



# History of the Offshore Oil and Gas Industry in Southern Louisiana

## Volume V: Guide to the Interviews



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Editor

Diane E. Austin

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## **ABOUT THE COVER**

Offshore rig, vessels, and barge in the Gulf of Mexico, May 1956, Jesse Grice Collection (photo number 242-16), Morgan City Archives.

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## PREFACE

The development of the offshore petroleum industry is a remarkable story of inventiveness, entrepreneurship, hard work, and risk-taking that turned Louisiana's relatively isolated coastal communities into significant contributors to the United States and global economies. This industry emerged as local residents and returning World War II veterans applied skills, technologies, and can-do attitudes to overcome the many challenges of producing oil from below the ocean floor. Offshore workers initially came from Texas, Oklahoma, and Louisiana, but soon people from throughout the United States were attracted to the Gulf Coast. This industry, born in the Louisiana marshes, has grown to have a key place in the modern world. Yet, it is little known, understood, or documented, and its dynamic economic role is virtually invisible.

To explore the history and evolution of this industry and the people and communities where it was born, in 2001 the U.S. Minerals Management Service (MMS) sponsored a study to examine the historical evolution of the offshore oil and gas industry and its effects on Louisiana's coastal culture, economy, landscape, and society. The study represented the convergence of the ideas of several people who recognized that an important piece of history – the origins of the offshore petroleum industry – was being lost and that capturing it would require the use of published works, periodicals and other documents, and oral histories. The idea for the study was supported by the Social Science Subcommittee of the MMS Scientific Committee, staff from MMS Headquarters and the Gulf of Mexico Region office in New Orleans, members of the business and academic communities, and Louisiana civic leaders and educators. As a result, researchers from universities in Louisiana, Texas, and Arizona came together to trace the development of the industry from land and marsh to state waters and then out across the Outer Continental Shelf.

Research of the MMS Environmental Studies Program provides information and analysis in support of MMS decision-making and assessment. From the beginning, a principal aim of the history study was to establish a collection of audio recordings of interviews with workers, company owners, family members, community leaders, and others whose lives were shaped by the offshore oil and gas industry in southern Louisiana. The focus of the study was on the earliest days, especially the period from the 1930's to the 1970's. Interviewees talked about how this industry grew from its fledgling beginning in the coastal wetlands and inner bays in the 1930's through the frenzied activity of the 1970's and beyond. The interviews ranged from very general conversations about life in southern Louisiana to very specific discussions of particular aspects of the oil and gas industry.

The study began with a team of researchers from the Center for Energy Studies at Louisiana State University (LSU), the Departments of History and Business at the University of Houston (UH), the Program in Public History Studies at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL), and the Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology at the University of Arizona (UA). The LSU team was led by Dr. Allan Pulsipher and included Ric Pincomb and Dr. Don Davis. Drs. Tyler Priest and Joseph Pratt led the UH team and were assisted by Jamie Christy, Joseph Stromberg, and Tom Lassiter. Suzanne Mascola transcribed the UH interviews. At ULL, Dr. Robert Carriker was assisted by Steven Wiltz and David DiTucci.

Drs. Diane Austin and Thomas McGuire of the UA were assisted by many people. Ari Arand, Emily Bernier, Andrew Gardner, Rylan Higgins, Scott Kennedy, Christina Leza, Lauren Penney, Jessica Piekielek, Dr. James Sell, and Joanna Stone conducted interviews and helped summarize and transcribe them. Kevin Bulletts, Jacqueline Dorfman, Justin Gaines, Mary Good, Kris Larson, Karen Morrison, Stephanie Pagac, Megan Prescott, Sherri Raskin, Jeremy Slack, and Maisa Taha helped transcribe and edit interviews and manage the project office, website, and multimedia products. UA researchers were supported by community assistants in Houma, Raceland, and New Iberia: Lois Boutte, Charlene Broussard, Norma Cormier, Nicole Crosby, Carolyn Cummings, Robyn Hargrave, and Debbie Toups. They received tremendous support from local organizations and individuals, especially the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program, Bayou Native Bed and Breakfast, C.J. Christ, the Desk and Derrick Clubs of Morgan City and New Orleans, the Louisiana Technical College Young Memorial Campus, the Morgan City Archives, the Morgan City Daily Review, the Nicholls State University Archives, Steve and Jean Shirley, and the United Houma Nation.

Over 450 interviews were recorded during this study. The tapes and discs onto which the interviews were recorded and the transcripts of the interviews are available in the archives of the University of Houston, Louisiana State University, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and Nicholls State University. Each interview provides a unique look at the offshore oil and gas industry and its impacts on workers, their families, and their communities.

In addition to the recorded interviews, six volumes were produced during this project. The first, *Volume 1: Papers of the Evolving Offshore Industry*, is a collection of analytical papers, each of which deals with an important aspect of the evolution of the offshore oil and gas industry. That volume is followed by three more, *Volume 2: Bayou Lafourche – Oral Histories of the Oil and Gas Industry*; *Volume 3: Morgan City’s History in the Era of Oil and Gas – Perspectives of Those Who Were There*, and *Volume 4: Terrebonne Parish*, all of which examine the offshore oil and gas industry through the lens of a particular community or region of southern Louisiana. *Volume 5: Guide to the Interviews* summarizes information about the interviews, including how each interviewee became involved in the study, his or her family and/or occupational history, and particular highlights of the interview. The final volume, *Volume 6: A Collection of Photographs*, is a compilation of photographs, diagrams, and other visual images that were collected from interviewees during the study.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The interviews summarized in this volume were conducted between 2001 and 2006 with men and women who lived and/or worked in southern Louisiana or Houston, Texas in the decades that mark the beginning and early development of the offshore petroleum industry in the Gulf of Mexico. These individuals offered their time and insights to make the study of the *History of the Offshore Oil and Gas Industry in Southern Louisiana* possible. We thank them for sharing their stories and reflections with us. Their names and interview summaries are included in this volume and are arranged in alphabetical order by last name.

In addition, special thanks are due to the members of the research teams from the University of Arizona, University of Houston, and University of Louisiana at Lafayette who conducted the oral history interviews and created the summaries contained in this volume. Their names are listed here and included with the summaries in Section 1 and in the list of interviews in Section 2 of this volume: Ari Anand, Diane Austin, Bruce Beauboeuf, Emily Bernier, Debbie Bryant, Robert Carriker, Jamie Christy, Norma Cormier, Carolyn Cummings, David DiTucci, Andrew Gardner, Rylan Higgins, Scott Kennedy, Christina Leza, Thomas McGuire, Sam Morton, Lauren Penney, Jessica Piekielek, Joseph Pratt, Tyler Priest, James Sell, Tom Stewart, Joanna Stone, Jason Theriot, Debbie Toups, and Steven Wiltz. Thanks also to Lucia Sayre and Bonnie Jean Owen of the University of Arizona who helped compile and edit the entries in this guide. We owe gratitude to Maria Rodriguez, Armando Vargas, and Nancy Young, staff of the Bureau of Applied Research in Anthropology at the University of Arizona, for their ongoing support and assistance in keeping our office and research teams going.

Finally, this history study would not have been possible without the support of Dr. Harry Luton, who championed and supervised the study, first in the Gulf of Mexico Region, MMS, New Orleans, and then from the agency's headquarters in Herndon, Virginia. The unwavering support of Harry and others at the MMS ensured that this project would be completed.

# 1. THE INTERVIEW SUMMARIES

From 2001-2006 the U.S. Minerals Management Service sponsored a study to examine the historical evolution of the offshore oil and gas industry and its effects on Louisiana's coastal culture, economy, landscape, and society. Researchers from universities in Louisiana, Texas, and Arizona came together to trace the development from land and marsh to state waters and across the Outer Continental Shelf. As one component of this project, university and community researchers gathered oral histories from workers, family members, community leaders, and others whose lives were shaped by the offshore oil and gas industry in southern Louisiana. Local entrepreneurs, workers, family members, industry and community leaders talked about how this industry grew from its fledgling beginning in the 1930's through the frenzied activity of the 1970's and beyond. The interviews ranged from very general conversations about life in southern Louisiana during this period to very specific discussions of particular aspects of the oil and gas industry.

Whenever possible, the interviews were recorded on tape or minidisk for archiving. All audio files were converted to a common format and stored to compact discs for uniformity and ease of storage. Photographs, diagrams, and other materials were gathered as well. The photographs were scanned and a digital copy prepared for archiving; the originals were returned to the owners. In most cases, a copy of the recorded interview was returned to the interviewee. Interviewees granted researchers written permission to place their interviews and digital copies of their photographs in the public domain. These materials are available for unrestricted scholarly, educational and public use. Persons using these materials should credit the donor and the Offshore Oil and Gas History Project (OOGHP). For example, "Interview with John Rogers, OOGHP, 2001" or "Photograph from John Rogers, OOGHP, 2001."

This guide to the interviews was created to organize the interviews and provide users access to the vast quantities of information contained in them. Whenever possible, for each interviewee, the entry was created by the researcher who conducted the interview, so there is variation in the style of the interview summaries. A companion volume describes the photographs that were collected during this project and presents a thumbnail and brief description of each photo (see *History of the Offshore Oil and Gas Industry and its Effects on Louisiana, Volume 6: A Collection of Photographs*). That volume also provides information about how to access digital copies of the photographs obtained during the project.

## 1.1. Organization of Materials

Interviews and photographs archived during the Offshore Oil and Gas History Project were catalogued and organized in electronic databases. Each interview was given a unique number and a separate entry. Each photograph was stored in a separate file in jpg format.

Section 1 of this volume includes information about each interview. A list of all people interviewed during the Project is provided in Section 2. The list includes the name of the person interviewed, the date and location of the interview, the name of the interviewer(s), the interview number, and the affiliation of the interviewer(s). The list of interviewees, created using MS Office Excel 2003) is also available electronically on the accompanying compact disc and can be

readily sorted and searched. In addition, all of the information contained in this guide has been entered into a database (created using EndNote Version 8) that is included on the accompanying disc.

## **1.2. The Interviews**

Each interview provides a unique look at the offshore oil and gas industry and its impacts on workers, their families, and their communities. For each one, researchers created an Ethnographic Preface summarizing how the interviewee became involved in the study, his or her family and/or occupational history, and particular highlights of the interview. In general, the Ethnographic Preface is then followed by a Summary of the topics discussed in the interview. Researchers from the University of Houston/ History International created indices to the interview transcripts; page numbers in the guide are those found on the transcripts.

An audio recording of each interview and a digital copy of the transcripts of each interview, along with a digital copy of the signed release statements, are available in the archives of the University of Houston, Louisiana State University, University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and Nicholls State University. Copies of these materials can be obtained by contacting the archivists listed in Section 3 of this volume.

The information in this guide is presented in the following format:

Interviewee Name

Location of Interview

Date of Interview

Name of Interviewer

Institutional Affiliation of Interviewer

Interview Number

Ethnographic Preface

Summary or Index

Niels Aalund

Houston, TX

August 9, 2006

Interviewed by: Jason P. Theriot

University of Houston/History International

MMS066

Ethnographic Preface:

Niels Aalund is a native Houstonian. He graduated from the University of Houston and worked in D.C. as a maritime lobbyist before taking a job with the West Gulf Maritime Association, where he currently serves as Vice President of the Maritime Affairs. He also serves on the Houston Maritime Museum Committee.

Summary:

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Robert Acosta

Houma, LA

February 7, 2003

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS016

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Bobby Acosta was contacted through Diana Edmonson of the Terrebonne Council on Aging. We met at the Council offices in Houma.

Bobby worked mostly in the Houma District for his 40 year career with Texaco. He started as a kitchen hand in 1948 (Dog Lake, Bay Ste. Elaine, Lake Barre). At 21, he became a roustabout (1951). In 1955 he became a pumper, working up through meterman to production supervisor at Lake Barre. He shifted fields regularly within the Houma District, including a stint in the Houma office. He was offshore for about six months. He finished up with four years as production supervisor at Caillou Island until retirement in 1987.

#### Summary:

**Pumper Work:** Took care of oil production, gauged, loaded barges, took care of allowables. Depth bracket allowable vs. natural allowable. Wells had to be tested each month. If water was mixed with oil, allowable had to be separated. Mann Hot Oil Act to regulate oil sales, oil produced and sold over allowable limit was illegal. The meterman would take care of maintenance of the meters.

**Oil Units:** Wells drilled into certain sands were known as sand units, had to have their own separate production facilities. Tank batteries were commingled but each well had to have separate records.

**Work Schedule:** Worked 6 and 6. He worked at night, because the pay was slightly higher. Night production supervisor had to do the paperwork, calculate production. Got Christmas and New Years off, in alternating years. Supervisors would let as many people as possible off for the holidays; pumpers, supervisors, and some boat crews stayed. On Christmas, at Dog Lake, for awhile the pumpers worked an informal deal where the night and day crews would alternate taking care of the whole field on holidays. After a few years the company stopped that because of safety/liability issues.

**Family:** His wife had to carry a lot of the work, even though she didn't drive. Other mothers helped, picked up his girls at school. "You missed a lot of things."

**Hazards:** Didn't experience any blowouts, but there were some close moments with pipe leaks and storms. Wells were kept producing until the last minute before a storm hit. The worst part of the storms was cleaning and repairing afterwards.

Working for Texaco: It was a good company to work for, but many workers tended to go to work the day before, so they would be able to start on time. "...there was always somebody waiting to take your place."

Changes: biggest change was in employee relations. In early days supervisors had a lot of power, including the power to fire someone. Now the supervisors have to document "everything." Now computer enables documentation and networking, so everybody maintains contact. Communications were by radio, but were limited. A home emergency meant his wife had to call the office, at night that would be the night watchman who would call the field.

Many times workers would be kept on the job indefinitely, 30-40 days at a time. Job dissatisfaction and turnover has increased.

Work Experience: What he missed the most about work were the people he worked with, still tries to keep in touch. Had 5-6 course meals at camps, but sometimes food quality varied with the cooks.

Effects of Oil: Oil "put a lot of money in people's pockets." It made a number of local companies - John Monteiro, Edmonson Construction, Benoit Machine Shop, Delta Ironworks.

B.A. "Red" Adams

Amelia, LA, Morgan City, LA

January 17, 2002, July 14, 2004

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner, Jamie Christy

University of Arizona, University of Houston/History International

AG055, MMS032

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Red Adams is well known in and around Morgan City. He runs a company called Oil and Gas Rentals, and this company is one of the larger employers in town. He was quite willing to talk with me. Red has an office in his business complex in Amelia, alongside the bayou. We met there and talked for just under an hour. Red reviews some of what he perceives as the keys to managing a successful business in the oilpatch, as well as some of the ways that businesses can be good participants in community life. Red was interviewed by Andrew Gardner in 2002 and then again by Jamie Christy in 2004.

Red Adams was born and raised in Harvey, Louisiana, across the river from New Orleans, in 1933. He joined the Navy and spent five years there. After his discharge he began working in the oilfield as a contract laborer in Bay Marchand for the California Company in 1952. Red worked as a roustabout for 5 years, then roughnecked for a year in Bay Marchand, and worked his way up to gangpusher. He moved to Morgan City to work for Arnold Pipe Rental in 1958. After six years with Arnold Pipe Rental, Mr. Adams went to work for Drilling Tools, Inc. for three years. In 1967, Mr. Adams formed Oil and Gas Rental in 1967, which he still owns and operates. Oil and Gas Rentals grew from a handful of employees to 95 employees in 2002.

#### Summary of AG055:

Early history: Red was born across the river from New Orleans in 1933. His father was a farmer, and later he worked for the water purification plant. His mother was a teacher. He had no idea about the oil industry. He joined the Navy at 17, and got out in 1952. He worked offshore as a roustabout for five years with The California Company. That was part of what is now called the Chevron Company.

First day offshore: He recalls his first day offshore. He was loading sacks. All of the drilling was done on pilings back then. In those five years, he went to pushing a crew, then pushing three crews. He came to Morgan City because they were drilling off of Morgan City, and he ran a little base for them.

Work schedules: He wasn't working directly for Chevron. He was a contractor. Most of the people he supervised were hardworking, they came from farms where it was harder work, but it was better paying. Offshore was good work for single men. Back then it was 14 out and 7 in.

Industry cycles and effects: Morgan City was just a two-lane road back then. He talks about how the oil industry is cyclical. You can't legislate supply and demand. Yeah, people say it was a wild

time, but you had to be tough to work in the oilfield. And when they were offshore, they competed with each other in a healthy way.

Labor camps: Even the labor camps served a purpose. It gave people a place to start, and then they could move on. You could pick yourself up that way.

Sales position: After five years as a contract worker, he moved to Morgan City. He got offered a salesman position, and that beat moving mud sacks around, so he said yes. He worked for Arnold Pipe Rental. At the time, southern Louisiana was like Silicon Valley. All these companies were bringing in college-educated personnel. These people got their starts here, and went on to become presidents of the major oil companies. At first, he thought he had made a big mistake with the sales job. The keys were integrity and honesty. He earned the trust of a lot of people. He would stand behind what he was selling.

Drilling Tools Incorporated: In 1964, he set up with Drilling Tools Incorporated. He went to work for them, and he stayed until November of 1967. In that month, he started his own company, Oil and Gas Rental Services. He has two silent partners - they supplied the money. The marketing has always been the same: you knock on the door and ask them for the business. That will never change. No matter what technology comes along, you can't replace putting your arm around somebody and saying thank you.

Sales: Now the equipment has changed a lot. He's got his sons working for him, and they work hard to stay up to date. They used to do mostly inshore sales: when they started, it was 50/50. Now it's 80/20 to the offshore. The majors have been eating up one another, and that has given fertile ground to the independents. They do more business with independents than with majors.

Company niche: He describes the specific niche of his company. His company started off with half a dozen personnel. Now they employ 90 people. The oilpatch has changed a lot, and most of the companies relocated to Houston. Before all the communication came in to play, they had to have camps and offices down here. Now you could be in Paris and talk to the fellow on the rig.

Community involvement: His company contributes to the community. Unless you give something back to the community, you don't belong. They have kids on scholarship, for example. He talks about the community relations for a while. They communicate with state senators and so on.

New generation of workers: We talk about the new generation of workers. He says that they still find some good ones, but there are some bad ones too. They have a program that brings high school and college kids into work.

Future: As far as the future of Morgan City goes, we're never going to get all the big companies back. And more than just the loss of industry, they don't have the land to support expansion anyway. He talks about what's going to happen when a hurricane hits Fourchon. He chooses to live in Morgan City because he loves it here.

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Gerald Adkins

Houma, LA

January 14, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM021

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Kerry St. Pé had referred us to Gerald Adkins as one who knew a lot of the commercial fishermen in the area. I had called him several times in September 2001, but his "on-call" job forced him to cancel a couple of appointments: he drives vehicles around to car lots all over the region. He retired in 1997, and rather than return to his native Shreveport, he built a house in a new subdivision behind the shopping mall in Houma. His wife, Jane, a nurse, was home but did not participate in the interview. The interview ranged across a number of topics dealing with W&F data collection and management, environmental changes and fluctuations, local entrepreneurs, and the differing propensities of shrimpers and oystermen to interact with the oil industry. He agreed with an impression I had been formulating: because of the greater degree of variability/volatility in shrimping (i.e., year-to-year changes in catches due to environmental factors), compared to the relatively steady nature of oyster harvests (function largely of how diligently an oysterman cared for his reefs/leases), shrimpers were more aggressive than oystermen in trying to find niches in the oil industry as it developed.

Gerald Adkins, a native of Shreveport, started working for the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries in 1963 at Grand Isle. He graduated from Northern and worked as a biologist at the lab on Grand Terre Island, studying shrimp biology and population dynamics. He moved to Houma, where he now lives, in 1966 and served as the District Biologist there until he retired in 1997.

#### Summary:

Early years: graduated from college at Northern; in the 1960s, decline in shrimp production put pressure on W&F to study the problem; he went to work as biologist at the lab on Grand Terre Island off Grand Isle, doing basic research on shrimp biology/population dynamics, though his preference was for finfish research; passage of Public Law 88309 in 1966 provided research funds to all GOM coastal states; biologists in each of Louisiana's 7 districts would select research; in 1966 he moved to Houma as District Biologist, until he retired.

Finfish research: stimulated when Florida clamped down on gillnets and the fear that Florida fishermen would bring "thousands of miles" of monofilament nets into Louisiana waters; at the time, almost nothing was known about the magnitude of commercial and recreational fishing effort in the state; finfishing was only a supplemental activity, done in cold weather, by crabbers, shrimpers and oystermen; federal law prohibiting contraband fish shipments made it easier to get more reliable data on fishing effort.

Recreational fishermen: not powerful group in the 1970s, but in 1980s, the GCCA moved into Lake Charles from Texas and united all recreational fishermen, gaining power in legislature; though "compromise" legislation - primarily outlawing unattended nets by both commercial and recreational fishermen, and restricting gillnets to mullet and a limited black drum fishery - the fishery is now "stable".

Impacts of oil activity: until 1972/1975, very little state regulation of activity; he did study of effects of canals and recommended that oil companies do directional drilling from central canals; his boss wouldn't let him publish recommendations because it implied added costs to oil companies; philosophy of little regulation was that "we have millions of acres of marsh;" canals disrupt natural water flow; offshore activity has little effect on fisheries, and rigs concentrate fish and thus make it easier for them to spawn; Houma Ship Channel increased in width from the original 150 feet to 1500 feet since banks were never stabilized; saltwater intrusion now impacting Houma's drinking water supply; Ellender got funding and Houma boomed with access for deepwater shipping; Houma Courier ran article on this 2 or 3 years ago.

Freshwater diversions: do some good in small areas, much major diversions, e.g., running the Mississippi down through Bayou Lafourche, resisted by landowners.

Effect of floods: 1973 to 1975 were flood years, displacing species 10 miles offshore; oysters were reestablished in some areas, though overall catch was down.

Game wardens: he was a biologist, but wore a uniform; "everyone was a game warden by association;" difficult to collect information from fishermen after someone from their dock gets arrested.

Local entrepreneurs: Motivati Seafood started by A.J. Busey in 1940s; Mr. Ernie Voisin moved to California and worked in aeronautical industry, bought out oyster leases and company, and automated it based on his experience from his California work and worked to broaden market in urban areas.

Oyster reef damage claims: W&F biologists assess damages done by props and barges; testify on behalf of oystermen; oil companies have their own assessors; reef off Grand Isle, right near shipping channel, known as "Million Dollar Reef" because lessee would (supposedly) move the navigation buoys onto his reef and collect damages repeatedly from boat and oil companies.

Recent marsh repair lawsuit: Michael St. Martin brought it for his own marshes, but offered to include state school lands in it, so it meant money for the parish; he's very generous in donations to causes around town.

Ralph Ainger

Herndon, VA

November 22, 2002

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS015

### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Ralph Ainger grew up on Long Island, NY. A marine biologist by training, he was hired in 1976, around the time of the first Mid-Atlantic offshore lease sale, by the Bureau of Land Management as an oceanographer. After a few years in the New York office, he moved to Washington to work in the environmental policy group, and in the early 1980s took over as regional supervisor for leasing and environment in the Atlantic region, formed with the creation of the MMS. In the early 1990s, he went to work for the associate director of the MMS, working on updating the data management system. In 1996 he became the chief of the leasing division, and in 2001 he moved on to become chief of the international marine minerals division.

### Summary:

Good background on historic functions of the BLM and the USGS in the overall offshore leasing and regulatory program and the merging of the two into the MMS. Ainger talks about the increasing politicization of the program despite its outstanding environmental record over the last 30 years. Some discussion of potential for offshore North Carolina and issues of oil import dependence and conservation. Good detail on the "Western gap" and the negotiation of the boundary line between U.S. and Mexican zones in the middle of the Gulf of Mexico, in which Ainger participated. Discussion of resource evaluation and different methodologies involved. Problem faced by MMS of competing for technically trained people.

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Vernon Albert

Lafayette, LA

November 7, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW027

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Vernon Albert was born in Pennsylvania and grew up an "Army brat." He studied business at San Antonio College before joining the Army, where he went to flight school and spent two years in Vietnam. Upon leaving the military in 1967, he went to work for Petroleum Helicopters Incorporated (PHI), where he stayed until he retired in 1994. The first six years he worked for PHI, he lived in Lake Charles and worked in Cameron, but then moved to Lafayette when he took a job in the company's training department. In 1982, he became vice president and chief pilot. He currently works as an air safety investigator and consultant.

#### Summary:

Early life: born in Pennsylvania; father was in military; studied business at San Antonio College; went into Army 1963, where went to flight school; went to work for PHI in '67. In Vietnam from '64-65.

Flying: he wanted to fly; went into Army when they directly opened up flight school to enlistees.

Hiring at PHI: sent resumes and applications to many companies and PHI responded favorably; wife was from De Ridder, so moving to southern Louisiana not a hardship. One of biggest expense for PHI is training; have high pilot turnover because people don't want to live along Gulf coast and don't want to work seven and seven or 14 and 14. At one time, 85 percent of the pilots in the Gulf were ex-military; pilots and mechanics were from all over the country, but locals usually most stable employees.

Training: military no longer training as many pilots; civilian flight school expensive. Unlike pilots, mechanics have to go through civilian technical schools even if trained in the military. PHI recruited some pilots at military bases with large air mobile divisions, especially during period of major growth in 70s and early 80s.

Helicopters: PHI had jobs all over the world; at height had 90 international aircraft, with 2-4 pilots per. Must have two pilots flying if have 10 or more passengers. In Gulf people were flying virtually every kind of commercially acceptable helicopter; majority of those crafts are working full-time contracts. Taylor Energy and Chevron operate their own aircrafts; Exxon owns their aircrafts, but contracts out the maintenance and flying.

Changes in helicopter use: in 60-70s, every field offshore had its own helicopter; today, aircrafts are more expensive and are used more efficiently.

Bust: at peak in the early 80s, PHI had 425-430 helicopters and 3300 employees and almost 1000 pilots; today they have 60-65% of that. A lot of the reduction in size was due to worker attrition because of low salaries; describes pilots' salaries.

Job: in '67, hired on with PHI out of Cameron and lived in Lake Charles; although where he was based would change, stayed in Lake Charles until moved to Lafayette in '72. Pilots working crew changes moved around a lot and lived out of overnight bag when on duty; people don't like being vagabonds, added to turnover; as you gain seniority, you get more stable jobs.

Cyclical industry: support industries are finally recognizing the cyclical nature of what goes on in the Gulf; effects of what is happening now in oil industry, show up in following years budget, not immediately; support industry figured out have to size their company for their benefit and not chase the oil industry cycle; good to be a little short on staff because gives opportunity for some to get overtime - benefits individual workers and company.

Safety: helicopters are relatively safe; chances of surviving an engine failure in a helicopter is significantly better than surviving an engine failure in an airplane; auto rotation. Four to five times a year helicopters will be blown off the decks of platforms - not an accident, but has economic impact.

PHI: Lees started it in '49 with three helicopters; sold company to Robert Suggs and M. M. ("Dickey") Bayon and based in New Orleans with operational headquarters in Lafayette. Lafayette a good central location; airport in New Iberia was being used by Navy.

Airports: discusses the many airports in the area and inefficiency in Lake Charles.

PHI's impact on Lafayette: one of largest employers; many of the employees lived and spent their money in Lafayette; PHI bought fuel, vehicles, paint, food from local businesses. Other than turnover, no real negative effect on community. City experienced phenomenal growth partly due to oil industry. Many of PHI pilots were ex-military and lived in areas like Pensacola that are near an existing military facility.

Deficiencies in Lafayette: not until early 90s did they get an aviation trade school; still don't have a flight school. None of the professional aviation organizations housed in the airport are represented on the airport commission board - leads to problems. Oil Center was brought to Lafayette because of Herbert Heymann; if not for him it probably would have ended up in New Iberia. City built Ambassador Caffery instead of a limited access loop; now city talking about bringing I-10 through center of town.

After retirement: went to work as a consultant in '94; family decided to make the career change and to stay in Lafayette - has no intention of ever moving away.

Aviation industry economic impact to area: has maintained a large payroll; paid lots of taxes (companies have lots of assets); supported a subsupport industry (e.g., parts stores).

Nedra Andrus

Lafayette, LA

June 11, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW055

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Nedra Andrus is the wife of Lafayette realtor Dwight Andrus. She was born in Merryville, but lived in a number of different towns in southern Louisiana while she was growing up. Her father was a manager for Morgan-Lindsay stores (a five-and-ten cent chain store). She moved to Lafayette when she was in the third grade and studied music at Southwestern Louisiana Institute (SLI) and Loyola. She describes the growth and changes in Lafayette related to the influx of oil-related business.

#### Summary:

**Early life:** Nedra was born in Merryville, near De Ridder. Her father managed Morgan-Lindsay stores. She moved to Lafayette in the third grade. After graduating high school, Nedra studied music at SLI (now ULL) and Loyola. She moved back to Lafayette in 1954 when her husband started working for his father. She was a secretary for Dwight, Senior, for about a year before starting a family (they have 3 sons).

**Realty:** Town-country border. During the 50s and 60s, the majority of the family's realty business was related to the oil industry ("transits"). The town's growth shifted southwards. They were major players in Lafayette realty.

**Impact of oil industry:** Growth in population brought money into the local economy. Lafayette was very social and "cultural" before oil came in (e.g., Mark Breaux). Lafayette impacted "transits" more than the "transits" impacted Lafayette. "Transits" brought in different ideas about education. People of Lafayette were generous and welcoming to newcomers; political party affiliation; growth of different branches of Protestantism in city; prominent community members related to oil industry.

**Oil bust:** Affected people personally and economically. It did not seem fair that some people lost everything. People wanted to stay in Lafayette.

Tom Angel

Houma, LA

November 11, 2002, November 21, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA067, DA078p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Joe Sanford referred me to Tom Angel. Tom was one of the first employees hired by Sanford Brothers in Morgan City. I met Tom at his office at Submar in Houma. He had an hour and a half for the first interview. During the interview he told me about scrapbooks his wife had put together from his early days in diving, and we agreed to get together again to look through his books.

Tom first moved to South Louisiana from Pittsburgh in 1961. He began working with Sanford Brothers in 1962 and retired from diving in 1988. He stayed with Sanford Brothers, which was renamed Sanford Marine, when it was bought by Westinghouse, then by Fleur, and then by Santa Fe Engineering. Among his contributions to oilfield diving, Tom helped develop underwater photography and was a founding member of the Association for Diving Contractors. After leaving diving, he became president of Submar, an oilfield service company.

#### Summary of DA067:

Early days: came to Morgan City in 1961; started profession as a commercial diver, then got into underwater photography, hooked up with Joe Sanford; in those days it was all muscle, not much brains; nobody was keeping records; worked up some systems for record keeping, went into management with Joe, were bought out by Westinghouse, then Fleur, then Santa Fe International; when Kuwait bought Santa Fe I sold the Santa Fe stuff to Sonat and went with them.

Firsts: made the world record 600 foot dive in the Gulf of Mexico in 1967; set the first Christmas tree on a wellhead on the bottom; pulled the first J tube; initiated a lot of safety things; guys used to keep their time on the back of packs of Marlboro cigarettes, we really cleaned it up; that's how I got into the Association for Diving Contractors

Underwater photography: cousin has his own studio; it was something done in our family; client wants to see what is going on on a job; devised a method of taking pictures in turbid water - pump a bag full of clear water and see through it; develop in the bag and the photo is 85 percent dry by the time it reaches the surface; had a photo on the cover of Parade magazine in 1967 or 68; work an average of an hour a day, lots of fun; build reputation on how good you are, how quick you are

First job: worked in a garage as a diesel mechanic for Shell Oil, injured, told could never do that again and needed to do lots of swimming; from Pittsburgh; had been in the SeaBees; met Joe McCall from Morgan City at a truck stop, he said if you ever want a job come to MC

First impression of Morgan City: very different place; not a lot of highways, only gravel roads; very difficult, lots of camps; Louisiana slow in advancing technologies; perceived as a leader, paid attention to details, people came to me for help

Diving community: lots of guys with guts and no brains; made lots of money and came home and drank it all up; never knew what was going to happen; mostly freelancing, lots of accidents, especially in underwater burning; divers didn't understand decompression tables, didn't want to do the math; I teamed up with Jack Laam out of the Navy; he and I would study the Navy manual; I'd teach him about the oilfield and he'd teach me about diving; we'd do helium-oxygen dives to test the system; a lot of people wanted to advance the safety and knowledge of diving, but nobody ever kept records; about 1963 or '64 we started keeping a database of how long the divers were down, who got bent, etc.

Hooking up with Sanford: was 7th employee, four were his family; joined Joe about 1 year after getting in the Gulf; got together with photo lab, opened an office for him in Venice; when we first started doing photography divers did not like it because they did not want anybody to see what they were doing; Jessie Grice also got into it, he didn't last long

Use of photography: underwater drilling was highly classified; go behind closed doors to see blueprints to go down, many divers could not read blueprints, colors on valves are not the same underwater; I would make three albums for the rig, the diving company, and the home office; Sanford Brothers and Jack Laam did not have the secrecy;

Diver knowledge: Jack insisted that divers had to be able to work the calculations themselves to be able to dive; competition would put guys down who didn't know what they were doing; Norman Knudson and Norm Ketchum made the deepest dive off a stage using mixed gas tanks we had ordered without knowing how to use them; Ketchum did the dive; all the divers had that attitude

Change: cost of insurance went up so high; we made it that if the diver did not turn in decompression sheets and dive sheets he could not get paid; when we finished we had a safer diving record than the U.S. Navy; Navy divers were puppets and had the chief to take care of them; it was the opposite of what we had in industry due to the high cost of insurance and liability; before insurance, in an accident you would file a lien against a job to get some money

Westinghouse to the Gulf: they had an underseas division that developed the Emerson rebreather and Deep Star, a manned submersible; Dr. Mickey Goodman helped develop decompression tables; Al Craftsberg and Jerry O'Neill had a rebreather and hot water suit; I made the 600 foot dive with them; used a bottle with a gauge for decompression; they brought this interest of Westinghouse, purchased Sanford Brothers and established Sanford Marine; we picked up Jack Laam; in 1961, 150-200 feet was a deep dive; I did the 600 foot dive with helium-oxygen and a Craftsberg system.

Relationship between oilfield and diving: diving was ahead of the oilfield and deep water; with air you can stay down 30 minutes, with helium, one hour, with saturation you can spend 8 hours down there; the oilfield was trying to do everything topside; diving made it possible for them to work at the bottom; NASA came to Sanford Brothers in the late 60s and early 70s because aerodynamics and hydrodynamics are the same; we showed them different tools and how to use them under those conditions; got media attention when we started to go international; first overseas job was in Cairo in the mid-60s for Phillips; we provided services on the first well drilled in the North Sea; Jack and I designed and built the bell chamber for it, trained the French divers in Morgan City

Source of divers: first company in the Gulf - Glomar - brought in California divers; they were used to seeing underwater, had a hard time here where they could not; only Can Dive - Laddie Handelman's company - stayed in the Gulf; they teamed up with World Wide Divers in Morgan City; the rest of the early companies were local entrepreneurs

Morgan City and Houma: only one diving company in Houma, and they built the tunnel; others were in Morgan City because that is where offshore was; left Morgan City 30 years ago, company was expanding and couldn't get any land in Morgan City because all tied up by a few families

Association for Diving Contractors (ADC): was founding member - along with Mike Hughes, Buster Hughes (no relation to Mike), Dick Evans (McDermott), Jack Smith (S&H), Danny Wilson (Subsea International), Ken Wallace (Taylor) and John Galletti (J&J); hardest thing was to gather everyone in one room; Andre Galerne came later; got started for community education and safety; shared information about equipment, etc.; what we did, which was to get together and talk about how divers had died and why, was unheard of in those days; held diving symposium in Morgan City to educate the divers; seminars to teach them new techniques and show them new equipment; divers liked it except it was held during the off season when many of them were on vacation; we recruited other companies to join ADC; started inviting Shell, Exxon, etc. to join as affiliate members and come tell us what they needed

Forces for change: insurance and liability; Bill Hunter had law firm in Morgan City, started going to seminars, knew what was going on and what should have been going on; lawsuits had been unheard of due to the Jones Act and unlimited liability; lawsuits could bankrupt a company; lawsuits and insurance made ADC stronger; oil and gas companies supported us when they saw we were doing it to cut costs

Relationship with oil companies: divers seen as necessary evil; got inspection divers from S&H; construction divers from Taylor, McDermott, and Sanford; in early to mid-80s started prepack qualifications and safety programs; diving always was and still is competitive; construction divers are most highly paid; inspection divers well paid but work not as hard; consulting companies started in the 70s to tell companies what the divers could do and if they were doing it right; most companies work for the majors, would do big contracts on bid and then special call out work; Westinghouse got out because did not know diving business; bought by Fleur Services, then Santa Fe; Santa Fe sold to their best customer, the government of Kuwait about 19

years ago; Kuwait just sold about 50 percent of its stock back to the public; pattern of companies buying up diving companies, bigger ones buying smaller ones

Changes: helium diving; sat diving; ROVs and manned and unmanned submersibles; with ROV can go see the problems and suggest solutions before putting diver down; J&J did not get into sat; lots of the early companies are gone now; ROVs enhanced divers' ability to go deeper, divers resented them at first but then found they made it safer; most companies now have ROVs or, like CalDive, McDermott, and now Global, subcontract out the ROV work

Other shifts: lots of mergers after things peaked and started to go back down; Taylor Divers and Subsea sold; where the diving industry and the ADC became very weak, were fighting OSHA; at Santa Fe were training Coast Guard divers so they would know what to look for; unions tried to come to Gulf, bad time for divers; OSHA and AFL-CIO pushing to get divers into the union; proposed regulations we saw would make diving more hazardous or put companies out of business; said tables have to be bend proof; we fought hard and finally got the regulations thrown out; it took a lot of hard work to explain the technology when it had never been there before; it took getting diving companies on the committees; divers started getting separated from their companies when the companies started getting bigger; at first companies kept a large freelance list, then due to insurance regulations the companies created requirements for divers to be on their lists; harder for divers to move from one company to another; union attempt was the best thing to happen to the Gulf because it brought safety into the limelight; ADC took the lead on challenging the regs and worked with the Coast Guard on that.

Summary of DA078p:

- 1: Weekly Reader cover photo
- 2: Weekly Reader article, "Deep Sea Diving"
- 3: Submarine being lowered into the water
- 4: Submarine on deck
- 5: Submarine being lowered into the water
- 6: Dixie Roto magazine cover, bottom 1/2, from the article "The Depth Frontier" from the Times-Picayune
- 7: Dixie Roto magazine cover, top 1/2, from the article "The Depth Frontier" from the Times-Picayune
- 8: Color photo of diver welding from 600' dive
- 9: Cover of brochure from Santa Fe Engineering and Construction Co.
- 10: Page #5 of the brochure from Santa Fe Engineering and Construction Co.
- 11: Christening of new system, RCV 25, Nicholas Bartinsky, President of Honeywell back in the early Santa Fe days
- 12: Christening of new system, RCV 25
- 13: Cover of program for 4th Annual Diving Safety Symposium, Morgan City, LA
- 14: Man spot welding pipe on boat
- 15: Santa Fe Underwater Services R&D facility - Houma, LA
- 16: Association for Diving Contractors Board of Directors; (back row, l to r) Skinny Brown, Tom Angel, Johnny Johnson, Carl Helwig, not remembered; (front row, r to l) Jack Lamb who is deceased now, Bill Dore, Don Terry, Ken Wallace, and Buck Humphrey

- 18: Tom Angel exiting chamber after 600' dive
- 19: Four men in front of the diving chamber
- 20: Three men standing on top of platform above diving chamber
- 21: Man talking into radio
- 22: Two men sitting inside the diving chamber
- 23: Diving bell off barge
- 24: Tom Angel's emblem on the side of his truck; I bought that and had a sign painter do that for me because that was a prestige thing back in them days; you had to haul your gear so you had to have a pick-up truck to haul your gear
- 25: Crane and diving stage
- 26: Diving suit, hot water
- 27: Tom Angel with diving suit
- 28: Helicopter, chamber and crane on the end of a barge
- 29: Diving bell being lifted and lowered by crane on the end of a barge
- 30: Photo of dive tank on boat deck
- 31: Dive suit being lowered by crane; at OTC show;
- 32: Tom Angel in dive suit on deck; what they gave me the inventor on the radio to tell me how to maneuver this suit; it was in the shallow water and in the shallow water the seals leak, I am in coveralls and a slicker suit and you would come out of there very oily because there is not enough pressure to really seal them seals off
- 33: Johnny Johnson talking to man in dive suit
- 34: Tom Angel taking photos underwater outside Perry submarine
- 35: Tom Angel's truck
- 36: Amoco job 546100 - setting charge in piling; this was setting the charge and that's shooting 'em, the diver would just go over in a basket and lower the explosive down in there and then the flare goes in
- 37: Amoco job 546100 - blasting piling
- 38: Display - "Total Diver Communication System"
- 39: Panel for communication
- 40: "Umbilical winch" - large roll of cable
- 41: Fluor Ocean Services test chamber on deck
- 42: Stand-by diver area on deck
- 43: Surplus LCM rigged up by students in ADC training school at the Florida Institute of Technology; the ADC and Taylor Diving, Santa Fe and McDermott were the three big leaders at that time, we got the Florida Institute of Technology into a diving curriculum and we got the U.S. Navy to donate this boat, their diving boat.
- 44: Tom Angel's flipflops after coming out of the saturation chamber on Project 600, a record-setting saturation dive to 600'; flip-flops look 2 or 3 inches longer than my feet and they were very thin and they are just like a spongy rubber and then several days later they got like they had oil on them, they were just flat.
- 45: Diver on stage getting dressed out by tenders, Tom Angel and Sanford Bass
- 46: Diver on stage underwater

Bruce S. Applebaum

Houston, TX

November 12, 2002

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS005

### Ethnographic Preface:

Bruce Applebaum retired from Texaco following its merger with Chevron. He had been vice president of Texaco and president of the company's Worldwide Exploration and New Ventures. Prior to joining Texaco in 1990, Applebaum had held positions for several independent oil and gas companies, including exploration manager with Sun Oil and Texas Eastern, domestic exploration manager for SEDCO Energy, and division exploration manager for Union Pacific Resources. He was born in Buffalo, NY in 1947 and received a B.A. in geology from SUNY-Buffalo and a doctorate in geological oceanography from Texas A&M.

### Summary:

Free ranging interview on the general history of offshore exploration from the late 1960s and especially on deepwater developments in the 1990s. Applebaum talks about the coring program undertaken by the "Glomar Challenger" and his expertise in turbidite geology. He covers the history of natural gas exploration on the shelf and its terminal decline, pointing out that deepwater is most important as an oil play. Discusses offshore bidding and bright spots, and offers interesting comments on the history of Texaco and why he was brought in to help improve their exploration program.

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Cleejus "Click" and Betty Arcenaux

Bourg, LA

March 26, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB048

Ethnographic Preface:

The interview with Click was a long time in the making. F.J. Matherne and I had become friends since my interview with him in July of 2001. Since that time, he had been wanting me to contact his good friend, Click Arcenaux. I tried for 3 months and had all but given up when F.J. said he'd call for me. Click and his wife were happy to be interviewed, and were apologetic that it had taken so long to arrange the meeting.

Click became involved in the oil industry in 1948. He had gone to school after getting out of the military with the hopes of getting a degree in geology. He spent a year at LSU and then decided to come home. He worked for Halliburton from 1948-1951. In 1951, he got a job at Texaco as a roughneck. He worked the majority of his years out at Lake Pelto. He was a derrick man on the night shift for 13 years before moving to push tools for 18 years. He was promoted to field superintendent in the late 70's. He retired in 1984 and has enjoyed farming his land and fishing.

Summary:

Background: Click was born in 1929. He graduated from Terrebonne High School in 1946 and went into the Air Force for the next 1½ years. When he got out of the service, he attended LSU with an interest in pursuing a degree in geology. He ended up returning home after completing one year and going into the oil business.

Oil Field History: Click got on with Halliburton from 1948-1951 after returning from LSU. In 1951, he got a job with Texaco as a roughneck. He was a derrick man on the night shift at Lake Pelto for 13 years. After his stint as a derrick man, he moved on to pushing tools for 18 years. In the late 1970's, he was promoted to Field Superintendent, a position he held until his retirement in 1984.

Retirement: Since his retirement in 1984, he has enjoyed farming his land and fishing.

Earl Armstrong

Boothville, LA

July 19, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM050

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Bud Latham and Sam Pizzolato both recommended Earl Armstrong, a cattleman born in 1944 down at Pilot Town, now living in Boothville. I hooked up with Earl at the Fill-A-Sack convenience store in Boothville, as arranged, and we went next door to the house his father keeps when he's not down in Pilot Town. Earl himself owns a house, barn, and pasture across the highway. Dressed in cowboy hat and boots, Earl looked the part. He was articulate about environmental deterioration in the delta.

Earl was born in 1944 in Pilot Town, and now lives in Boothville. He is a cattleman and runs 1,200 head on a dozen islands his family owns. His father and grandfather grew up at Pilot Town, as trappers, fishermen, and tenders of the Coast Guard's navigation lights along the channels. He and three partners bought four crewboats and a 160' supply boat in the 1980's, and "lost money for seven years" before selling the boats, two to Chevron and two to buyers in Venezuela.

#### Summary:

Cattle business: cattle range freely on the islands; he pens them once a year for vaccinations, puts them on barges to take to market; leaves bulls with herd year-long; some buyers suspicious of this, label such herds as "down the river" cattle; had trouble penning them once with horses so decided to turn an airboat backwards on them -- immediately scared them into the pen; occasionally, helicopter pilots flying over will spot cattle mired in muck and call him; during storms, only thing he can do is get cattle up on levees; can't get insurance on them; has trouble with coyotes - believes they were introduced to eat nutria.

Environmental change: nutria eat back of willow trees which grow along river banks, killing them; "oyster grass" (bull tongue) invading because of increasingly brackish water, cattle won't eat it; suspects he'll be out of business in 5 years; Corps dredges but doesn't use dredge material to try to restore delta, which is "sinking;" 30-40% of river's silt now diverted into Atchafalaya system; some restoration efforts going on, such as West Bay Diversion, but need "more work, less study;" oil spills clean themselves after a while; roso cane grows in brackish water and absorbs oil.

Navigation and river pilots: navigation on river getting more dangerous, especially in fog season (Nov-March), due to recreational fishing boats setting straight-line course by GPS and not watching where they're going; river pilots organized in 2 associations: Associated Branch pilots (New Orleans) are "bar pilots" who navigate from river mouth up to Pilot Town, and Crescent

Pilot's Association (Belle Chasse) are "river pilots," from Pilot Town upriver; pilots make \$300,000/year and "are worth every penny of it;" dangerous to get on/off large ships, and responsible for safe navigation of dangerous materials/chemicals; Earl's son has just joined one of the associations.

Burrwood: from 1930s to 1960s, army personnel stationed there; nothing left but a water tower; Corps stores its dredging equipment there.

Pilot Town: had one-room schoolhouse, all grades through the 8th; houses on pilings, connected to each other by boardwalk; I said I might want to visit - he said maybe he could take me down, but I should work through heads of pilot's associations.

Ken E. Arnold

Houston, TX

May 10, 2004

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS030

### Ethnographic Preface:

Ken Arnold worked for Shell Oil Company from the 1960's to the 1980's. He is now CEO of Paragon Engineering Services in Houston. Arnold got into the oil field in 1964. He graduated from Cornell with a degree in civil engineering and went to work for Shell in New Orleans. From there, he was transferred to the head office in New York City where he worked in the production department. He also worked a year in head office transportation and supplies and another year in manufacturing / engineering (refinery work). He was transferred back to New Orleans as section supervisor of mechanical engineering in the Delta Division. In 1971, Arnold moved to offshore operations as a section leader and division mechanical engineer. Four years later, he transferred to Bellaire Research Center as the manager of the production operations research department. Arnold spent his last couple of years with Shell as engineering manager of the mid-Continent production division (west Texas, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Illinois, and Michigan). After leaving Shell, he opened Paragon with a partner.

J. Frank Davis went to work for Shell in 1958. He grew up in the oil fields and got a degree in electrical engineering from Texas Tech. His first job was with W. A. Bill Farmer Construction in 1943. Over the years, he worked on drilling rigs, pulling units, and doing construction and roustabout work. He was in the Houston area gas department as plant engineer, project manager building gas trading plants, gas liquid recovery plants, compression plants, and gathering systems. He was construction inspector and first plant engineer at Shell's first sour gas operation in the United States.

### Summary:

Mr. Arnold interviewed with J. Frank Davis. This interview covered mainly facilities engineering, mostly from the Shell perspective. There was also interesting commentary on safety management, including accidents, government response, and MMS standards. Also, discussion environmental issues, Paragon, and Pecten.

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Leonard Aucoin

Morgan City, LA

June 2, 2004

Interviewed by: Jamie Christy

University of Houston/History International

MMS033

### Ethnographic Preface:

Leonard Aucoin was born in Little Bayou Long, Louisiana in 1927 as the son of a fisherman / shrimper. Mr. Aucoin worked on a dredge boat, as a dishwasher on a houseboat, as a deckhand, and then as an oiler. He went to work for Sun Oil in 1946 at age 19. Mr. Aucoin was most often working with seismic crews and he traveled with them all over Texas and Louisiana. He also worked for Geotech and Apache Oil for very brief periods and took a job with Band Marine of Berwick in order to return to his home near Morgan City. On his off days, he drove a cab. Mr. Aucoin was adept at operating boats and convinced Band Marine to promote him to captain. He retired with Tidewater Marine in 2000.

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Buddy Ayers

New Orleans, LA

March 2, 2002, July 27, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA034, DA114

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Buddy Ayers by Leslie Learney of the Historic Diving Society (HDS). I was talking with Leslie at the HDS booth at the Underwater Intervention conference, and he suggested that Buddy would be a good person to talk to about the history of diving offshore in the Gulf of Mexico. Buddy was also at the conference, and when he came over to the booth Leslie introduced us. We went and sat at a table in an area designated for Latin American contacts and chatted. Buddy introduced me to a couple of other people who came over and gave me the names of a number of people he thought would be good contacts. We arranged to meet again at the conference two days later for an interview. We connected up at the HDS booth late Saturday morning and walked to a nearby restaurant to have lunch and talk. The restaurant was almost empty and Buddy indicated that we wanted to be left alone, so almost no one came by. Buddy talked for a couple of hours and then we had lunch and went back to the conference before it ended. Buddy told me about the divers' reunion that was taking place the following Sunday and invited me to go along. I flew back early from Atlanta on a standby flight and rode with him out to the reunion. We picked up another diver, Jerry, on the way out. Buddy and Jerry talked all the way out and back. At the reunion I spent most of the time meeting other divers. I returned in July 2003 to complete the interview.

Buddy began diving in Texas when he taught himself to scuba dive as a young teenager. He started working offshore in 1961. During the 1970s, Buddy became the secretary for the newly formed divers' union. As a result of his union activity, he was blackballed in the Gulf of Mexico and ended up spending four years in the North Sea. He stayed there until the contracts ran out and he went to work in Mexico. He returned to the Gulf in the 1990's as an independent contractor.

#### Summary of DA034:

Early occupational history: from the Corpus Christi area, got into diving in 1961; still in the oil and gas business but as a consultant; started scuba diving at 16, "man laying pipelines asked me to go to work for him while still in high school; he had a hose and compressors, so I started working off a shrimp boat". In 1961, storm Carla hit, tore up facilities in the Corpus Christi bay, had to go out and salvage it; in 1963 friend's brother got a job tending, said come to Louisiana and get a job with Dick Evans; packed up 1958 Ford and came in; started out January 2, 1964, tended for a couple of months, and then back in the water.

Dick Evans Divers: Elba Masters worked for him, answered the phone, was the operations fellow; he called me and sent me on my first job; Gulf Platform was on fire; I went out, met Red

Adair, played poker with him; we never got that fire out; had done a lot of shallow diving, that was my first job with depth; Dick Evans worked mostly for McDermott; laid pipeline out to platform; pneumofathometers just coming out to get depth; we were making lots of money; Chuck Yates, one of my seadaddies, got me on as a barge diver; I was 22, had a wife and child on the beach, was making more money than I could spend; some heady times; mostly just a lot of work; barge divers got to work a lot; others had to scratch; had to have your own equipment, gasoline compressor, hose, ladder; they paid \$30 a day for gear rent; could also write off expenditures for gear for income tax purposes; Dick Evans bought out by McDermott.

Hurricanes and work: 1964 Hilda hit and gave us work; 1965 Betsy hit and brought more work; Dick Evans had no choice but to sell; if not McDermott was going to start its own diving division; they hired him as president of the subsidiary, Dick Evans Professional Divers; he worked 5 years as president and then went into another line of work; he was a welder and professional gambler from Texas; his brother was a gambler and killed a guy, came to Louisiana, got a job as a diver with Underwater Services owned by Al Warriner; worked on jobs till the late 1950s when he started his own company.

Seadaddies: one of mine was Joe Savoie; he invented the light weight diving helmet; had it in his car when I arrived in Louisiana; steel shell and fiberglass, made by hand in his garage; made 12; Joe died in 1996; went to fixed plate; quality made, I used mine for 30 years.

Innovations: things getting deeper, started using helium; first time I saw helium Roy Carroll was hired from the Navy, came out, said this is going to be the future; kept going deeper, using gear that wasn't all that safe; Kirby-Morgan came out with mask with demand regulator, came out with another helmet that cleaned the gas using barrel lime and then soda sorb which was not as caustic; Joe Savoie developed a backpack we used for a couple of years; found it was just as cost-effective to use as the demand type; soda sorb would clean the gas, reuse it and expel it; helium only found in a couple of places; first saw it in 1964, using it in 1965; Taylor Diving in early 1970s developed a helmet with a push-pull system, it killed a diver, Hoover, and they abandoned it.

Decompression tables: lots of experimenting going on in those days, especially with decompression tables; Navy had developed dive tables, in order to compete companies wanted more work time on the bottom, less decompression time; I experienced the bends 28 times; on one job 13 guys were bent within a 24 hour period; there was competition between Taylor Diving and Dick Evans; after McDermott bought the company, it remained Dick Evans Divers until 1971 when Dick's contract was up and he left; then McDermott Diving Division; they had all the barges, built some really sophisticated stuff for the time.

Divers' role: had small crew, took profiles on pipeline; then started using SCUBA gear, had battery operated scooters; diving 250 feet on SCUBA; people thought we were not safe, diving off end of barge; McDermott had old tugboat for live boating; could decompress on stringer or behind the barge; then got bigger, McDermott started hiring more divers; 70-80 divers, not including tenders; some working overseas, McDermott had spread operations to Africa, had a job in the early 1960s in Alaska.

My role: mostly diving pipeline; had barge to bury line; jet barge; Taylor called it a dredge barge; at least 4 divers on lay barge and anywhere from 4-6 or 8 on jet barge; everyone had own tender, unlike today where tender not assigned to diver, treated pretty much as deck labor; in the good old days, tender did not have to do anything but clean up the diver's gear; some of our tenders made it a profession.

Safety: in early 1970s, 1972, saw need for increased safety, for divers to get involved; bends were happening quite often, people were getting crippled up; Donald Boone started International Association of Professional Divers; pretty loosely run outfit; Association for Diving Contractors was starting up, some of them were members of our group; I'll never forget, we said we need safety standards, and they said it's our ball and bat, if you don't like the game go find something else to do; we knew we needed to get together.

Union attempt: Mechanical Engineers Beneficient Association was the maritime union; fellow lived down the street; I invited him to our meeting; we voted to go with this union, found out they didn't have the know how to deal with this; carpenters' union were pile drivers, on the east and west coast; none in the Gulf; we were all new to this, lots of skeptics, but we voted to go with the carpenters; they put money behind it, had their office across the street from the Department of Labor; diving companies dead set against it; Taylor Divers scared to come to our meetings; I was elected treasurer; people started getting summarily fired, said you weren't called out even if a barge captain had called you out; McDermott changed it around to where barge captains couldn't call out divers, would send who they wanted to try to break the union; in 1973 senate subcommittee hearings going on, I went to Washington from a job in the Bahamas to give testimony on behalf of the divers' union; was the only guy still diving giving testimony; it cost me; 1976, with the company for 13 years, 4 of us in the union were fired over an incident; when the union started McDermott sent people to recruit divers from China and prison system in hopes they would scare us away; these guys joined the union; got pay raises; weeded out most of supporters, voted union out, the company cut the pay a month later, about 1977; I was blackballed at that time.

To North Sea: was blackballed, found out we were listed in the computer with "union" stamped across our records; hired a lawyer; Freedom of Information Act had just passed, got our records, saw "not for rehire" there; couldn't get a job; in mid-1977 guy from Subsea called me to the North Sea; I went into exile in the North Sea; company's gear was so bad I planned to come back, but president of union and others also in exile, working for Occidental; got me the job; worked as a consultant diving for Piper Alpha 1978-1980; only time in my life on 7-and-7 schedule; lost contract, moved family to Texas, and built a home; started working in Mexico through the 1980s and 1990s; Subsea was U.S. company owned by ODECO Drilling.

Working in North Sea: standards loose, had Department of Energy, Jackie Warner, ex-Royal Navy guy, starting to get some standardization; then all Americans; now no Americans, everything is up to snuff; did not take family, boys in junior high and high school; later got divorce, probably related; gone 10 months one time, one time home only one week; divorce rate in U.S. 50 percent, among divers it's 80 percent.

Working in Mexico: guy I had met in the North Sea called me; all Mexican companies, American equipment; Mexican companies paid your way down and back, paid you in cash if you wanted it; did some salvage work, but most was pipeline, setting pipelines, putting valves together, putting risers in; considered ourselves professionals, not commercial divers.

Other companies: Professional Divers of New Orleans, sold to Cal Dive; Vin Russ had company; some inspections companies that would go behind and inspect work, before video cameras; now all divers carry video cameras, people on deck can watch to see that work is done right; Packer Divers - started by a member of Green Bay Packers; always two camps, Morgan City Divers and New Orleans Divers; Morgan City Divers did a lot of inspection work, didn't have equipment; Dick Evans started Global Divers; McDermott bought out Dick Evans; McDermott built a new building; Dick Evans had a big desk, we carried two dive books; you'd get a call, they'd tell you, take your Global book with you; McDermott found out and made them move; supposed to belong to Elba Masters, but Elba didn't have enough money; Katherine LaGrange did bookkeeping for Global Divers; her daughter married Bill Doré; separate bookkeeper, Guidry, for McDermott.

Global Divers: about 1965 Dick started Global; was upset he was forced to sell out to McDermott; losing money; Bill Doré's mother-in-law talked him into buying the company; Dick was 50 years old, I was 21 when I met him; it was wild and woolly; you could do what you wanted if you were big enough to do it; could take a bottle offshore.

Training: didn't know they had diving schools; other than how to decompress somebody and run a chamber, it's all nuts and bolts; I was a dumb ass Texas boy; lots of guys never went to school; except maybe the Navy school, lots of Navy Seals from 1968-1972; you don't learn in diving school, why you have a tender; now getting more technical; remember when they first came out with unscrambler, about 1967-1968 to improve communications; seadaddies show you how to do things, you learn as you go; when I started you'd spend 6-8 hours a day in the water, not deep water; did my first sat dive about 1967; didn't have sat chambers before that; did sat job in Flower Gardens, 360' of water, we blew the coral to smithereens; Don Bergeman was my partner, we took a parakeet in with us, he stayed the whole time.

Relationship with tender: if compatible may stay together for a year; some professional tenders; some tenders would get a percentage of the diver's depth pay; companies took away depth pay, stopped paying for gear; some companies paying as little as 60 percent of what they charged to the customer; part of the union deal - safety and pay; water was getting deeper, they were hiring people with little experience, the volume of work increased, a lot of cowboying going on; divers don't usually kill themselves, someone topside made a mistake; tenders learn by someone showing them, may have a mentor; now they have to chip, paint, etc. and cannot stand by and watch, learn; started to change when the union got voted out at McDermott; diving schools flooded the market with kids who think they'll make \$100,000 a year, now they can't get there for ten years; not a profession now, just another goddamn job, and not a very rewarding one.

Labor Board hearings: companies paid overtime on base wages rather than that plus depth pay; Labor Board ruled against them, they owed the divers money; didn't pay depth pay overseas; lots of allegations against McDermott, including \$500,000 payoff to Tenneco Pipeline; had one of

the longest Labor Board hearings when we were fired; guy from New York said they did not think the company was justified in firing us but would uphold the decision; idea of union came from me, Paul Woodhall, guys in Morgan City; guys offshore would start talking about it; saw things being stripped away from us, about 15-20 guys; began with International Association of Professional Divers, like a social club; Boone got settlement with Taylor for having his guts pulled out; we voted him out; then NEBA in but they didn't last long; no other organizations forming; in Mexico they kept us separate from the welders; they kept our base pay at \$5.85 an hour and then would double our wages, but they paid retirement on the base pay; none of us dumb asses knew what they were doing; some guys said they did not need representation; knowing what I know now, I would never get involved in organizing again; I'd mind my own business and go elsewhere when it gets too bad; McDermott had a color code system, green was company man, yellow was fence rider, red was union; it was stamped on your personnel folder; they spent a lot of money fighting us, hired a big, anti-union firm.

Association of Diving Contractors: dragged their feet in getting things going because it was to their advantage; lawsuits and insurance companies started to get in on it too, they had pressures, but didn't want things to happen too fast.

Early divers and companies: locals from Louisiana included Joe Savoie, Blue, his brother; Walt Daspit, Frenchies working for Dick Evans, Michel L'Clair had a company, was bought out by Smit; J&J out of Houston, Oceaneering was pretty good size, started by divers; Taylor started by divers but corporate now; Dick Evans bought out, Chuck Yates a diver, but then Bob McGuire took over, he was no friend of the divers; the whole structure of the diving companies pretty much changed, took away a little at a time; things like tenders not being able to tend one diver had a profound effect on the whole business; Gulf does not have much influence on diving any more; at one time Gulf divers could go anywhere, took our skills to the North Sea, Australia, Nigeria, Mexico; you don't find Americans scattered out like that; Jones Act affects what companies take on, ADC trying to castrate the Jones Act.

Summary of DA114:

Forming union: International Association for Professional Divers, divers and contractors were in the association, really started pushing safety issues, uniform manual; contractors more or less told us they would take care of it; some of us got together, decided to disband; Ed Parks, who was with the Marine Engineers Benevolent Association, approached me about affiliating with a union and offering his services; met with him, put it before the members, decided to go with them; discovered they were not going to be able to do what we wanted, we approached the Carpenters' Union; somewhere around '72, '73; sent organizer down; we filed charges of companies not paying overtime through the Labor Board; dismissed; I called Washington so job threatened; about half supported doing something, others did not.

Biggest accomplishment: getting contractors to get safety program going; diving wages went up for a while but back down in the bust; increased wages were short-lived; have manual with safety procedures, example of accident where injured diver brought up too fast, not recompressed correctly, died; company sent divers who were witnesses overseas; company settled out of court; industry not regulated, had standards but they were not enforced unless case ended up in court;

union pushing Department of Labor, they were pushing the contractors; MMS wasn't a player then.

Accident: supervisor made error, no consequence back then; now can be held liable for negligence; award based on money person could make in his lifetime, based on Jones Act; companies are fighting it; supervisor may get inhouse training, mostly coming up from diver; no real certification, only card that you have been to school, show you are a member of the club; early days no training, diver had his tender, taught him, journeyman type of situation.

Job: could make more money for increased depth; discussion of photo, job in Bahamas in 1974; no real schedule, would take a few days off every month or so, lived on the barge; had supervisor for a while, he had heart attack so diver took over.

Accidents: not that many when first started, water not too deep; accidents came with deeper water, more divers, not pressing safety issues, just trying to get production; experimenting with tables.

Response: never thought about quitting, stay and fight; fun, good pay.

Eddie and Marie Babin

Houma, LA

January 21, 2002, January 28, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB026, EB034p

Ethnographic Preface:

I first met Eddie at the Halliburton Retirees' Breakfast in Houma. I met Eddie and his wife, Marie, at their house for the interview. Marie had some things to say about being on her own while Eddie was offshore. Our second discussion also covered the activities involved in drilling, and the situation for women onshore. After retiring at age 50, Eddie served as a truck-driving instructor.

Eddie Babin's father was an oyster shucker. Eddie started as a cement truck driver, beginning in 1956. His job gave him experience in cementing, which he later applied to oilfield drilling. In 1958, he went into the service, spending 13 months in Korea. He worked offshore on a drilling rig for awhile. His truck was often loaded onto a barge and carried to the rigs.

Summary of EB026:

Work on a drilling rig: Discussion of use of cement in drilling, and how it is pumped in.

Changes to Houma: Death of Main Street, changes in size and natural vegetation. Growing up in Houma.

Family Jobs: Father worked in the oyster industry, brother worked in retail.

Equipment for pumping cement: Kellage Screw, blowout preventers, monkey board, volk material equipment operator

Boom and Bust: Hard to make ends meet in the down times. Eventually Eddie opted to work as a driving instructor.

Cement Trucks on Barges: Cement trucks loaded onto barges to reach wells by water. Eddie had to service the rigs as the barge reached them, this was a time consuming process.

Accidents and Safety: Some accidents but also discussion of toxic chemicals and the red tape associated with them.

Summary of EP034p:

- 1: 1956 diesel truck with mud pump and pipe on back, had a diesel engine underneath the hood and had one diesel engine on the back; the diesel engine on the back operated a pump that was known as an AC pump; it was acid and steam engine.
- 2: Cement truck early '70's; on the yard. Right here on Dunn Street, in Houma; had twin P-10 engines on it
- 3: This was the first FWD that came on the Humble yard and it was a complete flat front but it had 4-wheel drive. [Note: this photo is missing from the collection]
- 4: Cement pumper truck after rolling over; blows cement
- 5: The same truck after 2 months of repairs.

Martial Babin

Galliano, LA

July 18, 2001

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM002

#### Ethnographic Preface:

After my interview with Butch Renois, Butch went over to visit with Martial Babin, an 80-year old Chevron retiree who lives on the east side of the bayou. Butch called me at the motel to say that Mr. Babin had agreed to talk to me. Mr. Babin was Butch Renois' former boss for part of their time with the Chevron operation out of Leeville. Martial's second wife passed away in 2001; at one point in the interview, he pointed to a huge mounted fish on the wall and talked about how she, not he, would always catch the big ones.

Martial Babin grew up in Lake Charles and did metalwork in Texas during World War II. He began working for Chevron in 1947 and worked eight years on drilling rigs. He later did engineering work and advanced to drilling foreman where he trained new engineers coming into the business. He retired from Chevron in 1980 at the age of 59 and built a fishing camp to enjoy with his wife.

#### Summary:

Career: didn't go to the service, had asthma; during the war, working in Valasco, Texas in the metal department, light metal that they use in aircraft. While in the plant, got to know a man that had been in the oilfield before; after the war finished he went into the oilfield and brought me with him; came back home in 1945. August 1947, went to work for Chevron; eight years on drilling rigs; learned the trade through practice; later doing engineer work; advanced to drilling foreman; broke in the new engineers

Bay Marchand field: started in 1948; had a lease dispute between the state and the federals; would shut down for a little over a year and started drilling again in late 1949.

Transportation: before the time of the helicopter, had to do all of these crew changes by boat; was rough going, changing crews in rough seas. In 1955, the helicopter came out and we were able to change our crews out using the helicopter; first supply boat came out in 1956 or early 1957. The company built two of their own-the Tayte and Borre.

Retirement: retired May 1, 1980 at 59 years old; no packages; would retire older men and replace them with younger men; I was volunteer retiree. They gave me a \$3000 per year raise right before I retired in hopes to keep me for a couple more years. My wife wanted me to retire early, built fishing camp.

Evacuations/storms: we used to evacuate when a hurricane was about 40-60 hours away from us if it seemed to be heading our way. We used to close production, load everybody in the boat, and bring them all into port, stay until it was over. Then we had automation, could float the wells and shut them off from the base.

Milo M. Backus

Dallas, TX

June 12, 2002

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS001

### Ethnographic Preface:

Milo Backus is largely credited with being the father of 3-D seismology. Longtime head of research at Geophysical Services, Inc., he masterminded the creation and application of many digital signal processing techniques in the 1950s. He developed the concepts behind deconvolution in the changeover to digital technology, and led the development and promotion of the practical application of 3-D methods to exploration and production in the 1960s. He is currently a geophysical consultant and Dave P. Carlton Centennial Professor of Geophysics at University of Texas-Austin. He lives in Dallas.

### Summary:

Fascinating interview with one of the technical giants in the field of exploration geophysics. Topics include: graduate work at MIT; early years at GSI; work on deconvolution; digital seismic and effects on offshore Gulf of Mexico; move to digital recording; structural trap exploration; use of different sound sources; costs of 3-D seismic; important GSI scientists and managers; SEER project (Solid Earth Exp Res) at UT.

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Oden "Donnie" Bacque

Lafayette, LA

February 18, 2003

Interviewed by: David DiTucci

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

DD012

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Oden Bacque was born in 1944 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania but he lived in Lafayette all of his life. His father was from Lafayette and his mother was from Puerto Rico. He graduated with a History degree from Louisiana State, went into the army for three years and then worked in the insurance industry. He was very involved in city politics - he ran for City Council in 1972 and lost, but subsequently became involved in the City's Chamber of Commerce and the Optimist Club. He ran for parish council in 1987 and won. He talks at length about politics in Lafayette, and how it has grown to be a fairly progressive town. He believes the oil industry made significant changes to the town both economically and culturally.

#### Summary:

**Early Life:** Born in Philadelphia, PA in 1944, raised in Lafayette, LA; mother from Puerto Rico, father from Lafayette - a salesman and farmer; grandfather an educator and served in the Louisiana State Legislature from 1940-1944; great-grandfather from the Alsace Loraine region of France.

**Education:** three years at University of Southwestern Louisiana, but graduated from Louisiana State University with a bachelor's in History and a Political Science minor; one year of law school, dropped out, went into army for three years.

**Role in Politics:** 1972 ran for Lafayette City Council as a Republican but lost - no one knew who he was; became more involved in the community and civic groups. Optimist Club worked with disadvantaged youth and sports. President of Chamber of Commerce '74-'85; chamber responsible for promoting changing city's government, cleaning city's river; Leadership Lafayette community group; best to return to a citizen-legislature instead of current career politicians. 1987 ran for parish council, served for four years; won as Independent; switched from a Republican because of Watergate scandal.

**Lafayette:** always a progressive town; two mayors Ashton Mouton and Raymond Bertrand did a lot to make Lafayette a better place to live; changed form of government to a city council, then to a city parish form of government; also progressive because of influx of "oil people" from out-of-state in the '50s; Lake Charles not as good quality of life because it didn't have the same diversity of people. Edwin Edwards instrumental in building the Republican Party in Louisiana. Many changes in Lafayette - oil and gas boom brought in more Protestants; more young people feel they can make a difference; better government. 1980s oil bust, community pulled together. University of Louisiana brought in diverse people with different views; outsiders were always

welcomed and never excluded; today many of the old families still run the area with new ideas adopted from those who came in search of careers in the oil industry.

Insurance: after coming back from the army in 1970, began to work in insurance; insurance very much involved in the oil industry and it suffered as well during the oil bust; barely survived the downturn. Today business has fully recovered; Lafayette taken steps to prevent another economic downturn by diversifying its economy; today's oil/gas industry accounts for 10-15% of the local economy; back in the 1980s 30-40%.

Improvements needed: many of Louisiana's best and brightest young people leave the state for better opportunities; serious problem since LA does not have the same opportunities as other states; need a better standard of living in order to attract companies to LA and Lafayette; the state needs to change the image of LA; Governor Mike Foster has not been the salesman that he could have been; need to improve our educational system; a lot of potential but need leaders who have good vision, political capital, and who do not worry about getting re-elected.

Conclusion: oil industry changed Lafayette for the better; besides economic benefits there were a lot of cultural benefits as well; the introduction of Broadway and the symphony all came here because of the oil and gas industry came in the 50s and stayed here.

Bill Bailey

New Orleans, LA

June 26, 2001

Interviewed by: Rylan Higgins

University of Arizona

RH001

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Jackie at the Frame Shop in Morgan City told me about Bill Bailey. She knows Bill and his wife and suggested that I call them. When I did, I only spoke to Bill's wife. She informed me that Bill has a tracheal tube and that, though he was interested in doing the interview, it might make it hard to record. She and I scheduled the interview, and I drove to their home, which is located in a wealthy neighborhood in New Orleans. Bill was there with Griff Lee, whom Bill had contacted earlier in the morning and asked to join us. Bill explained that he and Griff had worked a lot together over the years and that Griff would have much to add to the conversation. And he did. We sat in the living room. Infrequently throughout the interview, Bill rang a bell for the servant to come. He would ask her to bring us drinks or tell her to answer the phone. The two men are both in their early 70s, and though Bill's tracheal tube slows him down a bit, they were both talkative and articulate. They spoke as two individuals telling their own stories, but they did reference each other often, and also told stories as a duo. They both talked with a rather intense nostalgic flare, often referencing the pioneering nature of their ideas and work, especially during their early adulthood, when the industry was young.

Bill began his career working at Humble Oil Company. He left and went to McDermott in 1956 to open the company's fabrication yard. He helped build and launch the first platform that was constructed on land and then hauled by barge to a location in the Gulf of Mexico. He stayed with McDermott until his retirement in 1973.

#### Summary:

Technology: Before the recording started, Griff talked a bit about offshore oil technology. He said that in the early years, "there was no technology." He said there were no technical papers; everything was very informal.

Bill's early adulthood: Bill worked for Humble Oil Co. before going to work for McDermott. He talked about going to McDermott in 1956 to open "the first fabrication yard in the world." He stayed with McDermott until he retired in 1973.

Griff's early adulthood: Griff got a civil engineering degree from Tulane University. He, too, worked for Humble for a few years (at Grand Isle) before coming to work for McDermott in 1954.

Idea to launch platforms: According to Griff and Bill, they came up with the idea to build platforms on land and then launch them on barges to their locations in the Gulf. They also claim to have come up with the idea of building platforms on their side.

First launch: In 1955, they built and launched the first platform in this manner. Griff and Bill gave a fairly detailed account of the launch. They tied a buoy to the platform before sliding it off the end of the barge. Having never attempted this type of operation, they were not sure whether it would sink or float.

Platform design: Around the same time (1955), Bill and Griff also designed a particular structure type. The idea for this new platform construction came from an Austrian bridge builder. Bill had somehow come across this person's idea on how to enhance the structural integrity of bridges-which was never successfully implemented in bridge building-and applied it to the building offshore platforms. It has something to do with the angles at which pieces are welded together.

Going public: Bill talked a bit about the company going public, which he remembered happened in the late 1950s.

The beginnings of McDermott: Griff talked about the nature of the company before it went into fabrication. R. Thomas McDermott started the company. At first, it was contracted out to do onshore operations. The company dug canals and built board roads for inland oil and gas exploration.

First offshore structures: McDermott built their first offshore structure for Superior, and Brown and Root built their first structure for Kerr-McGee.

Raymond Concrete Piles: Bill talked about how Raymond Concrete Piles played an important role in the early fabrication industry. Some early structures were made out of concrete.

Bayou Boeuf Fabricators: Bill talked about how R Thomas McDermott was hesitant at first to associate his name with the company. He thought the company would likely fail, so the company was called Bayou Boeuf Fabricators during the early years.

Labor: Bill and Griff discussed the need for trained workers in the early years. They said the company had to train nearly everybody back then. They hired blacks from the cane fields and hired whites from outside the area. Griff said the type of welding they were doing was unique to the industry.

Unions: Griff and Bill discussed the early presence of unions in the area. They said that local law enforcement helped stave off the unions through ostensibly legal forms of harassment. For example, they would stop and ticket union organizers for driving one mile/hour over the speed limit.

P.T. Bailey

Morgan City, LA

September 27, 2001

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB021

#### Ethnographic Preface:

P.T. is Dub Noble's brother-in-law. He owns Bailey's Basin Seafood in Morgan City. It was brought to my attention that P.T. had been interviewed for the previous project, mainly about his business and the regulations that were affecting small business owners in the area during the 1980's. I had Tom McGuire look at the previous interview to pick out topics I needed to discuss further. My interview focuses exclusively on his time in the oil industry and the impetus behind his move to owning his own business. We met in his at the bait shop where three young to middle-aged men, one of them being his son, were sorting large crates of crabs. We went upstairs to his office for the interview. His shop is located on Front Street in Morgan City. He appeared willing to talk with me, but it was apparent that he was extremely busy as well as the phone rang several times during the interview. Prior to the interview I had not known that he spent 15 years overseas in Malaysia and Singapore. He talks some about what it was like and the differences between working overseas and working here. We then move into a discussion about what prompted his decision to quit the oil field and start his own business.

P.T. Bailey was born in Morgan City in 1927. He worked as a shrimp trawler for 20 years, joined the Navy and then shrimped again after getting out of the service. His neighbor got him a job at Tidewater in 1966, and he started out as a deckhand. He quickly became captain after a couple of weeks on the job. After five or six years, the company moved him to Venice to be a Port Engineer. After four years, he became Marine Super for Offshore Logistics. He stayed with Logistics as a Manager until 1983, when Logistics sold all of its boats and got out of all aspects of the oil business except for helicopters. P.T. decided to go into the seafood business with his son.

#### Summary:

**Early life:** Born in Morgan City in 1927. Originally he was a shrimp trawler for 20 years, went into Navy and then began shrimping again. In 1952, bottom fell out of the shrimping business due to the recession.

**Oil job:** His neighbor got him a job at Tidewater in 1966. He was a captain but didn't know much about the oil industry. \$25 a day as a deckhand at first. Couple of weeks later became a captain on a small boat that hung around the rigs to provide backup or help if they needed it. Only getting \$27 because he didn't have a license. Went to get a license, needed 2 years of sea time and the vessels had to be 50 tons or over. Wanted a raise to \$35 a day running the bigger boats.

Boat license: They were hiring all the men they could because they were building boats so fast. The oil industry acquired experienced boat captains due to the slack in the shrimping business. He had all of his knowledge from real life experience. Had to study for the test for 2 months, learn navigation, for 500-ton license. Passed the test after 3 days. Began running the bigger boats, carried mud and drilling pipe and casing pipe, also fresh water and food.

Oil: it was a learning process for a lot of people including the toolpushers who at first were all from Texas and used to land drilling.

Hiring: Tidewater would lease the vessels to the oil companies. Dispatchers onshore were the link between the boats and the rigs.

Description of job: One rig might hire out 1 or 2 boats. Depends on how much time they had and how quickly they needed supplies. Maneuvering around the floating rigs was extremely difficult, especially running the anchors from the rig. Story about the first time he ran anchors. Couldn't touch the rig when you moved it because you'd put a hole in it and it would sink. Had to really know your vessel to do a good job. Dropping the anchors would take about 10 hours.

Cargo: picked up tons of fresh water and pipe. The water was needed for stability of rig, mud and consumption.

Hours of work: Schedule was 7 & 7 but if he was off and they needed to move the rig he would have to get back to work. He was the only one qualified to move a lot of the rigs so he complained. Moved one rig around for about 5 years.

Changing jobs: After 5 or 6 years they moved him to Venice to be a Port Engineer. His role became that of a problem solver and supervisor. There about 4 years. Had to drive 70 miles each way. Became Marine Super for Offshore Logistics in 1972. He was in charge of about 70 boats.

Changes in industry: huge changes in technology. Captains don't have to have too much experience now because there are machines that hold the boat in place. Cargo stayed about the same, water mud, food and pipe. Not sure how rigs have changed. Used to have an engineer to control valves where as now most things are electronically controlled. Altered boats to do the jobs more efficiently. Before, the boats were not made to do what the oil industry needed them to do, especially with horsepower.

Overseas: Logistics sent him to Singapore in 1975 as boat manager over there. Asians are set in their ways and you can't tell them what to do. Brought his wife with him. Stayed 2 years. Operations manager meant he was in charge of everything. Had to get contracts for his boats.

Contractors overseas: Drilling for the same companies that were over there, not too bad finding companies to take the contracts. Story about an accident (knocked a beacon over) that sent him to jail. Used to insurance taking care of things. Government wanted the \$250,000 so they held him until the company paid the bill. In jail 7 days, fed him pretty well.

Living in Singapore: His wife had a difficult time adjusting to the live-in maids that were customary, called "Ammas." His wife was used to doing her own work but finally caved in when they wouldn't stop knocking on the door. She didn't have anything to do for a while until they met some people.

The impression of oil industry in Singapore: Singapore depends on shipping because it was a duty free port. That was the major industry. Didn't feel that they were overtly happy about the oil companies, they liked it being there but had other industries. Didn't like the Americans too much because they were driving the prices for the locals and nationals up. Never had a visa for over 2 weeks because of bureaucracy. A lot of women workers in the oil industry as far as the cleaning crews went.

Back in States: still with Logistics as a manager. In 1983, Logistics sold all its boats and got out of the oil business save for the helicopters. Tried to go work for other companies but wasn't happy with the industry. He got burnt out and was worried about the money, which was scarce. Decided to go into the seafood business with his son.

Seafood business: enjoys the sleep. He had saved enough money, especially overseas. You were tax-free if you worked more than 18 months. He signed a 2-year contract and saved a lot of money. Got a loan from the bank to open his business. Had enough of the stress of the oil industry. Had a good wife who was really conservative. Hard times because of imports and competition.

9/11 Attacks: shut down business for a week because no flights were going out. P.T. ships crabs and crabmeat to the north, especially around Baltimore. Not sure if things are going to get back to normal because the country is in a recession.

