

Houston Serigny: That's a man that came here and he said, "Well, I'm going to give you 10 cents a pound." So, it happened to be that we went up the next day and we caught about 3,000 pounds of redfish. He came here and he took the fish and he didn't have the money to pay us. That was (Chico Lafon?), or Coco, his brother. He said, "I'm going to go in Mississippi." He said, "I'm going to sell the fish." He said, "As soon as I come back," he said, "I'll pay you all 10 cents a pound." So, a week passed. Chico Lafon wasn't there. We went at his house. What he was doing, he went down that truck that he had and he sold the fish and he bought a truck of watermelon with our money.

Robert Fritchey: But it was in the summertime?

HS: Yes. He bought a truck of watermelon. So, the few dollars that he made off of us, he never paid us, to all the watermelon.

RF: Holy, yes. He was going to buy them?

HS: Yes. Go and met her.

RF: Well, how about you were catching it for 8, 9 cents a pound? You were selling it down here?

HS: Yes. A lot of time we were selling it down Eddie Martin's. He used to buy it. But a lot of time when he'd buy some, we would – they had about three fishermen, I guess, full fishermen.

RF: Wonderful.

HS: They had an old man. (George Dontali? 00:01:56) they'd call him. He used to fish George Tabone and his daddy and us, three of them that I know. They said he'd buy fish for three or four days and he'd go the French market. Sometime he'd have to bring half of the load back and throw them overboard.

RF: He would take them to the French market?

HS: Yes, because he had some trucks. Just like we'd be selling them out, then he'd get rid of them.

RF: How long are you talking about? Forty years? You're what? You're fifty-eight?

HS: I'm fifty-seven.

RF: You're fifty-seven?

HS: Yes. I would say I was a young forty and fifty. How much would that be?

RF: Let's see. If you're fifty-seven, fifty years ago you would have been seven.

HS: I was about nine years old.

RF: About forty-eight years.

HS: I would say that, yes.

RF: Forty-eight years ago, you were getting 8, 9 cents a pound.

HS: Yes. We used to oar our boat here. We'd leave at 12:00 a.m. and go in the Fourchon Pond. It used to be open then. Didn't have no road that would go from the highway going back. The only way in was by boat. We'd leave down here at 12:00 a.m. We had a little piece of trammel line maybe 150 feet. So, we didn't want to catch too much fish. What we'd do, we'd fill up half of the boat with oysters. Then when we'd come back in, we'd make a couple cent catch, 300 pounds. Then there were three of us in the little boat. On the way coming back, my daddy got oysters that we could sell them for a dollar, a dollar and a half a gallon. The only thing we had, my mama used to make homemade bread. We'd eat raw oysters and bread for our dinner.

RF: You were using a putt-putt?

HS: No. We used to have to oar the boat.

RF: Oh, you'd have to row the boat all the way.

HS: Yes, when we would see the fish because we were too small to oar the skiff and get the fish. My daddy used to say, "Well, let me get at it." My daddy was young and had a lot of energy, so he'd take it. He circled the fish. No, we'd halfway back and all the way coming back in.

RF: How far to where? Not the Fourchon.

HS: Yes. Where did they kill all the ducks? That Fourchon Pond there?

RF: Yes.

HS: From here up to there. That's why we had to leave at 12:00 a.m.

RF: You'd leave at 12:00 a.m.

HS: Right, at night, yes.

RF: Row all night.

HS: That's right. Half of the night. We'd get down there around 6:00 a.m., 7:00 a.m. when daybreak.

RF: Your daddy, he was born in Leeville?

HS: Oh, yes.

RF: So, your grandfather was –

HS: Yes. Well, he was French from overseas. But he came here a long, long time ago. That's him down there on that picture, him and grandma. You see the one that's standing up there?

RF: Yes, that's your daddy.

HS: My grandma, yes. That picture wasn't here yesterday.

RF: I see that. That's a great picture. He lived in Leeville?

HS: Well, in between Leeville and Golden Meadow.

RF: Up around here in Drew somewhere?

HS: Yes, in that section there in a tree. But you know in those days, most of the people were living across the bayou. I don't know if you know that.

RF: I heard that already, yes. It had higher ground over that place.

HS: Oh, yes. They used to plant corn, rice, sugarcane, you name it. What they got way up to bag in that fresh water, they used to have it down here.

RF: Well, when did you all get a motor? Do you remember your first motor?

HS: I think it was a three-cylinder Fairbank.

RF: A three-cylinder Fairbank?

HS: Yes. To keep it cool, it had a big, old head. You had to fill it up with water. That would keep the engine cool with a crank. When the roof came out, that water used to boil in there. We'd fish crab and we'd put our crab in there and they'd boil [laughter].

RF: [laughter] You'd eat crabs that day.

HS: In other words, the boiling water in that Fairbank was open. You just filled it with a bucket, the head of it. We'd fill it up with water. You'd run it for a couple hours that way and then we'd put some crab in. Then we'd boil our crab and we'd eat boiled crab.

RF: Well, you used to load up on fish regularly not that long ago with your air cooler.

HS: Yes. Got all the fish we wanted.

RF: What happened then? You figured just the outsiders mostly come in and thin them out

pretty good?

HS: Why do you want me to answer you that?

RF: Well, I just want your opinion, I guess. Well, I don't know what I'm looking for. Some other reason to – I don't know. I guess that would be pretty much it.

HS: Yes, well that's one thing. But the problem is those days, nothing was closed in.

RF: You could go where you wanted.

HS: Today, you can't go nowhere. Everything is closed. Well, I don't have to tell you. You must know it just as much as me. There's nowhere you can go. If they have got a no trespassing sign, you cannot go.

RF: Yes, that's right.

HS: Those days, you could catch if you want to leave bridge, I've seen where Eddie Martin lives, where he's got his shed out there. We were picking up oysters on the side of the bayou. Right across the bayou from him, they got oyster shells there. I don't know if you noticed whenever you passed this white shell there, me and Stoney.

RF: By the cemetery.

