston. I mean we're always going all over the place so it's very important to us to have that integration.

S: And I was in Thibodaux and Baton Rouge, Monday – you forgot that.

H: Yeah. No they told me when I was there. I was in Thibodaux yesterday and they both told me that. So...

S: By the way, I don't know if she mentioned, but that's the secondary benefit in our offices besides the hurricane preparedness plan, the fact that we have the people that we can actually recruit in these other organizations, and, and with the computer system again, we had, what? A three uh, sharp uh, what is it not IT guy. What's the guy – the Frenchman over there in Houston...

H: Jean Paul.

S: Yeah what is he doing?

H: He's an applications developer.

S: Well whatever that is. But anyhow, this guy was gonna come to Houma to live, okay? And he was gonna sell his what – 175,000 dollar house in Houston, okay. He was gonna have to buy a 250,000 dollar house in Houma to replace that. He was paying uh, three thousand dollars a year in insurance premiums

in Houston, he was gonna pay eight thousand in Houma. So he wasn't gonna come. So he said, no why don't you stay in Houston and we're gonna get your computer like you're in Houma. And he comes to Houma I guess every six months or so or something. But that's been a big – we hired a lot of people out of Baton Rouge. Out of wildlife and fisheries and DNR. These people don't want to work for DNR. They don't want to work for wildlife and fisheries, but they don't particularly want to live – we have this office in Prairieville, which is (inaudibly)

H: Now there's a specific reason why we're in Prairieville, and not in downtown Baton Rouge, so...

J: One thing is the people in Baton Rouge don't know how to drive.

S: But anyhow, he uh, it's, but everything in this buis – in my opinion, everything in this business, to tell you the truth, everything in this area has been an evolution. Uh, we, we are 50% 50 years behind time in infrastructure, if you talked to me fifty years ago I'd have told you fifty years behind times in infrastructure. We now have this horrible coastal erosion problem, uh that we can't exist if somehow if we don't turn the tide, uh frankly I'm not very optimistic, that we are gonna do that. Therefore we have done that we're doing. I mean we're, we're we bought a number of pieces of property particularly in the Thibodaux area –not that I think Thibodaux is much safer than Houma, but it is safer. Again we bought some property in Thibodaux that fifteen miles north of here and fifteen feet above sea level. Uh, so we think that's – we may have to move from there one day. If some thing in uh, uh, frankly depressing to me, and frustrating to me is that I do think there are things that can be done. Uh, basically the management of the Mississippi River and it's tributary resources, uh, the tragedy is that uh, is not that we're not doing it. Uh, the tragedy is the bureaucracy is killing us. That's my opinion. Okay? We got too much democracy. We need a king.

J: Haha.

D: Do you have a candidate?

H: Yeah, I was about to say.

(laughter)

D: Well we've been doing this for two hours.

S: Would ya'll like to go to lunch? How about if I buy ya'll lunch? Is that unethical, or...

D: I'll tell you what. First of all, we have to say thank you. You've been very kind. We may want to come back – we still have some stories that – we don't know how we'd get you to get involved –

(laughter)

D: Maybe I need a red flag. Because – because you've opened some areas that, quite frankly we've never heard before. Um, I told this to Clifford but we need to tell these folks as well. Sea Grant has asked the two of us to try to develop this oral history. We both have our own individual interests, but we're almost velcroed on how we think. There's an expression we use – I can't use, but our brains work

similar. And where we're going is, we want to develop, across the coastal zone, and the coastal parishes, uh, with the media director's help, but we're gonna call them kiosks. Information booths. And they're gonna be theme driven. We don't know what the themes - today have opened up some interesting ideas. Our job is to find stuff. Like that book. Stuff. Our job is to collect the stories, put it in digital format, things that we can use. Carl comes from a publishing background. We have a media person, we'll put it together in a format that you can come and hear the stories. We don't ever want to lose the stories. We're looking at maybe as many as twelve of these kiosks. And that's not gonna happen instantly. So if we come back it's because we've listened to some things, made some notes, and we'd like to come back. Now, as far as lunch. Now you may not remember this, but it's important that you know this. Now that mikes are on. There was a time when things were a little difficult for my family. I hope I can do this well. Clifford and I sat down on the front steps of the courthouse. And I explained some stuff, and it was about a week later, that I had another job offer. I think I know where that came from. And I made a commitment to myself he would never buy lunch again.

(laughter)

D: So if you will allow my wife and I to take you to lunch, we'll gladly do that. That's the way it will go. And he never has. You may not remember, but...

S: Well I'm gonna mention two things we didn't talk about. I spent twenty four years on the Board of the Entergy Corporation. Which was a tremendous education. For me. And I think it has a lot to do with what's going on - the utilities are a very important thing - just so happens that we do a lot of work - T. Baker does a lot of work for Entergy too, but I was involved with Entergy before I was on the board, and I'm involved with it after engineering wise. But it gave me a great insight into a major corporation - a 22 billion dollar corporation, and the pitfalls of that - the ups and downs with it, dividends and etcetera. I was also involved in a bank in Houma for about twenty years. I'm not any more, but uh, in savings and loans, but I did learn not at LSU but I did learn through both two experiences, a lot about the business besides, you know the natural resources, the people in the area, besides the geography of the area, I think both of those experiences have been tremendous for me. Of course I have decided in the engineering business - from the engineering skills, survey skills, topographical skills, government skills, I've invested a tremendous amount of money in this area - primarily in real estate and other - frankly all the service companies that are primarily related to oil and gas. I do know - I am a good - invested in the seafood industry, but I've been a keen observer of the seafood industry, and I love seafood. But uh, So the point is that besides the engineering background, which frankly I consider to be relatively narrow in respect. I've done a lot of other things. As a matter of fact I'm published in 80% of my time doing other things I do. I still do engineering things, and I still do a lot of review of what goes on here, and of course the business is so big now that it's a - and I've always been the business manager. Now I said I've always been and have been since my son Kenneth I guess in the last - well you said five years you've been here. So at least five or ten years that he uh, assumed board....

S: Nice music. We can go to Big Al's which is a they don't have nice music but it's got good food.

D: Where do you want to do go. Which one.

(laughter)

D: I know who to ask.

H: Well food at Big Al's is way better.

D: So there's the answer. Big Al's is the place! I have a daughter too. I know how to do this!

D: Only – just put that out for your....

H: It will! It will! I might say something...

S: We can all go in my car...

D: Alright.

D: We can leave all of this?

H: Yeah!

D: Well we'll come back, and we don't have to be at the Louis's until about two-ish. Two-ish.

J: But as a – it's another book. Cajun mariners?

D: I've read that one.

J: Okay.

D: By...Chaisson.

J: No, Falgoust. Falgoust. Oh how it's changed ....Madam....