Crawfish: Chinese immigrants ruined the crawfish business. Don't process the crawfish anymore because the Chinese markets are so much cheaper than anyone else. Pay their employees a penny a pound to process and their fisherman the same price. They can afford to sell for a dollar a pound. Used to sell tons of crawfish to Sweden. Now everything is on the live market. Southern Louisiana imports crawfish from California.

Shrimping: Doesn't shrimp anymore because things have changed too much. Shrimp are too small now. No one wants to buy or sell the large shrimp (15 to a pound) now mostly dealing with shrimp that are 100 to a pound. Big dispute between which size shrimp to catch. Most shrimp are imported nowadays.

Environmental: Had to put a hole in the nets so Ridley Turtles could escape. Patrolled by the Coast Guard very strictly. The turtles lay their eggs on the Mexican coast and the Mexicans eat their eggs, which affected their populations. Knows that shrimpers were to blame for some of the deaths, but doesn't think there are as many as the environmentalists say there are. Say they are very powerful politically. Has caused a lot of problems for the seafood industry.

Relationship between seafood industry and oil: no problems, bend over backwards to get along. Paid for nets to get fixed from pipes on bottom of Bay. So much money involved, they had it to

fix things so they spent it. The seafood industry hurt itself by catching too many shrimp and fish. Last year was really good.

Changes in boats: Types of vessels in shrimping industry are now much smaller. Allowed smaller shrimp in Bays to be caught, extended season into December, needed smaller boats to get into the bays. Smaller boats have much smaller expenses as far as gas and repair costs. Labor is a large part of the cost. Vietnamese are the predominant laborers who pick the crabmeat.

Jim Baker

Houston, TX

June 6, 2006

Interviewed by: Jason P. Theriot

University of Houston/History International

MMS067

### Ethnographic Preface:

Jim Baker is a retired Houston port captain for Lykes Brothers. A native of West Virginia, Baker is a graduate of King's Point U.S. Merchant Academy (1949). As a cadet, he traveled throughout the Caribbean and West Indies aboard ships for several years before landing a job with Lykes Brothers. His career with the steamship line spans nearly three decades. His positions included: port captain, marine division manager, and assistant vice-president of the traffic department. He also served as chairman for the Port Safety and Advisory Council, and also served on the West Gulf Maritime Association. Capt. Baker has been involved in nearly every aspect of the Port of Houston, including environment and safety regulations, dredging, pipelines, Houston Pilots and Coast Guard.

### Summary:

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Gene Bankston

Houston, TX

December 3, 1999

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

SOC001

### Ethnographic Preface:

Gene Bankston grew up in Southeast Oklahoma. After serving in World War II as a B-17 gunner he studied petroleum engineering at the University of Oklahoma, earning his degree in 1949. He began working for Shell that same year and quickly rose through Shell's ranks. He worked towards economically evaluating prospects in order to maximize profits for the company. After working in New York in 1957, Shell assigned him to the Hague to better understand the "big picture" at the company. Between 1957 and 1963 he worked in various capacities for the company including division exploitation engineer for Southwest Louisiana and assistant to Shell's manager of exploitation in New York. He was the key liaison between development and E&P for Shell. He became manager of the economics department in 1964, and in 1965 he worked in London as head of the North American Division for Shell International Petroleum. In 1966 he became the Vice President of E&P for the Houston area. He served in that capacity for 6 years until becoming Production VP. He worked in that position until his retirement in 1980.

### Summary:

This interview covers the impact of the economics department on exploration. He has interesting information on Production Economics. This included a thorough discussion of the impact various economic models had on offshore lease analysis. Some discussion of technology including bright spots and recovery methods. Short discussion on reorganization and research.

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Herb Barrett

Houma, LA

January 22, 2002, January 28, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB028, EB055p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

We met Herb Barrett when Diane, Tom, and I attended a breakfast meeting of the Halliburton retiree's club in Houma. Herb was born in Duncan, Oklahoma in 1928. He graduated from high school in 1946 and went to the University of Oklahoma to study petroleum engineering. He left after two years to take a job with Halliburton working in the machine shop and as a cement truck driver. He was transferred to Harvey in 1949 and asked to be placed on the boats because the schedule allowed for some days off so that he could visit his family in Duncan, Oklahoma. In 1951, he went to work on the pump trucks in Harvey and transferred back to Houma in 1952. After serving some time in the army, he went back to work for Halliburton where he worked as a diesel mechanic until 1971. He quit Halliburton in 1971 because of circumstances around the Shell platform fire, and after going to school to study mechanics, he spent the last 13-14 years of his career working for Duplantis Trucking.

#### Summary of EB028:

Personal history: Herb Barrett was born in Duncan, Oklahoma in 1928. He finished high school and two years of college at the University of Oklahoma studying petroleum engineering, working off and on for Albert's Recliner company in the chemical plant. He moved to Texas to drive a truck for a short time and ended up in Louisiana in 1949.

Work on the boats: He wanted to be placed on the boats because there was a 12-4 schedule; he would get 4 days off, which was enough time to get back to Oklahoma to see his family. Workers on the boats had a nice place to sleep, food to eat, but the boats were hot in the summer and cold in the winter.

The company rigs were much better organized than the contractor rigs. They had been working for 12-14 years consistently.

Halliburton: Herb worked for Halliburton from 1956 until 1971 as a diesel mechanic; he quit because he felt he wasn't appreciated for the work he had done during the Shell platform fire. Herb went on to finish his career with Duplantis Trucking.

## Summary of EB055p:

- 01: A Halliburton super cementer built 1947; had the cab in front, cab over the truck and it had the 2 engines mounted behind and the engines were coupled where you could drive the truck over what's called a teaser engine, and you could run, it would normally run the 2 pumps by separate engines; Detroit Diesels. Or GM's as we called them; 1952 or 53
- 02: Cement barge, a converted LCT, landing craft tank, from World War II; Halliburton 204. It was a cementing boat, it carried 2000 sacks of bulk cement, had 3 power pumps and 4 steam pumps on it
- 03: New International four wheel truck, bought by Halliburton.
- 04: Another view of the same International truck used for mud service in drilling.
- 05: same as number 1.
- 06: Pipe joints carried on the truck are used to tie into the well.
- 07: Same International truck, sitting beside a canal and a barge behind it.
- 08: An International World War II surplus truck, used by Halliburton for hauling cement to drill sites; little short nose truck was an International, a surplus WWII truck. When they were in Army, they had canvas tops on them. At Halliburton, they took them to their shops and put metal tops on them
- 09: Back end of the pump truck, in the Oklahoma/Texas panhandle, hooked up to the well.
- 10: Another International truck, pumping cement in Louisiana.
- 11: Another view of the pump truck in Oklahoma/Texas panhandle.
- 12: A combined bulk cement/acid truck; my second truck up in Oklahoma, there's a pump mounted behind the cab and an acid tractor, also had a winch down in the back of it
- 13: Pump truck used in Oklahoma, with winch on front to pull other trucks through the snow to the drill site.
- 14: Another view of the pump truck in Oklahoma/Texas panhandle.
- 15: Old cable tool rig, still used in West Virginia. This one is in the Oklahoma panhandle, late 1940's.
- 16: FWD diesel cement truck in Naples, Florida; truck wouldn't move but 33-36 miles an hour, wide open
- 17: Outside of Leeville, a derrick and all the drill pipe fell over onto a truck.
- 18: The oil show in Tulsa, Oklahoma.
- 19: The pipe as it fell over, with the casing still in the well, center, Leeville, LA; the derrick fell right straight across that pump truck.
- 20: View from the rig floor of the pipe fallen over. A line tied into the well, to make sure it was dead before they started cleanup.

Julie Barrilleaux

Amelia, LA

July 29, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA118

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Julie Barrilleaux in 1999 when I interviewed her boss, Earl King, Jr., as part of the study of the impacts of the offshore oil and gas industry on individuals and families in southern Louisiana. I returned to visit Earl in 2001 as part of the offshore history study and spent some time talking with Julie as well. When I began looking specifically for women who were involved in the industry, I asked Julie if she would be willing to be interviewed, and she consented. I contacted her on several trips, but we had a hard time coordinating our schedules. We finally met in July at her office.

Julie Prestenbach Barilleaux was born and raised in Morgan City, Louisiana. When she graduated from high school in 1977, her parents could not afford to send her to college, so she began looking for a job. At the employment office, she learned that King Trucking was looking for help, so she applied for the job. She was hired and has been with the company since then. She has enjoyed working for a smaller company where she has many different responsibilities and has earned enough to raise her son. In 1996, while still working for Earl King, Jr., Julie returned to college; she was awarded her baccalaureate degree in 2001.

#### Summary:

Personal history: Born and raised in Morgan City; Graduated from Berwick High School in 1978; Started working as a secretary at King Trucking 2 weeks later; Had worked for Shell Oil in high school

King Trucking: In 1978, there were three women in the office; They had 30 trucks, 4 were owned by King Trucking and the rest were lease operators; Business was good and the number of trucks increased to 40 by the end of that year; JB started with typing invoices and filing and eventually started doing bills, payroll, processing the invoices, and pricing the runs

Pricing: Settlement sheets for driver and truck pay; Commission (70%); Deductions (fuel, administrative fees, repairs, etc.); When the price of fuel went up in the 1980's, they implemented a fuel surcharge; Regulated by Louisiana Public Service Co.; Insurance surcharges started in the early 1990's with rising insurance costs; Permits no longer required

Job satisfaction: JB felt that her boss treated her well and had confidence in her; She enjoyed her work

Economic downturns: In 1985, cutbacks in staff at King Trucking, down to only three employees in the office; In 1987, business started to pick back up and JB got part-time help in the office; In 1995 deregulation of the oil and trucking industries, formation of alliances between major oil companies and truck lines and King Trucking had trouble competing; Sought alliances with other small trucking companies, but nothing panned out

Changes in labor force: 20 years ago people were more job-oriented, more willing to work hard; Contribution of the oil boom to people's perceptions of work; In the late 1980's it became almost a necessity for both husband and wife to work, not many high paying jobs, increases in contract labor

Crane business: King Trucking rented cranes (with operators and roustabouts) to ODECO from late 1970's till 1990; Rates per hour; Roustabouts loaded trucks and moved pipe from rack to rack; Dispatchers called labor camps to get roustabouts on a daily basis; Today the labor camps hire out mostly engineers and technical experts; Cranes were at ODECO's yard; King Trucking had a mechanic there as well to service the cranes; Ended when ODECO was bought out and King Trucking couldn't get another contract

Labor: Problems with roustabouts, both employees and those from labor camps, including attendance, staying on task, safety issues; Labor camps sent an invoice and King Trucking paid them directly, didn't take on as much liability in terms of workman's compensation, insurance and social security tax

Family history: JB's father worked for Shell in the 1950's and early 1960's offshore; He didn't like working offshore and became an air conditioning repairman

Women in industry: Increase in number of women working since JB started in late 1970's

Changes in Morgan City: Increase in population and business until 1986, then businesses went bankrupt and people moved away; Interstate bypass has negatively affected Morgan City; Even though things eventually picked back up, Morgan City never fully recovered

Growing up in the 1970's: JB's parents were strict with their children; Drinking and driving, packed barrooms, overpopulation were prevalent in Morgan City; Serial murders

Fringe benefits of oil industry: During the boom up until mid-1980's, vendors would entertain potential customers, buying food, drinks; Corruption; Now businesses take careful inventory and gifts in kind are not permitted

Changes in industry: Deregulation resulting in cut-throating; Drug screening, beginning in the mid-1980's; Safety growing in importance as a result of insurance cost increases; Changes in unemployment benefits; More women in the industry, even in jobs that used to be dominated by men

Truck drivers: Only 3 out of 30 drivers at King are women, but bigger trucking companies have more women because they can be more flexible with schedules; King has low turnover and often

gets drivers from some of the bigger companies and those in alliances because their rates are higher

Alliances: Service quality has gone down; King's big customers were ODECO, Oil and Gas, Texaco, Chevron, and Kerr McGee; some of the bigger companies are starting to move away from alliances

Thomas D. Barrow

Houston, TX

October 30, 2001, November 7, 2001

Interviewed by: Joe Pratt

University of Houston/History International

OEC006, OEC007

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Dr. Barrow received a BS in Petroleum Engineering at the University of Texas in 1945 and his Master's degree in Geology in 1948. He went on to complete his PhD in Geology at Stanford University in 1953. Even before completing his doctoral work, Dr. Barrow joined Humble Oil and Refining Company. He became president of that company less than 20 years later. When Humble was transformed into Exxon, he was elected senior vice president and member of the board of directors. He also served as CEO of Kennecott Corporation when it was acquired by Exxon. When Standard Oil of Ohio acquired Kennecott, Dr. Barrow led their exploration division and served as vice chairman and member of the board of directors of SOHIO. He retired again in 1985, but couldn't stay out of the oil business. He is currently president of T-Bar-X, Ltd., an oil and gas exploration company, and chairman of Tobin International.

#### Summary:

Interview begins with discussion of geologic studies offshore California in the 1950s. Talks about Humble Oil's analog 3-D seismic system developed in the early 1960s. Moves on to discussion of Humble's early offshore gravity surveys along the Gulf Coast in the 1930s. Shift in geologic thinking in the late 1950s and early 1960s from salt domes to lower relief fault features. Story about Humble's West Delta 72 field. Change in Exxon worldwide exploration structure in 1964. Shell-Exxon partnership in the North Sea. International explorations offshore, especially Asia. Story about concession from Thailand.

This is a second interview with Dr. Barrow. Starts with background on the creation of the National Ocean Industries Association (NOIA). Talks about NOIA's effectiveness in lobbying Congress on offshore issues. Discussion of offshore Malaysia and Australia. Problems working in Algeria and former French territories in Africa. Exxon's role in Aramco. Wallace Pratt and Exxon's entry into the Middle East. Story of Barrow's father's trip to the Middle East and Europe in 1937. Barrow's experiences running Humble's exploration effort during 1965-1970. Barrow's role in the discovery and development of Alaska's Prudhoe Bay field. Story about radar system in Valdez area. Barrow's move in 1972 to head Exxon exploration and production research. Time as head of Kennecott beginning in 1978 and relationship with SOHIO. Story about John Browne of BP.

Arthur Barry

Lafayette, LA

June 19, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz, David DiTucci

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW001

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Arthur Barry is from Carencro. His father was a banker and a farmer. He graduated from Louisiana State University with a degree in Petroleum Engineering in 1939, and started working with Superior Oil Company, right out of college. He was in a training program, working as a Roustabout for 6 months on a rig. He stayed with Superior for a few years, then went to Conroe, Texas for 11 years. Then he moved back to Louisiana to work for the Natural Gas and Oil Corporation. He came back to work for Superior Oil in Lafayette in 1953, right about at the beginning of the oil boom. In his interview, he mostly discusses his role in the oil industry and the industry's effects on Lafayette.

#### Summary:

Early life: originally from Carencro, LA; father was a banker and a farmer.

Education: graduated from LSU with a Petroleum Engineering degree in 1939.

Employment with Superior Oil: first offshore well in Louisiana built for Superior Oil Company in mid-1930s, 9.5 miles offshore of Cameron; first job right out of college was with Superior Oil; was in a training program and worked as a Roustabout for six months on a rig; worked as part of an on-line wire crew; the platform he was working on was not too dangerous and he never saw anyone hurt; during this training program he would live in a hotel; earned 75 cents an hour and ten cents an hour overtime; a comparable job would pay less than fifty cents an hour. Superior Oil was owned by the Katt family out of California with a field office near Bosco oil field; decided to move the office to Lake Charles.

Other Employment: stayed with Superior for a few years before moving to Conroe, TX for eleven years; quit that job, moved back to Louisiana to work for the Natural Gas and Oil Corporation; worked for them for a year and then worked for a mortgage company for a year. Came back to work for Superior in Lafayette in 1953; worked in the office dealing with production records. 1965 General Superintendent of Superior Oil retired; Mr. Barry got the job; retired in 1977 because Superior wanted to transfer him to Houston, he didn't want to go.

Oil Industry and Lafayette: upon return to Lafayette in 1953, the oil industry started to boom; the area was growing and he bought a home for \$18,000; natives got along with out-of-state people.

Working for Oil Industry: enjoyed working for Superior Oil, many fringe benefits; last great independent oil company. Worked as a consultant after working for Superior; involved watching

the progress of a few wells. Has some patents for separating liquids from gas. Given the chance he would go back into the oil industry. Oil industry has changed because of reliance on computers and electronic equipment; when he was in the industry he did every thing by hand.

French and oil: French language was not as important an issue in his particular niche of the oil industry; did not learn Cajun French but his parents spoke it.

Oil in 1930s: life was not really bad except for the depression; the turning point was in 1939 with President Franklin Roosevelt; oil was a contributor to alleviating the economic conditions; Bosco field was producing oil during this time.

Aubrey Bassett

Metairie, LA

January 16, 2003

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS022

### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Aubrey Bassett joined Shell Oil in 1947, after obtaining a bachelor of electrical engineering degree from Georgia Tech, and a Master's in engineering from the University of Florida. He worked on various offshore and land seismic crews. In 1961, he became party chief of a marine crew shooting off the New Jersey coast. In 1967, he joined Shell's Offshore Division. In the mid-1970s, Bassett handled special technology, regional mapping and sale work. In the early 1980s, he became supervisor of the Data Acquisitions Group and helped design and oversee construction of the *Shell America*, the largest seismic vessel in the world at the time.

### Summary:

Interview discusses early refraction and gravity work offshore in the Gulf of Mexico, evolution of converted and purpose-built seismic vessels, and seismic recording and processing technology. Detail on move from analog to digital recording, deconvolution, the role of geophysical contractors. Talks about surveying off the East Coast and Florida in early 1960s. Sections on bright spots, depositional patterns, turbidite geology. Last section of interview covers the *Shell America* story in detail.

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Roland Belanger

Montegut, LA

November 20, 2002

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS003

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Roland Belanger was recommended by his son, Kevin, who is chief executive officer of the South Central Planning and Development Commission, the regional planning agency. Roland and his wife still live in Montegut in a house which was menaced by the hurricane floods of September. They are long term residents of Montegut. Roland is one of the Montegut residents who worked for Texaco his entire career of 37 years. Marie, Roland's wife, participated as well as his son, Barry, who owns a fleet of offshore service boats.

Roland Belanger is one of a number of natives of Montegut who went to work for the Texas Company and stayed with them for his entire career. His father owned a boat, and was hired by Texaco in the 1930's as crew boat captain. After serving in the Marines in World War II, Roland began working in the Texas Company shipyard in 1946. Within a few months, he transferred to Bay Ste. Elaine as a roustabout. In 1953 he was transferred to Garden Island. By 1960 he was a driller on the Terrebonne Bay, making toolpusher in 1963. In 1968, after an injury, he was assigned to a cost study team to evaluate costs of drilling. Returning to toolpushing in 1972, he worked in Mississippi and Florida, finishing his career as rig superintendent in 1983. Of his four sons, one works overseas on offshore rigs and one owns a small offshore service boat company.

#### Summary:

Background: Roland's father worked for the Texas Company in the 1930s, until his death (stroke) in 1940. He originally was a shrimper, who found his knowledge of local waters was in demand by the oil companies. In the military in WWII, Roland started working for the Texas Company in 1946.

Career beginnings: His first job was repairing and refurbishing rigs, which gave him a working knowledge of the equipment. In a year, he was working as a roustabout in Bay Ste. Elaine. In 1956, he transferred to Garden Island, working for an old hand, Mr. Les Lites, as a roustabout and replacement derrick man, later he was a replacement driller, mostly working on rig workovers. In 1960, he was promoted to driller in Terrebonne Bay. In 1963, he was a toolpusher (drilling and production foreman). Because of an injury, he was assigned to desk job, working on a cost study team. He noted that Texaco was considering automating its technology about then. In 1972, he started moving - to Mississippi and Florida.

Work on the rigs: As a roustabout, he worked a 6 and 6 shift, traveling by boat from Cocodrie (a one hour trip). These were 12 hour shifts, with the crew living in camps in their off time. When he was a toolpusher, he worked 7 and 7 and was on call 24 hours/day, sleeping on the rig and

dealing with problems as they developed. He discussed the changes in technology, from steam to diesel power, hands-on to automated work. Most of his work was on drilling barges. He finished his career as a rig superintendent (new name for toolpusher) at Caillou Island in 1983. He didn't really recover from his injuries and was offered a medical retirement package.

Workers attitudes: Barry and he discussed the changes in worker attitudes, noting a tendency for workers to set real limits on what they do and threaten litigation, as well as shift jobs more readily. Roland felt the long apprenticeship he served in his career allowed him to have a strong understanding of the work before being promoted. Now people are often promoted before they are ready.

Changes in Labor: Today's work ethic is not the same as in the past. Many people will not put out that extra effort, and a number are not reliable enough to show up for work regularly. Liability issues are important, some people seem to be looking for excuses to sue for injury.

Arthur Bellanger

Grand Isle, LA

January 21, 2003

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM056

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Arthur Bellanger, referred to me by Jean Landry, was born and raised in Lockport, and visited Grand Isle while his father, a carpenter, was building camps. After school, Arthur took a job with Louisiana Power and Light, and for 11 years was responsible for electrical work from Leeville to Fourchon to Grand Isle. He then took a job with Conoco, getting tired of being on call 24 hours a day for the power company. He worked for 17 years on the base, operating the separation process, then was sent offshore his last 3 years to oversee the gathering system on "43 Double A," Conoco's primary platform. He retired at age 55, having met the company's requirement of age plus 20 years totaling to 75. He has been mayor of Grand Isle, prior to David Camerdelle, and was largely responsible for the water pipe from Lafitte to the island.

#### Summary:

Background: father used to build camps down here; after school, Arthur got married and moved to island, been here 55 years; started doing carpentry work; job opened with Louisiana Power and Light; worked 11 years for LPL; bridge built 1932; gravel road when he came; went to work for Conoco, was operator, shipped oil and gas to barges, pumped to Golden Meadow, retired 1985; 17 years on base, last 3 years offshore because they put everything on computers and he was able to learn system, could shut and open wells by computer from New Orleans

Changes: oil companies needed good roads, started blacktopping; Texaco here for little while, then moved to Leeville to use Bayou Lafourche; Chevron took over the gulf, Texaco inland; Gulf operated out of Leeville, outside in gulf; pushed oil from Grand Terre to Ostrica, then onto ships; then built Allied refinery on river; Conoco didn't have refinery, did trading of oil/swapping, depending on closeness to refineries; Crude Oil Trading Company in Houston arranged swaps

Evacuations and automation: rented room in N.O. for 3 months every year to oversee evacuations, shutdowns; 3 computers so that nobody messes things up; computers could do everything; had backup, could change to manual; evacuation orders used to come from Parker City, OK, and Houston; then N.O. office given call

Gathering platform: was on "43 Double A"; 7/7; could house 125 people on platform, exercise room

Retirement: at age 55, companies started moving people around; company offered package deals at 55 to people who had 20 years plus age, so retired at 55; played stock market; pull everything out of company on advice of IRS man

Grand Isle Shipyard, since 1940; son works there as clerk; drydock was for shrimp boats

Exxon: had 76-80 houses, sold them; houses moved to other parts of island; still has 1 house, used for recreation; helicopter company Rotar Aid, had 16 houses

Water: Ivan Template used to deliver water to companies with tank truck, before pipeline; some shallow well water; old man Aubin Rigaud (Aubin's grandfather): cart with barrels, pulled by horse, \$.50/barrel; Andy Valance talked to Jefferson Parish about pipeline

Mayor: Gov. Foster appointed him after a recall; cleaned out pipeline to get more water; David Camerdelle took over from him; he's been on town council 3 times; now on port commission, appointed by Foster; on Board of Adjustment

Factions: split within local people; certain people want to control things; no problem with summer people, they give what we ask them to give

Production: sent oil to GI, gas directly into pipeline of a contractor

Port Fourchon: when he worked for power company, only thing there were tank batteries for Chevron and Gulf; would have to walk line at night; Old Man Boudreaux worked for Chevron, would cross me over canals in little boat; paid me time and a half

Jerry Benton

Houma, LA

April 8, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB052

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Jerry Benton through his sister, Mary Samaha. I had a brief interview with him in January when I stopped by to talk to Mary, and she called Jerry to come over. He is the oldest son of Mary's mother and stepfather, Escoe Benton. Jerry helped to run Benton Casing for many years. Since selling off his father's business due to the recession of the 80's, he has slowly been saving money and has opened another tool company under a different name. Jerry and his brother still run this company.

Jerry, born in 1944, began in the oil industry during summers off from high school. He worked offshore for a contract company and almost died due to the carelessness when a Halliburton truck was unloading some pipe. After he recovered in 1964, he went to work for his father at Benton Casing. He opened his own business in the mid 90's after the loss of Benton Casing in 1992.

#### Summary:

Personal history: Jerry Benton was born in 1944. His father started with a small company called Benton Casing; he started with equipment he would store right there on the egg farm. Family moved around a lot in the early days as his father was growing the business. Jerry was about 20 years old when he really got involved with the business full-time, after he had completed a couple of semesters of college work at Nicholls.

Small business: His father's business was probably different from others going into the business because of how things got started, as small as possible from the ground up. He mortgaged the house and the property to get it started. All the profits went right back into the company. He would continue to buy equipment as he made a little more here and there. Jerry joined the company in 1964-65, when there were about 6 employees - he started off in sales. He worked in sales until he moved to Winea, TX in 1974 to open up a branch store, their third.

Recession in the 80's: By around 1981, the company had 350-400 employees, with a number of stores in Texas and Louisiana. That was the extent of their expansion. In January of 1982, there were something like 4,500 rotary rigs operating in the U.S., and 4-5 months later, there were 900 rigs operating. It was devastating. The company was in really good shape at that point, with over 6 million in receivables and only \$500,000 in debt - everything went back into the company. At one point after Jerry got married in 1969, his father gave him a raise from \$200 per month so that he wouldn't be making less than his new wife was - she was making \$500 per month. The general feeling was that things would turn around by 1985-86, so many people hung on,

spending money, waiting for the turnaround. Those people in the production business fared better than those involved with the drilling side of things.

Sale of the business: The business was sold in 1992 to Frank's International. Jerry's father was in bad health, his wife had passed away, and they had lost a lot of money; by the time the oilfields really started to turn around, he was just too old.

New company: Jerry was supposed to go to work for Frank's, ended up taking a few months off, and began talking with some friends about starting up a new company instead. Business started four years ago called Benton Completion. They are in the tubing business, running small pipe. The oilfield is not what it used to be in the 70's and early 80's, but it is profitable. They now have 16 employees.

Labor: Labor is easier to work with when times are bad than when times are good. When times are good, your good people are just going to walk across the street if they see a better deal. When times are tough, people are less willing to risk their positions knowing there might not be another job if they do. Safety on the job is a much bigger issue today than it used to be, which is a good thing.

Environmental regulations: Jerry thought there always should have been more in place. There were a lot of spills, contaminations, and chemical refineries dumping - Southern Louisiana got a good share of that environmental damage. The United States still does better than most countries. Some places have no laws or regulation in place.

Unions: The oil industry never unionized successfully. The union organizers were too few, with too little money to wield any kind of substantial influence over workers here. They didn't have the resources to really investigate what workers' needs were; they didn't even know what a roughneck was!

Robert "Bobby" Bergeron

Houma, LA

January 24, 2003

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS008

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Bobby Bergeron is the Parish President of Terrebonne Parish. As such, he was someone I wanted to interview to gain his perspective on oil and community development. Other people also recommended him because he also represents something of a success story in oil service business.

Bobby Bergeron worked in the oil fields as a floor hand during summer vacations from high school. After graduation from high school in 1956, he began working for Heldenbrand Incorporated, a tool service company, rising to president. When Heldenbrand was sold to Chromalloy American, he was made vice president in charge of the former Heldenbrand, then a division of Chromalloy. After a rough time, the tool company was later bought by a group of local investors, including himself. So now he is president and part owner of Surbo-Tubular, which continues the tool joint rebuilding and repair work started by Heldenbrand in the 1950's. After serving on the Parish Council, he was elected Parish President in 1998.

#### Summary:

Oil Field Development: In the 1950's the oil field was "truly a totally more primitive industry." Drilling rigs were brought in and channels dug without much concern for the environment. "I have in my lifetime worked in areas where there were as much as 30 drilling rigs in sight of where I was. It was just a flourishing industry." At that time Caillou Island was the largest oil and gas field in the world. And basically a lot of what is now looked back on as oil field technology came from that time frame where new bits were invented, new ways of dealing with pressures, new drilling muds and additives and all of those kind of things basically evolved pretty much in that time frame."

Tool and Service Companies: Downhole assembly - drilling bit, stabilizers, drill collars to add weight, drill stem (drill pipe), a lot of threaded connections were developed then. Reed Roller Bit - rock bit. Rental tool companies started then: Patterson Rental (Mr. Patterson was from Houma) started in the early 50's, Petco, Lamb Rental (Lafayette) MacDonald, Knight Specialties, Drill String Incorporated. The first oil field service company he worked for was Heldenbrand. Many service companies that have evolved into large outfits like BJ, Halliburton, Weatherford, Baker. "This area of south Louisiana, it started out with land rigs. But basically it went to what we call inland water drilling. That's these smaller barges that are floated on location and drilling occurs. And it has now moved itself to where we were in deep water or as we refer to it - 'blue water drilling.'"

Entrepreneurship: "Let me tell you how things would happen back in those days - Mr. Russell Heldenbrand, who was the owner of that company, came down in an ole' pickup truck with a cuttin' torch and went in business as Heldenbrand Incorporated, cutting off ... tool joints off a drill pipe. And he ended up selling that company for a considerable amount of money back in the early 80s to Chromalloy American, which was a ...stock exchange company." Mr. Heldenbrand, from his efforts many things were invented - the rebuilding of tool joints is Mr. Heldenbrand's invention. Much of the, as we refer to it as 'hardband,' which is a high chrome mixture, that is, a band, is welded on the outside of the tool joint so that the wear can be reduced, Mr. Heldenbrand is responsible for most of that."

Louisiana as a Starting Area for Offshore Work: "But all of this started right on the edge of the marsh. Many of the oil field service companies, including the rental companies basically were born right in this area from Lafayette to, say, the end of the river in Venice and that area. There is still, and even today, this area. is, because we are the stepping off area to the Gulf of Mexico and to the deep water, the expertise in oil field service companies still belongs to this area."

Southern Louisiana is Where the Industrial Base of Oil Work Developed: "Houston, in fact, is where the oil field is managed. Houston, in fact, is where most of the sales transactions take place. But south Louisiana, from Lafayette to Houma or maybe Lafayette to Venice, is where all of this work is done. This is where the oil field service companies are, and this is where these big production companies depend on the expertise, the equipment, and the knowledge that's needed to deal with, you know, the drilling, even in the deep water."

Texaco and Terrebonne Parish: "The birth of Texaco didn't happen in Terrebonne Parish, but I have to tell you, this is where it matured and became the world wide entity that it was."

Uncertainty in the Oil Field: The oil and gas industry is almost, very similar, to goin' to Vegas, and rollin' the dice. You never know where you stand. Things that are completely out of control if you're in the oil field affects your bottom line with you not having very much to say about it." The uncertainty affects work conditions, financing. He feels that a national energy policy that stabilizes the price of oil would be good for not just the parish, but the United States. He thinks that would help avoid the boom-bust cycle that has been so hard on the local community.

Lewis Bernard

Lafayette, LA

July 30, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW013

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Lewis Bernard was born in New Iberia in 1945. He entered the land title business mainly because his father and grandfather were both land men. This made his involvement in land deals easier as did his ability to speak French when communicating with older landowners of Cajun descent. In this interview, he talks about dealing with landowners, Louisiana's unique land laws, and Lafayette's role in the oil industry.

#### Summary:

Early life: born 1945 in New Iberia; father and grandfather worked in land title business.

Oil in Louisiana: many land men came from LA but some also migrated from TX and OK due to company transfers; lots of activity in South LA for these individuals because LA has unique laws concerning mineral and surface rights that differ from laws in TX and OK; a lease lasted only 10 years from point of drilling; if no activity occurs on the land in question, the minerals and rights revert to original owners. In TX and other states, mineral rights owned in perpetuity and do not revert after a set period of time. LA's laws sometimes made things difficult but created jobs for land men and lawyers.

Lafayette and Oil: Lafayette became perfect location for management offices of oil companies because of location and willingness to host such companies; Heymann and his Oil Center were key in developing city's willingness; cities like New Iberia were not able to attract these companies' offices but brought in oil support industries such as rental companies. Increased technology hurt business opportunities for land men in the oilfield.

Oil Industry's effects: oil and gas industry brought much income and potential to LA; created jobs, circulated money, assisted in development of the university; individuals who made lots of money in the oil patch used that money in the community, which developed the arts, supported restaurant industry, and spread the wealth.

Reciprocal effects: people of South LA contributed greatly to oil and gas industry; hard-working individuals, rig builders, welders, and river pilots, among others, made it easier for oil patch to survive and thrive in this region; deep oil prospects would not have been discovered and developed if local landowners had not sacrificed their land (of course there was the incentive of profit potential); oil industry and Louisiana benefited each other in positive ways.

Melvin Bernard

Golden Meadow, LA

July 22, 2001, July 21, 2003

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire, Diane Austin

University of Arizona

TM006, DA107

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Melvin Bernard is part of the network of Chevron people I got into after first interviewing Butch Renois early on in the project. Some of the discussion deals with his recollections of the relations between Otto Candies and Humble: Otto could speak French, and thus negotiate land leases for Humble, so Humble gave Otto all of the company's supply/crewboat business. He also passed on some secondhand observations regarding Louisiana Land and Exploration's acquisition of huge tracts of land; the source was Loulan Pitre, Sr.

Gulf Oil drilled its first Southern Louisiana well on Melvin Bernard's grandfather's property, now below the Leeville Bridge. Melvin started school in Leeville, but the family moved up to Golden Meadow after a hurricane. His father and two uncles worked for Gulf before WWII. Melvin, now 69, began working for Texaco during high school; then he started with Chevron in 1961 and remained there until his retirement in 1990. In 1969, he was transferred onshore in the company's transportation division. His responsibilities included procuring supplies, services, and boats for the offshore operations.

#### Summary of TM006:

Gulf Oil: first oil well that the Gulf Oil Refining Company drilled was on grandfather's property in Leeville, guesses around 1930; Gulf Oil was a little village with a population of about 10 or 15; they used to have a Christmas party for the kids; telephone service because the oil company needed it; they even had, in the little village, a hotel and a store. It's been demolished now from the hurricanes.

Father: father and his two brothers worked for Gulf Oil Company; father, before and during WWII, worked in Timbalier Bay, which is still there now. In those days they had two real nice camps; had two oil wells; had two derricks that were still there at the time; had a generator that ran the lights and an icebox. Gulf Oil was rich and they were able to afford a refrigerator. My father took care of the two wells in the field. The two wells and two tanks would produce the oil.

WWII: I personally saw three ships get torpedoed; daddy saw five; me and my daddy saw a German submarine and a vessel that was probably bringing them supplies; the only landmark they had were the two tall derricks; oil field was involved because they were bombing the ships with oil in them; Coast Guard man only had a rifle and binoculars, but no radio or form of communication; so if he would have seen a submarine coming out of the water, what was he going to do?

Career and oil development: started working in the oil field part-time when still in high school, in Golden Meadow at that big school by the bridge; they had oil wells back there; Texas Company was drilling in those days; they had some small independent companies taking care of the drilling mostly on the other side of Bayou Lafourche and between Highway 1 and Catfish Lake; Texas Company still has an office back here; Texaco was one of the first companies inland that drilled; when I finished high school in 1952, I worked for a contractor of Exxon, then got drafted and went to Korea; when I came back from Korea, I worked for Schlumberger from 1955-1958 and witnessed one of the biggest downfalls of the oil industry then; we had 15 crews and they laid off about 13-14 crews; just kept a skeleton crew; after that, went to work for Chevron in 1961 and retired in 1990; when I first started there, I worked offshore; they had a lot of rigs at that time; in the 1940's when they started building platforms; all of a sudden it became a big city out there off of Fourchon

Schlumberger: worked for every company-Chevron, Gulf, Exxon, and Conoco. Whichever company was offshore, Schlumberger was the main service company; now there is a bunch of them; that was also true inshore; we used to do a lot of truck jobs; I was an operator for whatever we needed; worked a 10 and 5 schedule; spent most of our time offshore; we had a base here in Golden Meadow.

Otto Candies: had the monopoly; he would charge the boats \$50 a day if they worked for Exxon but contracted through him

Minor Cheramie: one of my best friends; "Him and his brother, Minor and Lefty, that is why they call it L&M Boat Company, saw a certain vessel, I don't know if it was overseas or in the New England states, with a round front. Most vessels are pointed on the end. Well, these vessels were round, pointed, and had a small cabin and a large deck. When they saw that, they fell in love with it. That is what the oil field needed they thought. Lefty's father-in-law was in the oil field business, but the reason was because he owned a lot of land with oil wells. It cost about \$85,000 in those days to build a boat like they wanted. They convinced the old man that they didn't have any money. The old man said he would take a chance. I think they have about 40 botrucs now. They are about 300 feet long. So, that is how they got started."

Summary of DA107:

Economic growth: Before the arrival of the drilling companies, Golden Meadow was small town. The cash crop was rice. The town itself was 3.2 miles long. It had no paved roads, no street lights, 3 full piers, 24 bars, 5 doctors and 3-4 hotels. This changed when the drilling companies arrived. Experienced men were brought down to work. This increased the population, and many men would marry, stay in the community, and raise families, again increasing the population. The Coast Guard established a base at Grand Isle and brought more people. More people brought in more stores and jobs. There was an abundant increase in grocery stores, shoe stores, hardware stores, ballrooms, more doctors, pharmacies and gambling casinos. When the companies left, so did a lot of people and consequently, part of the new booming local economy.

Frank "Peco" Besson

Grand Isle, LA

March 19, 2003

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM061

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Frank "Peco" Besson was recommended to me by Jean Landry. I called him at his souvenir and bait shop along the highway, and he told me to come over. He was doing some repair work, getting the shop ready for the season. Most of the first side of the tape is concerned with looking through photos and other materials Peco has at the souvenir shop. The second side has some discussion of oil and gas industry involvement on the island, as well as his observations on efforts made to turn the Tarpon Rodeo into a family affair.

Peco Besson's father was from Grand Isle, and his mother was from Golden Meadow. "Uncle Nat" Chighizola "adopted" Peco, because he had no children. Nat is the great-great grandson of Nez Coupe, Louis Chighizola, a lieutenant for Jean Lafitte. Peco worked for Grand Isle Shipyard for 25 years, has been a councilman, and expects to run for mayor in the next election. He got laid off 1990, then worked for Dolphin Services out of Houma for 3-4 years. He and his wife bought the chicken/hamburger place and the souvenir business from his mother and then bought the daiquiri shop across the highway.

#### Summary:

Jean Lafitte and pirates: going to war with British, Jean offered to fight; Jean and brother went to Chalmette, Nez Coupe stayed over here to protect back way to New Orleans; Nez Coupe settled middle part of Grand Isle, divided it up among 7 kids

Ludwig: we use to call it Coast Guard Lane, station there is now Town Hall;

Grand Isle: got built by driftwood out of river, sand built up beach; 3 dance halls; put drapes on windows during war; Stevenson came by boat, but walked from New Orleans on high ridges, built road in 1930s; Ludwig had boat named Chicago, shipped produce to Chicago; Ocean Club Hotel destroyed by storm before it was used

Changes: oil people came in 1948; people had money in pockets, built better homes; people had resentment of tourists coming in; Betsy in 1965; people took advantage of government and built better homes; ordinance - built 8 feet above ground; we don't have the businesses we ought to have to serve tourists

Storms: stayed at firehouse, kept eye on things

Service: drafted 1969, went to Vietnam, got an early out if you had job; got letter from employer, Mr. Prejean

Grand Isle Shipyard: was a supervisor, oversaw people working for Conoco, started as roustabout; business started as drydock for small fishing boats, then started working for oil companies, especially Exxon, then Conoco; structural and high-pressure welders; we just did stick welding; main office in Raceland, safer for computers due to hurricanes

Bust and cycles: out-of-town people got laid off; tried to keep the locals working; took pay cuts, cut hours; now the "graveyard" on the way to Houma piled with boats; nobody's drilling; "why spend money when they could be making a lot of money just producing oil."

Exxon: couple hundred homes, people bought them up, moved them; moved office to New Orleans in crunch; executives fly in and out of GI; did have 40 staff people here; put superintendents offshore, reports to main office; father-in-law captain of derrick barge

Conoco: sold operations, never had staff, working out of New Orleans, fly people back and forth from NO in seaplanes; cut flying business when crunch came, had to drive; automated, can control out of NO;

Outsiders: Exxon people didn't get involved in island affairs; didn't mingle

Channel: when lots of activity, was dredged to 20 feet; now only 11 feet; Fourchon had short channel they can maintain

Politics: plans to run against present mayor; after water line, more people building camps; engineer goofed off, we've broke line 4 times, by boats; paid 20 million for it; trying to sell water for revenues

Freeport: hired several people from GI; Carl Santiny retired with them, may still be consulting

Tarpon Rodeo: never was family-oriented; guys came to have fun, spend money everywhere; women; my brother was chief of police and cut that out.

James Bibee

Weimar, TX

May 27, 2003

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS034

### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. James Bibee graduated from University of Tennessee with a degree in Geology in 1950, and immediately went to work for Gulf. After spending a couple of years with another company in Colorado, Gulf hired him again in 1956 to work offshore at their New Orleans office. He worked on the 1970 and 1972 lease sales at the time when bright spots became an indicator of reserves, and due to his success became head of E/P for Gulf. Bibee continued his service for Gulf during its merger with Chevron and retired after 34 years.

### Summary:

This interview dealt mainly with Gulf's use of bright spots in the 1970 and 1972 lease sales, as well as the evolution of bright spot's from a research perspective at Gulf. There was some discussion of the bad experiences in offshore Texas as well. Mention of the Gulf/Chevron Merger. Texas Eastern contract. Significant discussion of Alaska and the Muk Luk dry hole. Move to West Africa and growth of technology. Additionally, a discussion of deep water issues. Talk impact embargo had on E/P in the Gulf.

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Wilbert Billiot

Dulac, LA

July 24, 2003

Interviewed by: Scott Kennedy

University of Arizona

SK003

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Mr. Wilbert Billiot by Kirby Verret. Mr. Kirby told me that he thought that Wilbert was one of the first Houma Indian to really move up the chain of command in the oil and gas industry. When I mentioned this to Mr. Wilbert, he chuckled and said not really. When I arrived at his house he was wearing an oil-stained tee-shirt, and said that he was getting ready to work on his car. After the interview, I spent a few minutes with him trying to troubleshoot the problem. He had pulled out a lot of components to get to the water pump, and then he discovered that that was not the problem. It looked like he had a lot of work ahead of him, and I wished him luck.

Wilbert Billiot is a fifty-five year old Houma Indian who has lived in Dulac, LA all of his life. He received a bachelor's degree from the University of New Orleans in petroleum services and petroleum technology. He worked for Unocal Corporation for twenty-seven years as a pumper, and traveled all over the Gulf of Mexico working in the oil field.

#### Summary:

Overview: WB is 55 and spent most of his career in the oil and gas service with Unocal Corporation. He worked as a pumper, also called a gauger, and was responsible for monitoring oil flow rates and preparing daily reports. He worked a shift of seven on and seven off, working mostly offshore.

Education and early work: WB graduated from high school in 1964, and went to the University of New Orleans where he earned an associate degree in safety and a bachelor's degree in petroleum services and technology. His college education was interrupted by military service, but after he finished school he went to work in the oil field for Otis Engineering, which is now Halliburton. He began working as a roustabout and moved up to field operator. He got a job with Unocal Corporation, and had to be away from home a lot as part of his work. He said that the seven and seven shift was difficult but it allowed him to do more things that required longer periods of time off.

Family: WB's father was a tugboat captain, and his mother was a housekeeper. He was raised by his grandmother who worked in a shrimp factory, and made as little as 95 cents per hour. He said this does not sound like much, but it was enough to pay the bills.

Native Americans in the industry: When he began working in the oil field there were fewer opportunities for Native Americans, and said that a lot of racism existed in the industry. There

were not many Indians or Blacks who advanced much farther than labor positions, which meant that they were not able to have the better paying jobs. He said that he was able to get work with Unocal because there was already a Native American working there whose opinion was respected. WB had applied to several other companies without receiving a response.

Effects of the oil and gas industry: Some jobs were created for some people, but it had pretty much peaked when he started to work. He believes that the oil fields are on their way out, but initially the offshore area created a lot of money for people who provided services for the oil companies. I asked him if he enjoyed the work he did, and he said yes. He enjoyed the mix of working both indoors and outdoors. He was also very intrigued by the troubleshooting aspect of his job.

Dangers associated with his work: Generally people had to be careful and pay attention to the equipment, which could be under ten to twelve thousand pounds of pressure. He had heard of close calls, and had been close to having an accident himself. He was being lowered in a basket by a crane as part of moving from one platform to another. He and another guy in the basket were 15 to 20 feet from the deck when the crane stopped. The other man in the basket fell and hit his head on the side of a boat. This man was in a coma and ultimately died from the injury. WB said that he realized that the work he was doing was dangerous, but he never considered quitting.

Injury: His last year of work he was injured on the job and his medical insurance increased significantly. At 55 he could retire, and his medical insurance would be cut in half. He decided to take retirement, but coincidentally the company he worked for instituted a general layoff which he would have been part of anyway.

Changes he had seen in Dulac: There were quite a few jobs through the peak of the oil industry. When the companies built inshore they created large canals which allowed salt water to intrude and increases erosion. He says that now that the oil and gas industry is starting to move out, they do not talk about undoing the damage they have caused. He says that water comes in his house now when it floods, but it never did when he was young. He feels that the marshlands are important, and if they disappear everything will be gone. WB feels that up until now the oil and gas industry has enjoyed a "free ride", and has not been hampered by many state regulations. He points out that refineries are given breaks on pollution, and that some hazardous materials created as part of the production process are not considered hazardous by the state. He said that in the early days of the industry they used to spray a chemical over the top of oil spills that made it sink to the bottom. It was part of what he considered an out-of-sight, out-of-mind way of dealing with pollution. He says this has changed, but oil companies do not take responsibility for cleaning up past spills. I asked him if he would do the same work again, and he said yes because the salary was double what he could get for doing anything else.

Storms and erosion: He said that he has property in Houma that he could go to if needed, but that if people were going to do it right they had to move farther north than Houma. He has learned that everything south of Lafayette is sinking, and he does not think that the levees will help this problem because they do not rebuild the marshes. He thinks that sediment diversion projects work, but they are expensive and would probably not be in place soon enough. He has lived on Shrimpers Row all of his life, and his family and friends live near him. People are trying to raise

their houses, but he saw a lot of people move after hurricane Andrew. Ultimately he thinks that people are going to have to move. When he was young, moving was not ever talked about, and now it is an issue. More people are working in Houma, and more people will probably move closer to Houma for the added advantage of being closer to work. I asked what all of this meant for the integrity of the Houma Indian community, and he said it will be difficult to be close to family like it currently is. But he feels that the Houma Indians are already losing their integrity because of intermarriage and the lack of a reservation.

Wenceslaus "Win" Billiot

Dulac, LA

January 19, 2005

Interviewed by: Joanna Stone, Betsy Plumb

University of Arizona

JLS03

#### Ethnographic Preface:

This interview was conducted as part of the study of the links between WWII and the offshore industry. Win was referred to us by Corinne Paulk, and she set up this interview. Win came with his wife, but she sat across the table and did not participate in the interview. He talks about his service during WWII and also his years as a tugboat captain servicing the offshore industry.

Win Billiot is part Choctaw, part Biloxi-Chitimacha. He was born in 1926 and grew up on Island St. Charles, working on boats from an early age. He left school after the 5th grade and started working for Delta Farm picking cotton and cutting sugar cane by hand at age 15. From there he moved to Baton Rouge, where he worked in a fish market. He was drafted into the army and served in the South Pacific during WWII and occupied Germany after the war. Upon his return he got back on boats and eventually became a tugboat captain, working for various service companies until his retirement at age 65.

#### Summary:

Childhood: Win was born September 28, 1926 on Island St. Charles; His mother died when he was 9 years old and his father remarried; He has one full brother, 3 full sisters, a half brother and a half sister; His grandmother would come to help the family, but he learned to cook to help out as well; He went to the Baptist School four miles away until he was 10; He remembers starting to really learn about boats when he was 8 or 9

Work history: Win started working at Delta Farm in Larose at age 15, picking cotton and cutting sugar cane by hand, now all of this agricultural land is covered by 10 feet of water; Then he went to Grand Isle to trawl and go offshore, they had to lift the nets by hand in those days, the road was 1 mile from the beach, the Gulf was not as rough then, a 35 foot boat could go anywhere; At age 17, he went to Baton Rouge to work in a fish market, making \$20/week and sleeping at the market

Military service: At 18 he had to register with the armed forces in September, they called him in October of 1944; He went for an exam and he was lucky to get a few days to get his things together; He went into the army; On the day he left, it took a whole day to get to Houma, and then he stayed there overnight at a motel that cost \$1.50/night; He did basic training at Camp Gordon, Georgia and then was sent to Camp Chaffe in Arkansas; He made expert marksman and was assigned to the infantry; The training wasn't very difficult for him because he was raised pretty rough; Next he traveled to Fort Arthur, California, the trip took 3 days and 3 nights by train, he received more training there and remembers having to crawl 100 feet with a 30 or 40

pound pack on his back; On the trip to the Philippines, many of the other men got seasick, but he didn't because he was used to being on boats; They disembarked in Northern Luzon and while eating they came under fire, they lost some men, and it was very frightening, they moved into the jungle for 2 weeks after that, which was also very difficult because of traps and snakes; He was in the ordinance outfit, helping out the mechanics; Their ship zigzagged to avoid submarines on the way

Home front during WWII: A U-boat was sighted 3 miles offshore in Fourchon; There was a Coast Guard station there and everyone headed out to the Gulf had to pass through it and give an account of everything on their vessel to make sure they weren't selling supplies to enemy submarines

Military service: After the base treaty, he had to choose to go to Japan or Europe, Win asked for Europe and was sent to Germany, where he served on Border Patrol for 14 months; He was at the France-Germany border because of his ability to speak French, he worked with a man from New Mexico who spoke Spanish; He had a German driver even though he was only a Private First Class; He made friends from all over the US and found that many people spoke French, he also made friends with a Cherokee Indian from Texas; He was discharged in June of 1947 at Fort Dix, New Jersey; It was hard to readjust to civilian life

Boats: When he returned from the service, Win and his father built a 35 to 40 foot boat; He did not get any help from the GI Bill; There were not as many boats operating as when he left; In 1955 they built a bigger boat and did some oystering; His brothers were trawlers; He got married in December of 1947 and had to go to work; His great uncle taught him to navigate by the stars

Licenses: At first they didn't need licenses, but around the 1960's the Coast Guard required them; Had to go to New Orleans to take the test; He had no trouble taking the test, he just got a book and studied with a friend; At first the licenses were free, but about ten years later there was a fee that his employer paid; They could choose to take an oral or written test, so he chose oral; He was certified for inland and the Western Rivers and declined an offer from the tester to be certified for the Gulf, he had had enough of offshore by that point

Work history: Win worked for LB Brothers Towing Company out of Montegut in the winters and shrimped the rest of the year; Then he worked for Dufran out of Larose, getting clam shell from Lake Pontchartrain; He worked 20 years for Al Cenac, which changed names to Loraine Co and Caillou Island Co.; He retired at age 65 and 1 month; He's been retired for 13 years and spends his time building boats

Changes in community: One of the biggest is that when he was growing up, there were lots of places that Indians weren't allowed to go, for example, in the courthouse in Houma, the whites sat up front with the Indians behind them and finally the blacks; Another is the land loss, one time he saw a man from LSU that was planting marsh grass, Win told him that if the oak trees couldn't stop the erosion then that marsh grass wasn't going to do much; Hurricane Juan pretty much cleaned everything out

Impact of oil and gas industry: The canals really messed up the marshes; Changes in the weather

Early childhood: They used to have a big garden and chickens, when his mom was a child, they grew rice as well

Work history in the oil industry: Win was a tug boat captain; He worked at Caillou Island for 8 years, then New Iberia and Garden Island/Venice; They mainly serviced Texaco, it was a contract company; His schedule started as 14 and 7 and switched to 7 and 7, but it all depended on what was needed; They would go to New Orleans to unload; It took them 7 days to get to Texas City, Texas pulling a barge, going about 2 to 3 miles an hour; There were about 7 people in his crew, depending; He was cook for awhile; There were generally 4 bunks on a tug

Connections between WWII and offshore: LSTs were converted to use as platforms, he remembers seeing them used by Humble, Texaco, Shell, and Continental; Radios were also the same technology

Luke Billodeau

Lafayette, LA

June 17, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz, David DiTucci

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW002

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Luke Billodeau was born in Cottonport, Louisiana on September 4, 1918. He attended Louisiana State University and University of Southwestern Louisiana. He began his career in oil as a truck driver for Progress Petroleum in 1942, and was later put in charge of rig operations, without any previous experience. In the 50s, he worked for Pan American building wells.

#### Summary:

Early life: born in Cottonport, LA in 1918.

Education: graduated from Clossureville High School; attended Louisiana State University and University of Southwestern Louisiana.

Early employment: worked for four months for the State Police in 1946; then Baton Rouge for Dixie Electric; then Western Union and worked a variety places including Canada. Built telegraph lines from Beaumont to El Paso, Texas; worked out of Dallas, Texas; was not drafted at first because he was installing telegraph machines for Army bases; was eventually drafted but failed his physical.

Progress Petroleum: worked as a truck driver for Progress Petroleum in 1942, which later became Amoco and then British Petroleum; drove the truck and managed road building crew for the rig site; those working at the rig site were from Magnet to Cotton Lake (near Houston, TX). Work was extremely hard; many men could not do the work; was placed in charge of rig operations (without any prior experience) to relieve the rig manager; an experienced well man gave him a crash course; working schedule was twelve hour days, seven days a week. Transferred to Dickinson, TX to manage a rig there; could not find a place to live; found another job in Pine Prairie, LA; stayed in a motel seven days a week, twelve hours a day; made 62 cents/hour; had to ration. Worked there for nine years, all types of hours. In 1940s there was an oil well there with many other oil companies drilling; about 15 wells at that location. Quit in 1946 because of a pulled arm muscle and did not want to work in the office; living in Easton, Louisiana; located a doctor who could treat this condition there.

Pan American employment: part of a wire line crew, scrapping paraffin; worked for a year on this job; transferred to Grand Chenier in May 1954; transferred to Church Point, assisting in constructing new gas wells. First well had 10,000 pounds of pressure; all the latest safety material used in construction of that particular well; started pumping eight million cubic feet of gas/day. Sun Ray Oil built a refinery in back of the field; company built a pipeline through the

refinery; had a disagreement with the new engineers over the rate of production that wells should produce.

Oil field politics: many other oil companies offered him a job but did not want to quit because he didn't like to start over.

Church Point: bought new house; helped create a water system and fire department.

Charlie Blackburn

Dallas, TX

September 23, 1999

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

SOC002

Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Charlie Blackburn had a long career with Shell beginning in 1952 after he graduated from the University of Oklahoma with a B.S. in engineering physics. He became Chief Petroleum Engineer for Houston E/P area in 1964. In 1966 he served as Budget Coordinator for Shell E/P and later became Southwestern Production Division Manager. In 1968 he became General Manager for the Onshore E/P division, and in 1970 he was promoted to VP of the Southern E/P region. In 1974 he became VP for Transportation and supplies, and in 1976 named Executive VP. Shell selected Blackburn as director and President of Shell Energy Resources in 1982 where he served until his retirement in 1986.

Summary:

Interview offered insight into Shell's organization and bidding process. Discussion of lease sales and the move to deep water. Interesting commentary on Alaska and frontier areas including technology. Great detail on the Cox Blowout and Bay Marchand. Also, candid discussion of the buyout.

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Acklin Blanchard

Houma, LA

February 3, 2003

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS012

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Acklin Blanchard was recommended by Diana Edmonson, and is one of the people from Montegut who went to work for Texaco. He and his wife met me in his new home.

Acklin Blanchard started work with Texaco in 1947 at the shipyard and warehouse in Montegut, loading supplies, cement and pipes, for \$.87 per hour with an extra ten cents for overtime. In 1949 he started in field production, starting as a roustabout. After two years he was promoted to night pumper at Caillou Island, where he stayed for 30 years. In 1953 he was promoted to meterman, then "head roustabout." In 1972 he was named Production Foreman. After that he was "shuffled around" to Bay Ste. Elaine and Lake Barre, ending up in Golden Meadow when he retired in 1983.

#### Summary:

**Local Environment:** All focused on bayous. He used to live further down the bayou, but was flooded out. He moved to his present house because of flooding further down the bayou. His current house is located at a high point, elevation 7 feet. Skeptical of storm protection plans.

**Hiring Bias:** People from North Louisiana tended to hire their friends rather than people who had worked locally.

**Tankers:** Before the pipeline the oil was loaded into barges at the tank batteries then transported to storage tankers. Texaco used to have three tankers that were tied up at "Port Texaco" near Coteau. These were used for storage only. Tankers would tie up, offload the oil then transport it to Houston before the pipeline was built. The pumpers' work changed with the pipeline and also the introduction of the radio.

**Texaco Fields:** Texaco had Lake Barre, Caillou Island, Lake Pelto, and Bay Ste. Elaine fields in the area. Texaco was the primary employer in the area.

**Different Grades of Oil:** Light grade and what they called "B" oil, which was noxious, full of sulfur. When they gauged production, they had to get down into the wells with the gases, worried about it.

**Pumpers' Work:** Pumpers had to gauge the amount of water, sand, and "BS" mixed with the oil, and separate it. State "allowable" was for oil, but oil companies wanted to separate the oil so their allowable production did not include all the contaminants. At the end of the month, it was

important to not pump more than the allowable, if so the next month's production had to be less. Caillou Island field had different owners whose royalties had to be calculated.

Work Schedule: Camp food cost one dollar per day. In storms they wouldn't let the pumpers come in, they wanted the wells shut down at the last minute, then wanted the pumpers to stand by to start pumping as soon as the weather cleared. Everybody would gather in the dining room and wait it out. Snow or ice made it really difficult to move from well to well by boat.

Engineers: New engineers were sent to the field for three months' field experience, "to break them in." Engineers tended to look down on the field workers, but also took credit for innovations by others. Acklin found a way to pump nitrogen to recover oil, but an engineer took credit for it, and he complained. Because of that, he was transferred to Golden Meadow in 1980.

Oil Industry Changes: Major emphasis on training and safety certification. More attention paid to pollution today. Now have a "pollution barge" that would dump solvent on a spill, then pump it up. Drilling rigs used to pump mud overboard - even when it was mixed with diesel. Young people from high school in the 1980's couldn't even calculate percent, so Texaco started its own school. Blacks tended to come to work late, missing the boat to camp. This was mostly because they had not had the job experience; "after a while they settled down."

Retirement: He retired in 1983 at age 57, took an incentive package. Had several bypass operations in 1984. Now does woodwork when he wants to.

Oil Family: Has three sons-in-law working in the oil industry (one is a compressor mechanic for Unocal, one a machinist, and the third is a pumper). Most people from Montegut worked for Texaco. When they pulled out, there wasn't much left.

Oil and Community: The older people got a retirement incentive and were able to retire in their 50's. But it is hard to find work today.

Melvin Blanchard

Houma, LA

March 25, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB046

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I received Melvin's name from Herman LeBlanc. Melvin worked for several different contract companies during his time with the oil field. Melvin talks about his oil experiences with much interest. He seems glad to be out of it, but is also thankful to the oil industry for providing him with work. His last comment was very telling. He said, "Well the oil industry hasn't changed one bit. My nephew was laid off this morning from Weatherford."

Melvin Blanchard was born in 1930. His father was a farmer, and Melvin began in 1949 working for a contract company as a roustabout. He worked onshore and offshore on rigs and was involved in drilling and pushing tools. He held jobs with 7 different companies, changing jobs in response to layoffs and in search of better working conditions.

#### Summary:

**Background:** Melvin was born in 1930 and moved to Houma when he was 1 year old. His father was a farmer, hauling sugar cane. He finished high school and began his work in the oilfields in 1949.

**Oil History:** Melvin began in 1949, working for a contract company as a roustabout. In 1951, he was drafted into the service for two years at Camp Pope. In 1953, he went to Chancewell Service to work on workover rigs. He worked 7 days a week, 8 hours per day with no time off. In 1954, he went to Magnolia to do offshore work - they began laying people off. In 1955, he moved over to Sea Drilling, Inc. where he worked for about 12 years. He also worked for Dresser Industries on workover rigs and Maritime Oil Company on their drilling platform.

**Oil Business:** Seemed glad to be finished with the oil business, but thankful that they provided him a job. His last comment was telling of his general feeling about the oil industry. He said, "Well the oil industry hasn't changed one bit. My nephew was laid off this morning from Weatherford."

Rosalie Blum

Morgan City, LA

March 1, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA097

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Rosalie Blum was referred to me by Steve Shirley. She is a lifelong resident of Morgan City, and Steve suggested she would be able to talk about the oil and gas industry and its impacts on the community. Rosalie was hesitant as she felt that she did not know much about the oil and gas industry, but after we talked for a while she agreed to be interviewed. As a native of Morgan City, Rosalie offers a valuable look at Morgan City before the oil and gas industry arrived and then talks about life in the community.

Rosalie Blum was born and raised in Morgan City. She and her four sisters and two brothers grew up on Railroad Avenue with her grandfather, Pioto Guarisco, her grandmother, parents, uncles, and one unmarried aunt. Her family was one of several Italian families that, along with black families, lived "across the tracks." Rosalie's father worked on the farm and in the family bakery and later bought a bar and pool room and an ice cream store. Her uncle, Victor, had a crab factory and a bulk plant and later built Twenty Grand, a boat company that serviced the offshore oil and gas industry. Rosalie's husband, Milford, worked at the bulk plant and other jobs around town. He died when their fifth child was only a year old, and in 1961 Rosalie began working as a schoolteacher, a job she held until she retired.

#### Summary:

Personal history: Born a Guarisco; family had a bakery and the house at 210 S. Railroad Avenue; lived with grandparents, uncles and one unmarried aunt; five girls and two boys, all born in the upstairs bedroom; no hospital; grandfather was Pioto Guarisco; brother Peter killed by a train when 11 years old and on the way back from serving mass in Bayou Boeuf; mother died at 91; grew up across the tracks; large house, another double next to it and a big house across the street; two hotels; blacks lived in a house behind the Guarisco house; Castelano family moved in from Amelia and bought the grocery store; hotels and duplex were destroyed by fire; at one time there was a Chinese laundry next door, in the early 1930s; the train station was at First Street; lived in that home until married; had wedding reception at the house; lots of blacks on that side of the tracks, nice, friendly atmosphere; married Milford, also from Morgan City; his mother was Catholic and father Jewish; used to have Jewish stores on Front Street; not a lot of Jewish people in Morgan City any more; Daddy worked on the farm, in the bakery, then bought a bar and pool room, then an ice cream place; no women ever went in the bar; Daddy did well for his family

Uncles and Aunts: Uncle Victor Guarisco really made the money and left rich children; Milford worked at the Esso Bulk Plant as manager after uncle had it; uncle had a crab factory, women would go and pick crabs, including two aunts; one Castelano aunt was a seamstress; then uncle

branched out and had all the oil stuff, including Twenty Grand and all kinds of stuff; they built the Twenty Grand building on the highway and had their offices in there; Rosalie's daughter worked as an operator there during the summer when she was going to school; the other uncles ran the bakery

Living in Morgan City: Shrimpers came in and helped the economy a lot; they needed a processing plant; husband's brother and a friend opened one in Berwick in the early 1960s, after Rosalie's husband died; opened a seafood place Blum and Casso; when oil and gas industry came it seemed people had more money to spend, the economy got better; family moved to Third Street with mother-in-law who did sewing for a living; Mrs. Hazel Smiley had a dance school and Mami made all the costumes; got married in August, then WWII started and Milford left in November, gone till 1945, belonged to a medical supply company; when he returned someone had bought the home we were living in so we moved upstairs over the restaurant and lived there until we bought land where house now is; had five children, Milford died when the youngest was 1 year old and before the house was built; son designed the house in high school, lived here since 1946

Bulk Plants: Industrial properties and bulk plants were all along the river; husband worked at Rio Fuel which belonged to Twenty Grand; provided oil and gas for service stations; when he first started Milford would sometimes be called out at night, like when a barge arrived from Baton Rouge

Growth: Lakeside was part of the growth from the oil and gas industry; a couple of other subdivisions went in; the Guariscos had property in Morgan City and are now trying to develop it, somebody said there was an eagle's nest in there; lots of developments in Bayou Vista and Patterson; some people did not want the growth but we welcomed it

Career: Started teaching in 1961-62 at the Catholic school; had quite a few non-Catholic families, mostly from Morgan City but some from across the river; had some oil people but could not tell the difference; had a summer program for children, taught swimming, played baseball and basketball; Milford was the basketball coach; had dance schools; did not worry about living near industrial areas; one time had a fire on the other side of the seawall but fire department put it out; at one time people worried about the youth when the town became wilder, but the kids were always in groups; the bars were on Railroad Avenue, still are; where Daddy used to have his; there were no businesses on Front Street; the kids never had any reason to go there; the Gathright Building on the corner of First and Railroad Ave. had ladies' material and thread; DiMaggio's Shoe Shop, a men's shop; Milford and his brother bought it but gave it up - Fisher; movie theater on the corner, a garage across the street where I worked in the office; story of young man who was working in the oil and gas industry and came in and bought a car, went out with him once

Children: All finished college; two sons are bankers, one is an architect; daughters are teachers; "You have to do what you have to do, and when I think about it, you didn't realize...."

Charlotte Bollinger

Lockport, LA

July 28, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA116

#### Ethnographic Preface:

In addition to her position at Bollinger's, Charlotte is active in various community organizations. I interviewed her when I was investigating educational issues in southern Louisiana for the baseline study we conducted in 1997. When I called her to ask if she would be willing to do an oral history interview, she invited me to come over within the hour. I met her in her office and we talked for a while and then went to her house for lunch.

Charlotte Bollinger is the Executive Vice President of Bollinger's Shipyards, located on Bayou Lafourche. Bollinger's was started in 1946 when Charlotte's father, Donald, was willed \$10,000 by the owner of the company for which he and his father had been working. Donald moved his family to Bayou Lafourche in 1960, and Charlotte grew up in the shipyard. She married and raised three children and then went to work for the company in 1984. Since its inception, the shipyard has been involved in building vessels for the offshore oil and gas industry. In the 1980s the company began building patrol boats and has built the entire fleets of both the U.S. Coast Guard and the U.S. Navy.

#### Summary:

Background: Executive Vice President of Bollinger's Shipyards, company started in 1947 with two shipyards, today has 15 along the coasts of Louisiana and Texas; concerned about coastal erosion, decided conveyance channel is the answer; if don't do something will have to move away; problems with saltwater intrusion and subsidence

Family: Father, Donald, graduated from high school in 1932, grandfather could not afford to send anybody to school, taught his children crafts; father was machinist, told story of 20 men sitting on levee wanting his job; motivated to start his own company ten years later to be the last person fired; Mr. Alex Barker owned the company grandfather worked for, left daddy \$10,000 when he died in 1946; daddy used that and what he had saved to start business; fledgling oil and gas industry onto continental shelf

Starting business: modified oyster and shrimp boats to store things to be brought to service the oil industry; many fishermen made it big; uneducated but smart; children all well educated and took over companies; our company 212 employees in 1983, now 2,700; enjoyed watching company grow; had wooden-hull boats, one dry dock and one wet dock; grew with the industry, didn't realize how much it would grow; Daddy's philosophy, ""Quality would be remembered long after the price was forgotten;" good reputation; Daddy moved the family to the middle of the shipyard in 1960, Momma would cook lunch and Daddy walked home to eat, brought

customers, vendors, bankers, insurance people; they became friends; my husband started working for the company, I stayed home with the three children for 12 years, then came to work for the company in 1984; Daddy bought 80 acres of land for \$7,000, Army surplus building after the war for \$2,000, poured cement by hand, brought water and telephone lines, spent \$16,000 starting business

Getting into government work: built second shipyard in 1980; Coast Guard project changed everything, so much work in the '70s, couldn't build fast enough; in 1980 industry dried up, just two people who had built boats in that period, no confidence anything coming back, bid on government contract in 1982 for 16 patrol boats, part of national Narcotic Drug Interdiction program; boats to replace all Coast Guard patrol boats; ended up building 100 boats; gave backbone of steady work

Industry cycles: always up and down, no rhyme nor reason; very reactionary to world events; treated the government like commercial customers so never had adversary; won quite a few awards; motto was "stay alive until '85;" nothing there; understood the business because we all participated in it as a family; enjoyable; three generations and privately owned; working for government was philosophy change between father and brother; father felt government would come get in your business, unions would come, he would close down before he would let that happen; lost the first bid on the Coast Guard boats, went to court and it was reversed

Community: people don't move away easily; passed on crafts to their children; whole family works here, we encourage that; working hard to promote non-college-bound options, fast-track apprenticeship; blame emphasis on college instead of crafts on report, "A Nation at Risk," which claimed we were not teaching enough math and science; switched to college-prep curriculum, kids in industrial arts or agriculture started not feeling good about themselves, lost their relationship to school; proud of people in this area trying to do something about it; South Lafourche High School rewrote curriculum to train mariners, help build our own workforce

Family origins: pure French families, strong Catholic background; grandparents had to learn English when they went to school; I was born and raised in Lockport, Louisiana, moved three miles away

Impacts of industry: can't separate the community from oil and gas; families put their children through school; Glen Pitre wrote book of small communities in Lafourche thriving because of the oil field; 125 percent employment because could work 7 and 7 and go work in a shipyard or mill on the other 7 days; return to problem of saltwater intrusion, lobbying to make people understand how critical highway LA1 is, started group; spend most of my spare time working on these two groups; Shell Oil Company funded promotion, "America's Wetlands;" must find money to save Louisiana's resource; greater awareness less six years; needed private citizens and business people to get on board, no time to lose

Adrian Bonnette

Houma, LA

January 29, 2003

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS009

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Bob Bonnette is another person identified by Diana Edmonson of the Houma Council on Aging. He and his wife live in a newer part of Houma, not far from the Civic Center and YMCA. He has a good retirement package, and has been able to be active in community politics. While he doesn't regret the work, he is very aware of the "fast and loose" accounting of the oil fields.

Adrian (Bob) Bonnette began work in the oil field in 1959 after completing service with the military. He worked his entire career with Texaco, mostly operating out of Houma and the Caillou Island field. He began as kitchen help, but also worked as a roughneck at night. Within a few months, he was promoted to radio operator. As radio operator, he was responsible for communications, but also office management, production reports, payroll preparation. He worked directly under the dome foreman. Eventually, Bob was also assigned to troubleshoot situations where accounting wasn't properly maintained. He retired from Texaco in 1993 and has been active in local community politics.

#### Summary:

**Radio Operator Work:** He wanted to work as a roughneck because the money was better than in the office. He was given no choice, and his new job brought a reduction in salary. The radio operator was involved in all office work, gathering information on oil production, drilling, and field operations.

**Oil Field Changes:** Texaco didn't treat its employees that well, their pension plan wasn't as good as other companies. In one case, he had an argument about overproducing a well, which killed it. He feels that overproduction - "don't worry about tomorrow" - destroyed the Louisiana oil fields.

**Techniques for Increasing Production:** Gas lift is done by pumping natural gas into the well at different levels, relying on increased pressure to lift oil. Also tried to use nitrogen gas, foam, "fire flooding" to force well production increase. Water flooding is by pumping water into a well, which can wash oil out of nearby wells. He felt water flooding "killed the oil industry in Louisiana," because flooding the wells blocked the flow of oil.

**Oil Field Corruption:** Raping a well is overproducing a well and allocating over-production to a "dead" well. Some toolpushers, pumpers were corrupt, took kickbacks, used falsified production information. "Jumper lines" were lines laid from producing wells to intersect lines from dead wells. Texaco would put guys who "couldn't read and write" on the job, they would rise up to toolpusher but didn't know how to administer, and things could be done around them. Drillers

who got promoted tended to be the ones who drilled the fastest, and they were prone to taking shortcuts. "Hot oil barges" were used to clean paraffin out of the flow lines and tank batteries, but they also used them to store overproduced oil, which was then allocated to dead wells. Bribery was common, conflict of interest even among the state conservation officers. Some state officials didn't come out to check gauges or make safety inspections.

Dome Foreman: "Steel God," who had a lot of power. Was in charge of the entire field. These were rough people.

On the Job Training: With a high school education, he had to teach himself to handle the mathematics, learned calculus and slide rule techniques from an engineer. He was assigned to accounting jobs but had to learn on the job.

Caillou Island: Was the largest producing field in the United States for awhile, was overproducing its legal allocations. Eventually it ran dry.

John Bookout

Houston, TX

July 16, 1998, September 24 and October 1, 1998, December 18, 1998

Interviewed by: Tom Stewart

University of Houston/History International

SOC003, SOC004, SOC005

#### Ethnographic Preface:

John Bookout had a tremendously successful career with Shell Oil Company. After serving in World War II as a B-17 pilot he attended the University of Texas earning a B.S. and a M.S. in Geology. He began working for Shell in 1950. He became District Geologist in Amarillo in 1954 and stayed in that position until 1958. That year he was promoted to Division Geologist for Wichita Falls, TX. He also worked as Exploration Manager for New Orleans in 1965, in Economics Department for E&P, and as exploration manager and VP Denver. He became president of Shell Oil Company from 1976-1988.

#### Summary of SOC003:

The interview covers Bookout's background extensively including discussion of his experiences in World War II. Great information on his time in Amarillo as District Geologist with a commentary on his experience with the Dalhart Basin. More discussion of some of his various experiences throughout the early part of his career in Texas, New Orleans, Denver, and The Hague. Interesting information on the Corporate Culture of Shell or, the "Shell Family." Comments on the relationship Shell Oil had with the Group.

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Summary of SOC004:

This interview has extensive discussion on bright spots and their implementation. Commentary on the New Orleans office and other aspects of his tenure with E&P. E&P reflections included Shell Canada and international efforts. Discussion on Shell's success in the Gulf of Mexico with an emphasis on technological evolution and research. Talk about the move to deep water. Candid discussion about his preparation for presidency. Showdown regarding Chemical production vs. refining.

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Summary of SOC005:

Interview covered more information on move to international. More on the role of technology and secondary recovery. He ties much of this to the Belridge acquisition. Extensive commentary on the debate to diversify the company. Excellent anecdote on the Carter years and public criticism during his API years. He contrasts API's position to Shell's. He also discussed regulation as it pertained to the environment and safety. Interview ends with a long commentary on Shell strategic planning leading up to, during, and after the downturn of the mid 80s.

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Moye Boudreaux

Houma, LA

October 2, 2001, January 15, 2002, January 15, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin, Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

DA014, DA023, AG050p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Moye Boudreaux at the ecology festival hosted by the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary Foundation in Thibodaux. She was sitting near our booth resting when she realized that we were doing a history study. She and her daughter came over and talked about their experiences in the oil and gas industry. Moye had sent a message to the email address we set up for the project. We exchanged cards and agreed to meet the following week. Moye was very happy to set up a time to get together, and we met at the Terrebonne Council on Aging, where she is helping the organization set up new offices, partially furnished by Exxon.

Moye was born in 1939 in Palestine, Texas and first arrived in Louisiana as a young girl when her father took a job in a newly developed oilfield operated by Tidewater Oil Company in Venice, Louisiana. Moye grew up in Venice, moved with her family to Houma for a few years as a young teenager, and then returned to Venice to finish high school. Moye began working in the oil and gas industry right out of school and worked for Exxon until her retirement in 1994. Among her other activities, Moye was president of the Desk and Derrick Club, a women's club organized in New Orleans in 1949 to help educate women employees about the oil and gas industry.

#### Summary of DA014:

Early history: Moye Penney Douglas Boudreaux; father from Cayuga, Texas, mother from Kesse, Texas; father worked as roustabout in Cayuga 1939-1942; Buck Smotherman first to go to Venice, wrote back looking for people experienced in the east Texas oilfields; opportunities for advancement; hard to find housing; some citrus growers built small houses to rent; Moye and her Mother took the train in June 1942; no road to oilfields; men would go to work by boat; dredged road out of canal; rigs on barges; built dock; Rowan Drilling Company; in Texas workers had company cars, in Venice had company boats; boats bigger and better with each promotion; roustabouts and pumpers worked shifts; supervisors worked 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Arrival in Venice: moved into apartment; orange orchards everywhere; economy was oranges and fishing; people started digging canals to build up the land and build houses; no pipelines, everything barged; company built camp on Tigris Pass; Exxon had a camp on Southeast Pass; drilling contractor had bigger house; contractors lived in boarding houses and bunkhouse; about 100 families by 1950s; contract workers worked 24/12 or 12/24, no 7/7 till started offshore.

Father's work: started as roustabout, worked up to field foreman in 7-8 years; (showed photos and named guys); had 8th grade education because that was all that was available.

Life in camps: houses in small clusters, women like sisters, dependent on each other; clam shell roads; paved only at Freeport Sulphur and Buras; twice a year to Gretna for shopping; showed movies in the bar rooms before theaters; oil companies built recreation halls in late 1940s; Humble (Exxon) camp near Port Sulphur; Gulf Oil camp at Triumph; Texas Company camp further down; then California Company (Chevron) camp; then Tidewater camp; Buras grew and became largest community, had high school; had Catholic churches; opened Baptist churches, one Methodist church.

Post-WWII: height of activity in late 1940s, 1950s; offshore starting and Venice became jump-off point; "The Jump" - where oil companies built their transportation bases; oil industry staffed when relatives would tell others to come down for jobs.

Social life: Catholics and Protestants separated; children played together, loosened up by high school; problems between blacks and whites exacerbated by Perez family; Texans were such outsiders; natives lived in cabins in the marsh; came to school in boats from across the river; probably more locals than outsiders, but they were not consolidated, no one ever spoke; lots did not go to school; no local teachers, mostly spouses of oilfield workers; by 1950s one of the richest parishes, people of the parish did not see any of it; Leander Perez and his family got everything; offshore bases on public land; some problems with police.

Knowledge of political activity: segregation put spotlight on parish, political climate improved a bit; activity hushed, heard about people being murdered; prostitution became rampant; lots of alcohol and alcoholism; don't remember any hard drugs.

Move to Houma: way behind in school; heard Houma was unfriendly in 1940s, early 1950s, but when Moyer moved there in 1955 she joined the church and had lots of friends.

Return to Buras: drilling wells out a Bastian Bay, south of the sulfur mines; never had a blowout; learned about the industry by going with dad, listening to him talk; then joined Desk and Derrick Club.

Desk and Derrick Club: started in 1949 in New Orleans by group of women who wanted to learn more about the oil industry; women had worked in WWII and become career oriented; mostly secretaries, but many retired as company owners and comptrollers; Linda Bratlee was oilfield scout; about 60 clubs and 10,000-12,000 members at height; cooperated with UT Petroleum Extension Service to make textbook on the fundamentals of petroleum; produced the Oil and Gas Abbreviator; early days only let in members who worked in oil and gas; had monthly guest speakers, field trips; became prestigious organization; Moyer president of New Orleans Club in 1978 (has scrapbook); articles in Oil and Gas Journal; association office in Tulsa, Oklahoma; Red Adair, Boots 'N Coots would love to come to talk to the group; had own little oil show at convention.

Relationship with diver: Frenchie (Tilman Collins), young man from Golden Meadow who lived at Venice; eloped with 15 year-old girl, started Taylor Diving; had learned skills in the Navy; later dated Moye; went to Diving Association shows, people missing limbs and eyes; company bought by Brown and Root in 1960's.

#### Summary of DA023:

Work History: This interview is mainly about Moye's employment history with information about each company. She graduated high school in 1957 and got married. She got a job at Ellzey Marine Supply supplying mainly diesel fuel for offshore rigs and boats. She then moved to Houma when her husband got a job with Getty Oil Company. During this time, she got a job at Superior Services, a service company, as an office manager. She was on 24-hour call there all the time. She then went to work for Houma Filter Services in Shreveport, then returned to the New Orleans area and worked at Bunge Grain Elevator as an office manager. She was finally able to get a job with Exxon as an office clerk and moved up the ranks until her retirement.

Exxon: During her years at Exxon, Moye got involved in many projects that were aimed at improving working conditions, from getting telephones to the men in the field to establishing drug and alcohol policies. She challenged herself to move beyond the traditional roles of a female clerk, helping write contracts and policies. She discusses lawsuits, safety, insurance, and industry standards. She also talks about working with contractors and the need to avoid any appearance of accepting gifts from them.

#### Summary of AG050p:

1. The Exxon company office, near Cameron at Pecan Island, people would meet get their assignments, have a safety meeting and go to work.
2. Moye went on offshore field trips as a secretary, and the engineers and other people talked her into arranging one for them.
3. Engineers and Desk & Derrick members riding a cargo net onto the Rig.
4. Moye during a tour of an offshore Exxon Rig, 1994
5. Engineers and office staff visiting an offshore platform in the 1970's.
6. Moye and the Desk and Derrick Club going on an offshore visit to one of the production platforms
7. Local Desk and Derrick members-- the women who joined the club were ambitious achievers willing to learn more about the oil business.
8. The vice president of British Petroleum North addressing the Desk and Derrick, at the time that the North Sea was being developed.
9. A Desk and Derrick field trip offshore to Bluewater 4, 30 years old first semi-submersible, in Port Arthur, Texas, for Santa Fe Drilling.