HS: Yes. Well, right on this side a little bit. We saw a school of redfish and we went and caught them right there. I guess it had 1,500 pounds we caught. We just crossed the canal. You can see the Eddie Martin shed. They were watching us. We came down and we unloaded the 1,500 pounds right there.

RF: That's progress. Too damn many penny outboards, too many gillnetters, too many no place to go.

HS: You see in the old days we didn't know what was a gillnet. We didn't know what was a setnet. We didn't know what was the seine.

RF: You didn't know what a seine was?

HS: Well, we had seines for shrimp, but they got seines for fish now. We didn't know that people there came and brought all of that up. That's something we did not we didn't know what it was.

RF: In other words, your daddy used the trammel line.

HS: Yes.

RF: See, that's a really old-fashioned net from Europe somewhere.

HS: Oh, my daddy used to make his own net.

RF: He used to sew them.

HS: That's right. When the nylon net came out, we had bought an old nylon net from somebody. Who had it, I don't know. We used it maybe for five years. Then we made a little money. I guess we saved maybe \$500 in a year. We saved \$500. There used to be a hardware, (Lenoir? 00:10:41), by the French Market.

RF: Oh, in the Quarter?

HS: Yes. My daddy went down there and bought some twine nylon. So, we threw the old one while still in this house, yes. So, we stayed for five years. So, I decided I wanted to fish for myself. I went back down there and took the net off the mud and the grass and everything was growing in it. He pulled the net and he patched it up. I worked that net maybe for four or five years, and I made money with it.

RF: Trammel line. Cotton, you used to have to take out and –

HS: Oh, yes, throw it away.

RF: – you dry it out. Every time you use it, you'd have to dry it out.

HS: That's right. Raúl Martin, I don't know if you knew him or not.

RF: I knew him well.

HS: Well, he died a while back.

RF: Yes, I know that.

HS: He came here one day. Well, we weren't living here, but he was living by the bridge. My daddy had bought a brand-new net maybe 150, 200 feet long. I'm the first one that used it. He came down, he said, "Houston," he said, "I've got my brother-in-law and my sister." He said, "We'll take our boat." He had a little boat like a skiff maybe like Richard Truman's got there, something like that. He had a six-cylinder Chrysler engine in it. He said, "We're going to go catch some fish." He said, "We're going to go spend the day in the lake down there." He said, "I'll give you \$10." He said, "You come with us." He said, "We'll use your net." \$10 was plenty of money. So, we went down there around Free Boots, they called it. They had an oyster camp. They had a big bend, a rock roll. Well, I could see that muddy water. He said, "Houston," he said, "Let's circle them." I said, "No." I said, "That isn't redfish." He said, "Let's circle them anyway."

RF: Raúl said that?

HS: Yes. So, we circled them. It was goldfish that weighed from 150 pounds.

RF: [laughter]

HS: Those things were that long. Tore my daddy's net up, no more good at all.

RF: [laughter]

HS: Then I was in trouble.

RF: [laughter]

HS: Man, a hole that big all over from one end to the other. Since today he was supposed to have the net fixed and that was it.

RF: Too late now. Houston, when did you get into air cools? How did you get motors, those were the little one cylinders? You remember that? How did you ever come into the first one?

HS: The first rig and strike engine we had – I cannot say a rig and strike. The first engine we put in the boat was a Clinton or Wisconsin. I can't tell you which one it was. We kept them and we had problems with them. That's been about a 3.5 or 4 horsepower. But we had a lot of problem with them. They had a magnesium on the side. You know magnesium? We had problem with them. So, the rig and strike came out, I think, the 4 horsepower. Then my daddy bought a 4 horsepower or somebody gave us one. I don't know what it was. Then we started back.

RF: Well, you're talking forty years ago now.

HS: Oh, yes. Easy forty years ago, maybe. Well, as long as I can remember, that's what we've been using.

RF: You always did use your trammel line to make a regular set?

HS: Yes.

RF: You always did that. See that's a big problem they're having. When we went up there to Baton Rouge to try and fight the GCCA, us Jane and all, they went up there and they said, "Well, we strike net. We make sets." But everybody to the west, Cameron, Charenton, all they do is setnet. They don't even know how to strike fish.

HS: We used to catch our fish by oaring the boat with oars. Then when the 3 horsepower came out, or 2.5 or 3 horsepower, we put one of them. My dad used to oar the boat faster than the engine. He had a little shaft about this long. It wasn't starting to seal; it was made out of iron. Our shaft log, let's say that we had rubber, we used to make that out of hard wood. That oak, my daddy used to cut that out. I told you that already.

RF: How would he hollow it out? He'd drill it?

HS: He'd drill it.

RF: How did he make the outside? Did he carve it with a knife?

HS: With a knife. You see the way it was like a key. The bottom of the boat, they had a piece of wood that would go up and then would go like that and then go like a big skiff. The backend where the rubber bottom would fit that, he made a piece about that long. That long piece that would be, let's say 12 inches. So, he'd make that piece, that 12 inches. When it would come to the middle, it would be like a pipe. But he carved that, it would go in there. Then we didn't have no rubber iron. It would turn in that hard wood there.

RF: Then it would last a while. Your family then, I'd say you made most of your money with shrimp and then redfish and trapping, you think?

HS: That's the three of them. That's the only thing we could do.

RF: You made the most money with shrimp or you think you made –

HS: No, redfishing.

RF: You made the most money redfishing.

Houston Saucier: You're fishing with a net right now.

RF: Right.

HS: Because before we couldn't even buy on that. When we started, we started hand fishing with nigga pole with the bamboo there. We used to go out in the lake right here and fish with bamboo and catch them. We'd string them up with the grass. I don't know how you would call them. It's a fuzzy thing. We'd cut the heart of it. It would be a round thing. But you peeled that thing off two of them. You make a knot at the bottom of the two. The thing would be about that high. We'd open up the gill. We'd gill them up on two sides. Then if we'd be four people fishing in that little boat, let's say we make one knot at the end. We had a block of ice for all four of us. So, we make one knot at the end. Now you'd be with us, you'd make two knots. All the fish would be stringed up. The other one made the end.