Bob Bougeois

Lafayette, LA

August 9, 2002

Interviewed by: David DiTucci, Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

DD009

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Bob Bougeois was born in Raceland, LA in 1934; he had four brothers. He studied physical education at Nicholls College before being drafted into the military, where he served in Europe for two years. He hired on with Continental Emsco during the summer of 1959 as a truck driver; he worked there for 12 years in sales, moving from Houma, to Venice, to Morgan City, to Lake Charles. In 1971, he went to work for Precision Instrument Company; he was transferred to Lafayette in 1975. Eight years later, he went to work for Gemoco, a division of Weatherford; he retired with them in April 2002. He describes what sales were like in the late 1950s and 1960s and discusses ethically suspect sales practices.

#### Summary:

Early life and education: born and raised in Raceland, LA; studied physical education at Nicholls Junior College and Southwestern Louisiana Institute (did not get a bachelor's degree); drafted into the military in 1956 and spent two years in Germany. No one in his family was really involved in the oil and gas industry. When he returned from the service, he reenrolled in Nicholls (now a four year college).

Start of career: got a summer job with Continental Emsco in 1959, which ended up lasting 12 years; he continued to go to school while working; started out as a truck driver, but went into sales.

Sales: in the late 50s and 60s, sales personnel would make calls on the rigs or platforms; these offshore calls would take all day to complete; helicopters sped up this process. Niceness of rigs' living quarters varied by drilling contractor; today's rigs are much nicer and used an incentive to attract workers.

Career: Emsco: while working for Emsco lived in Houma, Venice, Houma, Morgan City, and Lake Charles; Emsco manufactured equipment and acted as a distributor for other manufacturers; also provided financing for new drilling rigs with certain conditions. Left Emsco in 1971 to work for Precision Instrument Company, where he could make more money and advance himself.

Business: trend in industry towards mergers and buyouts, squeezes out the little guys; increasing emphasis on the bottom line ("bean counters"); people have to change along with the industry changes or will be left behind.

Career - Precision Instrument and Gemoco: were more specialized in their products than Emsco; he only dealt with the production side of the industry (not drilling); started in Houma, but moved to Lafayette in 1975. In 1983 he went to work for Weatherford Gemoco because it offered more job security; in the last few years of his career, he left the oil and gas end of the work and worked more with the industrial end; valves; retired in 2002 because of health concerns.

Wining and dining: lavishly entertaining customers to entice business; usually involved individuals in the upper echelons, he was never involved in it; practice dried up with the 80s bust and today there are more restrictions; he would take people out to lunch or dinner to thank them for their business. Rental tool companies made a lot of profit and were known to do this. Area restaurants (and other businesses) benefited from this practice. He was glad to see the practice end. Governmental politics and corruption.

Major oil companies: pooling resources for deep water projects; lots of overhead and concern with profitability; smaller, independent companies taking over smaller revenue projects; fears of running out of oil and gas are ploys to jack up prices.

Minorities: early on in his career, he did not see minorities in the industry; as long as the individual was qualified to do what he or she was doing, the color of his or her skin did not bother him; today minorities are well accepted in the industry.

Wages: before working in oil industry, had done odd jobs; attracted to oil industry by people working in it and the good wages. When started working for Emsco, did not matter how many hours you actually worked, were paid the same wage each month; could not complain because had a line of people ready to take his job.

Effect on Louisiana: positively, oil and gas industry brought in money and gave people jobs; negatively, it did damage to the environment; hopes it has done more good than harm.

Moving: wife was a school teacher, so when they moved she had to quit her job; left final decisions of whether to move to his wife; son was reserved, so moves somewhat hard on him; delayed family's move to Lake Charles so his son could finish first grade; used social networks to support integration into new communities; moving around is tough.

Louisiana politics: state is mineral rich, but poor due to bad management.

George Bourg

Montegut, LA

February 5, 2003

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS014

#### Ethnographic Preface:

George Bourg was recommended by Ed Henry, who had contacted him and explained the study. He was another of the Montegut Texaco hands, well acquainted with the others from there whom I had interviewed. We had a little trouble scheduling an appointment because his wife was ill, but eventually I was able to go to his house and talk. We had limited time because he had to take his wife to the doctor.

George Bourg grew up in Montegut. He dropped out of high school at 16 and began work with Texaco as a cook's helper. In 1943, when he reached 18, he went into the service. After studying gunnery for B-17s, he was shifted to the infantry, joining the 101st Airborne as a replacement just after the Battle of the Bulge. He returned in 1946 and returned to work for Texaco in the warehouse and office of the shipyard below Montegut. He didn't care for the 5 and 2 work, so he shifted back to cook's helper, then second cook on a 6 and 6 schedule. In 1949 he began work as a roughneck on the drilling barge, Shea. From there he moved up through derrickman to driller in 1966 and toolpusher in 1970. As a toolpusher, he worked in the Houma, Harvey, and New Iberia Districts in Louisiana, then in Alabama, Florida, and Mississippi. He returned to the Harvey District and retired in 1982 as field superintendent of the Lafitte field.

#### Summary:

Money: Started at \$.54 per hour to \$1800 per month.

Offshore Work: Most of his work was inshore. Rabbit Island was the furthest offshore he worked, in about 30-40 feet of water. He wouldn't ride the helicopter to go offshore. The Mallard plane was ok to ride, but he didn't like helicopters.

Barge Work: He liked it. Some barges had sleeping quarters, but they often had to go to camps.

Family: When he worked derrick, he worked nights, and when he went home he had trouble shifting to sleeping at night, then had to switch back on the next shift. At first, all they had was radio, and were contacted only for emergencies. If nothin' went wrong, well, you was on your own and your family was on their own." At one time, he had a son in the hospital and the worry was rough. Once he had to "double over" - stay out for another shift, so he had to come in in the morning, go to the hospital to see his son, then catch the 2:00 boat to go back out.

Drilling: The barges were always facing north. They would spud in with a 16 inch bit and drill a conductor hole. After they set casing they would start drilling about a 12 inch hole, and set

casing pipe to about 1800-3000 feet. Then they would shift to a smaller bit, and go to about 15,000 feet. Typically they would use a 9 7/8 drill bit, with a 4 or 5.5 inch drill pipe. Hard formations were drilled with diamond bits. Most formations in southern Louisiana were soft. They wanted to "drill as much hole" as possible, competing with other drillers. Often he would set up one pump on salt water and one pump on the mud pit to drill.

Drilling in Salt: Used "black magic" mud, which was diesel oil based. Regular drilling mud was water based, and it would melt the salt and create large cavities. The mud weight also had to be maintained, kept heavy enough so it wouldn't blow out when they hit a gas pocket. Derrickman had to work both the "monkey board" 90 feet above the floor and maintain the mud mixture.

Finding "X": In school he never was able to "find X" in algebra, but he did when he needed to on the rigs. They had to figure out how long it would take to circulate the mud from bottom, how much the tubing and drill pipe would hold. If they hit a gas pocket, they would have to figure out how much weight they needed to hold it. All of that took a lot of algebra. He finished high school in 1966, and was immediately promoted to driller. He would not have been promoted to driller without the diploma.

Toolpusher: At first, he didn't want the job. As a driller working 7 and 7, he would work on the rig for 12 hours then go to the camp and rest. Toolpushers stayed on the rigs, often with no rest for 36 hours. He asked to have his drilling job back because he was making less money for more work as toolpusher. He was kept at toolpusher but given a raise to bring his salary up. Toolpushers were on call 24 hours per day.

Change from Steam to Diesel Power: Worked on the drilling barge, Shea, which was a steam rig. Later went to the Gibbons, which was a diesel power rig. He "didn't really care to go to the power rig" because there were so many differences. Steam pumps were easier to take apart and repair, and fairly safe if they were careful. Steam lines were all wrapped with asbestos, but he didn't see any ill effects.

First Day on the Job: "Your first day of roughnecking you were as green as grass. You don't know what to grab or what not to grab." No prior training beforehand. There were no power tongs, so they had to make the line up by hand. "I got whipped quite a few times by the end of that chain." The people that were already there showed the new roughnecks what to do.

Co-workers: Some of the drillers were hard to work for. When he was toolpusher he told a schoolteacher working on a summer job, "The only thing I ask of anyone ever workin' for me is 12 hours of work, just like anybody else." There were only three men on the drilling floor, and if one didn't pull his weight it was rough on the other two. Regular crews tended to stay together. "Extra board" -- people who were not part of a regular crew. Blacks wanted to be treated differently - "They wanted to catch the second boat and get paid from the first...they always had female trouble, they had trouble at home or trouble with their car. But that's in the past. He retired partly because of that.

Blowouts: One in Houma District. There was high pressure in the well and had to bring up mud weight. One near Pointe-aux-Chenes almost blew but they were able to keep the mud weight

high enough to prevent it. Most of the time, they could just drill through the gas pocket and it would seal itself. He was never on a bad one; his were caught in time. "If you see where you're gainin' mud in that pit, in that mud pit, that's time to do somethin'"

Monkeyboard: Where the derrick man stands to catch the pipe as it comes out of the hole, about 90 feet above the floor. From the monkeyboard the derrick man catches the pipe and racks it.

Mud: Mud is used to lubricate the bit as it cuts, remove cuttings, and hold the weight on the drilling column to prevent blowouts in gas strata. Mud mixture requires the right chemical mix and weight. Ingredients include caustic soda, Quebracho, lime. Pumped out of the hole into a shale shaker to remove cuttings, then recirculated back into the hole. They used to pump the mud and cuttings overboard but now the environmental regulation require them to keep them. Black magic especially had to be stored on the barges.

Texaco: "It was a good company to work for. But things have changed through the years. it wasn't the company that I started working for."

Family in Oil: Son who started with Texaco, worked up to toolpusher and was laid off. He is working for Denbury now, "he more or less runs the company." The son with the childhood heart trouble is an engineer, working for Rowan International. Another son works in Indonesia for McDermott. "At one time most of the people from down here were Texaco employees because of the warehouse. For years. But right now they're just movin' out. They're movin' out of Montegut because of the high water and what have you comin' down here. They're movin' towards Bourg and Houma."

Montegut Community: Roland Belanger moved in first. Then George in 1947. Ed Henry. Richard Redman went overseas and made quite a bit of money. Then some neighbors who died, leaving George as the oldest in the neighborhood. George has never moved for storms, even when a tornado touched down next door. They are on a higher ridge. He also operated a bakery in town for awhile.

Storms: Caught in camp at Caillou Island. "I don't believe the superintendent was letting anybody else stay out there that long after the wives got all over 'em." That storm was too rough to come in by boat.

Ray Boykin

Bayou Vista, LA

June 28, 2001

Interviewed by: Rylan Higgins

University of Arizona

RH003

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I had Ray's name on a list from the last time I was in town. My notes did not indicate what he had done, but only that he was involved very early in the history of offshore oil. I called him for the first time on Tuesday (6-26-01), and after I talked briefly with his wife, Ray and I chatted for about twenty minutes. He told me about some other jobs he had had and about his recent marriage. I told him more about the nature of the project. He was interested, if not excited, about the prospect of doing an interview. He told me to come by any time later in the week; he and his wife were going to be gone for the next couple of days. Ray and his wife live just a couple hundred feet from the bayou, near the high school in Bayou Vista. Ray and I sat on the screened porch, and his wife brought us each a soda and told us she would leave us to talk. Ray moved slowly but looked happy to be sitting and talking about his life. Even so, he did not know where to start at first. So, I asked him to tell me how he got started in oil.

Ray Boykin began working for Halliburton shortly after he was discharged from the Army in 1946. He worked for Halliburton's inland operations initially. He was based at first in Harvey, then Lake Charles and finally in Lafayette. While in Lafayette, he got the orders to switch to the company's offshore division. This change took place in 1948. After working in the local offshore division for only 8 months, Ray was sent to Venezuela for four years. He then returned to the states and was based in Morgan City, getting in on the "ground floor," for the next several years. In 1969, Ray was promoted to supervisor.

#### Summary:

Early adulthood: Ray quit school when he was 13 and worked odd jobs until he joined the US Army in 1943. He trained in Florida and served in World War II as a truck driver. He was discharged from the Army in 1946, and went to work for Halliburton shortly after.

Sent offshore: He worked for Halliburton's inland operations initially. He was based at first in Harvey, then Lake Charles and finally in Lafayette. While in Lafayette, he got the orders to switch to the company's offshore division. This change took place in 1948.

Marriage: Ray got married to Ellis Comeaux the same year he started working offshore.

Overseas: After working in the local offshore division for only 8 months, Ray was sent to Venezuela for 4 years. Though he missed being away from his wife, he talked with fondness about the years he worked in Venezuela. He returned to the States and was based in Morgan City for the next several years.

First offshore job: Ray's first offshore job was for Magnolia. He talked for a few minutes about that first trip. He described the old wooden boat they used and how much fuel it consumed.

Co-worker saved his life: Ray tells a story about a co-workers name C.J. Trahan.

Working conditions: Ray talked about the scheduling and other aspects of working offshore. These comments were about his career generally, but he also talked specifically about the difficulties of working for Halliburton in Venezuela. He was working in the jungle and described how there was no communication and how sometimes relief would come several days late.

Promotion: In 1969, Ray was promoted to supervisor. He was given a position that put him in charge of boats and boat crews. During this time, he got to know a few of the teams that were fighting oil fires. He mentioned that he got to know Red Adair.

Morgan City office: Ray got in on the "ground floor," when he came to work at the Morgan City office. He talked about what the Morgan City office was like when it first started back in 1953.

Tender barges: Ray explained that back in the 1950s, the use of tender barges was very common. The drilling rig was then only one component of many needed to drill and complete an oil well on the platform itself. All of Halliburton's equipment was stored and operated on tender barges.

Mr. Charlie: Ray is very familiar with the Mr. Charlie Rig Museum, because he did many jobs on the rig when it was still active. Halliburton's equipment was located in the low barge (the submerged portion) of Mr. Charlie.

Changes: Ray talked about some the changes that he noticed taking place in the industry during these early years. In the late 1950s, according to Ray, the most significant or noticeable changes were to the drilling rigs. He remembers that the first jack-up rig was used by Humble Oil in 1955 or 1956.

Watching the industry grow: I asked Ray what it meant to him to be one of the pioneers in the industry. He answered simply that it had been rewarding to watch the industry grow and change and to know that he was a part of it.

Jim Bradshaw

Lafayette, LA

May 7, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW050

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Jim Bradshaw is originally from Lake Charles, LA and moved to Lafayette in 1964. His father worked for Union Oil and Gas. He graduated from the University of Southwestern Louisiana with a Bachelor's in English and Journalism. Since then, he has worked in media and is currently employed by the Lafayette Daily Advertiser. In the interview, he talks about the changes that the oil industry brought to Lafayette, including economic, cultural, religious, and commercial changes.

#### Summary:

Early life: originally from Lake Charles, LA, moved to Lafayette in 1964. Grandfather an avid newspaper reader, who wrote many letters to the editor; he and his grandfather published family newspaper, the Bradshaw Bugle, sold it for a dime.

Education: majored in English and Journalism, minored in History at University of Southwestern Louisiana.

Employment: Left Louisiana for New York, worked for Harry Reesner, but decided didn't want to live in NY. Worked for Dioceses of Lafayette, Director of Communications; ran newspaper and worked in media section. Currently works for Lafayette Daily Advertiser; personal experiences of researching the local region's history.

Expansion of Lafayette: Promenade mall, expansion of Johnson Street, and building of the Oil Center; these additions to the city added to decline of downtown area; attributes rise in population to development to prefabricated homes; no uniform planning codes resulted in many growing pains.

Oil Industry and economic development: at height of oil boom, life was extremely good; oil industry created population bases that led to greater economic development; created an infrastructure, reinforced Lafayette as hub between New Orleans and Houston; responsible for bringing medical and educational industries, but forced many local businesses to go out of production and caused a consolidation of enterprises in Lafayette away from small towns. In 1950s, the high-rise Pioneer building in downtown Lake Charles was built as hub of an oil center about the same time as Mr. Heymann built Oil Center in Lafayette; reason it ended up here was Lafayette's cultural uniqueness.

Negative impact of oil industry: Lafayette relied heavily on oil industry, did not develop other industries and resources; suffered from over-inflated real estate prices.

Cultural conflict: always friction with the new people and the locals, in particular Baptists and Texans; other denominations became more powerful in community such as Episcopalians, Baptists and Methodists. Conflict between people populating North Lafayette (old section with the more local residents of town) and South section (newer, more commercial section of town).

Oil and Politics: before oil industry took off in Lafayette, there were no registered Republicans there; the rise of the Republican Party forever altered the political dynamics; local, state, and national politics are very complex and people do not abide to one particular party for all three levels of politics. Impact of the oil industry on Lafayette was that the town became more conservative; noted a concurrent rise in the law industry with rise of the oil industry.

Lafayette Metro Airport: rise of oil boom resulted in expansion of the executive jet business; Petroleum Helicopters Inc. used airport, resulting in increased landing fees and expanded runways. Other major airlines did not want to move here because too many people owned their own planes.

Oil Industry and Lafayette: Lafayette better off from petroleum industry; caused "Americanization" of the area with the influx of people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds. Many oilmen decided to stay when oil industry retreated to Houston. It caused an incredible spurt of economic and population growth, but also brought problems with infrastructure; oil industry changed the political, religious and educational dynamics; brought Lafayette international recognition. At one time, Lafayette was producing the highest patents per capita because of the oil industry.

Lee Brasted

Houston, TX

December 19, 1997

Interviewed by: Bruce Beauboeuf, Joseph Pratt

University of Houston/History International

SOC006

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Lee Brasted got his B.S. in Civil Engineering from Bucknell University in 1964. He joined Shell in 1965 and soon began to work on developing offshore structures for the company. He worked on such projects as Cognac, Bullwinkle and numerous other offshore structures. In 1987, Shell made him Floating Systems General Manager. He retired in 1996.

#### Summary:

Interview covers various platforms and their design. Extended discussion on the evolution of platform technology including an emphasis on computers and undersea hammers. Useful information on TLPs as most of the interview discusses that technology.

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Minos Breaux

New Iberia, LA

April 12, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG001

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Minos Breaux was recommended to me by Father Fred Reynolds, a friend of Barbara Davis with whom I had a long discussion upon my arrival in New Iberia. He's a very nice man and is willing to meet with us again anytime.

Minos was born on Jefferson Island and spent his teenage years working in the salt mines before serving in WWII. He continued working in the salt mines upon his return and then began building sugar mills, an occupation he maintained to the present. In the late 1960s, Minos began working in the oilfield in a variety of capacities. He started as a pipefitter, and his longest stint was as a supervisor in a fabrication yard. Most of his work consisted of engineering and construction, the very skills he used in building the various sugar mills over the years.

#### Summary:

General work history: worked in the salt mines on Jefferson Island. There were also some sulphur mines around at the time. Minos provides a description of both.

History of the oilfield: Minos describes the general history of the oilfield, and we end up talking about the Texaco Weeks Island mishap for a while as well. Minos provides a description of his own job history in the oilfield. We talk a little bit about the successes and failures of the union initiative in the region.

WWII: Minos recalls his service in WWII, the places he served, etc.

Family and Community History: Minos describes the history of his own family, the traditional livelihoods commonly found in the region, and some of the early oil activity in the New Iberia region. He also describes the history and growth of the port of Iberia.

Oilfield Job history and labor: we talk more about his own work history in the oilfield, as well as the changes in the labor pool that he commanded.

Boom and Bust: we talk about the boom in the economy, the impact that boom had on New Iberia, and his work as a superintendent during much of that period. After the run, he made his way back to the sugar industry and built many of the sugar plants both here and abroad. There's a long story here about a particular construction project.

Jefferson Island: Minos talks more about growing up on Jefferson Island, the drilling rigs in his backyard, and some more about the early oil industry. He also gives me some other contacts.

Generational Change and the Labor Pool: Minos talks about the changes in the labor pool he experienced while working as a superintendent. Training was always an important issue in the oil industry. He notes that the Mexicans and Vietnamese are fine workers - he never had any problems with them.

Future of the Industry: Monopolies and other structural issues are the biggest hurdles facing the oil industry. Entrepreneurship and personal contacts don't mean as much anymore.

Numa Breaux

Larose, LA

October 3, 2001, July 21, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA016, DA108p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Numa Breaux was referred to me by Katherine Richardelle. He was a bit uncertain about participating in the study because he worked only onshore. When I told him we were interested in the transition from onshore to offshore and therefore needed to learn more about how things worked onshore, he warmed right up and began telling his story. After the interview, when I was asked to stay for lunch, Numa's wife began pulling out albums and talking about their children. Their son, Davey, works for the Port Commission at Fourchon.

Numa's daddy was a cattleman, and he was born on Delta Farm. He is the youngest of 14 children and the only one in his family to go into the oil and gas industry. He worked for two years at a paper mill, making \$1.75 an hour, and then moved to Texaco because they were paying \$2.50 an hour at the time. His father-in-law worked for Texaco, so Numa went to work there in 1957 and stayed there for 36 years until he retired in January 1993. When he began, it had been 10 years since the workers had seen a new face. As the new kid on the block working with lots of older men, only one of whom could speak English, Numa helped out those who could not read and was taught a lot by them. He began as a roughneck, became a gauger in 1968, a gas lift specialist in 1970, a gang pusher in 1980, and an assistant production foreman in 1990.

#### Summary of DA016:

Early years with Texaco: started carrying pipe on his back in the marsh; "I was young, so I could do it;" worked up to a better job as a gauging specialist in production and ended as a foreman in Paradis, LA; worked on the bayous 12 hours a day; started at 5-and-2, then 6-and-6, then 7-and-7; working for large company meant he kept his job; lots of people got hurt, always in a hurry; when started they used steam rigs, had to lay pipeline for gas; one big landowner, and Texaco had mineral and surface rights.

First day on the job: hot, wasn't used to heavy lifting and hard work; "I had to show that I could do it;" got the job by applying at the Houma office, father-in-law had been on the job, worked 42 years with Texaco.

Moving up: learned by going along with the person who already was trained; filled in for him on vacations to learn more; gauger had to make sure well did not go over its allowable production.

Handling oil and gas: had treatment facility at the tank battery to separate the gas and water from the oil; pump oil in pipeline to GM and then to Port Arthur refinery and to Convent, LA refinery;

would burn gas because no use for it; would dispose of water overboard; would report to supervisor who would report to the main office in Houma.

Gang pusher: back to making lines; working around the lake; all workers under him worked for Texaco; would use contractors when couldn't keep up; other companies had their own pushers; hard to get good contract labor so tried to use our own; no women on my crew, one on the other crew with him; didn't work out too well, no facilities for women; always came back to sleep at home, get up at 4 a.m., drive to boat, get on boat at 6 a.m., work till 6 p.m. and then come home; worked 28 years out of Leeville, 6 in Golden Meadow, 2 in Paradis; Leeville had 350-400 wells, Golden Meadow had around 300 wells.

Biggest change: environment and salt water intrusion; it came in gradually, but now it's coming quicker and quicker; no one anticipated the change, everyone thought this would last forever; people looked at it as a job, money coming in; companies came in, got what they wanted, and moved on; started talking about it 25-30 years ago but nothing changed, just talk.

Workers: after the war, lots of guys hired on with no education, couldn't advance; major companies had no problems finding labor, contractors did; job with major company was a job for life; was offered an incentive package at 57, took it, lot of guys left; it got worse after I left; bust did not have much affect on company personnel; do not remember any incentives before being offered my raise.

Family: mother raised 14 kids during the depression; no money but survived; daddy would trap in the winter, do cattle the rest of the time; oldest brother 86 years old still hunts, traps, hunts alligators; never worked offshore because had a family, harder to stay inshore because of commuting back and forth, but was raising his kids; could have made more money offshore, but that was not the most important thing; 4 children; oldest son went to work for Texaco but was seriously injured in a motorcycle accident and could not go back; youngest son is an assistant at Port Fourchon.

Pollution: in the early days put oil overboard; it wasn't a big deal at that time; things got stricter and stricter; Texaco always operated with old equipment, slow in modernizing; had to keep a tight ship; people were aware of problems with dumping the water - saltwater - but it was done and nobody would pay attention to it; changed in the 1970's.

Regulations: OSHA came out with a lot of regulations; had to put chain and lock on wells if there was a leak, required lots of travel to and from well and pipeline on old luggers; problem for supervisors because subject to losing job; as supervisor had to report to the Houma office every morning, they would report to the New Orleans office.

Early workers: workers were mostly outsiders; local people did not have the experience; for good jobs the outsiders would bring in their relatives or friends from Northern Louisiana, Texas, Oklahoma; it was rough and there were a lot of fights; the rig crews would get off work and stop at the bars and fight; it was their way of life, they had that macho idea; would stay at hotels, motels, boarding houses, rent rooms; anyone from somewhere else was a Texian; locals only mixed with them at the dance hall and saloon; things changed slowly.

Other issues with workers: few blacks in southern Louisiana, not many in the oilfield; the ones from down the bayou had moved to cities; in the last few years I was working they had a couple of blacks from Houma, no problems.

Accidents: on drilling rigs people wanted to see who could do things the fastest; lots of high pressure lines; caught in a blowout with 900 pounds on the line, thrown 30 feet; hard to protect equipment in saltwater, high pressure gas would rupture lines; rigs moving at night crossing pipelines would break the lines.

Barges: Texaco did not use swamp buggies, men hauled the pipe and used a barge with cable and blocks that they pushed through the marsh.

Numa had no stories about hurricanes but did tell about a few pranks that he engineered.

Summary of DA108p:

- Photo 1: Numa Breaux taking a break for lunch
- 2: Numa Breaux climbing ladder to check controls on heater treater
- 3: Loading pipe on an old lugger in Leeville
- 4: Drill boat for pumper or gauger

Bill Broman

Houston, TX

December 15, 1999

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International  
SOC008

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Bill Broman got his B.S. and M.S. from Michigan Technological University. He joined Shell Development Company in 1953 working mainly in the Houston E&P area. He began working as a geophysicist in 1959 and became Senior Geophysicist in 1965. He continued to serve in various capacities including Acting Director of Exploration Research. He then transferred to Shell Oil in 1969 becoming Division Exploration for the Onshore Divisions, Southeastern E&P Regions. Shell Oil made him manager of Geophysical Operations in 1973, and in 1977 he became Division Exploration Manager, Offshore Division for the Southern E&P Division. In 1980 he became General Manager, Rocky Mountain Division for Western E&P operations. In 1983 he was named General Manager for Exploration for Shell Offshore. He retired in 1990.

#### Summary:

This interview dealt mainly with seismic processing technology. Comments on the early development of seismic including stacking. The evolution of digital and various computer programs. Good information on the discovery and implementation of bright spots and the use of 3-D technology toward deep water.

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Ron Brooks

Houma, LA

April 2, 2003

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS021

#### Ethnographic Preface:

A number of people said I should talk to Ron Brooks at Patterson Real Estate. While he has been living continuously in Houma since 1978, he was president of a major real estate firm and known as a collector of economic information about the community. I called him and told him I was interested in his perspective of the role of oil in community development, and he said he could spare an hour. As we talked, he continued for almost two hours, although some of this was informal discussion, not on tape. He offered information about his business, but also about the experiences of a Protestant newcomer from northern Louisiana.

Ron Brooks first came to Houma as a pharmaceutical representative for Eli Lilly in 1967, but he didn't stay. He was transferred to Baton Rouge in 1970, then to New Orleans in 1973. In 1978 he returned to Houma to stay, working as a real estate broker. He is now president of Patterson Real Estate, a well established, full service real estate company.

#### Summary:

**Oil Businesses in Houma:** Historically, Houma has acted as a regional headquarters. The major oil companies in Houma were Texaco, Exxon, and Gulf. These companies all had middle managers in Houma. Gulf was the first to move out in 1979; the others followed later. Presently, Halliburton, with about 850 employees in the area, is considering leaving.

**Economic Base:** About 16-20% of Houma's jobs are directly related to the oil and gas industry. Much of that is fabrication, pipeline, and oil service. The land and inshore fields are mostly pumping gas. The major features of Houma's current economic base are oil, medical, and regional retail services. Houma has had a regional mall since the early 1970s.

**Useful Oil Service Companies to Investigate:** Bilco Tools and Billy Coyle, Sr. as a major inventor. HWC fire suppression. K and B Machine Shop, one of the best of a number of talented machinists in the area.

**Newcomers to Houma:** As a person from northern Louisiana, Ron Brooks was a Baptist in a largely Catholic area. He had to help establish a Baptist church in Houma. One parishioner, Polly Martin, has written a history of the church, "Sunshine on the Bayou."

**Qualities of Place:** People tend to stay put. Kerry Chauvin of Gulf Island Fabrication grew up in Houma, keeps his business here, even though his market is global.

James "Cecil" Broussard

New Iberia, LA

October 2002, December 12, 2002

Interviewed by: Norma Cormier, Diane Austin

University of Arizona

NC001, DA079p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I (Norma) met Mr. Broussard through a couple I had previously interviewed. When I asked them if they would know someone who had worked in the oil business that would be at least 60 years old, they referred me to their neighbor. Mr. Broussard is 64 years old and had been retired since 1993. He retired from Otis after 29 years of service. He did an outstanding job for them and was honored with many letters of recommendation for his work. Three of these letters had been mounted and framed, and were presented to him at the time of his retirement. His extensive collection of pictures, as well as his extensive rock collection made him an extremely interesting person to interview. Diane returned in December to do a photo interview with Mr. Broussard.

Cecil Broussard was born in 1938 and began working in the oilfield with Louisiana Oil and Exploration in 1957. He went into the military in 1958. Four years later he returned to southern Louisiana and took a job with Loffland Brothers. In 1964, he began working for Otis, and he remained with that company until his retirement in 1993. He worked on snubbing units and spent 15 years working on-call 24 hours a day.

#### Summary:

##### Summary of NC001:

- 00 Began his employment with Louisiana Oil and Exploration, went into the Service, Loffland Brothers, eventually wound up with Otis - he is retired from them.
- 08 Significant changes he has noticed
- 14 Describes first job he went on - was not sure he wanted to stay - long hours
- 26 Input and feelings from Mrs. Broussard
- 37 Holidays no guaranteed time off
- 46 MMS safety regulations and how they have changed
- 62 Unions trying to get into companies - not always helpful
- 83 Worked on snubbing units - used cables and stakes in the ground - Near catastrophe that involved an injury.
- 114 Change in the oilfield procedures - no leaks - change to oil that is biodegradable-hydroglue \$7.00/gallon
- 133 Women in the oilfield - you had to watch what you said
- 141 Working with African Americans
- 173 Loyalty - company wants it, they don't always give it
- 185 Seniority did not mean a thing
- 186 Halliburton bought Otis in 1958, did not change name until 1993, layoffs

- 205 Worked 15 years, 24 hour call
- 225 Sacrificed to work long hours to make money
- 234 Many of the workers like 7 on and 7 off - mini vacation every other week
- 239 Changing schedule to reduce expenses - 14 on and 7 off
- 250 Shared some old pictures of past jobs
- 268 Picture of a job in a lake - snake on platform
- 285 Another description of a picture
- 300 What he would do differently today if he could go back
- 306 Shell Weeks Island picture
- 313 Picture of a job in Mexico
- 318 Picture of a platform burning (Mexico)
- 339 Another description of a picture of a job
- 348 Picture of Boots and Coots
- 366 Described picture of a damaged well
- 374 Described pictures of a job he did in California where they set up a rig inside a building
- 408 Described rules for drilling in California in 1973
- 420 Described work on a man-made island - park and trolley takes you out to a boat that takes you to the job
- 445 Good experiences and no regrets
- 460 Retirement party - presented him with large plaque of letters of recommendation he had received from satisfied customers

Summary of DA079p:

- 01: Hydraulic workover unit, Mr. Otis got his start in business, started with a mechanical snubbing unit, then built a hydraulic snubbing unit
- 02: Workover unit in the bottom of Lake Catahoula in Jena, LA
- 03: Spud barge Otis used for doing wireline work
- 04: Spud barge, crane used to pick up lubricator and wireline tools
- 05: Top of crane
- 06: Bottom of barge with crane
- 07: Going in basket, used crane to pick up men; not personnel basket
- 08: Hydraulic workover unit with drilling rig
- 09: Jackup barge designed for oilfield work
- 10: Jackup barge designed for oilfield work
- 11: Jackup barge designed for oilfield work
- 12: Preparing for hurricane, snubbing unit rigged on well
- 13: Well on platform in Mexico
- 14: Extended jack; jack down to force pipe into hole
- 15: 5 inch piece of drill pipe; well came in blew pipe out through derrick
- 16: Boots (of Boots and Coots)
- 17: Basket rigged with tarp to keep wind off men working
- 18: Platform with a drilling rig and a well, special case for engineer
- 19: Manifold of a high pressure well
- 20: Manifold of a high pressure well
- 21: Manifold of a high pressure well

- 22: Manifold of a high pressure well
- 23: Platform on fire
- 24: Platform on fire - fire coming out the sides
- 25: Platform after fire was out
- 26: Pipe plugged with cement
- 27: Pipe plugged with cement
- 28: Drilling rig and crane on jackup rig in Vermillion, after well caught on fire and caused collapse
- 29: Drilling rig and crane on jackup rig in Vermillion, after well caught on fire and caused collapse
- 30: Drilling rig and crane on jackup rig in Vermillion, after well caught on fire and caused collapse
- 31: Drilling rig and crane on jackup rig in Vermillion, after well caught on fire and caused collapse
- 32: Trying to pull wireline tool out
- 33: Diamond drill bit and core gun
- 34: Diamond drill bit and core gun (photo missing)
- 35: Mr. Cecil Broussard at work standing on ground, holding blowout preventer, Greenwood, LA
- 36: Mr. Cecil Broussard (right) in Alaska standing with boss, Rogers Romero

Sammy Broussard

New Iberia, LA

November 15, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA072

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Sammy Broussard, Jr. had participated in the 1998-1999 study of the impacts of the offshore oil and gas industry on individuals and families in New Iberia and Morgan City. I called and told him about the history study, and he agreed to participate. He was very pleasant and open and alternated talking about his father and his own history. He described struggling to keep the company going during the 80s and then the restructuring of the 90s. He attributes his company's continued existence to his Christian faith and commitment to operating according to Christian principles.

Sammy Broussard, Sr. established the owner/operator lease concept in oilfield trucking in the 1960s when he was a state senator. At the time he also owned a truck dealership and trucking company. Sammy, Jr., began working for the dealership in the late 1970s and then took over the trucking company in 1987. He brought the company through the rough times following the 1980's downturn and continues to operate Broussard Trucking.

#### Summary:

History of company: founded by dad in 1952; he had gone to Louisiana Public Service Commission in 1960s; company owned a fleet of trucks, but problems getting drivers who don't own the trucks to maintain them; grew up in the depression at Breaux Bridge; was senator from 1960-1968; thought you could make everybody his own boss by establishing lease concept; first blockade was LPSC; trucking was a regulated industry; rates, rules, and guidelines were set; was able to get the lease concept established in the early 1960s; one lease owner with company since 1963, retired at age 73; heard him tell truckers that he was presenting an opportunity to them to be their own boss; Mr. Larry Verret started with 1 ton truck; Mr. Earl King, Jr. bought truck from dad, leased to dad, went into business for himself in Morgan City; Mr. Larry Verret went out on his own to do interstate trucking, now back with us

Philosophy: Dad remembered where he came from; he knew he worked hard and felt the little man needed a break; at least a few have done well and been appreciative; others took advantage of him

Sammy Jr.'s history: was valedictorian, in Key Club, sports, etc.; history of doctors and dentists in mother's family; dad's family were farmers; dad didn't want me to be an attorney; could go to any school; leaned toward business; finished first in the College of Commerce; went back three times to graduate school, the last time employees said we'll quit if you leave; the economy was

good; I had what I wanted, was offered positions with Texaco, International Harvesters; dad said do whatever you want, but I have the business here; started selling trucks

Sammy Sr.'s history: graduated Southern Louisiana Institute in agriculture; worked for Soil Conservation District, sent to Northern Louisiana doing erosion work; also in ROTC; became an officer when WWII started; was at Fort Polk training people to go into combat; was one of 6 people on deck at D-Day; worked with French underground; received highest medal of honor from Belgium and France; back to Louisiana after war, started first National Guard in Breaux Bridge, then to New Iberia and to Washington; back to St. Martinville, met my mother; went to work in Ford tractor dealership; two years without salary to buy stock, then bought them out and moved to Lafayette; in 1951 was selling small tractors to dairy farmers; International Harvester was going broke in New Iberia; dad sold his tractor dealership to his brother; International Harvester people wanted him to take the truck dealership as well; New Iberia had a port and airstrip and he felt it would be a going place; in 1952 one company ordered a bunch of trucks, they couldn't pay for them; the guy gave him the trucking company; he opened the trucking company across from his first dealership

Running business: in the early 1960 someone offered him \$1 million for the company; he ran the business conservatively but as state senator neglected his business; he had big green International trucks; all had oilfield beds, gin poles, winches; they moved oil rigs; the rates were regulated by the LPSC; Rex Champon worked for him and wanted to run his own company; he started Rex Truck Lines, no longer in existence; both he and I were president of the Louisiana Motor Transport Association; people started with a pickup or one-ton truck, he sold them; International Harvester was the best truck at the time; a man worked, made money, saved up to buy a bigger truck; as late as the 1970s with the truck dealership we sold very few 18-wheelers; we had a full mechanic shop, would stretch trucks and put oilfield beds on them; sold mostly oilfield, 2, and 3 ton trucks; between 1979 and 1981 sold the first cab over; it was reconditioned, sold for half price; within a year I sold about 40 in the oilfield

Leasing company: I started a leasing company for people who didn't have money and couldn't get bank loan; helped people buy trailers and trucks and expand; worked well; some people took advantage and wouldn't pay

Operating the company: Sam Broussard Trucking is about trying to help the right people; have maintained our rate structure; owner/operators have better attitudes, little turnover; the goal is a quality company run on Christian principles where good people can make a decent living and get a fair shake; now have to grow a little to keep up with insurance costs

Surviving the downturn: February 1, 1987 was my first day on the job; I was in the equipment business running the dealerships; a friend told me my dad's trucking company had problems with unpaid interest to the state from the 1970s when the CPA was calculating interest only on the company's 25% and not on the entire revenue from a job; the company was losing money for the first time since the 1950s; went through a decade of hell; logical path was to go bankrupt, everybody was doing it; made the decision in church; went to the bank and put everything on the line; by 1991 had paid back the bank and settled with the insurance company; opened 5 new

terminals; had to get new drivers and grow the company; knew nothing about the trucking business because I came over from the equipment business

Raised tough: raised by black lady, Agnes; she told me dad would make it tough on me "so when you get to tough decisions in you life you'll know what to do;" Dad told me you have to love God more than anyone else; in the late 1970s was working for my dad; opened a dealership in Lafayette on April 1, 1980; was 24 years old; took ten years to turn it around; very few of us made it through; family businesses are dinosaurs; I'm fearful of human nature, when things get good you get lazy; so I also work on our ranch; do the same thing my dad did; Dad never let success ruin him; try to maintain conservative lifestyle; keeps me focused on values; before we recruit a terminal we try to make sure their values are in line with ours; this is a very competitive industry; can't let it get you; during bad times did not think we would make it, but miracle after miracle happened; stuck to Christian principles and never deviated; still a family business

Owner/operator system: guy owns the truck and leases it to you; Sam Broussard pays the insurance, offers benefits, gets the work; the more the man works, the more he makes; it's pure capitalism, but we work as partners; the driver is an employee of our company, we cover him for worker's comp and dictate safety standards; he wears two hats, truck owner and driver-employee; arrangement motivated when industry was regulated and only a few could get the permits; also customers don't want to deal with a lot of people; and insurance is very expensive; now that's a bigger factor than ever; so much paperwork and recordkeeping

Insurance: seems like every 7-10 years the insurance companies do the same thing, they tighten up, charge excessive amounts; will go to court to prevent fraudulent claims; insurance companies have poorly managed their business

Associations: Louisiana Motor Transport Association is the mother group of everyone; used to have Oilfield Carriers Association of Louisiana when we were regulated; was the last president; organization dissolved when no longer under LPSC auspices; LMTA provides guidance and legislative lobbying; fragmented because everyone has different interests; truckers try to just run in the oilfield; make more per mile but lower utilization; fewer differences today than in past; LPSC lost its cause except for hazardous waste and passengers; 20 years ago about 80 percent of the businesses were like myself; now few left; guys who are making it now have their trucks paid for, owner-operators with multiple trucks won't be able to make it.

William Brown

Lake Charles, LA

July 25, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA055

#### Ethnographic Preface:

William Brown was referred to me by Mary Ann Galletti. Willie had worked for J&J Divers, a company out of Pasadena, Texas that was started by John Galletti and Joe Carroll. I met Willie at his home near Lake Charles. Willie met me out front and informed me that he had prepared his "props". He sat me down on the couch and then brought in albums, boxes of materials, and other items. We talked throughout the day, taking a break in mid-afternoon to go for some lunch. The first and last parts of the interview were recorded on tape. The middle part, conducted during lunch, is recorded only in my notes.

Willie was born in south Texas in 1928. He left Texas in 1944 to go work as a tender for his uncle's diving business in California. He entered the U.S. Merchant Marine in 1945. He continued working as a seaman and diver until 1958 when he devoted all his time to diving. His first job in Louisiana was helping to build a bridge over I-10 in 1947. He operated his own company, Deep Diving Company, from 1946 until 1966. After that he worked for several companies, including J&J Marine Services and Dick Evans Divers. He quit diving in 1976 after he was injured on a diving job.

#### Summary:

Early history: born between Mission and McAllen April 12, 1928; supposed to graduate in 1945, but went to California in 1944 to help uncle in his diving business; was tender and then diver; entered U.S. Maritime Service Training Center at 17; worked as diver and seaman; experience on ship; shipping declined; worked in oilfield as roughneck; sold shoes

Japanese helmets: while in Japan on ship met G. Tanaka who made diving suits for Japanese Navy; helped Tanaka get copper to make helmets; turned business over to J&J in 1966; had one of the first copper helmets; it got smashed on a bridge job in Tennessee; started getting influx of shallow water gear after the war ended; Thompson Engineering produced a package with helmet, suit, hose; Scott mask adapted from mining engineering; description of masks, Kirby Morgan masks

Type of work: shallow jobs hand jetting on pipelines in marsh; mud crawling; would get calls; do favors for the guys in the field who hire the divers; about 8 companies in Texas, 25 in Louisiana; small one and two man shops; worked for new pipe laying company that had a spool barge; McDermott and Brown and Root hiring divers; insurance getting more prevalent; had my own company, Deep Diving Company, from 1946-1966; diving companies furnished the equipment and charged for it; started going overseas for diving jobs in 1956; Lake Maracaibo in Venezuela

in 1958; took diving jobs all over, got calls from everywhere; went to work for John Galletti and Joe Carroll for J&J; also sold diving equipment; one time worked a job and then showed up the next day as the inspection diver

Divers and companies: have list of names of all divers with whom I worked; many of the small companies went to work for other companies; closed company in 1966; stayed with J&J; things got bad, no work; went to Africa for a while; describes job; went to work as diver for Dick Evans in 1970; work in Persian Gulf; did job with Wayne Willet; details about catastrophe, ended with jumping over the side and being picked up by a tugboat the next morning; returned to site; worked for J&J again in Texas; then got hurt - 1976; put me out of business forever

Reflections on career: 99 good things to every bad; most bad ones about an inch long - leeches, gaspergoo, sea urchins; best jobs were when got paid and stayed home; jobs in Venezuela opened doors in the states and overseas; used connections to get nephew a job; worked for companies that contracted for Brown & Root; worked for McDermott Divers and J&J Divers

Safety: people trying to start unions felt there was not enough safety; had to take two physicals a year, CPR; a supervisor who knows his business will not let anyone get hurt; keep away from repetitive diving when possible because that is what hurts people; no set rules; people have different tolerance levels; story of guy who got oxygen poisoning and went crazy in the chamber; they never did test us for oxygen tolerance during the physicals; changes dictated by OSHA.

Billy Bundy

Houma, LA

July 23, 2001

Interviewed by: Ari Anand

University of Arizona

AA011

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Billy Bundy was referred to me by Mr. James Dishman of Rainbow International Carpet Care in Houma (Mr. Dishman's daughter Jamie struck up a conversation with me at Sunrise Fried Chicken in Houma when she noticed the Arizona license plates on Diane's car; upon hearing of the offshore history project, she suggested I look up her father). Mr. Bundy is also a notary public and is a friendly, talkative man. Mrs. Bundy made us some lemonade and also offered me some gumbo.

Mr. Bundy was born in Louisiana in 1930 and has worked many jobs in the oilpatch. He began with Halliburton Cement Company in 1948 and, beginning in 1951, worked for Texaco for six and a half years roughnecking on workover rigs. Then he shifted to Guiberson as a production packager and later a life serviceman fixing gas lift valves. From 1959 he worked for Otis Engineering (which had just merged with Halliburton). He worked several jobs with Otis until 1981, when he joined a friend's office. He became a real estate broker in 1985.

#### Summary:

**Early Family Life:** Born in 1930 in Boise Parish; father in oilfield work, moved to East Texas then to Golden Meadow. Father was driller for Texaco in early 1930s, transferred to Louisville in 1932 or 1933 for the boom there. Started school in Golden Meadow; moved to Houma in 1937. Father worked 12 days out and 4 days in for Texaco; Texaco used to make employees work continuously until a well was completed, which could be 30 or 40 days without time off. Got out of school in 1947.

**Early Oilfield Work:** Started working in oilfield as driver for Halliburton in 1948; all helper positions were classified as "drivers." Worked at Grand Isle on Exxon Platform A, the first platform in the Gulf; hard to get from boat to platform. Exxon had lots of LSTs; describes design and operation of LSTs. Right after high school, worked for meat packing plant; entered oilfield for better pay. Married after 4 months at Halliburton. Father was foreman for Texaco.

**Halliburton Wages and Work Hours:** Worked as helper for Halliburton; paid \$240/month; guaranteed 120 hours/week but usually worked 140-150 hours. When minimum wage law went into effect around 1950 or 1951, workers got paid for past overtime; lowered hours to 60 and raised pay, but still worked about 120 hours/week. Hard job, long hours; tells story about falling asleep while driving.

Halliburton Work: In early years, service people were looked down on. Had to drive trucks onto barges then take barges out to rigs; had to bring along their own food. "We were on a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week time schedule;" no scheduled days off. Describes some of his early work experiences. No crew quarters on early rigs. Worked in skid department for a while. Describes cleanup of cement pipe blowout. Worked as driver for Halliburton for three years; other man on crew was a cementer who operated pumps, mixed cement, etc.

Texaco Work: In 1951, went to work for Texaco as roughneck; worked on workover rigs. Describes various tasks. Then moved over to drilling rigs. Describes laying of surface pipes; no blowout preventers in early years. Later did work on laying underwater pipe in a lake. Worked as roughneck for 6.5 years, worked with lots of older men- hard to advance because not lots of open jobs.

Guiberson Work: Left Texaco in 1957; went to work for Guiberson. Still had "24 hour a day, 7 day a week" schedule but usually only spent a few days out at a time. At Texaco, worked 6 days out, 6 days in. At Guiberson, worked as production packer and forklift serviceman. Describes production packer job.

Worker Origins: At Halliburton, worked for man from Oklahoma; most workers from South Louisiana; manager from Texas; lots of Texas people.

Otis Work: Worked at Guiberson from about 1956 or 1957 until left in 1959 to work at Otis. Halliburton and Otis merged in 1959. Otis engineering paid really well; hired mostly people with college degrees. Discusses commute to platform and work on the rig. Good company to work for. Worked as serviceman and wireline operator on rigs, then took over production packer department; worked in sales for two years in 1970s. Then tried to send him back out into the field, so he quit around 1970 or 1971. Went to work as manager and serviceman for Udell-Garrett, owned by Brown Oil Tools; worked there for about two years. Went back to Otis as warehouse manager for two years; describes job; then became office manager; left Otis in 1981. Worked as office manager for Dimensional Oilfield Services from 1981 to 1983.

Post-Oilfield Work: Retired from oilfield in 1983 and worked real estate until 1993. Still does some notary work. Wife is a tax consultant.

Otis Wages and Work Hours: Discusses Otis pay scale. Salaries increased since 1980s. Guaranteed base salary for 40-hour week; paid time and a half for overtime. Sometimes worked 84 hours per week. Later implemented maximum of 60 hours per week. People are now making \$100,000+ for the job he was paid \$25,000-30,000 for.

Changes in Oilfield: Lots of horizontal drilling; use of turbo drills; can control drilling angle much better. Types of completion have changed. Sand control has increased. Lots more use of subsurface control safety valves; previously used storm chokes. Describes freezing of well.

Blowouts: Drove wireline truck to blowout at Oakland; describes blowout. Describes Shell Oil blowout.

Social Changes in Oilfield: Service companies have become more "sophisticated;" workers are intelligent. Early offshore rigs were "primitive;" some rigs had no living quarters. Describes life on the rigs. Started to change in mid-1970s.

Unionization: Union could not operate in the oilfield, because "everything is so unpredictable" and jobs are so varied. Each worker did lots of jobs. Would not want to work in union.

Employee-Company Relations: Very good relations; no problems. Supervisors had worked same jobs in past.

Job Availability: Easy to get jobs in early days; jobs not as plentiful now. Father was field foreman and only had 7th grade education. People now not willing to work as hard. Once worked seven days with only two short naps.

Family Life: Hard on wife when he was offshore. Wife liked Texaco's 6 & 6 schedule.

Changes in Oil Companies: Companies really took care of employees back in 1960s, but do not as much any more partly because employees will not work as hard. Started getting rid of older high salary employees. Now employees are "just a number." Used to take care of injured workers; Halliburton and Otis particularly good.

Environmental Changes: Used to dump diesel overboard in 1950s and 1960s. Threw sacks of mud, cement, etc. overboard; now have to send them to shore. Workers thought throwing stuff overboard was stupid; attitudes and regulations started to change in 1970s.

Benefits and Costs of Oil Industry: Created lots of good paying jobs. Environmental costs were "very, very high"; canals have contributed to erosion. Ruined seafood industry. Lots of marshland is just gone, due to canals and saltwater intrusion.

Most Difficult Job: Physically, roughnecking. Mentally, working long hours without much sleep. Did not get to spend much time with his five children. Would not do it today. Enjoyed his work; would advise young people to go into oil industry. Houma is now a medical community more than an oil community.

Family: Discusses his children. In his father's day, most rigs were steam driven. Discusses childhood memories of his father's work; worked 12 days out, 4 days in so did not see him much.

Leon Burcalow

Thibodaux, LA

January 21, 2005

Interviewed by: Christina Leza, Colleen O'Donnell

University of Arizona

CL003

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Leon Burcalow was referred to us by another participant in the project. Leon spoke at length and in great detail about his experiences in World War II. Leon also answered questions and spoke to us about his career in onshore oil. He was eager to share some pictures from an excellent book he had on World War II and treat us to some great seafood at a local restaurant. This interview was conducted as part of the study of the links between WWII and the offshore industry.

Leon was born in Barrett, Texas on September 23rd, 1923. He grew up in the oil field in Texas and talks about climbing all the oil derricks in his town as a kid. Leon graduated high school in 1942, and shortly after started work on a subtender and then went into service in April of 1943. After being discharged from the Army in 1945, Leon returned to the oil field, working as a roustabout and doing contract work for about three years. Then Leon was hired on by Humble/Exxon and worked for the company for 31 years and three months.

#### Summary:

Military Service in WWII: Entered Army in Kilgore, Texas; training in Missouri, starting out in Signal Core, then sent to train Durham, North Carolina; wound up in Assault Troops; Then Torquay, England by convoy for amphibious training; left out of New York in January of '44; trouble between blacks and whites, but they decided that they were going to be doing enough fighting soon enough, so they should do "some drinking" in Torquay; taught to get along, important if you were going into combat together; interpreter did not speak English and they worked day and night to teach him English; kept interpreter out of harm's way; when briefed about D-Day, went to staging area, down to dock to load up. Stayed in staging area four to six days; knew something "was up" but not talking about it. Left staging area on APA's and LCT's, anchored off, then ten miles on LCVP; driver of LCVP was killed when entering range of beach guns, then boat hit underwater obstacle; about 36 people with him on LCVP, all JASCO men; exiting LCVP all in water up to their heads; five of seventeen men left in company after, 1 of 2 officers killed; on Omaha Beach, Section Dog Green; objective was to first set up phone line, get communication; rank on D-Day was T5; Had about three commanding officers; lost helmet on beach and picked up one marked 29th infantry; ended up with the 29th, then taken back to own infantry by MP's; In Normandy, slept in pup tents; thirty furlough delay in route partly for Churchill's boarding the Queen Mary; After Normandy, debriefing in States, then first stop in New Guinea in January '45; Assigned to 29th infantry on telephone and wire communications; In New Guinea, all patrol work, then left for Luzon; ship hit day before invasion; opposition in hills of Luzon; on frontlines with 20th infantry about thirty days; enjoyed fishing with locals in Philippines; Discharged December 27th, 1945 in San Antonio, Texas.

Jobs after the War: Went back to oil field; Grew up in oil field; started working as child in scrap iron for oil industry; After the War, brother and sister owned rod and tube pulling business and he worked with them pulling rod and tubing out of the wells; took a couple of months before going back; wanted to work for the telephone company, but didn't because oil industry paid more; did roustabout work, laying pipe and "a little bit of everything"; worked for Mobil laying pipeline between eight months to a year, then set mind to getting job with a major oil company; did contract work for about three years; hired by Exxon, Humble at that time; First day with Humble was introduced to all the people he'd be working with; knew most of them already from contract work; was a roustabout on subtender before the War and was given a six month extension on draft while working; started work on subtender September of '42, then got draft letter and entered Service in April of '43; returning to oil field after the War seemed routine since he grew up with it; father was a pot foreman, and derricks all over the place in hometown. Worked sometimes as a lease operator, going from well to well checking gas flow; more "scary than anything." Job involved checking all the tanks going into barges; to do this had to be licensed with Coast Guard and he had a lifetime license. Wanted to go offshore but once you went offshore, you had a hard time getting back onshore.

Work Schedule: Usually had weekends off, but had to have someone there seven days a week; worked five days a week; two evenings, two days, and one morning.

Family Life: Himself and wife very fortunate; moved around a lot but two kids had not started school; it hurt ones that had started school; If a reasonable distance, he would drive back and forth, or if not, would get a place to spend the night near site on working days; never bought a house because thought he might be transferred at any time to Florida and also so many expenses for the kids.

Work Relations: Worked with many WWII vets; had many local boys working in the oil field; also lots of non-locals during the boom; a few squabbles and fights, but friendly beer fights, picking at each other; no real trouble between people in getting things done on the job; As far as he can remember, Exxon did not discriminate; he helped several women in the office learn about the oil industry in the field; Exxon had women in the office train in the field so that they would do a better job in the office, to better understand supply orders, etc.; guys gave some of the women a hard time; one eventually in regional management, in charge of gas calibration; another worked for Exxon as an engineer; to get on with a major company you just had to have "inside pull" or "hit it lucky."

Military Experience and the Oil Field: Grew up in oil field, but thought about getting work with the telephone company after the War because of his training with telephones, but the oil field was paying more money.

Thoughts about the oil field: After he got into Exxon, they had regular company men, but also had roustabout crews to help them in case they got into a bind; wishes they had another big oil field to go to; offshore drilling has put some people to work and likes to see people working.

Jim Burgess

River Ridge, LA

July 27, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA115

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Several people told me I should contact Jim Burgess for an interview, but I had a hard time reaching him because he still works on a 30 and 30 schedule overseas. When I was at Buddy Ayers' house in July, Buddy told me that Jim was home and took me over to his house. Jim was packing to return to work, but he took time out for the interview. While Jim and I talked, Buddy sat in the kitchen with Jim's wife and chatted.

Jim Burgess was born in Champaign, Illinois and moved to the Gulf of Mexico in 1957 to work in oilfield diving. He got into diving in the Navy during the Korean War where he worked on mine recovery. When he got out of the service, the offshore oil and gas industry was beginning to take off, so Jim moved to Houma, Louisiana. At first, Jim had difficulty finding work because the companies were not hiring ex-Navy divers, so he went back to school. His first job in the Gulf was on Grand Isle for Walt Daspit repairing damage from a hurricane. After that job, he moved his wife to Morgan City, took a job with a new company, and started working overseas. He worked for several companies and then wound up at Dick Evans Divers, which was later bought by McDermott. He was a diver on Westinghouse's first total saturation job outside Roanoke, Virginia. Jim left McDermott in 1978 and worked as a consultant until 1995 when he took the overseas job he still holds today.

#### Summary:

Early history: born in Champaign, Illinois, moved to Gulf area in 1957, where diving work was at the time; dove in the Navy, came out, tried college but got back into diving; Walter Daspit was first employer at Grand Isle; worked there after hurricane, located pipelines, put in risers, changed clamps; stayed eight months

Where worked: worked out of Lake Charles, Morgan City, Texas; in Venezuela, Persian Gulf, Africa, England; worked for Dick Evans, wife and daughter stayed in Ohio then moved to New Orleans; dove first sat job for Westinghouse outside Roanoke, Virginia on dam

Diving jobs: finished with Westinghouse, stayed on with Dick Evans, he built biggest sat system, Tri-Sphere, with three chambers, too expensive to operate; Jim and ex-Navy buddy got lots of sat time, worked from '67 to '78, J Ray McDermott was the prime contractor; lots of work after hurricanes; work stopped from November or December till February, during those months worked in California or went home to visit relatives; construction work more interesting than work elsewhere; found jobs through friends, learned by following along behind, watching, and assisting

Overseas: left McDermott after 15 years, went to Scotland with family in '78; hired people from Gulf of Mexico as consultants over there; did consultant work in New Zealand, Australia

Family: Married 52 years, takes strong woman to stay with man, put up with the lifestyle; only a few women divers; lots of divers did not stay in; no money when work was slow; wife - Cathy - was frugal, saved money; always looking for work in between jobs; hard to make it as a tender, low pay; became a supervisor

Accidents: increase in accidents when things were booming; lots of novice divers; getting the job more important than safety; oil companies started requiring consultants; did not think about suing, had worker's compensation if accident was due to someone else's negligence

Technology: ROVs took away some work but also made more work for divers; first cameras in the 1960s, made it possible for engineers to see what divers were seeing; equipment in North Sea was heavier duty but now all is the same

Divers: from all over; American divers had more get up and go; would do it all over again, though try to be home more

Photos:

- 1: Jim Burgess on first sat dive with Westinghouse, September 1965
- 2: Jim Burgess dressed for sat dive
- 3: Jim Burgess dressed for sat dive
- 4: Westinghouse sat chamber
- 5: Westinghouse sat chamber
- 6: Westinghouse sat chamber
- 7: Jim Burgess on salvage job, 1966
- 8: Salvaging platforms after hurricane, 1966

Leroy Burgess

Bayou Vista, LA

September 19, 2001

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB019

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I accidentally found Mr. Burgess. There was a Leroy Burgess on the contact list who was a friend of Julie Delaune's. When I looked up the number this is whom I found. Leroy's son answered the phone and was excited to hear that someone might want to talk to his father who had worked at McDermott for 25 years. Leroy is an extremely soft spoken but polite man. He offered to get me water and made sure that I was comfortable at the kitchen table. He answered my questions to the best of his ability but did not tend to elaborate on any points. He also had a difficult time remembering names of people he'd worked with.

Leroy was born in 1944 and grew up in Verdunville, Louisiana. He served in the Army in Vietnam and began work with McDermott when he returned to Louisiana in 1966. He began with no experience but worked his way up to the position of welder. He was laid off in 1984 and again in 1986. On both occasions he worked odd jobs to make ends meet. He returned to McDermott when things picked up again and retired in 1998.

#### Summary:

Early years: Grew up in Verdunville, born 1944. After high school he went to Vietnam, back in 1966. Went to school after he got out of the Army and applied to McDermott. Didn't shrimp because that was all that was available at that time.

McDermott: Was hired with no experience, went to school first thing. Didn't have to have a high school diploma. Began welding. First day "wasn't bad, it didn't take me long got catch on". 10 hours a day 4 days a week, 8 hours on Friday, 8 hours on Saturday. Semi-retired in 1998.

Changes: Laid off twice in the 80's, 84' and 86'. Called getting laid off, "furloined" They called him back because work started picking up again. Things were really bad, no one was working. A lot of people went on unemployment b/c it didn't last too long. Leroy drew unemployment and then worked with his brother for a while as a carpet layer. Also went offshore and welded on the decks of some of the rigs while he was unemployed. Got job through a friend of his who was contracting out. Most of the rigs have their own welders but if there's a lot of work they will hire out to finish a job. When he came back in 1986 they had put in new equipment, which made the job a little easier. People didn't change that much over the years.

Unions: failed in the past but he thinks they have one out there right now. People were afraid of the union. Not everybody is in the union. Thinks the union could have helped him make more money.

Safety: McDermott was committed to 0 accidents. Doesn't think they'll ever achieve it. When he began safety wasn't first-rate, but about 1987 - 1988 the safety regulations changed quite a bit. Had to have their shirts tucked in at all times. Dress code.

Women: Remembers many women working at McDermott especially as welders. Difficult because they didn't have any bathrooms for women in the early 70's. Most of the women welders were from Thibodaux. Didn't remember them having too many problems at work as long as they did their job well.

A day in the life of a welder: they would weld pipes together mainly. Never got to go to the rigs they built. Sometimes if you went offshore you'd wonder if you were standing on something you built.

Success at McDermott: success was determined by the position you had. The higher up the ladder you went the more successful you seemed to be. Took from 10 - 15 years to become a highly respected welder and move up the ladder. If you didn't do your job they would put you back down the ladder. To get fired you had to do something "awful bad". They would bust you back down and give you a chance before they would fire you. 3 warnings for being late at work before they would let you go.

Bosses: from all over LA, but majority were from Thibodaux. Not too many from Texas.

Area Changing: a lot of people left during the bust, some came back, but many stayed away. Oil industry has been good for S. LA because of the jobs. Had some oil spills but that didn't hurt anything, so no big deal. Only saw blowouts on TV.

Hurricanes: McDermott would close down early if there were a hurricane. They would first have to tie everything down. Ruth caused a lot of damage, blew the roof off one of the buildings.

Harold Burton

Houma, LA

March 22, 2003

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS018

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Harold Burton was recommended by Adrian Bonnette as a toolpusher who really knew how to do the work. Adrian called me earlier with the news that he had talked to Harold ahead of time and had gotten him to agree to be interviewed. We met at Harold's home on a nice Saturday morning and spent the whole interview time on his back porch. We talked for almost 3 hours. He was very responsive to my questions and patient at explaining how the work was done in the oil field. Subsequent informants have referred to Mr. Burton as one of the most knowledgeable about drilling.

Harold Burton has the reputation of being a "toolpusher's toolpusher." His grandfather worked for the Texas Company (production foreman) in Shreveport and raised his brother and himself (his brother is an MD), so Harold grew up in the oil field. He started doing well salvage for independent contractors in Illinois. His grandfather asked him to come back to Louisiana and got him a roustabout job with Texaco in 1950. After working on land rigs around Oil City, he transferred to the Harvey district, as roustabout on the drilling barge, Gibbon. In 1956 he worked on Texaco's largest barge, the Terrebonne Bay, as a driller. He moved up to toolpusher later that year and in 1958 was promoted to dome foreman at Leeville. Later he worked in that capacity at Lake Barre and Caillou Island. The dome foreman was in charge of all activity in a field - construction, drilling, production. He spent 14 years in that position at Caillou Island, which was Texaco's largest field (he said at one time they had 1800 wells there), retiring from there in 1983. He has worked occasionally as consultant since then.

#### Summary:

Texaco Corporate Culture: Hard to move up because of so many good people starting work after WWII. Texaco people were "top notch, practical people," and the Houma district was the best in the company. Texaco also had a policy (off and on) of requiring college educated engineers to work six months in the field to give them practical experience. Many of these people were bright and went on to higher level jobs either with Texaco or other companies. The original drillers he worked for were hard men, always looking for reasons to fire "weevils" (workers too inexperienced to even be called roughnecks). His experience was that everyone shared information and helped each other in crisis situations. This changed later when "Engineers took over and ruined the company."

Drilling: Cable tools used gravity to chisel the hole, an old system only used today when rock layers are susceptible to collapse by fluids. Rotary drilling is more typical, using a diamond

tricone bit (tremendous invention by Hughes). Drilling is a logical process, but it was learned through trial and error.

Major Changes Came to the Oil Field in the 1960s: Drills, bits and pumps got better. Steam rigs were replaced by power rigs, which were much faster. Other innovations were bottom hole assembly, rock bits, and mud. Texaco also pioneered drilling barges. The Giliasso was the first; the Terrebonne Bay was the largest. Caillou Island also had the first stainless steel Christmas tree, which was able to handle higher pressure.

Mud Mixture Varies With Need and with Rock Strata. Shale tends to swell and slump when saturated by freshwater, swelled shale will "kill" a gas well (by not allowing the gas to flow through the swelled strata). Texaco invented a shale control mud. Mud was also used to control the well in conditions where high pressure gas was mixed with the oil, such as Louisiana. The mud weight would hold down the possibility of a blowout, although rapid drop in mud pressure is a sign that gas bubbles have gotten into the pipe and are rising up, a precursor to a blowout. A heavy mud weight will reduce the possibility of a blowout, but also slows the drilling. Drilling in a salt dome is delicate because water based mud dissolves the salt and could collapse the hole. So the mud is mixed with oil, usually diesel fuel.

Hazards: Because of the high gas pressure in the fields, blowouts were a constant hazard, Leeville blowout was one of the earliest. There was a tendency for office personnel to order field actions that were hazardous. One example was an order for Mr. Burton to perforate a well below 22,000 feet. Perforation is the use of an explosive charge to fire a pattern of shot through solid casing, to allow oil or gas to percolate through into the well (this was thought to increase production from that well, at least in the short term). Because of the high pressure at that depth, Mr. Burton knew the explosion would destroy the derrick and endanger his workers, so he refused, although subjected to great pressure. Eventually he was vindicated and the well was not perforated.

Pat Byler

New Iberia, LA

May 7, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG012

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Pat Byler was referred to me by Jimmy Hebert. Pat and I met fairly early in the morning at his place. His mother had a minor stroke the day before, and he had to leave to go to the hospital. I attempted to make plans for another time, but he insisted we go ahead with the interview. The interview itself is a little short, but he's a very clear speaker and he addressed all the questions quite precisely.

Pat Byler began work for Shell in 1960 as a roustabout. He worked in both drilling and production. He worked his way up through the ranks to production foreman.

#### Summary:

Early career history: began work in 1960 as a roustabout; move to production; got seasick in a storm; worked on Eugene Island; decided to go to college

Work: worked as a roustabout; got speedboats in '63; moved to Shell headquarters; first floater, Bluewater I, tipped over; discusses secrecy, new offshore drilling technology; drillships; move to over 80 feet, shifted from production to drilling; went back to production; advanced all the way to production foreman; tinkered with the schedule

Regulations: MMS policy; focus on safety; would shut an unsafe place down; in the early days would do what you were told; efforts made to get rid of trash; lots of trash on the sea floor; new regulations, inspections

Companies and change over time: differences between Texaco and Shell; change in labor pool; change in attitudes; blacks, women offshore; instigation of change

Impact of the bust: shortage of people, no hiring, company reaction; historic source of labor, in the '60s old boys dominated; lots of company loyalty

Ed Cake

Ocean Springs, MS

March 29, 2003

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM067

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Dr. Ed Cake was one of Ron Dugas' referrals. We had communicated through email on an earlier trip; Ed remembered me well, and was anxious to give me some time. We agreed to meet in Ocean Springs on a Saturday, and held the interview in a Chinese restaurant over in Pascagoula. Driving over (I had left my car at the Chamber of Commerce/Visitor's Center in Ocean Springs), I raised the question of why, as I was hearing, fewer and fewer oystermen are bedding oysters. His initial answer (untaped) was that Louisiana oystermen may have pretty well ruined the seed grounds by not returning cultch. I countered with the issue of labor costs, and he told me a story of one of his clients. Through some familial ties, the client had connections in Honduras, and would go there several times a year to recruit workers. I had already heard from Marty Bourgeois of the Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries that most of the oyster workers in Terrebonne Parish were "Hispanic."

E. W. "Ed" Cake, Jr., Ph.D. operates "Gulf Environmental Associates: Biological, Environmental, Legal, & Mariculture Services (edcake@datasync.com) out of Ocean Springs, MS. He is one of a handful of biologists certified by the State of Louisiana to conduct oyster damage assessments, and prides himself on working both sides, oil companies and oystermen. He was the plaintiffs' main expert witness in the Alonzo case in St. Bernard Parish, and his formula for reef restoration costs was accepted by Judge Manny Fernandez in establishing the damages caused by the Caernarvon Freshwater Diversion Project.

#### Summary:

Leases: can form partnerships to lease additional 1000s of acres, put in kids', dogs' names; Kenny Fox had 17,000 acres; Robin Seafood in St. Bernard, 14,000 acres; if good spat set, may not spend funds to transplant seed; Robin moving seed every season, so relatively successful; freshwater diversion preventing spat set, so have to move seed

DNR/Wildlife and Fisheries relations: LA. Department of Natural Resources deals with dead resources, e.g., oil, gas, sulphur; Wildlife and Fisheries deals with live resources; overlap in jurisdiction on permits for coastal zone work - WF determines if oysters are involved

"Forensic oyster biologists": we determine what happened, what will be required to restore lease, who owes what to whom for what happened; e.g. case last week where Texaco drilled well, piled spoils on oyster bed, assess funds for lost oysters, lost production, and restoration of lease; permit required them to get pre-impact assessment; 6 groups do assessments, 3 work for oil industry, 3 of us work for oyster people or go both ways; in my case, go both ways, provoked in

1970s when I represented Edwin Cheramie in Lafourche against Texaco, federal court suit, jury trial [check on LexisNexis: no paper trail on this case], J.C. Mackin represented Texaco, rig kicked up wheel wash, Mackin had theories on how it wasn't their fault, young attorney says to me, "any questions?" "How many years he's worked for Texaco?" and "Has he ever worked on behalf of oystermen?" "Thirty years" and "No." "I said to myself I will never allow myself to be caught in that same question." "He had no objectivity at all and the jury knew it"; we examine all oceanographic processes; we prefer to be there 6 weeks after event, e.g. oil spill in January, in cold temperatures, takes 6 weeks for oyster to use up internal food reserves and die if it's buried or stressed;

Project 9: good base of information; my professor Menzel produced information on natural predators; information not distrusted at all; those were field scientists

Damages: long-term salinity changes are hard - changes in vegetation, fauna, associated organisms; effects of humans, e.g. pollution, erosion; loss of wetlands in birdfoot delta east of river; in 2 decades, areas deep enough to grow oysters; natural sedimentation may cause problems

Canals, currents, oyster survival: oysters consume any detritus, detritivores, feed on grunge, remains of marshgrass, deciduous tree leaves; so when you open canals, open areas for inflow of nutrients from larger area, so canals positive, but probably a tradeoff when you look at amount of marsh loss, "a wash"; food not a limiting factor, cultch is limiting factor; oysters live in very active sedimentary zone, stay above falling mud to survive; feed our chickens crushed oyster shell to form eggs; used as fill, driveways, etc.;

His operation: 3 of 12 certified oyster biologists work for me; since 1975 with oil/oyster issues; he was head of oyster biology section, Ocean Springs; ruffed in 1970s because they knew he could make it as consultant

Changes in claims: increased willingness of companies to negotiate and stay out of court; don't want to go before jury of fisherman's peers; change to pre-impact philosophy; "Let's prevent rather than restore"; folks around willing to tell industry here's what you need to do; I came in when small cases settled in court for modest sums; freshwater diversion cases over billion dollars in awards; Robins family \$125M in awards; more informed court and judicial system, mirrored mass tort actions in other courts, e.g., tobacco settlements; oyster leases in midst of active oil fields, I fault both state and oystermen for allowing that to occur; should be reserved areas for oil production, keep oyster leases out, let them fish natural oysters if they are there

Oyster Lease Damage Evaluation Board: try to prevent lengthy courtroom battles; board of 4 older white men, 2 from oil, 2 from oysters, chaired by female administrative law judge; Buddy Pusina, Mike Voisin; pre-impact assessment, they set a 10% bond for potential damage based on formula, then do post-project assessment; not a finding of fault or punitive damage such as you'd find in a court; no stigma attached to it; just getting off its feet; economic formula, manual of operating procedures; way for oil and oyster industries to cooperate; Plaquemines case probably impetus; 2-day workshop 4 years ago at DNR, tried to formulate methods for figuring out what to do when they start more coastal restoration projects

Restoration projects: close canals, dredging, restore barrier islands, may affect oysters, new diversions; purchase or move leases; cessation of leases in certain areas; DNR "looking down this barrel loaded with the Avenal and Alonzo cases, where they've gotten their collective butts shot in court because they didn't figure out quick enough what was going on"; years ago a number of oystermen appealed to the state to buy their leases for \$50/acre; "The state not only said no, but hell no. Sue us. And they took them up on that invitation"; state didn't prepare for this; Damage Board was one outcome of workshop; now you have oysters vs. state; Jack Caldwell set up new procedures for lessees to get paid if damaged; one of our competitors has contract with DNR, but seems to have problems finding oysters; finding bottom too soft; Caldwell says take it or leave; should be appeals body; thinks it was Wildlife that rejected \$50 offer

Caernarvon: on line in 80s; until early 90s managed by Wildlife and Fisheries "periodically for maintaining a certain salinity regime out on the seed grounds, something that would promote the settlement of new oysters and the growth of those new oysters so that they would be available for the oyster industry. It pushed the conch line, the shoreward line..."; low/moderate salinity regime over seed grounds, so conchs didn't move in; some crabs, Dermo (a virus), drills like 15 ppt and above; "Then DNR took it over and they opened it like a flushing toilet with the handle broken, and simply let it for years go full force out there ostensibly to take the sediments and whatever else was in the water out there. So there were two different philosophies." ran it all year around; turned marshes fresh, catching large-mouth bass; our suit essentially from 1991 [dating DNR takeover]; only one way to halt marsh loss in the "let the river go"; bedload of sediment is at bottom, so let the river go "at depth"; can't simply have siphon at bank level; Corps wouldn't do that, would make present river channel a canal rather than a flowing river; simple diversions don't have enough sediment

Davis Pond: simply have pipes, not getting sufficient sediment; bought out lessees for a lot more than \$50/acre; frosted the ones across the river; engendered problems in courts

Alonzo: wasn't involved in Avenal, but Alonzo was a replay, state put on no new defense; didn't bother to go back and say how did we get our asses beat? came in with same experts, said same things; that was amazed court; we used their own data; we showed results; with southeast prevailing winds, freshwater blows up into St. Bernard Parish; they had no defense; jury in Avenal; in Alonzo, judge made decision primarily on my evidence, on replacement value; lead attorney was prosecuting attorney, had served before that judge; tried to have judge recused; "If for no other reason than it should have taught the state a lesson, then my part has been beneficial, as far as I'm concerned"; Caldwell is 2002 Conservationist of Year; "That hurt;" common folk in marsh look at biologists and people in New Orleans with mistrust; Caldwell part of problem, need younger fresher scientific minds; he's a politician/lawyer

Mississippi Gulf Outlet: opened up new areas for leasing as it widens; but allowed salt water in, have predator problems; study looking at plugging it, but now route for ships, fishermen, oil industry; may allow it to shallow up by not maintaining it; spoil areas used to be wetlands; shortcut with nothing but tidal flow, so quicker, but we didn't understand wetlands

Environmental changes: canalization: marsh loss, erosion and ships use them; impact of oil/gas industry was major; seas are rising due to global warming, increases volume of water as it gets warmer; sinking and compaction, settling with gravity; pumping water, oil, gas from below it; geological features - may be slipping into Gulf; can't mitigate it unless you let the river go; too much in the way to let the river go; we don't have cajones to do that; too much family heritage to sacrifice communities, etc.

Black drum: transplanted oysters cracked/broken, leach out tissue and liquids that attract crabs, drill, and black drum; might account for diminution of transplanting; hear crunches, "listen closely you hear "God is great, God is good, bring us more of these seed oysters comin' from these big black drums that school up in the presence of these bedded seed oysters"; feed at night; 1 3-inch oyster per pound per night; seed oysters easier, spread out, not clumped; we now have stopped net fishing

Gordon Gunter: more scientific literature on oysters than any other animal except humans; drill predation tremendous, on small oysters primarily; most harmful predator in high salinity areas

Nutria: get rid of them by telling Cajuns they are good to eat, there is a limit of 3/day, and they're out of season; eat young marshgrass shoots; burned marshes to get good growth of shoots for muskrats

Vibrio: immediate problem with every case - reduction in sales; April to October, meet standards of time and temperature to forestall vibrio; with maraculture group in Galveston, going to purge oysters of vibrio, make them saltier, by placing them on old oil rigs; vibrio doesn't like high salinity, cold waters; been around for long time, naturally occurring bacterium; more of a problem now because more of us are living longer with health problems; vibrios is due to compromised immune system; "Dying from vibrio is a horrible way to go. It occurs in 96 hours, and you get gangrenous limbs and they begin to cut the limbs off of you until you're a torso and dead"; but if you don't eat raw stuff from time to time, you aren't challenging you immune system

[driving back from restaurant in Pascagoula to Ocean Springs]

Oil and aquaculture: Biomarine Technologies has permitted sites using surplus rigs; 4 rig complex off Port O'Conner in Texas waters for at-sea mariculture using pens for cobia; site off Fort Morgan in federal waters, don't have rig there yet; MMS will allow you to leave rig out there if another economic use is found for it; after you P&A (plug and abandon) it, you have 1 year to remove it; director of Galveston group is John Ericsson (cell 409 502-0997); containerized relaying for cleansing oysters; John Supan did his masters on this (my master's student); cleanse themselves in 15 days (FDA regulation); symbiotic relation with oil industry; means for oil industry to fund new research for tax purposes.

Ronald Callais

Golden Meadow, LA

June 6, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM036

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Ronald Callais is a regular at PJ's in Golden Meadow for early morning coffee. The last time out, he agreed to talk, and also gave me the name of Mr. Web Callais (TM034, UA-0178), his uncle. I interviewed him in his office at the shipyard, an office well-stocked with novels (James Lee Burke, among them), with walls filled with official certificates, marking perhaps his service on Lafourche Parish's Police Jury and his membership on the Levee Board. He admitted that he is semi-retired from the shipyard business (started in 1980), though he comes in to the office, often just to read. This yard, and another in Larose, is run by his son exclusively do repair work, including much work for the shrimp industry. After the interview, we toured the yard. Several utility boats and tugs being worked on, and he talked about plans for expanding the yard.

Ronald graduated from high school in 1959, then went to USL (SLI at the time) for accounting, then transferred to Nicholls. At one time, Ronald was also involved in the utility boat business of his father (Abdon Callais), but he got out of that end of it when it was clear that the two enterprises were in conflict: he was repairing the boats that competed with the boat business. His father's siblings included Fornest (Callais and Sons – inland towing), Weber (Callais and Callais, boats), Joseph (B&C Boats), Harris (Callais and Callais, with Mr. Web), Inez (husband was Frisco Gisclair, of Guidry and Gisclair – inshore and offshore tugs), Pearl (mother of Luke Bellinger, offshore tugs), and Velma (mother of Arden Rogers, school principal).

#### Summary:

Family: grandmother owned grocery store; father's siblings included Fornest (Callais and Sons - inland towing), Weber (Callais and Callais, boats), Joseph (B[lanchard] & C[allais] Boats), Harris (Callais and Callais, with Mr. Web), Inez {husband was Frisco Gisclair, of Guidry and Gisclair - inshore and offshore tugs}, Pearl (mother of Luke Bellinger, offshore tugs), Velma (mother of Arden Rogers, school principal); all had shrimp boats; daddy would work for oil companies when shrimping season shut down; brothers would help each other out, but with slowdown, things not so friendly, due to shortage of jobs, could be cutthroat.

1980s slowdown: "blindsided us," was operating 6 medium-size offshore boats; thought this was temporary so made expenditures we never should have; brother and I had outside interests, so we were fortunate; were cash-rich, could borrow against other assets; had to keep equipment ready (Coast Guard-inspected) when jobs came up; doctors etc. invested in limited partnerships; banks turned boats over to other people, shysters, banks put boats back into market, and hurting their other customers; banks wanted "utilization".

Shipyard business: we were a little behind cycle, since boat owners would bring boats in for work when slowdown hits; we also had fishermen's business; Larose does larger offshore supply boat work; to be shipbuilder, need big staff - nautical engineers, etc.

Other slowdowns and cycles: 1958, 1961, real well 'til 1980s, dropped again in early 90s; fabrication yards most affected by changes in industry; this yard started as fabrication yard, I convinced them to build a drydock, to keep critical employees, particularly welders; pure fabrication yards decimated by slowdowns, e.g., now Halter pretty much shut down; we're strictly in repair.

Coast Guard: inspections is what keeps us alive; inspection in 60s, 70s, causal; father and uncles couldn't survive now with inspection procedures; but important now because of bigger loads, stresses on boats; late father frustrated when inspector asked him to turn wheel to see if rudders would turn; lot more trust in that generation; you gave them an answer and they would believe you.

Boat companies: back to cycle of fewer operators; now oil companies dictating prices; "price of boats has nothing to do with the price of oil;" players [oil companies] have shrunk, they talk to each other [re boat prices]; they know what they can get away with; but boat prices were too high; larger specialty boats making \$10-24K/day; scarcity will turn it around; boats tied up at Bollingers will never go back to work - they've been cannibalized for electronics, etc.; fewer boat operators mean they can talk to each other about reducing number of boats, have more control of market; but oil companies always going to have upper hand.

Unions: not big advocate, but in slowdown of 1980s, oil companies couldn't have done what they did to us; I pay top dollar, take care of my people; Guidry Brothers being harassed by unions (Dick and I went to school together); they go to his customers, harassing, Dick pays good wages, takes care of his people; I'll have to lean over and fall with them if they get to Bollinger, McDermott, etc.; most of my guys contract workers, with unions, they would lose freedom to go from job to job.

Chouest: was smart, organized employees into CCFC; very intelligent operator, wants to do everything itself; talking about opening a grocery store - I don't care for that, everyone's got to make a buck - will lose public support, and unions will get you; lots of employees resentful of owners.

Contract workers: at one time, most yards were employee-owned; larger yards couldn't afford to carry 100 people; my foremen and office workers are full-time, they earn a little less than contract workers, but guaranteed 45 hr/week work, benefits and vacation; they aren't the ones to go into the tanks, so that's worth something to them; federal government gave us a problem over Social Security re contract workers; 3 audits over what we paid contract workers on workman's comp - paid on workers' salary, not on rentals, so some contractors reduce salary and pay more for equipment rental; system seems to be working - employees happy; call United (labor contractor) for crews when he needs fill-ins; the day of 9-11, had crew of Indians - had phone call- "get rid of those Arabs;" my preference is for Americans, but now have problem with foreign workers.

Shrimp boat repair: mindset among shrimpers that they don't owe you until they have money to pay you; I automatically have a "workman's lien" on a boat when it comes into the yard; but if I seize boat, have to put a marshal on it.

Oil properties: most people have so many heirs, that income isn't very big.

West Bank: mostly populated by people from here, who moved up after hurricanes.

Louis Roussel: interests in New Orleans.

Levee Board and other positions: president, in 5th term; on hospital board, was on Police Jury; floodgate being converted to locking chamber, \$6M project; state promised \$4M but doesn't have money now; will roll back millage when state pays us the money; with locking chamber, you can equalize pressure on floodgate; can keep traffic flowing during hurricane; might be 4-5 days after hurricane before tide goes low enough to open floodgate, so boats losing that many days' work; Corps has approved system, and will give 70% reimbursement but we have to come up with the money to build it first; levee district originally set up as 2-parish district (Lafourche and Terrebonne) but nothing got done because Terrebonne so widespread; Gov. Treen got us going; big landowners realized need and worked with us, e.g. Alain family of large landowners; Louisiana Land has always worked with us since value of their property went up with the levee protection; Leon Theriot appointed board president - a big mover; levee consists of 3 lifts; some sections don't have final lift yet; encircles whole 10th Ward; designed to withstand Category 3 hurricane; for a Category 5, would need 2 more lifts.

Golden Meadow: collects millage for drainage protection, even though Levee District provides this service; Golden Meadow was hub when I grew up, now children moving back with new land becoming available.

Hospital: remodeling due to patient confidentiality rules, need privacy.

Marsh loss: great tides cutting vegetation as they go out; conventional wisdom is that oil canals contribute; ground is sinking; water level in bayou up 2 feet since I was born; channelizing of Mississippi River slowly killing us; Dr. Gagliano's plan to build channel parallel to Bayou Lafourche; guy in Montana raising cattle doesn't give a shit what happens down here; if we get CARA, will provide some funds.

Politics: dominated by north Louisiana Protestants; politics changing - more accountability - now that money is coming out of our own pockets, instead of oil revenues; expect more honesty; disappointed by Gov. Edwards' last term - thought he would have wanted to leave good legacy; Ward 10 has 30% of parish population, 80-90% of taxes - now we are getting our share; sugar a dying industry so what is Thibodaux? 2 of 9 councilmen come from Ward 10; under Police Jury, 4 of 15 members from Ward 10, so we lost a little when we changed over; now get 5-4 split on everything - "because you for it, I'm against it".

Weber Callais

Golden Meadow, LA

June 4, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM034

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Web Callais, 88 years old, had been referred to me by his nephew, Ronald Callais of Allied Shipyard (a regular with the coffee group at PJ's in Golden Meadow). I had contacted him on previous trips but never hooked up with him. His grandson, Brad, was visiting him when I arrived, and I explained the project to both of them; several other female relatives came in and out during the interview. After the interview, we walked over the Chene's netshop, where Mr. Web goes many mornings to help make nets and get exercise (and, according to Ronald, play bourée).

Web Callais owned a netshop for decades, but his primary business was boats, first tugboats after the war, then crewboats, then offshore boats. He serviced Humble Oil out of Grand Isle for 22 years. With only a 2nd-grade education, he is proud of a career of running boats, serving on bank boards of directors, making nets, and running a 100-acre crawfish farm up in Larose. He is still on Hibernia Bank's board.

#### Summary:

Family: 4 Callais brothers from France jumped ship in New Orleans; some went west to Lafayette area, rest came down here; daddy farmed, trapped, trawled, converted trawler to seismic boat in 1935; oldest brother (Harold, "Don") owns CCTV (Callais Cable) and solid waste company; daddy was Abdon (Abdon Boats); other brother in tugs; younger brother in boats (Harry, who passed away Sunday), youngest brother in boats; Ronald got out of boats and into shipyard.

Boats: built the first 100 footer at Halter Marine in 1963; up to then Coast Guard would not permit oil boats bigger than 65'; kept building more and bigger boats, would sell off smaller ones; things got bad in mid-1980s but he had good record of service to companies so he kept all his jobs.

Edison Chouest: Chouest's father moved to Keel, MS to be in pulpwood business, came back, Chouest's a shrimper; Humble asked Weber to build a crewboat; Weber asked Chouest to go 50-50 on it, Chouest reluctant, then Weber heard of a steel-hulled shrimp boat for sale in Bayou La Batre; Chouest bought it, even though Humble would only offer him a 6-month contract for its use; so Weber got Chouest started in the boat business; now they have 400 men at shipyard; Weber and Chouest calculated how much money/time was wasted by giving 2 15-minute breaks every workday, at average wage rate of \$15/day; now building 324 footer, will have biggest winch to set casing in 4-5,000 feet of water; with rigs now 120 miles out, Chouest converting 2

230 foot seismic boats to floating hotels with 80 rooms; Edison Chouest kept half interest in one of the icebreakers, and still has shares in 3 boats used by LOOP.

Otto Candies: had contract with Humble to procure all boats; company paid him flat day rate; he would keep a percentage of this, rest to boat owner/crew.

Boat contracts: no good - easily broken by oil companies when oil prices turn bad.

Coast Guard: requires inspection every year for "top" of boat (safety equipment, etc.), every 2 years for hull, every 3 years for shaft - which is the most time-consuming; Weber thinks its unnecessary since boats are twin-screw (always a backup); lose 15-20 days/year to Coast Guard activities; lose \$25,000 to pull the 5 inch shaft in drydock every 3 years.

Financing: his father got him started with a boat, but after that he could always get financing from local banks; bank wanted some local on board after Citizens' Bank sold the Raceland branch 30 years ago; he always used his judgment when asked if local applicants were credit-worthy; now Hibernia owns former local banks; he financed a couple of boats through GMAC [General Motors], but they charged 6-7% interest, so he stuck with banks at 4.5%.

Net business: used to buy trawl nets in Morgan City, but decided he could make them here; in 1950, Gulf coast shrimpers started fishing in Mexico - so many shrimp that the nets would break; always had 10-11 men working; remembers taking 16-day bus trip with New Orleans mayor (Morrison, former ambassador to Mexico) through Mexico to El Salvador to open up Pan American highway in 1958.

Changes in area: don't see neighbors anymore; used to be only 7 houses between Corporation limit and his house - now many more; had 7-8 ballrooms, now only 1; big stores/restaurant chains killing small ones (Randolph's Restaurant just sold); 4 shrimp canning factories gone; he sold big ice plant he owned-shrimp so scarce now that it wasn't needed; younger people moving up bayou to new subdivision homes.

Environmental change: used to haul fresh water from lakes for steam rigs; bayou used to be fresh below Golden Meadow; canal cuts erode in no time; need to restore beach [he has camp on Grand Isle].

## Ruth Camp

Houma, LA

July 11, 2003

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS030p

### Ethnographic Preface:

Ruth Camp is the widow of Robert Daniel Camp. Robert worked for Penrod Drilling from 1937 until his retirement in the early 1970's. Robert moved up from roughneck to toolpusher by the 1950's. He worked inland and received an award for deep drilling in a lake.

### Summary:

In this interview, Ruth shared photos of her husband, Robert.

1. Tool pushers at Houston Oil Show, 1959.
2. RD Camp as driller, late 40's/50's.
3. RD Camp as driller, drawworks in back, 40's/50's.
4. Penrod Drilling Barge, December 1968.
5. Coastal Oil Field, Texas.
6. Penrod Drilling Barge, float plane, crew boat.
7. Hughes drill bits, RD Camp in hat, 1956.
8. Drilling crew on drilling floor late 30's, early 40's. Bill Dorn, driller, second left with hands on machinery. RD Camp, roughneck, in center.
9. Drilling rig, Corduroy Road, Hughes car, 1956. Area referred to as "Cotton Valley, east Texas."
10. Drilling rig, Corduroy Road, 1956, east Texas.
11. Office on drilling barge. RD Camp seated, Mike Harper on left, unknown in center, 1960's.
12. Crew on drilling barge. RD Camp (toolpusher) on left. Johnny Jackson, driller at station behind cage on left, 1960's.
13. Drilling barge. RD Camp (toolpusher), on left, 1960's.

A.J. Cantrelle

Larose, LA

July 17, 2001

Interviewed by: Ari Anand

University of Arizona

AA006

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. A.J. Cantrelle was referred to me by his son, Buddy Cantrelle. Initially, I was to interview them together, but Mr. Cantrelle Sr. could not make it to that interview, so we met later at his home. Mr. A.J. had a large CCFC (Concerned Citizens for Community, an anti-union group initiated by Edison Chouest Offshore) sign out in his yard and told me that he was one of the first people to put it up. Both he and Buddy (earlier) spoke quite vehemently about the damage unions would do. We did the interview at the kitchen dining table. Though initially aloof, he warmed up a bit into the interview. He had a pronounced limp from a work-related injury.

Mr. Cantrelle was born in 1937 and left school in the 10th grade when his father fell ill. He began working in the oilpatch in 1952. He got his first Captain's assignment working for Griffin Towing in the mid to late 50s before being hired as Captain by Galliano Tugs. He worked there until 1965, whereupon he joined Robin Tours Corp. Mr. Cantrelle was injured in October 1985 while working for Gulf Fleet Marine and left offshore work. He then began teaching at Houston Marine in 1987.

#### Summary:

**Early Life and Work History:** Born in Cut Off, Louisiana in 1937. Went to public school until age 15. One of 14 children; father fell ill so he dropped out of school in 1952 to work on river and canal boats hauling oil; worked in oilfield moving rigs, hauling drilling equipment; worked until 48, when he hurt his back by falling between two boats.

**Oil Industry Work:** Worked for Edward's Transportation hauling oil in Louisiana and Texas for about 1½ years. Then moved over to a local transport company, Oil Transport, in about 1954 for better pay; stayed there for about 1½ years. Next worked for Galliano Tugs for about 8½ years. Worked for lots of small independent companies, including Griffin Towing, in between other jobs. After Galliano Tugs, worked for Robin Towing Corporation starting in 1965; worked there about 8½ or 9 years. Left that job in 1972 and went to work for Gulf Fast Towing until 1974. Then went to work for Gulf Fleet Marine until he got hurt in 1985. Gulf Fleet Marine went through several name changes; bought out by Houston Natural Gas, then merged with Zapata, then merged with Tidewater Marine. Went back and got his GED in 1960.

**First Day of Work:** Working as a deckhand. Work was a lot harder back then; did not have all the modern equipment. Responsible for maintenance of boats and barges. Then moved up to mate, then to captain.

**Injury and Retirement:** Classified as disabled after getting hurt in 1985 so forced to retire. On workmen's compensation for a while. Still wishes he could go out to sea even though it is a lonely life when you have a family. Married in 1956.

**Schedule:** Varied: 30 days on, 15 off; 10 and 5; 14 and 7; 7 and 7; or on call for some jobs. Varied schedule was hard on his wife; she had to raise the kids alone. Went overseas for 10 months one year. Worked about eight or nine months a year.

**Work History:** Really misses boat work and the diversity of it. Describes various tasks. Waters can get rough in the winter. Caught in two hurricanes, one in the Gulf and one in the Pacific. Began as tugboat deckhand in 1952, became mate at age 18, became a captain just before turning 20. Supervised boat construction for about 1½ years.

**Comparison of Companies:** Some companies had better equipment. Crew sizes varied between companies. Equipment improvements made work easier. Used to have to tow lines in by hand. Might switch companies if one had better equipment. Gulf Fleet, Tidewater, and Nolte Theriot had better equipment than smaller companies.

**Changes in Equipment:** Radar was on offshore boats in the 1950s. First Loran bought from Navy surplus, then started putting them on other boats. Most tugboats were steel hulls by the time he started working. Many shrimp boats are still wooden hulls.

**Social Changes in Oil Industry:** Most workers were local. Many shrimpers and oyster men decided to switch over to tugboat work. Now the crews are much more diversified, coming from all over the U.S., Central and South America, Europe, Africa. Work force started to diversify in the mid-1960s. Shrimp boats are still mostly local but some people who come to work oil switch over. Could not support the current oilpatch with only local workers.

**Navigation Equipment:** Loran followed by radio direction finders, then Loran C, then Omega hyperbolic navigation system. Each new navigation method was longer range. He was captain on the first oilpatch boat with Omega system. Describes Omega operation. Omega never got widespread because satellite navigation came out in the mid to late 1970s. Now have GPS but it came out after he retired.

**Retirement from Oilpatch:** Upon retirement, got settlement from insurance company. Describes his claim process. Started teaching at Houston Marine's maritime school in 1987. Complicated getting this job because of insurance issues. Taught engineers, mates, masters, radar theory, operation and plotting, and celestial navigation. Taught until the school closed down 5½ years later.

**Employer-Employees Relations:** Lots of the current young workers do not work as hard and do not demonstrate much initiative. Attributes this to changing work ethic. Working for smaller family-owned companies better; becomes like family; smaller companies treat employees better. There are now fewer family-owned companies because of all the mergers. Mostly small tugboat companies in the early years. There are still lots of small companies, especially inshore. Bigger companies have much more equipment. Compares operation of small and large companies; large

companies have stockholders and lots of tiers of management so harder for individuals to make decisions.

Unionization: Unions trying to come in now; he "hopes they never make it." Unions trying since 1950s but people do not want it. Does not need a union to negotiate raises; does not want a union to tell him when to work. AFLCIO is "vicious." Explains why he is very anti-union, including increased cost of living and slower completion of work.

Environmental Regulations: All the environmental regulations are "for the good." Big companies are bottom-line so they would have trashed the area. Used to dump everything overboard, but once people knew the environmental impacts, they wanted to stop. Tugboats used to pump bilge overboard, which often contained diesel fuel. Also used to dump used mud overboard. Not that big of a deal when there were only a few boats. People started becoming more environmentally conscious in the 1960s. Environmental regulations are good and necessary.

Benefits of Oil Industry: Good employee benefits: 401K, retirement plans, health insurance; most companies offer these benefits today but they did not in the past. Companies now have to offer good benefits to attract employees. Lots of improvements in equipment and employee treatment.

Future of Louisiana Oilpatch: Resources will become depleted so drilling will have to move elsewhere in the country. But lots of places, including Florida and the East Coast, do not want to allow offshore drilling. He thinks this is shortsighted and that they "better start gathering firewood" to heat themselves in the winter. People blocking offshore drilling want "to have their cake and eat it too." Supports offshore drilling; thinks there should only be drilling in natural forests and the Alaskan wilderness as a "last resort."

Buddy Cantrelle

Cut Off, LA

July 13, 2001

Interviewed by: Ari Anand

University of Arizona

AA004

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Buddy (A.J.) Cantrelle was referred to me by Mr. Ferrel of Crosby Tugs as a person with extensive offshore experience. He was younger than I'd assumed. Mr. Cantrelle lives in a fairly new house. His wife and daughter were home watching TV in the living room, and I was cursorily introduced to them. On the phone he'd mentioned to me that his father might join us, but Mr. A.J. Cantrelle (Sr.) could not make it.

Mr. Buddy Cantrelle was born in 1960 and began to work on boats at a very young age. He began working as a deckhand on a tugboat while he was still in high school and returned to the boats after graduation. He became a captain at the age of 20 and worked offshore from 1977-1993; his father worked tugboats from 1953-1986. Mr. Buddy has worked on the east coast and abroad, and he feels that Louisiana's infrastructure needs more funding, given its importance to the nation.

#### Summary:

**Family History:** Mr. Cantrelle is a tugboat captain who no longer goes out to sea but works "shoreside." His father was a boat captain, born and raised in Larose, born in 1936, started working on boats when he was 15 years old to help support his family of 13 siblings. His father, two of his uncles, and three cousins were/are all tugboat captains. Most men in the area make their living off the water, either directly or indirectly. The area "welcomes people with open arms."

**Early Oil Industry Work:** Started working on tugs in 1977 when he was 16, in the summer between his junior and senior years in high school. Parents had to sign a minor's release to allow him to work. Had a merchant mariner's document that he got in high school. Worked 14 days on, 14 days off on a tugboat owned by Nolte Theriot, which used to be the largest independently owned tugboat company in the world but is now out of business. Worked on pipe-laying barge.

**Pipe-Laying Barge:** Describes pipe-laying barge and pipeline-laying procedures. About 100 men lived and worked on the barge. Crew boats brought supplies out. Some of the company men came out on helicopters. Now works for Crosby Tugs, which is helping in the process of laying down the longest pipeline in the Gulf of Mexico, 437 miles running from Mobile, Alabama to Tampa, Florida.

Current State of Oil Industry: Oil industry has peaks and valleys. Now in an extended good time. Lots more deep water drilling. Port Fourchon has grown drastically in the past 30 years. Used to go there as a kid with his mom to go visit father. Describes Port Fourchon.

Early Oil Industry Work: Worked as deckhand on tug when he was 16. Crew of 10 on the 100-foot tug. Went back to school in the fall to finish high school. After graduation, went back on the tugs. Worked as deckhand until 18th birthday in November 1978. Then signed up with the company his father worked for, Gulf Fleet Marine, now called Tidewater, which is the largest marine service company in the world. Worked with Tidewater for nine years, during which time he moved up from deckhand to captain in about two years. Became captain in 1980 when he was 20 years old; youngest captain in the fleet. Too young to have a license; lots of work at the time so companies did not care so much if people had licenses. Wanted to drop out of high school and start working earlier but his father made him finish school. Stayed with Gulf Fleet Marine until 1988. Describes various types of work he did for Gulf Fleet Marine.

Tugs and Drilling Rigs: Not self-propelled so have to get tugs to move them. Jackup rigs used in relatively shallow water (up to 300-400 feet). Describes two different types of rigs. Tugs often move the rigs to new locations. In the 1970s and 1980s during a boom time, tugs did nearly constant rig moves. Now there are not as many rigs or tugs. Current rig count is about 198 rigs in the Gulf of Mexico.

Derrick Barges and Drilling Platforms: Used to build production and drilling platforms. Describes process of building a platform. After platform is built, have to run a pipeline to it. The Louisiana Offshore Oil Platform (LOOP) is about 25 miles southeast of Port Fourchon and 25% of the entire nation's oil runs through LOOP.

Oil Dependence: Discusses dependence on foreign oil due to people blocking drilling along the Continental Shelf. Louisiana has allowed offshore drilling since the 1930s, but both Florida and Maryland have resisted it.

Environmental Impacts: Describes salt water intrusion of a nearby lake. Marshes are being eroded. There is no easy fix. Current legislation is trying to get money from the federal government to fight coastal erosion. Oil industry has had huge environmental impact.

Infrastructure: Also trying to get the federal government to help build infrastructure, including road improvements around Port Fourchon. Local and state funds can not support road building and maintenance.

Early Tug Work: Worked for Gulf Fleet Marine until 1988. Towed equipment to locations all over the world, including West Africa, South and Central America. Towed both construction barges and drilling rigs. Describes work with construction barges. Recently, companies have begun to salvage platforms and either use them as "fish havens" or salvage materials from them for reuse.

Mid-1980s Downturn: Tough in the mid-1980s. In the summer of 1986, Gulf Fleet Marine had 17 tugboats inactive. Lots of layoffs and pay cuts, but he was not laid off. Speculates about why he was not laid off, mostly attributes it to youth and versatility. Lots of older captains laid off.

Tug Transport Work: Decided to change jobs; offered him lots more money. Began work with Moran Towing Corporation in New York, the largest company on the east coast. Moran Towing is not associated with the oil and gas industry but is involved in marine towing and transport. Describes various tasks the company did. Worked as a tugboat captain for five years and made trips to West Africa, England, South and Central America, and the west coast. Discusses the building of the Panama Canal and his amazement. Had an engine room fire on a trip back from England that resulted in abandoning the tug; picked up by another ship.

Schedules and Family Impact: Hard to spend time away from family. On drilling rigs, schedule is usually 7 and 7 or 14 and 7. Most boats worked 28 days on and 14 off, but you could be gone for months on overseas trips. After returning from one three-month trip, his daughter was afraid of him and would not let him touch her for two days. Hard on the family; hardest on the wives. His father-in-law was a tugboat captain so it might have been a bit easier for his wife. "Astronomical" divorce rate in marine work.

Schedule: When work offshore, get large chunks of time off. Really enjoyed the time off when he could spend lots of time with his family. Now, working onshore, he does not have large chunks of time off. Figured out that someone working 28 days on and 14 days off actually spends more time with his family than he does working five days per week. It is a tradeoff.

Return to Oil Industry Work: Moved to Connecticut in 1993 and became offshore operations manager for Moran Towing. Moved back to Larose in 2000 and started work with Crosby Tugs. Describes operations of Crosby Tugs.

First Day at Work: First day offshore was with a schoolteacher on a 95-foot crew boat before he began working for Nolte Theriot. Worked as deckhand. First day out, the water was rough so he was throwing up a lot. Went out during the day and dropped men off on production platforms, then they all came back in the evening. Never got seasick again. On the third day, he got to back the boat up to a platform. Just worked on the crew boat for six days. Really enjoyed it.

Hurricanes and Accidents: Got caught in two hurricanes offshore in tugboats; once when towing fuel tank for space shuttle in 1985 or 1986. Describes space shuttle fuel tanks and a nighttime launch that he witnessed. Spent five days on 20-25 foot seas. In 1979, a large Texaco tanker called the North Dakota hit a platform head-on. His tug helped pull the tanker off the platform.

Technological Changes in Oil Industry: Biggest changes are improvements in technology, making captains' jobs a lot easier. His father only had radar and a magnetic compass for navigation. Now, tugs have state-of-the-art radars, a magnetic compass, a gyro-compass, autopilot, GPS, Loran. Much safer and more accurate.

Social Changes in Oil Industry: When he started 25 years ago, people on boats more dedicated to their jobs, enjoyed their work. Could rise through the ranks more quickly and easier because not

as many licensing requirements. Could go from deckhand to captain in two or three years. Now it takes five or six years to get the sea time and licenses to become captain, which discourages young people. Deckhand is lowest paid person on boat. Lots of people do not want to go into oil industry because it is erratic. Many companies have exacerbated that by laying people off during slow times, which has to be done but also makes it harder to get workers when things improve. Captains are still good, but mates and deckhands are not nearly as good. Deckhands often quit after only a short time. Deckhand pay is higher than it used to be, but people can get land jobs and make similar wages. Belongs to tug and barge committee that is trying to figure out how to get better training and recruiting.

Future of Oil Industry: Unless something is done to improve training and recruiting, the industry will be in "a world of crapola" in about 10 years as older guys start retiring.

Current State of Oil Industry: Quality of deckhands not good now. Hard to hire deckhands because "7 out of 10" fail their required Department of Transportation drug/alcohol screening. Even four or five years ago, people did not have to take drug/alcohol tests so it was easy to hire deckhands. Work is currently plentiful, but some companies have had to tie up boats just because they can not get personnel. Companies are currently working on solving the personnel problem. He is spearheading the effort and is very proud of it. Crosby Tugs is now starting to give incentives to workers such as bonuses and paying for training.

Labor-Corporate Relations: Current relationship between employers and employees is the best he has ever seen. Workers making more money and have better benefits. Describes various benefits offered by Crosby Tugs. Most smaller companies did not have these types of benefits until a few years ago. Had to implement benefits to get employees. Big companies have had benefits for many years.

Changes in Boat Operation: Boats better maintained and safer than in past. Safety was "a non-issue" 30 years ago. Describes current safety requirements. Major improvements in safety.

Environmental Regulations: They are "100 times better off than 30 years ago." Exxon-Valdez incident in 1989 resulted in Congress passing the Oil Pollution Act (OPA) in 1990, which requires any discharge of water into U.S. waterways to be reported to various government agencies. Thirty years ago, an overflow of 100 gallons was no big deal but now it is a "major incident" that requires cleanup. Regulations have helped create lots of environmental companies and jobs, but have also increased costs of business. Company that has the spill must pay for the cleanup. License requirements have also gotten a lot tougher so it takes longer to advance. Talks about how hard it is for young people to support a family on deckhand wages.

Unionization: Currently trying to unionize. Unions are just trying to make money. Lafourche Parish has the lowest unemployment rate in the nation, and there are plenty more jobs available. Workers come from all over, including Alabama, Texas, Florida, Minnesota, California, New York, and Mexico. Does not think the oil patch can ever be unionized because the industry fluctuates so much. Most industries that have unionized are pretty stable, no big peaks and valleys. Unions are coming in now because the industry is in a peak. But OPEC could change that at any time.

Future of Oil Industry: Future looks good for the next 10-20 years, but needs federal assistance for infrastructure.

Richard Carline

Amelia, LA

January 6, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA086

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Richard Carline by Dewey Wilson. Dewey had worked with Richard when he took a job with Tidewater, and the two of them did many overseas deliveries together. They also were very involved in Tidewater's training program. When I called Richard, he was busy trying to get a vessel ready to go overseas, so we agreed to wait until the following week. I reached him at his office on Monday morning, and he told me to come on over. When I told him what I wanted, he told me that he had spent his entire career with Tidewater and had lots to say. He told his secretary to hold his calls and closed the door so we could talk. At the end of the interview, Richard mentioned that he had a nearly complete set of Tidewater's company magazine, the News Tide, going back to the 1960s. He agreed to bring them in so I could borrow them.

Richard was raised on a houseboat in the Louisiana swamps. His family moved to town when he was 10 or 11 years old, and he later moved with his mother to Houston. After finishing high school, he spent three years in the Army and then returned to Morgan City and started working on the Rip Tide, servicing Texaco rigs off the coast of Louisiana. He learned how to navigate and became a deckhand. Then he worked his way up to earn his 100 Ton then 300 Ton and then 1600 Ton licenses. He has worked in and out of the office since 1968, returning to the boats whenever he tired of being in the office. Among his responsibilities, Richard delivered vessels around the world, helped develop training courses, served as operations manager, and oversaw new construction. He worked in the Gulf of Mexico, Nigeria, Angola, and the North Sea.

#### Summary:

Personal history: Born and raised on a houseboat in the Louisiana swamps; spent three years in the Army, came out in 1957 as a cook; began October 1, 1957 working as a cook on the Rip Tide, servicing the offshore rigs off the coast of Louisiana for Texaco; worked 7 and 7; jobs were hard to find at the time, said would stay for one week; prepared three meals a day and cleaned the inside of the boat; crew was the captain, engineer, cook, and two deckhands; would bring out drill pipe, casing, mud in sacks on pallets; offloaded onto rig with crane; pumped water and fuel to the rig; brought groceries in carryall from Morgan City; everything came out of Morgan City; three boats at the time, the Rip Tide, Ebb Tide, and Flood Tide; stayed almost two years; they taught me how to navigate; became a deckhand, worked up to 100T then 300T then 1600T license; no license till the late 1960s because offshore vessels were classified as uninspected vessels

Tidewater vessels: Ebb Tide was first one built with cabin forward so could offload off the stern; Ebb Tide went to Venezuela in the early 1960s, first to go foreign; then took the Ocean Tide to Egypt; then all around the world

Tidewater career: Did shore duty in Cabinda, Angola; in 1973 spent a year in Nigeria during the war because nobody would relieve me; worked on drug research vessels for the government; in and out of the office since 1968; would get aggravated with management and go back out on the boats; was Operations Manager at one point, now in new construction; operations manager responsible for all marine superintendents; worked up to 130 boats at one time, with 139 crewed; now crewing 30 and working 24; was in Alaska for Valdez spill; longest trip was 60 days, could not talk to anyone; story of stowaway onboard vessel; today have communication everywhere

Changes over time: Started on 85 foot utility boat, then 120 foot supply boat, then to 130, 150, 161 foot; then 180 foot and now 260 foot; story of going to England, caught between Azores and English Channel on the Great Tide in the late 1960s or early 1970s; went to the North Sea with the East Tide, a 150 foot supply boat, and got the windows busted out by the weather; worked mostly out of Aberdeen; vessels in the North Sea have a different configuration, European vessels are more complicated; different types of engines, have to match the person to the vessel, the area, and the job; in Nigeria and Cabinda had to stay on the boat; worked on one of the first anchor boats in the Gulf of Mexico, wound up in the North Sea picking up 1,500 foot of chain

Training and Personnel: When started had on-the-job training; still 80 percent that way; taught with Dewey Wilson over at Young Memorial for Tidewater when they started training for licensing - AB, 100T, 300T; set up for Tidewater but taught anybody; vessels were certified and had to have licensed people; in the early days it was easy to find people; lots came off the shrimp boats; today costs lots of money, not many fishing; best hand is a guy out of school who knows nothing but is willing to work and a person to train him; when started training none of the guys had a high school education; had to teach reading, they had to memorize lots; story of three guys who could not read but passed test for 100T license; Dewey was gifted teacher; mentoring was common or people would not have survived; US Coast Guard grandfathered in a lot of the guys, gave them 3-5 year grace period; everybody we taught got a license

Changes in personnel: Lots of people left because of the slowdowns; in the 1970s, then in 1984-85 everybody left and went to work out of Atlanta; those people never came back; it takes a certain type of person and a certain type of wife; been slow again for about 4 years; in the 1960s didn't have as many vessels working; if vessel came off charter would let go of the crew, except for the captain and engineer, to cut costs; Tidewater's first big acquisition was Twenty Grand in 1968, got 30-40 boats at the time; then bought up companies all over the world; merged with Zapata Marine, Hornbeck Offshore, then OIL in North Sea; merger between Tidewater and Twenty Grand was very competitive, biggest in the Gulf; tried to intermix the crews a little at a time; then started sending lots of vessels into West Africa

Diversification: Hiring women was another fiasco, and hiring minorities; old hands were shrimpers and locals, not used to working with women or minorities; took a while; started them as cooks to start with; some became captains of the biggest vessels; all came about the same time, took guys some time to get used to it; I took first girl out of GOM on delivery trip, told her

what goes on on the boat stays on the boat, had no problems; treated her with respect, expected my crew to do the same; worked under a guy whose wife was real jealous, sent woman to same place, she went home; had adjustments on both sides; was in personnel when this started; guy from government came to explain it to us, he looked like Rosie Greer; girls do a great job

Work: In supply boat end, 98 percent of our work is oil and gas; tugs also tow other stuff; working overseas have to supply the vessel with at least six months spare parts, wheels, rudders, shafts, for emergency dry docking, and as many groceries as possible; biggest problem starting out was we did not have enough equipment to get going; took boat to Cape Town in the middle of winter and froze; generally we stay long enough to train a crew, or deliver a vessel and fly back; was five people per crew, sometimes six; now often 12; delivery crew worked together as a team, delivered 50 or 60 vessels; turnover was low; seasickness is the biggest factor in turnover

Family: When 10 or 11 we moved into town, then to Houston, then went into service, then to Jeanerette; dad was a commercial fisherman, parents separated, mom remarried and went to Houston; worked as foreman while in Houston; almost all aunts and uncles are commercial fishermen; when came out of the service fell in love with working on boats; enjoy working with people all over the world; been a fantastic life; have three sons who work here, tried to get them out of it; wife runs the family; one of the hardest things is adjusting to having wife do everything, lots of responsibilities; can't come home and try to run everything

Reflections: Would do it again, been a good adventure; got in at the start of the oil and gas industry, met interesting people all over the world; shows model of Carline Tide; Tidewater names vessels after employees who have been here more than 20 years; most of us who started doing the overseas work were idiots, no special training; went to whoever needs the oil; in Nigeria couldn't run at night, that was just the adventure part of it; harder to work in the Gulf because been at it longer, more precision of when you'll do something, work without stopping; overseas is more lax; hard for a person who has worked overseas to come back to the Gulf

Career paths today: Start as deckhand or oiler, get time and achieve able bodied, work up to mate and captain; all new regulations, lots of school time between deckhand and captain; Tidewater pays for school; don't think you could do it on your own today; I got my license with Dewey Wilson and the high school kids on my time off; today people feel you owe them to pay them to go to school; I put my own time in; if you're going to supply vessels, you have to train them; still have two guys on the fleet who went through the high school program; that program was a help for us, Dewey didn't cut them any slack

Companies: Tidewater, Marine Service (later Zapata), one or two little companies; Twenty Grand had tugs; company in Cut Off had offshore tugs; Kerr McGee had their own boats, had a bunch of these small PT boats; When Kerr McGee got out, about 90 percent of those came to Tidewater; Poochie Satoon retired last Saturday at 70; Bill LeBlanc was our boss in 1957, used to work for Kerr McGee; they got out of the small boat business and then the big boat business; ODECO had a few small boats; Superior had two wooden hull boats and one with an aft cabin; Tidewater ended up buying it; George Falgout started in the shrimping industry and had a few boats; Mr. Guarisco was in the shrimping industry and started Twenty Grand, used shrimp boats for supply boats; Garver Brothers came later; Mc and IMC had boats that delivered mud;

Tidewater bought all those; Zapata was the biggest acquisition with over 200 boats; not much competition with companies in south Lafourche; Tidewater only had 12 tugs, had to go outside and broker them; nobody had a big share of the towing vessels

Tidewater organization: Used to be all together, then towing, crewing, and supply separate; lots of crew boat companies; Tidewater wasn't much in crew boats in the Gulf; after merger sent every crew boat out of the Gulf to Africa; got into doing McMoran's work and got back into standby boats and crew boats about 1986-1987; they gave us all their work drilling for oil; we went and bought crew boats and started the crew boat division again; sold all the utility boats; smaller than supply boats, they work the production platforms, more things between platforms; Twenty Grand had tugs, that's when Tidewater got into tugs; had inshore and offshore back them; probably 30 inshore tugs; loaded them on barges and sent them to Nigeria for Shell Oil contract; can't crossbreed inshore towing guys and offshore guys; overseas do all the rig moving with supply boats, not with tugs, especially off the coast of Africa; found out we needed bigger boats overseas

Working in the North Sea: Tidewater was building big boats to work in the North Sea; got competitive there building anchor handling tugs; thicker glass, smaller panes so sea would not break them out; done in early 1970s; was manager in the Gulf and sent over there to build them; all from there; once built foreign they have to work foreign; people from 4-5 different nationalities and local; use a lot of Filipino engineers, Portuguese fishermen in the North Sea; took awhile to get people to leave home

Early classes: First class in the towing division, all spoke French; first time to New Orleans they all failed Rules of the Road; next time sent a guy who spoke English and they all passed; most of the guys had never finished school; get to know the people, makes it a close knit industry

Being on boats: Started on boat docked at the old Bizzo Dock in New Orleans; get used to running overseas, long periods without going ashore; exercise, stand watch, paint; always something to do; it's unbelievable the companies that have been in the business and bought out; Tidewater is the oldest company not bought or sold; 1984 went to Orange, Texas to base where they were storing supply vessels to look at the boats MARAD financed; didn't know there were that many boats in the entire industry; banks and MARAD had seized boats.

Wallace Carline

Amelia, LA

January 9, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA089

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Wallace Carline is the owner and CEO of Diamond Services Corporation, and when I interviewed Earl Hebert, a long-time employee of his, Earl said that I really should interview Wallace. He talked with Wallace about it and arranged for the interview. After a couple of attempts to get together, we managed to coordinate our schedules. I met with Wallace in his office and explained the study, and he said he would be happy to talk about his experiences. We talked for about an hour and a half, stopping a couple of times so he could answer phone calls.

Wallace Carline was born in Plaquemine, Louisiana in 1931 and moved to Morgan City as a child. He began working in the oilfield during the summers when he was still in school. He served two years in the Korean War and returned in 1953 to work for his brother in his oilfield contracting business. In 1961, he went into business for himself and continues to operate Diamond Services Corporation. His company has been involved in laying pipe, putting in foundations for drilling barges, driving pilings, and putting in platforms. In 1973, Carline went to the Amazon to perform work for most of the major oil companies that were drilling there. In the 1970s and 1980s his company's main business was dredging. In 1995, the company built its first water jet boat and now has nine of them working, three in Mexico.

#### Summary:

Occupational history: Born in Plaquemine in 1931 and moved to Morgan City; worked during the summers until 1951 when was a student at LSU and sent to the Korean War; returned in 1953 and went back to the oilfield; worked for brother in oilfield contract company until 1961; went into business for himself in oilfield construction; started in the Atchafalaya Basin doing mostly water-related work; years later shifted to offshore in shallow waters laying pipe, putting in foundations for drilling barges, driving pilings; in 1973 went to the Amazon, working for most of the major oil companies, Phillips, Sun Oil, ARCO, BP, Getty; dredging canals off large tributaries, driving concrete piling to set up rigs; had no water access so flew rig in by helicopter; reassembled cranes on location; had office in Quito, Peru; now working in deeper water, with bigger equipment, derrick barges, still laying pipe

Company evolution: 30 years ago began putting in platforms; brother started this work in the early 1940s, was in Berwick; I was in Amelia; he got out in 1964 or 1965; was strictly construction till five years ago; too capital intensive to go deep; built first water jet boat in Gulf of Mexico in February 1995, now have nine of them, three working in Mexico; in 1970s and 1980s main business was dredging; over time the environmentalists and move out to the Gulf reduced this work; in the past had to dredge a canal for everything; in 1975-1977 a guy from

California came out and bored the first river crossing; since then don't dredge, bore across horizontally; he sold company to someone else; in the Gulf would dredge and then backfill, put in a mat to protect the shoreline; that was a big change

Company organization: Worked directly for oil companies; Texaco was big client, good to work for; had a lot of state leases; started as Win or Lose Oil Company, then the Texas Company; had Lease 340 out here, from here straight out, now broken up; had Pipeline Department, Pile Driving Department, Dredging Department; to dredge would have ten people on a barge 24 hours a day; worked 14 and 7; two crews on all the time; with pile driving one crew would stay out until the job was finished

Employees: Privately held company; held on to our people; only had two secretaries in 50 years; dredging superintendent here for 40 years; up to \$24 million in annual sales; survived the 1980s downturn by tightening belt and staying competitive; people like Texaco always give you work; kept it simple and private; lots of dredging in Atchafalaya Basin; lots of work for Phillips, all the way to Bartlesville

Reflections: Would absolutely do it again; love what I do; highlights were the work in the Amazon; nobody knew anything, water would come up 8-10 feet overnight; was like in the basin; every day was a challenge; natives were friendly; no navigation aids, stayed on the river; rented helicopters from the Peruvian Air Force; in the Gulf don't use helicopters; in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s used seaplanes when communication was not too good; had to send out a plane to see what was going on; sold last seaplane in 1985; had two seaplanes, a little land plane and a jet; had lots of pilots in the area, many planes, bases in Amelia, Morgan City, New Iberia; Lafayette had mostly amphibious planes to land at the airport; back in the 1950s it was strictly seaplanes

Problems: Marsh, hard sand; every job is different; experience was the best; co-leased for mineral rights; operator dealt with the mineral lease; we'd move in and they'd tell us what to do; most of the land owners were happy; most were big landowners, Louisiana Land & Exploration, Continental Land and Fur; they had 140,000 contiguous acres; LM Company, Bouree Lumber Company; most of the property was bought for timber rights in the Atchafalaya Basin, cut timber; LL&E bought it for 5 cents an acre; people didn't want to pay taxes on it

Changes: Equipment got bigger; started with three inch yard dredges, now up to 8 is standard; only three dredge companies left, have bucket dredges; Brown and Root, McDermott, Diamond, Bean, Berry, Scroggins, Monroe Wolf; Brown and Root and McDermott got out of the business a long time ago; at one time had 40 bucket dredges on the Louisiana Gulf Coast; today we run 4, Bean has 5, Berry has 2; the heyday was the late 1970s and early 1980s; nowadays you can't get a permit; there are too many environmentalists; after directional drilling came in you don't dredge a canal; now most of the work is cleanouts for old canals; back in the 1960s you would pick up the phone and call the Corps and get a "verbal;" don't think people were concerned, no Sierra Club breathing down your neck; now, in past ten years, dredged a canal on my property and for every acre I destroyed I had to buy two; paid \$6,000 an acre; the landowner keeps the money and has to plant cypress trees; same thing with laying pipelines; little things like backfilling you didn't have to do before

Other changes: Work more for independents now; in the 1960s had few independents; now 60-70 percent of our work is probably independents; a lot of work is taking out platforms; in certain areas can't use explosives; rules on how to take them out; subcontract to divers; at one time bought diving company but got out of that business because they were trying to unionize our diving company; we lost the election, so we shut the company down; safety and insurance are tough; acquired S&H Divers in 1967; it was a fad here; conglomerates came and picked everybody up, we were picked up by conglomerate in Connecticut; they wanted us to pick up divers; stayed ten years, bought my company back in 1977; I had become part of Board of Directors, 135 companies; they were uncontrollable, hard to live under rules, all entrepreneurs; conglomerates went down the tubes; caused lots of change, traumatic; would never go through it again

Italians: First came to the Gulf in the 1980s; helped them get their permits; they were drilling in 1,500 feet of water; water pressure collapsed the pipe

Family: Three children, one takes care of real estate; construction is hard work; most employees from this area; tried platform fabrication for 4-5 years but it didn't work out too well; too people intensive

Patent: January 24, 1989 patent for underwater cutting tool; had sunken barge in navigational channel; Corps would not remove, cost too much, so went and cut it up; on Board of Morgan City Bank since 1969.

Elvis "Al" Chabert

Galliano, LA

September 20, 2001

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM012

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Roy Champagne, Sr. was shrimping at night off Campeche when he got chased by gunboats, so he decided to quit shrimping and went to work on crew boats. Roy's friend, Elvis "Al" Chabert, worked his way up through his career as a driller, beginning on Rowan rigs, then working mostly for Texaco. Unlike many of the old-timers, Al and Roy don't hang out for early morning coffee at the Fed Pond in Golden Meadow. Roy's house is just behind the L & M office, so he visits the office regularly. When I was explaining the consent forms, Al said, oh, you mean a release form. It seems like he and many others have become familiar with the process working as actors or extras in Glen Pitre's movies. Tony Cheramie arranged this interview, and we talked in MJ's office at L & M Botruc, with Tony and MJ present through most of the discussion. During the interview, the two would talk to each other in French.

Al began his career working on drilling rigs for Rowan and then went to working for Texaco in 1954, working on drilling barges in the bays. He stayed with the company for 33 years until his retirement in 1984. By the 1980s, everything was run from the office, by computers.

#### Summary:

Al's career: drilled for Texaco for 33 years, starting in 1954 on drilling barges in bays; retired in 1984; Roy worked mostly for Gulf Oil, had best rigs around; everything was mechanical; 6-man crews; Texaco never shut down, always had things going on; by 1980s, all things run from office, by computers.

Roy's career: started in oilfield in 1957; was shrimping in Texas before then; ran crewboat for MJ's uncle, Lefty; hired for 3 days, but lasted 30 odd years; ran out of district office in Paradis; covered Houma, East Lake Barre, Redfish Bay, mainly to Humble rigs; then operated out of Port Sulphur; Botruc started in 1964; #11 was a big one, never hit a rig nor a boat; Minor gave him watch after 17 years' service, \$1000 bonus at 20 years; got first license in 1957; needed 300 ton license for deck boats, the 1600 ton with unlimited radar; grandfather clause for written exams (explain answers verbally); "proud to say, never a spill;" retired 6 years ago; got tired of the water and hasn't taken his shrimp boat out since he retired.

Operations at rigs: discussions of bow thrusters, maneuvering around rigs; crews of rig would do unloading, had to watch them if you had supplies for several rigs; captain makes decision on moving away from rig; Old Man Tony Price as Gulf's transportation supervisor; yellow sheet with delivery instructions; big rigs have water systems (salt to fresh); living quarters on boats.

Technology changes: with Loran, "just like putting milk and sugar in your coffee" Other changes in industry: computers, telephones; used to be up to the driller, now it's all from the office; used to use oil based mud, "black magic," and clean up with diesel, now you can't put your finger in diesel

Accidents: drowning off rigs; crushing hands when tying up barges; nor'westers

Texians: many stayed; "once you drink the bayou water, you're hooked"

Killing wells: talks about dirty gas wells in Mobile Bay, "once you smell it, it's too late."

Roy Champagne

Galliano, LA

September 20, 2001

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM012

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Roy started working on boats in the oilfield in 1957. Prior to that time, he was shrimping in Texas. His first job in the oilfield was to run a crewboat for MJ Cheramie's uncle, Lefty. He was hired for 3 days but lasted 30 odd years. He ran boats out of the district office in Paradis and covered Houma, East Lake Barre, and Redfish Bay, mainly servicing Humble rigs. Later he operated out of Port Sulphur. He got his first license in 1957. At that time, he needed a 300-ton license. He was proud to report that he never had a spill. Roy retired from shrimping 6 years ago and has not taken his shrimpboat out since.

#### Summary:

Al's career: drilled for Texaco for 33 years, starting in 1954 on drilling barges in bays; retired in 1984; Roy worked mostly for Gulf Oil, had best rigs around; everything was mechanical; 6-man crews; Texaco never shut down, always had things going on; by 1980s, all things run from office, by computers.

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Killing wells: talks about dirty gas wells in Mobile Bay, "once you smell it, it's too late."

J.C. Chargois

Lafayette, LA

May 2, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW049

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. J.C. Chargois was born in 1924 in Lafayette and was the third child of Kezz and Louise Chargois. His father was the first city marshal in Lafayette parish in the late 1920s. His grandfather and later his father owned a plantation and opened 450 acres of land that included four springs, which serviced as Lafayette's only swimming pool. After graduating from Lafayette High School in 1942, he went work for the Southern Pacific Railroad where he started out as a clerk on the road and later became a crew caller and worked in the time keeping department. During that time he also went to college at Southwestern Louisiana Institute (SLI). When his department at Southern Pacific was relocated to Houston in 1963, he went to work for Dootree's Furniture as a designer; he went into the decorating business for himself in 1968. He provides a detailed description of downtown Lafayette in the 1930s and 1940s. Then he discusses the influx of oilfield people (early on called "oilfield trash") and the departure of the railroad.

#### Summary:

Early life: born June 1924 in Lafayette to Kezz and Louise at 309 Polk Street; father first city marshal and later sheriff (on Long Administration ticket); mother, with three other women in town, formed city recreation (describes).

Downtown Lafayette: describes businesses there during his childhood; Saturday nights stores stayed open until 9 p.m., the town's curfew.

Southern Pacific Railroad: went to work as a clerk in '42; later became crew caller (midnight to eight shift, seven days a week) (describes job). During World War Two, women were hired as telegraph operators. Railroad at its peak growth in '42; 90% of Lafayette worked for railroad.

Oil Center: oil industry came into Lafayette after the war when Heymann developed the Oil Center; Crowley didn't want the Oil Center because of stigma against oilfield people ("oil trash"). Built on 350 acres originally bought from Girard Family.

Growth of Lafayette: occurred with influx of oil industry and people; residential development. People mainly coming from Texas and considered to be outsiders and oil trash; no problems, but oilfield people never properly dressed; people stayed in rooming houses; natives didn't really socialize with them - they didn't take to outsiders to quickly. As time went on, people established roots in the community. Took awhile for utilities to catch up with growth; but growth during this time was very gradual.

Impact on community: no real social changes; companies bringing in executives from outside and hiring people from community to fill in office and field positions; economic development.

Bust in 80s: whereas there had been 300 millionaires in Lafayette in the late 70s, but the 80s there were just a few, if any; it was a little disaster. Before graduates would stay in Lafayette because there were jobs, but today they leave.

Railroad departure: in 60s with new technology and equipment (e.g., diesel engines), railroad consolidating and moving everything to Houston; he decided to take severance pay instead of moving and got into interior design business. Had a bad impact on the community - many people lost their jobs, though many did relocate to Houston.

Heymann's Department Store: merchandise; Wednesdays were sale day, with ice cream and hot dogs a penny apiece; auctions and prizes; Missus Heymann would watch over clerks from a special high-backed chair. Clerks made a dollar a day, which was typical pay in the 30s.

Extra board: had this for most positions at Southern Pacific; if one was going to miss a day or more, would get someone from extra board to take their place; would not get paid for the missed day. Describes working in time keeping department.

Lloyd Charpentier

Amelia, LA

January 14, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA091

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Lloyd Charpentier was referred to me by Richard Carline, another long-time Tidewater employee. Lloyd was not at work when I interviewed Richard, but Richard talked with him about the study. When I called, he was happy to arrange an interview. I met him at his office at Tidewater.

Lloyd began his career on the water in the 1950s when he went to work on his uncle's fishing boat. He then operated a crewboat for Phillips 66 when the company was laying a pipeline to a Eugene Island field. He left the Gulf of Mexico to serve in the army from 1961 to 1963 and returned to the oilfield as a deckhand/engineer for Tidewater. He advanced to captain within six months and then moved from crew boats to supply vessels the following year. He worked in the Gulf of Mexico, Alaska, South America, and Trinidad until 1973 when he moved into a staff position overseeing vessel repair and maintenance. He has given 40 years of service to the company and has no immediate plans to retire.

#### Summary:

Tidewater history: Lloyd almost 65 years old, with Tidewater for 40 years; started as deckhand/engineer in 1963; prior to that spent five years working on oilfield supply vessels and two years in the military; brother was a Tidewater, talked Lloyd into coming; Tidewater had only three vessels when Lloyd began, the Rip Tide, the Ebb Tide, and the Flood Tide; Alden Laborde with Murphy Oil Co. created the Mr. Charlie and decided they needed vessels to carry equipment to the rigs; designed an open stack vessel; Charlie Murphy did not want to be in the boat business, Alden asked his brother John to come head up the company; Ed Kyle had mud company in Berwick, and the first office was in the corner of Ed's warehouse; started with five employees, one secretary, and one operations guy; Tidewater spread from Gulf of Mexico to Venezuela, then to Africa, Australia, and the North Sea; now have vessels wherever they are drilling for oil

Personal history: born in Franklin; then lived up the road in Amelia but house burned when 12 years old, family moved to Morgan City; then to New Iberia, finished school there and lived in New Iberia till 1987 and then back to Berwick; used to commute; started working when still young; worked on a fishing boat for a while; started in offshore service work in the early 1950s

Early offshore industry: First used Navy LSTs as tenders for people to live on; LeTourneau came out with jackup rig; mobile rigs important

Growing up: Southern Louisiana was a sportsman's paradise; Dad was a commercial fisherman for a while; then he worked at Terrebonne Shipyard during WWII; older cousin asked Lloyd to work on a shrimp boat; started running his own boat at 18 for Paul's Boat Rentals in Amelia; Paul Hanes was the father, later turned the company over to his son; also Seamar, PBR; first crewboat carried light supplies and crew members to inshore drilling rigs; worked 8/16 or 12/12 or 12/24; changed crew out on the rigs every 8 or 12 hours, only the company man would stay on the rig; did that till drafted in the military in 1961; served in the army till 1963; brother had been with Tidewater 8 months, told me to come in, called the next day for a job

Working for Tidewater: No captain jobs open for about 6 months; started running a 65-foot crewboat; about 1964 started running supply boats, did until January 1973; then handled repairs of the boats; company had about 60 boats by 1963, some in Venezuela; then started out of Africa and had some vessels in the North Sea; Lloyd worked one year in the Gulf of Mexico, one in Alaska, then to Gulf of Mexico, then South America, then Trinidad until 1973

Licenses: Got first license when 18 years old; first license was an inland license; moving offshore had to get Coastwise License; May 1958 had to change to operators license for crewboats; supply boats required 300Ton license; back then lots of vessels did not require licenses because of the tonnage; for first license got books, studied, and went to take the test; no schools back then; for 100Ton license a friend loaned Lloyd the books, studied on the vessel and at home; in the early to mid-1970s Tidewater started a program to train guys for licenses because saw trend where certain boats had to have licenses

Schools: Tidewater had the first school to teach employees and help them get their licenses inhouse; Young Memorial was first to have schooling for Able-Bodied seamen (AB's), captains, engineers; Dewey Wilson taught the first school, had a little vessel in the port that was used for training, then VoTech School, then school opened in Houma and spread throughout the Gulf Coast; schools were response to rapid changes in regulations, technicalities that had to be learned

Changes in regulations: First change for Tidewater was when began building 180-foot vessels, all certificated; had to have licensed engineers, ABs, didn't have enough people; captains had been on vessels that did not require licenses, were very good boat handlers; 1982 Coast Guard grandfathered everyone in, they all had to be certificated; all vessels had to be inspected and had to have it all done by 1982; NAVCS got involved with the International Maritime Organization and this started affecting the offshore vessel industry; Tidewater had to hire a professional person to take care of the changes; most regulations are deep sea regulations, designed because of fatalities, most fatalities in Europe; Tidewater always had a safety program, a safety director; in the early days, many in the industry were not worried about safety, only about getting the job done; Tidewater had to figure out how to do safety and get the job done; in early days captain had to run in the fog, today captain has the choice

Accidents: Changes all boiled down to bad accidents where people drowned; in the Gulf of Mexico in the early 1950s, crewboats ran together in the Mississippi River, supply vessels ran into each other and hit a ship; not many given the amount of work being done, but enough to get attention; in the early days, no special equipment, people used fishing vessels, PT boats

Companies and vessels: Mobil Oil had lots of boats for crew changes and decided to build a specialized vessel; it had a diesel engine and ran slower; in about 1974 companies started building aluminum crew boats; PHI was the first helicopter company and came in around the 1960s; in the 1960s helicopters would fly but only for special occasions, very rare to see them; until companies realized they could ferry people back and forth more quickly by helicopter; with each evolution Tidewater shifted assets to overseas locations not yet caught up in the evolution; only a few oil companies built specialized vessels; Phillips was probably the first; Tidewater bought theirs; Mobil went to contract vessels after their first fleet got older; the oil companies had their own seismic vessels because there were none to be had elsewhere; three Tidewater vessels were used for drug interdiction, special projects; in a lot of cases the rules changed about what vessels could be used for, vessels were certified for only one thing; jobs outside the oil and gas industry were good for the company, but probably only 5 percent of the work was outside

Downturns: Lloyd first affected in 1982, then the industry went to nothing in 1983 and 1984; things started back up a bit in 1985 and then the Arabs cut the prices and 1986 was the worst yet; things started back up in 1986, in 1992 Tidewater acquired Zapata; 1997 and 1998 were some of the best times, Lloyd's division made \$358 million; things started down again in 1999; don't understand why things are still not turned around

Mariners: Tidewater has always been a training ground for the rest of the industry; now with laws all seamen have to have some training; have new training facility to respond to STCW regulations; have dual tonnage for international as well as Gulf waters; problem with downturns is that the company has to lay off people, lots leave the industry, and they are reluctant to come back; with young people today, out of 10 trained probably only 3 or 4 stay

Changes in vessels: Early vessels had manual controls, manual steering; then to hydraulic steering, then air controls, then stick steering, control pitch systems; bow thrusters, joystick control; dynamic positioning; Z drives; today captains sit at a console on the bridge to operate the boat, it costs a lot of money; the job, to carry supply and cargo, has not changed; every time somebody comes up with something, everybody has to follow suit; example of hauling drilling mud - from sacks that had to be hauled by hand to bulk tanks

First day offshore: Ran a crewboat for a Phillips 66 pipeline from the beach to Eugene Island; used to do live boating with divers; the divers would jump over the boat and you would follow them; first trip for Tidewater was to go pick up a crew, but never made it offshore because of bad weather; exciting to go out and see this rig jacked up in the water

Tidewater history: Tidewater's office was in Berwick at the International Mud Company until 1969; in 1969 Tidewater acquired Twenty Grand, moved everything to Morgan City and got rid of the old place; Tidex was the people company and Tidewater Marine the asset company; operated out of Morgan City until 1995 when moved to Amelia, kept getting flooded at the Morgan City location; with the Zapata merger the towing department moved to Harvey; about 1997 redid the Amelia office and moved everyone to the same location; till then very few people used computers; worked a 7 and 7 schedule until Zapata merger, then people could chose between 7 and 7 or 14 and 14; Zapata worked 28 and 14 and their people pushed for that because

they could make serious money and have serious time off; today back to 14 and 14 to keep more people working

Family life: Had one child when started working for Tidewater, two more later; Mama always said, "Wait till your daddy gets home;" got off vessels when youngest 5 years old and moved to 8 to 5 schedule, home every night

Reflections on career: Have nothing to regret; would be more aggressive in investment in Tidewater, would like to carry the legacy, but don't have professional people any more; guys came to work on boats because that was what they wanted to do; John Laborde was great leader; there was lots of respect in the company and for the company

Competition: Twenty Grand was a fishing boat company that got into the oilfield; Arthur Levy Boat Co. sold out to Petrolane; Petrolane sold to Houston Oil and Gas; Marine Service started in 1964, split up, one started Service Boats and sold to Tidewater, the other started Zapata; Arthur Levy Enterprises became Nicor then Seacor; Hornbeck started buying companies; Tidewater bought them in 1996; OSA, OIL has an office in Aberdeen and 150 vessels; Twenty Grand was probably the biggest merger of the day, they had over 100 boats and so did Tidewater; after the merger, stock prices escalated, both groups got benefits, had staff problems because of a duplication of jobs; survive by doing your job and going beyond the call of duty; never turn a job down, go anywhere they ask you to go

Working: Always fun coming to work; was in charge of drug interdiction program 1984-1993 out of Key West, FL and Panama; got clearance, saw stuff people did not know about; did a lot of Research and Development work; it was different and exciting; the oilfield never changes; during the downturn got job with T-Com tracking a hot air balloon; the company officially commissioned the boat as a platform; in the early days, everybody looked after each other, didn't have the sophisticated equipment so if you got in trouble you talked to each other; mariners were fishing people and looked after each other; the only liability we think about is putting a vessel in harm's way; story of helping a guy whose boat was sinking and who later wanted to sue Tidewater; did not happen much 30-40 years ago, but does happen today; back then you could help people without worrying about having them turn on you; all three children worked on vessels for a short period of time

Operations: Tidewater got its first computer in the office on Canal Street, about 1978; computer took up the whole room, had one guy in charge of it; Lloyd's job was to oversee crew assignment and personnel, would spend hours looking up each person's seatime; asked to put it on the computer; eventually got done; now all vessels are computerized; "GPS has really opened up the world."

Steven Charpentier

Galliano, LA

July 12, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM044

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I called Mr. Jimmie Martin for referrals to shrimpers; he recommended Steven Charpentier as a man who had really made a living on the water. He's been retired for 6 years, and is 71. He is an avid duck carver, on the board of directors of a carving club. After the interview he showed me around his workshop; he intends to donate many of his carvings to the Cajun Heritage Museum that is being set up in Larose. He introduced me to his wife, but she didn't participate in the interview. During the interview, his uncle came over from next door to ask for help loading a huge TV into the car to take back to Wal-Mart. Later in the interview, the uncle returned, saying that Wal-Mart had to order a replacement 35-incher, so we unloaded the TV into the carport.

Steven shrimped on wooden boats for 47 years until he bought his last boat, a steel, 72 footer, Mom and Dad. His son-in-law crewed with him on that boat, and Steven sold the boat to him, at no interest, telling him to pay him back when he could. The son-in-law also has a license to run crew boats. Under Governor Edwards, Steven served on a task force attempting to set up sanctuaries and revise the inshore season so that shrimp had time to grow larger before capture. Both of these efforts failed because the offshore shrimpers, such as Steven, were outvoted by the inshore/bay shrimpers on the task force. During the interview, Steven kept coming back to the main problem with Louisiana shrimping: the ever-growing number of inshore shrimpers are catching small shrimp. But, he said, this is a democracy and you can't control the number of shrimpers. He sees the trend of big-boat trawlers converting to small boats - much cheaper to operate - so the problem will get worse. The inshore May season was a disaster, due to low prices caused by a flood of imports.

#### Summary:

Family/growing up: quit school 5th grade; father was muskrat trapper and shrimper in lugger-type boat; good pelts sold for \$1, 35% of which went to owner of leased trapping ground; trapper could make \$3-4,000/3 month season; had 4 brothers, all fishermen; grocery store owner in brick building across the bayou - Williams - would co-sign note so you could build a boat; has 2 sons and a daughter (works in bank); 1 son shrimps, the other sold his boat to go to work on liftboats for Orgeron [Montco].

Shrimping in dad's days: dad and others fished with a lugger similar to the Petit Corporal, Leon Theriot, Sr.'s boat on display in Golden Meadow; would get white shrimp in Timbalier Bay and Grand Lake, carry them to larger "ice boats," owned by Hubert Lefont, which delivered them to canning plants in Golden Meadow; ice boat would supply bread to luggers; luggers had 1 bed,

would nail up a piece of salt meat, cut off piece to add to whatever the canned food was for the day's meal.

Inshore: Lafitte skiffs with skimmers cheaper to operate, small but powerful motors; there are 25 skimmer boats for every big trawler; catching shrimp that are too small; tried a bigger-mesh net, but returned to 1¼ inch; people who are disabled will buy little boat; getting worse every year.

Big boats: shrimp organization collects \$.01/lb to underwrite lobbying efforts; George Barish from Chalmette is president; 15 years ago, boat would cost \$250K; Caterpillar would finance engine, but you had to sign your whole boat over to them; earnings all depend on nature of trip, e.g., weather, etc.; Kiffe brothers started pulling 4 trawl nets; when Steven shrimped, all he had was a compass and fathometer; now, an educated guy with little experience but better equipment (radar, plotting, fish-finding, etc.) can catch more than he could; claims that feds 'planted' a type of turtle that doesn't exist naturally in the gulf, to enforce pressure for TEDs.

Seasons: Texas closed May - 15 July out to 200 miles [some boats, like the one he sold to son-in-law, left to go over there for the opening]; Texas - big boats can't fish within 5 miles of beach; LA inshore brown season May - mid June, whites mid-July; when TX closed, their fishermen fish deepwater off LA; late Sept - whites move out to big boat territory.

Duck carving: Steven is "amateur" on scale of novice, amateur, professional, master; participates in carving contests as far as Maryland; winning carvings auctioned off to support charities; for upcoming contest, he had carved a feather, which is judged next to the real feather - the weather got to his real model today and messed it all up.

D.J. and Lucy Chauvin

Chauvin, LA

July 9, 2001

Interviewed by: Ari Anand

University of Arizona

AA001

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. D.J. Chauvin, a retired mud engineer, was referred to me by Rob Gorman of Catholic Social Services (Houma). I met him at his home in Chauvin, where I also met his wife Lucy. They live in a relatively new subdivision, and the house was easy to locate. D.J. and I conducted the interview by the mantelpiece in their dining room, while Lucy sat further away at the dining table. D.J. and Lucy also had a tape recorder running so that they could have a copy of the interview for themselves. They were both very warm and gracious.

D.J. was born in Chauvin in 1941. As a youth, he worked at a shrimp factory and grocery store and then worked in a pipeyard while in college. He graduated from Nicholls State College and worked as a schoolteacher until 1970. At that time, he joined the oil industry. He became a mud engineer and then a trainer. He was blinded in an automobile accident in 1988, and has been an oil sales representative since. He and Lucy work together (she drives him around), beginning very early in the day and winding up by the afternoon. He still calls on rigs for his work. D.J. also has an older brother, Ferrel, who spent many years with Texaco.

#### Summary:

**Early Life:** Born in 1941 in Chauvin, Louisiana, in-home delivery by a doctor. Worked at shrimp factory while he was young, which was common among youths. Later worked in a grocery store. Got summer job working in oilfield while in college. Worked in pipe yard for companies like Tuboscope, which tested and graded pipe casing. Describes process of grading tubing/piping.

**Education and Academic Employment:** Graduated from Nicholls State College with a degree in education. Taught school in Bourg and in Chauvin at Cache Elementary. Promoted to principal of Montegut Middle School but didn't like it and quit after one year. Worked for insurance adjustment company.

**Early Oil Industry Employment:** Then hired on at Baroid as a mud-engineer trainee. First full-time job in the industry. They sent him to school in Houston for 6-9 weeks; then came back to Chauvin. Worked in lots of different areas. First well he worked on was a Shell Oil well on an inland barge in the swamps. The rig was originally owned by Sun Oil and was a nice rig with a special mud pit. Later this rig burned. Shell Oil Field was drilling wells down to 18,000 feet and the mud weights were very high. Used inhibited mud system, which is harder to master.

**Offshore Experience:** Later worked offshore. First offshore rig he worked on was a storm drill rig. Very foggy so went out in crew boat instead of helicopter. Hard to see the rig due to fog.

Was still working for National Lead Baroid at this point. Worked for Baroid for a couple of years. They had applied drilling technology (ADT) and tried to convince oil companies to hire them to do most of the mud engineering, mud logging, and drilling. ADT was intended to be the drilling foreman training school and he attended the training.

Mud Engineering: Then went to work for a smaller mud company named Delta Mud because they paid better. Fifth mud engineer hired by Delta Mud. Only worked there briefly because he found out they didn't have a mud program. Describes components of a mud program. Then started writing mud programs. Delta Mud was bought out by Chromaloy, which decided to hire and train their own mud engineers, so he started interviewing people for the mud school and training people. He also wrote a mud manual for the school. Promoted to a mud engineer manager who supervised the applicants. Did more management and less actual mud engineering as time passed.

Mud Engineering Technology: Describes mud industry equipment and development over time. Describes different types of equipment developed for various types of mud.

"Mr. Charlie:" Did mud engineering on "Mr. Charlie," which was different from working on other rigs. Areas around mud pit much quieter than on other rigs. Most rigs very noisy. "Mr. Charlie" had a pool table with coin slot. "Mr. Charlie" was a submersible and was very quiet, because noisy gear was in the bottom barge. Clothes washer was on the drill deck with the mud pit but lines for drying clothes was down in the hot, noisy bottom barge.

Schedule: Offshore rig was seven days, with occasional doubling over. Inland barges also typically seven days. Land locations were either quick "drive bys" or you ended up there for weeks. Worked on land rig down below Montegut and his wife, Lucy, delivered lunch to him.

Drilling Technology: Describes changes in drilling technology over time.

Delta Mud: Joined in about 1972 after starting work in the oil industry in 1970. Began by writing mud programs then began training mud engineers; then began supervising mud engineers. Had an on-ship lab, which was expanded by Chromaloy, for development of products. First company to use synthetic oil-based drilling mud, called Clean Spot, which has now become standard in the industry. Union Oil adopted Clean Spot.

Drilling Fluid Development: Describes development of drilling brines and sand control. Began with just salt water, then calcium chloride and sodium chloride, then zinc chloride (about twice the density of drinking water; very corrosive); continued to pursue higher density brines, including calcium bromide, then zinc bromide. Describes physical properties of various fluids. Earliest form of sand control was used by Gulf Oil.

Sales Experience: Quit working mud in 1980 and went into sales. Has worked for numerous companies in sales. First worked for Flowtrin then Filter Clean and Hothead Incorporated. While working for Hothead in 1988, he had a car wreck between Morgan City and New Iberia, which left him blind. Quit Hothead and went to Preheat Incorporated, where he has worked since 1995.

Technological Changes in Oil Industry: Describes changes in fluids, especially in fluid density

(went from 11.6 to 19.2 pounds per gallon over time). Also expanded into new areas, such as Laredo, Texas. Provided high-density brines to people working on government oilfields near Bakersville, California. Cleaned fluid after each use so it could be reused. Use of synthetic oil-based mud very common offshore now. Small deviations in drilling angle used to cause problems, but now wells can be drilled horizontally due to technological improvements in equipment.

**Social Changes in Oil Industry:** When he started working in 1970, most of the employees had been in the oil industry for a long time; lots of hiring based on personal relationships. Drilling foreman and other employees were hired directly by oil companies, and each company had its own way of doing things. Workers tended to be gruff and "hard" and were all white/Caucasian. Beginning in the late 1970s and early 1980s, companies started to use more consultants, who were not "company men." This allowed companies to hire extra people when needed but not have to lay off lots of people during slumps. Oil companies stopped hiring new drilling superintendents; just let positions vacated by retirees go unfilled; then would hire retirees as consultants when needed. Over time, there were fewer oil company drilling foremen and more consultants. Consultants not always good. This was a cost-saving strategy. Drilling foremen now coming from "all over." Currently, very few drilling foremen are company men, with the exception of Exxon and Shell, which both still use some of their own people.

**Racial Changes in the Oil Industry:** Oilfield is still not very "dark", but some rigs will be mostly black workers. More black workers in 1980s; "good old boy" network persisted throughout 1970s. Industry was not antagonistic towards new black workers but was not accepting and friendly either. More acceptance of blacks in the oil industry after the slowdown in the late 1980s/early 1990s; Companies needed to hire lots of people after the downturn ended but many old Caucasian workers had gotten new jobs outside the oil industry, so lots of blacks got hired. Blacks, Indians, Pakistanis all started showing up in oil industry jobs.

**Advancement to Drilling Foreman:** Now easier to become a drilling foreman because do not have to go through all the advancements within the company. Describes sequence of jobs leading up to drilling foreman within Texaco. Becoming a drilling foreman used to take a long time, but now people can become consulting drilling foremen after working only a couple of years as a roughneck or toolpusher. Lots of drilling foremen are young, in their 30s.

**Labor-Employee Relations:** There are some unionized oil rigs up North, but foremen on these rigs hate it because roughnecks will only take orders from their toolpusher. On non-unionized rigs, workers are skilled in many tasks so can trade duties with other workers. Workers on unionized rigs might get too specialized and not be able to do multiple tasks. This has happened some in the North and on large semi-submersible ships. Oil industry workers are very proud, and workers felt that if they did not like the job, they could always move to another company. Not a big push for unionization because the jobs paid so well.

**Impact of Environmental Regulations:** All products in the mud business had to meet environmental standards. Mentions specific regulations. Environmental standards are more of a "problem" now than when he started. Used to dump excess oil-based mud overboard, which dirtied Coast Guard vessels. In the 1970s, rig would not be shut down for dumping but now

people can go to jail for it. Regulations have become more stringent, which he thinks is good. Also used to dump water-based mud overboard. Now can not dump anything overboard. Describes Mobil Oil incident near protected Dauphin Island in which numerous people got fired company for pumping rainwater overboard.

Environmental Story: Back in the 1970s, State of Louisiana was concerned about earthen pits where waste mud was stored. Tested waste pit water for saltiness and alkalinity before dumping it in estuaries. If water too salty, would add fresh water to dilute it. Tried to get ph down to seven (neutral).

Suggested Interviewees: Jake Giroir, retired salesman (mentioned above), D.J.'s brother, Ferrel Chauvin, retired Texaco drilling foreman

Ferrel and Grace Chauvin

Chauvin, LA

July 13, 2001, July 18, 2001

Interviewed by: Ari Anand

University of Arizona

AA003a&b

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Ferrel Chauvin was referred to me by his younger brother, Mr. D.J. Chauvin, who also called him to introduce me. Both Mr. and Mrs. Chauvin (Grace) were quite friendly (she came in mid-interview), and the interview was quite informative. We talked for a while about traveling, and about various things in general like cultural differences. The Chauvins have traveled a fair bit, and Mr. Ferrel Chauvin is very proud that he has traveled to Europe a few times and taken his kids to most of the big monuments across the U.S.

Mr. Ferrel was born in Chauvin in 1932. He served in the Army in the early 1950s. After leaving the Army in 1953, he joined Mobil as a kitchen hand, then became a roustabout, and then a roughneck. He went to work for Texaco in 1954 and worked his way up from being a derrick man, mud engineer, and driller, to a senior drilling supervisor before his retirement on December 31, 1989. Mr. Ferrel remembered his years in the oilpatch fondly, particularly the jokes crew members played on each other, a subject on which he said he could write a book! I returned to interview him on the 18th for more specifics about his work experience.

#### Summary of AA003a:

**Early Life:** Born in 1932 in Chauvin. Father worked for Texaco. Attended University of Southern Louisiana for one year then enlisted in Army.

**Oil Industry Work:** Went to work for Mobil Oil after leaving the Army; worked offshore as galley hand, roustabout, and roughneck. Schedule of 7 days on, 7 days off; changed to 6 and 6, which paid less so went to work for Texaco in about 1955. Worked on Texaco rigs as roughneck, then as derrick man. Most rigs were steam back then because no market for natural gas. Started working on drilling rig around 1956 or 1957. Then went to work on pile rig powered by natural gas. Then worked on derricks until 1970 with same crew for 12 years. During this time there was a big push to increase production.

**Mud Engineering:** Took mud engineer job in 1970, stayed in that job until 1976 or 1977. Invented a mud cleaning system and some other items.

**Motivation to Work in Oil Industry:** 7 and 7 schedule allowed him to work during his time off. Cultivated large orange crop, which he sold for extra money. Oil industry was one of the only places to make "good money." Also just fit his personality.

**Early Oilfield Work:** Working for Mobil, 5-6 hour boat ride to rig. Took awhile to get over his seasickness. Rigs were not equipped to live on so stayed in a camp. Worked 12 hour shifts, mostly nights. Camp was on pilings.

**Family Life:** Married while in the military. Wife had to manage family and make all the decisions.

**Life on the Rig:** No telephones when he started in the 1950s. Great food. Hard work in early days because had to do all lifting manually. Crew played lots of tricks on each other.

**Work History:** After derrick work, was a mud engineer until about 1976. Then worked on a drilling rig until 1977, when he became drilling supervisor (a.k.a. tool pusher). Describes drilling supervisor duties. Drillers used to be in charge of rigs but supervisors became more common as rigs got bigger over time. Describes more supervisory duties. Remained drilling supervisor until he retired on December 31, 1989. Never went back on rig; never misses the oilfield. Talks about retirement activities. Had plenty of money in his retirement plan.

**Mid-1980s Bust:** Working as senior drilling supervisor overseeing various drilling supervisors. Describes duties. Starting around 1985, lots of rig work started to be contracted out to save money. Then, in about 1987, the districts began to be consolidated. When they consolidated New Iberia and Harvey Districts, someone took over his job, and he went back out in the field as drilling supervisor. Then there was a big blowout that destroyed 24 wells on one platform. He was sent to clean up the mess and try to redrill. Still working 7 and 7 schedule.

**Injuries and Safety:** Worked in oil industry for 35 years, from 1955 to 1990. Never had a serious accident. Most workers end up with back problems or missing fingers. His brother was blinded in a car accident. Oilfield work is dangerous. Company always had a safety program, but safety really depended on who was the driller and the experience of the crew. In mid-1980s Texaco got rid of all their rigs and started contracting rigs instead.

**Family in the Oil Industry:** Son has worked for Texaco for about 20 years. Son-in-law has worked for Texaco for about 25 years. Father worked for Texaco.

**Technical Changes over Time:** Everything was done by hand when he started. Now rigs are much more modernized. Rigs have become more technically sophisticated as began drilling offshore in deeper and deeper waters. Lots of technical advances in equipment. Oilfield work has also become a lot safer. Progressed from on land drilling to offshore to deeper waters. Now can drill in 9000 feet of water. Communications have improved; now have fax machines, computers, and telephones on rigs.

**Social Changes over Time:** When he started working, most workers were not well educated. Soon people had to have a high school degree to get a job. Today, company jobs are hard to find; most work is through a contractor. From when he started work in 1954 until about 1975, oil jobs were very secure; "you had to really screw up to lose the job." But by the early 1980s, people had to worry about their jobs; companies were giving retirement packages and shutting down rigs. Companies tried not to fire people when they shut down rigs; instead moved people to different

jobs; some people had to take pay cuts. Now people worry about keeping their jobs and being able to retire. Most workers do understand that companies have to do something to cut costs. Describes contractor hiring and training process.

Unionization: Never unionized because the refinery workers were unionized and oilfield workers would get raises when the refinery workers got raises. Refinery workers went on strikes and all the company employees benefited. Shipyards are now trying to unionize.

Environmental Regulations: When he started working, dumping oil or whatever overboard was not a big deal. Things started to change around 1968-1970. Now people have to report any spillage and recover the oil. Oilfield destroyed barrier islands and marsh areas by digging canals. The government should have had more control earlier. Now can go to jail or be fined for dumping oil. Regulations made job a lot harder but everyone realized they were necessary.

Mud Engineering: Describes mud handling process. Designed a system to take solids out of mud and a lost circulation field to minimize mud loss. Describes use of mud in drilling. Have to treat mud with chemicals to prevent water loss as it circulates. Worked as mud engineer for six or seven years, moving from rig to rig. Texaco had 10-15 rigs in the Harvey region, including both land and barge rigs.

Future of the Oilfield: Future will be offshore, either in the Gulf of Mexico, Alaska, or Florida. Still lots of oil in Gulf, but will have to go farther and farther offshore. Might use secondary recovery techniques if oil prices continue increasing.

Funny Story: Tells story about a joke played on one rig, which involved a rivalry between the day and night crews and an angry nutria.

Summary of AA003b:

Family in Oil Industry: Father worked for Texaco for about 25 years; started in about 1944; retired when he was 65; worked as laborer then mechanic; never went offshore. Lots of onshore work in the shipyards. Son and son-in-law worked for Texaco on rigs; at one time, both worked for him on the same rig. When Texaco sold rigs and went to contracting, son and son-in-law were moved to production. Both still working for Texaco; one on offshore platform, one on inland lake barge. Describes processing oil and gas from various rigs, which is done at a "tank battery."

Work History: Got out of school in 1951. In Army from 1952 to 1953. Went to work for Mobil; worked in kitchen in 1953; worked as roughneck in 1954. Went to work for Texaco in 1954; worked as a derrick man on a rig for 15 years, from 1954 to 1969; mud engineer from 1969 to 1975; driller in 1976; drilling supervisor from 1976 until retirement. Paid by the hour until became drilling supervisor, which is salaried. Pay at all levels is pretty good. Last few years before retirement, he was a senior drilling supervisor in charge of all the rigs, working out of an office. Retired December 31, 1989.

Drilling Problems: Pipe getting stuck in hole. Drilling into pressure hole, which can kill a well. "There's always a problem" when drilling a well. Describes all the ways things can potentially go wrong. Time is money on a rig; expensive to run; need to drill as fast as possible. Describes potential problems. Problems are really common. Most dreaded problem is a well blowing out and catching fire. Describes more potential problems.

Training: Sent to school before becoming mud engineer, but the training was really a waste of time because he already knew most of the information. Talks about early mud engineering experience.

Worker Demographics: Most workers were from the area; some workers from northern Louisiana, Mississippi. When the boom started, most supervisors were from Texas. Few Cajun supervisors until about 10 years after drilling began in the area. Lots of workers from Many, Alexandria, and Bunkie; few from Mississippi and other states. Most early engineers from out-of-state, mostly from east coast and Texas; also some engineers from other countries. Crews from certain areas tended to stay together. Texaco put workers on "extra board," in which you could go from rig to rig until you found a job you wanted; so tended to cluster with similar people. Some Cajun crews would speak all French.

Desegregation of Oilfield: Less clustering of crews after desegregation in the mid-1960s; extra board system ended. People from northern Louisiana seemed to have harder time with "colored" workers. He had no problems with "colored" workers; skin color did not matter to him. Started hiring women in mid-1970s, which was more of a problem. Some women sued company for sexual harassment. Work not as hard as it used to be so women can do it. Integration changed how workers talked and behaved; more "carefree" before integration.

Job Security: Job security per se has not changed that much. Texaco tries not to lay off workers; instead, cuts work force through attrition and by offering retirement incentives. He took early retirement because of incentives, but it was still a hard choice. When he began, the oilfield was booming and there were tons of jobs. Just not as many jobs today. Now Texaco offers retirement at age 50, but few people have enough money to do that.

Worker-Supervisor Relations: Less personal relationships between workers and supervisors than in the past.

Unionization: Oilfield might eventually unionize. Boom-bust cycles result in lots of hiring alternating with lots of layoffs. So workers might unionize to get more steady employment. Also, workers get paid less in Louisiana than in other areas so might unionize for better wages. 14 and 14 schedule attracts lots of people from other states; can fly back home during time off. Oilfield workers never needed to unionize because benefits accrued by unionized refinery workers were also given to oilfield workers.

Mid-1980s Bust: When Texaco sold their rigs, many workers went to work for drilling company contractor, Bid Drilling Company. Bid Drilling Company was owned by Texaco but was a separate entity. Started cutting benefits in 1980s. Later Bid Drilling Company sold all their rigs. Many rigs ended up "in the junk pile."

Marriage to Oilfield Worker: Gracie Chauvin describes being married to an oilfield worker. No communication while he was out on rig. She made all the decisions. Later, Texaco got more lenient and let workers call home. Then, when he became a mud engineer, he came home almost every day. When working as driller and drilling supervisor, he could call home daily. Only time she ever called him on the rig was when his mother died. Most of her friends had husbands offshore, mostly working for Texaco. He would work extra hours to get extra day off. Have five children, all married now and living nearby. Working 7 and 7 schedule allowed him to start an orchard.