HS: That's how you could tell whose fish it was.

HS: That's right. The other one would make four knots.

RF: You mean everybody had their own stick?

HS: It's like a grass. I don't know how you would call them. I assume they still got them. Like out here they're called? The green thing that grows on the side.

HS: The palmetto.

HS: I don't know how you would call them.

HS: It's like this?

RF: (Aratani? 00:18:43)?

HS: Yes.

RF: What'd you call it?

HS: Aratani.

RF: I think that's the same thing.

HS: Yes.

RF: (Aratani? 00:18:49)?

HS: Yes. We used to tie –

RF: They used to make the roofs with them. They used to use that to make a roof on a little house or something.

HS: Yes. They had a long stick. But the heart of it, we peeled them off the outside. They had the heart of it. It would be about that long. So, we cut it at the bottom. So, they had a whole bunch that would be together. So, we'd take two of them. But maybe they had thirty or forty of them. But we'd take two of them. We'd take one, take two of them, then we'd tie the bottom to make a roof. Then we take the gill of the fish, we'd scoop them out. You could put about twenty fish on each side.

RF: Then you'd tie the other end.

HS: Then we'd tie the other end. Let's say we make one knot. All the fish would be iced up together. But then your fish, you'd make two knots. So, whenever we'd come and sell, the one that had two knots, that was yours. The one that had one knot was ours. The other one had three and four. Well, that was that fish. Because we couldn't buy enough ice to ice up separate. Now, I used to be smaller than that. I used to go with my daddy. Same thing. We'd oar the boat. We'd leave down here around 12:00 a.m. We'd go by your blue there. He used to take a kerosene lamp, a funnel. How would you call it? A funnel, not a lamp.

RF: Not a funnel.

HS: Yes.

RF: What'd you do with it?

HS: Put kerosene and make a light. Take a pole and stick it in the ground in the water. We'd tie up on that. He put another pole at the back and a pole in the back end. At a certain time in the morning, all the shrimp would come there on top of the water. He'd throw that cast right there. He had a hard time to bring it in. Fill up that boat.

RF: It'd be like a torch kind of thing.

HS: Yes.

RF: Just a flame. No glass.

HS: Yes. They had a little glass and it'd make a little light. We'd put kerosene just like a lamp, but it was made out iron. They had a handle it.

RF: Oh, what did you call that? Funnel? What did you call it?

HS: Yes, funnel.

RF: Funnel. I know what you're talking about.

HS: Well, that he used to tie that by the water about that high.

RF: It would make it look like there was plenty of light.

HS: Yes. That's the way he used to catch the shrimp.

RF: I'll be damn. That's how he used to make lighthouses.

HS: That's right.

RF: Used to have some shrimp. You used to make –

HS: Living.

RF: Used to make a living.

HS: That's it, a living. We used to get all of that where we fish right now. All that section there, we'd lease that with the people. We were working about 20 percent and they were getting 80 percent. The man that they had the property leased in them and we were making all of that.

RF: You were making 20?

HS: Yes, he was making 80. Then he was buying our farm.

RF: I thought the boat was bad.

HS: Well, everybody down here for trapping, that's the way it was. They were 20 or 25 percent. The only way that people could make a little money, they had to hire a few of them. If that, we couldn't have made it. My daddy would save some good and hire them some good rat and some good mink. The mink was selling 35, \$40 in those days.

RF: Is that so?

HS: Yes, sir.

HS: Oh, yes. The otter they used to sell.

HS: The otter I used to get 65, \$70 for him. Today it's \$10.

RF: Thirty years you're talking about?

HS: Yes, easy. Thirty-five years ago.

RF: Well, your daddy used to set a couple aside and then sell them.

HS: That's the only way we could have made it. Just by 20 percent, we couldn't do it. I think you got enough on that.

RF: I won't tell in my story [laughter].

HS: You got all that?

RF: See, I'm taping that, yes.

HS: Oh, it's on?

RF: Yes. A copy, you give that to your grandchildren, man. They're going to say, oh. I got enough about the fish, I guess. I wanted to hear about the fishing days.

HS: What about the fish you all used to catch by the flare?

HS: Yes, we used to go at nighttime and catch fish by the flare.

HS: They had a hard time putting the fish in the boat and the trout. The trout, that was in –

RF: With a pole. Well, we got our oyster lead done there. They had a flare in the water. But that's about twenty-five years ago. You could go down there and circle that pond. You didn't have to see nothing. You'd fill up your boat with one strike. It all come to that light and you'd give them a little bug that would fall in the water. I guess the smallest one was 3-pound, 4-

pound, big, old yellow (malchina? 00:24:23).

HS: You don't see that no more.

RF: No. Houston, what do you think is going on with the fish right now? What do you think is going on? Why can't you fish? Well, let me ask you this, do you think they have any fish?

HS: No.

HS: I can bring you where you can load up the fish three times a day a boat.

RF: Right now?

HS: This is how everything became a long time ago. They never had any relationship. They never had. Now everywhere you turn around, you got [talking simultaneously].

HS: I'll tell you one thing, you might be against me, I don't think that lady that's in the place can do that job.

RF: Jane?

HS: I don't know her. Not Jane Black.

HS: No.

RF: Oh, Virginia then.

HS: Yes, that lady can't do that job.

RF: I'm afraid not.

HS: Well, you can put your foot on there. Because a man that knows what should be done, he couldn't do it right. Then put a lady in there?

HS: There's no kind of way.

RF: She heard us. Jane kept trying to get her to say, well, what kind of quota, how many can we catch? Maybe 300,000, maybe this, maybe that. She would never come out and say, "Well, a commercial man can have this much." She never would. So, they just kept letting it slide. They never gave us no shit.

HS: If she wants to do it right, at the price that we stopped fishing, you and us, we were getting a dollar something a pound.

RF: A buck and a half.