Kerry Chauvin

Houma, LA

February 4, 2003

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS013

#### Ethnographic Preface:

A significant number of people in government and business suggested talking to Kerry Chauvin, who is chairman and chief executive officer of Gulf Island Fabrication. The interview took place at the corporate offices near the main yard at the end of Thompson Road. His office is unpretentious, considering he is CEO and chairman of the board of a NASDAQ listed company. That, and small things like the worn boots in the corner, suggest an environment at the corporate headquarters that emphasizes hard work rather than pretense. The interview was easy going and open.

Kerry Chauvin grew up in Houma, and went away to college. After receiving a bachelor's degree in engineering and an MBA with an emphasis on banking, he went into the Air Force. Upon discharge from the military in 1973, he began working for Delta Shipyard (New Orleans), which opened a division in Houma. He stayed with Delta through thick and thin, as it evolved into Delta Services and finally Gulf Island Fabrication. When the Gulf Island investor group bought Delta's fabrication assets in 1985, Kerry was named general manager. By 1990 he was president and chief executive officer, and in 2001 he also added chairman of the board to his titles.

Gulf Island is a publicly traded corporation traded on the NASDAQ under the symbol GIFL. It has three primary subsidiaries: Dolphin Services, an inshore and offshore fabricator; Southport International, which makes offshore living quarters; Gulf Island MinDOC, which develops deepwater oil and gas production structures.

#### Summary:

Gulf Island Fabrication: Growth out of Delta Shipyard, relationship with Chromalloy. Delta bankruptcy and purchase by Louisiana Gulf Island investor group in 1985. Relationship with local investors. Acquisition of Raymond Fabrication, Dolphin Services, and Southport. Tendency to have a conservative business model, partly because of the cyclical nature of the industry, strong awareness that Gulf Island grew out of the assets from the bankruptcy of Delta.

Role of Houma Navigation Canal: It made Houma a deepwater port, and its lack of overhead obstructions made it ideal for shipping large fabricated products. This canal was a primary factor in locating in the Houma area. Later discussion focused on the need to have a deeper canal to move larger pieces of equipment. The shallow depth of the canal means it is not as easy to bid on the largest platform projects. There are environmental issues (salt water intrusion, flood hazard) that need to be addressed to gain project approval, but these can be dealt with in design.

Changes in business over the last 20 years: Inshore to offshore activity, increasing size in supply boats, larger size platforms, floating concepts in platforms, wood to steel construction, increased regulation, changes in technology, internationalization. Gulf has concentrated on fabricating designs made by oil companies and delivering them on contract. It is not a full service Engineer/Procurement/Install/Commission (EPIC) contractor.

Regulations, Liability Requirements: International competition means regulatory complexity, more paperwork. Welding requirements are more stringent. Steels used on the platforms are so sophisticated that U.S. companies can't manufacture them; they have to be imported. Safety is a major issue, especially because platform transport is covered by the Jones Act, which has no limits on claims. The Harbor Workers Act also covers their dockside work. Because they build what the customer designs, they don't worry about product liability. Minerals Management Service also requires inspection of all phases of design in areas over 400 feet in water depth.

International Context of Oil Business: More international acquisitions (BP, Shell buyouts). Most of the international oil companies have a strong presence in Houston, so access to them is relatively easy. Competing internationally is different; Europeans have different ways of operating.

Labor: Shortage of skilled labor. Use of contract labor is not as efficient. Too much emphasis on college degrees in K-12 education. He has been working with the technical college to increase skills training. Gulf Island also has a training facility on site, has a two year training program. A related issue is drug testing, about 5% of workers are fired each year for failing drug tests.

Houma Sense of Place: It is a good place to raise a family, with low crime rate. The workers have a strong work ethic. Quality of life is improved by access to hunting and fishing. Cultural activities enhanced by access to New Orleans. On the downside, it is hard to get workers to come to Houma to work, the wages are low compared to other areas, and it is hard to socialize with Cajuns.

Chester Cheramie

Golden Meadow, LA

March 4, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM028

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Chester Cheramie at the boucherie in Cut Off and arranged to interview him the following morning at the Fed Pond in Golden Meadow, where he is a regular at the morning coffee gathering.

Born in Golden Meadow in 1923, Chester Cheramie was one of seven siblings in a trapping/fishing family. He graduated from high school, spent three and a half years in the Navy, then returned to Golden Meadow and worked as a roustabout for several years. His father-in-law gave him a barroom, which Chester operated for fifteen years before going to work for Cheramie Brothers' boat company. He then worked in the office, doing mainly personnel, purchasing, and promotional work, for Nolte Theriot's boat company. After 26 years at that job, he retired at age 74. One of his sons has a PhD and directs the CODOFIL program (Council for the Development of French in Louisiana) out of Lafayette.

#### Summary:

Early life and military service: pulled out of school every year for 3 ½ months to help with trapping; all children did everything they could to help family income during Depression - peel shrimp, open oysters, fish; growing up during Golden Meadow's oil boom, "you go to bed at night and get up in the morning, there would be a new well next to your house; in Navy, was on submarine patrol in South America for a year, then hauling equipment and supplies for preparation of invasions of North Africa and Japan

Blowout in Golden Meadow: in 1939 or 1940, blowout, people moved up to Galliano and Cut Off because all the roofs and the ground in Golden Meadow covered by 4-6 inches of oil

Financing boats: companies manufacturing marine engines would finance boats so that their engines would be used

Industry cycles: a boom in 1954-55, then oil prices dropped and stopped drilling; late 1960's, things took off again; in 1980's, downturn lasted 8-9 years, popped up again in 1991-1992; in the 1980's, still a lot of muskrat trapping, shrimping during bust; oil companies tell you to build and build boats, so that the more there are on the market, the cheaper they can rent them for.

Boucherie: the event (killing hogs, preparing other traditional dishes) was started about 27 years ago by 15 of us, chipping in a couple of bucks; now has 50 members, putting in \$50 each, allows to invite family and a couple of guests; started up by golfing buddies who said, "what are we

going to do in the winter?" but it does replicate the old days when, without refrigeration, grease and lard used to preserve meat

Old economy: shrimp companies all had mother boats that would collect catches; all companies had grocery stores and shrimpers would trade catches for groceries and supplies - no money exchanged; with oil coming in in the 1930's people started having a little money; people with oil on their land would get a check for \$200-300 a month

North Sea: Nolte Theriot was a pioneer there (featured in the video, "Cajuns of the North Sea"); activity slowed down for Cajuns when England, Norway started demanding that their nationals be used on boats; got to where the only Americans on the boats were captains and assistant captains; then English learned how to make their own boats

Reflections on growing up: it was hard; tells parable of man complaining that he had no shoes: "Did you ever meet the guy that had no feet to put into the shoe?" Always someone worse off than you are.

Linwood "Boz" Cheramie

Cut Off, LA

October 3, 2001

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA015

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Linwood "Boz" Cheramie by his coworker, George St. Pierre. George had recommended that I talk with Boz because he was known as the practical joker on the rigs, so I was looking forward to hearing his stories. I talked with Boz's wife on the phone, and she was hesitant at first because Boz had fallen on his head and also suffered a mild stroke, and he has trouble with his memory. He is also suffering from prostate cancer. When I told his wife what I had heard from George, she laughed and warmed up to the idea of the visit. When I arrived, both Boz and his wife were waiting outside and eager to visit. We talked for a while about their yard and then went into the formal dining room. Boz and I sat at the table while his wife sat at a chair off to one side. I asked her to join us at the table, but she said that she preferred to sit in that chair. We had a delightful interview. Boz was able to answer questions and remember stories, and his wife joined in with comments throughout. She also brought in photos of his last day at work and other mementos.

Boz was born in 1920 and raised in Golden Meadow. He moved to Cut Off in 1954 when he was married. His first job was with Rebstock and Reeves. He then worked as a roustabout for Brown and Root in Golden Meadow for 5-6 years. He went to work for Latek Gulf, a small company in Leeville, and then worked for Chevron until he retired in 1982 at age 62.

#### Summary:

Early history: worked for Latek Gulf, a small company in Leeville; boss died, so everyone laid off; bought St. Jude candle, burned it 9 days, went back to Leeville and got job with Chevron; started working on a boat; knew all about boats; then moved to structure; very first job was on section dredge working for Rebstock and Reed for his brother-in-law; then went to work for Brown and Root in Golden Meadow as a roustabout for 5-6 years; worked on his daddy's property; the boss died, so he went to Latek Gulf in Leeville.

Early Chevron: worked on Penguin, a long, narrow boat; carried people and supplies between rigs; left on structure during hurricane; worked 7 and 7; from roustabout became a gauger; liked roustabout because with others; gauger had to stay alone on structure; lonely.

Pranks: soot on can to put on forehead; wear dog collar to protect against mosquitoes; lipstick on shirts; short-sheeted beds; hung rags around men's throats.

War: was in medical corps; worked on maternity ward; had been in oilfield before war; went to 7th grade, highest available; back from war to Latek Gulf.

Work experiences: stuck in basket between helicopter and platform; Chevron was safe company, not too much happened; would fish, listen to radio, watch TV, play cards when not working; was the cook, watched what mama did; guys from the boat would come around every night for supper; constantly traveling between structures; ordered food they wanted, received orders on Wednesdays; worked for Texaco for about 6 months but quit; Chevron better company.

Contract workers: had roustabouts from Danos and Curole for dirty work; they had separate bunkhouses on platforms; would stay, cook, eat, and sleep there; were people from down the bayou, had to do what they were asked to do.

Regulations changed: could not throw anything in the Gulf; could see oil sheens for miles, had to report them.

Changes in Golden Meadow: had no cars, had to walk everywhere; no heaters; Daddy had stores in Leeville, Golden Meadow, Cut Off; people during the depression could not pay, never refused food to anyone; Daddy was 5 years old in Hurricane Chenille in 1893; survived in oak trees; lived to be 102; bought 600 acres of land in Little Temple; had platform to dry shrimp; leased the land to Humble Oil; got money, bought land for \$6,000; five kids got royalty, checks every month; elected to Port Commission, School Board; lots of heart problems in family; Daddy had no education, would order by bringing down cans; sold all property except Little Temple and where house is; now mostly water; Humble took care of family.

Wife: from Golden Meadow, Toups; one of 11 children; Boz' second wife; first wife died at 29 of cancer.

"MJ" Cheramie and Tony Cheramie

Galliano, LA

September 19, 2001

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM010

Ethnographic Preface:

MJ Cheramie and his son, Tony, had been recruited by Kerry St. Pé of the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program to be part of the "action team" for this project, and both had agreed to talk with us. For several days, I had been working through Tony to set things up with some of the companies old-time captains, and I interviewed MJ in his office when he returned from a trip to Mississippi (the tape has noise from phone calls and intercom paging). Tony was sitting in on the interview and added some information and opinions. I only ran one side of the tape, though the session continued with a tour of the operations and discussions about the unique Botruc design based on scale models in the conference room. Then MJ, an avid horseman as well as a hunter, had to go off to help a friend cut out some cattle.

MJ Cheramie runs L & M Botruc from the office on Highway 1 in Galliano, a business started by his father. Starting in 1948 or 1949, MJ's father borrowed money for engines from his grandfather and began building up inventory, starting with crewboats. He got contracts through Otto Candies. He took a Rhode Island ferry design to George Engine Company in Harvey and had boats built for the offshore industry. He operated three vessels built by Baroid Mud and also kept building according to the Botruc design. Through the years, the company built larger vessels as oil work went further out in the water. The company built several vessels with Bollinger and American Marine.

Summary:

History of business: starting in 1948 or 1949, father borrowed money for engines from grandfather, began building up inventory starting with crewboats; got contracts through Otto Candies; took Rhode Island ferry design to George Engine Co. in Harvey; operated 3 vessels built by Baroid Mud; kept building Botruc design; molded lines, bow to stern, makes it better through water; through years, built larger vessels as oil work went further out in the water; built several with Bollinger, American Marine; now, market doesn't justify new builds; we do mostly shelf work.

Current situation: slowdown right now; expects to pick up after Sept. 11 bombings, due to need to be independent of Middle East; expects Congress to pass incentives to drill wells, especially natural gas.

Ecological impacts of oil: some bad feelings; shrimpers thought oil would destroy fishing, but realized that platforms drew shrimp to them; people think Louisiana destroyed by oil, but platforms provided ecological boon; industry is very conscientious regarding spills, etc.; as kid,

would swim, trunks would be black; biggest problem is levees on the river; east-west currents push saltwater up into marsh west of river, causing erosion; but nobody's going to knock the levees down.

Other boat companies: Gilbert Cheramie, Montco; Chouest; Twenty Grand bought out by Tidewater; in 1980s, some boat companies went under, others bought out; most companies specialize, e.g., crew boats, supply, tugs, lift boats.

Workers/regulations: problems with regulations because they are written for deep sea; captains knew material, but had trouble on written exams; finally got Coast Guard to give oral exams back in 1960s; shrimpers could sail by dead reckoning to Yucatan; bareboat charters: hire boat from one company and crew from another, and due to quirk in regulations, crews didn't have to be licensed; came out with "public law licenses" in 1964; we finance schooling for STCW tests; "I'm all in favor of it;" now getting deckhands from all over; local people go to work for major oil companies directly and can make more money, or become "doctors and lawyers".

Oversupply and consolidation: Title 11 loan program to stimulate activity in shipyards in 1980s; could borrow couple million from government; doctors and lawyers built boats, had bitter pill to swallow with slowdown; Title 11 still around, though not as active; boats sold foreign, with stipulation that they never could come back; definitely an oversupply in 1980s - was 200 boat companies, now down to 18; lots of consolidation going on now (Seacor bought Gilbert Cheramie); we're medium-size fish, so we've fought them off; we've been approached, but offers were stocks and notes, very little cash; wasn't interested.

Mark Cheramie and Eric Vizier

Houma, LA

July 24, 2001

Interviewed by: Ari Anand

University of Arizona

AA012

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Mark Cheramie and Eric Vizier at Penny and Ray Adams' home, where they seemed to have dropped in for a conversation and some food. Diane and I were there to talk to Ricky Cheramie, but often the conversation was general, and it turned out that Mark and Eric (who are cousins) had both recently lost their jobs for trying to organize their workplaces. They were both very outgoing and worked up about labor issues and local politics, and when I asked if they would be interested in being interviewed, they agreed. I contacted them some days later, and we set up a meeting. We conducted the interview outside the union offices, by the parking lot at a wooden picnic table, next to a swing-seat in the lawn. During the interview, every now and then a couple of people would come out, maybe to have a smoke, and go back in, one of whom was Michael Creivash (sp?), a local organizer who was described by Mark and Eric as an encyclopedia on unions and legal issues.

Mark Cheramie was born in 1963 in New Orleans and was a licensed deckhand by the time he finished high school in 1981. In 1985 he joined Doucet Adams as a Mate, and in 1992 he moved to Guidry Brothers, where he moved from Mate to Captain in two years. By 1994, he was First Captain. In December 2000 he was fired for Union activities. He is currently working as an organizer at the Offshore Mariners United union in Houma.

Both Mark's and Eric's cases against Guidry Brothers were up before the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) at the time of the interview.

#### Summary:

Work Histories: MC was offshore tugboat captain for 17 years; in oil industry for 22 years; lots of family involved in oil industry. MC fired from Guidry Brothers after 8½ years; captain for 6½ years. Until 1983 oil crunch, people making good money on boats and got lots of respect; but no job security. Now captains do not get much respect because big companies have taken over "mom and pop" businesses. EV is fourth generation captain; has uncles in oilfield; boat owner in late 1990s; illegally fired from Guidry Brothers for supporting union.

Reasons for MC firing: MC fired after discussing unionization with his boss and supposedly having a union meeting on his boat, which he did not; supported union because concerned about job security. MC discusses conversations with company owners about unions and his participation. Guidry Brothers badmouthed MC after firing him, claiming he was a bad employee. Feels he should be compensated for all the time he had to spend away from his

family; also wants respect. EV also thinks captains deserve respect; he has been working for Crawley Marine Services since being fired from Guidry Brothers.

Worker Complaints: MC says boat owners can make workers do whatever they want because could fire you at will; workers typically work for several companies, but have same complaints about all companies. Typical worker complaints: being forced to go out during hurricanes; forcing captains to work with illegal crews; "green" workers; old or broken parts/equipment; job security. If workers complain too much, they will be fired. MC and EV repeatedly emphasize that captains are very skilled and deserve respect.

Union Efforts at Guidry Brothers: MC and EV spearheaded union discussions among Guidry Brothers workers; 60-80% of workers supported unionization. Workers most concerned about job security and pay. Companies threatened to sell out, close down, or fire workers who supported union; workers got scared and withdrew support for union. Most workers do not believe that their rights are protected by law. Labor Board in discussions for settlement with Guidry Brothers, but the company does not want settlement with union.

Continuing Union Efforts: Logistics difficult in MC's and EV's continuing union efforts, partly because difficult to access many workers; people working longer hours to make extra money or because they do not have relief; also cannot go down to docks. Workers scared to voice support for union. MC got involved in union when EV came onto his boat and showed MC his union contract from Crawley. EV worked for Crawley before Guidry Brothers; Crawley had 100% medical coverage. Benefits like 401K are relatively recent in most companies. MC realized captains have been badly treated by companies.

Worker Involvement in Union Efforts: Workers not previously interested in unionization because thought they could stand together to influence company policy; workers would send petitions to supervisors but usually nothing happened in response. Employees would come to MC and ask him to take up issues with the company. MC is very vehement about the ways in which Guidry Brothers repeatedly put him at risk. Coast Guard regulations allow captains to refuse to do certain tasks, but employers can fire the workers anyway. MC wants to prove that companies cannot "get away with it"; he works as union organizer for Offshore Mariners United.

Union Organizational Challenges: Hard to convince organizers that they need to get the community on their side. Tried to tell organizers about police corruption and similar obstacles but union people did not believe him at first. MC emphasizes that Southern Louisiana is different from any locations where unions have previously operated. After trying to talk with workers at docks, police started preventing access to docks and other areas. Describes interactions with and harassment by police.

Work Histories: MC born in 1963 in New Orleans. Working in oilfield on tugboats since age 15. Started working full time on tugs during senior year; graduated high school in 1981. Worked as licensed deckhand for Nolte J. Theriot for 3½ years; then went to work for Doucet Adams as mate and worked his way up to captain. Began working for Guidry brothers in 1991; began as mate, worked up to captain. MC fired in December 2000 for participation in union activities. EV fired in January 2001 for supposedly attending a union meeting on MC's boat; Labor Board has

determined that he was illegally fired. MC and EV did meet with union organizers but not on a Guidry Brothers boat. MC put in applications at various companies that were hiring but would not hire him; rumors that Guidry Brothers sent out a fax warning companies not to hire him.

Certification Program: By February 2002, everyone must be certified to work offshore; this just allows standardization of training, which MC thinks is a good idea. Gulf Coast Mariners Association (GCMA) got federal grant to provide training, but some companies will not allow their employees to get trained at GCMA because it is union-affiliated.

Impacts of Union Involvement: Both MC and EV and their families have been harassed for their union involvement. Neither could get non-union job after being fired from Guidry Brothers; could only get work with union companies. EV did get work with Crawley Marine Services because he had previously worked there, but they will not hire MC.

EV Work History: Born in 1970; living in Lafourche Parish. Working in oil industry for 15 years. Worked as captain for Tidewater Marine Service in 1995. First worked on grandfather's tug when he was 13 or 14 years old. Began working fulltime at age 16 for his grandfather's company, Robbie Vizier Incorporated. After age 18, went to work for Tidewater Marine; worked there for six years and worked his way up to captain. Worked for Moran in Miami for a few months in 1996; did some union organizing there. Later entered marine towing business but could not compete with big companies so sold his boat. Went to work for Crawley Marine Services in 1996 and joined union. Left when he got his own boat in 1998; left union at this point. Then sold boat and went back to Crawley for a while. Started working at Guidry Brothers where he worked with MC. Union experience in Miami so much easier that he was surprised at all the difficulties in Southern Louisiana.

Why Involved in Union: EV is "fed up with the dictatorship." Working on boat in Southern Louisiana is not respected; people consider workers "boat trash." In contrast, captains are highly respected in other parts of the country. Big companies are making massive profits while they screw over their workers. Need to educate people. MC believes in the concept of the welfare state and thinks he needs to fight against complacency.

Prospects for Eventual Unionization: Unionization will occur when employees realize that they have the right to unionize and when they do not fear losing their jobs. Also need national publicity and support. Five major maritime unions now working together with 8 major steelworker unions; transportation unions also supporting efforts. Need to get "unions to unionize" and support each other worldwide. MC and EV talk about economic globalization and its negative impacts. Both support globalized labor movement.

Social Issues: Lots of racial discrimination in oilfield in times when workers are abundant; racism is less obvious now because there are worker shortages. Louisiana is right-to-work state so non-union employees can be fired at any time.

Response to Objections to Unionization: Some older workers think the union would never work in the oilfield, because jobs are too diversified. But in reality, union contracts would be tailored to local working situations. Many people were just socialized that unions were evil. Workers on

rigs can do various jobs, but still might need specific workers, like electricians, in case something major malfunctions; so required union specialization could be beneficial. Companies have already responded to union presence; benefits have risen since unions became active in the area.

R.J. Cheramie

Cut Off, LA

July 19, 2001, September 26, 2001

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB008, EB020

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I received R.J. Cheramie's name from Raymond Dupre. Mr. Dupre seemed hesitant to give any names but then decided that the President of the Exxon Retirees Club would be a good person for me to talk to. R.J. was skeptical at first as to what our future purposes were for the information we were going to be gathering. After I explained that the interviews would be for posterity's sake for a large part, he agreed to the interview wholeheartedly. He lives down in Cut Off and is familiar with the "down the bayou" families such as the Cheramies and the Chouests. R.J.'s house is filled with furniture and pictures from the Orient. It is strange to see such foreign objects in a house in southern Louisiana. R.J.'s wife is pleasant but left us alone down in the den.

R.J. is from south Louisiana. He went to the Marine Corps out of high school, returned home and went into shrimping, and then went to work for a contract drilling firm. He then got a job with Exxon and when the company got rid of its drilling rigs in the mid 1950's, he was transferred to the production department. He worked for Exxon for 37 years. Seven of these years were spent overseas in Burma and Singapore. He is extremely loyal to Exxon and says so several times during the interview. He insists that he was railroaded into becoming the Exxon Retiree's Club president but has enjoyed his duties.

#### Summary of EB008:

History with Exxon: R.J. worked for Exxon for 37 years, 7 of those being overseas in Burma and Singapore. He knows much of the history of Golden Meadow's business. He said that Otto Candies, from Des Allemandes, was the first man to begin shuttling food and supplies out to rigs back in the late 40's to early 50's. He talks a bit about the reaction of the community to the oil business, both good and bad. He is my first interview to stress the difference between outsiders and local boys. It is obvious that this is a very important topic.

Work history: R.J. worked for contracting firms the first several years of his oil career. He wanted more money and was always looking to try something different, so he applied to a big company, Exxon. He worked on a wildcat rig for a few years until he was transferred to the production department. He worked his way up the ladder always willing to take on more responsibility and different jobs as long as there was more money involved. In 1970 he applied for an overseas position. When I asked him if he discussed the decision with his wife he said no, he knew he wanted to go and that was it. He took his 2 teenage children and moved to Rangoon. His family was there for 6 years.

Overseas: R.J. talked a lot about working overseas for Esso, a subsidiary of Exxon. He did not like to stick in one place for very long, which was the reason he applied for the overseas work in the first place. He makes several comparisons of the oil industry in Malaysia and in Southern Louisiana. He stated that while he did not like "Texians" or outsiders, over here he was considered a "Texian" over there. He talks about the Exxon Valdez spill and how Exxon got a bad name because of it. He stressed safety being important to the company all along.

Summary of EB020:

Success in the oil field: What kind of success? Remembers when oil field first moved into Golden Meadow. Moved houses to make room for oil wells. Instant money so many people didn't have a problem having their houses moved around at first. Tracts of land were so small that there wasn't really any money to be made. People who had lots of land made it, Jackson Chermie, for example. Working aspect was to work hard and know your business. Was making more as superintendent of production than superintendent of schools was making. Is money success?

Early work life: Marine Corps, then shrimping, let him go when there was someone with more experience, then working with drilling contract firms. O.W. Dowyer, drilling contract firm he worked with the longest. Was making more money at the contracting firms because of no days off. His boss asked him to stay but was at a point in his life when he wanted a little time off to get married and have kids and have benefits. Some people there just for the paycheck, if you want to know what's going on down in the hole, that will get you promotion.

Contract firms vs. Exxon: With Exxon, first come first serve on the positions on the drilling rig, everyday doing the same thing over and over again. Exxon stressed safety from the very beginning, also wanted green hands so that they could train you. Work with the same crew but different jobs each day. R.J. was never hurt on the job.

Jobs on rig: Driller made the most money. Strived to be the "brake man." R.J. never got the privilege of getting break time. Moved up by knowing your job. Learn different jobs by on-the-job drilling.

Boom & Bust in 50's: Exxon shut down almost all the drilling rigs, kept only the choicest men to work the rigs still open. Put most of the men on production. They were importing most of the oil during this time. In the mid-60's the need arose again. Needed more drillers so R.J. went back to the drilling rigs because he felt this was exciting.

Community reaction: Not that many people in oil industry at first (50's). There were some locals who made it big because they were the only ones around at the time; for example Otto Candies, out of Des Allemandes. Phil Glashear, fisherman who was very successful in the boat industry. A lot of people who made a lot of money, but many didn't.

Quarter Boats: Began at Exxon in early 50's but then were shut down a few years later. The cooks and galley hands were often placed in production crews to keep their jobs. In the late 60's

they began using the living quarters again. During the recession, the boat companies got a lot of business because they had to transfer supplies and people everyday.

Promotion/quitting: As long as you did your job and somebody higher in the ranks liked you, you were sure to get a promotion. R.J. knew of several instances where a person wasn't well liked but was moved up anyway just to get them out of their position. People would often leave because they felt they weren't being treated right, wanted to start their own business or knew that they were not going any higher. The Cheramies are an example of people who quit their jobs to open a business. Most resigned to open up their own businesses. Chouests had money to begin with.

People down the bayou: Most want to work on their own, not work for anybody. Very few like manual labors. They are good people and good workers. That has been the generation since R.J. can remember, especially since they began getting education. Exxon wouldn't hire local people in the beginning (crews as well as bosses).

Leeville Blowout: 1940's a blowout at Leeville caused all of the water that is there now because things started caving in and filling with water. That used to be all land.

Climbing up the oil ladder: Had to be well liked and know the right people. R.J. will not talk bad about them at all. He made his living for them and feels that they were very good to him. Some people who have worked for Exxon for 30 years will talk bad about them because they went to work with a negative attitude and it stuck with them. R.J. had some rough times, felt like he was passed up for promotions especially overseas, but many more good times. "as long as you give me more money, I don't care what you call me."

Overseas Company hierarchy: Worked for Esso Exploration in 1970. He went over as technicians they took the drilling engineers off the rigs and put them in the office. The presidents of the companies were often the nationality of the company headquarters, French, Australian, British. Had to hire and train the locals to do the floor work, except for the drilling positions. Very difficult in Southeast Asia because the people were so much smaller. All the work was wildcatting. Working for the local governments. Language didn't seem to be that much of a barrier. Used his French when he was working in Africa. Frenchman are hard headed. Worked a relief schedule his entire career with Exxon (Humble) and Esso. Wives didn't have to work over there because there was too much of a social life.

President of Retirees Club: was railroaded into the position. Says they are all old, any of the younger generation who retire doesn't want to join the club. People used to sit around and talk about old times, but many of the "younger" retirees don't join. Cannonball Baker, John Farley, old drillers with heads like mules, but they were workers. A "friend" nominated R.J. If he wasn't going to do it, no one else would. He enjoys it thoroughly. All he has to do is get in front of people and talk. 6 meetings a year. At meetings there is literature and info from Houston office, guest speakers. Cajun music, CEO of businesses, sheriff, etc. Wives are automatically in. When a member passes away the wife stays a member. Membership down to 86 from 120 due to death. Trying to get Mobil retirees to join their club.

Differences: Drilling oil now and then is like night and day due specifically to technology.

Retirement: Due to bust in 1986 offered a very lucrative retirement package, 4500 people took it, and they had to go back out and hire all green hands. Exxon refinery in Baton Rouge is the largest in the world but has less people now than 20 years ago.

Politics: All their (down the bayou folks) politicians are interested in is fattening their pockets. Parish Council is suing the Parish ever since they went to having Parish presidents. Nobody has ever served more than one term as Parish President.

Community changes: Houma has grown twice its size in the past 10 years because of the oil industry. Fishing and shrimping are not as big as down here, still a lot of it going on. Says that this part of the parish is catching more shrimp than they ever have. Last May's season of brown shrimp was the best it has ever been, millions of lbs. of shrimp caught. White shrimp season is not as good as brown.

Doesn't feel like he answered my question about what it means to be successful in the oil field. He doesn't know how to answer that. Feels like there have been more successes in business as far as the boat business goes.

Boating Companies: Cheramies began business with one small boat. Texaco was the only company around here for a long time, worked with them. Their boat design is different than other boats. Many businesses are cutthroat even though they are supposed to work together. A few years ago they all agreed what the going prices were, one company was underbidding the others. The Cheramies always kept their prices level even during boom time. In R.J.'s neighborhood alone, there are 5 or 6 people who made their fortunes through boats. One guy at the end lost everything because his son lived too high on the hog.

Hubert Chesson

New Iberia, LA

May 11, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG018

### Ethnographic Preface:

Hubert Chesson was recommended to me by Rene Seneca. Both are Texaco hands. I met Hubert on his porch on the outskirts of New Iberia. He was working in the yard and wearing the ubiquitous coveralls. His hands were dirty with oil and grease from whatever he was doing. Hubert was a fun guy to talk to - he was frank and forthright with me, and there was lots of good material in the interview. He spends some time talking about the various schedules that he worked after the war, and we end up talking about the Texaco camps for a while. The descriptions he gives are probably the best I have, and he notes that the camp concept was finally given up after a hurricane took them all out. Most of the rest of the discussion is about gas production, although there is a fairly frank evaluation of the friction caused by the racial quotas instigated in the late 1960's. He is also one of the few oilmen to admit to me that the oilfield was a pretty dangerous place to work in the early days.

Hubert comes from a Texaco family, and although he had some experience with other companies before the war, he got on with Texaco in 1946. He worked for the company for 38 years, beginning in drilling and ending in gas production. He made these advancements without a high school education.

### Summary:

The Early Years: Hubert started working for Texaco in January of 1946. Platforms were on pilings then, and there was a lot of work. That was all steam rigs at the time. He ended up putting in 38 years with Texaco. He had come from a Texaco family. His father had worked for Texaco as well. Hubert only has an eighth grade education. They began to shut down all the old steam rigs and move to diesel and natural gas. There's one old electric rig that was around for a long time. He also notes that he had roughnecked before the war for Noble Drilling for a while, and that Texaco sold most of their inland holdings.

The War Years: We talk about his first day of work, and he notes that he started by substituting. He worked in some shipyards before the war in Morgan City, then he was drafted in to the Navy, served in the Pacific. We go over some of his stories from the war.

Working for Texaco: During the war, Texaco was forced to hire some older people; when the GIs got back, they were able to get their seniority back as well. Everything was fine until he got laid off/retired 38 years later. No one was immune in that downturn. Just about everyone started with drilling at Texaco. Hubert roughnecked for about eight years, worked as driller after that.

They worked 12 hour days at the camps. First it was 10 days on and five days off, then it was 6 and 6. They were paying 83 cents an hour when he started, and that was the best job around.

Camps: The Texaco camps were on pilings. We talk about the camps for a while. Texaco wanted their labor at camps. Those camps finally closed for good after the hurricane. Some quarters were moved onto the drilling barges. The food was good at the camps. It cost a dollar a day for food. He worked his way from roughneck to roustabout. Texaco built its first gas compressor, and they used it for production via gas lift.

Gas: when they were producing gas, they started selling it to the sugar mills. Then they found other customers. Hubert had to repair the pipelines when he was head roustabout.

Quality of Labor: hiring blacks meant downgrading the workforce. There were quotas, and you couldn't choose your crew anymore. When he started working for Texaco, the old timers were mostly local guys. The oilfield was pretty dangerous back then. Not all the blacks were bad workers, though. You've got to remember, though, that a rig never shuts down.

Offshore: Hubert stayed inshore his whole life. He didn't want to go offshore - the move offshore took a lot of people from his crews. Eventually they moved him to Morgan City to replace the contractors. He worked all over the Atchafalaya with the high pressure gas.

Loyalty: we talk about loyalty to the company. He says the wages were good, the food was good, and more. The working conditions weren't too safe when he first started. His boss had a bad accident.

Unionization: Union organizers couldn't come out to the camps, which made it hard for them. But they didn't want them anyway. The men didn't want to pay dues, and they didn't want to give money to someone like Hoffa. They would try to meet you at the landings, but that didn't work either.

Family History: his family is from Cade, Louisiana, near Orange, Texas. There was a little oilfield there with wooden derricks when he was growing up. He evaluates the oil industry, and talks about his son losing his fingers in the oilfield.

Charles "CJ" Christ

Houma, LA

March 18, 2003, January 19, 2005

Interviewed by: Diane Austin James Sell

University of Arizona

JS020, DA132p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Both L.J. Folse and Hartwell Lewis mentioned CJ Christ as a local historian, although his reputation had to do with his knowledge of U-boats in the Gulf so I put off contacting him. When I had some free time, I looked up his address and found that he lived right next to my motel, so I called. He invited me over immediately, so I gathered my notebooks and tape recorder and walked over. It turns out he was an oil field pilot who also worked with mud and later on offshore service boats, and is very knowledgeable. My interview with him was spread over 3 days.

Charles Christ, known over Houma as "CJ," is a pilot who had a varied set of experiences in the oil fields. Before completing college, he joined the US Air Force and served as a bomber pilot in Korea. After the Air Force, he returned to college, then started driving a truck for Halliburton in 1954. In 1956 he became a mud engineer, working for Magnet Cove Barium (Magcobar - now owned by Dresser Industries). As a pilot, he flew to his mud engineering jobs. In 1959 he became chief pilot for Magcobar and set up their aviation and pilot training program, so that all mud engineers could fly to their jobs. In 1963 he had a partnership with a friend to create Coastal Marine (Comar), an offshore boat contractor. In 1964 he started Houma Aviation Services, a fixed base floatplane operator at the Houma Airport. Houma Aviation was caught in the 1980s oil bust and went bankrupt in 1989. So at 61, Charles became a boat captain for Coastal Marine, running crew and supply boats to the offshore platforms until retiring in 1995. He is well known for his knowledge of naval and marine history, especially U-boats in World War II, and consults on underwater archaeology.

#### Summary of JS020:

**Oil Business Operations:** Reputation was important, much business was done on a handshake basis. The early work was informal, but urgent. Pilots and other service operators were on-call 24 hours per day, because any down time on pumping or drilling operations was expensive. Toolpushers and supervisors on the rigs had strong control and large expense budgets, as long as they produced results.

**Mud Engineering:** Mud mixtures varied with drilling conditions. In the Gulf area, where oil deposits were mixed with natural gas under pressure, the danger of blowout was high. The mud tended to be heavy to provide pressure in the hole. Barite ( $\text{BaSO}_4$ ) was mixed with water because of its high specific gravity (4.3), which would increase mud weight to about 12-14 pounds per gallon (water alone weighs 8.3 pounds per gallon). To keep the barite in suspension, a "gel" was used, such as Magcogel, made by Magcobar. Mud engineers had to monitor the

strata, gas levels and viscosity of the mud, and make adjustments on the spot. To get around, companies like Magcoar trained their engineers as pilots.

**Oil Field Flight Services:** Because of the distances and inaccessibility of the fields, airplanes were a necessity. Because of the water, float planes were used extensively. At the time, helicopters were not able to carry the loads needed and, since the drilling barges and platforms had no helipads, they were not practical inshore. At its peak in the early 1980s, there were about 250 float planes in southern Louisiana, with four seaplane bases in Houma. The flying was at first informal, because the planes traveled extensively and were not concentrated at airfields. They had to make up the rules as they went along.

**Float Plane Activity and Modifications:** Float planes landed directly on the water and taxied to the barges, this was a delicate operation because coming in at an angle meant hitting a wing and causing damage. To tie up, a pilot had to turn off the engine and jump out just as the plane bumped against the barge, then tie the mooring line to the barge (being careful to not touch the hot engine). Shoving off was just as delicate because of the dangers of hitting a wing against the barge and dipping a wing into the water. The float planes had to be modified with fenders and flexible mooring to avoid damage.

**The 1980s Bust:** The oil price drop affected everybody in the area, but for the fixed wing aviators, the 1980s Bust was especially bad. Along with the price drop came the demise of the inshore fields as the big corporations shifted offshore. The floatplane usefulness was primarily inshore, where they could land and taxi right up to the drilling barges in the shallow water. The offshore platforms were too high to tie up to, and the water was too rough - wave action would drive the planes into the platform supports. At the same time, improvements in helicopter technology made it easier for them to land directly on the platforms and carry sufficient payload. The result was a demise of the fixed wing aircraft oil field business. In 1981, Houma Air Services had 41 employees. In 1989, when they went out of business, they had 3.

**Family:** He was married to one of the Wurzlows; when she died, he was left alone to raise four daughters, while working on-call. He was able to get help from his extended family.

**Summary of DA132p:**

**Schooling:** Crowley High School, Sea Scouts, Naval Reserve, McNeese Junior College 1946 and 1947, LSU, took flying lessons, ROTC, Army Infantry summer camp, then signed up for Air Force, worked in the swamps running transmission line, got called in November 1949

**Military Experience:** basic aviation and cadet training, advanced training on T-6, very competitive, advanced multiengine training, graduated December 1950, then training to transition to B-29s, survival and escape innovation training, combat in Okinawa September 1951 to April 1952, for more training, then temporary duty to Mildenhall, back to New Mexico, then to Guam in 1953, decided to be pilot but salaries very low, returned to college in spring 1954, graduated McNeese

**Oilfield work:** first job driving a truck for Halliburton, wireline truck, cement truck, promoted to pump truck, would do calculations for boss, then working offshore, equipment on skid unit

instead of truck, stayed till fall 1955, decided to be mud engineer, applied and was accepted, was sent to school, assigned to New Orleans but swapped with guy and ended up in Houma in January 1956, worked for Magcobar, went as high as could with the company, became seaplane pilot for the company

Seaplanes: did not go offshore, could not land; was flying mud engineer on a float plane; company had three bad accidents in a row, was hired to be chief pilot for all company airplanes in south Louisiana, then United States, then North America, developed safety programs, helped reduce insurance costs

Coastal Marine: Paul Hanes and Paul Hanes, Jr. asked CJ to join Coastal Marine as third owner, oilfield vessels; boat business was very lucrative at the time, formed the company in 1964; almost simultaneously, in late 1963, CJ also formed Astro Flight Service to teach people to fly; 1964 he and wife, Pat, formed Houma Aviation Services, ran flights from New Orleans to Houma, stayed in business for 25 years at the Houma airport; Coastal Marine was all aluminum boats; Paul Hanes, Jr. built the first aluminum offshore crewboat; slow to become accepted because big and expensive, but soon led the field of aluminum offshore speed boats, 65 feet long; sold back stock in Coastal Marine when Houma Aviation began doing well; was with Houma Aviation till 1989

Photos:

01: CJ Christ standing by F-51D Mustang made by North American; from Royal Canadian Air Force at Manitoba

02: Air Force T-28 - North American manufactured in CA; CJ Christ in first class of aviation cadets to fly the plane

03: Cessna 180 Float plane; no wheels, flown for Magcobar; at Geist Seaplane Base on Pecan St. in Houma; this plane revolutionized oilfield flying, could carry 3 people, pilot, fuel, and more

04: P-51 (F-51) the Mustang

05: Calcasieu Springs, building bog log structure, horizontal reinforcement of vertical poles

06: Calcasieu Springs, building bog log structure, horizontal reinforcement of vertical poles; CJ Christ in sunglasses

07: Magcobar Managers' Meeting - CJ Christ last on right, seated; Homer Grant, last on right standing; Frank Ford, third from left standing

08: CJ Christ in Air Force at Guam, serving in Marianas Islands of Pacific

09: CJ Christ at school after returned from Air Force

10: Cessna 180, flown by Lamar Nicholls; CJ Christ was supposed to fly but Lamar took the plane to take customer to a drilling rig; lost an engine, blade went through right float

11: Missing engine of Cessna 180 (see 10); recovered from Intracoastal Canal

12: tying off to rig; Lin Roy (left), one of three divers who made homemade aqualungs, started diving for party boats

13: divers getting into water on trip with party boat (see 12)

14: homemade diving rig; cartridge belt from WWII used as diving belt; other surplus WWII equipment used on the rig

15: checking for leaks in diaphragm of homemade diving gear, fire extinguisher bottle from airplane, O2 regulator from Air Force walkaround bottle; 2 hoses from WWII gas masks; CJ Christ top center

- 16: (r to l) Lopez, Balzoni, Lin Roy; homemade SCUBA gear; note two bottles
- 17: early SCUBA gear; homemade bottle on left, early Cousteau aqualung on right
- 18: CJ Christ, far right, COMAR crew supply boat, putting guys in personnel basket to transport them to the rig
- 19: guys ready to be lifted to the rig in personnel basket; CJ Christ signaling to the rig to lift them up
- 20: Diver coming up with red snapper
- 21: CJ Christ shown after his squadron won the Strategic Air Command bobbing competition

Joe Clark

Boothville, LA

July 23, 2003

Interviewed by: Jessica Piekielek

University of Arizona

JP010

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Michael and Daisy Dardar suggested that I talk with Joe Clark, their new council member who represents them in the Parish government, and a family friend. Michael called and arranged for me to meet with Joe at his new office after work. They said that Joe was someone their parents' age and had worked several kinds of jobs which allowed him to be familiar with various aspects of the industry. When I explained the project to Joe Clark, he said right away that he hadn't worked in the oil industry, only at a supply store. Nonetheless, he offered a comprehensive perspective on the economy of Boothville-Venice. Joe Clark often moved the conversation back to issues currently facing the community, primarily the unsure future of the economy and its relation to the oil industry.

Joe Clark was born in New Orleans and moved with his family to Port Sulphur in 1964. In 1966 he married and moved to Venice, where he has lived since. He worked 3 days in the oil fields before his first employer discovered that he was 16 years old, too young for the job. He worked many years for the Press family, who owned Empire Machine Works, with business operations in Boothville and Venice that served oil companies' supply and repair needs.

#### Summary:

Changes: Boothville-Venice is experiencing many changes, many oil companies are moving out, BP (British Petroleum) just closed their dock three months ago, smaller companies have tried to move in to replace larger, but without too much success, and without intentions of staying long term, Venice is "like a ghost town," not sure why companies are leaving, many moving to Fourchon and Mobile Bay, only advantage Venice now holds over Fourchon is four lane highway, thinks Venice has 25% of what they used to in terms of oil business, 10-15 years ago Venice had maybe 50 crew boats, now have 10, 12 supply houses, now have 2, 3 hardware stores, now 1.

1966 oil booming, everyone rushed, "never rained" meaning that nothing stopped oil production, even weather; many businesses in Venice in 1960s, butcher, grocery store, ballroom; business peaked in 80s and now declining; people thought it would last.

Career: Worked 3 days in oil field laying pipe, was 16 and newly married, when boss found out how old he was he had to leave because too young to work in fields; worked on water barge with father-in-law; at that time jobs were plentiful, hiring deckhands, captains.

Camps: Ran out of locals to hire, people moved to the area; camps- one at end of road was Getty camp, used to be Tidewater, 4 blocks of houses; Chevron also had camp in 1960s at intersection of Rt23 and Chevron Lane, now parking lot; Gulf had "Gulf Town" at Triumph, below where Pizza Inn is now, houses are still there, but privately owned.

Contracting: When oil fell, companies became more cautious; moved more to contractors, 90% people working are contract; locals started to look for other jobs with move to contract; companies sold camps in early 80s. Buster Hughes- primary contractor for Getty; Packard another common contractor.

Robey Clark

Amarillo, TX

June 25, 2003

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS035

### Ethnographic Preface:

Robey Clark went to LSU in 1939 and joined the Navy before graduation. However, they still gave him a diploma. After serving on the Gulf Coast during World War II, Mr. Clark got a job with Magnolia. He worked in various locations throughout the Southern U.S. in geology, mapping, and analysis. He became heavily involved in Offshore Gulf of Mexico and served as head of E&P for Mobil. He left Mobil in 1971 to work for Diamond Shamrock where he also enjoyed success. He finally retired from corporate life in 1982 only to start up a consulting business.

### Summary:

This interview covers a vast amount of information. Discussions of his time at Magnolia include early techniques for finding oil fields. Included was a comment on Lynn Morrow and the idea of offshore oil. He covers in only minimal detail some of the early state and federal lease sales. Some information on bidding with competitors as well as industrial fraternization. An excellent discussion on the discovery of bright spots, Mobile Bay. Quite a bit of geologic discussion as well.

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Jay Cochennic

Cut Off, LA

March 18, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB039

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Jay Cochennic's name was given to me by Mrs. Viviane DeFelice of Larose. When I interviewed the DeFelices in January, I asked about finding someone who worked for Schlumberger, as we had not found anyone who had worked for them yet. Mrs. DeFelice told me she thought Mr. Cochennic had worked for Schlumberger. When I reached Mr. Cochennic in March, he was happy to be interviewed; in fact he suggested I come down the same day I initially called him. He and his wife Doris greeted me when I pulled up. They have a lovely home in Cut Off. There were fans going and the wind blowing and out back they had a partially covered pool, which made me feel like I was in the tropics.

Mr. Cochennic was born in Golden Meadow to a bar owner and his wife, a jewelry shop proprietress. He grew up living behind the bar and remembers every Saturday night listening to oilfield workers, shrimpers and oystermen fighting. He spent summers working for Exxon and Brown and Root while in high school. He was in the Air Force for six years and was trained in Radar. He got out of the service, returned to Louisiana, and almost immediately got a job at Schlumberger. He felt that he was well trained to work there because of all his technology training in the military. Schlumberger was a very technology-oriented business and invented many oil field tools. Jay worked his way up to an electronics technician and retired in 1997.

#### Summary:

**Early Life:** Born in Golden Meadow, went to high school there. Father owned a bar and mother owned a jewelry store. Remembers the oil field workers feeling that they were really tough because of the nature of their jobs. Also, oystermen and shrimpers at the bar, a fight every Saturday night. Remembers hearing stories about locals and outsiders not getting along but by the time he was in high school that wasn't the case. Went to college for awhile but didn't like it much so he went into the service.

**Air Force:** Went into Air Force and was trained in Radar. Wanted to get trained in something that would be useful and that he could make some money. Also had the draft so he wanted to go in before he was called. Never saw any combat but was in during the Cuban Missile Crisis. Then went back to Louisiana. Mother had someone who worked for Schlumberger come into her shop, she asked about a job for her son and this man told her to send him down.

**Schlumberger:** Didn't know much about the company before applying, knew that they were involved with technology and electronics. Didn't know it then but later learned that they used the same technology that NASA used but in the opposite direction. Began in 1965.

First Day: Applied for electronics but didn't have a job yet, wanted him to work in the field for a while. His first day he was sent offshore. Everything was on the job training, you learned from someone with more experience. Now they have schools for everything, from how to get on a boat to how to do your job. 3 man crew, 2 operators and an engineer. Had to ride a boat out because no helicopters yet, only a couple of hours at that time. Later even the helicopter rides were several hours because they were drilling so far out in the gulf. Was paid for "drive time."

Payment: Paid for the number of tools you ran in hole as well as a base salary, and then drive time. Base salary wasn't very much nor was the drive time. Incentive to run as many tools as possible.

Schlumberger Duties: Put a string of tools together and put them down the hole. It was induction and open hole work. Tool's purpose was to measure the dome as well. Good company for research and development, interested in finding out what was down there. The number of tools you use is the luck of the draw. You didn't have too much control over how many tools you'd use. If tools don't work you run the risk of getting kicked off the rig, didn't happen very often.

Personalities: It was "weird" how big a part personalities played in the oil field. If personalities didn't mesh that could make big problems. The company men had the biggest egos.

Crew: 3-person crew for Schlumberger. Sometimes you could have over 100 people on the rig depending on what was going on in the hole. Sometimes there would be too many people and there wouldn't be any place to sleep.

Hurricanes: Called in before hurricane. Some still waiting to the last moment. Didn't have all the technology to tell you when to leave. Each rig was different. Individual judgment as to when crews went in. Usually was for the company's benefit, not yours. Wanted to make as much money as possible.

Retirement: Worked 1997, worked 32 years for them. Twice as busy as he was when he was working for them. Made lists of things he had to do and wanted to do. Drives to Chicago to see his daughter and her family every year a couple of times.

Operator: Was an operator for 4 months. Began getting familiar with the tools and making sure they work well. Enjoyed working in the field and thought it was extremely beneficial.

Dangerous situations: Had never been in one before. Getting on the platform was scary because of "the basket". Also talks about the Widow Maker being very dangerous. Learning was by watching and doing. Widow maker was the way to get from the tender to the platform. Basically a plank with a rope swing. First time he almost slipped but managed to hold on. Some made it out, but many fell. Oil companies did not like to talk about any of the accidents. Really rough in the winter because of the bad weather.

Electronics Shop: After 4 months moved to shop. It entailed working on all of the electronics in the tools. Felt that his military training was extremely helpful in this part of his job. Worked with two other guys in the shop. Herby Doucet and Matt Muntz. Herby had been trained by a

correspondence course and had been an operator for a long time. He was color blind which made the fact that all the different components were color-coded irrelevant.

Unions: In 1965 talk about the union and some people fired because of their attitudes toward the situation. People from New Orleans had come down on their own time. Most people down here are against unions, even though there is a possibility that they could make your life a little easier. Says that lately Chouest has put up signs, but even since the 60's people were against unions. Says it's because people are very independent and didn't want any more people telling them what they had to do.

Electronics: Long skinny electronics and often very heavy. They fit into the tools, pipes and casing. Outside had to be strong because of the temperatures. Uphold portion, panels which received information that the tools sent them to be read at the top. When he left computers were talking to computers down hole and info was being sent quicker because it was between the wires and not through the wires.

Biggest Change: Technology was state of the art, up with NASA. Always a new tool coming out and old tools being updated.

Training: First training was driving, first aid, how to get on the boats and platforms. They had to get trained for all of this as well as a couple of weeks a year to get trained on the new tools that were coming out. Still had some antique tools that some companies would want for a lesser price. Some would think we've done it this way all these years and we don't need to update: Booker Platform. Majors wanted new technology as soon as it came out.

Offshore: After the first 4 months only went offshore as a trouble-shooter. He would take a tool with him to solve a problem. Would have to arrange for his travel back (not pay for it) sometimes had to wait for a day to get a ride back inshore.

Marriage: Met in 1965 and married in 1966. The girls thought he was a Texian because he didn't have a strong accent. He spent 3 years in San Antonio.

Climbing the ladder: He was in charge of the electronics shop less than a year after he began because everyone else had gotten fired.

Schedule: Home every night except for the times he was offshore. Might have to leave early but for the most part was home every night. You went out by the job and usually didn't come home until you were finished, someone would come and relieve you after 14 days. 14 - 7 when working offshore. When he first began he didn't have any days off because they were short handed. He would sleep on the rig or on the boats coming back.

Positions: Electronic technicians, senior electronic technician and general electronic transitions. They were in charge of repairing tools from all over the oilfield. They would send tools in to the shop and then would fix them. Made more money as a general technician for doing the same job but they expected more from you. He remained a technician until he retired. The only other step up was as an engineer, but needed a degree to do that and he didn't want to go back to school.

Asked for volunteers to go to Libya, and he almost did it but decided against it. Worked most of his time in Larose, and 4 years in Houma.

Retirement: Profit sharing and a retirement plan in the beginning, then a 401K came in plus the other two. It is still the same now. Trying to work towards a 401K as a "nest egg" and your retirement will be a sum for each year you were employed by them. In order to retire you needed 85 points. 55 years old and 30 years for the company. He had to go past 55 because he needed to get more points.

Wife: Nurse for 33 years, retired a year after Jay.

Changing area/Houma: Nobody paid too much attention to what your dad did. Whether you were rich or not was irrelevant. In Houma there was only one restaurant there, no shopping center or Mall. The oilfield made Houma big. In Morgan City during the boom had a sign that said, "Last one out turn out the lights". So many people left the city. Isn't sure what industry is supporting all of the building that is going on, especially the \$250,000 homes. Wants to know where they are coming from and how they are living. There seems to be a lot of out-of-state license plates at the Walmarts and shopping centers. Thinks it must be because of offshore where they come down here to work and then go back home. Mall opened 20 - 25 years ago.

Bust: The 80's at Schlumberger found some of the people getting laid off but most of them still had jobs. You could get a rig at a very good price because there wasn't a need for them but they were still drilling and if you're drilling you need Schlumberger. Didn't feel the recession too bad.

Laying off: Used to retire or get laid off only because of boom and busts or if you did something really wrong. Now that things are changing they are going more by evaluations, which is good and bad. If a man gets several bad evaluations, he can still get laid off even though he had 22 years.

Frances Cockerham and Buddy Justillien

Berwick, LA

July 29, 2003, July 30, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA119

#### Ethnographic Preface:

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Joyce Cockerham was born in Lafourche Crossing near Thibodaux. Her father was a supervisor for Shell Oil Company, and the family moved to Conroe, Texas. She and Bob Cockerham met there while Bob was serving in the army during World War II. They married in 1943. After Bob returned from the war, the couple ended up in Morgan City where Bob soon got a job working for Kerr-McGee drilling what was to become the first successful offshore oil well drilled out of site of land. Bob worked for several drilling companies over the next 22 years and then worked as a consultant until his retirement in 1984. Bob and Joyce adopted their daughter, Frances. Bob became a second father to Buddy Justillien. Buddy became his son-in-law in 19 when he married Frances. Joyce, Frances, and Buddy spent their lives in the oil field. Buddy and Frances now operate Justco Engine Service.

#### Summary:

Joyce early history: born on Lafourche Crossing out of Thibodaux, father was supervisor for Shell Oil Company, moved to Texas, met Bob Cockerham when he was in the service, came through on troop train; he was transferred to Louisiana, Joyce moved to Morgan City, he came to visit, two months later they were married, in 1943, when Joyce was 15, two months later he was sent overseas for three years, he got out October 1945; both moved to California in 1946 but Joyce didn't like it and they returned to Louisiana; he worked on shrimp boats for three or four months and then got into the oilfield; his dad worked in the oil fields in Texas

Life in the oilfields: he started working for Danziger drilling wells, moved every two or three months, was hard, bought a trailer and pulled it with the car; built a house in Berwick in 1956 and adopted a baby girl; had to make new friends in each place, working land rigs he worked 8 or 12 hour shifts; then he worked for the offshore drilling company for 20 years, longest in one place was four years in Lafayette, when the oil fields really first started there; built the house in Berwick because Joyce had family there, would rent lots for the trailer from whomever possible,

get electricity where we could; made good friends along the way; one time when Bob was gone Joyce went and got drivers' license; worked for a while as a cashier at a restaurant about 1951

Offshore: schedule changed to 7 and 7; then with Homeco Bob would not come home until the job was completed, in the 1960s; he quit working for the Offshore Company when they started to shut down rigs in the Gulf and send the crews overseas; when he was working offshore was wonderful, Joyce had some free time, did not have to cook every night; he would call in once a week or so; 7 and 7 was the best schedule, he had a vacation in between times; worried because it was very dangerous; Bob got hurt in 1964, '65 when a Halliburton mud line blew up, hit him in the stomach, he had to have two surgeries; Joyce was called from the hospital; he was ready to go back as soon as he was healed, he loved the oil field; the company paid his hospital bills, he had workman's comp; they got rid of him two years later, he went to work for different drilling companies, then Homeco, worked lots of overtime because that's where the money was

Frances' youth: Daddy gone most of the time, worked a different schedule than most families; celebrated holidays when Daddy was home, would take off when he could get off for a day; always a celebration when Daddy came home, Mom cooked, baked a cake; he would go fishing when he was home; even when he was home it was woman's work to do the carpooling, be the supporter at school

Safety: oil field was different then, there was a lot of danger, people got hurt; Joyce saw Bob up on the derrick the first time once when she brought him his lunch, scared her to death, after a while you get used to it; lots of changes today

Buddy: backyard touched the Cockerhams, was Bob's fishing buddy as a boy; started going out to the rigs with Frances and Bob, other workers would spoil the kids, bring cokes, candy; no TV out there

Oilfield Life: wives were friends, oil field people with families tried to live close to one another, a family deal; when still moving from place to place, moved together, lived from payday to payday

Buddy: graduated from high school, ran hardware store for two years, went to diesel mechanic school, self-employed diesel mechanic since 1978, lots related to oilfield but do not go on rigs; work mostly on equipment, made it through the 1980s by diversifying, did carpenter work, ditch digging, anything to make a buck, started own business in 1987; roller coaster is the way of life

Changes: don't know everyone in town any more; Morgan City used to be a center of the oil industry, lots has drifted away; lots of companies gone, abandoned buildings, thought of leaving, but not the type of people to live in a big city; don't know anything else but the oilfield; family members worked in the oilfield; no one thought of suing; everyone was glad to be working, making a living; this was Dad's life; part of the Cajun mentality is the sense of adventure, sense of surviving that exists in the oilfield, willingness to accept change and fight for survival

Unions: Daddy against them, one time beat up because he was against unions forming in the oilfields, when he was working in Lake Charles on drilling rigs in the mid-to-late 60s, people

from Texas who came with the Union; don't see unions in the offshore industry in Louisiana; conditions aren't as harsh as in the North Sea or Africa; the union people dumped sugar in the gas tank of his company car; he was working for Pan American

Photos:

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Joyce Cockerham

Berwick, LA

July 29, 2003, July 30, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA119

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Robert "Bob" Cockerham

Morgan City, LA

December 13, 2000

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA000

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Bob Cockerham was referred to me by Jerry Cunningham during our study on the impacts of the offshore oil and gas industry on individuals and families in southern Louisiana. I had asked Jerry for help getting more information on drilling and on the history and evolution of the offshore oil and gas industry, and Jerry introduced me to Bob. Bob was 80 years old at the time of the interview and was very happy to participate. We met in his office at the VFW and talked for a couple of hours. Bob passed away in November 2002. After his death, I contacted his wife, Joyce, for permission to include his interview in the oral history study. I met with Joyce, their daughter Frances, and Frances' husband Buddy Justillien in July 2003 (see DA119).

Bob Cockerham was born in Louisiana and raised in the Texas oil fields. His father owned and operated drilling rigs. Bob went into the service in 1940 and met his future wife, Joyce, when he was passing through Conroe, Texas on army maneuvers. The two of them were married in 1943, and after Bob returned from serving overseas during World War II, they moved to Morgan City. He was working on shrimp boats in 1947 when Kerr-McGee began drilling what was to become the first successful offshore well out of sight of land. Bob heard about the well and went to work for Kerr-McGee. He then worked for Dansiger, a drilling company, and stayed with them for ten years. He moved on to another drilling company and remained in drilling for 22 years. He then went into consulting until his retirement in 1984. Shortly before his retirement, Bob was given responsibility for managing the first women's crew to work offshore.

#### Summary:

History: Bob grew up working in the oil field with his dad. After high school, he went into Army then came back to Louisiana after discharge and tried going into the shrimping business. Due to the oil industry, the shrimping industry was not as profitable as it used to be. This prompted him to go to work for Kerr-McGee. He also worked for Mr. Charlie and Dansiger. He spent 22 years working offshore. He was forced to retire in 1984.

Pay changes: When Bob began as a roustabout, he was making 50 cents an hour, later he was making over \$5.00 an hour. Once he was promoted to tool pusher, depending on what company he worked for, he would make between \$500-\$3000 a month.

Life of a tool pusher: As a tool pusher on an offshore rig, you were not only the only one, but you were also on call 24 hours a day. You would work 12 days on and 12 days off and you had to cook your own meals.

Woman in the offshore industry: Woman began in the offshore industry in the early 1980's. Bob's company was one of the first ones to bring woman on the rigs. They were cooks and roustabout. Bob even moved some up to drillers and tool pushers because they worked better than the men.

Ed Collins

Lafayette, LA

April 8, 2003

Interviewed by: Robert Carriker

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

RC006

#### Ethnographic Preface:

One of three boys, Ed Collins was born in 1924 in Laurel, Mississippi. His father owned a plumbing business. While in high school he roughnecked a bit on a drilling rig and worked as a rod man on a survey crew. After graduating high school and serving during World War Two, he spent a semester at Mississippi State before studying petroleum engineering at Louisiana State University; he graduated with his degree in 1949. After graduating from LSU, he found himself in a saturated job market and was lucky to get a job with Magnolia Petroleum Company where he first worked as an engineer in Snyder, Texas. Two and a half years later he went to work for Wilshire Oil Company in Midland, Texas; several years later, when that company was bought out, he went to work for a year for Wilshire Oil Company of Texas. A year later in 1954, he moved to Wichita, Kansas, to work as assistant production manager for Vickers Petroleum Company; not long after he was made vice-president of production; in 1959, he moved with the company to Denver, Colorado. After a deal with Alco Oil and Gas Company, he went to work for Alco representing the Vickers interest; in 1962, Alco centralized itself in Lafayette. He lived a year in Lafayette, before he took a job with the Vickers as a consultant and started venturing out on his own as an independent; he became involved in buying and selling leases and royalties. In 1963 he started a sugar cane bagasse (product used in drilling mud) processing factory in Belle Rose, Louisiana; he did this for 12 years while still doing the other independent work. In the late 1970s, he sold the company to Venture Chemical Company; he was involved in Venture until they were sold in the early 1980s. He discusses why Alco Oil and Gas made the decision to centralize their company in Lafayette and not other cities, as well as the Lafayette community.

#### Summary:

Early life: born in Laurel, Mississippi, in '24; served in World War II; studied petroleum engineering at LSU and graduated in '49. Father was a plumber; two brothers.

Magnolia Petroleum: few jobs available when graduated, so lucky to get a job with Magnolia as petroleum engineer; spent six weeks in De Ridder for what is usually a year training in roughnecking and roustabouting. First job in Snyder, TX, which was just starting to boom; at first lived with pregnant wife in tourist court; unpleasant working environment; later moved into house in oilfield camp (story of sand storm and housewarming party).

Wilshire Oil Company: after two and a half years with Magnolia, got a better paying job with Wilshire in Midland, TX; back then things were booming and lots of demand for people, so people often changed jobs. Wilshire had own drilling rigs; he did more hands-on supervising; company developed method of moving a rig by skidding it instead of tearing it down. After

being there two years, company sold out to Monterey Oil Company (later Humble); principle owner and his local boss formed new company, Wilshire Oil Company of Texas and he worked for them about a year.

Vickers Petroleum Company: in '54, at request of ex-coworker, went to work for Vickers in Wichita, Kansas; Vickers was family-owned and completely integrated - beautiful working environment; after five and a half years, management, drilling, and exploration part of business moved to Denver. He had to travel a lot, while wife home with four little kids - wanted to move back to South; Vickers sold drilling part of their business to Alco and his position was no longer necessary.

Alco Oil and Gas: small, scattered company with one-man offices around the country; Vickers were third largest holders of stock in company and he represented their interests in it. Consolidated company and tried to focus on one area; chose Lafayette over Houston, Jackson, and New Orleans because had good oil and gas reserves (describes decision-making process). Moved in '62; about a year later, after irregularities were noticed, Vickers and he resigned from company.

Contracting and venturing out: worked on a retainer for Vickers for five years buying royalties and such; did some independent work, too, buying and selling leases and royalties.

Bagasse: started bagasse (sugar cane stalks and pith) manufacturing business (mud additive factory) in Belle Rose; would grind it up, put it in sacks, and sell it; was one of the products sometimes used in drilling mud to stop leakage (describes); other similar products used by mud companies were cellophane and cotton stalks and seed hulls. After 12 years ('77-78), sold company to Venture Chemical Company and sat on their board; Venture then sold out in early '80s just before the crash (describes how he almost blew the deal by demanding stock in the company buying them out).

Offshore oil industry: when Alco came, never intended to get into offshore drilling; Vickers were approached by Zapata Drilling (one of the partners was George Bush). He's never really participated in the offshore business. Notes bagasse principally used in hard rock drilling; describes different drilling environments. Alco made conscious decision not to go offshore because of the initial costs; more business room for smaller companies onshore.

Lafayette: in early '60s was still little country town; most of the people he rubbed shoulders with were involved in oil and gas; differences between small towns and big cities (e.g., not stopping at stop signs, traffic tickets, personal customer attention, city layout).

Discrimination: never saw oil people discriminated against, but heard people say that natives didn't like oil people; perhaps people who arrived earlier had paved the way for them. Noticed that Lafayette was a Catholic community, but as Protestants it wasn't a problem; good friends with a Catholic family.

Language: only regret was never learning the Cajun language; in his work, didn't ever have problems with language barrier, but heard that some land men did (misunderstandings); in early '60s people buying leases ran into high rates of illiteracy.

Child rearing: found children in Lafayette were allowed more freedom; coming from larger cities, were more watchful over their children and more leery for their safety.

Heymann: his vision of the Oil Center contributed a lot to Lafayette's development; large part of real estate and commercial development due to oil industry. Met with Heymann in his office before Alco moved down there; he was a business man, but because he was a visionary had to be more cooperative with prospective clients; built much of his property on speculation that the industry would go; he was very congenial, very pleasant, very business like.

Choosing oil industry: would do it all again; since high school, never considered anything else. Describes climbing on top of a derrick and getting a job as a roughneck and rod man in high school.

Offshore vs. onshore: difference between major leagues and the sandlot; service companies work both; engineers, geologists, and hands tend to work one or the other; investors he knows have just invested in onshore work. Opened an exploration company (C and B Exploration) with his son and another partner just before the crash; almost got involved in offshore.

Difficult part of oil business: people don't understand the substantial risk involved (lot of dry holes drilled).

1980s: had a difficult time keeping up with a loan he had taken out and had to sell off a lot of private assets; was kind of in bad shape, but was lucky he never had to sell his house; notes friend who went broke who recently remade lots of money due to a big discovery.

Wilbert Collins

Golden Meadow, LA

July 18, 2001

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM003

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Wilbert Collins, born in 1937, is one of only a handful of oystermen left in lower Lafourche Parish. His grandfather started the business in the 1930's, and Wilbert's son Tracy is carrying it on - the fourth generation. After 50 years of working oysters, Wilbert himself isn't going out on the boats much anymore. He is active in the Louisiana Dealers and Growers Association, fighting with federal agencies over repeated efforts to restrict raw oyster sales in the summer, due to potential health effects. He is also currently on the Commission for Port Fourchon, spearheading the fundraising effort to get a monument placed there for Senator A.O. Rappelet, the early driving force for the port.

I try to touch base with Wilbert whenever I'm in the Golden Meadow area. He is one of the most respected of the old-time oyster farmers.

#### Summary:

Impact of oil companies: even before the '50's oil companies did not think they should pay to go across oyster bedding grounds. We had a lot of trouble with them; they took billions of dollars out of the community and put a couple million back. Back in the '30's and '40's they never left enough money for the land damage they did.

Oyster leasing system: make application at Wildlife and Fisheries; they send a crew out there and survey it. Today it is more difficult than in the past. Leases good for fifteen years then you can renew it for another fifteen years, no limit on how long you can keep it. There's an oyster season, work private beds when it's closed. The lease is mainly for planting. People are getting away from planting; too expensive. They are going mostly to selling wild oysters. I am one of the few that is left that plants. In Lafourche Parish, I am the only one. You have to go to Plaquemines Parish to see people that plant.

Oyster disease: some companies move oysters to purify them, one in Houma and one in Franklin. They pasteurize it and they are not as good. All the bacteria is dead, but the oyster is dead too. The FDA wants that and they want to shut the oyster business down because of the bacteria.

Environmental changes: oil companies dug canals through the marsh; through the years it has hurt us, too much opening. Every canal they dug in the marsh had to be filled with water so it was bringing the current in faster, eating up the marsh faster. It brought more salt water in. After they started building these canals, it took so much water to fill them and now the land is all

going. In the '30's they didn't think of losing land. Any oil company that wanted a permit would get it.

Oysters dying in the 1930's: a big loss that lasted 30 years. The oil companies were to blame. They were just walking in and had started drilling. Biologists came down from Texas A&M and they found some disease in the salt water. Where the disease come from, nobody knows...from a well, from offshore.

Oyster and shrimp boats: oyster boats are from 30-60 feet. Our boats are not made for the gulf, they are made for shallow water. Shrimp boats were made for the gulf. When they started the offshore business, they needed boats to bring supplies to the rigs. So, some of the shrimpers took the job.

Global warming, sea level rise: people don't even worry about that. I don't know why. I guess because they think they will be gone by the time it happens. So, why worry about it. We should be trying to stop it but we are not.

Bruce Collipp

Houston, TX

September 21, 1999

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International  
SOC012

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Bruce Collipp graduated from MIT in 1953 with a Master's degree. He started at Shell in 1954. He worked with Shell's Technical Service Division to develop offshore technology. He is credited as the father of the semi-submersible after the construction and placement of the Bluewater 1. His efforts earned him the Holley Medal from the American Society of Mechanical Engineers. He continued working with Shell developing offshore technology, including the Cognac, project until his retirement in 1987.

#### Summary:

Interview has a lot of information on the progression of ideas to a true semi-submersible. He covered the Trident design and most phases of the bluewater project. There is also commentary on Bluewater 2, and other platforms. He has extended discussion of Cognac, and Shell's technology seminars for the industry.

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Johnny Comeaux

Lafayette, LA

February 11, 2003

Interviewed by: Robert Carriker

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

RC002

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Comeaux was born in the early 1920s in Austin, Louisiana. His father was a farmer. He graduated high school when he was 16 years old and attended the University of Southwestern Louisiana (USL) while also working for the Civilian Conservation Corps (for two years) and for the college. He enlisted in the Air Force and spent most of 1942-45 in Europe. After going to a few trade schools, he worked as an electrician for Lake Charles Electric for seven years. In 1953 he entered the oil patch working for Mervin Taylor's rental tool business, first running the yard (11 years) and later as a salesman (3 years). During the following years, he did concentric work. In May 1981, with his son and two partners, he opened Workover Equipment Rentals; he worked there until he retired in 1999.

#### Summary:

Civilian Conservation Corps: was a rod man on a surveying crew out of Girard Park (in Lafayette); went to school at USL when he got off work; \$25 of his pay was sent automatically to his family; promoted to project manager; leisure time.

Early life: born in Austin, LA; got through primary school early; Carencro High. Loaned money from his barber and Rex McCulloch to pay for first semester at USL; to pay for room and board, worked on school agricultural farm and as a janitor.

World War Two: enlisted in the Air Force in December '41; radio school in St. Louis; made fun of because of his accent; refused to teach and requested to go to gunnery school (Apalachicola, FL). Could not speak English when he started school; was punished for speaking French; today is proud of his accent. June '42 arrived in Scotland; 14 months in England; worked with B-26s and medium bombers; discharged October '45.

Radio and electronics: starting in '46, went to and finished T.H. Harry Electrical School in Opelousas and radio mechanic school in New Orleans; for seven years did electrical work for Lake Charles Electric; politics related to the electrical union led to his quitting.

Start of career in oil patch - Taylor: floor covering business broke up after three months, leading to a job working for Mervin Taylor; when he started in May '53, the only thing he knew was what a one inch pipe and a three-quarter inch pipe looked like. Worked for Taylor for 14 years (11 years running the yard and 3 years as a salesman); the business deteriorated when Taylor's two sons took it over.

Small pipe business: concentric work; company not paying its bills; quits. Opened Concentric Pipe in '71; less than a year later, sold business because of his "crooked" partner; worked for the people that bought them out.

Workover Equipment Rentals (1): owned with his son (Conrad) and two silent partners; oil patch was booming; had to put workers on unemployment during the bust. At 75 years of age, company wasn't doing well, so he sold his share to his two partners; kept on as a consultant; retired in November '99 in the interest of the company.

Pipe and tubing: small pipe they rented was used to clean out producing wells; coil tubing was less costly and replaced small pipe. Taylor was one of the first companies to be in small pipe business; he got his training on the job, asking questions and observing. He was successful in what he did because he was able to adjust to working with different people.

Environment: in the early years, would dump anything (mud, shale) overboard and oiled pipes; later, environmental regulations and company had "environmental man"; more lenient onshore than offshore. Workover Equipment Rentals had to change their waste system; describes cement pit system; hired a consultant; a big burden; never checked by EPA.

Workover Equipment Rentals (2): paid a lot for the property the company was situated on, but ideally located between I-10 and Highway 90. Was worth it, ran 160 percent over projections in first six months. Made sure things were done right and did not take short cuts. Describes equipment: string of pipe; blowout preventers.

Offshore: never went offshore; 90% of business was onshore, did not cater to offshore; offshore was a different breed of people; less costly dealing with onshore.

Early career: inexperienced when he first started.

Lorimer Comeaux

Larose, LA.

March 22, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB043

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Lorimer Comeaux was the first person to approach me after the Exxon retirees' luncheon and ask to be interviewed. He was one of the oldest members there. When I arrived at his home, he had made a huge batch of pralines for me to take home.

Lorimer was in the Army until 1945. During his summers off from high school, he would help his father farm the land behind where he now lives. In November of 1945, he went to work for Exxon. He chose Exxon because he knew there would be security when he retired. He began working the pipeline and always seemed to come back to it. He would walk 20 miles through the swamps checking on the lines. He worked the pipeline gang until 1958; then he was transferred to Grand Isle for 13 years. Lorimer retired in 1985 after 40 years with Exxon.

#### Summary:

Personal history: Lorimer was born in 1920, one of 12 children, and raised in Larose. His daddy was a cane farmer mostly and Lorimer helped him work the farmland during his high school years; he graduated high school in 1939. They grew some potatoes, onions and such as well. He moved to New Orleans after high school to work for awhile and then went into the Air Force for 4 ½ years during the war. He got married while he was in the Service, had two kids, came out in 1945 and found a job with Exxon.

Exxon's early days: Lorimer got on with Exxon because of the retirement security and benefits that were offered. His schedule was 5 days on, 2 days off, worked mostly on the boats or checking pipeline by walking through the swamps. Nowadays, they have airplanes that can check the lines from the air.

Leon Comeaux

Lafayette, LA

August 15, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW024

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Leon Comeaux was born in Carencro, Louisiana in 1936. His father was a dairyman for a while and later became a salesman selling dairy-related products. He went to Southwestern Louisiana Institute from 1954 and received a degree in geology in 1958. Jobs were hard to find, so he ended up roughnecking and roustabouting for Superior Oil Company. After being knocked out on a rig, he started doing relief office work in Dulac. In 1960, he got a position as a geologist. He did geology work (evaluating and logging wells, mapping, paleo) onshore and offshore; in 1967, he got into unitization work as well. In 1976, He left the company when it began to be reorganized; he went to work for Ted Hoz, a premier unitization geologist. Hoz gave Comeaux the business when he retired in 1986.

#### Summary:

Early life: born in Carencro, Louisiana in 1936; father was a dairyman before he took on odd jobs and sold dairy-related materials. Went to SLI in 1954; got a degree in geology in '58.

Career: no jobs when he graduated; hired on with Superior Oil Company as a roughneck; did not tell them he had a degree, because would have been considered overqualified for the job; started out on a workover rig in Bosco; laid off, but hired back on a few months later as a roustabout; roustabouting job - worked ten-and-five, 12 hour shifts. Toolpusher found out he had a degree and was sent to do relief work in the Houma office, but ended up on a steam rig; describes pulling joints out of the hole; after he gets knocked out by a backup tong, does not go back on the floor; works in production office in Dulac basically as a radio operator. Bored with work, asks superintendent for a different job; in 1960 got job as a junior geological engineer; prior work as a hand proved to be really good experience.

Geologist: with three other geologists, he worked in a department controlled by engineers; primarily charged with evaluating wells, which involved running a number of different logs (used a Schlumberger logging unit) and evaluating cuttings (sampled every 30 feet). Had a background in paleontology; looked for fossils (foraminifera) in the samples; these were used in comparing wells. Mud weight and blowouts; the deeper you go, the heavier the mud weight needs to be to hold back the pressure; in the early days, Superior Oil had too high mud weights; today, mud weights are calculated very precisely, allowing for faster drilling. Because there were only four of them and the company had a number of rigs, they were always really busy; never worried about losing his job.

On the rigs: food was fantastic; fed four meals a day. Used boats and helicopters to get out to the rigs; when the weather was bad, usually rode in big war boats; had to swing off the rig to get onto the boats; preferred to ride in helicopters.

Salary: paid well enough to put his five children through college; when he went into the office in 1960, was making 600 dollars a month; would get a yearly raise.

Unitization work: in '67, began representing Superior Oil in hearings regarding unitization of production; by that time he was a senior geological engineer; in '74, Ted Hoz, and independent unitization specialist, started trying to get him to leave Superior. In '76, Superior hired an ex-Mobil executive who began reorganizing the company; he foresaw that he would be let go, so went to work for Hoz. In '89, Hoz retired and gave the company to him; he shared company with a number of other former employees, but they went their separate ways during a slowdown in '94; plans to give the company to his son, David, and Bill McAllister (both of whom work for him) when he retires.

Looking back: no regrets; coming from a small town, had no great aspirations, so was delighted with what he got; although his work took him away from his family, he's thankful he was able to remain busy.

Effect on Louisiana: made a lot of people rich; landowners have been able to get part of the profit risk free; some people have a hard time understanding how the units of production are divided. In Lafayette, oil industry helped to build up the town (other areas have been built up by other things). He was a good worker, so if the oil industry had not been around, he would have found something else. Education helps open up opportunities and proves that you have fulfilled certain requirements; it is important.

Parker Conrad

Morgan City, LA

May 10, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG017p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Parker Conrad at his office at the Conrad yards. Although he's well over 80, he still goes into the office every day. He's a very kind and intelligent man, as others had correctly noted to me, and he was perfectly willing to take an hour out of his day to meet with me and talk. He is a wealth of knowledge concerning the history of the region, the history of industry, and the entrepreneurship necessary to succeed in the oilpatch. Most of our discussion revolved around his business, but in places we talked about the community and people upon which his business depended. He has good things to say about the people of Morgan City and the surrounding areas - they're hard workers. The community has changed a lot. He describes how poor the community was when he got started, and how much things have changed since then. We also looked at some photographs from WWII - the German Uboats sunk 35 ships just off Morgan City.

Parker was born up near Jefferson Island but moved down to Morgan City as a boy. His father came from a wealthy family, but Conrad struck out on his own in the Great Depression. He rode a train across the country as a hobo and tried numerous ventures before he finally got into boatbuilding. While he started out building shrimpboats, the oil companies began to lease boats for their seismographic work, and eventually he made the transition to building in steel. He built crewboats and barges for the most part. Conrad Industries is a large business, and a successful one. The company recently went public and bought a shipyard in Texas, and Parker technically has less control over the business than he did in the past.

#### Summary:

The boatbuilding business: Conrad Industries got its start building wooden shrimpboats. In 1945 he had a wooden shrimpboat working seismograph for Shell, and then he purchased a PT boat for the same purpose. He built the first crew speedboat, and eventually they moved from steel to aluminum construction.

Booms and Busts: there are a lot of ups and downs in the oilpatch. He started building trawlers, but moved into repairs. Conrad Industries was building drydocks from 1953 to 1955. McDermott moved out of service and into ship repair and construction, which left it open for Conrad. There was a big boom in demand in the 70's when everything was blowing and going. He was building barges for everyone and his brother. Then the bottom dropped out. Conrad Industries was able to weather it because they were diversified, and because boats were still needed for production activities.

Labor: The labor pool has changed over the years. Local people work hard, they have a history of working hard. During the boom, though, people would move from job to job a lot. "you can't teach alligators and possums to weld". Hard to find good workers in the boom.

Keys to success: he says the key to his business's success was entrepreneurship, that he didn't take much from the business during the busts, determination, prayers, etc. He put a lot of money back into the business, and he kept things simple so he could really know the business well. He fostered his clientele, and they knew that it was more than an issue of the bottom line - it was good quality work. He never hired salesmen, and he chose to work at the yard rather than go on the road. They have 200 employees now, plus contractors. They grew with the industry.

Community: He enjoys being an asset to the community and to the families in Morgan City. Morgan City was a poor community in the early years. There was no crane, no bulldozer, no cherry picker, none of that when he first started up. Oilfield businesses brought a lot of wealth to the area, and a lot of people. It brought some drifters, too, in the 50s and 70s. And while Conrad Industries managed in the bust, the community lost a lot of good people. They just never came back.

Early History: Parker moved there with his family, and before getting this business going, he tried a bunch of other things: rice farming, trapping, fishing, frogs, logs, he tried it all. He was born in 1915, and he remembers the Depression. He was aware of the oil industry at a young age because the seismograph crews were blowing holes in the back of his dad's plantation. Oil eventually overtook shrimping in importance in the early 60s. That's about the time the boats went from wood to steel. He remembers trucking loads of shrimp up to NYC before this business. There've been a lot of big changes over his lifetime, he notes.

WWII: We talk about the war, and he shows me some photographs of the boats sunk by German U-boats off the coast. 35 ships went down out there. Some families onshore were thought to be helping the Germans.

Environment and safety: we talk about environmental regulations. He says that they've gone too far - with the safety and environmental regulations, a man can hardly work anymore. Some of the regulations are comical. But the real problem is with the frivolous lawsuits. He gives an example from his own business. It's not just employees, it's companies suing each other.

The flood: we look at more pictures, talk about some of the drydocks he built, and then we look through some pictures of the flood of 1972.

Nelson Constant

Thibodaux, LA

July 23, 2001, July 18, 2002, January 13, 2005

Interviewed by: Diane Austin, Betsy Plumb

University of Arizona

DA004, DA050p, DA131

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Nelson Constant by his granddaughter, Alana Owens, who was working as an intern for the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program. She accompanied me to the first interview. Nelson's wife sat at the kitchen table through most of the interview, but she did not say much. A couple of times she made a comment or two, but she asked that she not be recorded. Nelson had a notebook of photos from his work as a surveyor, and I visited him a second time to do a photo interview. The third interview was conducted as part of the study of the links between WWII and the offshore industry.

Nelson was born in 1914 and raised in Kramer, Louisiana. His childhood was unique because his mother was a teacher and ensured that he finished high school, even though it meant he had to live with several different aunts. He entered the oilfield after working in his daddy's store for several years and getting to know a party chief who did business with the store. He began with a survey crew in the swamp and advanced quickly to surveyor and permit man, jobs which he kept for most of his 23-year career in the industry. When he left the industry, Nelson went to work planting soybeans for about 8 years and then built some crawfish ponds.

#### Summary of DA004:

Early personal history: about 50 families in Kramer when growing up; no roads, traveled by boat; started working in grocery store with father in 1933; graduated 1935; boarded at aunt's house in New Orleans to get high school education; finished high school at Thibodaux College after roads completed from Kramer; father leased land to fur trappers, had to manage property lines; got job working as surveyor for Humble Oil Company, big benefit being able to speak French

Surveying: company would pick up lease, would go mark property lines, get permits from property owners; was more successful than others; some people frustrated with how contract companies had treated them; mostly French people, some rednecks near Hammond and Sulfur; experience with oyster fishermen in Bay Adams; started in 1945 through connection with party chief; started laying shot; would go ahead of crew and talk to the people living in the area; (showed photo album); pulled quarter boats as close as possible to job for living quarters; advanced to surveyor and permit man within one and a half years; worked 10 and 4, but called in on off days as well

Early days in the oilfield: one would prod for oysters; used Breton compass; no radios; then phones; wife only called one time in 25 years when child sick; wife good friends with party

chief's wife; started \$.60 an hour, shipyards paying \$1.25; people came out and tried to unionize, would have been bad because needed flexibility; sometimes worked 10 hour days; like a family; no major changes; lots of tricks played - short sheeting, taking hinges off ice box, pack suitcase with canned goods; 3 blacks on crew; lived on little quarter boat behind theirs; workers from Kenner, swamp people, and they knew how to handle it; a few of the Texas college graduates would come out but then quit and went home

Swamp buggies: slot wheel buggies; Model B chassis with wheels and motor; could not cross bayou; then to iron craft built by Houma Marine about 1952-1953, would get stuck, had to walk the back wheels; talked company into renting Cheramie buggy (has photo); then track buggy with pontoons; film at Exxon plant in Baton Rouge of Party 10 working in Plaquemines

Work experiences: worked as boat driver on Shell job and then got Humble job; did everything by hand at first; would give crew a sketch of where to lay charges and they would go do it; usually brought quarter boats in harbor during storms; worked 23 years and then retired because they were going to break up the crew; was successful surveyor without education, company sent people out to learn how he did it; had the best cooks; would drill hole and leave a slush pit, did not know dangers of what was going on; would talk about holes, dangers at dinner table; blacks started during WWII, 13-15 from Opelousas, stayed on barge because no more room; kept leaving because were drafted; Nelson was drafted but got deferment, with 4 others, because activity was essential for the war

Growing up: went to 6th grade, mama teacher from New York, went to New Orleans, lived with aunt to go to school in New Orleans, then with another aunt and another; Kramer was closed community, mostly French and a few Germans; would take daddy's boat to go get ice

Laying shot points: now have to pay more per hole for shot point; never offered anyone money for shot; talked to the people and they'd agree every time; would get map from conservation department showing oyster leases, would pole to check for oyster beds; only had about 4 holes blow out with gas; worked on Pecan Island, some families never came off island; sometimes had to use mud boats to get to the trenasses; only one guy bit by snake out of 25 years in the marsh; don't regret the work

Summary of DA050p:

Getting workers: Choctaw and Kramer were places to get workers; we needed people who could work in the swamps; we carried everything on our backs, had to take apart the instruments from the cab and each person carry a different part; we hired them with the understanding that we'd lay them off when we got to the water; they had nothing else to do, it was 1932 and the Depression; the only work besides trapping and fishing was to work in the shipyards; young people could not go to school beyond the seventh grade, they would listen to you; had sawmills in Kramer so the people lived in wooden homes; most of the people in Choctaw lived in palmetto shacks; would find them where people gathered after passing their traps; I was assistant to the party chief and would talk to them in French or English; I got my job by translating for them

Experiences with others: trappers were very good workers; they were used to swimming, we sunk a work boat in the canal, one swam down, hooked a cable, and we wrenched out the boat; on their off days they'd go to drinking and we'd have to get them out of jail; none were bad; there was no staling, could leave pocketbook on the bed; would help each other out if one had a heavy load; guys from Houston would come to the quarter boats and work there, two or three of them were very nice; no communication in the beginning unless we were close to Thibodaux; no phones in the community back then, no electricity; electricity came after they started getting jobs with the oil companies when people could pay for it; started working at 16 or 17 because already broken in in the swamp

#### Summary of DA131:

Early years: Nelson was born December 29, 1914 in Bayou Boeuf. The community he grew up in was very small, it had a total of fifty families living there. At the time, it was only accessible by boat. His father owned a grocery store and his mother was a teacher and she was animate about him finishing his school. After the 6th grade, he was sent to New Orleans to live with his aunt to finish his schooling. Unfortunately, his aunt died and he was sent to live in Raceland to live with another aunt to continue school. By the 10th grade, he took a year off and went home to help his dad at the store before finishing his schooling. During his summers in high school, he helped his dad set property lines in the surrounding swamp areas. By this time, "primitive" had been constructed making Bayou Boeuf more accessible. After high school, he went to Thibodeaux college where he met his future wife. After marriage, he moved back in with his parents and continued working with his dad until Shell arrived.

Working for oil companies: Nelson's first job with Shell was tending a dynamite store for two months and then went to Grand Isle as a boat skipper. In 1942, he got a job with Humble Oil Company with a surveyor crew. It was his experience with and knowledge of swamps that helped him get this job. Since he also spoke French, and nobody else on the crew did, this made him invaluable in dealing with natives' property rights. He worked around Lafayette and Grand Chenier. Later on, he moved up to surveyor status and had his own crew. Nelson was not particularly fond of being a surveyor because it entailed too much responsibility. He was responsible for putting out lines, taking notes through out the day on the terrain, topography, supplies need by the crews and map making. When in the swamp, the crew used pirogues whenever possible, but when they were not functional, they had to carry all of their equipment on their backs. While working as a surveyor, Nelson would work ten days out, four days off. When Humble would hire college graduate geologists to work in the field with them, none of them wanted to stay because the work was too hard and dirty.

WWII: When the draft was enacted for WWII, Nelson and others on his survey crews were drafted. They went to New Orleans and passed their exams, but before they were to depart they all received deferments because they were needed as surveyors in oil exploration, Humble pulled some strings and prevent them from going into the war. Unfortunately, for those who were not seen to be important for Humble, the company did nothing to stop them from being drafted. Nelson recounts a time when they had hired some blacks on to the crew and because they weren't essential, when they were drafted, Humble did not interfere.

Hurricane: Nelson recalls a time, in 1949, when they were out surveying at the mouth of a river and a hurricane hit. They had to suffer through two days of 125mph winds stuck on quarters. They lost all of their equipment and had no way to communicate with the outside world. Fortunately, after the storm passed, Humble sent out search planes to look for them to see if they survived. After spending 25 years with Humble, Nelson retired from the oil industry and started a soy bean farm.

Changes from war: Nelson recalls that while the war was going on, they could not buy lumber. To be able to build a house, he and another fellow from work bought an old building and dismantled it piece by piece, and each used that wood to build their homes. He also recalls food such as rice, flour and sugar being rationed.

John Couvillon

Lafayette, LA

July 9, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW008

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. John Couvillon was born in 1920 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. His father worked for Standard Oil of New Jersey (now Exxon) as a blacksmith. After graduating from LSU in 1942 with a degree in petroleum engineering, he went to work for Stanolind (Standard Oil of Indiana; now Amoco) out of Jennings as a roustabout. A few months later he was drafted into the service during World War Two, where he served in Europe. When he returned from war in 1946, he went back to work for Stanolind on a drilling rig (worked lead tongs); in 1947, he was promoted to engineer and moved to Hackberry, where he married his wife. After moving between Hackberry and Lake Charles a few times, he moved to Lafayette when Stanolind opened their office there in 1957. In 1961 he quit and went to work for Falcon Seaboard Drilling Company; the following year, he was promoted to division engineer and transferred to Houston, where he oversaw production in a number of different states. He was transferred to Lafayette in 1970 to work for a subsidiary company, Oleum Incorporated. After being laid off in 1975, he took a job with DOR Engineering, a consulting firm, in Lafayette, where he would supervise drilling operations. He retired in 1989 at the age of 69. The interview with him covers a range of topics.

#### Summary:

Early life: born and raised in Baton Rouge; father a blacksmith for Standard Oil of New Jersey. Graduated from LSU with a degree in petroleum engineering in 1942; went to work for Standard Oil of Indiana (Stanolind) in Jennings; drafted into the service during World War Two; in '45, got out of service and went back to work in Jennings.

Start of career: wouldn't have gone to LSU, but couldn't find a job; drilling wells near campus got him interested in petroleum engineering; LSU one of only four or five universities offering petroleum engineering; early on, few petroleum engineers in the field. Started as a roustabout in '42; how Stanolind got into Louisiana (merger with Yount-Lee).

World War Two: drafted after working for only a few months; draft dodging by working; was the first draftee out of Jennings.

After the war: drilling crews switched from 48 to 40 hour work weeks; when he returned in '45, put on a drilling crew on steam rig in Jennings. In '47, went to work as an engineer in Hackberry; only stayed about two years in one city, before moved, usually due to a promotion; while with Stanolind, he moved from Hackberry to Lake Charles, to Hackberry, to Lake Charles, to Lafayette.

Stanolind - offshore: operations handled out of Sabine Pass and Hackberry; crews left out of Cameron; transportation offshore; platforms connected by wooden walkways; one time a platform caught fire and everybody pulled for the fire because they didn't want to have to go out there anymore.

War vessels: YF barges; the majority of the vessels Amoco had were LSTs; LCTs; surplus vessels were cheap, available, and relatively new.

Locating wells: Stanolind survey crew in Galveston based out of the Buccaneer Hotel; at lake in Hackberry, used piano wire; describes marking land/marsh jobs.

Falcon Seaboard Drilling Company: went to work for them in '61; had about 50 marsh rigs; transferred to Houston in '62 to be division engineer; circa '63, they started getting offshore rigs.

Rigs: platform rigs; jack up rigs; monopod rigs.

DOR Engineering: became a consultant with them in '75; company handled drilling operations for small companies.

Schedule: when building rigs for Falcon, he worked ten and five, which he thought was "a killer"; some people commuted from out of state (AL, GA), maybe didn't relocate because lack of job security; went out to the rig and stayed there as long as something had to be done.

Getting from the vessel to the platform: in early '50s had rope ladders, which were miserable; in '64 Falcon started using transfer nets, which were better but dangerous.

Injuries: in Galveston, a man was cut in two after an accident; he busted his nose when working the lead tongs, only time he ever got hurt; man got hand caught under a cable and lost fingers; "it's a dangerous job." People didn't sue in the early days as much as they do now, "you took your lumps."

Lafayette: moved back to Lafayette in '70 to handle production for a company Falcon merged with (Oleum); opened office in the Oil Center; laid off when office moved to Longview, TX in '75. Went to work for DOR Engineering as consultant.

Consulting: made more money, but worse job because never knew when he was going to be called out to a rig; narrates several instances of being called out to a job (e.g., sinking rig at Bell Chasse).

Offshore living conditions: always had good quarters and food.

Industry magazines: three main magazines: Oil and Gas Journal, Offshore Magazine, and Petroleum Engineer. Several articles he wrote for these were published by people he worked for.

Job security: thought he'd have good job security with Stanolind because they were a major company, but laid off after 19 years; they were pretty secure jobs, though.

Local area: stereotypes of Cajuns. Pollution was terrible; polluted a man's water well in Texas; Lafayette area drinking water (effect of rice farming and rusty oil tanks).

Unions: unions never formed in drilling or production, but maybe in the plants where you had more men.

Billy Coyle

Houma, LA

April 8, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB051

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I received Mr. Billy Coyle's name from Gip Talbot as well as Phillip Fanguy. While Gip knew the name, Phillip knew Mr. Coyle, Jr. personally and called his secretary to help set up an interview time with me. Billy's father, Billy Coyle, Sr. is legendary in many circles. He began several oilfield tool companies, but the most successful has been Bilco tools which Mr. Coyle Jr. is currently running. Mr. Coyle Jr. has a negative attitude about the oil field and what it's done to both Houma as well as greater Louisiana. He knows the history of many of the businesses that grew up in Houma and has given several contacts of men who began businesses in and around the area. Mr. Coyle was extremely cooperative. I tried several times to suggest that his father needed to be interviewed, but he seemed adamant about leaving his father alone. It was valuable to hear a different perspective on the oil field's impact on the land and its people, especially from a small business owner. The interview took place in the boardroom of his office building. His office was a medium sized his office. He wanted to aid me in my quest to fly over South Louisiana by helicopter but unfortunately the weather played its card and I left the next day.

Billy was 10 years old when his father moved the family down from northern Louisiana to Houma, and he felt like he had entered a whole new world. At the time, seafood was going out and the oilfield was coming in. Service companies were locating next to Houma because of access to Grand Isle, Venice and Morgan City. In 1978, Billy's father was turning 62 and working at JEMOCO, and he wanted to look at early retirement. Billy, Jr. then came on board with his dad to try and help him sell the business. He and his father founded Bilco in 1978. Bud Williams let them use part of his business, and Billy and his father built the business up from scratch. His brother joined the company as well. In 1981, it felt like there was no end to the amount of business they could generate, but in 1982, things dropped quickly. Billy, Jr. bought his brother out and much of his father's share as well. Since that time, Bilco went from having one patent to having 18 and has some technology that nobody else has.

#### Summary:

Early life of Mr. Coyle Sr.: he's 84. Been in the manufacturing end of the oil business since the 1950's. Began in northern Louisiana as a GE refrigerator salesman. Began experimenting with centralizers. Had 25 patents in the manufacturing side of things. Lost 2 businesses. Hub Oil Tool Company, partner ran off. Other business (no name) also had partner want to file bankruptcy so Sr. sold out to Delta Iron Works. Fred Newman was the owner.

Delta Iron Works History: Out of DIW came JEMOCO. Sr. had a reputation of selling his equipment down here in southern Louisiana. Fred Newman put him in charge of Jem Oil Tool

Company which later became JEMOCO. Began with 14 people and now they have over 200 people. Sr. was vice president of JEMOCO along with Tim Alexander who was president. Out of Delta spun 6 or 7 different companies. They were the largest employer in Terrebonne at one time. Back then 1200 - 1500 people, this was back in the early 60's.

Chrome Oil American: Bought Delta as well as its subsidiaries. Told Sr. they were going to take care of him but didn't get any stock or anything out of it. They were afraid that if he got any money he would go ahead and start his own company.

Family History: From northern Louisiana. Dad came down in 58' and brought the family down in 59'. Jr. was 10 years old at the time and felt like it was a whole new world. Seafood was going out and oil field was going in. All service companies were locating next to Houma because it was close to Grand Isle and Venice and Morgan City.

Houma: Houma at the time (59') had 4 picture shows, a lot of churches and a lot of places to build on. Morgan City didn't have a lot of land to build on. Houma then became a hub. Back in the 50's they could have become a Lafayette but the local people wouldn't sell the property, didn't want any outsiders over here. Houma could have grown but not as big as Lafayette because of land.

Who's who in small business industry: Must call Cliff Smith, associated with many businesses. Son was T. Baker Smith. His father got involved with oil field work in 1903 with survey companies. He can tell about land basin in Houma as well. Lafayette became the engineering hub for the oilfield for a long time. Houma got left with the service sector because of its geographical position.

Current oil spill: (April 2002) just lost 90,000 barrels in a place called Little Lake in Lafourche Parish. BP pipeline with a 3 inch hole in it.

Impact of oil field: frustrating because the rest of the country doesn't understand. Intracoastal came through in the late 40's and early 50's. It cut a community in half, east and west Houma. It divided a community with drawbridges. People could die waiting for the bridge. A lot of that was east-west towing, much was oil field related. Doesn't know any other community where people will sit and wait for boats to go through. Parts of the city do not have an overpass so you have to wait it out. Says the people over here are complacent.

Houma funnel: (Houma tunnel) has 4 lanes going into 2, been overloaded for years. Been waiting on the overpass since the 50's. Houma canal was dug for the oil field. Marine has priority, just now altering the patterns a little bit.

Servants to the US: southern Louisiana is impacted severely in so many ways and is not compensated for it. The rest of the US can have all the oil and gas they want and at cheaper prices. Example is the Boston Tunnel. Wasting money on this tunnel and it's tax payer money. Doesn't put a good taste in your mouth about Yankees. All they want to do is shut down oil fields because they are so environmentally sensitive. Want the benefits of the oil and gas industry but don't want to see them anywhere.

Bilco history: 1978, Dad was turning 62, working at JEMOCO. Wanted to look at early retirement because he had gotten screwed over by so many companies, for a lifetime of work he only had 19,000 - 20,000 in his account because the company had lost all of the rest.

Jr's history: has a marketing background. His father was sick because he felt like he had wasted the last 20 years of his life because he had nothing to show for it. Jr. then came on board with his dad to try and help him sell the business. Didn't realize how hard it would be. No contacts whatsoever, but the market was still booming at that time, 4700 drilling rigs were running. Began Bilco in 1978. Bud Williams let them use part of his business.

Bilco history again: he and his father built business up from scratch. In 1981, it felt like there was no end to the business but in 1982, a lot changed. A rock dropped. We had some patents and someone wanted to buy us out. It was his father, brother and himself at that time. In 82' or 83', only had one patent issued and one pending, when they wanted to buy him out. Passed up 1 ½ million because he saw opportunity. Bought his brother out as well as much of his father's share. Went from 1 patent to 18 currently. Has some technology that no one has.

New technology: Started CRA, close and resistant alloy pipe (chrome). It is softer than other pipes because it has a lot of nickel in it so it is resistant to many of the environments down in the hole. Explanation of the chrome pipe and why it is important. Egg theory. Take an egg and push on three opposable forces and it won't damage the pipe. Won awards for patents. Soft touch tongs another patent. Would rent the patents here in LA but would sell it overseas.

Overseas promotion: Picked out several spots in the world where rigs were still drilling. He was losing money and needed to find some sales. He put everything he had in the world trip. Began in Bahrain, then to Ahmadabi for an oil show. Met a guy in Bahrain who was from southern Louisiana, sold an order for \$140,000. This saved his company. Also went to Singapore and made contacts that helped save his company. He got an award in 1987 for excellence in exporting.

Patent technology: people would steal patent info so he just sells it. He has tried to have joint ventures but has gotten screwed so many times that he sells his patent information as he goes along.

LA while he was overseas: Lots of layoffs, businesses closing down.

Boom & Busts: 1983 was okay in LA, 1984 was pretty good, things started to improve and picking up. 1985 was pretty good but when they hit 1986 things went bad again. In the mid 1980's he had paid off some of his creditors as well as expanded a little bit but then '86 came.

Office in the old blimp base: talks about the extensions throughout the years. Each piece was added on in chunks. During upswings they would add onto the building.

Strongest year: 1998, 110 people working for them. In 86 had 40 people and went down to half of that.

William Craig

Lafayette, LA

July 24, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz, David DiTucci

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW011

#### Ethnographic Preface:

William Craig earned a bachelor's degree in Petroleum Engineering at Louisiana State University. He worked for the Arkansas and Louisiana Gas Company for two years, joined the Army Air Corp until 1945, and returned to the Company for five more years. He did consulting work beginning in 1951, first in Texas, then in Lafayette in 1956. He discusses the changes that the Oil Center brought to Lafayette, and how it was different from when he visited the city as a child. He also talks about economic changes that the oil industry brought to Louisiana.

#### Summary:

Education: father was a lawyer; took freshman year at Louisiana State University to decide on a major; graduated with a degree in Petroleum Engineering.

Employment: worked in Shreveport for the Arkansas and Louisiana Gas Company for two years, earning \$100/month, working 6 days/week; most time spent in office, so he didn't consider himself a drilling engineer. Entered the Army Air Corp as meteorologist, serving in SW Pacific; discharged in 1945; returned to Arkansas and Louisiana Gas Company for 5 years. 1951 went to consulting firm in Dallas, TX for 4 years; then Tyler, TX for 1.5 years; transferred to Lafayette in 1956 until 1959 when company closed their office; worked for another oil exploration company until 1966. Did evaluation and estimating work; evaluated particular fields to determine physical factors, production history, and tested wells to determine types of oil and gas reserves there; constructed economic evaluations. 1975 worked with Morrow Corporation with their well in Crowley.

Oil Center: opened in 1952; at that time a company was opening an office almost every week; contrasts this "golden age" with the present state of Lafayette's oil businesses; mentions Jimmy Owen, an independent oil producer. Other possible sites for Oil Center were Opelousas, Jennings and New Iberia; mentions Paul Moorevahn, district land manager from Tidewater; Moorevahn talked to Heymann about building an Oil Center there. Heymann at the time had his nursery. Mr. Craig cites one reason Lafayette was chosen was because of the central location between New Orleans and Houston, and the close proximity to Baton Rouge.

Lafayette: city grew tremendously from his early days; first memory of Lafayette was a trip with parents in 1941; south of the Southwestern Learning Institute campus were gravel roads; Pinhook Bridge was the edge of town at this time; area isolated with few bridges to connect it to the rest of the state; influx of out-of-state people coming in; mostly Catholic population was

suspicious of people from northern Louisiana; everyone treated him with courtesy, but he always felt like an outsider.

Economic changes: in 1979 a lot of money came in from out-of-state due to high marginal federal tax rates; changed in 1981 when tax law was altered and reduced, causing a lot of money to leave the state; another economic change resulted from oil deal between United States and Saudi Arabia to hurt Russia; price of oil dropped to nine dollars a barrel; took a while for price of oil to pick up again; since then industry has been either boom or bust; in early 1990s his business was picking up in areas like Crowley.

Neal Cramer

Houston, TX

August 20, 2002

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS006

### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Neal Cramer is a former president of Western Geophysical, Inc. He joined the company in 1949, working on a land crew in Elk City, Oklahoma. Most of his experience was with Western's foreign operations. He stayed with the company for over forty years, retiring in 1991.

### Summary:

A short interview offering candid commentary on Western and the geophysical services industry. He discusses the first offshore surveys and the importance of the Paslay streamer cable and the move to non-dynamite sound sources. Talks about the key innovation of Western's in developing nonproprietary or "spec" data acquisition. Gives most the credit for this innovation to Boothe Strange. Howard Dingman, who succeeded Strange as president, also a towering figure in the company. He is less charitable to Henri Salvatore, founder of the company, and Carl Savit, Western's research guru.

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Evelyn Creel

Cut Off, LA

January 20, 2005

Interviewed by: Joanna Stone

University of Arizona

JLS05

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Jean Landry set-up this interview with Mrs. Creel because she knew we were interested in people who had lived in the company camps on Grand Isle. Jean and I met at the D&D Restaurant in Larose and I followed her to Mrs. Creel's house, which is in Larose even though it has a Cut Off address. Jean participated in the interview, both asking and answering questions, and she added a lot of very interesting information.

Evelyn Creel was born in Paradis, Louisiana in 1924. She was the only child in her family to graduate high school, and she worked on the weekends at a restaurant. She moved to Exxon's Grand Isle camp when her husband was transferred there in 1948 and stayed until 1971, when she relocated to Larose.

#### Summary:

Personal history: Evelyn was born in Paradis, Louisiana in 1924, both of her parents were from there; Her father worked at whatever he could, repairing radios, gardening; She had 2 brothers and 1 sister; She met her husband Robert when she was working in a restaurant during high school; He was working for Exxon at the time, driving truck; They moved to Grand Isle in 1948, when her oldest son was 1 year old, and stayed until 1971, by then they had 4 children; Evelyn started school in Paradis and graduated from Hahnville in 1942, she was the only one of the children in her family to graduate high school; She got married in 1946

Exxon: Robert worked for Exxon, and they moved to Bogalusa, Louisiana; He drove a truck that pulled rigs to inland fields; lived in Crowley for 1 year, and then were transferred to Grand Isle

Arrival at Grand Isle camp: The first time that Evelyn went to Grand Isle, they drove down at night, and she wondered what she had gotten herself into

Early days at Grand Isle camp: There was not much on the island at that time, only one grocery store and a post office, they would go to New Orleans once a month for supplies

Housing: First they rented a house for a year and then they bought a house at the camp, where they stayed for 3 years; In 1948, there were two rows of about 7 two-story houses each; They were built by the contract company Danziger; The houses were elevated about 10 feet off the ground and made of cypress, with hard wood and tile floors inside

Social life: There wasn't much of a social life; She played bridge, went to church activities, helped to lead the Girl Scouts; The kids would organize themselves and play together; There were not too many "locals" to speak of; There was a company-owned recreation hall; Most of the families were Catholic, but there were enough Baptists and Methodists to start their own congregations as well; The different denominations used to tease each other

Exxon: Robert operated a crane and then became a supervisor

Workers: Were one big family; Came from all over, Oklahoma, Texas, Mississippi; About three-quarters of them stayed in Louisiana after they left the camp

School: There was a school on Grand Isle, grades 1-12, but it was not accredited, so Jefferson Parish made an agreement with Exxon to bus the company children to an accredited school, agreement lasted until 1987, then parents had to pick up the tab

Raising children on Grand Isle: It was a great place to raise children because you knew everyone; Evelyn's sons worked on charter boats on the weekends during high school; There were no bus accidents and the bridge never broke

Changes in camp: There were not as many trucks on the road before as there are now; When Evelyn arrived there were 10 or 12 houses, and when they left there were more than 100; Rotor 8 had a separate section of the camp for their employees, and Halliburton had a small camp there as well; Exxon had a mess hall, sleeping quarters, supervisors house, many of which are still there

Housing: Evelyn and Robert stayed in the company house for the rest of their time in Grand Isle; Exxon painted the homes inside and out, at first only white, then they let the employees pick colors; They paid \$30/month for a 2 bedroom place, they turned the long porch into a bedroom as well; Exxon cut the grass, paid the electricity and water bills, and did maintenance on the houses; Water was a big deal, Exxon used to barge in water and store it, they found out later that some kids were swimming in the drinking water tanks; They have reunions in Lafayette for those that lived at the camp

Changes in Grand Isle: New, nicer houses; Ratio of land to water has changed, there was much more land then, you didn't realize it until you went up in the air and looked down; Betsy really did a lot of damage

Hurricanes: Exxon would tell them they had to evacuate, either over the loudspeakers or through the office personnel; Evelyn would pack up a suitcase and 4 kids and they would go to New Orleans; Sometimes she didn't want to leave because it was so much hassle; Golden Meadow would flood and they would be cut off; Flossie messed up the islands in 1956 and Betsy caused a lot of damage in 1965 but Exxon paid for the damages to their house; Exxon paid for the hotel rooms and food while the families were in New Orleans, they would all try to get into the same hotel; During hurricane season, Evelyn would leave a box of important family pictures in the car to be ready

Health: The doctor only came one day a week, so if you were sick on another day, you had to go up the bayou; Evelyn delivered her children in Raceland

Leaving Grand Isle camp: Evelyn left in 1971 and moved to Larose when her husband switched to 7 and 7; About 25 to 30 other families had left by that point, but most were still there; At its high point, a bigger church was built, but now it has no congregation; She didn't want her son to have to change schools during his senior year; The adjustment wasn't too hard because people were nice and Evelyn already had connections in the area; Her kids go to the reunions, even if she doesn't; They formed lasting friendships during their time at the camp; They still meet every 2 months in Houma

Retirement: Robert retired in 1981 at the age of 62 because he decided it was time; He took a lump sum retirement

Restaurants: There were only a few restaurants on Grand Isle: The Nook and Sarah's were open in the late 1940's, and a forerunner of Don Landry's Seafood was there, as well as East End, where the fishermen hung out; In the 1950's, the Snack Shack was built and a few years later, the New Snack Shack, which is now called Jitterbugs

Entertainment: On Sundays after church Evelyn's family would go to dinner at Exxon's mess hall; The food was great, and the kids looked forward to it; Exxon would pay for employees and their families; Grand Isle Theater was the place to take dates; Evelyn's family would go to movies fairly often because there wasn't much else to do; They had a newspaper from New Orleans delivered by the bread truck every morning

Luxuries of living at the camp: The locals didn't have trash pick up, Jean's family would burn some trash and bury the rest in the backyard; The locals had to secure their own drinking water; Jean said that from an outsider's perspective, the camp looked like heaven; At Christmastime, Santa Claus arrived on helicopter (in early years he came by boat) with toys for the children, at Easter they would have Easter egg hunts

Tim Creswell

Lafayette, LA

August 5, 2002; August 8, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz, David DiTucci; David DiTucci

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW016; DD008

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Tim Creswell responded to the article in the Baton Rouge *Advocate*. Born and raised in Abbeville, he realized that the oil industry would be a good way to make money without going to school first. His first job in the oilfield came in 1953 after his sophomore year of high school; he worked in the marsh running pipelines. After graduating high school, he went to a few colleges, before deciding that was not for him. So in 1958 he went to work for Union Oil Company of California (Unocal) which was just beginning to get into offshore production; he worked as a contract dispatcher in Intracoastal City until 1963. After that he took a job in production operations and began working offshore. In 1974, he took a construction foreman's job where he supervised the building of offshore platforms. A year and a half later, he became a production foreman where he supervised two offshore complexes; several years later he took on the additional responsibility of being a shore base foreman, while losing one of his offshore complexes. Later, he continued with the production foreman job and took over the safety supervisory work (taught water survival). He did this until 1991 when the company completely reorganized when he became the logistic superintendent's job for the Louisiana Gulf Region. After having a quadruple bypass, he retired at the end of 1996. During his first interview he discusses his career, noting changes in the industry. His second meeting was for a photo interview, wherein he shares picture of many Union Oil Company structures, including their first offshore production venture in the late 1950s.

#### Summary of SW016:

USGS inspections: was involved in the first serious USGS inspection in '69 or '70 in Vermillion Block 14 Field when he was a field foreman; was a nightmare because didn't know anything. Almost all of the inspectors were old oilfield workers. API-RP14C recommendation concerned production equipment and operations and had to do with safety and environmental issues.

Early career: began in summer after sophomore year in high school ('53); father's friend owned a contracting service; worked in marsh running pipelines; nasty work, but not dangerous - born in marsh. After high school, found college was not for him.

Early career with Union Oil Company: started in late '58 at a shore base in Intercoastal City as contract dispatcher; Union Oil offshore production in its infancy; first production in '59 at Vermillion 67A platform. In '65, took over Pure Oil Company. In '63 went into field in production operations; first onshore at White Lake and then offshore as production operator.

Production operator: worked in Vermillion 14 Field, Unocal's biggest field at the time (describes); high pressure, corrosive wells; they did reporting, testing, chemical injections, and kept wells flowing. Worked seven and seven (it was lovely); had six-man crew with contract cook and pilot; only a 12-hour day shift (had alarms on sales meters). High pressure wells pumped high volume of fluid and paraffin could cause problems; had to watch it all the time.

Safety: not very dangerous, but had certain things to watch out for; in wintertime, decks got slick; fatigue could cause inattention and lead to accidents.

Communication: wife could always get a hold of him if there was a problem; early on, communication from family was limited to real emergencies, but then communication systems got better.

Schedule: took a long time to adjust to five and two schedule after working seven and seven; with seven and seven was able to spend more time with children (two sons).

Construction foreman: took job in '74; would set production platforms in place, hook everything up, and put it online; was onshore and offshore (describes).

Pay: upper end on the pay scale for that part of the country; production operations normally paid better.

Industry cycles: got into the industry when it was growing; was trained on the job. In '62 there was a recession and drilling stopped offshore, shore base hours cut, two people laid off.

Loyalty: at that time, companies took pride in their people, but today workers are an expendable commodity; no loyalty either way; dissuaded his sons from going into the industry. Disloyalty started when companies offered employees stock options and bonuses; no longer have long-term company goals, but short-term individual goals.

Production foreman: took job in mid '75, working out of Intercoastal City with three other production foremen; supervised two offshore complexes. Several years later supervised one offshore complex (West Cameron 280) and became shore base foreman. After a few more years, stayed as production foreman, but went to work as safety supervisor in company's expanded safety and training program.

Safety program: taught the first aid, CPR, water survival, marine rescue; developed water survival school that they ran out of Pecan Island High School's indoor pool during summer; with Bill Lovell, developed a marine rescue drill that became a recommended practice by API.

Logistic superintendent for region: company reorganized in '91 and he took this job for Louisiana Gulf Region (offshore TX, LA, and AL); oversaw shore bases and transportation. In '96 when taking company physical found problem with heart and had a quadruple bypass; retired at end of year.

Changes: oilfield now run by bean counters; focused on short-term goals - not just oil industry; not maintaining reserves. Could see problems with disloyalty coming in late '80s, early '90s; poor management.

Oil industry impact on area: brought it out of a primarily agriculturally-based economy; helped to build Lafayette and ULL. In '80s, Lafayette got smart and learned to diversify; at some point industry is going to fall, a downturn is inevitable; running out of places to go for oil (have to go deeper, which is expensive).

Louisiana's impact on oil industry: gave it employees with strong work ethics (raised in marshes and on farms).

Big and little companies: never again see boom like in the mid '70s; takes a lot more money today - deep water only for big boy conglomerates; individual operators able to make some money by recompleting old wells.

Practical jokes offshore: to make seven days go by, you always had practical jokes; story of mackerels in tool box and tool boxes in sewage unit; container of water over doorway. Crews were like families. Union was an excellent company to work for.

Summary of DD008:

[032TimCreswell32]: Union Oil Company of California's first production in the Gulf of Mexico; late '58 to early '59.

[001TimCreswell1]: Vermillion 67B Platform being drilled; late '58 to early '59.

[002TimCreswell2, 003TimCreswell3, 004TimCreswell4]: slinging operation, '69, Vermillion Block 14 Field; Bell 47G helicopter. Slinging operation basically used to move pumps with a sling underneath the helicopter.

[005TimCreswell5, 006TimCreswell6]: extension of a helicopter slinging operation.

[007TimCreswell7, 008TimCreswell8, 009TimCreswell9, 010TimCreswell10]: underground blowout at Vermillion 46 Field, at a Mobil platform; casing had ruptured and to kill the well had to drill a relief well.

[011TimCreswell11, 012TimCreswell12, 013TimCreswell13, 014TimCreswell14, 015TimCreswell15, 016TimCreswell16]: old Pure Oil Company platforms in Vermillion 66 that Union Oil Company inherited with the Pure-Union in '65; tied up a platform is surplus World War Two minesweeper.

[017TimCreswell17, 018TimCreswell18]: early '70s, derrick barge and an eight-pile jacket in preparation of being set.

[019TimCreswell19, 020TimCreswell20, 021TimCreswell21]: early '80s marine rescue drill.

[022TimCreswell22, 023TimCreswell23, 024TimCreswell24, 025TimCreswell25]: marine rescue drill; lowering life raft to person fallen overboard and raising them up to platform in personnel basket.

[033TimCreswell33]: '69 or '70, Vermillion 14B Platform.

Changes since the boom: during '70s until bust, had unbelievable growth; a third to one half of the people in the area were attached directly or indirectly to the oilfield. Big difference today is that there are fewer oil companies and the oil companies that are left are going to contract labor. Most of the big oil companies join with other big companies for deep water drilling ventures; costs are astronomical.

[027TimCreswell27, 028TimCreswell28, 029TimCreswell29, 030TimCreswell30, 031TimCreswell31]: series of production platforms in Vermillion Block 36C; difference between drilling rigs and production platforms.

James "Peanut" Crochet

Houma, LA

July 20, 2001, July 25, 2001

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier, Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

EB009, AG039p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Peanut, as family and friends refer to him, has worked with and been friends with F.J. Matherne for over 30 years. He worked at Kerr McGee as a flunkie and then went to Texaco for 36 years. When I called him to set up an interview he sounded excited over the phone; he also asked if F.J. put me up to this. When I drove up to the house, I was astounded by the number of plants sitting in the car port, around the car, beside the house and on boards out in the yard. I then noticed a small faded sign by the door that said, "Plants for Sale." Peanut answered the door with a quick smile. He and his wife were sitting in the living room watching television, as it was rainy that day. I soon found out that his wife was the gardener; she talked very excitedly about her plants to me for 10 minutes. Peanut brought out a number of photos to share during the first interview (July 20, 2001), so Andrew Gardner returned five days later to scan the photos and conduct a photo interview specifically about the photos.

James "Peanut" Crochet was born in 1927. He was drafted into the service in 1944 and toured Marseilles and Belgium for 20 months. His first job was at a factory called "Weatherhead." It was a canning factory in Houma. In 1949 he got a job with Kerr McGee as a flunkie and then moved onto roustabout after a year or so. After Kerr McGee he went to work inshore for Texaco. In the 1970's he worked as foreman for a few years. During the downturn of the early 1980's, he was transferred to work on a clean up barge by the name of Barge Lawrence.

#### Summary of EB009:

History: Peanut was born in 1927. He was drafted into the service in 1944 and toured Marseilles and Belgium for 20 months. His first job was at a factory called "Weatherhead". It was a canning factory in Houma. He has a picture from a magazine with all of the Weatherhead employees on it. In 1949 he got a job with Kerr McGee as a flunkie and then moved onto roustabout after a year or so. He has some great pictures of himself and his cooking crew on an offshore camp.

Texaco: After Kerr McGee he went to work for Texaco inshore. He hated working offshore because he would get so seasick. He was not afraid to tell me, in great detail, how he felt riding out on those first boats to the offshore rigs. After roughnecking for a while he worked as a pumper. He explains each job explicitly. In the 1970's he was foreman for a few years. During the bust cycle of the early 80's he was moved to work on a clean up barge by the name of Barge Lawrence. It is interesting to note that this was the same fate that befell F.J.

Sexism and Racism: We talked a little about blacks and women coming into the oil field in the 1970's. Peanut does not hide the fact that he is sexist as well as racist. He says he knows he

shouldn't say these things out loud but these are his beliefs. He believed that women were not made for the oilfield, literally. They weren't strong enough. He held that blacks did not want to work when they got to the rig because they got it in their heads that everyone was prejudiced towards them. Peanut retired in 1987 because too many things were changing in the oil field and they offered him a good package. We talked a bit about unions, although Peanut is not a verbose man by any means. His first job at Weatherhead was union work and he said he didn't mind working for the union but still didn't believe that the oil field should have been unionized. Since retiring his wife travels a bit leaving him to plant vegetables and tend to his fruit trees. Upon leaving they gave me a bag of pears.

#### Summary of AG030p:

1. On Lake Pelto, below Cocodrie, a Texaco steam drilling platform.
2. Same field office, view of the living quarters, Lake Pelto.
3. Same field office, view of the living quarters, Lake Pelto.
4. Cook's crew on the Lake Pelto living quarters 1951. James' dad on the far left, Sam Trahan on the far right, Broussard second from the left, with the head cook Seque in the middle with James "Peanut" Crochet, second from right.
5. The Texaco plane flying the shift bosses out to the rig. George Sherman center, Light 'One-eye' Gonselet, the toolpusher, wearing the hat.

Percy Crosby

Grand Isle, LA

January 22, 2003

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM058

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Jean Landry introduced me to Percy Crosby at the senior's dinner at the Grand Isle Community Center, and he agreed to chat with me the next day. I got to his house somewhat later, after putting in a courtesy visit to Mayor Comerdelle, and Mr. Percy berated me (kindly) about punctuality. The interview was fairly brief, because he had to go the meal again at the Center.

Percy Crosby is a native of Grand Isle, 82 years old. After the War, he spent a few years as a cook for Shell, then went to barber school in New Orleans. After 26 yrs, he suffered disk problems and couldn't stand up, so he gave up the business. He was elected town constable for two terms. He has a small pension from Jefferson Parish for working in mosquito control on the island. This is the fellow that Bob Gramling had recommended to me, though Bob didn't recall his name.

#### Summary:

Background: Veteran of WWII, Philippines and Leyte and Luzon, came back to barber school, raised 8 kids, lost wife 14 years ago, lives with dog, commander of VFW post 15 times; barber for 26 years

Childhood: went up to 8th grade; altar boy; Catholic school in Thibodaux but didn't get along with brothers; went to work on oyster boat, went to Army 1941; work for Chinamen drying shrimp; turtle farm run by storeowner; daddy would buy turtles for him; John Ludwig got to be rich man; sold to Fulton Street Market in New York; cattle roaming; picked snap beans and cucumbers; people came with tent to show movies, mostly Westerns

Oil companies coming in: after Army, he was cook for Shell; 4 years doing seismographic work; Brown and Root doing all construction for rigs and docks; oil companies put a lot of money on the island; steady income; Humble came in after war; Shell did all seismic work, but Humble had a scout, bid \$1 more than Shell, got oil leases and sulphur, which they subleased to Freeport

Wooden bridge: 1933, under Huey P. Long

No doctors: had to go by boat up Barataria to Harvey Canal; pregnant women might die

School: 2 rooms, 2 teachers, sign on wall be outhouse: "No foreign languages will be spoken on the school grounds"; married childhood sweetheart from same grade

Army and Civil Air Patrol: went in with buddies from around here; CAP patrolled beach, airplanes to patrol offshore; had balloons, based in Houma; old people volunteered for CAP; whole island under blackout

Town: 1959 became town, under Morrison Act, allowing for smallest towns to incorporate; opposition from parish seat, because GI was biggest revenue producer for parish; that revenue would stay here

Exxon: brought boat rental business; supplies and crews; Otto Candies was multimillionaire; not too many licensed captains from down here, couldn't pass exam

Leland Culligan

Lafayette, LA

July 7, 2003

Interviewed by: Robert Carriker

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

RC007

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Leland Culligan is from Birmingham, Alabama; his father was the vice-president of a coal company. He received his bachelor's degree in geology from Birmingham Southern College. After serving in the Marine Corps during World War Two, he went to the University of Colorado where he received his Master's degree in geology in 1947. He then went to work for the California Company (since became Chevron, Texaco) as a development geologist in Mississippi. He spent five years in development work, moving every six months to a year. He moved into the exploration department in Shreveport, and then was transferred to Jackson, Mississippi, where he stayed 11½ years. He moved to Lafayette in 1965, where he went back to doing development work. The interview seems to end abruptly when Mr. Culligan asks to change the subject and that the recorder be turned off.

#### Summary:

Early life: from Birmingham, AL; father was VP of a coal company in Warrior Basin. Received his bachelor's in geology from Birmingham Southern; served in the Marines in Pacific during World War Two; received his master's in geology from University of Colorado on GI Bill. Chose geology because he wanted to do something to contribute to welfare of people.

California Company: hired in '47 after a professor recommended him to the company; company was looking to grow, so hiring personnel. First job as development geologist in Brookhaven, MS; over next five years transferred to Natchez, LA, Escalante, UT, New Orleans, Ardmore, OK. Started in exploration department when transferred to Shreveport; sent to Jackson, MS, when Shreveport office shut down. Came to Lafayette in development in '65; first office on Calico Boulevard.

Types of wells: development wells are drilled in an established field; exploratory wells are made in search of a field - larger scale. In exploration, tested for hydrocarbons in shows; look for fluorescence (describes) and sometimes tasted samples. While in Jackson a technological change occurred and started making record sections instead of individual records to evaluate structures.

Locating areas for exploration: oil seeps and salt basins and domes give clues to where structures may lie; closures. Gravity meters help locate salt domes, use subsurface mapping to identify anomalies, use seismograph to identify structures.

Jerry Cunningham

Morgan City, LA

June 8, 2001, January 11, 2002, January 14, 2002

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG028, AG045, AG049p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Jerry Cunningham was an active participant in our previous project in the region. He put me in contact with a variety of different people in the Morgan City area, but I also thought it would be a good idea for me to interview him at some point in time. His actual participation in the offshore oil industry was somewhat limited, but his father worked in the industry, and he is also familiar with some of the community impacts felt by Morgan City over the years. The topic of conversation here wanders a bit, and there is a period where his son participates in the interview. Jerry talks quite a bit about the early seismograph crews on which both he and his father worked. He clarifies the activities of the various personnel on the boats, and explains some of the other technology used to locate oil. He talks about the danger in the oilpatch, the bad weather, and some of the accidents he witnessed. There are some good sections near the end about the emergent environmental movement in the region.

Jerry's father was born in Oklahoma and started working there for Shell on seismograph crews. He then moved down to southern Louisiana and worked his way up to the main office in New Orleans. Jerry was raised in southern Louisiana. He pulled cable on gravity boats and started working offshore in 1955 while going to school part-time. He completed his education after serving in the armed forces and became a teacher and principal in Morgan City.

#### Summary of AG028:

**Seismograph Crew:** He was on Grand Isle in the first grade in 1945, and although there's some argument, Shell was the first seismograph crew working offshore. His dad was born in Oklahoma, and started working for seismograph crews there, and then he moved down to southern Louisiana. He had two years of college education, which, at that time, was a lot more than most men in the oilpatch.

**Shell:** They were a big company, and they were a good one to work for. Their retirement plan matched dollar for dollar. Jerry's dad started off with Shell as a common laborer. But Shell had a special program - even the college graduates had to start out at the bottom. They wanted everyone to know the business. He worked his way up and eventually ended up working at the main office in New Orleans.

**Offshore:** They were working in lakes and close offshore in the 30's. But the two-boat seismograph rig didn't come along until the 40's. They were adapting land technology to drill offshore. Jerry has one picture of a bunch of boats sunk around a rig to protect it from the wave action. Now they're out in 8000 feet.

Work History and environment: Jerry was pulling cable on the gravity boats at an early age. There were a lot different things that they were trying at the time. There was a conservation man on the boat at the time, and he'd log everything they killed with the dynamite. That's why they were trying other ways of finding oil. Jerry worked on a sparky boat. He describes the sparky boat and the use of electrical charges. Then they tried a sniffer crew.

Work History: He started working offshore in 1955. He remembers Hurricane Audrey in 1957. He was going to school part time at the time as well. He also went into the service in 1959. When he got back, they put him on Shell Rig 11, and after about six months Hurricane Betsy destroyed it. Then he went back to school, and got into education.

Morgan City Boom: when he got back from the war, they had really moved away from converting shrimping boats to building service boats, and that was a real boom for Morgan City. There was a steel boat maker out of Pascagoula that made the Walker boats.

Shell Policy Labor: Shell came up with a policy that family couldn't work together. Jerry describes the policy and the reasons for it. His son arrives and begins participating in the discussion.

Seismology Crews: We talk more about seismology crews. They were variable in size and duties. We go through each job and task on the seismology crew. He also describes the general process of setting seismograph charges. His son describes how different and simple the process is today.

Jerry Injury: Broke his hand on a winch. He talks about how Shell dealt with it - they didn't come in for two days, and a lot of his bones were broken. Then he was a cook's helper.

The Grid: he talks about how they divided up the Gulf so that they would know where they were at. Offshore Logistics evolved out of this - contracting out for specialty trades, like navigation. Maybe it wasn't called Offshore Logistics. Anyway, they had towers on the beaches. Sometimes there were so many boats out there they were picking up charges from other boats. Back then, there was a lot of duplication. Now, with the contractors, they just buy it from a company. Or they'll go in together.

Morgan City Boomtown: When things were booming in the 50s and 60s, a lot of drifters and transients floated into town. There were a lot of criminals that came down here. It was hard to find good cooks. His dad joined the military, but they sent him home - they said we needed the oil more than anything. His dad was hiring guys with one leg, etc. ... it was hard to find labor. When the war was over, all the soldiers came back looking for work.

Loyalty: he talks about when he was injured and how they kept him working. Loyalty began to break down when they started hiring all the contractors in the late 50's and 60's. He talks about the process by which people were hired back then. His son says you don't see young guys working for Exxon anymore. Jerry mentions that the differences in quality of living quarters on the rig between company quarters and contractor quarters were great.

Leaving the oilfield: Jerry talks about the danger of the oilfield, hurricanes, 40 foot waves, and his decision to leave the oilfield. And they were working 16 hour days. He talks about more accidents.

Environment: they were throwing everything overboard. There was a conservation man around, as he mentioned earlier. He slept all day and stayed drunk. At one time they were blowing charges for the fish - just to eat them. And they were throwing everything overboard - batteries, everything. Environmental activism started around the canals dredged through the marsh - the oak trees started dying because of saltwater intrusion.

Unionization: the companies took care of their employees back then. But now things are different. Jerry talks about safety engineering - they didn't have anything like that back then. But Jerry personally doesn't remember ever hearing about unions. The first he heard about was the one that came to McDermott last year.

Summary of AG045:

Family History: Jerry's dad began working for Shell Oil Company in the late 1920's to 30's doing land seismographic work. Later, he was part of a team that perfected offshore, deep ocean seismographic methods. He worked for Shell his entire life until he retired.

History of seismography: Early seismography was done on land; some was capable of being done in lakes and offshore in shallow waters by drilling holes and dropping charges into them. Deepwater seismography was obstructed due to environmental damage from the powder charges, which Wildlife officers were on each boat to document what was being killed and to halt charges if they felt fit. Early methods to get around this were tried: sparky boats: used electrical waves to send down to the bottom strata and bounce back up and be recorded-failed; sniffer boats: attempted to chemically detect hydrocarbons which indicated oil seeping out of the ocean floor-failed, finally they began using new military gas charges that produced high frequency sounds and did not hurt the environment.

Jerry's history: Began working on offshore seismography crew when in the '50s with his dad. He continued working on these crews during his high school summers. After high school, he began working on the experimental offshore seismographic boats for two years then went into the military for 6 years in the December of '59. Once Jerry finished his term of service, he came back to work for Shell on a drilling rig for 6 months before it was destroyed by a hurricane. At this point, the GI bill had passed and Jerry went to college and then on to teaching.

Changes in the offshore industry: Between the time that Jerry left for Military service and came back, he noted many changes on the offshore drilling industry. Before, companies were converting shrimp boats and Navy surplus boats. Upon his return, they had begun to make and used very specialized vessels with computers on board. Another change he noticed was the development of steel hulls in response to the damage and inevitable destruction of the previous (wooden? - not stated what previous boats made of) hulls.

## Summary of AG049p:

1. The first seismograph boats Shell Oil Company had were converted shrimp boats on Grand Isle. This is an instrument boat, middle, shooting boat, right, and a supply boat to the left.
2. Drilling a hole on Lake Pontchartrain.
3. The houseboat the men lived on, built by Shell.
4. Jerry Cunningham working on a gravity boat just out of high school, with the wheel that pulls the cable in on the left.
5. The Navy surplus minesweepers that Jerry Cunningham's dad bought for Shell Oil Company for seismic exploration.
6. Ben Champion, who was boat captain for Jerry Cunningham's dad, steering the minesweeper/exploration boat.
7. Loading supplies to go offshore.
8. Photos of John Ryan from Patterson, shown to Jerry Cunningham. A motorboat with a Pontiac car motor used to take materials out to the houseboat.
9. One of the boats used for inshore gravity work.
10. Speedboat used to carry supplies out to the houseboat.
11. A.B. Cunningham, Jerry's dad, 24 years old, in the swamps doing seismograph work, Blind River, LA.
12. Crew house boat on the coastal canal on White Lake, LA, built on a cypress barge, before steel barges. Galley and crew chief's quarters, office and meeting room downstairs, sleeping quarters upstairs.
13. The houseboat, pulled with a tugboat to other locations.
14. The houseboat where crews worked 7 and 7.
15. AB Cunningham, center, onsite supervisor for an exploration crew.
16. Drill crew using water pressure to drill a hole in 24 ft of water.
17. Motorboat on a lake, on exploration, were leased by the company.
18. Motorboats would go 8-10 mph on the lake, for exploration.
19. Instrument truck where they hook up the equipment.
20. The water truck used to pump dirt out of the way, filling up in town.
21. The shooting truck, with dynamite for blasting, at hand held gas pump.
22. Converted rig for drilling for water.
23. Using water pressure to drill by pumping water into the pipe after starting it with an oil bit.
24. An instrument barge on Lake Pontchartrain with the instruments protected under a tarpaulin.
25. Speedboat tying up to a shooting barge with the drill and pump, on the lake.
26. Wooden motorboat used to move around the swamps.
27. Bunk room on the houseboat.
28. View of the rear of the houseboat.
29. Drilling under small oak trees in the wetlands.
- 30-37. No information available.

Bernice Curole

Larose, LA

January 21, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA026p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Bernice Curole is the mother of Katherine Richardelle (see also DA003). Her husband's father had land in Golden Meadow that he leased to the oil companies in the late 1930s. The oil drilling made such a mess of the property that he bought land farther up Bayou Lafourche in Larose and settled there with his family. Bernice and her husband were living on that property at the time of the interview. In this brief interview, she shared photographs from the late 1930s and early 1940s and talked about the oil wells in Golden Meadow.

#### Summary:

Early oil wells in Golden Meadow: they made two wells in the back and two in the front; they were almost on the houses; we had to move the house; remember having to bend down and have children scream to be heard because the pumps were so loud; father-in-law had property on the 308 side in Golden Meadow, south of Yankee Canal; we couldn't live there anymore after the wells were drilled, so father-in-law bought property here; they messed up the land; it was good for checks, paid for the land and to move our houses here

Blowout on Highway 1: 1939 or 1940; close to high school in Golden Meadow; had to leave because oil was everywhere; took the bus from Golden Meadow to Thibodaux and then a cab to relative's house; oil companies made no effort to compensate anyone; stayed in Thibodaux and then called Mark Picciola's store, kept calling until he said everything was okay; only about three phones in Golden Meadow then; Picciola would get calls and then come out with a megaphone; after the companies were done drilling, they moved out and left everything; all the grass died, houses messy from oil drizzle.

Windell Curole

Galliano, LA

June 5, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM035

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Born in Cut Off in 1951, Windell Curole is presently director of the South Lafourche Levee District, where he started in 1980. He was trained as a marine biologist. His father was a shrimper and roughneck. Windell's responsibilities (he is also the Emergency Management person for the parish) include making the calls on when to close the flood gate below Golden Meadow in the face of approaching storms - a decision which can get him in trouble with shrimpers and utility boat operators who may get stuck on the outside.

Windell is something of a local historian and culture broker, taking every opportunity to speak out on "Cajunism." He will also make calls to the local radio talk show, hosted by "Truk," when no one else is calling in. He is also an avid skier, as are many people in the parish. As one of the few local functionaries, Windell was one of our early contacts in south Lafourche, and we try to touch base with him on field visits.

#### Summary:

Childhood memories: father worked in Abbeville; oilfield work broke people down; bosses from out of the area, with "southern" accents; lots from Texas and Oklahoma; stories heard of when oil broke out in Leeville - life rough, lots of us vs. them; grandfather was trapper, shrimper (2 boats), hunted ducks commercially when that was legal; grandfather on other side had drydock; both converted boats to work for Texaco, but we didn't get rich; was 4-5 years old during Hurricane Flossy; mother's grandfather was Web Crosby, whose sons had tugs; Windell worked in ice plant in high school; worked on Uncle Vinton Crosby's boat

Storms: rescuing lay barges in face of storm that became Camille - Uncle said we can't go back out to rescue another tug; people evacuated by helicopter (1969); lesson he learned about storms - can't wait, stay way ahead

Changes with oil industry: without oil, we would always have eaten well, but not have had much money; oil provided constant money; very good people came in; like to believe hybrid vigor involved; marriage of fishing/experience with oil outsiders, who didn't know how to navigate, but had oil technology; seamanship skills taken world-wide; negative side: money is power, power corrupts; attract people who take risks and maybe not the best kind of people; take daddy away a lot; with shrimping, fathers away a lot anyway

Power and government: a little oil money to poor state; attitude that you don't care if politician siphons a little off; we're still under that influence; began to see some change when big oil no

longer paying the bill; politicians more accountable; governor of LA still most powerful of any governor; finally facing task of restructuring tax system

Environment: all big companies based in Texas - if had been based here, wouldn't have done what they did in their own back yard; in 30s, no one cared about cutting canals, etc.; grandma said stopped going to camp near Leeville to trap muskrat - due to saltwater intrusion/unfavorable habitat for muskrat; oysters ruined through spills; since 1960s/70s: science came in; major factor in marsh loss is levees on Mississippi River; systemic solution is sediment from river; could heal most of damage done by oil industry but will take political will; Lafourche levee system has dried out marsh (35K acres out of total of 426,000 acres of wetlands south of Intracoastal) but protects people - a tradeoff; my job is to keep wet land wet and dry land dry

Fishing community: was a marine biologist, looks at this as still a fishing community.

Revenue to federal government: government not giving resources back to mitigate, keep infrastructure in place; we don't have big population/power like FL, CA; LA's political/business past haunting us still, but we don't hide it like East Coast puritans

Huey Long: when ready to be impeached, cut oil lease deals with Peltier, Perez to stay in power

LOOP and levee: we negotiate with landowners; landowner sues; at 11th hour, LOOP stepped in and said it didn't want such alignment; delayed levee construction for 2 years; LOOP didn't show any concern for local people

Parish politics: north is agricultural, south is water: two different mentalities; farmers independent but rooted, are English speaking and Protestant - Cajuns from north part of parish sold land along the bayou to them and moved to Chackbay, etc.; fishermen are gamblers, willing to try new things; farmers not as flexible; what we lacked was the written word so people taken advantage of in leasing oil properties; Levee District a separate entity [covering 10th Ward] - if not, money would never have come through Thibodaux; our people paying tax burden

Oyster: state leases could have been changed before building Caernarvon diversion; state didn't take oyster community seriously; settlements not good for real oyster fishermen [undercuts political standing]

Cajunism: start to talk about it when you start to lose it; after WWII everyone wanted to be "American" because we just kicked Nazis.

Lloyd "Highpockets" Dagenhardt

Houma, LA

June 26, 2003

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS023

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Lloyd Dagenhardt is the father of Kandy Theriot, who is director of the Chamber of Commerce and one of my early helpers on the project. When I mentioned to her that many oil workers seemed to have children who either went on to work in the oil fields or were able to go to college, she said that was her case, and suggested I talk to her father. Lloyd was very willing to be interviewed. He suffers from emphysema and is confined to a wheelchair, but very alert and with a good memory. While there, we watched a video of his son directing his middle school band. Problems with tape skipping, this tape may be hopeless.

Lloyd Dagenhardt is a second generation Texaco worker. His father moved the family from New Orleans to Houma when he started with the Texas Company in 1936. His father was injured in an accident with a pile driver and Lloyd had to drop out of college (he was a music major) to work. At first he tried to make money playing music, but the work wasn't steady and he started with the Texas Company in 1951. His first job was laying timber for a road. He joined the military from 1951-53, and was married during that time. Upon returning, he started as a roustabout at Caillou Island and worked up to pumper by 1957. Family needs led him to move to clerking at the Texaco Shipyard in 1957. In 1965 Texaco shut down the shipyard and he transferred to the warehouse in Houma (on Van St.). He left the company in 1965, working as a plumber in the Houma area. He continued in this work until 1972, when a back disability forced him to retire.

#### Summary:

**Family in Oil Work:** His father worked for Texaco from 1936-51, moved from New Orleans to Houma. Lloyd worked from 1951-65. One son worked for Halliburton and Morrison-Knudson overseas in North Africa and the North Sea. Two children went to college.

**First Day at Work:** Building a board walk (at \$.54 per hour). Work was hard, hauling boards two by two. His partner made it harder.

**Worked Production:** Gauging wells. Storms would come in and they would have to turn off each well by hand. When Hurricane Flossie hit, he had to wait it out at Caillou Island.

**Oil Friendships:** He developed a "radio friendship" with Selwyn Gilmore, for several years they just communicated by radio, on the job. They finally met face-to-face at a gas station, and have been friends for years.

Injuries: His father was injured on a pile driver, losing full use of his leg. His own back was hurt so that he needed surgery and couldn't work in the oil fields. He transferred to a clerical position at the warehouse.

Oil and Community: He worked as assistant manager in a dry goods store, making \$30 per week. He played music at night for dance bands at \$120 per week. But the music work wasn't steady. And he could more than double the store salary by working for Texaco. That's an example of how oil work affected Houma - by bringing up salaries.

Irving "Sammy" Daigle

Houma, LA

January 21, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM025

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Sammy Daigle was referred to us by Professor Tom Becnel, a retired history professor at Nicholls. Sammy's mother and Tom's mother were sisters. Sammy's house is in a subdivision not far from the old Texaco office and warehouse, now owned by T. Baker Smith and Sons. His wife, Gloria, recently had a bypass operation and was recovering. He learned to fly small planes in the 1940s, got a license in the early 1980s, and went in with a couple of friends to buy a Cessna. He recently sold the plane.

Sammy started with Texaco in 1948 and retired in 1989 after 41 years. His primary job was that of marine supervisor in the boat supply sector - getting materials of all kinds to drilling barges and moving drilling rigs between districts. He supervised as many as 200 inshore boats that were hired and operated out of Houma.

#### Summary:

Job: marine supervisor, dealing with marine transportation, hauling supplies, moving rigs, supervising 200 inshore boats that were hired; operated out of Houma; get pipe in by river barges; had 40-50 rigs running in 1950s; warehouse was one of finest facilities Texaco had at the time; worked 5/2, every day if needed; maintained 24-hr radio watch; Texaco owned 15-20 drilling rigs, 5-10 workover rigs stationed at Houma; my job to move rigs between districts; steam rigs: needed source of fresh water to fire boilers - can't fire them with salt water; source of water on Intracoastal Waterway close to Houma, before we had channel.

Districts: Houma, New Iberia, Harvey; closed Houma in 1983/4; we moved to Harvey; eventually closed New Iberia; we had offshore district in Morgan City, formed in early 1950s; today all operated out of New Orleans, will be operated out of Lafayette now that Chevron and Texaco merged.

Contracting boats: Texaco owned 2-3 tugs; used converted shrimp boats, "luggers" from independent contractors; 95% were wooden lugger boats.

Oysters: had section in N.O. that dealt with oyster people; "We never did have any trouble with the shrimping people, just the oyster people;" Texaco contracted with Texas A&M to test oil/oyster effects - testing at Bay St. Elaine and Lafitte; "book" said it didn't have any bad effects, was biodegradable; complaints mainly us dredging canals, cover beds; when complaint, pay off on the spot oftentimes; haven't done any dredging out here in a long time; back in those days, didn't hear about "environmental".

Canals: came off main body of water.

Rigs: steam rigs went out in late 1950s, then all diesel-powered rigs; diesel more economical, did away with all these water tows, more powerful; steam rigs limited in drilling depth due to power limits; sold our rigs to Bay Drilling Co., who exclusively operated for us; barge rigs deteriorate by sinking down in salt water; still had a few company rigs in 1989; strictly contract now; little ones eaten by big ones; 2R got bought out by Falcon, who got bought out by "Transworld" [Transocean]; when we owned rigs, we always had wells; we never laid any of our crews off.

Fields: 8 fields we operated; oil production over 100,000 bbl/day in Houma district; used to flare gas since no market; Bayou Lafourche was boundary line with Harvey District, but Golden Meadow, Leeville, Valentine fields operated from here; those fields accessible by road, but we barged pipe, casing out to them; each field had camp; eventually all went to 7/7; stay in camp when rig was in the field; isolated rigs - crews stayed on rig, we would put company man on rig, rest were contractors; each area had head man, with 2-3 junior men e.g., "junior toolpushers".

Toolpushers: all good men; early 1950s, Texaco really started after petroleum engineers; some were specialists in certain kinds of drilling; eventually engineers became toolpushers and moved up the line; Jerry Shea was first engineer/superintendent in Houma district; before him, Trotter, a practical man, a field man.

Mobility: examples of junior engineers becoming managers, CEO's; later years, headman in N.O. made vice president; J H Gibbons last toolpusher [not an engineer] to become a division vice-president.

Price of oil: no one in the district worried about it; my section - marine - was service: if they wanted it, we had to get it to them - so wasn't question of pinching pennies; Texaco kept drilling/production program through the 80s; don't operate camps - go out every day from Cocodrie; pumpers might stay out there.

Dual completion: started in 50s, 1 well in different reservoirs, increase production.

Family: from right here in Houma; dad was head cook at Bay St. Elaine, retired after 30 years of service.

Hiring: mostly local people, backlog of applications; "my son's going to need a job; put him on the list, at the top of the list;" in late 40s-60s, over 2000 employees in Houma District; "roustabouts" on production and maintaining tank batteries; "roughnecks" on drilling.

Tank batteries: Caillou Island field had 15-20 tank batteries, then to save cost, made one central battery - this eliminated lots of boats, jobs; problem was also that storms destroyed tank batteries; after every storm, tremendous rebuilding process of pipes and walkways.

Storms: didn't have good weather reporting, we would get trapped out there; lost a lot of boats - swamped, crashed into wells.

Changes with company: because of decline in production, reduction in personnel; Texaco went big offshore out of Morgan City-to Eugene Island; at end of my time, willing to sell anything inshore; takes 100s of guys to run inshore, because of area they had to cover, so wanted to get out of it; offshore, only 1 or 2 guys to run a production platform; "Texaco was a real good company to work for".

Retirees' club: guy running it was money hungry, "I don't have to listen to that".

Severance package: I was "boat foreman" when I retired; they gave that job to guy in Harvey; retirement package was 2 years' pay.

Mergers: was against the merger; Texaco was viable company; takeover of Getty: Getty people came into top positions

Walt Daniels

Morgan City, LA

November 21, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA077

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Walt Daniels by Steve Shirley. Dr. Daniels has been practicing medicine in Morgan City since 1961 and is also an active member of the civic community there. He was born and raised in Gueydan, Louisiana where his father, one of the original West Texas rig builders, worked for Pure Oil Company. Dr. Daniels decided to become a physician because he disliked his early experiences working on the farm and in the oilfield and because of the positive influence of the physician in his hometown. He completed medical school and was accepted into the practice of Dr. Brownell, Morgan City's mayor and one of its two town doctors. He remained in Morgan City throughout his career and is now semi-retired.

#### Summary:

Personal history: Physician in Morgan City, Louisiana associated with the oil business since birth; father was one of the original rig builders from West Texas and moved the family to Gueydan, Louisiana in 1930; Gueydan was a Cajun farming community that was transformed because of local oil-related businesses; later many of the men from Gueydan commuted to Morgan City to take boats to go offshore; when I completed medical school I was looking for a place to practice and Morgan City was a boom town; spoke to the hospital administrator, got the names of two doctors; went to see Dr. Brownell, the mayor at the time, and came to Morgan City as his associate in 1961; Brownell's father had come here, purchased swamplands, gone into the lumber business, and become state representative; Dr. Brownell took over his term when his father died, was the mayor for 20 years

Early days in Morgan City: Oilfield was an important part of the economy when I first came; had been through several industries - lumbering, shrimping, oil; the practice was very large and busy, very different from today; Dr. Brownell took no appointments; patients came in from the bayous and city at 8am; social gathering; Dr. would arrive about 10am; by then people outside; segregated waiting rooms; I said we have to end this; closed the black waiting room, at first they were uncomfortable

Oil related work: Large amount of physicals and work related to industrial accidents; no specialists at the time; if we could not handle it we would send them to New Orleans; had to do so many physicals that we would put men in 14 by 14 foot rooms, 8 at a time, did them like an army precondition physical

Early practice: Fees were low; Dr. Brownell was independently wealthy, a generous man; in 1961 the first visit was \$3 and all others afterward \$2; made a lot of house calls, calls to little

boats on the bayou; oil business was a good old boy network; people in the oil business responsible for sending individuals for physicals, for industrial accidents had access to your ear, got to come in for their appointments early; offshore business was booming; had heard that some doctors had to go offshore to deal with injured people

First trip offshore: Shortly after arrived Dr. Brownell said have to go deal with diver injured in diving accident; he had city business so sent me to helicopter pad to go offshore; tried to recall diving medicine I had learned in medical school, about 30 minutes worth; met company man and flown to the middle of the Gulf of Mexico; helicopter landed and I met the guy in charge of the divers; he knew more diving medicine than I did; led me over to tank; one guy inside was awake and alert, the other was unconscious; something happened at 120 feet; he rose to 60 feet where the other guy was working, caught him, and held him; I didn't want to go in; had problems clearing my middle ear; worker handed me his knife, said we're going down; tap if too fast; I tapped and guy said we have only gone 16 feet; by time to depth my hearing affected tremendously; out there 48 hours, used expertise of physician in Georgia, talked to him 6 or 8 times; guy was okay

Other offshore work: Guy injured on a tugboat; went out on a boat and met the boat offshore; young man dead on my arrival; long line had broken, struck him in the middle of the chest; many horrendous accidents, still are but not as many; another time a guy was vomiting up blood, I went out in a Coast Guard cutter; waves were high, boat was bouncing; captain said he'd get the ship level and I was to jump over; guy was in a steel gurney; 4 guys on boat, 4 on cutter, they pitched him across; guy was alert and talking, had cut tongue and swallowed blood; took care of numerous accidents, on call 24 hours a day

Morgan City: During oil boom times rest of U.S. went through depressed economic times; we had a lot of work and a lot of money; people got quite arrogant toward the rest of the U.S.; I had worked as a roustabout for Shell Oil between second and third years of medical school; next year I got a job offshore for Rowan Drilling Company working 10 on and 5 off; worked 12-14 hour days, but the food was good and there was lots of it; unique conversations, lots of talk of sex; summers offshore gave me insight into how things worked; when I was approaching my senior year in medical school the guys would call me doc; story of whittling out fishhook without telling anyone so would not ruin the safety record

Growing up: Dad worked for Pure Oil till I was 11 or 12; he also had cattle, I milked cows; then he went to work for himself as a dirt contractor; when he first got his bulldozer I was the first operator; we had two doctors in my hometown, I didn't want to be a farmer or work in the oilfield, decided I wanted to become a doctor; doctors were held in high esteem; told me stories; mid to late-1930s had inland oil around Gueydan in rice fields; if had oil became wealthy; lived at Pure Oil camp, six houses; when began school French was not allowed in the schoolyard; mother was Cajun but father was Texan; I did not speak French; our school was the pride of the community; people in the area put a premium on education; parents emphasized education; father's father had a stroke and father had to drop out of school in 5th grade to go to work; mother went to 7th grade, all that was available, would read to me a lot; also had great teachers

Working in Morgan City: Never dreamed of leaving; none of children stayed; very rewarding to be a physician in a small town, financially, socially, individually; civic clubs have always been very active in Morgan City; no Medicare or Medicaid when first came; physicians gave lots of pro bono care; group of black people formed an organization to guarantee payment for all, even those who could not pay; learned industrial medicine by doing it; most of the stuff what would see elsewhere, except more trauma; went out and visited a couple of companies once a week to do physicals; now Industrial Medicine has become a specialty, due to the litigation factor in our society it has increased tremendously; not about care but about the paper trail

Physicals: In the 1960s the purpose was to make sure the person coming to work was physically capable, not going to get hurt or cause others to get hurt; insurance the big thing; healthy people have less accidents; now do whatever you can to get the person back to work, even if light duty; oil and gas was one of the few industries that required physicals; Americans with Disabilities Act changed failure rate of people coming in for a physical; back then it was fairly common, maybe one a week; women now working offshore; unheard of when I was working; maybe 20 percent are women, not only clerical

Surviving the downturns: Area never has recovered from 1980s; prior to that downturns were mild and would last a couple of months; survived because government instituted so many programs; industry only about 20-25 percent of my practice; always icing on the cake; medically easy, mostly pre-employment physicals, bruises, bumps; during downturn people who could normally pay their bills requested credit, many lost insurance, had to refer patients to Charity Hospital

Early practice: Started as doctor on call in July 1961; after a couple of months Dr. Brownell quit the practice; seeing average of 65 patients a day; made house calls at noon and after hours; everyone had access to your home phone; hospital had unmanned emergency room; I got another associate after about three years; hospital was quite busy when I arrived; built in the late 1950s; prior to that the hospital was an old boarding house that Dr. Brownell donated to the city; hospital reflects links to offshore industry; has helicopter pads, industrial medicine specialty

Reflections on career: Would come back in a minute; area has so much to offer, nature, wildlife; seen a negative change in Morgan City; when I first came Texaco and Shell had local facilities, had professional people who moved here, played an important part in the community, lots were active in civic affairs, were big donors; McDermott still active, but top people don't live here anymore

Amelia: Was a trapping and fishing community when I first arrived; became a Vietnamese community after the Viet Nam war; people there are very family oriented; kids started graduating at the head of the class; family and community spirit; Vietnamese started to work for McDermott, bought shrimp boats, opened family businesses

Patterson: Was bedroom community of Morgan City; river has become prime property for well-to-do housing

Gueydan: Pure Oil had six houses, storage and office buildings, car garage, mechanic shop; had rope swing inside water tower; the lease where drilling went on was about a mile away, 8-10 rigs there; camp still in existence; oil people were held in high esteem in the community; they made more money than farmhands; Gueydan was a relatively poor community; during WWII would have scrap metal drives, get metal from the drilling rigs; all inhabitants of the camp were Texans or Oklahomans except for one Cajun family; Texans and Cajuns got along pretty well, but there was always a distance; they were Protestant, others were Catholic.

Allen Danos

Larose, LA

July 10, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM041

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Allen Danos, "semi"-retired now from Danos and Curole, still comes in to his office in the modest shop on the bayou-side along Hwy 1 in Larose, D&C's main operation is on the other side of the bayou, up near the Intracoastal Waterway. Hank, Allen's brother, pretty much runs the multi-faceted business from there. Ronald Callais suggested I talk to him; when I called, Mr. Danos politely asked for references. He called Ted Falgout, then called me back, saying "Ted says I should give you some time." I drove up for the interview; the office had a family-like feel, and Al was extremely friendly, sending me out with a CD recording of a brief story NPR had done recently on the Danos family. They interviewed his mother, and when he started to answer her, she hushed him up and talked for herself.

Danos and Curole Marine Contractors evolved out of an association between Allen's father and an uncle, Civiac Curole. The uncle was a shrimper and oysterman who converted some luggers for oil work. Allen's father was a shrimper, but worked for the Coast Guard during the war, looking for German subs. Together, they bought a tug, pushing fuel to Gulf operations in East, Black, and Quarantine bays, working 7 and 7. Then they bought a crewboat in bad shape, but the boat came with a job - supplying Gulf's Bully Camp operation near Cut Off. At the time, Vic Jones, head of the Gulf operation, was looking for a new labor contractor; boat captains had been providing their own labor, so it was natural that vessel owners moved into the labor contracting business. They date the start of the present operation to 1947.

By age 14, Allen was working summers in shipyards. After college, he and brother Hank bought out the Curole interest in the company and expanded into lift boats and marine construction. Allen has been a 2-term president of Offshore Marine Services Association, and now takes an active interest in Nicholls State University, serving on its foundation board. He is working now to recruit for a chair in entrepreneurship, with the Bollingers.

#### Summary:

Company organization/functions: 3 divisions now: fabrication, lift boats, labor supply, with about 950 employees; consolidating operations recently in Larose, but had office in Morgan City (now a training facility), sales offices in Houston; recruits and supplies labor on production end, also welders and fitters, dock workers; lift boats, built in Morgan city, work with production needs.

Labor force: oil companies very safety-conscious, looking for a more educated work force; can't simply supply "hats" any more; we train, certify, find them jobs; some of it seasonal; going to longer shifts, but workers "get used to it; more time at home".

Overseas operations: started working overseas when things were slow here in 1991; typical schedule is 28/28; working in Nigeria, Venezuela, China (just vessels, not labor); never worked in North Sea; with U.S. Coast Guard-flagged vessels, need American captain.

Banking: appointed as young man to board of directors of State Bank and Trust; meetings convened in French by Lester Plaisance (Allen broadly pulls out a picture of the board); Albert Cheramie owned another bank; Citizens' Bank (now owned by Hibernia) was the Peltier bank.

Michael and Daisy Dardar

Boothville, LA

July 10, 2003

Interviewed by: Jessica Piekielek Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA104

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Michael Dardar is the tribal historian for the United Houma Nation. He grew up on South Pass in the southernmost end of Plaquemines Parish and then moved with his family to The Village, a trailer park in Venice, when the parish government relocated the families from South Pass there. His family moved to Boothville, within the levee, when his father bought land and Michael and his wife put their trailer on it. Several years later his parents moved onto the property with them; his mother still lives in a trailer on the front of the property.

Michael Dardar was born and raised in southern Louisiana. In the late 1930s, his father worked on a dynamite crew for a company that was exploring for oil in the wetlands of coastal Louisiana. His father went into the service during World War II, and when he returned home he went to work on a drilling rig, moving his family from place to place as the rig moved. When Michael's father began working on offshore rigs, the family no longer had to move from place to place. When Michael was 3 years old, his family moved from Golden Meadow to South Pass, on the southernmost end of Plaquemines Parish. His family later moved to Venice and then to Boothville. Michael joined the army out of high school but returned to Plaquemines Parish when his father became ill and he had to take over his father's business. He has worked throughout the offshore industry for an oil field service company, a supply company, a construction company, and a crew boat business.

#### Summary:

Family history: Father in Service, then into oil drilling; Discussion of lower Golden Meadow; Father worked on inshore rigs, continued trawling and trapping; opened restaurant

Occupational history: Born and raised in Plaquemines; graduated Boothville-Venice High School, went to Army, then home to help with restaurant, then to oilfield service companies, changed jobs about every five years for economic reasons and because got bored

Bust: 1980s, things got bad, lots of companies out of business, people mostly stayed, were fishing

Land companies: took land, people had to move out of Spanish Pass, most families settled in the Village; grew up in Spanish Pass, house made it through 1960s hurricanes

Impacts: mostly on the environment, coastal erosion, now have problems with storm surge, flooding

Perez: dad friends with people who had political connections to Perez, parish politics, impacts on who was hired to work with service companies, boat companies were mostly local; getting job depended on connections

Race: for blacks it was a political issue; Indians were not treated so badly

Oilfield jobs: considered the good jobs, especially with a major oil company; company camps, close knit neighborhoods; some of the newcomers stayed; oilfield starting to decline down here; wish I had taken the skiff dad offered, hard to work for a boss

Houma tribe: on Council, much time spent on tribal business; don't see recognition as the big issue, environment is; attempts to offer relocation

Recreational fishing: changed the whole community; storms come through, these guys have enough money to build back; Houma people don't want to leave the area

Downturn: not bad for me personally, always had work; companies pulled out, it affected the local economy; with commercial fishing and oil we have lost the opportunity to be independent

Wife family history: dad from Mississippi; mom from Gretna, moved all over with the oil fields; dad was fishing tool operator, went where he was needed; moved here and settled down, don't leave; moving a lot, you had no roots; dad worked offshore, sometimes did not see him for months; didn't want offshore lifestyle; Mike does construction work, that's dangerous enough; had oilfield shakeups twice in 24 years of marriage; just adapted; Dad never went to school, did not speak English, but self-sufficient; it's not about making the big bucks but being home with the family

Tribal issues: moving would be hard, having to make tough decisions; people don't understand Indian culture, ridiculous idea of blood groups; discussion of different projects

Thomas Dardar, Jr. and Noreen Dardar

Houma, LA

July 26, 2001

Interviewed by: Ari Anand, Nicole Crosby

University of Arizona

AA014

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I had seen or met Thomas Dardar a few times in various contexts before this interview-when he danced at the Native American Liturgical Celebration in Dulac, at the United Houma Nation Tribal Council meeting at the Robichaux residence in Raceland, and again at the Robichaux residence at the Houma community strategizing meeting, where he suggested we interview his father. We decided that Nicole and I would both do the interview, and both arrived there on Thursday evening. The house was busy, with Noreen cooking up a big meal, and Thomas and Noreen's kids and grandkids present. About half an hour to an hour later, Thomas Sr. and Beverly arrived, and we commenced the interview. Much of the interview was informal conversation, and the atmosphere was very lively.

Thomas Dardar, Jr. was born in 1956 as the oldest of 11 children. He completed the 7th grade and began work at a supermarket and in a service station. He then got into the oilfield as a roustabout, oiler, and tugboat operator. He has also held jobs blasting and painting and advanced to foreman.

#### Summary:

Summary: Thomas Dardar, Jr.

Work History: Oldest child of 11. Born in 1956. Had outhouse until 1964; but did have electricity and one indoor water tap. Describes home life. In school 1963 to 1972; only completed seventh grade. Helped with childcare, so missed lots of school. Worked in supermarket, then at service station for about six months. Then went to work on tug for Bayou Marine in late 1972. Then worked for his father at Patterson and Edmonson from 1973 to 1978; worked as roustabout, oiler, tug operator. Quit because did not have insurance. Worked nearly 115 hours per week; often worked 24 hour shifts. Began blasting and painting for Delta Iron in 1978; named changed to Chromaloy then to Delta Services. Worked there until 1984 when oil bust caused Delta Services to close down; employees furloughed so could not collect unemployment for about two months. Companies now have to inform employees of bankruptcy in advance. Then hired by Nicholas to work on Gulf Oil platform; worked there for about one month. Out of work for about three months in 1985. Then went to work for John D. Montero for six months. Next worked for Gulf Island and has worked there for 15 years; started as blaster and painter; later became foreman/leaderman. Has worked as foreman since 1979.