HS: Dennis, you all commercial fishermen, you all can catch thirty redfish a day. Thirty red fish a day you could have made a living. I could have made a living. He could have made a living and everybody else. But it wasn't like that. She closed it for the commercial fishermen and let the sport catch them. That's a hundred percent wrong.

RF: I know it is.

HS: When I was looking at this –

HS: Now, they say, well we can't do it like that because you got to go sell your fish at the shed. Now, you might bring your thirty redfish in and go back and catch another thirty redfish. No. Have a law, a book. He said, "Well, Robert, you brought in thirty redfish August of 1988, the date." Make him sign your name. You cannot bring thirty more that day. Anybody the game warden wants to check it, well, look, that's the record. Yes, they could have stopped that. You and me and all the rest. Another thing, what we call sport, no such thing as sport. Because the sport sold more fish than the commercial fishermen.

HS: That what I was getting ready to say. When I went to that meeting in New Orleans –

HS: Because I've seen minority. I'm in a sport that would back up in there and sell the fish. I've seen it by tear across the value or you can go down the line. If they won't sell it here, they'll sell it to New Orleans or Baton Rouge.

RF: I know.

HS: You still got the authority to fish in the water and catch five redfish. We can too. But when we catch five redfish, that's for us to eat. You haven't got the kind of money to take three days off, Friday, Saturday, and Sunday and come down here and run a motel. We cannot do it. When we were doing that selling the fish, it was to feed our family. But they got good jobs. They make a lot of money. That's why they call them sport. They got \$30,000 boat. I can't have one, can you?

RF: No.

HS: If they wanted to close the fish, close it for everybody. They're not more than us then. They don't need that money.

HS: The rich get rich and the poor get poor.

RF: That's right. I don't know.

HS: I'll tell you it hurts me. It hurts everybody from the Lafourche Parish. All the poor people that used to make a living, they can't no more.

RF: It hurt me. I got a house note, a truck note. I didn't know if I was going to make it or not. I got nothing sure.

HS: Now, thirty redfish a day, we could have made it.

RF: Yes. 5 pounds apiece, 150 pounds, a buck and a half a pound, yes. Even if they had just left the quota maybe 300,000 pounds. Like Goey, he's going to catch a hell of a lot more than a lot of other guys. Could have paid a lot of bills.

HS: But today we got to take whatever is there. The game warden is on our tail. If you walk on the highway, they're there. If you go on the water, they're there.

RF: That fur isn't worth shit.

HS: No, not all. It's going to get worse than that the way it's going. I don't see no future where the people can make a living.

HS: So, last year there for trapping season so I can make a few extra dollars, I was selling the fur in Kraemer.

RF: In Kraemer?

HS: Yes, he could.

HS: I would have to go all the way to Kraemer and sell the fur.

HS: You couldn't get nothing for it here.

HS: For gloves, I had to keep the cool mink and the muskrat for the extra dollar. I was getting \$16 for the make over here. Over here they were giving me six.

RF: Come on.

HS: Yes.

RF: That much difference.

HS: Oh, yes.

HS: I was getting sixteen over there. They were giving me six over here. Oh, shit. They paid me to go over and sell. I sold one time over there almost a thousand dollars.

RF: You sold any otters up there?

HS: No. The guy told me if I could catch the otter, he'll give me \$35 apiece for it.

HS: Yes. But you would try to catch one of them things alive.

RF: I wouldn't mess with one for two hundred alive. It'd be worth it for six hundred.

HS: The guy from Hobart, he did buy this. The guy from Hobart that said – let me see how it was – if he comes down here, it was 35. If I go over there, he'd give me forty.

HS: Oh [laughter]. I wouldn't fight one of those things to get forty. What if that thing bites you?

RF: What was he giving you for (nooches?)?

HS: Let me see if I can think what it was. The coons, he was giving me \$6 maybe. No. I take it back. I'm sorry. The black coon, he gave me \$12 for the black coon. Over here, the red coons it was twelve, six, four, three, and one. But I saw one time I had two sacks of fur that I had brought. I don't know what the value was.

RF: Nine hundred for just the price.

HS: The mooch I think was \$1.75.

RF: Did you catch any muskrats?

HS: Quite a few. You see, over there in Kraemer what they want is the muskrat and the mink. He told me, "Go bring me all you can of the muskrat and the mink."

RF: No kidding.

HS: He goes, "I'll take anything." I got the guy's phone number. I'm going to call him before trapping season to find out the price of the fur.

HS: Robert, I catch you the otter next winter?

RF: I can make a good deal with otters, man. I'm getting something going.

HS: Try and get something going. I could catch twenty otters. I bet you I could cash nine out the day.

RF: Houston. I got an otter at the house I got to show you. I'm going to show you that before I leave. I'm going to come over. I've got some otters and I got them tanned by people that tan them to make clothes. Then I sent that to New York. For \$20, they run that through a wheel. An otter, it's like a duck. It's got those long hairs.

HS: Yes, and it's –

RF: Well, they took that and they pulled all the long ones out. Man, it's about this long and it's fluffy like a teddy bear. You ought to see that. I'm going to show you. They had two people, a man and a wife, they design, they make clothes and stuff. Expensive. Man, they don't even sell

it in New Orleans. They sell it in New York. They want to buy some of that stuff to use for trim, put a little bit around the cuffs and make collars. I got 60 bucks in each one. I paid 20 for the otter. I paid 20 to have it tanned. I paid 20 to have it plucked. I'm going to sell them for a hundred apiece. I'm going to make 90 bucks a piece.

HS: Damn.

RF: They say they're going to buy it. If they buy it, I can buy some otters.

HS: Try to find out. I can catch you some otters.

RF: More than anybody can pay, I can pay you.

HS: I could get you the otters. Let me tell you the otter that I'm catching, big.

HS: Well, this is the book that tells how many people were living down here in Leeville. I'm going to show you something. Let me show you something.

HS: You maybe look at it after.

RF: I'd like to try and find one.

HS: I'm going to show you something.

HS: That book is old.

HS: That's about the hurricane in Leeville and Grand Island went clean. Leeville and Grand Island. Tree this section if I can find it. Look at those olden days' houses.

HS: It's all in Leeville there?

HS: No. Grand Isle.

HS: Grand Isle and Leeville.

RF: Do they have some Serignys listed on there?

HS: No. Maybe, I don't know. But there are so many people there.

HS: No.

HS: That's true.

HS: She had three little girls right there holding hands. When the hurricane took, they got caught in the barb wire fixed.

HS: It says all the story.

HS: Of them was hanging by her hair.

HS: This is the parts you got to read.

RF: Early Leeville Homes.

HS: That's old. That's a long –

HS: That used to be a hotel and a motel and everything. They used to sell groceries by boat.

RF: Yellow fever.

HS: That's right. That's the day my daddy was born, 1905, I think.

RF: No shit. Yes. "In 1905, trouble started when one of the townspeople contracted yellow fever in New Orleans and returned to Leeville to die. Everyone attended the funeral and the casket was opened and they had a lot of mosquitoes." Son of a bitch. They had an open casket.

HS: Something to put in a magazine.

RF: Yes.

HS: That's old. She has the cover right here.

HS: You read that book you can cross.

RF: I'll get the name of that book.

HS: Yes. I'll tell you where you can buy it at.

RF: Where?

HS: You know where Barker's at in Lockport?

RF: Barker, the jewelry place?

RF: No. They have it up there?

HS: Yes.

HS: Yes, sir. That's the only one that sells it. It's not on 308 now.

RF: Oh, it's on the route 1 side?

HS: Yes. You turn left there. You take the road that goes back there.

HS: You pass in the front of the little school.

HS: Yes. You know where the school's at there?

RF: Yes.

HS: You pass that. It would be on the right-hand side after you turn the other one there.

RF: Before you get to the little bridge.

HS: Oh, yes before.

HS: They got an insurance place on that side across the street.

HS: Yes.

HS: It's Barker's Jewelry.

HS: Yes.

HS: It's a jewelry place.

HS: I would say that little book sells for \$2.

RF: Man, that's a good little book.

HS: You'll cry when you read all of this. The more you read, the more you want to –

RF: The more you want to cry.

HS: Well, it's sad. Now, see, I don't remember this. But my daddy remembers all of this. He had a – how would you call it? A woodman? It used to be at the end of the canal right here on the East Canal. When that hurricane struck down here, my daddy was a young kid. They went in there. They lost everything that they had, the houses and people.

RF: Oh, they lost the old people?

HS: Well, what they brought in there was mostly all the old people. The old lady that used to live next to Norton, that little house there. You remember I told they call old man all Sid. You remember them? Her mama, she had a baby in 1905. She smothered the baby with a blanket. She was so afraid about the hurricane she had the baby and she smothered the baby right there in the home.

RF: She killed her?

HS: Yes.

RF: Oh, damn.

HS: Now my daddy told me that hundreds and hundreds of times. They released her. That's why I know all of that. She smothered her own baby. She didn't want to let go.

RF: But they were all in a building there.

HS: Yes. They got the woodman a house or let's say the V8W outfit.

RF: Oh, it's something like a lodge, wooden.

HS: Yes. Something like that. So, all the people went in there. They had an old man. They used to call him the Pirette. Some names are in there. They had a little grocery store. They put everything that they had in the grocery.

HS: That's not the boat that used to bring the food?

HS: Yes, bring the food. We used to buy salt meat. My dad used to buy salt, meat, groceries.

HS: That's the boat that used to bring the groceries, that boat.

HS: They had a whole skiff full of food. Do you know those two men didn't want us to share the food with the people that were in that building there?

RF: Really?

HS: No, sir. My old grandma, she had made some big bread. She cut it up by pieces and gave it to the people that were in there. They lost everything they had, those people. They had to fill up that boat. The hurricane took it and they lost everything.

RF: That's good.

HS: Now, I don't remember that. But my daddy told me that. That old lady that was living right there, she told me that.

HS: See, that's the guy that made the book right there.

RF: He's a weird looking dude. Let me see what I can do. C4 or something.

HS: Now that's coffee.

RF: Yes, that's coffee. You going to give me some of that?

HS: Got some money?

RF: [laughter]

HS: We're trying to make a living.

RF: I'll make mine in a pot made out of that aluminum. It tastes like shit.

HS: Yes, we're like that. Well, usually I don't make too much like that. It's better coffee when you make it in here though.

RF: I know it is. I burn it too. It's all black on the bottom. I can't get it out with a steel wool.

HS: When your mama's going to come back, we got to go run them cages there. I think that Robert Fritchey has got enough of me.

RF: I got enough. I got what I wanted.

HS: I thought he'd tell you a little more.

RF: Yes, I got enough. I'm going to use that.

HS: It's that dentist too.

RF: Do you want drink coffee in a fancy cup or something I'd drink in?

RF: Just like you. That's all right.

HS: I still don't know if it's on me.

RF: [laughter]

HS: Now, you see that's true right there too. That's another one.

RF: Done hanging by her hair somewhere alive. God damn, she didn't have any clothes on.

HS: You talk with all the old people and then see, yes. See, that's all the people that lost their lives, I think. I can't read me.

RF: "Heads of households." Yes, the ones that were saved and the ones that died.

HS: Do they say there how many people lived in Leeville? I think twelve hundred.

HS: Three thousand?

RF: Three thousand living in Leeville then.

HS: Yes, sir.

HS: It says it on there somewhere.

HS: Golden Meadow hardly didn't have no people. It was mostly down here in Leeville. But not on this side. On that side of the fur yes, like I told you.

RF: I wonder why they ever moved. Oh, because of the road, I guess.

HS: I guess so. They build a highway. I remember when this highway was in there. This highway there used to be out of mud. They had an old man, Morgan, around that had all of them that drove through that boat there. Well, they were three brothers. When they made that road there, it was only mud. He used to come by the bridge right here. He was an old model A or something. I don't know. I can't tell you if it's a Ford or Chevrolet, whatever. He'd laugh. He had that long crank you stick it in the front. We weren't strong enough to crank it over.

HS: To crank it over.