Unionization: No need for mediators, because employees can talk to their supervisors about any problems. Unions could not give him anything. Many people think that unions would restrict

employee freedom. And "I don't need anyone to talk for me." Lots of issues resolved by employers talking to employees. Describes foreman job and interactions with his employees. Unions not useful as long as employer-employee relations are good.

Hardest Job: Working on the back of a tug in 20-foot seas; very dangerous.

Worker Issues: Workers now need more education to work in oilfield; have to get certifications. In 10 years, workers will probably have to have Master's Degree or PhD to get work. Technology is forcing oil companies to educate their employees; companies spending lots of money on worker training. Describes himself as totally dependent on oilfield. "Company loyalty is at an all time low." Employment is very insecure; could be fired tomorrow despite working for the same company for 16 years.

Tribal Activism: Very involved in tribal issues; serves on Tribal Council. Trying to improve life for local people. Lots of tribal members do not have transportation to Tribal Office in Golden Meadow so set up another Tribal Office in Houma. Has always been aware of his Indian heritage, because "they wouldn't let me forget." Often called "sabine" in school. Elected to Tribal Council in 1990; loves serving on the Council. Opposed push to require college degree to serve on Tribal Council; won that vote so Council service just requires high school diploma or GED. His goal is to become Council Chief. This is the ninth year that there is a tribal powwow. Participates in tribal dances; learned tribal dances in mid-1980s from Steve Cheramie. Two branches of tribe, Houma Alliance and Houma Nation, merged in 1980s. A woman at his church called him a "savage" when he showed up in tribal dance robes.

Thomas Dardar, Sr. and Beverly Dardar

Houma, LA

July 26, 2001

Interviewed by: Ari Anand, Nicole Crosby

University of Arizona

AA014

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I had seen or met Thomas Dardar a few times in various contexts before this interview-when he danced at the Native American Liturgical Celebration in Dulac, at the United Houma Nation Tribal Council meeting at the Robichaux residence in Raceland, and again at the Robichaux residence at the Houma community strategizing meeting, where he suggested we interview his father. We decided that Nicole and I would both do the interview, and both arrived there on Thursday evening. The house was busy, with Noreen cooking up a big meal, and Thomas and Noreen's kids and grandkids present. About half an hour to an hour later, Thomas Sr. and Beverly arrived, and we commenced the interview. Much of the interview was informal conversation, and the atmosphere was very lively.

Thomas Dardar, Sr. began working on an oyster boat as a boy and shifted to oilfield work in the 1950's because it paid well. He worked his way up from roustabout to welder and then worked as a machine operator. He then took a job with Delta Iron as a pipelayer, but quit and returned to oystering because his brother became ill.

#### Summary:

Work Experience: First oilfield job was at Patterson and Edmonson in late 1950s. Before that, worked on oyster boat. Describes working on oyster boat; worked 27 days straight before coming in; hard on the family. Discusses neighborhood they lived in and how it has changed. Started working oilfield because paid well. Worked as roustabout, welder helper, tacker, welder. Then worked as machine operator. Next went to work for Delta Iron as pipe layer. Had nine children by this time. His son also worked in oilfield; worked with his father building levees. Describes pipe-laying job for Delta Iron. Worked for Delta Iron for about a year; then went back to oyster boat. Quit Delta Iron because his brother was ill with cancer. Then did some roughnecking for Willis on a lake rig, but did not like it. Also did roughnecking for Delta Drilling.

Discrimination: Says there was no discrimination against him in oilfield for being Indian. Father died when he was seven, and he went to work oystering; so he did not get much schooling. His son describes various manifestations of discrimination against Indians, including things that his father did not perceive as discrimination. Now works as certified inspector. One brother works as inspector and consultant for Amoco. In contrast to other workers, Indians have to prove certification and have lots of experience to get same job as other people. Very few minorities in upper levels of oilfield work. Lots of change in perception of discrimination between generations and even within generations. Less discrimination against other minorities, because Indians have

not organized to protest against discrimination. Continues to describe manifestations of discrimination, including takeover of Indian lands.

Oilfield Impact: Discusses cyclical nature of oil industry; growth of communities follows oil cycles. Nearly everyone in the communities works for oil industry.

Oilfield Work: Often socialized with other workers, except he could not go into "white only" places. Most workers from around Houma. After Delta Drilling, went to work for Prestenbach. Went back to Patterson and Edmonson as operator in 1969; stayed until 1978. Then worked for Anteel Pipeline as machine operator; then worked for Mr. Perry; then for John D. Montero. Next worked for Anteel; then began work as dragline operator for Terrebonne Parish Consolidated Government; then worked as dragline operator for Benny Cenac. Last job was working for Belle Pass Terminal; got injured on job due to rookie mistake. Describes dragline operator job. Company had good insurance and took care of him after his injury. Shows video from mid-1980s to interviewers. Retired in 1990. Describes barge operations as shown in video.

Changes in Oilpatch: His son thinks there were lots of changes in environmental regulations and technology in response to earlier oilfield activities. But he thinks that his job did not change much. Now have lots of regulations; have to fill out lots of paperwork and get permits; have to do impact statement. Upgrading of equipment often very expensive; everything automated now. Lots more safety features; past accidents often due to equipment failure, now mostly due to human error.

Employer-Employee Relations: Better in past because boss tended to know employees well. Now bosses do not really know their workers' families. Crews are "like family"; often socialize outside of work. Supervisors try to be "family-oriented" but also have to keep the company profitable. No more horseplay like in earlier years. Describes practical jokes on rigs in earlier years. Describes "comical parts" of work for Cenac Towing.

Whitney Dardar

Golden Meadow, LA

July 14, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin, Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

DA046

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Whitney Dardar is the father of Brenda Dardar Robichaux, principal chief of the United Houma Nation, and husband of Delores Dardar. He has lived in Golden Meadow all his life and is a trawler and oysterman. He worked as a crewboat and tugboat captain for several years as a young man. I first met Whitney when working on the baseline study for the MMS in 1996 and have talked with him on several occasions. He agreed to be interviewed for this project to talk about the community, the fishermen, and the early arrival of oil and gas. Whitney talked about the improvements in the equipment they used in trawling and fishing and also the establishment of seasons. He also talked about how he made a living. We started out talking about the low prices for shrimp this year and how the imported shrimp were negatively affecting the local trawlers. The price of fuel and ice continues to rise, but the price they are paid for the shrimp falls so the fishermen are losing money. When we finished the interview, Whitney showed us some of his oysters. He talked about raising oysters as being like raising a garden. You tend and tend them and make them grow. "I like to see things grow."

Whitney began trawling when he was 16 years old. His dad made his living fishing, trawling, and trapping, and Whitney did the same, though he only trapped for a short time. When he was about 25 years old and working on oyster boats, Whitney decided to try operating crew boats. He worked in the oil and gas industry for about 10 years and trawled on his days off. Then he returned to shrimping fulltime and continues to operate his trawler.

#### Summary:

Occupational history: trawler most of my life; worked on crew and supply boats, then as roustabout, but mostly fishing; dad fished, trapped, trawled; different methods - tongs for oysters, nets on the beach for trawling, cast nets; could not sell fresh shrimp so boiled and dried it to sell; sold to dealer not to sheds; also picked moss; used to trap in winter and shrimp in summer, fished crabs with long lines, now use traps 24 hours a day; seasonal cycle of trapping, then oysters, then crabs, then shrimp

Oystering: now mostly use winch and dredge, have beds in several places, closed certain times of the year because it is polluted; open in May but I don't fish then, take them from the open beds and put them in my leased beds until winter; oyster leases are yours as long as you pay your lease; started at \$1 an acre, now \$2 an acre; leases can be passed down to someone over the age of 18 or can be sold; lots of people lost their bedding grounds with the freshwater diversions but got paid for them; you also get paid if they run a rig or something on your bedding ground; some of the companies pay you all right; had a dynamite crew passing through my lease and didn't

have any trouble with them; have a little trouble with trawlers that are not supposed to go across but do.

Leases: when I first leased in the canal I had a lot of trouble with the barges, trying to collect; I happened to be traveling past my lease and saw them spud down on my lease; they stay overnight and then leave, a lot of times I don't catch them; sometimes friends who are crabbers call when they see them there; I get a written statement from the captain of the tug, when I have my camera I take a picture of them and write the date and time they were there; they claim they don't see my signs; deal directly with the company, if they don't pay you have to get a lawyer; sometimes 2-3 times a year this would happen, though not so much now as 15-16 years ago; what really hurt me was the drum fish, they clean you out; a bad hurricane can clean you out; snails can be a problem; water can't be too salty or too fresh.

Environmental changes: when first started Barataria Bay was full of oysters, now it's too salty and people moved the beds further in; lakes where I used to trawl have all been eaten up by the Gulf; they are trying to restore it but it's 20 years too late; like Leeville, we started trawling way up high, but all the rigs they put in there and all the canals to them; they took out the rigs but put nothing back; every time they put in a pipeline they cut a canal; used to have a coulee across the bayou where we would trap and lay lines on the way to school; now it's all eaten up.

Trawling: the trawlers would have small boats and then sell to a freight boat that would come out and tie up; now they have platform lights all over the lake, but back then they had nothing but a big island and you had to find the open canal; today the boats carry their own ice and sell back onshore; my daddy had a boat and I worked for him, then started working in the oilfields 7 and 7 and then trawling on my days off; it used to be a good living, but things are changing; now we get no price for our shrimp; the freight boats were owned by the shrimp sheds; you were paid by pound by them just looking to see how full the basket was, if the basket was not full you did not get paid for the shrimp.

Processing seafood: they used to have shrimp plants in Golden Meadow; they used to haul it to market in New Orleans to the factory to can; they used to have a factory that steamed oysters here and canned them; I worked there unloading the boat; now we don't have enough oysters to can; used to have big oysters in Barataria Bay.

Making a living: not every place is good for growing oysters; bottom cannot be too soft, have to lay down shells to make a reef; when there is too much salt water the snails come in; used to work for somebody else, they would pay so much a day; sell to different companies or the guy thinks he owns you; same thing is true for shrimp; everybody says you should not get tied up in one place; fishermen talk among themselves about how much the different buyers are paying; there were 3 factories in Leeville and they worked together.

Vietnamese: there are 2 Vietnamese factories in Leeville; most all the boats around here now are Vietnamese; now the Vietnamese are getting into crabbing, the only thing they don't do is oysters; they started with little, bitty boats but now use big boats; they all work together, were the first with the stick net, Wildlife and Fisheries outlawed it; not much the local people could do, just let them fish; they bought a lot of boats from people around here.

Equipment: I always bought my boats, got them cheap; use butterfly nets in the bayous but not on the lake; a skimmer can pull in the bayou and the lake; I rig with a skimmer and single trawl; think they should outlaw the skimmer on the channel because they are getting the little shrimp in the bayous before they get to the lake and the Gulf; without skimmers they would stop trawling at night; they stopped at Delcambre; then the shrimp would have a chance to settle; people think they have to trawl at night because they can't make it in the daytime; need a season for crabs; big boats from FL, TX come over here, some Vietnamese boats came from the east now homesteading here.

Operations: get leases from Wildlife and Fisheries; some people made a lot of money because they knew where they were going to pass a canal and they would get a lease there, then get the money; they're starting to get wise to that; also they make sure the land does not belong to Louisiana Land; it's harder to get a lease now, they come and survey; they're holding back because of the lawsuit in the east; now have to keep a log; used to have to keep it only in the hot months of the year; have to send your trip ticket every month.

Oil and gas: started when I was young; when I first started working they had them up in Leesville, made a bunch of little islands with their canals crisscrossing; I think that's what's hurting our seafood, all that stuff they're throwing in the water; used to work on a boat for Bollinger, we used to haul drums way offshore, dump it out and watch it explode; did it once or twice a month; we were told to pick up the drums, didn't know what was in it, knew it was no good, but they told us to go dump it; then we get the big oil spills; one in Lee Lake they cleaned but they can't get it all up; did not close the season this year after the spill; spills would happen pretty often, find out in the paper or hear on the news.

Working for oil and gas companies: started when about 25 years old; was working on oyster boats and decided to try crew boats; worked inside and then offshore. started inside with Norton Drilling Co., then running supply boats out of Morgan City with Joe Callais, to Platform 88, Block 16, worked 7 and 7; sometimes would stay out 20 days with no relief; then worked in Lake Barre, worked straight time, would come home once a week overnight and go back; hauling stuff for the crew and the rig; worked about 10 years for oil and gas industry; after that started trawling; I like trawling and there was good fishing (earlier had talked about how he could be home every night and involved in his daughters' lives); now price is down; lots of trawlers out there and people are building bigger boats; some people think everyone can go and make a lot of money.

Losing nets: used to lose a lot of nets; they used to have a fund to pay you; now they quit that; you had to make an application, have proof of your trawl; go to the company, if you know there's a company with a field nearby; a lot of time the company had left and you couldn't collect; some companies cleaned up when they left and others did not; here in Golden Meadow the government had to clean up what the company left; Leesville is a place that needs to be cleaned up, but the companies all took off; when they started, they would just come and drill, and you didn't know what company it was; you see all the stuff they bring and then they didn't clean up.

Working in the oilfield: a lot of people around here work roughneck with the companies; my oldest brother did, people from away come and work here; lots of people from Mississippi came

and worked offshore; now Chouest has a lot of Mexican workers, they are getting them cheaper; he's sending all of them over to Chabert County Hospital, he pays them cheap labor and they all go to the charity hospital; we don't see them much.

Early interactions: people from Texas would rent rooms in the motel; some stayed on the rigs full time and drove back to Texas when they were off; brother had some good friends from Texas; some married locals and stayed around, that's how it got mixed; not too hard to get jobs; to go roughneck you didn't have to have a good education as long as you could work; I was a roustabout, but not for too long because it was easier driving the boats; it was a dangerous job; a lot of people got hurt; had to bring in a guy who got hurt; brought him to the dock and someone picked him up; never hit a hurricane; used to have a room on the rig, eat on the rig.

Impacts: summer is calm, winter is rough; built levees, locals worked day and night to save the levee; now have to go far away if get a strong hurricane; big trucks tear up our highways carrying that equipment; before the oil and gas companies we didn't have all the trash and the water was cleaner; people did not try to get them to clean up, like the people in Grand Bois, they complain and complain and try and try and instead of shutting it down they make it bigger; lots of the politicians are friends with the oil people.

Making changes: politicians say they are with us but get to Washington and vote against us; fishing organization formed but we do not have a good voice in Washington; hard to get trawlers organized; the factories make their commission no matter how the price goes down.

Licenses: had to pass a test, got a book at Wildlife and Fisheries; now even harder; if you can't pass the test you work as a deckhand; in the early days some of them that couldn't make the test bought their licenses; the companies they worked for would fix them up with a license (in an earlier discussion Whitney said he failed the test the first time but got the books and then studied and was able to pass).

Elton Darsey

Houma, LA

October 1, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM052

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Historian Tom Becnel suggested we talk with Elton Darsey, a still-practicing lawyer with an office near the courthouse in Houma. During the interview, he frequently calls out to Ms. Bee in the outer office to help with facts and dates. The interview contains some interesting discussion of both the Intracoastal Waterway and the Houma Ship/Navigation Canal, the first taking its route through the city at the behest of powerful property owners, the second built to attract oil business. Both, Elton suggests, have been unfortunate for Houma.

In his 90s at the time of the interview, Elton Darsey was born in Houma, went through high school and got a job working for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in New Orleans. While at that job, he attended night school at Loyola University for 7 years, got a law degree, and came back to Houma in 1935 to start practicing law. As a French speaker, he was able to represent local oystermen in their case against the Texas company in the 1930's, then won an important case against the highway department by researching French civil law about the batture, lands along the bayous and rivers. He and his wife, now deceased, have traveled extensively throughout the world. He walks into the office every day.

#### Summary:

Batture: area between road and bayou; he won case against state; case was that highway had to buy land

Oil and oysters: good for state while it lasted, but destroyed oyster industry; suit filed 1934 by oyster people against Texas Company; plaintiffs brought expert on fisheries from Washington; plaintiffs all spoke French so I could translate for them; I thought fishermen had perfect case but judge ruled for company; oyster people won in higher court; now very seldom do you find oysters; oysters ingest water and catch crude

Public office: I've avoided it, cost too much and people don't appreciate you; Huey Long built roads, etc, did more for state than any other politician; Ellender in state legislature, saw Long was a success so joined with them; Carl Ellender worked case for oyster people

Cypress: outsiders came in and cut them all, didn't replant a single one; Dibert in Gibson, sawmill in Houma; all cleared in about 10 years

Sugar: minimum wage killed it; those who raise it now are families who use family labor; years ago, cane all over parish; big factories at Houma and Montegut; now land built up and businesses took over; sugar factory purchased by firm in Guatemala

Family: great-great grandfather from France late 1700s, from D'arce north of Paris; so named Darcey; then changed to Darsey

Education: was supposed to be separate but equal; had good schools, but when we mixed the races, things went wrong; here we had a black school just outside city - Southdown High School, was very good school; when mixed, public school system ruined completely

Slavery: kept lower class of whites down, because they had to compete with slave labor

Houma airport: WWII, blimps flew over Gulf; after war, parish and city started to run it; I was attorney for airport for several years, for no money (\$250/month); bought other lands and added to it

Intracoastal canal: after WWII, association, IWW, Intracoastal Waterways, formed to connect New Orleans to Lake Charles, inside gulf to be safe; I was working for Department of Engineers at the time, plan was for 60 feet wide, 10 feet deep; plan to make it as straight as it could go; in Terrebonne, certain family decided they wanted canal close to their land, so it came into the city; this man/family had property on Main Street; Rene Clere was lobbyist in Washington, plan taken out of hands of local engineers in New Orleans; now separates parish into two parts; 15-20 miles added to canal; cost state and parish money to build bridges, cost a fortune because of influence of that one man on the Police Jury

Navigation [Ship] Canal: first meeting in 1937, idea of building ship canal sold to Police Jury and Board of Aldermen; told that it would bring in saltwater; [apparently originally had something to do with moving crude oil, so this was to service the early lake oil fields]; has destroyed parish, fur industry; dredged after WWII; locals, not oil companies, wanted it to attract outside business

1927 flood: blew up dam on Bayou Black to save land.

Walt Daspit

Mandeville, LA

March 14, 2002, July 10, 2002, July 16, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA039, DA044p, DA048

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Walt at the divers' reunion on March 10, 2002. He spent quite a bit of time talking to me about the diving business and showed me the diving hat he had developed. He agreed to participate in the study and gave me his card to call him. When I called, he was happy to arrange a meeting and also agreed to contact other divers because he said he thought they would remember more if they were in a group and could remind each other of events and dates. He arranged for us to go talk with Al Warriner. Walt participated a bit in the interview with Al (see DA038). In addition, he and I talked during lunch prior to that meeting with Al and talked in the car to and from the meeting. We also went back to his house after the meeting to talk some more. The first notes were jotted down during lunch or from memory later that evening; the second set was taken as Walt showed me pictures at his house that evening. I returned for a photo interview in the summer of 2002 and then also interviewed Walt in a joint interview with Rusty Guidry on July 16, 2002. The notes from that third interview are recorded under Rusty Guidry.

Walt Daspit was born and raised in Lafayette, LA. He left home at age 17 to join the Merchant Marine. While a seaman he saw an advertisement for a diving school, and this led to an eventual career change. He began diving in 1954 while still serving in the Merchant Marine, and he closed his seaman's book in 1956. He worked for Al Warriner and then Dick Evans Divers. He remained with Dick Evans after the company was purchased by McDermott and continued diving there until he was hit with a severe case of the bends as a result of a faulty gauge.

#### Summary of DA039, part I:

Early diving companies during the 1950s: Al Warriner had Underwater Services; Bob McGuire had McGuire Marine Divers; Larry Elliot had a company in Lake Charles; Norman Knudsen had Gulf Coast Divers in Morgan City, Norm Ketchman worked for him and did the first gas dive in the Gulf; Buck and Mike Frolich had Frolich Brothers, Mike was an alcoholic.

Origin of Dick Evans Divers: Al Warriner was known for sending out the cheapest divers; had a project in Bermuda; Walt was in the shop when the call came in, heard it and said he was heading home to get ready; Al balked, in front of others in the shop Walt said Al had promised him the job and he knew his word was good; Al sent Walt; Dick Evans heard about it, had expected to get the job; he was out on a 12 foot job nobody wanted; found out about it and quit; went and started Dick Evans divers, took Al's divers and Al soon went out of business.

Personal start: born and raised in Lafayette, left at 17 to join the Merchant Marine; started diving in 1954, closed his seaman's book in 1956; worked at Grand Isle for four years but fell out of

favor; went to diving school, came out and went back to sea when a ship from New Orleans needed an AB; Dick (the host of the diver's reunion) was the boatswain on the ship, he was a rack operator for Taylor Diving; went into the air force at the time, got hold of a Pageant Magazine, advertised schools for unusual occupations, showed a photo with a diver blown up in full gear, said divers make up to \$200 a day; came out of the service, wrote an application to diving schools to the Chamber of Commerce in Sacramento and asked that it be forwarded to the school; it was; while in Japan bought diving helmet.

Taylor Diving: owned by Mark Banjavich; Hempy Taylor, hair looked like straw, got kicked out of the company early; in Bay Marchand diving, crew boat passed, caused a lot of surge in the water at the boat from which he was diving; Hempy came out with a 45 and started shooting at the boat; that was the end of his involvement with the company.

Creation of companies: a law was passed to prevent lock outs, about 1958; Mark B. approached Miner from Brown & Root and said if you back me we'll beat this law; a lawyer came and got about 10 divers together, just about everybody back then; with a few exceptions, everybody went along with it; the new law was very restrictive, said that everybody running a company had to be licensed, had to have qualifications that few people had; Walt, Norm Knudsen from Florida, Buck Frolich was local, Alex Isyak from outside, Bob McGuire was local, Sam Bongiovanni still diving in the river at age 90, Erik Spitzkeit was local; involvement was prompted by greed; companies not getting much work wanted to lock others out; law passed, Dick Mathews drew it up, really locked it up for people involved in the association; what really tied Taylor Divers to Brown & Root, Mark said foot the bill and I'll break the law; Mark was not in it; he challenged the law and it was thrown out of court.

Early divers: all were mostly one-diver shops; Al Warriner was the biggest with 6-8 divers working for him; Alex Isyak opened cathouse in Peru, wife always calling looking for him; McGuire went to work for McDermott Diving and became president of the division; Knudsen is dead, he went to South America and became a preacher; came back with woman from there, broke up, went back to his wife.

Summary of DA039, part II:

Saturation diving: at 100' depth, the diver is at a pressure of about 3 atmospheres; with each doubling of pressure, the volume is reduced by half; the longer the diver is down, the more compressed air circulates through his system, when the external pressure is reduced, the gas tries to expand; steps must be taken to let the blood circulate and the air escape slowly; oxygen however is toxic, so the percentage of oxygen in the breathing mixture must be reduced; with mixed gas, the gas is selected so it comes out of the solution faster than regular air would; the diver still has to come up slowly and for the same length of time regardless of the time down; the tissue can only absorb a fixed quantity of gas; once the diver is saturated there is no limit to how long he can stay down; the diver comes up at a rate of about 100' per day.

Conditions: normally at least six divers perform a sat dive together; a diving bell is flanged to the saturation chamber and the divers work two per shift on three 8-hour shifts a day; the saturation chamber stays on the barge and divers go to and from the worksite in the diving bell; the barge

can be moved to a new location and the divers can continue to work if they have been kept under pressure; when not working, the divers read, watch TV, and exercise; not everyone can handle it mentally; divers may stay in saturation for six weeks.

Accident of Donald Boone: Donald Boone was in the saturation chamber with toilets installed with a 2-valve system; under that system, when ready to flush the diver would radio for someone outside to flush and then open the inside valve to complete the process. Donald was sitting on the seat when someone had left the inside valve open; he called to have the outside valve opened, the pressure differential formed a vacuum and jerked his intestines out; a doctor was called in and put under pressure; he operated on Donald with no anesthetic because no one knew the effects of anesthetic under pressure; at that time, in the late 60s or early 70s, Donald got the largest settlement ever offered, \$880,000.

Pneumofathometer: pressure gauge at the surface that gives psi (pounds per square inch) and depth of seawater; the pressure hose is married to the diver's air hose, and is open-ended on the bottom with a valve on the top; when the air is out, the pressure required to hold the air registers on the meter and tells how deep the diver is; someone at the surface is responsible for watching the depth and keeping track of the bottom pressure.

Walt's accident: got hit by the bends one time when the gauge was off so therefore his decompression was calculated wrong; when he arrived at the surface and they realized the pressure was off (he arrived sooner than the people at the top expected), they should have sent him immediately into treatment, but they did not; he got home and started having problems making sense, so he went to a doctor who knew diving medicine; he ended up with brain damage.

Early diving precautions: Mike Frolich built a nice decompression chamber; he had been a Navy diver; when they first began they did not have tables; on Walt's first deep dive they did not bring the tables and he got badly bent; the equipment became more sophisticated and the pneumofathometers more common; divers were paid by the foot, so they tried to get every foot they could, tricks included pushing it way down into the mud to get a reading; in deepwater, the diving supervisor is responsible for determining how many stops had to be made and at what depth.

Summary of DA044p:

Early history: graduated high school 1945; joined Merchant Marine at 17, went to school till general seaman's strike in 1946; had been boxer in high school; with friend decided to turn pro fighters; seaman's strike over in 3-4 months; back to sea; joined air force about 1950 when about to get drafted for the Korean War; out of service in 1952; before discharge had come across magazine for odd occupations, saw announcement for Sparking School of Deep Sea Diving; went back to sea till made enough money to go to diving school; entered diving school fall 1953; from Lafayette, Louisiana; out of diving school in January 1954, back to Merchant Marine till end of year; came back to Gulf, started diving company with brother in the fall of 1954

Work in the oilfield: not much work in the early days, but not many divers; only 7-8 divers from New Orleans to Lake Charles; got boost when drilling barge capsized at Avondale shipyard across from New Orleans; thought there were people inside, called everyone listed as a diver; wife took call; called state police for escort; all companies were there, including local divers, said go home, bill us; called again, returned, raised the barge in 6 weeks; me and Norman Knudsen out of Morgan City; did everything by hand signal; divers are individualistic; found the people when they raised the barge

[Went through photos]

Leaving Dasplit Brothers: my brother and I went our separate ways; I was the only one diving; not enough business to need a business manager; all one horse operations back then; had company 1954-1957; got married 1955, father-in-law was explosives man on the job; 1957 was doing lots of work out of Grand Isle for Humble Oil Co.; wife loved Grand Isle; moved there; did too much drinking on the island; stayed four years; lost business and moved into the French Quarter; we were really broke; wife went to work; found me at the bar, challenged me to get a job; called Al Warriner, went to work for him the next day

French Quarter: Taylor Divers hung out at Bourbon House; we hung out at Johnny White's; all seamen; lots of the divers had been seamen back then

Working in the Gulf: stayed with Al for a year, he was pulling stuff; giving jobs to younger divers because they were cheaper; what cost him his business; Dick Evans left and started his company; Dick kept calling me; I went to work for Dick and had no days off for 6 weeks; when on Grand Isle I'd send guys to Humble every day to see if they had any work; worked in Gulf of Mexico, Mexico, Bahamas, Nigeria; offered Alaska but too frosty, would have made three times what we made; west coast was union, we didn't get any work on the west coast; McDermott bought out Dick Evans

Mixed gas: Bluewater II was drilling barge that had capsized during a hurricane in fairly deep water; Dick got the job; it required gas because of the depth and length of time; he hired Roy Carroll out of the Navy, Navy only one working with gas at the time; about 1967; first gas job in the Gulf; Sanford Brothers out of Morgan City had ordered mixed gas; Norman Knudsen got hold of it, Norman Ketchman made the dive, but Knudsen on TV and in the paper as if he did it; mid-1960s; diving on gas your head stays clear, you get down in 200 feet of water on air and you get real stupid; no nitrogen narcosis because you're diving on helium-oxygen mixture; helium comes out of solution fast; can't cheat on your decompression

Sat diving: on sat can spend unlimited time; worked with Bob Mock; stayed with McDermott till got hurt; got out of sat on 45th birthday in 1973; McDermott had built sat equipment but hadn't been using it

Injuries: got finger cut off diving with mask at about 200 feet of water; pulling head on end of pipeline; had hand on pulling hand rail; block fell and sheared it; medic on board sewed it around the edges; went to doctor, getting gangrenous, chopped it off; back to work a month or so later; then, lead diver had me dive to over 200 feet on air; though supervisor was watching over this;

went down, had to go down again; took my stops according to pneumofathometer; off by ten feet; instead of putting me on treatment table they dropped me a few feet; sat down to eat, whirling vertigo; found supervisor, put me on treatment table for pain only (5); should have been on 4; kept diving but didn't feel well; on sat job for seven weeks; went to Navy diver doctor, three days of tests; said he'd beach me; went to McDermott for job supervising; said no; no choice but to go to lawyer, had lost my livelihood; rough time for a few years; lawyer personal friend of woman on jury; they offered \$25,000 settlement, wouldn't take it; back to court; same juror; offered \$10,000; wouldn't take it; 3-4 months ago got a call it was now up to \$31,000; that suit caused several others to settle for peanuts; no income, lots of debts; did supervising for Epic Divers; then contracts for government when putting oil in salt mines; guy wanted me to go to Saudi Arabia; couldn't because wife dying of cancer

Benefits, other injuries: no benefits; have known and worked with at least 20 divers who have gotten killed; lots of times it's accidents; examples; McDermott never admits wrong in a case like that; everybody's mouth gets shut; 2 or 3 killed in dry habitat rigging up to do welding

Comparison of companies: some companies like Epic Diving had bad reputations; terrible equipment; Taylor went all out for the divers; old Navy divers; change when went from shallow water to deep water; barge captain would look over the side, all looked the same to him; you wanted to decompress they'd say you're holding up the show; too many guys would go without decompressing to show it's not too rough for them; barge captain can say he does not want you out on another job

Knowing when divers are working: sometimes have to run off divers if they're not getting anything done; can tell if they're doing any good by the sounds over the radio; didn't know who you would have to work with but could guess who the divers were going to be by the type of job it was; I didn't do much welding, I'm not a welder; before habitat stuff they took divers and made welders out of them; Donald Boone was one of those who was a welder and they made a diver out of him; some divers were known for being able to do certain types of jobs; most of what I did was pipeline work on lay barges, jet barges, installing risers on structures; did a little of everything- salvage, explosive, etc.

Technology: more or less the same; no jet sleds or jet barges when I started; Larry Elliot of Lake Charles was the first to design a jet sled; we started with a hand jet; then jet sled then jet barges; put out huge pressure and blew a hole in the bottom; tricky business; working on a jet barge was risky but easy; just dropping down and checking the pipeline

Hats: started with Desco; Scott got real popular but was not made for commercial diving; All Warriner was the first guy ever to use a Scott; Desco had a free flow, hand valve, gave you the air you wanted; Scott is demand; hit the valve if you want more air; designed for SCUBA, but divers started using them because they were smaller and used less air; could get to 100 feet with a small compressor; free flow mask had speaker but had to turn off air to talk; Joe Savoie first to make lightweight diving helmet; working on lay barge 21; Joe was explaining what he was going to build; I said can't do it that way; Joe was a hardheaded coonass, never had any formal diving training; just kept getting louder; I made one and showed him; he found out I was right; made neck ring, evolved to his helmet; divers liked it; I made 7 or 8; father-in-law was a machinist and helped; decided he didn't want to be bothered

Gear: when first started diver had to supply own air hose, compressor, etc. then diving companies supplied all but personal gear; made the helmet in the 1960s; Joe demonstrated his; was a character

Looking back: the end result turned out alright, but missed going to sea; after wife died looked at going back but the cost to reinstate is too great; turning point was doing the gas job; liked the gas work, quit doing shallow work; would stay out 1, 2, 3 months or 1, 2, 3 days; after hurricane could be out 2-3 months without seeing dry land;

Overseas: worked for McDermott International, the overseas division; would go to Nigeria to kill the winter months; they don't start any big projects in the winter months; after hurricanes there'd be lots of damage, especially in shallow water; didn't like to work shallow water but can't take the cream and not the crap; on shallow water dives they'd keep you on standby, knew you'd scatter; kept up with jobs coming up through Pipeline Digest, magazine about onshore and offshore

Career: lots are seamen; you held a certain place in society as to your ability; was one of the better thought of; when there's lots of work they'll take anybody

Radios: from day 1; Navy rigs as big as an air compressor, nobody used; O'Neill Landry built small portable radio; then unscrambler around the 70s; in the 50s Navy used the Mark V, not suitable for working in the Gulf, too big and bulky; in sat can't talk to your partner, have to write everything down

Decompression and chambers: Navy had the tables, used those; no chambers when first started; got bent on first deep job, no chambers; Al Warriner built first chamber, I was first to use it; everyone outside drinking beer and laughing at me inside; people had to go to work, told me to get out; got hit again on way home but toughed it out; no idea how many times got bent, it was very common, especially on repetitive air diving; some guys more susceptible than others; not many Cajun divers

Rusty Guidry has been a friend of Walt Daspit since they were in school together in Lafayette in the middle 1940s. When I was at Walt's house on July 10, he suggested I should try to get in touch with some of the rig builders and their wives because there are few of them left. Many of them came in from Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas and built the rigs in the swamps, marshes and lakes. When things moved offshore they built the rigs there as well until the jack-up rigs eliminated the need for them. Walt called Rusty and arranged for us to meet her at Carmine's restaurant in Bush. She was at the restaurant when we arrived, and we joined her in a back room. We were the only ones in the room so we were able to talk. She did not mind the tape recorder, so we did the interview before and during lunch. Walt was quiet for much of the interview but commented here and there. Rusty was married four times; her second husband was a rig builder and third one a diver. She met them in bars and has the language and toughness of a woman who bragged that she could take care of herself among the men. Rusty is candid about living among the rig builders, which she describes as "never dull." What comes through as she relates the stories is the persistent cycle of work, alcohol, and fighting that defined the existence of many rig builders, divers, and other oilfield workers.

## Summary of DA048:

More on Lafayette: when Walt left in 1945 there were about 23,000 people; when Rusty left in 1960 the oil industry had hit, they had the oil center, and it was still growing; a bunch of the guys in their high school cohort went to sea after leaving school; they used to hang out in front of the post office; would go to L'acadien Bar in Lafayette; Rusty's mom would show up looking for her and everyone would split; Rusty's grandfather was one of the first to ship fish out of St. Martinville Parish; he had a grocery store and boat; uncle would take the boat and deliver groceries because lots of people didn't have transportation or money to pay; they moved the grocery store to Henderson; father's father owned land on Marsh Island; federal agents came to put grandpa off the land when my daddy was 16; he told my daddy and uncles to go get a can of gasoline because he was going to set their boats on fire and leave them stranded on the island; he got dressed, took a boat to Lafayette, drove to New Orleans and told them not to send anybody else because he would burn their boats; he left Lafayette, his kids, and wife and went to Texas to get shrimp boats.

Walt's school and background: went to Cathedral High School; during the war the public schools had no sports programs, so he went to the Catholic school so he could box; 30 people in his graduating class; dad retired from the railroad; mama ran the grocery store, which she opened with \$100 she borrowed; anybody who worked for the railroad could get credit because they knew the railroad would pay them; Southern Pacific had a fare yard; Lafayette was a railroad hub.

Haggai Davis

Morgan City, LA

July 8, 2004

Interviewed by: Jamie Christy

University of Houston/History International

MMS060

### Ethnographic Preface:

Haggai Davis was born in Denton, Texas. He roughnecked in high school in 1947 for a drilling company called Cooper Herring. He quit high school in his last semester and went into the Coast Guard. He went to work for Warren Automated Tool Company out of Houston and then moved to Harvey (New Orleans) in 1952 where he met his wife, Gail (she was working for J. Ray McDermott in Harvey). Later, he went to work for Fishing Tools, Inc. and then Taylor Oil Field Rental. Then he went to Kajan Specialty (Fishing Tool company out of Houma). He did sales for Whipstock, Inc. out of New Iberia, Louisiana. That company was so busy that Mr. Davis also learned and performed directional drilling. He headed directional drilling projects and worked in the oil fields of the southeast United States, the Middle East, Alaska, London and the North Sea. He moved to Morgan City in 1958 and then returned in the late 1960's to work for Stable Drill. Mr. Davis has patented several drilling tools including a snubber rig and the Gumbo-buster. He had his own company called Macaroni Tubing Rental. He was still working full-time at Tri-City Pipe and Machine when he gave this interview in July of 2004.

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J. Frank Davis

Houston, TX

May 10, 2004

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS030

### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. J. Frank Davis graduated with a degree from Texas Tech University and went to work for Shell in 1958. He worked in the gas department for nine years. He also served a plant engineer, project engineer. Later, he was project manager on various projects including, building gas trading plants, gas liquid recovery plants, compression plants, gathering systems.

### Summary:

Mr. Davis interviewed with Ken E. Arnold. This interview covered mainly facilities engineering, mostly from the Shell perspective. There was also interesting commentary on safety management, including accidents, government response, and MMS standards. Also, discusses environmental issues, Paragon, and Pecten.

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Raymond DeFelice

Lockport, LA

January 24, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB031

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Raymond DeFelice, or Rainbo as he likes to be called, and his wife at the Exxon retirees' luncheon. We scheduled the interview for the afternoon so that he could be out with his cattle in the morning. Since retiring from the oilfield in 1983, he has kept himself busy with real estate and cattle ranching. He talks a lot about what kinds of jobs and characteristics got a man a raise as well as all of the different schedules he worked. Viviane had a big box of pictures and showed me some great shots of what "everyday life was like with the oilfield in your backyard." Viviane was honest about how difficult it was to raise her kids by herself basically but knew that her husband couldn't make as much money working anywhere else at that time.

Rainbo was born in 1932 and began roughnecking during his summers off from high school. After returning from the Korean War in 1955 he began working for Offshore Drilling Company. He got a job with Exxon in 1956 as a roughneck. He worked himself up to workover superintendent by 1977. He took early retirement in 1986.

#### Summary:

History of oil: Raymond began the interview explaining how people in the oil industry still use the phrase in production and pricing of oil "barrels" of oil even though oil is drilled, contained and transported mainly through extensive pipelines and such. In the 1800's, when the oil business was first getting going in Oklahoma, the oil used to be stored, sold and transported in barrels. Labor for the oil fields first came from generally farmworkers and the majority of farms in those days in LA were cotton farms. The rookies from the farmfields adopted the nickname of "weevils", and the term has stuck.

Background: Raymond was born in 1932. He went to Larose High School and completed 11th grade. During high school, he worked in the oilfields during the summers because the money was good. His father was in the trucking business. Raymond was drafted in the Army for combat duty in Korea and served from 1953-1955; he describes himself as a hard headed private.

Offshore Drilling Company: Raymond got out of the Army and, "4 days after returning from the service", went to work in the oilfields for a contract company called Offshore Drilling Company as a roughneck. He liked the oil business because it was rough work and paid well.

Offshore rigs: On his 2nd day, he started to work on the rigs, drilling past 10,000 feet, as a derrick man; it was scary work, but "when you're young and rough you don't give a damn, don't

have any sense." He worked for about a year for Offshore then went to Humble/Exxon 1956 because the big companies had the good benefits - had a lot of work.

Work with Exxon: contract companies like Offshore hire guys, let them go, hire some more, all the time avoiding any kind of long-term stability or responsibility. The major companies like Exxon hired you, and you could spend your whole career there with benefits and retirement. His wife worked as a nurse part-time, and they had four children. His work with Exxon kept him closer to home and didn't have to work quite as hard. He got into real estate and cattle while working for Exxon to bring in some extra money.

Raymond started out as a roughneck with Exxon offshore - he was offshore for 7 months, one rig, not for me, got seasick pretty easily, lake trips were fine, not like the rigs. He was transferred to production when Exxon shut down a bunch of wells, worked as a maintenance person on land in a number of facilities, edges of the lakes still traveling by boat.

Promotion: He took 14 years to complete 11th grade, so he put down on his application 14 yrs. as # of years he attended school. His boss thought he had two years of college plus a high school diploma, so he got promoted to management in production as a plant operator for four years, much easier job. Foreman job came open back with the roustabouts, doing the fieldwork, like pipe fitting work, construction of facilities, office work, a little bit of everything.

Contract work: 1972-1977, he was then promoted with a company car and about \$5,000 more/year completing and in charge of most of South Louisiana and southern Mississippi.

High standards: Exxon was one of the most difficult companies to work for the contractors because they had such high expectations. Pollution control, environmental standards...

Education and training: By the time he became a foreman, there were lots of opportunities for learning through the job - seemed like there was a school for everything, training, certifications supervision school for managers. They had started to send women into the fields, so there was school for proper treatment of women on the job. Raymond believed that much of the work in the old days was done by hand which made it a much rougher job. Nowadays, everything was mechanized so the work was easier; makes it easier for women coming on the job.

Job descriptions: The description of a roustabout changed to maintenance man as the work became less strenuous, more mechanized - more computerized. Supervisors work 24 hours per day, while Field Foreman worked every other weekend.

Moonlighting: Oil companies weren't understanding at all about other jobs like real estate and cattle, didn't ever talk about his other work. When he was home, he never did housework, but he would help out with the kids. He was raised only to do outside work, never "learned" how to do housework.

Hobbies: Fishing, hunting, big garden, raising cattle.

Looking at pictures: Oil companies leased land from residents, people made a bit of money from that. Raymond's wife's mother would lease some of her land, raised seven kids as a widow - was

incredibly resourceful. Strong, domineering when she had to be, did housework - took in laundry, peeled tons of shrimp (she'd make 15 cents a bucket for peeled shrimp - \$1.50 per day was a good day), leased land, oil business provided lots of work for women like her.

1984 recession: It didn't really affect Exxon - Raymond retired in 1986, early retirement at the age of 53 - they ended up providing early retirement to a bunch of folks to try and cut costs, but also lost a lot of their intellectual capital.

Deaths on the job: Few people were killed in the oilfields, but had a good life. We never thought too much about the danger of the job. Helicopter pilots were contracted through two companies Petroleum Helicopters and another one - good pilots they had to be - some were Vietnam vets.

On the rigs: company guys, contracted guys, divers - everybody got along pretty well for the most part.

Esmiel "Dee" DeHart

Houma, LA

July 26, 2001

Interviewed by: Ari Anand

University of Arizona

AA013

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Lucy and Esmiel "Dee" DeHart were referred to me by Audrey and Maudrey Bergeron as having a room available in their Bed and Breakfast, which it turns out is two of the three rooms of their home. Mr. Dee had spent many years in the oilpatch, and both he and Ms Lucy seemed interested in the project, suggesting many other people with whom I could speak.

Mr. Esmiel DeHart was born in September 1931. He first started working the oilpatch in 1952 with Texaco, where he became a boat captain three months after starting. In 1957 he moved to Cenac Towing, and then he went to McDermott in 1962 where he drove a bus. In 1965 he moved to become a boat captain again at Halliburton. In 1983 he had back surgery and got leave for a year. He continued to work at Halliburton until his retirement in 1990, during his five back surgeries and cancer. Mr. Dee was also a Deputy Sheriff from 1955 to 1972.

#### Summary:

**Early Life:** Born 1931; family of five brothers, one sister. Trapping muskrats since age 10; trapping and trawling until age 18. Married at 18, trawled for two more years until oilfield opened up. Starting in 1952, worked on tugboat leased by Texaco. Completed 7th grade. Raised on a houseboat; trapped during winter; out of school November through February; lived at trapping camp, only came in once a month for supplies; trapped muskrats, minks, otters. Wife's father was fisher and trapper; fished with him during first year of marriage.

**Oil Industry Work:** Worked on tugs for Texaco for five years. Next worked five years for Cenac Towing Company moving rigs. Then drove bus for Jerry McDermott. Went into oilfield because paid well. Got Texaco job through a friend. Describes first day of work for Texaco, during which he worked 48 hours straight. Drove bus transporting oil workers for Jerry McDermott for three years. Then began working for Halliburton in 1965; worked as boat captain for 25 years. Describes boat life and crew. Bottom started to fall out of oil industry in 1984. Retired in 1990.

**Halliburton Work:** Halliburton Services took good care of its employees. Back surgery in 1983; out of work for 12 months, during which Halliburton paid him extra. Cancer in arm in 1984; heart bypass surgery; four more back surgeries. Halliburton accommodated him during all these. Worked 7 and 7 schedule. Describes conditions of retirement.

**Retirement Activities:** Opened bed and breakfast with his wife. Describes operating bed and breakfast and tending his garden.

Back Injury: Describes on-the-job back injury in 1983 and his recovery.

Captain Work and Schedule: Became boat captain in 1952, after working three months; but had worked on boats all his life. Worked as captain for Texaco, Cenac, and Halliburton. Worked 14 and 7 schedule at both Texaco and Cenac Towing Company. Schedule never really affected family life. Worked 7 and 7 schedule at Halliburton. Crews usually changed out by plane/helicopter; describes process of changing crews. Worked Wednesday to Wednesday at Halliburton. Halliburton offered early retirement; would replace older workers with younger ones. Workers from Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida; mostly local. Had 50-ton, 100-ton, and 300-ton licenses.

Unionization: No unions because "never called for." Companies gave regular raises as workers advanced so no need for union. Union provides job security in other industries, but already relatively hard to get fired in oilfield so union unnecessary. Companies do move people around and change their schedules.

Job Hazards: Accidents common. Describes fatal drilling rig accident. Often felt like he had to risk his life to keep his job, especially when out in bad weather. Some large boats capsized. Describes some bad weather experiences.

Environmental Regulations: Oilfield blamed for environmental degradation. Never dumped oil or mud overboard. There were plenty of fish, shrimp, crabs prior to environmental regulations; now very little edible fauna due to damming of inlets. Some regulations just stupid, such as not being allowed to use toilets.

Non-Captain Work: Worked as Deputy Sheriff during his time off for 17 years, 1955-1972. Sometimes filled in as derrick man, which was very hard job. Captains consistently well respected.

Impacts of Oil Industry: Whole community involved in oilfield. Offered opportunities for well paying jobs. Gas cheaper in the area. Town grew to over 300,000 people during oil boom; now have population of around 90,000. "The oilfield does not bring any sadness" but "the aftermath is the sadness." People happy when oilfield booming, but sad when it drops off. Lots of mixing with black people and other ethnic minorities in oilfield and oil towns.

Current Challenges: Environment is currently the biggest challenge to the oilfield. Regulations are extremely strict for both oil industry work as well as fishing/trawling boats. "They'll fine the hell out of you, and every chance to get money, they pop it to you." Environmental regulations a little "too strict." Regulations are "protecting some things and hurting some things." Would definitely suggest young people work in the oil industry, because there is even better potential than in the past.

Life on Boats: Had fun with crew out on boats; played bourée (a card game) for money every night. Describes stint as a cook on a rig in 1954 or 1955. Describes work on drilling rig for Texaco. Describes barge accident while working for Cenac Towing.

Family: Talks about his children, all of who live nearby. Two sons worked for McDermott, but are now retired. Married for 51 years.

Clifton Delcambre

Delcambre, LA

May 1, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG008

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Clifton Delcambre was referred to me by Jimmy Hernandez. I met Clifton at his house. His friends call him "Slick." We had a good discussion about his history of the oilpatch, and after the interview, we had a look at his boats and the nets he uses for shrimping.

Clifton Delcambre started work as a roustabout for a contractor in 1951. He got a job with Shell in 1953. His first job was on Weeks Island working on both steam and diesel rigs. He eventually moved to production, working his way through gauger to a lead operator. He's pretty modest about his career with Shell but had plenty to share.

#### Summary:

**Early Employment:** He talks about when he started working for Shell. Before that, he was a roustabout for a contractor. He grew up in Delcambre, but he heard there was good money in the oil industry. He started at Weeks Island, working on both steam and diesel rigs.

**First Job:** he talks about his first job in the oilfield, the steam rigs he started working on, the changing technology of the drilling rig.

**Safety and experience:** we talk about some of the accidents that happened, and then he talks about training and training programs utilized by Shell.

**Labor:** we talk about the changing face of labor, the job hierarchy out in the patch

**Military:** he talks about his service in the military.

**Career with Shell:** he started as a roustabout, moved to gauger, then to lease operator. He describes each position, and talks about the long hours he worked.

**Bust:** he describes the impact of the bust, and talks about some of the clandestine accounting maneuvers that went on in the leasing department.

**Salt Domes:** he talks about Weeks Island and Cote Blanche, and talks about the process of drilling through salt.

Labor Pool: he talks about changes in the labor pool, how people have a more sophisticated knowledge coming in now, how Shell doesn't hire roustabouts anymore, and how they shifted to the use of contractors over the years.

Environment: he talks about the impact of the oilpatch on the environment, how they used to dump stuff in the bayou, and then he explains slicklining.

The Oil industry: he talks about drilling in Alaska, Prudhoe Bay, changes in Acadiana resulting from the oil industry, and the growth of the Port of Iberia.

David DeMartini

Houston, TX

July 9, 2004

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS036

### Ethnographic Preface:

David DeMartini was interviewed on the history of Shell Oil and offshore activity. DeMartini received a B.S. from Notre Dame and a PhD. from Ohio State (1969). He graduated and went to work at Shell's MP lab at Bellaire a few months later. DeMartini is a geophysicist and did pioneering work on bright spots for Shell. He remembers Shell being on the cutting edge of technology and largely taking a lead in the 1950's. DeMartini comments on finding oil, bright spots, seismograph, leasing, bids, sales, and upper level management at Shell. He retired from Shell at the end of 1998 after thirty years with the company.

### Summary:

This interview was fairly technical and covered the evolution of bright spot technology, and its use in the 1970 lease sale. Some discussion of Shell's corporate culture including a well developed section on sharing research within the company. He also commented on deconvolution. This interview also generated a large list of names.

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Edward Richard Denet

Boothville, LA

July 22, 2003

Interviewed by: Jessica Piekielek

University of Arizona

JP007

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Edward Denet at the Boothville Senior Center; the coordinator of the center introduced him to me after I explained the project to her. She had talked with Mr. Denet just the other day about his work, and remembered that he used to run boats for the oil companies. Edward Denet agreed to do an interview right away, and we met in a quiet room at the center. Edward Denet was a well dressed man (as he attested to during his interview). He was a great story teller and would lean in every once and awhile like he was about to tell me a good secret. He was enthusiastic to tell me about his own success working on boats, as well as the subsequent success of his son, who has followed in his footsteps and now owns his own company, Denet Towing, in Boothville.

Edward R. Denet was born in Boothville in 1919. He spent his working life on boats, first as a shrimper and then working boats serving the oil industry. He worked for Shell Oil for 40 years, first working as a deckhand and then a captain on a boat owned by Herby Collette. Edward Denet then bought his own wooden hulled boat and continued to work for Shell Oil. His son followed in his footsteps and owns and operates Denet Towing in Boothville.

#### Summary:

Personal: Born in Boothville in 1919; attended school in Boothville, but school was not like what they have now, had to walk to school, school was often canceled because of weather; wife and 6 kids, wife died in early 90's; attributes financial success in part to wife's capacity to save money; he never believed in credit, bought everything (boat, home, furniture, Lincoln) with cash; "kids were well taken care of"; doctor recently called him "best dressed man" to come into his office, always liked to wear suits and be well dressed; father was a barber in Boothville, played trumpet; Edward went with father to trumpet lessons and also learned trumpet, had band that played up and down river, Pilottown, sometimes in New Orleans; loved to dance, along with daughter, would get invited to dances, balls.

Work History: First worked as fishermen, would then worked shrimp boat for Herby Collette, once recognized as good shrimper, Collette shared catch 50-50 with Edward; then worked as deckhand and later captain for Collette, who began to serve oil industry; learned much of what he knew initially from captain who worked for Collette, Lambert Duncan; Edward bought his own boat and began to work for Shell personally, eventually had two boats; became blind in left eye, so retired.

Relation with Shell: Shell was "crazy about him," proud of him, respected his work, treated him well; offered to put Edward in business by buying him a boat, but he declined, saying that he

didn't need anyone to buy him a boat; would go to One Shell Square where "big shots" would introduce him to people in the office; liked working for Shell.

Boats: Started work on pogie boats; his boats were wooden hulled; bought used diesel engine for first boat for \$1,000 and put in boat himself; wanted to buy steel hulled ones later, but couldn't find any he liked; kept boat up very well, inside and out; "big shots" would fly out to rigs and tour Edward's boat, always well kept, beds made, motor looked just "like a piece of furniture"; also kept boats well maintained mechanically, because oil companies expected boats to be ready at any moment; captain of his second boat sank boat, boat beyond repair after towed on land, too much damage in towing process.

Licensing: Had to have license from Coast Guard, took test at Custom House in New Orleans, 1960's, despite what Edward considered minimal schooling (given school conditions as child) he passed licensing exams, didn't study but kept book underneath his pillow; later told friend who didn't have a lot of schooling what he needed to know for the test, friend's wife helped him study and he also passed.

Navigation: Didn't have GPS units, navigated by compass; knew where all the wells were; Shell put out a book with well locations, would study book; would show other people where wells were, or tell them how to get there; once Shell had well which was out of operation, didn't know where it was located anymore, so called Edward who told them where to find it.

Weather: Ran boats during fog, because if you didn't say yes to a job because of bad weather, then somebody else would; didn't have problems during bad weather because he knew who to talk to - the Lord; was on boats in Fort Jackson canal during Camille while working for Collette, worst storm with fierce winds, worried that McDermott barge would destroy boats, so jacked up barge, boats eventually safe, but Edward and Collette lost their homes; another time foreman asked Edward to stay with him (with his boat) at rig, after all other workers had been sent in during storm, Edward said yes, because he felt it would have been held against him later if he hadn't done it; his family would always worry from New Orleans during bad weather while he was out.

Relations with oilworkers: sometimes oilmen would come and eat on his boat, had a deckhand that was a good cook, most times Edward and deckhand would eat on rig; developed friendship with college educated young oilworker, encouraged young man to take promotion- "Don't ever refuse something that will build you high." After promotion, young man helped Edward establish own business relationship with Shell; watched men at wells and rigs and learned from watching, would then give advice to oil workers.

Perez: Short story about "run-in" with Chalin Perez, while working for Herby Collette.

Son: Son, Gerald Denet, started working on boats weekends while still in school, learned a lot from father; Edward wanted son to go to college to study, but son wanted to study mechanics; son got first break when he sold his first boat, which the company that bought it had sent to work overseas; then son started having boats built for him; son currently owns and operates Denet Towing, with a fleet of boats, successful operation, also helped one oil company to keep rigs on

location and protect from rollers in Gulf; son recently went to make business deal with oil company, man asked son to bring his dad along, remembered working with dad, very well received at office.

Ronald Deshotels

Lafayette, LA

January 19, 2003

Interviewed by: David DiTucci

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

DD004

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Ronald Deshotels was born in Kaplan, Louisiana in 1934. His father was the first person to organize a Credit Union in the United States in the early 1950s. Ronald graduated from Louisiana State University in Geology and Economics. When he finished school there were too many geologists so he became a mud logger. He worked for Universal, Baylard, and then Oil Base. He was laid off from Oil Base in 1986. He is now a consultant to the oil industry. In his interview, he discusses the economic, cultural, and technological impacts of the oil industry in the region.

#### Summary:

Early life: born in Kaplan, Louisiana in 1934; father organized first credit union in US in early 50s.

Education: graduated from Louisiana State University with degree in Geology and Economics.

Employment: wanted to be geologist in oil industry, but too many geologists at the time; worked as a mud logger/engineer for a few years; mud logging involved analyzing samples of mud when drilling for oil; added water and gel to mud as part of process; position paid a decent wage; thinks the name of company was Universal. Next worked for Baylard for ten years, then for Oil Base; in early 1950s, oil industry expanded and it paid well. Baker Hughes bought out Oil Base around 1984 and right after this the oil field started to collapse; Hughes lost 3,600 rigs as a result of the oil glut; was laid off in 1986; worked as a consultant for a year, then became a chemical salesman; currently works as a consultant to the oil industry.

Entertainment: offshore crew in 1960s lucky if had a television; card playing very popular.

Economic impact: oil industry had positive economic impact on the communities it operated in; brought in much needed jobs; rise in oilfield service companies;

Cultural impact: oil industry helped modernize surrounding areas like Lafayette, Louisiana because of influence of outside people. Discusses his overseas travels to places like England and Scotland; describes family's experiences overseas.

Family life: while working offshore he couldn't call his wife.

Cyclical nature of oil industry: when oil prices decline, causes more drilling, results in lower prices; Lafayette suffered immensely during downturn in 1980s due to lack of economic diversification. Dallas and Houston suffered less from oil glut because they diversified economies.

Final remarks: would return to oil industry if he started over again; shares comical oil field stories that occurred over the years.

Lee Dias

Lafayette, LA

June 7, 2002

Interviewed by: David DiTucci

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

DD001

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Lee Dias was born in Paincourtville, Louisiana. His father worked as a truck driver and later operated a general merchandise store. He started his career in the oil industry working as a roustabout for Danos and Curole in 1967 or 1968. He worked for several other companies, gaining experience as he worked his way up to driller, before he went to work for Baker Oil in 1976. At Baker he worked in the tool division and went into management in 1982, where he stayed for 17 years.

#### Summary:

Early history: born in Paincourtville, Louisiana; his father worked in a general merchandising store that his maternal grandfather owned and that his father took over when his grandfather retired; received a high school education; when he got out of the Marine Corps there were not many good-paying jobs, so in 1967 or '68 he decided to get a job in the oilfield.

Job history: first job was as a roustabout for Danos and Curole; a friend helped get him a job as a foreman on a workover rig with Lake Workover Company, where he worked for about a year and got some experience as a derrickman; then got a job with ODECO (his first major company), where he worked for four or five years, working up from derrickman to driller; went back to work for Lake Workover when industry slowed down; with experience, he learned how to operate in different positions and about the drilling environment.

Baker Oil: in '76 went to work for Baker as a completion hand; when Baker began specializing their jobs, he went to work in the tool division; they had 150 tools that they used in remedial and simulation work; packing; water wells and squeeze cement; testing formations.

Competition: in the 70s and 80s there was cutthroat competition between the many wireline companies, forcing prices down; in the 80s, major companies started bidding out jobs; Baker refused to cut their prices; in the end, major companies found it was better to pay more for better quality service; the bigger service companies (Schlumberger, Halliburton, Atlas) survived, while the smaller companies did not.

Management: went into management in '82, where he worked for 17 years; in upper-level management, company privileged those with engineering education, but found they did not have the experience to apply their knowledge.

Tools: knowledge of and experience with some tools is generalizable to other tools, same principles; example, directional drilling.

Family: hardest thing about working in the oilfield is living away from your family; wife has to do everything; but, you make good money, even during the downturns; in the 60s, average person made 100 dollars a week, while he was making 500.

Life on the rigs: schedules; tension; sleep; companies prefer to keep men out for the duration of jobs; politics of the "partner" system - have to know someone to get a job; most of the workers on the rigs were not from southern Louisiana.

Safety: rigs were a dangerous place, you had to stay on your toes; as insurance rates and lawsuits have risen, so has emphasis on safety; he never hurt anyone or got hurt; safety records are better when crews have worked together longer, where you know who to trust and who not to trust; dangerous situations arise when people do not know what they are doing or are not careful/alert ("livin' on the edge"); spinning chain; card games.

George Dickie

Thibodaux, LA

January 27, 2003

Interviewed by: Debbie Z. Toups

University of Arizona

DT002

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Dr. George Dickie is the father of a co-worker of mine. By chance, during a conversation with her, she mentioned that her parents were originally from Ohio, but moved here when her father was working as a geologist for an oil company. I contacted Dr. Dickie after his daughter, Georgia Elfert, said that her father was willing to share his story. Dr. Dickie has a master's degree in Geology and at 28-years-old went back to school to become a dentist.

I interviewed Dr. Dickie in his home and was fascinated with the story of how he decided to change careers due to a "downturn in the oil industry" and the fear that he may lose his job due to cut backs. He worked for The California Company (now Chevron) in the summer while in graduate school, working on his masters in Geology. He also worked for the same company for 6 years following his graduation. This is when he was introduced to South Louisiana where he eventually settled to raise his family and spend his entire career in dentistry. He is now retired, living in Thibodaux.

Dr. Dickie was very friendly, interesting, and humorous in his account. He explained that when he became a dentist he was "still in the drilling business, but not near so many dry holes".

#### Summary:

**Early Years:** He was born in Cleveland, Ohio in 1932. This was in the middle of the depression. His father was a teacher and also an officer in the Navy in World War II. After the war his family moved to Kent, Ohio. He attended high school there and went on to Kent State.

**College Education:** He received a bachelor's degree in Geology from Kent State University. He went on to graduate school at the University of Illinois. He got an assistant-ship there and taught a geology lab. While doing graduate work, he was hired by The California Company (now Chevron) to work during the summer.

**First Experiences in the Oil Field:** After completing graduate school, he was given a position in Pensacola, Florida. They were exploring in the state of Florida, the continental shelf off of the east coast, Alabama, and parts of Mississippi. He describes this as a very good experience. While there, he went on field trips to the Florida Keys, which involved scuba diving on a reef. They drilled a well in Tampa, which produced no oil. He was assigned to take a trip to the east coast to speak to geology professors at several universities regarding the possibility of developing oil on the continental shelf. He then reported his findings to the heads of the company in San Francisco.

**Oilfield Experience in South Louisiana:** He was transferred to Harvey, Louisiana. During that time he and his wife lived in New Orleans. He was assigned to the production department out of Leeville and Grand Isle. They sat wells offshore at Bay Marchand and Timbalier Bay. Dr. Dickie describes what his job involved in detail and how geologists were not well received by the petroleum engineers. Later he was transferred to the New Orleans downtown office. This job encompassed Livingston, East Baton Rouge, and West Baton Rouge parishes. Old oil fields had been producing for a long time. They were looking at new possibilities of where to find oil. The oil industry soon took a downturn and many geologists' positions were terminated.

**Looking at Other Career Possibilities:** When the oilfield dropped off he began thinking of a possible career change. He looked at Louisiana Oil and Exploration. They were not hiring at that time. Dr. Dickie then looked into getting a PhD. from LSU. This would take 3 years with no job guarantee. He decided to take a dental aptitude test and then applied to dental school. He was accepted at 2 schools, but chose Case Western Reserve in Cleveland, Ohio to be near family. He completed dental school at age 32.

**Family:** He and his wife were married in 1954. In 1960 they still had no children and decided to apply for adoption. A year later they adopted a baby girl. While he was in dental school he and his wife had two natural children of their own.

**After Dental School:** Dr. Dickie and his family could have gone to Florida for an internship, but he liked South Louisiana. He wanted to set up a practice in New Orleans, but a dentist in Thibodaux had suffered a stroke and Dr. Dickie was offered an opportunity to fill in for him. Eventually he opened his own practice in Vacherie, Louisiana where he was very happy. He remained in practice there for 28 years. He retired 10 years ago and lives in Thibodaux.

**Retired Friends:** Some of the men he worked with in Pensacola are now retired and live nearby. They get together once a year to catch up on each other and reminisce old times. He shared a photograph of the group from the last reunion.

Ed and Tess Dilsaver

Morgan City, LA

July 24, 2001, January 5, 2005

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier, Rylan Higgins

University of Arizona

EB012, RH020

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Ed Dilsaver is a member of the Old Salts Club in Morgan City (Mobil retirees club). I met him at the club's weekly morning breakfast. I asked all of them for their names, but Ed was the only one to come up to me after the breakfast and ask if he could be interviewed right away because he didn't like to put things off. He also suggested several other men to call right away, namely Burt Ross and Santo Russo. When I called to confirm the interview he asked if I wanted to talk with his wife, Tess, who worked for Kerr McGee in 1947. I said yes and it was determined that Tess would be present for the interview. Both Ed and Tess were extremely helpful and descriptive in their answers to my questions. The second interview was conducted as part of the study of the links between WWII and the offshore industry.

Tess began working in the front office for Kerr McGee in 1947 when she was 19 years old. She was confused about the lingo so they decided to take her out to an offshore rig - she describes the day with much detail. Tess remained at Kerr McGee for 9 years. She describes her time at Kerr McGee as fun and "wild."

Ed was born in North Carolina in 1925 and moved to Florida as a child. He served in the Navy during WWII and then returned home and earned a business degree from Florida State University. He compares the drilling department to a "war program" because they seemingly had unlimited resources, money and personnel. He worked for Shell the first 10 or 11 years of his oil career. Because of his education and experience in the Navy, his starting position was as an "oil buyer" in 1955. In the mid 60's he went to work with his brother on his boat, which was contracting out to Mobil at the time. In 1967 he went to work for Mobil as the marine foreman. After retiring in 1982, he went to work in Houston for the Trans-Co Energy Company, which he describes as the best company in the world. The company offered him a lot of money and listened to his ideas and suggestions. His bosses even supported his quest to patent an Emergency Boarding Net he invented while working there.

#### Summary of EB012:

Tess at Kerr McGee: began in 1947 when she was 19. Stayed for 7 years. And then for 2 more after her kids were born. The boats were extremely slow. Took 7 hours to get to the offshore rig. Waves were horrible, not very comfortable. People who owned company were very nice to show her around so that she would understand the things about which she had to write reports. Food was great, way to make locals happy especially in the beginning when they weren't used to going away for so long. Couldn't stop the rigs because of the expense it would incur. Drilling

department like a war program, all supplies and money and personnel you need to keep things working.

Oil impact on community: hard on roads especially, not made for the kind of traffic they were getting. Companies tried to please locals so they wouldn't cause problems. Amount of money oil companies would spend in town was mind boggling to the locals. Never seen that kind of money change hands before. Bought whatever was available from the local communities. Made a lot of the local businesses very rich. Made a wonderful impact on the community. "Always blessed with natural resources." The oilmen would come and get involved in the community while they were here.

Safety: stressed at meetings from the very beginning.

Company Men: Mr. Kerr was in Oklahoma a lot and was a politician. Mr. McGee was the brains behind the business. Had really good people behind the business and that's what it took. Still alive, George Parks and Frank McPherson were from Oklahoma and made it as top engineers. Learning experience. The locals were important because they helped them with the water part of things. Only did land drilling before this.

Church Services: Congregation would change because the men would go offshore. Many of the men who would come in would get involved with church.

Ed's story: early life. Born in 1925 in North Carolina. His father was a shrimper, and Ed would work on the boats in the summers. Moved to Florida when he was 4. Eight brothers and sisters. Was in WWII in 1945. Went to college in Florida and received a degree in business. Came to this area to help his brother who was here working with boats. He got to know oil people at Shell and they asked him to come work for them.

Shell: Began in 1955 out at W. Lake Verret as an "oil buyer" He tested the quality of the oil with a field gauge. Spent 10 - 11 years at Shell. Enjoyed work but quit because his brother needed some help with his boat business.

Marine business: Always a hard time finding labor for the boat business. Wanted to get labor locally but found that there weren't enough people to work the boats offshore.

Mobil: Contracting his brother's boat out for Mobil and they wanted to hire him. (Mobil took over Magnolia in 1967). Magnolia was short on money so they took in partners, MCN, Magnolia, Continental and Newmont. Everything was MCN at the time; Continental took care of Newmont's investment. Mobil owned 50% of company.

Building rigs: Magnolia had a shipyard and shipped them offshore, they were drilling in shallow water at that time. Began as a marine foreman. Never roustabouted a day in his life.

Employees: had good people in the yard but didn't want to exert themselves to go the extra mile, that's why they hired Ed.

Prior to Mobil: He was President of American Towing Company, his brother's business. Brother gave him the title but it was a fluff title.

Job duties: Knew how things worked because he would get involved in the operations. If things were broken or run down he would get down and dirty to figure out what was wrong. Made sure that what anyone was doing he'd done it as well. Assigned to Burns Terminal, 280,000 storage facilities that received oil from offshore. Responsible for camps as well. Had 42 people working for him.

Schooling in oil field: they've always had a school teaching people their job. Enhance their knowledge of the oil field. Had to learn how to use new machinery that was always coming out.

Contracts with boats: hired a boat, signed 2 contracts, operating agreement & bare boat agreement. Boats didn't have a license to show they knew what they were doing. Contracting crews with boats. Old boat captains were grand-fathered into the industry. Coast Guard didn't have much jurisdiction over boats when 2 contracts were signed. Late 70's and early 80's things began to change. Coast Guard got stricter.

Made a better operation but cost a lot of money. Marine Industry fought it. Ed's problem with it was that they never tested the skill, only had to take a test.

Industry: lots of drugs in the industry. Take license away from those who have had problems with drugs. In the beginning the Coast Guard would board the vessel to check cargo, but now they don't have the personnel to board all of the boats. Still check, but when the boats are in the shipyard. Made the industry safer with more restrictions.

Environmental & Safety changes on boats: Boats got bigger with more horsepower and handle materials differently. Cargo boats used to use pallets to carry cargo, then it went to large tanks. Then moved to pneumatic tanks or P-tanks. Bought from Halliburton. After boats got bigger, P-tanks were put in the hold. Can load mud, already mixed, in the tanks.

Blowouts: "In a problem time," his job was to make sure that the materials they needed to stop the blowout got to the rig as soon as possible. Logistics was his main job.

Retirement: He retired as a Marine Superintendent in 1982. Then he went to Trans-Continental Pipeline in Houston when he was 58 years old. Trans-Co hired people from other oil companies. They got into drilling to supplement their need for gas. Wanted experienced people. Worked with some of the finest people from Shell and other companies. Fully vested in retirement plan from day 1. Everybody was older, experienced people. Some young engineers. People in the field would take advantage of Trans-Co because they were so good to them. They would give you your uniform from head to toe. People would take advantage by taking shoes home and asking for more. Presidents were from Houston.

Offshore: would fly over the boats to see what they had on the deck of the boats. Wanted to pack the boats so as to supply as many rigs as possible. Ed came up with the idea to share equipment

with Shell and Dow. Saved about \$35,000 a month. Explanation of equipment sharing contracts. Not making any money, saving money.

Bust in the 80's: a lot of money in the beginning was wasted in the drilling department and that might have affected the companies later on.

Hurricanes: cost a fortune. Because he was marine superintendent, he often had to ride out the storm at work. He had to be the last to leave. They spent every hurricane in Morgan City except for one. Tess had her sick mother and her 2 kids in the house, but they never left. Children are now unafraid of hurricanes.

Biggest change in oil industry: transportation, helicopters and boats. Getting people on and off of rigs. Time wise it was such a savings, money as well.

Education: oil companies supported education for their workers outside of the companies. Gave some scholarships for college. API, continuing education.

Emergency Boarding Net: Similar to a cargo net but stronger. Ed designed it for Trans-Co and they wanted to patent it, but it would have cost too much money.

Summary of RH020:

Ed was one of a small group of people who had served in WWII and been involved in the early development of the offshore oil and gas industry in the Gulf of Mexico and was interviewed in a joint project of the University of Arizona, U.S. Minerals Management Service, and the National D-Day Museum. In this interview, Ed talks mostly about his experiences during WWII.

Childhood: Born in North Carolina in 1925 and grew up in Florida before being drafted into the Navy in 1944, which was his senior year of high school. During high school, his father and two brothers, who were shrimpers, moved to Louisiana, where Ed spent his summers.

World War II: life in the United States during the war; Pearl Harbor, served in the Navy during the latter stages of the war, stationed at a naval base in Florida the entire time. After the war, attended university in Florida, where he studied accounting and commerce. He graduated in 1951.

Getting into offshore: shortly after graduation, Ed joined his brother in Morgan City operating an offshore oil and gas crew boat business and then went to work for Shell in their Oil Shipping Division; worked for Shell for ten and a half years before going to work for Mobil in their Marine Department, where he worked for sixteen years; retired from Mobil in 1982, after which he went to work for Trans-Co Energy, a pipeline company; talks at some length about each decision to switch jobs, about his work at each company and about the companies themselves.

Connections between military and oil industry: was a storekeeper in the Navy, not see many direct connections between the two; learned a lot about how to work with people as a manager

and that these were good skills to have for any career; talked about what it meant to work in the Oil Shipping Division there.

Toward the end of the interview, Ed talked about the importance of education. He was also asked if he had any other comments about the connections between WWII and the offshore oil and gas industry. He talked briefly about how the equipment from WWII helped get the offshore industry started. He talked about how certain boats and maritime technologies were transferred from WWII directly to the crew boat sector.

John and Catherine Dilsaver

Morgan City, LA

April 6, 2002, July 25, 2003

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier, Diane Austin

University of Arizona

EB050, DA113

Ethnographic Preface:

John is the brother of Ed Dilsaver. When I interviewed Ed back in July, he had talked a lot about his brother and suggested that I contact John for an interview.

John Dilsaver was born in North Carolina in 1920. He moved to Louisiana in 1938 to work on a shrimp boat. In 1951, he built his own crew boat and started a business called Marine Construction Company. Because of severe health issues, John sold his business in 1958, worked a bit for Houston Drilling Company, and then spent the rest of his working years as a consultant until his retirement in 1971.

Summary of EB050:

Background: John was born in North Carolina in 1920. He moved to Louisiana in 1938 to work on a shrimp boat. In 1951, he built his own crew boat and started a business called Marine Construction Company.

Health Issues: In 1958, John had his first heart attack. He was busy building boats and trying to run his business - proved to be too much for him. After his first heart attack, he sold his company. At that time, he had built 6 crew boats and 4 tugs. From 1962-1963, he worked in the marine department for Houston Drilling Company before he had his second heart attack. That was the end of the road for John being involved in any hands-on building/construction business.

Consultant: John spent the rest of his working years as a consultant, finally retiring in 1971. John talked at great length about the changes in boats and boat building over the years, and he seems to know firsthand what technology made the job easier and cheaper.

Summary of DA113:

Thunder Bay: at the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans on business, was paged, asked by Lew Leary to help acquire equipment needed for the movie; agreed to go to work for him as soon as filming started; would meet at the Ordognes' restaurant; operating a base out of Kerr-McGee oil operations dock on Bayou Boeuf, Mobil Oil Company had installation there, too; John would line up transportation, arrange lodging, get equipment they needed; helped find and lease the shrimp boats that were used in the movie, lasted a couple of months; was in the marine towing business at the time, in 1953; had sold out of shrimping a year or two earlier; during the filming would have stars come to the house to eat seafood, went to watch an early viewing in New Orleans with Gilbert Roland, both he and Jimmy Stewart were nice people; had a special process

for preserving the film, union rules were strict about who could do what; the fishermen could speak English, past the days when everyone spoke French

Shrimpers and Oil people: got along pretty well after shrimpers found out oil would not hurt their business; shrimpers originally against oil industry because of the dynamiting; at the time Morgan City was known as the shrimp capital of the world; Kerr-McGee drilled the first offshore well in 1947, was next to the property where Chicago Bridge and Iron had been during WWII

Wars: the CBI property was leased from the Youngs Brothers during WWI and during WWII, during WWI it was Union Bridge and Iron and they built vessels for the Navy, during WWII they had steel dry docks, Catherine worked down at CBI just out of high school, was hired as a typist, they build Advanced Base Sectional Docks and took them to Africa and the Pacific; one dry dock too wide to get through the Panama Canal, had to tip it on its side, Catherine worked at CBI for a year, then went to Southwestern for college for a year, met John and was married; during the war it was hard to get tires, shoes, gasoline

Housing Shortage: Mobil Oil had to build their own houses for their offices, schools were overrun, Morgan City was a boom town at the time, had seismograph crews in the area before 1947, things happened fast, during WWII had German subs in the Gulf, Morgan City was swarming with FBI agents, Daddy had a hotel and some of the agents stayed there, the Breaux Hotel, Coast Guard men rented rooms

Catherine family history: Father worked for FB Williams Lumber Company in Patterson, moved to Morgan City in 1913, first wife died in 1916, in 1921 he remarried to Catherine's mother, Catherine went to school in Morgan City, graduated 1942, spent a year in Lafayette in college, returned and worked for CBI, then met John and married in 1947, raised three children, he was shrimping, ran a seismograph boat, would shrimp from North Carolina across the Gulf to Texas, would be gone a week, ten days at a time, could communicate through the marine operator via shortwave radio; then John got into business building boats, rented and subleased them to the oil companies, founded a company, then merged with a drilling company out of Houston to take care of their marine needs

Morgan City Archives: with the third child in high school, Catherine became interested in history of the lumber industry, connected with Miss Lela Lehman who was with the Library Commission, had a history project and started a collection in 1959 to prepare for the 1960 centennial; the collection grew and was organized into the Morgan City Archives in 1979, 1980 with money from the Young Fund and the City of Morgan City

Oil Industry impacts: generally good, more paved streets, schools, subdivisions, oil companies were generous, willing to make donations; families donated property for the hospital, high school, business going down now, Morgan City did not handle things well, trying to develop tourism, ad some problem with drugs, prostitution, early police chiefs not versed in how to deal with these

Morgan City: lots of history here, from steamships to railroad, opening the channel, German prison camp, labor buses running from New Iberia, maybe Lafayette, and from the east to J Ray

McDermott, Highway 90 couldn't handle the traffic, bad road conditions, people had to conserve tires and gasoline so they carpoled to college, work; Catherine carpoled to college for a year at Lafayette, sometimes took the train, Lafayette had an air base at the time, was crowded

Howard Dion

Bourg, LA

July 16, 2001

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier, Ari Anand

University of Arizona

EB005

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I found Mr. Howard Dion through sheer determination. I received the name of his brother Nile from Ms. Corine Paulk. She knows them from United Houma Nation as well as from the community center down in Dulac. Once I reached Nile Dion, he informed me that he was not the one to be talking to and that I could talk to his brother, Clyde. I tried to reach Clyde several times with no luck. Nile called me back and informed me that his brother, Howard, had recently retired from Unocal. Howard was very willing to answer any questions Ari or I could throw at him. He made us lunch and insisted that we eat. Howard is a Houma Indian and has been actively involved with the Dulac Community Center as well as in fighting for land rights near his home in Bourg.

Howard Dion is from southern Louisiana and left school to work for American Machine Foundation in 1963. He then went to work as a mechanic at Delta Iron Works. In 1967, he was hired at Unocal, the first Native American to work for the company. He remained with Unocal for 31 years, working on rigs, in gas fields, and as a construction foreman putting up facilities for new wells.

#### Summary:

Early schooling: Believing in yourself helped a lot with schooling as far as being an Indian. He began working for American Machine Foundation in 1963. He had dropped out of school because he thought that he wasn't learning much in the one room schoolhouse the Indians had to attend.

Stories that should be told in oil patch: The oil drillers opened a whole new world. Oil was an opportunity to get off the shrimp boat. Offered opportunity to make money. Oil was a godsend for people who were able to take advantage of it.

Environmental Impact: would have happened to a degree anyway. The way the Mississippi River Levee would have eroded the land. Oil Company is getting blamed for it. We can find a way to fix it but the companies don't want to pay the money to fix it. Should learn how to reclaim land from others who are doing it (up North).

Corruption: Politicians killed the Indians on paper, said they didn't exist. Jim Walter. Louisiana Land, bought huge chunks of land but don't even live here. Politicians sold the people out. Louisiana Land drilled on it. The State doesn't have any power over it because it is essentially

private land. Saw article in National Geographic that said the Houmas were extinct (back in 30's).

Houma Indians and land: has maps and land records that say a Houma owned the land he is now on, but they won't do any good. Land was sold - or stolen, depending on whom you talk to - to companies.

LTX: Low Temp Extraction Units on Unocal rigs. Was working at Delta Iron Works as a mechanic so he learned how they worked by putting them together. A man owned Delta Iron Works from Montana who was an engineer for Texaco. He opened his own business and became a support service for Texaco. Fred Newman. Nobody was refused a job at his business; he was a fair man.

Beginning jobs at Unocal: December 21, 1967 hired at Unocal. Howard says that he was the first Indian to work for Unocal. Had to get a high school diploma. Worked at Lake Paigie. He was in charge of the LTX units. Central location where all oil and gas was sent. Had to make sure that all the valves were in working order. State governs how much you could flow a well. Making 8,000 barrels of oil every 24 hours. Lasted a few years.

Other oil jobs: night operator at gas field. Gave him job to see how he would handle it. Went to Caillou Island for 6 months. By 1960 he was in charge of the field. Loved the responsibility, loved the challenge.

Being a minority in oil field: resented him because of his position. Learned to respect him for his knowledge. Was a production foreman after 6 years (1974).

Foreman duties: watch out for the environment and make money for the company. Repair equipment fast and efficiently so that all machines stayed on line.

Field description: A field is associated with a salt dome. Lake Paigie was spread out 5 miles from the central location. They will try and have as many wells as they can in one field.

Workover Rigs: Went to school and learned how to fix rigs on the workover rigs. Was there for 3 years. Didn't have to accept different positions but wouldn't get the promotions if you didn't accept. Went back into production after that. Howard was never hurt.

Safety: have to follow the procedures so you don't get hurt. Safety was important from the very beginning of his oil career.

Environment: As time passed, more and more schooling to learn the new regulations. Says that he thought Unocal was very good at cleaning up the few spills they had. Heard people complain every day about the regulations. Says the more you complained the less they listened. One of the hardest things he had to do was keep them on their toes following the rules. Always explained that somebody had to be the boss, he was there to enforce the rules, not make them up. Three of his men called him back over the years and thanked him for being hard on them.

How things changed: Old guys were complacent, new guys had newer processes to learn. The way you operated changed. Went from barging oil to the refinery to piping it in. Technology changed. Everything was changed "upside down." Some newer guys got fired for non-compliance or drug problems.

Loyalty: Still have people who come and stay for 30 years. The employees have to choose a career. Good money. Have to spend a lot of time away from home, depending on the job.

End of oil career: retired in 1999 as a construction foreman. Hired service companies to come out and lay pipe. Went all over as service foreman. Always put up new facilities for new wells, they didn't ever use old wells. Liked this job the best because he dealt strictly with contract people. Didn't have to worry about whose button he pushed, who he aggravated or anything. He hired a guy, told him what the job was and then made sure he finished. Easier to work with others sometimes than people you'd worked with for years and years. Companies had been hiring contractors all along in oil industry.