HS: He'd come there and he'd make us try to crank it and we couldn't do it. So, he'd go down there and put the switch on his car. It looked like that whole thing was moving. Boy, you could see that old man, boom, and it hit him. But we could run faster than the car almost.

HS: [laughter]

HS: I could get you the cool water somewhere in there. We didn't have enough to go and collect it.

HS: Now that's decaffeinated. I don't know if you will like it or not.

RF: Oh, that's decaf. Oh, that's fine, man. I've been drinking coffee all morning.

HS: Want some milk?

HS: Sugar.

HS: Sugar is right here.

HS: You got a spoon?

HS: Are you freaking that you got to make a landing? He said, "I want to drink some of that coffee." I said, "Yes," but I said, "I got a truck." That's a man that came here and he said, "Well," he said, "I'm going to give you 10 cents a pound." It happened to be that we went out the next day and we caught about 3,000 pounds of redfish. He came here and he took the fish and he didn't have the money to pay us.

Female Speaker: Did he actually say that? She said, "Yes." Believe it or not, she was that man could hardly ever go. He got out pretty good and he told them.

RF: [laughter] Son of a bitch, he's good. He was little, Houston?

HS: My daddy?

RF: Yes. He was a little guy?

HS: So, about 150 pounds. At last, that is when the doctor stopped him, he started gaining a little weight.

FS: I haven't checked them out.

FS: No light. Nothing much. They're not sleeping.

RF: Then you won't be able to eat too many ducks either. What do you do?

HS: I don't want to eat the [inaudible].

FS: I don't even want to buy a license.

HS: A lot of licenses. Just go buy a license and cool them in the washroom. I'm not going to buy no duck stamp. You got to buy two stamps.

HS: Or where you can't kill something to eat, you got to buy a federal stamp in one of the states.

RF: You guys go fishing a lot there?

HS: Yes.

RF: I might go up here. A lot of deer over here.

HS: Where do you want to go?

HS: I never killed one yet.

RF: Didn't you?

HS: Never.

RF: Oh, you'd shit in your pants.

HS: You're sure about this?

RF: Yes. That's fun. That's exciting, man. That's when we used to see him all the time. We

had them around the house and all then. I was so excited.

HS: Robert, what about your girlfriend? You're still going out with her?

RF: Yes. I'm shackled up with a woman in New Orleans.

HS: No. That's the same one that you used to bring by the bridge there once in a while all the time?

RF: No, that's a different one.

HS: Oh, man. What are you going to do?

RF: [laughter] I can't keep track of them, Houston.

HS: Not them.

RF: No. That one –

HS: You were going out with a girl from Mississippi, I think, it was.

RF: Well, I was a shopper. She was from up the road.

HS: Oh, yes. Was she?

RF: Yes, her dad was Ali Do.

HS: Ali Do?

RF: Yes. We went out for about a year and a half and I shut that down. I met this one on Mardi Gras Day. Somebody took me to her house on Mardi Gras Day up in the French Quarter. Shit, I went for it [laughter]. I said I couldn't stay down here on the bay by myself. I figured shit, I'm going to –

HS: My daddy, he used to work for the colony out of Westwego. He couldn't read and he couldn't write. He couldn't see a right-hand sign or left-hand letter. Right turn or left turn. He made my daddy drive that truck to the French from Westwego, go bring some gallon of oil [laughter]. He made a map to my daddy. He said, "You go straight." He said, "Don't turn for nothing." So, my daddy took the truck and he went to New Orleans.

RF: Oh, man.

HS: It was an open bed truck, kind of big, the old car. He said he couldn't figure out why all the cars were coming on that lane. He never met nobody going back that way. Everybody was coming over and he was boom, boom.

RF: [laughter]

HS: So, I guess he went about two blocks like that when the law stopped him.

RF: [laughter]

HS: He said the sheriff told him, he said, "Where are you going at?" He said, "I'm going to the French Market." He said, "Do you know you're on the wrong lane on the wrong highway?" He said, "This is the wrong way." My daddy said, "A one way?"

RF: [laughter]

HS: [laughter] What the hell is a one way?

HS: He said, "How many cars did you see going like you were going?" He said, "No, I didn't see nothing."

RF: [laughter]

HS: He said, "Everybody was coming." He said, "You got to go and take the other road right here." He said, "Go take the other street." So, my dad said, "My boss told me to take that road and go."

RF: [laughter]

HS: The cops said, "You can't go on that street." "Oh, yes," he said, "I'm going to go. My boss told me to go." He said, "Your boss, you can go back and tell him he can't go on that street." So, he said he had a big argument with him for thirty minutes. So, my daddy finally took the other street. But my daddy had just took the wrong one where he told him because he didn't know nothing. He said everyone that I was meeting was coming towards me. He said boom, boom, boom here and boom, boom, boom there.

RF: Yes. I like that story about the son of the bitch too [inaudible].

HS: I'm going to drink my coffee now.

RF: I'm not going to do it now. But if you can get a price for me getting more travel. If we can change policies. Prices where I can make the money to buy. If I could go catch me some redfish, I can peel one off. But for you and them.

HS: Making good money off of it.

RF: Last year, yes, I'm going to go get my money. I've never made –

HS: I caught three mornings straight when I went trapping. Three mornings straight of nine otters. Three mornings, 9:00 a.m. one morning the next morning 9:00 a.m., and the next

morning no. But that would be three or four hours, every morning I used to catch. I wouldn't drop me. I wouldn't drop maser eye, boom, or nothing.

RF: You see most people down here, they never even caught an otter or trapped one.

HS: No, my daddy trapped all his life and fishing, never caught anything. You see me when I first went trapping. Usually, I used to go with him every morning. I used to know what he used to do. You understand? Some people like to go and they don't care how you got the mink. I used to go travel with him because I knew I didn't have to do it. Understand? So, I went with him and I used to watch exactly what he used to do.

HS: I showed him.

HS: We used to go in the trees, let him show me to pick one. You got one, you need to stick them with that fork on the end. You used to cut it with the fork on the end and anything about that big on just where the stick would pass in the rain. We used to find the trail with the otter there, stick that whole stick in the ground.

HS: Oh, yes. You'd walk on it and you'd stick it about that deep.

HS: You stick about that much in the mud and you step on it because an otter is going to pull it out. He'll pull it out.

RF: The [inaudible] hold it in the mud a little bit.

HS: The fork, yes.

HS: Yes. You take the [inaudible] off of them.

[talking simultaneously].

You stick that in the ground. You follow the trail. You know the little water buckets? You get down there. It's soft mud. You make a pile. Cover that up really good there.

HS: A pile of mud.

HS: You fix your trap right on top of it. Just cover that with the same mud. You fix your trap there and cover it in there where you got all your chains at the bottom.

HS: All your chain underneath the mud. You can't see nothing except the pile of mud.

HS: So, that otter is going to come on that bank there. See, an otter is always digging.

HS: Always. You notice how sometimes you see all them grasses tore up? An otter did that.

HS: See that pile of mud there?

HS: They want to tear it up.

HS: She puts a fur in that there. She wants to break that up. She wants to break it up.

HS: Oh, yes.

HS: I don't care.

HS: Is it her way to pass there? She's moving out the way.

HS: When she puts some fur in that, that's it.

RF: That's her right. How did you ever learn that?

HS: It's an old man from Mississippi.

RF: Old man from Mississippi.

HS: Yes, sir. I couldn't catch them right and he told me how to do it.

HS: But we used to have teeth welder on our truck.

HS: Oh, yes. He said another thing, if you don't weld teeth on it, when same way like we done it with no teeth. When you get her trap in that she's so strong, she'll jump and she'll pull it out.

RF: Pull it right out.

HS: Put it out.

HS: The teeth that get stuck to that knee.

HS: Though she won't.

HS: I never did get trapped with no teeth. Never did. If

HS: If you could buy the otter there, you want to buy me about two dozen of your truck. The round trap. We call it the (papoondo? 00:53:220). They're round. That's what we used, no bigger than that with the handle. We pull some teeth for it. Last year, I wasn't even trapping the otter before. I wasn't trapping them. We see one in the pond. They ruined the cage there before you ask them. They're all over on me.

RF: I caught them in the bus crack trapping. It's been about ten years we have been trapping.

HS: But \$10 doesn't pay you to go.

RF: Not to skin them. I skinned one time and I'll never skin another one.

HS: I caught one morning in the muskrat trap. Really? But how I caught it with nail. The thing that jumped when the thing had come back, his nail was caught in the trap and it was caught underneath and it couldn't come out.

RF: It was in a barn.

HS: When I was coming, you shut them with a long stick, put a muskrat trap in the pool. So, that excited everyone. I didn't even think we are doing that there. The little trees that were that big, tore all that. Tore everything up. They didn't have a piece of grass sticking up. An otter there, when you go catch something there, what's around that trap is getting out.

HS: Oh, yes, he going to cut that brick in the mud.

HS: She'll dig that much in the mud.

HS: My old daddy when the doctor said that he couldn't work no more, he was sick. He used to help me skin them things. If you said no, you got cut out by used to, he darkness. He said, "I'm glad to see that." He said, "I've never caught one as long as I've been living."

Rf: That's something.

HS: So, he told me you got a little pond right here in the Texaco company. Maybe you already went to where all the little piece of woods at there. He went in there hand fishing one day. That was in the wintertime. He came back and he told me where the otter would pass at. So, I went down there that day because I used to go after them right there. Boy, that's the only thing I used to trap. I went down and I found the road where they come through. They cross from the pond. They jumped the levee. But the levee was from here to the TV there. That's not wider than that. You come in one side you jump on the other side. So, I put two traps. Right at the edge of the water, I fixed them. So, the next morning I had to go to Thibodaux I couldn't go run the trap.

HS: You've told me that many of times.

HS: He was sick, so he took his spear. He didn't want that money on the boat. He took his spear and he paddled. He I said, "I'm going to put a trap up." I said, "I don't know about one." I said definitely. He said, "I said they got more otter in it." That's how sure I was man. Then from here to the mailbox before he got to that boy you could see that water flashing. He said, boy I hope it's an otter. At close be saw it was an otter. He got on ashore and you see he had the heart trouble. He said, "Try to hit that all out." Hit him on the tail. He said an hour and a half it took me to try to hit that otter right. He said an hour and a half after he said when the otter fell, couldn't go no more, he said I had to fall down on the side. He said I stayed fifteen, twenty minutes. He said never no more again. He happened to look on the other side.

RF: [laughter]

HS: Yes, the other trap.

HS: Yes, the other trap. You've seen the water splashing there. He said, "Don't tell me they got another one there."

RF: [laughter]

HS: He said the same thing there. It was in the water where he couldn't – he didn't know how to do it. He said, "No, tell me." He said they got another one.

[laughter]

He said it was about the same thing over an hour before he could get that thing there.

RF: If you don't hit him on the nose, you get to lose him.

HS: Oh, yes. You see, when you get an otter and she's in the water, only her head is going to come up. You do that, she's going to go down in the water. But you put your stick a little bit that far away, that's where she's going to come up. Okay. Don't watch her the same place. You watch her and then she's going to come up there, and then you can hit her. I used to.

HS: You just take a little 22 dart gun. That's it.

RF: One time we're hitting the back of the house. The first time I had went put the traps off. You know the first day I ever put the traps out for all I told everyone there, I said damn, I'm going to take you two dozen dollars, come with some sticks and I'm going put some out. Said, "Go ahead." So, I passed through the pole right in the back of the house. I passed through the other set of poles and I kept going. There were two foundations. The second foundation I could see the grasses were tore up. So, I bought my daddy a cooler born tore up that night. It was cold but especially when it's cold in South Australia.

HS: At nighttime, oh, I see it.

HS: But the grasses were still wet. The mud was still wet when they come down over here. I think for sure that was it. When they come up out there, the grass stuck stick in the book with the cheese. But you see when you buy and trap them, they come as a short chain. But what we do, we extend it. The small tickle chain you bought, that's where we add small tickle. That's where we add onto to it.

HS: You don't have to be that. It could be that though. But if it's too short, they got a better chance to get out if it's short. They can twist the chain, break the chain, or something. But if you got more, they can play around better.

HS: Not long ago. Only about that long.

HS: About a foot and a half, 2 feet.

HS: So, I put a trap there. I got a bucket of water now. You pass it off of the mud. You pick up that soft, soft mud. But you don't want to put that too hard. But the trap is going to dry it up.

RF: The soil is going to dry it up.

HS: So, I set a trap there. So, I set all my traps out, twenty-four of them I put up. Come back over here the next morning, take them off, go over there if I could see anything. She made the wrong like that. She made the wrong. She made the wrong. She made the wrong. I had the animal powder [laughter] all on top of the head. A little something, she fell down. Blood gushing out of her mouth. When you see that, they're dead. You're done. So, I took on the trap, I went and threw it. I'd go by to set my trap everything off, go back in the boat. I put the boat on the tickle. I was having to look in the back. See if they had some water in the boat. They were just right in the back down. What the hell? I turned around, she's running around on the boat in the wall. I said, you bitch. She had the strength to go into the water machine there, spin the blood out. You bitch. I stopped the motor just in case she wanted to die. Stopped the motor and the powder came out. The big pile we had in here, I had a fiberglass one. I had a fiberglass with a handle one and a fiberglass. She grabbed the flat of the fiberglass. She kept one swimming too. Flatted. She curled up so much.

RF: Oh, that's when you can tell if you got a girl.

HS: She tightened up her mother so much and then I had to stretch her open to tighten her to straighten her back out and I put her on the front of the boat. If you don't hear that otter flat on the door, then you could beat on their head. My mama hit an otter that she thought it was a male. That sucker was higher than me.

HS: Oh, yes. Over 6 feet.

HS: Every time she'd go the window, the otter was – she be that son of a bitch all day on the water. All day. Every time she'd go into the winter. That was \$56.

HS: One time I went down there; they had a levee. They had made an old pit. I don't know if you know what the pit they used to put it all in there, mud pit. But then they have no grass and the pit was old and it had rained a lot. So, I had set a trap below that where they go in that water. when I got up on the levee it was cold. I had a brand-new pair of blue jeans and the long jeans and my head boots went right when my boots slipped and I went straight for mine. When I got that, she got me ready.

HS: It was lots of bells.

HS: Yes, that's how close it was. Right here she grabbed me. I could feel the teeth on my skin. In other words, she had my jean, my boot, my long Jones, and my rubber boots. I could feel them teeth on my skin.

HB1: You were biting and she wouldn't let go. I had her up like that, one leg the water and the

other leg like that. I couldn't hold myself no more. I didn't want to slide more. I was trying to come back up. I said if I ever get out of this mess [laughter], I didn't want nobody around. I said if I could ever get what I'm going to give you, whether it was a female.

HS: Let' start with a main.

HS: Going all night long in the track like that, you know. I was watching my chance. She went, – boy, I pulled that leg out of that boat. But she had chewed my boot. My boot was no more good. My jeans weren't. She patched it up, yes. But boy that was close. God no, that was close.

RF: She didn't grab some bells there?

HS: She wouldn't have grabbed much

RF: [laughter]

HS: I could have passed out in between her teeth.

RF: [laughter] Yes. I love to try. I love it. I used to love to do that. I used to try from Pennsylvania. I used to love it.

HS: I would love to try. I like to go set the trap out in the morning. Next morning you see what you got. I caught nineteen coons last year. Nineteen I caught. I caught some coon last year. I caught a cool last year who weighed 24 pound right in the back of the hall, right here.

HS: That big, I think with that big a role. Heavy? The fact she had that much fat in her.

HS: This year I want sell at a different angle. I'm going to sell all of them.

HS: The meat, that's what they wanted. The meat.

HS: It's the meat.

HS: Meat.

RF: Where are you selling your meat?

HS: American New Orleans.

HS: A nigga from New Orleans that come bought a little bit.

RF: Your muskrat too?

HS: Muskrats and coon.

HS: The muskrat gave me a dollar piece. The coon gave me \$2. He's selling that to the niggers.

HS: I guess he is.

HS: Yes, he goes down and maybe to \$5.

HS: Yes, that's what I'm saying. I'm going to sell him higher than that. You don't want more shit on him.

RF: Not much. But also, you know how much he has sold it at? \$800 a meat license. [inaudible].

HS: Coon and muskrat to sell \$800 meat.

RF: You could go eat that.

HS: Those boards you had your saw board.

HS: Saw board in aluminum.

RF: Can you say all of them?

HS: Buy, go, make drive in the morning. [inaudible].

HS: That night, why do you think I stay tied up there?

HS: I'll catch all the bullshit. I would drive more an hour and fifteen minutes and I might 21.25. That guy 21.25 knows he's catching. I know where he gets them. Same place I could get.

RF: Where does he go?

HS: No, I can't tell you if I tell you there'd be too many people here.

HS: You don't have to worry about you and me because I know where I'm going to get it.

HS: Where that's at, where the lonely goes.

RF: Where the lonely goes, get down there by somewhere.

HS: Yes, I know where he goes. I've seen him in there already.

HS: It's about time. I thought you had a left even.

FS: No [foreign language].

HS: No, he you want to get rid two 15 double rig. Airplane. Fourteen is too big.

RF: What do you want to pull up?

HS: Yes, then I'll add with more trouble.

HS: 214, that's 48 quid. That's why we're here.

RF: You can get a \$25 license to and you're allowed to catch 150 pound a day with twenty-five lights. But you cannot go and sell your shrimp to a shark.

FS: [foreign language]

HS: I got to off of on a date.

RF: See the concept?

HS: It was going to stay tied up to your motor board.

RF: You're going to stick your butterfly and put it out there. You can wear out your motor. The brand-new webbing.

HS: I pushed the webbing one time.

[end of transcript]