Oil crash: Never felt it. Saw people lose jobs but it never affected his job. No one at Unocal lost his job. Doesn't understand it except to say that they had a lot of work at the time. Unocal tanker sank which put them out of the shipping business. Ships were too small after a time. Also sold refinery in 1990's. Wanted to be an international company, but it didn't work out.

Retired: May 1999. Has been enjoying himself for the past 3 years. Sleeps less now. Helps friend fix boats and outboard motors. Helps Sister Rosario in Dulac fix furniture and fix up yard. Son works for Lamar Advertising, living in Baton Rouge. Daughter going to Nicholls State right now. 31 years with Unocal.

Relationship between corporate and floor employees: Most of the corporate men were office men. Buckshot Harper was one of them; he'd come on the floor to talk with the guys. Formed a breakfast club to keep in touch with the retirees. Saw the corporate people as friendly people, part of the family. Not everybody had such a great experience, but most.

Being Indian: earned the respect of everybody, bosses and roustabouts alike. Never had any problems there. Would sometimes hear derogatory comments about minorities while getting coffee on the rig. After they got to know him these same guys became friends. Didn't hold a grudge because it would have eaten him up.

Segregation: after service, 21 years old, church had been segregated. Howard decided he'd had enough and sat in the "other" seats. The church decided it was time to take the bars down because they had a "crazy Indian" coming around. Said he was wearing the uniform of the United States, was making money at Unocal and felt that he could sit anywhere he liked, especially at his place of worship.

State Recognition: worked for state recognition while working in the oil field. Talks about the split in the tribe, so much animosity and jealousy. He was making good money and said some of the guys didn't support him and his job. In 1977 he merged with the Tribe Incorporated in Golden Meadow that became the United Houma Nation. (Merger of The Houma Alliance and

Houma Tribe Inc.). Gained a lot of respect from co-workers from working for his cause while working in the oil field as well. There were a couple of other Houmas who worked for Unocal.

A.G. Domingue

Lafayette, LA

December 22, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW031

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Born in 1915, A. G. Domingue was raised in Carencro in a farming family. He began working as a roustabout for Superior Oil Company the summer before his senior year of high school in 1934. Although he received a scholarship to go to college, he decided to continue working in the oil industry. In 1941 he was drafted into the military and he served in the Pacific Theater during World War Two. When he returned in 1945, he began work in production in the Bosco Field; he started out on a workover rig, worked in the warehouse for a few years, and then worked on gas lifting the wells until 1976. He retired as a compressor operator. Upon retiring he worked from time to time as contract labor when the company needed him.

#### Summary:

Bosco Oilfield: describes a lease in 1934 with 12 wells on it; Superior and Pure Oil Companies and several contract drillers were active in the field; peak production about 20,000 barrels of oil a day. No market for natural gas until World War Two. Started working there during summer vacation in '34 in production as a roustabout (brother-in-law ran a gang); went back to work following summer after he graduated, but most of the work was over and he was laid off in '36; hired back on in '37. Superior, not familiar with the area, mistakenly thought it was swampy and needed concrete foundations; later found they did not. Paid 65 cents an hour, which was good at that time.

Later work: after '37 worked in Evangeline Oilfield and around Cameron and Grand Lake; drafted into military in '41 and came back in '45. When he came back Superior wanted to send him to Lake Arthur, where they had drilled the Grand Lake Field in late '30s (describes); he asked production foreman in Bosco for a job and got one; worked on a workover rig, then in the warehouse, and finally in a gas plant. Never did any true offshore work, only some water jobs.

Stripping: method for flowing natural gas; gas lifting.

Early life: born in '15 in Carencro area; parents were farmers; he wanted to get out of farming. For fun would go to movies, dance halls, and a pool hall; describes dance halls and bands (big band music); a large truck would provide transportation to the dance halls.

Carencro: really small in his early years; had two names (Saint Pierre and Carencro or Napville). Citizens had to spend at least one day helping to fix the town's streets. Some of the oilfield workers received board in Carencro. Many were attracted by the higher salary they could get in the oilfield compared to farming.

Outsiders: wanted experienced roughnecks and drillers, so brought in people from Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas; people from the area were bullies and would fight with "rednecks" (outsider roughnecks) in bars in the field over their territory.

Job security: bad at first; hired and fired based on whether the companies needed you; in '50s as fuel demands increased, job security got better, especially with Slim Law running things; in late '30s Superior tried to keep experienced, good workers as they spread out their operations; this meant many men were transferred around. He got into production because although you did not make as much money, you had a steadier job.

Danger: drilling work more dangerous, but you had to watch yourself in production because of pressure.

Unions: Superior was an independent company that didn't believe in unions; tried to keep wages up to union wages. Sun Oil had a union.

Bosco Field's first well: two geologists working on the well; didn't have the money to go to depth they wanted to, but the companies (Superior and Pure) agreed to fund it by borrowing money from National Supply; they hit oil, but because did not have the money, they did not have tubing to the flow the well and had to use drill pipe as a production spring.

Schedule: five days on, two off; had three shifts working 24 hours; if something broke or it was poor weather might have to work longer shifts. At the gas plant, workers supplied their own food.

World War Two service: describes his training and different places he was stationed in the States; went overseas to Africa in '43 and then up into Italy and France. Did some interpreting work because he spoke French.

Language: first taught to speak French; had to know at least a little English to work.

Eddie Domingue

Lafayette, LA

June 19, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW003

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Eddie Domingue was born in 1927 on the outskirts of present day Lafayette. He did not finish high school, because he tried to enlist in the Merchant Marines, but then decided not to do that and got training in marine and radio electronics. After finishing his training, he got a job with Keystone Exploration in about 1942 on a seismic crew and doing electronic work; although they moved him around a lot, he stayed with them because it provided him with a deferment from military service during World War II. He left the company after the war, but was called back to do hot shot work for them twice in the early 1950s; he was in demand because he had a radio license and shooters offshore needed that. When not working for Keystone after the war, his main job was running a service company that took care of jukeboxes and pinball machines. He describes how they would use dynamite and the rules they were supposed to follow. He also explains that his ability to talk to local landowners, and his knowledge of dynamite and electronics made him valuable to the company.

#### Summary:

Early life: Born in 1927 at grandfather's ranch, on outskirts of present-day Lafayette; ranch was built at turn of 20th century and father's house also built here. During teen years, worked for Keystone Explorations. Married at 22, after which he did hotshot work.

Employment: tried to join the Merchant Marines, but decided to work in shipyard; in 1942, was working 40 hours/week, making 50 cents/hour; then became a roughneck, making 80 cents/hour, and making 90 cents/hour working on derrick barge; did not stay long working on the derrick barge due to wet working conditions. Took Marine Electronic courses at South Western Learning Institute; then worked for Keystone Exploration in 1942 on a seismic crew; was considered an asset on home front and given deferment from the draft. Stopped working for Keystone at end of WWII because was constantly moving around.

Hotshot work: hired by Keystone as a hotshot in 1951; Keystone one of first to use explosives offshore; used three 50 pounds charges of dynamite tied together. Sent to Atchafalaya Basin to make 80-85 holes with about 80 pounds of dynamite; drilled a hole 80 to 90 feet deep and used pipe to place explosives; hard to reach marshy parts of the basin; he and co-workers rented small boats and a pirogue to travel in basin; rules and safety procedures for working with dynamite, depending on supervisor and situation. One time it was about to rain, supervisor ordered him to ignore some safety rules to expedite project.

French: job also to obtain permits to operate from local landowners due to knowledge of French language; did not learn English until he went to school. At first landowners were suspicious, but he reassured them that company would pay for any damage.

Side business: had small business for 50 years servicing jukeboxes and pinball machines.

Doughty Dominique

Houma, LA

January 17, 2002, January 21, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB023, EB027p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Doughty Dominique learned that we were collecting oral histories from the librarians at the Terrebonne Parish Library. He worked in the industry for 48 years and volunteered to tell his story. In addition, his father had worked in the industry, beginning in Texas, so his interview discusses both his and his father's experiences.

Doughty was raised in Raceland, Louisiana. His family moved there when he was about six years old when his father bought an old sugarcane farm. His father was born in 1893 and went to work for Gulf Oil Company in the mid-1920s. He worked as a driller in the oilfield, first in east Texas and then in south Louisiana. At times before he had a family, he lived in a boarding house with members of his rig crew. Doughty entered the oilfield for Gold Medal Well Service in 1951, after returning from the Korean War. He was then able to get a job with Gulf Oil in 1952 where he started off in production and then moved to the drilling department. He went to work for Grant Oil Tool Company in 1957 when Gulf sold its drilling rigs. He worked for several years for Grant Oil and for Noble Drilling and then took a job with Kerr McGee and worked his way up to production supervisor. After 14 years with Kerr-McGee, Doughty left and went to work for McMoRan Oil and Gas Company in New Orleans.

#### Summary of Interview EB 023:

Personal history: Born in Longview, Texas in 1931; His father was working in an oil field for Gulf Oil; Eventually transferred back to south Louisiana and the whole family moved back; It was hard having his father gone so much; Went into the army at fifteen; Met his wife in the Air Force in California; Moved to the West Bank; Got into the oil industry because his father had worked there, there were opportunities, and the pay was good

Employment history: Started with Gold Medal Well Service in 1951; Then went to work for Gulf in 1952; Started out as a roughneck, then worked on a production gang, then worked on a steam rig in the drilling department; First day of work

Early days: Gulf had five steam rigs in 1954 but sold them in 1957; the steam rigs were quieter than diesel or diesel-electric ones; Used wooden crew boats with gasoline engines; Workers played cards on the way out and back in; Lay offs in 1958 during the recession; Employees were from south Louisiana and transplants; Workers on each crew were generally from the same area so they could share rides; Explains how an under-reamer works; Shell would drill all the wells at once on a platform, then come back and complete them

Different companies: Grant was headquartered in California and didn't really understand what it was like in Louisiana; Changes in McMoRan, sold all of their oil and gas properties in order to develop a sulphur project and some mines in Indonesia.

Freelance jobs: with Production Management Corporation and an operating company in Houston; Explains how operating companies worked  
Housing difficulties in the early days

Kerr-McGee: Easier to get a job there because they were independent and all the other companies had workers who had been there for twenty years or so; Had to take a mechanical aptitude test and they even hired a private investigator to check him out, but they don't do that anymore; Having the first producing offshore well didn't give Kerr-McGee any clout; Got LSTs from army surplus; Gave their superintendents and foremen a lot of responsibility; Trained engineers on the offshore rigs; Had drilling rigs from the late 50s through the early 80s;

Safety: In the early days, it wasn't a big concern; then in the late 70s, the companies started having safety departments; Usually a result of OSHA; It was hard to get workers to comply with the regulations

Environmental regulations: In the early days, none at all; It wasn't until USGS started sending inspectors that companies started implementing environmental safeguards;

Labor: Early on, minorities were concentrated in the more physical labor positions; It was hard for them to get jobs with service companies in the 60s and 70s because they hadn't been able to acquire experience; In the early 70s they started to come offshore and making advancements; Not much racial tension

Technology: Caused the biggest changes in the industry; Going further and further offshore

Communities: Animosity from locals in south Louisiana; Contributions of the oil and gas companies to the communities; Some companies didn't clean up after themselves like they were supposed to; Implication of politicians

Local businesses: The rental tool companies and suppliers were mostly local people who had the business sense to see opportunity

Kerr McGee's boats: They had their own till the 80s, but they still contracted supply boats; Usually the manager would hire somebody he knew, but upper management never heard about that

Lists all the rigs he worked on

Service companies: Halliburton, Byron Jackson

Mergers and acquisitions

Summary of EB027p:

Photo 1 is of a drilling crew in Liberty, Texas, probably before 1920.

Photo 2 is of a store in an oil camp in Longview, Texas.

Photo 3 is a steam tractor and derrick, probably being set up to move.

Photo 4 is of a crew for a wooden derrick, with exposed machinery (rotaries, joiner pipe, tongs).

Photo 5 is of a drilling barge used by Gulf about 1923.

Photo 6 is of a rig crew at a boarding house.

Photo 7 is a rig crew at a mud pump, near Orangefield, Texas.

Photo 8 is of the Kerr McGee offshore platform built in 1947, taken in 1978.

Photo 9 is an elevating boat with spuds.

Photos 10, 11 are pictures of Kerr McGee personnel.

Photos 12, 13 are pictures of platforms.

Arles "AJ" Doss

Houma, LA

June 28, 2003, January 10, 2005

Interviewed by: James Sell, Colleen O'Donnell, Lauren Penney

University of Arizona

JS025, LP001

#### Ethnographic Preface:

AJ Doss was discovered by CJ Christ, who was doing personal interviews of anyone who had seen any U-boat activity in the Gulf of Mexico. AJ had gone with his drilling crew to look at a ship (the David McElvey, torpedoed May 27, 1942) that had been torpedoed near his rig and was photographed on deck with his crew. In the course of his interview about that incident, CJ also found that AJ was a toolpusher and arranged for me to interview him. AJ was 82 at the time of the interview, in a wheelchair as he recovered from an automobile accident. The interview with AJ also includes his wife, Madge, CJ, and for a short time, his son, Arles Jr. and his wife. All these people are hard of hearing and CJ, especially, was not aware of the ease with which a tape recorder could "hear" sidebar conversations, so at times the tapes may be hard to follow because of background noise. After our June 28 talk, AJ called, saying he was not sure I quite understood what he meant by directional drilling, so he invited me back to view some rough sketches and discuss it further; so I returned for a short discussion on July 11. Mr. Doss was identified to be reinterviewed because of his military service during World War II. He arrived at the interview accompanied by a friend, Ms. Moore, who often drives him to appointments. She remained in the room throughout the interview. The third interview was conducted as part of the study of the links between WWII and the offshore industry.

Arles ("AJ") Doss was a second generation Texaco oil worker. His father worked 42 years for Texaco, mostly in Caddo Parish, LA, and he and his brother worked 34 and 32 years respectively. In fact, Doss Point on Caddo Lake is named after his father. His son, Arles Jr., also worked 15 years as a Chevron toolpusher. AJ started out as a roughneck for Texaco in 1942, beginning at Golden Meadow and moving to Dog Lake, Lake Pelto, and Garden Island with the barge Ellzey. From 1944-47 he served in the military. When he returned from the service, he went back to roughnecking at Caillou Island. In 1948 he was promoted to driller on a workover rig, then later moved to the barge, Hosey Campbell. The Campbell was a steam barge and was remembered affectionately. In 1955, AJ was promoted to tool pusher and worked on the early offshore rigs at South Pass Block 37. He worked on the first generation "barge and tender" rigs and also developed an expertise in directional drilling. He retired in 1975, but continued as consultant for Sea Drill, Gulf Oil, and Quintana Petroleum.

#### Summary of JS025:

Cable Tools: Used in hard rock, not sedimentary, where the cable tools would collapse the rock. Bailer was a way of cleaning the fillings out of the hole. His father worked with cable tools, but he didn't.

Steam Rigs: Preferred over diesel power. He worked on the steam-powered barges Ellzey and Hosey Campbell. Steam power required a "fireman" (or "boilerman") to watch the boilers, keep things running. For a long time, the fireman on his crew was Jim Chamberlain. Another fireman, Amos Randolph, was on one in an explosion. The fireman was also responsible for "steam cleaning" their work clothes at the end of a shift, so that when they started the next day they had clean, dry clothes. As an aside, he noted that the whole crew bought their coveralls at J.C. Penney's. He preferred steam rigs, they were quieter and were faster "comin' out of the hole." Most of the times the boilers used natural gas from the fields. One job was so isolated that they used crude oil. The water was recycled through a condenser to conserve. The boilers needed to be cleaned of the scale that built up because of the water they used. That meant crawling inside and scraping. The boilers needed fresh water, which had to be barged in from "up the bayou." Salt water was not used in the boilers because it would foam so much that the fireman couldn't monitor it.

Worm: Another name for weevil, green worker.

World War II in the Gulf: "Tanker, David McElvey, was torpedoed near his rig. It looked like you took a big stick and just broke that tanker right in two." His rig crew went out to the stern end and looked around. It was sinking in about 60 feet of water.

Early Offshore Work: He started with the early "barge and tender" platforms in the South Pass, Block 37 area, as a toolpusher. These are small platforms (with just enough space to hold the drilling rig) with a platform tied alongside with supplies, sleeping space, and equipment. They were uncomfortable and the walkway between the two was called a "widowmaker" because of the danger of crossing on the narrow, moving walkway (It had to be movable to maintain connection in a rough sea). Texaco owned the platform, but the drilling rig and tender barge were owned by someone else. He was out as far as 105 feet water depth.

Contractors: He was made toolpusher early, in 1955, and also worked offshore for Texaco in the mid 1950s. Not much later, Texaco began to depend more on drilling contractors.

Hearing: Drilling and holding the brake affected his hearing, as it did many oil workers, because of the loud squeaky sound from the brake.

Crew Relations: The crew was very accustomed to each other and the equipment. They were comfortable enough to do practical jokes or have "athletic contests" - lifting mud sacks. "Everybody took it, nobody got mad."

Quebracho: Mud thinner, bark from a tree high in tannin. If mud viscosity were too high, Quebracho would be used to thin it. The deeper the hole, the harder it was to reduce viscosity, then they converted to a high PH (10.5) Red Lime Mud. Used caustic soda, Quebracho, and lime. And aquagel to thicken it. Derrickman mixed the mud. Story about the illiterate boat skipper stealing mud instead of cement.

Discussion of Installing Offshore Platform: Legs were set down and cemented in, then platform was laid on top. Also worked on one "floater": owned by Ocean Drilling, stabilized by 8 anchors. One floater broke loose and flipped over in a hurricane.

Directional Drilling: Platforms might have upwards of 24 holes drilled out in various directions. Monel collar was used to gauge angle and direction. Very sensitive to equipment change - type of bit, number of drill collars, turning speed, could all change direction. Could drill up to 35 degrees angle and 75 degree turn. Used a "whipstock" with a concave angle, this was made of steel with a monel collar. Drill bit bounces off the whipstock to set the drilling angle.

Lost Circulation: Some formations wouldn't hold the hydrostatic pressure and the pressure would force the mud into the formation. Lost circulation material was pumped in to plug up the formation, typically walnut hulls and mica, sometimes cloth.

Summary of LP001:

Mr. Arles was one of a small group of people who had served in WWII and been involved in the early development of the offshore oil and gas industry in the Gulf of Mexico and was interviewed in a joint project of the University of Arizona, U.S. Minerals Management Service, and the National D-Day Museum. In this interview, Mr. Arles talks mostly about his experiences during WWII.

Early life: Grew up in northern Louisiana. His dad worked for Texaco. There were two boys and two girls in his family. He moved to Houma when he was 23 or 24 years old. As a child, he would go out with a group of boys for 4-5 days at a time with only lard and fishing poles. On September 10, 1939, he married Madge Welsh.

Pearl Harbor: The day that the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor, he was in a 1937 Ford Coup with his wife getting gas in Texas (near where they were living in Louisiana). The owner (Mr. Watkins) asked him to take his wife to a funeral in Paris (1.5 hours away). During the funeral, his wife and he stayed in the car. When they took Mrs. Watkins back to him, her husband told them about Pearl Harbor.

Oilfield work: From '43-44 he was working in drilling in northern LA. Then he went to work for The Texas Company (would later become Texaco). His father had worked for the same company, only under the name of The Producing Company. He said that "Texaco put Houma on the map."

WWII changes: He was drafted into the Army in March 1944. He had 17 weeks of basic training in Little Rock, Arkansas. He came home for 14 days and then was shipped overseas near London. He went into France via Omaha Beach not long after the invasion. Back in south Louisiana, they had to put blackout globes on the rig lights. The Coast Guard patrolled to ensure that the lights were not visible. If a light was visible, the Coast Guard notified the company that if they did not black them out, they would put it out with a machine gun. In the camps, everything had to be painted black.

U-boats in the Gulf: A sunken U-506 was found with both ends sticking out of the water not far from where he was working in Lake Pelto. AJ boarded the submarine before it was salvaged and found shells with their primers in place, indicating that the Germans had not fired those weapons. A lot of oil was leaking out of the submarine and there was some fire.

Drilling: They were drilling on the outside edges of salt domes and had to use salt-saturated mud in order to drill through it. He was in the military for 27 months, after which he went back to work for The Texas Oil Company. Shortly after this is when they started drilling offshore. It was often dangerous going from the ship to the platform and vice versa, because the ship moved and the platform was stationary. Had to cross in a "widowmaker."

Army training: They trained one full year in night fighting. During basic training they were mostly taught to "kill somebody" - to be tough, have stamina, and camping survival skills. But first, they learned to obey orders. Their rifle and overcoat were the two things they were taught to take care of. In his opinion, his rifle is the best rifle. It was heavier (weighed more than nine pounds) and more powerful than what today's infantry use. He would not want to use today's rifles. He described the types of ammunition that they carried. He also related a story of being pinned down by the Germans one night and pulling out a grenade that didn't feel right. That night it was "Every man for himself."

Seigfried Line: He described the German pill boxes that were constructed to stop tanks. They had long short windows for the machine guns to fire out of. It was difficult to fire into these windows. To destroy the pill boxes, they would send continuous fire into the openings, then set a torpedo on wire to allow an opening for the troops to get through. He said that the American soldier just would not give up.

Food in the Army: They had K-rations and C-rations. They were allotted cigarettes, but because it was raining so often the cigarettes sometimes were ruined.

Wounded: He was wounded in Germany and was eventually transferred to a hospital in Westminster. Three pieces of shrapnel were left in him (right ankle, leg, and back) because it wasn't really bothering him and would cause scarring if they were taken out. The mortal shell had to have gone through his legs to land where it did; it knocked the shin off another soldier. This happened 17 days before the Battle of the Bulge.

Prisoners: They took some prisoners and he had to shoot one.

Family: His son was 13 months old when he went into the service. His wife wrote him everyday, but he never received a letter. He went through rehabilitation in Macon, Georgia. There he got 60 letters at once. His wife stayed with his mom and dad during the war.

After tour: After he was in Georgia, he went to a fort in Texas; it was a very "dismal" place with lots of wind. Next he was sent to California and later to someplace up north where he was discharged. He was discharged as a Buck Sergeant, but offered Staff Sergeant if he had stayed on. His job had been to supply troops with clothes and munitions. He noted that he had worked in Louisiana for two years before going into the service.

War stories: He described a few more stories from his military service, one of when he shot a prisoner. He had shot him because a commanding officer had told him not to take any prisoners (although he later questioned him for shooting the man). He was bothered by this incident for a long time, but much later talked to a preacher about it.

Getting back to work: Texaco paid his GI insurance the whole time he was in the service. Not too many of his co-workers served in the war because they were older. Some of his later co-workers had served, though.

On the rig: He worked on a six-man crew and could move people in and out of it if they didn't work well. They competed with nearby rigs. He ran a steam rig (as opposed to an electric rig) when he was in drilling and found it faster and quicker than the electric rigs. He found that if he ran the rig with "vigor," his crew also did their work that way.

Comparing service with oilfield: Both had bosses. Oilfield had an objective and paid well and they had to work to produce something to be paid - did not think these things applied in the military. His military work wasn't as hard. Because he was on the smaller side, he had to work hard in the oil field. He noted that being a toolpusher meant that he was a supervisor. When he was on contract rigs, he was known as a Company Man. He made sure that the holes they drilled were straight, etc.

Leaving Texaco: He retired in 1975 to do consulting work and was treated differently. They took care of him and he enjoyed his work.

What he took from military service: Learned his hobby (guns) while in the war, but not necessarily any skills. The service was "a whole different ball game than Army." If you didn't pick up something in the oilfield, you would be fired. When he had graduated from high school, getting a college education was not that important. He wanted to work. His dad had worked for Texaco, so he went to work for them.

Cultural diversity in Army: They had people from all over.

Equipment from military to oilfield: Maybe ultrasound. He talked about mud and described a four-inch pipeline the Germans had constructed. The French had discovered how to extract oil out of it, diminishing the Germans oil supply. He said the Germans moved much more slowly than the Allies and could not move their equipment very quickly. He expressed his interest in engineering. [His interest and attention to the way that things work was evident in the way that he described different processes, e.g., drilling, and construction]

Safety: He never saw anyone fall off the widowmaker. Described playing practical jokes on one another [note: it sounded like they also did this in the service] and said you wouldn't be able to do that today because men would not take it.

Keith Doucet

Larose, LA

September 25, 2001

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM016

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Arthur "Tuts" Gautreaux had been identified by Windell Curole as the head of the Texaco retiree's group in the Lafourche area. I met with him briefly in July to explain the project; he was busy at the time, but agreed to locate other retirees for interviews. Several calls to "Tuts" in September ultimately produced not an interview with oldtimers, but a session with his son, Murphy, and one of Murphy's friends, Keith Doucet (both in their mid 50s). During the interview, in Tuts' kitchen, Tuts himself had little to say; he worked 32 years for Texaco, primarily as a safety engineer, and now keeps busy as a sales representative for a company dealing in safety equipment. Keith worked his way up to toolpusher, starting in the 1960s, and retired as a "company man" from Texaco in 1999 after 33 years. His last posting was on a drillship operating in 6000 feet of water. Our initial discussion centered on the enhanced security at that facility following the September 11 events.

#### Summary:

Technology: subsea completions; Gemini project; logistic differences between bays/lakes and offshore; shutting down offshore if Leeville Bridge goes out.

Safety changes: accidents affect everyone up the line, due to interruptions in production; with Texaco, everything was "safety;" communication improvements with satellite systems; protective equipment now required; MMS has demanded safety changes; companies had put safety on back burner; now, with litigious society, everyone will sue, so companies concerned with safety as it may affect productivity and profits; companies now take proactive stand, particularly vis-à-vis contractors; changed when corporate leadership changed; OSHA in early 1970s didn't apply to offshore work.

LOOP: created by Congress, so brought federal regulations to bear on safety in design and construction in late 1970s; corporate mentality vis-à-vis personnel i.e. outsider executives not as sensitive to local people.

Loyalty: changed a lot; years ago, was personal; now companies are bean-counters; with mergers/downsizing, you're just a number; departments within companies are in competition with each other; people at top not worried about those on firing line; job security not there anymore; companies worried about stockholders.

Retirement packages: if under 50, more likely to get laid off; now CEO's saying why should I pay packages to guys I'm going to lay off? "golden handshake" offered to employees to accept or

reject; Murphy got caught in downsizing because he was under 50, but got severance package (1 year salary); many become consultants after being retired; lots of companies hiring consultants at a day rate without benefits; Keith retired at 50 with lump sum after 33 years even though Houston headquarters didn't want him to, since he was the lead operator on the project.

Schedules: Texaco was 6/6, now 7/7.

Contract drilling: Shell was last one to have own rigs, mainly training rigs; now all employ contractors; majors use contractors as screening for potential company employees; contractors have training programs; "worm" has to wear red hat; don't want more than 1 or 2 "short-service employees" (SSE); Petroleum Education Council does basic orientation and issues "PEC" card; OMSA also does training; training [hands-on] vs. orientation; most drilling companies not specialized.

ECO training facility: primarily for his own people; lets LOOP use it; mom and pop boat businesses going to be caught by STCW.

Consolidations: Seacor buying up everything, e.g., Gilbert Chermie; Seacor second only to Tidewater, wants to be biggest; to compete, have to be as large as the other ones; Chouest keeps buying up people; rig people doing same thing; big service companies losing business to small ones so will buy them out.

Port Fourchon: still needs infrastructure; bridge should be an overpass; port has potential to keep young people here; 2 miles from port to open gulf, vs. other ports where you can get caught in fog and not get out; with all that money the feds are getting we should have what we want; 3 to 4 vessel-vessel bumps a week.

Accountability: profit is bottom line; most efficient boats are mini-supply boats: liquid and solid cargo; "boat-sharing;" half the CEOs wouldn't know what a rig looks like; LOOP had so many bean counters, owned by 5 companies; didn't hire people with pipeline experience; 20-minute video on LOOP.

Texaco: slow to move offshore; last one of majors in deep water; had so much stuff onshore; accident on Eugene Island jackup rig - a "punch-through" caused by rig supervisor moving rig too fast; underground blowout; was Texaco rig involved in accident at salt dome by Avery Island at West Cote Blanche Bay in 1978/1979.

ROVs: deepwater rigs all have them - rented at \$7K day (with 3-man crew); have to have it there when you need it; with Coonass ingenuity, rigged up crab trap to ROV to catch deepwater crabs in 4000 feet of water.

Unions: unions good years ago when people weren't treated well; small boats companies won't survive if they have to pay union wages; Murphy thinks things run relatively well and is concerned about motives of organizing; concerned about culture being changed, would be "culture shock;" contractors are going to have to wake up and start offering benefits if they expect workers to be loyal to company.

Cycles: favoring major oil companies now, will favor boat and rig companies later.

Manson Doucet

New Iberia, LA

June 4, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG024

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Charles Tisdale recommended I talk with Manson Doucet. I met Manson at his house on Julia Street. We had a nice conversation on his back porch. He provides a great overview of his job, the kind of problems they would typically run into, and the cooperation necessary to fix these problems. Manson was also on city council for several decades, and we talk a lot about the growth in New Iberia, the kind of things the town did to keep the oil industry there, and the impact of the rapid growth of the population in the region. There are brief discussions about the induction of African-Americans into the workforce.

Manson Doucet began his career in 1942 and spent most of it as a foreman in the Laughlin Brothers yard in New Iberia. At the height of operation, Laughlin Brothers had 200 drilling rigs under contract to a variety of oil companies. Manson's job was to supply these rigs with equipment according to their needs. The toolpusher would call in to the yard, tell Manson what the problem was, and then Manson would put together a pack of materials and have them shipped out to the rig.

#### Summary:

The Yard: the yard was divided into four sections. Manson had the yard. There was the electrical department that took care of the generators on the rig. The fabrication department made the tanks for the rig. The last department was the mechanical department, and they repaired the engines. This was the Laughlin Brothers company out of Tulsa. Two brothers started it with wooden derricks in the '30s, and at one time they had 200 rigs. He started working for them in 1942 on Jane Street. The company was there for years and then moved to the airbase. Recently, the company moved to the port.

Early history: Manson had a friend that was working in the yard. Manson was a store manager here in town. Told his friend to get him out of there - he's about to go nuts. So his friend got him a job. He moved up to foreman sometime around 1948. In 1950 they started building electric rigs. They had started by building steam rigs.

Building rigs: That wasn't really his department. A guy from Westinghouse helped put all those diesel electric rigs together. The company was good to him. They sent him to school in Houston. Manson got to be pretty good with blowout prevention. Everything he sent out to the rigs was tested and tested again. He'd help his boys if he didn't have anything to do - helped them in the yard.

Manson's department: He dealt with the toolpushers on the rigs. When they had a problem, they would call him and tell him what they wanted. The toolpusher might not know everything he needed, but they'd call with the problem, and Manson would send out everything that they would need. Manson would get that stuff to the truck pusher, and they'd load it and hit the road.

Toolpushers: some knew what they were talking about, some didn't. But he got along with them all. They had a job to do. Working together, they always figured it out. Laughlin was building rigs and running rigs. They only supplied Laughlin rigs, but those rigs might be drilling for all kinds of different people. When Manson was working there, they had tons of rigs all over the US, and up in the Amazon jungle.

Labor: Manson retired in 1973. There came a day when the feds said they had to hire blacks. He took them by the hand and trained them so when they got on the rig they knew what they were doing. Some made really good hands, but some didn't. He had to fire three of them that showed up late. But all in all he didn't have many problems with them. He'd buy the fellas a cold drink with his own money. And once Man retired, the guy who replaced him would still call him late at night for help.

Loyalty and Unions: When he could save a nickel for Laughlin Brothers, he did, because they were giving him a good living. They talked about unionization at Laughlin. A Laughlin guy called all the supervisors together and told them not to talk to the union men. They would tell them they were too busy to talk to them. They never did unionize.

Contractor: they leased rigs to just about all the oil companies - Texaco, Humble, Shell. They worked in Africa, Amazon, and so on. His job didn't change as they moved offshore, but there was a lot of new equipment, so he had to keep up with that. The threads were all different, though, and he had to watch out for that. It can cost you a big fishing job if you screw up. You can lose all your profit on one fishing job.

Early History: Born and raised in Vermillion Parish. He married a girl from New Iberia. He didn't figure out what all the oilfield was about until he started working for them. His wife died two years ago.

Community Politics: he was in politics for 32 years. In 1960, a bunch of guys showed up in his driveway, and they told him he was going to run for district four. It was a great experience. As the city grows, the problems grow too. His wife was a good politician. She was born and raised here. Everybody knew her, and she would deal with people on the phone. She made sure he called back all the constituents who had called.

New Iberia and the Oil industry: big changes. The city grew rapidly. They worked hard to keep the oil industry happy and in New Iberia.

The Bust: Laughlin Brothers had a lot of rigs stacked. It was tough. They couldn't pay people as much. But overall, they were working 24 hours. We talk a little bit about servicing rigs far away.

Rigs: "It don't rain and it don't sleet and it don't snow on the rigs". They've had some rough days out there. It's not nearly as rough as it used to be, though. All they have to do now is just touch a button. We talk about contacts. He recommends Arthur Bergeron in Jeanerette. We spend 10 minutes looking through the phone book for contacts.

Marlan Downey

Dallas, TX

September 24, 1999

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

SOC013

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Marlan Downey graduated from the University of Nebraska with a B.S. and a M.S. in geology. In 1957 he joined Shell Exploration in Tulsa. He quickly rose through the ranks to become Chief Geologist for the Denver area. He came to Houston in 1970 to serve as Western E&P Chief Geologist. He later became Division exploration manager for the Alaska division, and in 1978 he was appointed the General Manager for Exploration. In 1980 he became the Vice President of International Exploration, and finally President of Pecten in 1982. He served in that capacity until his retirement in 1982.

#### Summary:

Interview covered Downey's experiences in his various positions. Good information on the development of oil migration theories and bright spots. Commentary on the Michigan pinnacle reef play, his time in Alaska. Great detail on Pecten with a continued section discussing Cameroon.

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Harold Dugas

New Iberia, LA

May 3, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG010

#### Ethnographic Preface:

This was a great and enjoyable interview. Harold Dugas was referred to me by Jimmy Hernandez. I met Harold at his house in New Iberia. We got along really well, and we ended up driving out to see his land camp after the interview. He's got a couple photographs from Cameroon in his scrapbook. We covered the typical topics, and he was able to deal with all of the questions quite well. There are particularly vivid descriptions of growing up on the farm and keeping up with homework during the harvest, first day on the rig, great injury story, good description of moving offshore, cleaning the valves into the marsh, problems with new technology, the machine that ties the knots.

Harold grew up in a farming family in Cajun country during the Depression. He served in WWII and returned to the states to attend college under the GI Bill. Harold worked for Shell most of his life, and thanks to his education, he was able to advance up the job ladder. Like many of his peers, he began at the bottom of this ladder, but with his education, he advanced rapidly through the ranks. The latter part of his career consisted of engineering and construction jobs abroad for Shell.

#### Summary:

**Early History:** He talks about his decision to go to college, the number of other veterans in college at the time, his parents, Depression in Cajun Country, sugar farming, and how he had no awareness of the oil industry at an early age.

**Early Work History:** Harold talks about his awareness of the oil industry, Texaco and Horseshoe bayou, safety and Texaco, Texaco's Ripley rig. Harold describes his injury in the oilfield. It's a great story. We compare the safety concern of Shell and Texaco, and then he talks about Shell production in Louisiana, and the jobs through which he progressed.

**Engineering:** he talks about his work as an engineer's assistant, as a foreman, and then we talk about Weeks Island history and Shell's move offshore. He talks about working in Syria, Cameroon.

**Family:** He talks about his grandson, his children. We talk about when women first started showing up on the rig, and then he talks about Cameroon some more.

**Bust:** he talks about the bust in 1983, his retirement, and the evolution of safety concerns over the years.

Environment: he talks about environmental practices, the impact of regulations, the kind of people that started showing up to work in the oilfield, and the emergence of blacks as oilfield laborers. He talks about the perception of race in the oilfield, his own prejudice, the difference between generations and the attitude of labor.

Education: he talks about education and its role in the oilfield, the difference between generations, attitude, loyalty and the reasons for it.

Evaluation: he talks about the future of the industry in Louisiana, Louisiana politics, the school system in the region, and the historic impact of the oilfield on the Cajun people.

Flora Duncan

Boothville, LA

July 23, 2003

Interviewed by: Jessica Piekielek

University of Arizona

JP009

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I had met Flora Duncan the day before the interview, when the coordinator at Boothville Senior Center introduced me to her. We talked briefly and she agreed to do the interview. Although she seemed initially a little hesitant at our first meeting, Flora Duncan was more than happy to talk during the interview. Flora Duncan seemed much younger than many of the other folks at the Senior Center. She did not seem to find her position as one of the first women roustabouts in Plaquemines Parish for Gulf Oil Pipeline as especially remarkable.

Flora Duncan was born in 1937 in Boothville, where she graduated from high school and has lived her whole life. She worked a variety of service jobs, until in 1976 she began work as a roustabout for Gulf Oil Pipeline Company. She was the first woman to work in the oil fields for Gulf in Plaquemines Parish. She remained with the company, which merged with Chevron, until 1993, when knee problems forced her to retire.

#### Summary:

Personal: Born Boothville 1937; graduated high school in Boothville; single parent of two boys, 16 and 15 years old when began working for Gulf.

Career: Worked as domestic, cleaning houses; worked in restaurants, cooking and washing dishes; then worked for Buras Cleaners; started as roustabout 1976 Gulf Oil Pipeline Company; saw ad on television that Gulf was hiring, hired as a minority - a woman and an African-American; black men had been working in industry since 1960's, but Flora was the first woman to work in oil field for Gulf in Plaquemines; took job because better pay than previous jobs, also had good benefits - insurance and retirement; worked at Ostrica terminal; retired in 1993 as result of knee problems.

Job: responsibilities included cutting grass, driving boats, checking gauges; enjoyed job although hard work; some issues with backstabbing among employees; Flora never wanted to move up in job, didn't want additional responsibilities, not worth additional pay.

Contracting: Started job with contracting, everyone started in contracting, contractors trained and then when company wanted to hire, they would hire off contracting crews; worked three months for contractors then hired.

Boats: Learned to drive boats on job, had to drive by herself on Mississippi River, wasn't too bad once she got the hang of it, had to drive in fog although she wasn't supposed to; father had

worked boats all his life as trawler, then tug boats, then touring sports fishermen but dad didn't teach her about boats; liked driving boats, but not in her blood.

Scheduling: with Gulf, worked 7am to 1pm in field, then left office at 3pm; change to Chevron at Ostrica switched to 7-7 scheduling with 12 hour days, all the men wanted to go back at the end of the day to see their wives, wives would cook them dinner; but Flora preferred 7-7 because then she didn't have to face cooking and housework at the end of the day of work, got good meals and cable television at Ostrica housing facility.

Women: was one other woman who started after Flora; after 1992, were four women at Ostrica; didn't have trouble with being a woman, men respected her and had to accept her; had to be tough, couldn't be real feminine; would have recommended job to other women friends if she thought they would be able to handle it.

"Women's Lib": Flora used to tell people that she wasn't part of the women's liberation movement of the 1970's, but she's glad for what they did

Son: son later worked for Chevron in production after college, although not in field he studied, took job because was good pay; Flora wanted son to go to college.

Patt Dunn

Columbus, TX

July 1, 1996

Interviewed by: Joseph Pratt, Bruce Beauboeuf

University of Houston/History International

SOC033

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Patt Dunn graduated from Ohio State with a Masters in Civil engineering and began working for Shell in 1961. He headed Shell's offshore Design group in 1969. He designed offshore structures for mainly the Gulf of Mexico for 31 years.

#### Summary:

The interview is free ranging, but covers quite a bit on offshore structures and the challenges posed by the Gulf of Mexico. Good information on the move to deeper water. Talks about the problems with various types of structures. He also has extended discussion on the growth or lack of growth of the subsea gulf.

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Clarence Duplantis

Morgan City, LA

May 16, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG021

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Clarence Duplantis was recommended to me by Jerry Cunningham, one of the teacher-researchers in Morgan City. Jerry grew up next door to the Duplantis family, and they've been friends for a lifetime. His experience in the oilfield is not extensive - he spent most of his career in the grocery business - but he did dabble in fabrication for a bit in the 40's and 50's. Because of this, much of the interview is focused more on community issues in general, and less upon the oilfield specifically. We spend a bit of time talking about the Jimmy Stewart movie filmed in Morgan City, and then discuss the rest of his career in the grocery business. He did send his son into the oil industry, and he also describes some of the impacts of the oil boom on Morgan City - there's a story about how people had to live in big pieces of pipe back in the early days because there was nowhere to sleep.

Clarence was born in Vermillion Parish but relocated to the Morgan City area as a boy. His father was employed by the contractor building the highway and then took a job with the Texas Company. After high school, Clarence opened a little coffee shop downtown, and then he opened a grocery store. In the 40's, he moved to the shipyards operated by Chicago Bridge and Iron and built drydocks. He worked in the shipyards and for a contractor building tanks for Magnolia and then for McDermott, but he left fabrication because of concerns about the working conditions. His health forced a decision to leave.

#### Summary:

Father's work history: Clarence was born in Vermillion Parish. His father worked for the contractor building Highway 90, which eventually carried the family to Morgan City. He worked for the Texas Company afterwards. He worked in a box factory, but the company itself was the predecessor to the contemporary Texaco.

Oysters: He talks about the price of oysters during the depression. He went into the restaurant business when he got out of high school. He talks about what it was like in Morgan City in those days, the various markets downtown, and the customers in his restaurant.

Clarence's work history: After he shut down the restaurant, he went to work at a grocery store, but things slowed down - it was hard to get basic food items because of the war. So he went to work at the shipyard. He worked for the Chicago Bridge and Iron Company. They tried to unionize, and Clarence didn't want to unionize. He was the last employee as they closed down.

Unions: He thinks the reason people don't like the union around here is because they don't want to pay the dues. He talks about how rough it was working in the fabrication yard - you were either too hot or too cold. They were building drydocks in 1942 when he worked there.

Movie business: He also worked for a contractor that built tanks for Mobil Oil - which was Magnolia back then. The guys from Thunder Bay (the movie) came out and filmed them. He talks about all the problems with the movie - you could see shrimp in the supposed oil! His part was cut out of the television version of the movie. Some of the tanks he built were for offshore, but others left on the train - he doesn't know where they went.

Return to the grocery business: Morgan City was the booming oil town back then, but it's all gone now. The action is at Fourchon now. Clarence also notes that he worked for McDermott during this period. Eventually he left the oil industry and went back to work in the grocery business.

Health concerns: We talk about his reasons for getting out of the fabrication yards. He notes various health concerns, including the dust and particulate from welding, which really seemed to be a problem for him. He suggests that drinking a lot of milk helped with that particular problem.

His sons: He talks about his sons. One went to work for Shell Oil. Then we talk about the various occupations he worked in the grocery industry. We talk at length about the grocery industry.

He talks about the boom in Morgan City, then more about the health problems associated with working in the fabrication yards. Then he talks about his son's business in oilfield supplies.

Changing demography: We talk about the changing demography of Morgan City. He says that even back in the early days, people would come from all over to work in the shipyards. There weren't enough houses for all the people. But a lot of the young people moved out of Morgan City, and they're not coming back.

Mexican immigrants: He thinks things are picking up again for the oil industry. He talks about the problems with Mexican immigrants - they can't read a blueprint, but they work hard.

WalMart: We look at a family picture, and then a picture of him in his grocery store. We look at other old photographs and some memorabilia. He talks about how much you save when you shop at WalMart.

Elmer Duplantis

Lafayette, LA

February 5, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW038

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Elmer Duplantis was born and raised in Chauvin, Louisiana. His father worked for Texaco for nearly 30 years. He received a scholarship to Northwestern State College, but after a year volunteered for the military service where he worked mainly in Europe during the time period after World War Two. He got out of the service in 1948 and got a job with Texaco. In 1949, wanting to better his position in life, he sought and acquired a roustabout position with Superior Oil Company; later he was promoted to roughneck, derrick man, relief driller, and driller. In the early '60s, Superior stopped their offshore drilling operations and he was sent to production as a roustabout and later as a production foreman. By 1976 he had been moved to Lafayette and a year later had a permanent position as a superintendent. Two years later he began working overseas on troubled jobs. After working in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Europe, and seeing Superior bought out by Mobil in 1982, he asked to take a retirement package in 1986. Since being retired he has gotten into real estate. During the interview he discusses what it was like after Mobil bought out Superior, issues related to differing hydrostatic pressures in different regions of the world, changes within the industry and "drilling by the book," his nine years in the production department, and Mister Charlie.

#### Summary:

Early life: born in Chauvin, LA; father worked for Texaco, but during Depression cleaned ditches. Got a scholarship to Northwestern State College, but volunteered for the military after only a year; spent three years in Europe with post World War Two occupation activities. Jobs hard to find when back in States in '48; went to work for Texaco because that is where his father worked.

Career: wanting to better himself, contacted a driller at Superior about getting a job; hired as a roustabout in '49 and worked his way up to superintendent by '77. Best paying company in LA at the time. '59 Superior quit drilling program; '60 he was out with cancer surgery and when he came back given two choices; went to work in production as a roustabout, then as production foreman. '69 started a big drilling program under a subsidiary company; had one rig left, W. M. Keck, and he was in charge of getting it operational again; problems with land drilling and got more into offshore. In charge of seven producing fields out of Dulac. Came to Lafayette in '76 and made superintendent in charge of 7-8 rigs; took reports longhand. '79 began overseas troubleshooting work (describes). Mobil bought Superior in '82; retired in '86.

Mobil: did not give positive feedback for good work, only pointed finger when there were problems (harassed and criticized); ex-Superior workers not as well respected. Superior was better in every way than Mobil; provided greater support for workers.

Moving to Lafayette: was living in Gray and came to Lafayette on a temporary relief basis; after about a year given a permanent position out of Lafayette, but on the rigs; then moved into office.

Killing wells: both in States and overseas the process involves controlling pressure and trying to not lose returns; most people are scared and do not want it to flow too much. Louisiana formations are very porous and prone to losing returns; difficult because pressures of sand vary greatly.

Troubleshooting: experience versus drilling by the book; examples from Indonesia, Peru, and the Mediterranean.

Overseas work: in terms of communicating with workers overseas, always had an interpreter in non-English speaking countries; had more problems in Scotland (describes). Wife would accompany him, but has equilibrium problems, so he worked out a 28-and-28 schedule; would have to go back on days off if problems at field site, but compensated for that time; was given stock options for overseas work. Describes house burning down and support from Superior. Problems with Mobil on reimbursements for expense account.

Production work: did this for nine years; worst job he ever had. He did gas and oil calculations by hand for each of the wells in his fields; didn't ask for assistance because when they gave you a job it was yours.

Reflecting on life: if had to do again, would have gone to college after being in service; at that time, though, times were hard and you were fortunate to have a job. Reviews early career; problems with boss.

Experience: best way to learn is out in the field working with someone who knows what they are doing; when working on the W. M. Keck, always had a class of 5-6 people he taught. Today cannot expect to work for a company for a long time and make something of yourself; company stock and retirement.

Offshore drilling: Superior first drilled in '47 off Creole beach. He worked on Mister Charlie for over a year; drilled many wells. Describes incident where pumps stopped because of problem with mud.

Irvin and Drusella Duplantis

Dulac, LA

July 16, 2003

Interviewed by: Jessica Piekielek

University of Arizona

JP005

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Irvin and Drusella Duplantis at the Grand Caillou senior lunch held at the gym near the library in Grand Caillou. They were both eager to talk during lunch and agreed to meet at their house the following day to do an interview. They have a home on Grand Caillou Road, a few houses north of the Combon Bridge. In the front yard they have two porch swings and at least once I saw them on their porch swing in the evening, as I drove past on my way to Houma.

Irvin Duplantis was born in Grand Caillou in 1924. Drusella Duplantis was born in Chauvin in 1926. Irvin and Drusella Duplantis were married in 1944 and have lived in Dulac since that time. Irvin Duplantis worked a variety of jobs, including boat skipper, for various companies, including Tideland Exploration, Wheless Drilling Company, McDermott and Louisiana Land and Exploration (LL&E). Irvin Duplantis is nicknamed "Bobine," which means "top" in French, because of his high energy level.

#### Summary:

Personal: Irvin, nickname is Bobine, means "top" in French because always in a hurry "I spin like a top." Born in Grand Caillou in 1924; Drusella Este Duplantis born in Chauvin 1926, married at 18 and moved to Dulac.

Career (Irvin): first a fisherman, then entered the service in November 1944, served in Europe, went as far as Berlin, escorted prisoners from Germany; on return from the service in 1946, he worked for Tideland Exploration; first worked on a small boat as skipper, pulled barge with shot crew; then he worked for Wheless Drilling Company as a standby boat skipper and a cook.

Boats: Big offshore boat working gravity meter as relief skipper and then first skipper on 82ft long and 16ft wide army rescue boat, round boat; bosses would let their college boys work offshore but they couldn't work on Irvin's boat because they got seasick, boat rolled a lot in Gulf, sometimes "like you could catch the wave with your hand." Then laid boat off and hired PT boat which didn't roll so much.

Roughnecking: On rig, foreman's son was married to Irvin's first cousin, so would ask Irvin if he would take someone's place on the rig for a few hours or a day, or would cook for rig crew; once had to work a few days relief shift as a roughneck. Felt really bad at first working as roughneck because young "boys" were handling pipe and he didn't know at first how to do it. Was tricky work because timing was important. Then got the hang of it. Also had to haul mud bags off the barges.

Schedule: Worked 7 and 7; once had to work 21 days because engineer and skipper quit, during same time as fourth baby, but made it just in time for baby's birth.

LL&E: Then worked for LL&E 8 years working to dredge and hold land; worked first as a deckhand, within 3 months moved to first cook, then oiler, then operator, plus was boat skipper; boss let him work same shift as a neighbor who didn't have car so they could car pool; had one big project near Golden Meadow: closed off reservoir, filled, put in a pumper station, took a year but within the year "they were cuttin' grass in the marsh." Mississippi company used land to grow rabbit feed, later LL&E planted sugar cane there. Tried similar project closer to New Orleans, near Boutte near refinery, behind refinery; soil from marsh was so rich it didn't hold up cane, so gave up on project; eventually abandoned because it was "too fertile;" all projects were to "preserve the land" which was being eaten up by the Gulf; after awhile gave up on projects because weren't accomplishing anything; for example, once built a 75 foot levee which by the next year was washed away.

Working on Boats: No licenses or training needed to work boats, Irvin just knew the area real well, navigated with compass

McDermott: Then worked for McDermott building and repairing "wheels" propellers for boats; worked there for 2 years; burnt with caustic soda on job, had boilerman in charge working on shaft that turned cable of offshore boat; "We were too stupid to know." Man in charge didn't know either, had two men with torches burning, got too hot and ash turned to liquid and blew up in face; was wearing goggles; 3 days in Morgan City hospital and then 1 month in New Orleans to treat infection; at one point so painful that Irvin asked them to cut his ear off and give him a "paper ear," but hospital staff talked him out of it; eventually operated twice on ear.

Leaving oilfields: Then bought Exxon Service Station in Grand Caillou for 8 years 1966-1974; bought from friend, did well but had to work every day. "My wife would fuss" because they couldn't go anywhere; quit station. Then worked for State Highway, retired in 1984 after 12 years at 60 years old.

Career (Drusella): Stayed home to care for kids, no car, bus line which people used a lot, stopped at Court House, from there could take another bus to Chauvin or Montegut; would do grocery shopping on bayou locally, or sometimes would go to Houma for shopping during holidays.

Lifestyle: Disadvantages having husband work shift work, had to discipline kids, get them to school, would get up early; but were also used to living that way; biggest problem was when somebody would call sick; were fortunate with kids, once son fell, called father in Chauvin who came and picked them up; before her time, doctors would go down to the bayou to see people if they called them. Didn't have phone, when had first baby Irvin had to go to the grocery store to call doctor, ambulance would pick mothers up to deliver; when coming back from service would have to call someone else to ask them to tell wife that he was coming back.

Impacts and changes: Oil field slowed down in 1984, and moved to offshore, have seen changes since then; Lirette Field in Montegut first field 1929; could tell changes from oil, not so much in Terrebonne but more over in Lafourche where they had oil in their backyard; recently have

found a gas well on Grand Caillou bayou; Bourgs made a lot of money, only other family made much money was maybe Anthony Voisin; a lot of families in Dulac worked in oil industry, mostly worked for Texaco; a few worked for Exxon. People didn't move into Dulac with oil, but some people moved out of Dulac to Houma; used to have bus line, a lot of shrimp factories, dance hall, now gone; people are moving out of Dulac; shrimping is not as good; kids not interested in shrimping business because they want to go to school; used to have Dulac Beach dance hall, people from bayous would come, from New Orleans, had jukebox and dancing, big oak tree with rope swing over water, water wasn't polluted like it is now, had good seafood.

Leasing: had oil well in back of Dulac but closed, was LL&E that had property; LL&E would pay tax on property and take over property; sometimes people would get mad at Irvin for working for LL&E, although he didn't have anything to do with land takeovers; sometimes people wouldn't sign leases, if they wanted more money;

Schools: Kids went to school in Grand Caillou until 8th grade, then to South Terrebonne for high school, her younger kids went to Oaklawn; when Irvin was child had four room school house in Grand Caillou, combined classes.

Drusella's brother died pushing barges with mud in storm just ten minutes from rig in 1963 boat flipped; didn't hear about too many accidents like that.

Irvin had typhoid fever, with mother and sister just before met Drusella in 1942.

Edward Dupont

Bayou Vista, LA

July 2, 2001

Interviewed by: Rylan Higgins

University of Arizona

RH004

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Edward was recommended to me by Ray Boykin, who is Ed's neighbor. Though the two of them did not know each other well back in the early days of offshore oil, they socialize now on occasion. Ray told me that Ed helped start the first fab yard in Morgan City and made the initial call to contact Ed. I called Ed the next day and his wife told me to come on over. They live in an old two-story home in Bayou Vista. The walls are covered with family photos and woodcarvings that Ed does. They welcomed me in and excused their messy home, which looked rather clean to me. (Though she participated for a few minutes near the middle of the interview, Ed's wife purposely left us alone for most of it. She left for the casino after talking briefly several minutes into the interview.) Ed made coffee, while I told him more about the nature of the project. Ed and I sat side-by-side at the kitchen bar on stools and started the interview.

Edward Dupont was born in Riceville, Louisiana in 1922, and grew up in Rayne, Louisiana. During high school he worked with his dad building tanks and rice carts for farmers. After graduation he went to trade school for a few weeks to learn how to weld, then in 1941 moved to Morgan City to work for Chicago Bridge and Iron Company building a big dry dock with his brothers. After serving in the armed forces, he returned to his home town and then to Morgan City again where he joined his two oldest brothers at a company they started, E.W. and A.P. Dupont Incorporate, as a foreman, but also did welding, burning, and crane operation. He also held jobs at Pure Oil Company, where he welded up pressure lines off of a wooden platform offshore; as an inspector; and at a company in Alaska. He retired in 1990.

#### Summary:

First offshore platform: While working in the Mobil yard, built first offshore platform with his brothers, E.W. and A.P. Dupont in 1948; wooden platforms closer to shore, iron ones farther out; his brothers drove to Dallas with a few hundred pounds of shrimp packed in dry ice for the engineers and bosses in order to get the contract; about 15 employees involved in constructing the first platform, which weighed about 50 tons (60 ft x 40-45ft); this was before they had patterns for cutting the pipes, they filled in any cracks with welding.

Workers: It wasn't hard to find workers, they were all local; either they found people who already knew how to weld or use a torch, or they taught those who came in from agricultural jobs; his brothers probably employed the largest number of people then; all White workers, the only Black workers rolled and stacked pipe; in the Mobil yard around 1949-50 he had fifty men working for him, all Black.

His brothers' company: Called E.W. and A.P. Dupont Incorporate; started out working only for Mobil and then built platforms for Shell, Texaco and Kerr-McGee when they bought leases out in the Gulf; then McDermott got in to building platforms, sent them overseas; when they first started building platforms no one else was doing it; McDermott learned from their experience, even hired some of their former workers.

Personal history: Retired at 68; worked for Pure Oil Company welding up pressure lines off a wooden platform offshore; father's work ethic; worked with father in Rayne building tanks and rice carts for farmers; after high school went to trade school for a few weeks to learn to weld; worked for Chicago Bridge and Iron Company, building a big dry dock.

Improvement in platform construction: Introduction of cranes; pipe came by rail or truck from Houston, New Orleans, other places up north; story of a boxcar-load of frozen pipe.

McDermott buys out his brothers' company: Not much competition early, but eventually, McDermott got big enough and offered them three times what they expected; A year or two later, his brothers went back into business and McDermott bought them out again.

Safety: He worked on a wooden platform during time at Pure Oil and requested a boat in case of fire, but it wasn't until the Coast Guard forced them that they provided one.

Personal history: Moved to Morgan City in 1948; met wife in 1949; built house in the evenings after work over a period of 9 months; had four children four years after getting married; none of them work offshore, but the youngest builds ROVs for Oceaneering; talks about how he came to work for his brothers; building the yard at Mobil out of a mud hole; sense of accomplishment about being part of important advances in the industry, learning everything for himself, making do with what they had; when he left his brothers' company, they had to hire five people to replace him.

Dennis D. Dupre

Houma, LA

September 28, 2001

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB022

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Dennis Dupre lives with his wife at Terrebonne House Nursing Home in Houma, LA. The Terrebonne House's manager, Gail Wink, was wonderful in trying to get the stories of the people who live there. She went through the files and found out that Dennis worked in oil for years and then introduced me. Dennis and his wife were sitting watching TV coverage of the September 11th attacks. Dennis is in a wheelchair due to arthritis but says that he and his wife still work out 3 times a week. Dennis was extremely congenial during the interview and continued to add in bits and pieces of information as he remembered them. He remarked several times that it was amazing that he hadn't thought of his oil career since retiring back in 1973. Dennis said that he would be willing to talk with me again if I had any more questions. He also promised to think more about his time in the oilfield to see if he could remember anything new.

Dennis Dupre was born in 1911 to a farmer. His family lost everything during the Depression and moved to New Orleans. Dennis began working in the city at age 14 and eventually returned to the country to work at a sugarhouse for \$1 a day. In 1935, he began working for Texaco in the oil industry building steel derricks because he could make more money. He stayed in construction until 1960 and retired from Texaco in 1973 at age 62.

#### Summary:

Early days: Dennis was born in 1911 in Assumption Parish. He went to school for 8 years. His daddy was a farmer but they lost everything in the depression.

Depression: Moved back to New Orleans after losing the farm. Worked as a messenger at age 14. He joined boxing clubs in his ward. He boxed at the Pontchartrain Club for 4 or 5 years. When he couldn't find any more work in the city, he went back to the country. He worked for \$1 a day at a sugarhouse. Had an office job for a while at the sugarhouse. He decided that he needed more money so he began working in the oil industry in 1935 as a construction worker. He'd build the steel derricks all throughout the bayous, often standing in water for 10 - 12 hours a day. He gives a wonderfully detailed description of how the derricks were built. It was amazing to hear that only 4 men built and tore down those immense structures! They were already using steel when he began.

Laid Off: Began being laid off in 1934.

Description of construction work: Stayed in construction for his entire career. He would build or tear down whatever needed to be built or torn down. After companies such as McDermott began

building the steel derricks they would build bridges, board roads and tool houses. They had a lease at Leeville. Story about floating derricks on steel barges from one place to another. There were 5 crews. All in marshes and canals.

Later years: After Mr. Dupre turned 60 he needed to look for something lighter. He took a correspondence course on refrigeration and air conditioning and then had to go to Youngstown, Ohio to take a test on the theory behind the trade. Working outside in the elements had taken a toll on his joints and he was looking for something else to do. He knew he could make a living in that area if he could learn what to do. Still working for Texaco but in the capacity of cooling and refrigerating food to put on supply boats.

Retirement: He took early retirement at age 62 because he had so much arthritis. When he was laid off back in the 30's and 40's he kept busy by having a garden and working on window units.

Life since oil industry: Even at age 90 he still works out as much as he can. He doesn't like taking medicine for his pains and aches. He lifts weights with his legs while sitting in his wheel chair three times a week. When I left their apartment to go talk to another tenant, he and his wife came out for lunch singing "This Little Light of Mine". They are well liked in the assisted living home and have enjoyed their time there. He says that the oil industry made Houma.

Changed the most: Used to be wooden derricks. Now they're steel derricks and wooden men, not as tough. The wooden derricks would crumble sometimes, although they would make a loud noise before falling.

Fabrication: After awhile all they were doing was reinforcing the derricks, building angle lines because all of the derricks were being bought ready made by the fabricators. Couldn't remember what year this was.

Accidents: Two men killed building derrick. Stories about how the derricks were built and how Dennis almost got killed had to do with his shoes and the weather. Never used nets or harnesses, would have made things more dangerous rather than safer. Needed a good board to stand on; that was the best safety there was.

Military: During the war, they had to build a wall around the derrick so submarines couldn't see the derricks being built. All his life he was lucky with numbers. His number was in the 20's but he never got called. He tried to get in one time during peacetime but couldn't pass the tests so he never tried during wartime.

Hours of work: Said they worked for 24 hours with 2 crews when he first began. One crew would work 12 hours and then the next would work 12 hours. Then they went to 8 and 4, sometimes working 24 and 8. One time he had to come in and get a new pair of shoes because he'd been out there so long.

Conditions: your shoes had to have rubber soles because leather would slide on the seals. If they weren't in the derricks they were in the water. They had to work in cold water up to their chins. Had to move the derricks they had built. Made the rafts to move them.

Marriage: Married late in life, she was 65 and he was 72, both previous spouses died. He had one son with his first wife. Dennis, Jr. who worked in education his whole life. Dennis, Jr. is now retired and just became a deacon at his church.

Early school: religion was in school. Had one teacher for 4 grades. Had to memorize everything because the teacher didn't have time to explain everything.

Attacks: Said that he can't get his mind off of the attacks, glued to the TV.

Traveling: traveled when he was young all over the place except South America. Likes the Terrebonne House, only been there for 8 months.

Raymond Dupre

Point-Aux-Chenes, LA

July 11, 2001

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB002

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I got Mr. Raymond Dupre's name from Clyde Hahn in Patterson. Raymond agreed to talk about his work in the oil industry, but both he and his wife made sure I knew that they were not going to say anything negative about Exxon. Raymond has an extremely thick bayou accent that is difficult to understand at times. He was jovial and welcoming, and after the interview began his wife, Anna Mae, warmed up and began making comments as well.

Mr. Dupre was born in 1928 in Terrebonne Parish; he's lived in the same vicinity his whole life as well. Raymond began work in the sugar refinery where his father was employed and then was hired in 1952 by Humble Oil to work as a janitor on one of the company's quarterboats. After a couple of years he went to work on wildcat rig. When the rig was shut down in 1966, he moved to production. He began as a roustabout and worked his way up to pumper and then mechanic. He retired in 1986 when the company offered packages to many of its employees.

#### Summary:

**Early Life:** Mr. Dupre's father worked at a sugar refinery his whole life. Raymond worked for the same refinery for 8 years before getting hired on at Humble Oil in 1952 as a janitor on a quarter boat. Description of quarter boat layout. Had a room for the contractors. Carlo Elardo was supervisor. Went to work on the rig after 2 - 3 years. He began working on the rig in 8-hour shifts for 5 and 2. Rig #29 (diesel electric), was a wildcat rig. Made \$2 a day.

**Hours of work:** very difficult schedule. Worked in MC, only had about an hour off sometimes. Things were very difficult when they took the living quarters off the barges, had to find a place to live.

**First Day on rig:** remembers how hard it was with everything being manual. Story about having to switch rigs with another crew down in Grand Isle. Stayed with same group of guys for about 8 years.

**Extra work:** He lived close to one of the rigs for 10 years. Guys would drive by and ask if he wanted extra work. He worked 6 days a week for a long time.

**Production:** Shut rig #29 down in 1966, so he went offshore to production, block 30 at Grand Isle. Started off as roustabout then moved to pumper and mechanic. He flew around to different platforms to check and fix machines. Had to work at night if things broke, worked 5 days out of

6 overtime. Made money but didn't get much sleep. 3 mechanics on the same hitch. Worked 7 & 7, 5, 12-hour days and 2 days at 10 hours a day. Worked relief sometimes.

Hurricanes: had to ride boat in during bad weather, took 2 hours while flight took 9 minutes. Preferred to ride in the helicopter.

Service: He was in Korea for 5 or 6 months, didn't fight in WWII because he turned 18 at the end of 1945.

Family: four children, one son has worked for Texaco for 33 years.

Retirement: Retired due to a "deal" in 1986, says he wasn't ready to retire.

Responsibility: liked the responsibility of relief supervisor, difficult because all names and people changed between the times that they worked. Exxon is like a big family; people took care of each other.

Oil field men: when colored people came in it messed up the schedule. The blacks took all their sick time right away. Had to build up sick time from the time that you started working. Had to go to the doctor if you said you were sick. Raymond didn't miss a personal day in 30 years. He missed 2 days for funeral and 2 days for injury.

Loyalty: Exxon gave you a slap on the back, that's all it took. Picked Humble because he had family in Humble. No policy about hiring family members, but you couldn't work at the same place.

Bosses: bosses from Houma, but most of them were from Texaco. Every rig had a different tool pusher.

Contractors vs. Company rigs: Company rigs were different because they had the same people all the time. It wasn't like a contractor rig. Called them drifters because they would leave and leave their clothes and everything.

Work ethic: like a big family. Had to follow the rules of the rig you were on. Worked all over the bayous on the wildcat rig.

Safety: had to wear safety shoes, glasses or buy gloves at cost from them from the very beginning. Not much changed in safety rules over the years. Working with the same guys you get to know them and what they're going to do, no surprises.

Accidents: He never got hurt, but rig #40 blew up one time. Burned several men pretty bad. Says they carried the people who got hurt, they stayed on payroll. When better they went back on light duty. Did not replace a man but would work the other men double duty until you could take your job back. "No light duty on the rig"

Environmental Regulations: became bad in 1984. Used to shut rig down and do whatever they wanted with the oil. New regulations about ran the companies into the ground. The regulations were for your own safety.

Unions: Each rig had a federation representative who would tell you what was going on. No unions because there was a federation member. They would fight for your rights, they'd give you a raise when they wanted, but you can't ask for everything. Didn't like percent raises. Got more of a raise the more money you made. Unions might have talked to federation representative but never to the people.

Change to the environment: All the canals that had to be dug make it flood at their house when it never flooded before. Some are good fishing holes. Companies left some barges and machinery in the canals.

School: sent them to compressor school in Kilgore, TX. for 2 weeks in 1970. Wife went with him. Worked with Phillip George, went to school with him. Picture of them having a safety meeting.

Different people he worked with: women were never mechanics. Worked with some Hispanics and blacks in the 1970's. Worked with a man by the name of Wild Bill Dufrene, crazy driller who had a big heart.

Freddie Durocher

Chackbay, LA.

January 24, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB030

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Freddie Durocher at the Halliburton retirees' breakfast in January. He was one of the youngest members of the club. At the breakfast, he talked a lot about how much better the marine department was than the land department. He said you had a better life if you were in the marine department.

Freddie was born and raised in southern Louisiana. He was in the military for a few years and began working for Halliburton when he got out in 1960. He was a driver for 4 years until moving up to cementer. When he retired in 1991, the company had 18 boats and 4 barges. Freddie retired as a supervisor and still believes that working for the marine department was the best job in the world.

#### Summary:

Personal history: Freddie was born in 1938. He began his work with the oil companies when he got out of the military in 1960. He started with Halliburton as a driver, did that for four years, then moved up to cementer. His schedules varied between 10-5 and 7-7. He used to roughneck on his days off to make a little extra money.

Schedules: Around 1964-1965, his schedule changed to 16 days on / 32 days off. He learned the cementing work on the job. Many of the guys didn't make cementer very easily - some didn't want to go above cementing because of the fear of moving.

Boats: In 1978, he was promoted to supervisor in the marine department, which had about 500 workers. At the time he started his work there, there were 13 boats and 2 barges. By the time he retired in 1991, there were 18 boats and 4 barges.

Clyde Dyerson

New Orleans, LA

July 19, 2001

Interviewed by: Rylan Higgins

University of Arizona

RH012

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Several people had mentioned Clyde Dyerson's name during interviews, including Howard Thibodaux and Garver Watkins. They told me that Clyde had worked as an engineer for McDermott from the late 1950s to the early 1990s. Howard told me that Clyde would be a good person to interview. Clyde and his wife live in a very nice, two-story home in a gated community in Metairie. When I came over, Clyde and his grandson were hanging out in the living room with the boy's hamster. Clyde was friendly and welcoming. He and I talked casually for a few minutes in the living room and then went into the kitchen, where we conducted the interview. At one point, his grandson came in and put his hamster in the cage, which was right next to us. The strange clicking noise that appears occasionally on the mini-disc is the sound of the hamster drinking from the metal tube in its cage.

Clyde grew up in Kansas City during the Depression. He earned a degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Kansas in the early 1950s. His first job was with Magnolia Oil in Lake Charles in 1954. He left Mobil in 1962 and began working for McDermott. He stayed with McDermott until his retirement in 1992.

#### Summary:

**Early life:** Clyde grew up in Kansas City during the Depression. His family was not wealthy but "lived all right," as he put it. After high school, he went to the University of Kansas and got a degree in civil engineering.

**First job:** In 1954, Clyde went to work for Magnolia Oil in Lake Charles. He served in the military for two years, and then came back to work for Mobil Oil in Oklahoma.

**Move to Morgan City:** In 1958, Mobil transferred him to Morgan City. He stayed with Mobil for a couple years and got married in 1959. When his job at Mobil changed and he had to spend considerable time offshore, he quit (1962).

**Entry into fabrication:** In 1962, McDermott had just bought out Dupont Fabricators. Through a personal connection he had with Ernest Dupont, Clyde was able to secure a good job with McDermott.

**Pipe mill at McDermott:** Around the time Clyde was hired, McDermott was developing a program to install a pipe mill in their yard. In this section of the interview, Clyde discusses in

detail how the different pipe mills evolved in the yard and the role he played in getting them started.

McDermott fabrication in Scotland: In 1971, McDermott upper management asked Clyde to transfer to Scotland to work at the new fabrication yard developing there. Clyde declined, even though he would have been 2nd in command at the new yard.

Friction at McDermott: Shortly after this, McDermott went through a particularly difficult phase regarding different levels of management. This was based partly on differences between how onshore and offshore workers were treated. Clyde described that, during this time, morale in the yards was particularly bad.

Transferred to New Orleans: In the early 1980s, Clyde was transferred to New Orleans, to work on international proposals for major oil companies. He became heavily involved with research and presenting this type of project. His family did not move to New Orleans, however, because his daughters were in school and did not want to move.

Back to Morgan City: In the late 1980s, McDermott transferred Clyde back to Morgan City. He was charged with working as a troubleshooter because the shipyard was having some major problems.

Asked to retire: In 1992, Clyde was asked to retire early. He was not looking to retire when asked, but agreed to do so because of the package they offered.

Jim Edmonds

Houston, TX

August 11, 2006

Interviewed by: Jason P. Theriot

University of Houston/History International

MMS068

### Ethnographic Preface:

Jim Edmonds has held the office of chairman of the Port of Houston Authority since 2000. His is a native of New Mexico and moved to Houston in 1966. He worked in various political offices, including the office of former Mayor Louie Welch, and worked in the private sector before coming to the Port of Houston. He has extensive knowledge about the history of the Port of Houston particular the roll of the early Houston pioneers and the oil industry in developing the port. His greatest accomplishment is developing Bayport Container and Cruise Ship Terminal.

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C.E. "Chuck" Edwards

Houston, TX

April 30, 2003

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS023

### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. C.E. "Chuck" Edwards served in the Pacific during World War II and received his degree in geological engineering in 1949 from the University of Tulsa. He went to work for Standard Oil of Texas (SoTex) in Midland, TX and worked on seismic crews in West Texas through 1956. He became a supervisor in Houston and helped start the company's Seismic Integration Group. He was also involved in the geophysical research arm of SoCal. He was assistant chief geophysicist at SoTex until 1962 and then assistant chief geophysicist for SoCal. In 1964, he became chief geophysicist for Chevron West in Denver. In 1969 he went back to SoTex as chief geophysicist. In 1970, when SoTex was shut down by Chevron, he became chief geophysicist for the parent company, a position he stayed in for fifteen years until he retired in 1985 after the merger with Gulf Oil. Mr. Edwards now works as a consultant.

### Summary:

Interview begins with Mr. Edwards' educational background and early years working as a geologist looking for reefs in southeastern New Mexico for SoTex. Talks about working with geophysical contractors. Gives credit to his boss, Julian Pawley, for forcing him to learn geophysics without academic training in the field. Work with the research arm of Chevron -- not as controlled by research as Shell or Exxon. Integration of geology and geophysics. Discusses move from analog recording to digital recording and processing. Story about use of "sausage powder" source shooting in the Powder River Basin. Problems with getting reflection signals in the sand-shale sequence in the Gulf Coast. Discussion of bright spots. Claims Mobil found it in Nigeria before Shell Oil was onto it. Discussion of 3-D seismic and recent developments.

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Russell Elliot

Houma, LA

January 25, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA030

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Russell Elliot was referred to us by Tom Becnel. When I called him, Russell cautioned me that he had only worked on pipelines for Texaco, and I told him it would be great to get his perspective of the industry. When I arrived at his house, Russell was waiting for me with six 8 ½ x 14 inch ledger pages of notes about his work. His interview is an excellent overview of Texaco's pipelines in southern Louisiana.

Russell began his career in Houston in 1947 working for The Texas Pipeline Company. He started as an electrical engineer and worked in several states building pipeline stations. He was transferred to Lafayette, Louisiana in 1952 to take charge of the electrical system at the Erath station. In that position, he was responsible for maintaining that system and the installation of the New Iberia system. In 1980 he became the Louisiana District Manager and was in charge of the design and construction of the Houma to LOOP 24-inch line and pump station. He retired in 1985.

#### Summary:

Career history: spent 38 years with Texaco Pipeline; company then went together with Shell, formed Equilon Pipeline, now bought out by Shell; started in 1947 in Houston as an electrical engineer; from 1948-1951 worked in New Mexico, Kansas, Chicago area, Colorado, Texas; built pipeline stations to increase capacity; supervised electrical installations; came to Louisiana in 1952, in charge of electrical system at Erath station; transferred into Louisiana division to look after maintenance of system; responsible for installation of New Iberia system; viewed as pipeline engineer - not only electrical but also mechanical and civil; in 1955 upgraded east Texas mainline system, starting to automate; 1980 became district manager in Louisiana, in charge of design and construction of Houma to LOOP 24 inch line and pump station, increasing capacity of Houma to Erath station; career included design, construction, operation, and maintenance of pipelines

Houma to LOOP project: last big project I really enjoyed; \$100 million project; soil so soft had to drive pilings to 174 feet to hit sand; started spring 1980, finished latter part of 1981; supervised the engineers; experience paid off; used coal tar coating, the best protection; environmentalists have eliminated this type because it pollutes the air; have to dig up and recoat pipelines; original paints for tanks had lead in them; held up the best; newer epoxies seem to have held up well; Texaco made asphalt and wanted to see it used, did experiments against coal tar, asphalt did not bond as well; had corrosion engineering group, had to fight to get funds; old timers used to using clamps when had a leak

Installing pipelines and tanks: first pipeline laid in Louisiana by Texaco in 1942; laid 10 inch line from Houma to Port Arthur, extended it to Paradis and Lafitte; four field in Terrebonne Field, Caillou Island the biggest; used tankers and barges until laid pipeline; had 8 pump stations; Houma had six 55,000 barrel tanks, still out there; had to drive pilings for tanks; Erath had six 80,000 barrel tanks; changed from cone to floating roofs; built stations at Lafitte and Paradis; manned with a full crew; really began to expand in 1951, laying 22 inch mainline from Houma to Port Arthur, completed in 1952; increased capacity at Houma and Erath; had four operators and supervisor at each location; then laid 12 inch line to Golden Meadow and 12 inch line to Cocodrie; tanks and gauging; all oil from Terrebonne Bay to Cocodrie to Houma; exclusive Texaco line because of grade of crude in Port Barre field; production in Terrebonne Bay peaked in 1970; produced oil, stored in 1,000 barrel tanks and then put into pipeline system; gaugers said oil had to be less than 2 percent brine and saltwater to reduce cost of pumping water

Expansion of system: 1960s laid 16 inch line from Houma to Lake Barre; in mid-70s laid line from Caillou Island to Pennzoil platform 100 miles in the Gulf; joint interest of five companies; Texaco Pipeline in charge of installation and operation; information came into Houma via remote; all different sizes of pipe are tied into the main line; had to clean pipeline internally; divided up throughput by percent of ownership; companies could put their own crude through or lease to someone else; now most of oil coming in from Gulf; in 1970 Terrebonne Bay produced 235,000 barrels a day; today 12-15,000 barrels a day

Route and right-of-way: coordinated route of line to be beneficial to all companies; went out and ran side scan of route picked; state looked at it, if any artifacts had to move it; had to buy right-of-way from the state; would hire companies to go out and do that; tried our best to be a good neighbor; always requires going across others' property, tried to give people what they wanted; when laid the pipeline from Houma to Carline we made a settlement with the judge so any objectors had to go before him; on land would fly over proposed route, avoid houses, cattle; intended every time to get one-time right-of-way because becomes very expensive if have to do it every year

Lines: discussion of specifics of lines built in the 1970s and 1980s; built station elevated on barge; constructed in Houma; floated it and put in on Shell pad; lay lines across the marsh by coating them so they would float; put on big Styrofoam floats and drag line behind, used marsh buggy, lay barge behind, keep welding and pushing the line out; then cut off floats and pipe will settle in the ditch; had four stations on the barge for welding and sending the pipe out; same process in the Gulf but have to have a stringer to hold tension and keep pipe from buckling; have huge anchors to move barge; pull barge out from under pipe and it gradually lays down; specifics of 1980-1981 job

Problems with pipeline: paraffin buildup; people gouging hole in pipeline; spud barges drop anchor and hit line; on lay barges anchors hook line and pull it; there are several methods of repair; costs to company that caused damage, if anyone admits it; internal and external corrosion are problems

Ups and downs: pretty much steady; retired at 65 because time; had one layoff in the gang area in 1955; fairly selective about hiring; hired a lot of people during WWII, had gang that did not

want to take responsibility, wanted to keep some of the younger ones but followed union rules and laid them off; went back a year later and rehired some of them; with automation people were shifted to other areas, used retirements all along to cut back; some people in the gang were college graduates who could make more money than in teaching

Entering this line of work: finished college in 1943, to Humble Oil and Refinery in Baytown, Texas; felt out of place, people going into military; Humble would not release us; talked with draft board but they said couldn't go; finally got to know someone in personnel who said talk to top person, told to make arrangements with Navy; went into Navy as ensign; at Naval Ordnance School, very intensive schooling; ended up in Key West, Florida on special project; quite a training period for me, had 35 men under me; helped me manage pipeline crews

Impacts of industry: changed southern Louisiana upside down; in 1952 Lafayette still had some horse and buggy people coming in for church; closed community; people came from all over the country, like Lafayette and stayed; Louisiana property laws made it easy for people to do well; with pipeline company accepted the fact we would have to move to advance.

E.J. Ellzey

Venice, LA

July 19, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM049

#### Ethnographic Preface:

On Bud Latham's suggestion, I looked up Mr. E.J. Ellzey by dropping into the Ellzey Marine Hardware Store in Venice. His son-in-law, Ray, who now owns the operation with his wife, said the 80-year old usually comes into the store in the morning, and that he might talk to me. So I came back the next morning - no Ray, no E.J. I called EJ, and set up an appointment for the next morning. As it turned out, EJ had been visiting his wife in Belle Chasse, where she's undergoing treatment for cancer.

EJ was born 1922 in Jackson, Mississippi, where his father was a lawyer/judge and farmer. The family moved to Plaquemines Parish in 1933, settling on the other side of the river a few miles above Pointe a la Hache. There his father started to grow rice - running a pipe over the levee into the river to draw irrigation water. EJ had 2 sisters and 2 brothers, one of whom apparently died young. The family soon bought up some land in Venice and established a grocery store and post office. They ran a mail boat down to Port Eads, delivering groceries along the way. The father also owned a hotel in Venice. One of EJ's early ventures was road building in Venice using barges and barges of shell. He has 6 kids, one of whom is on the 25th floor of Chevron - a "troubleshooter" with degrees in engineering and business administration.

#### Summary:

Early days in Venice: native mostly French-speaking trappers, could make \$5000/winter from it; if they had oil jobs, they would quit during season; 1-room school in Venice, then up to Buras for high school; fruit business was big; was a regular bus running down to Venice; in 1933, land for sale and people from all over bought it up.

River pilots: river and bar pilots, make \$300,000/year; all "family," a closed group; have to put up \$40,000 cash to get into associations; just recently hired first black man and woman; pilots work 2 weeks on, 2 off; big houses for them at Pilot Town, cisterns for water; bar pilots had camp at South Pass/Burrwood; state pilots are cheaper than association pilots.

Oil activity: oil field started in 1935/36; Texaco built dock on river; Gulf and Tidewater had big fields on land; Tidewater Oil Company had camp with cookhouse; Mr. Fitzgerald had fuel dock; Cenac Towing brought fuel in; local companies were mostly welders; Tom Popich's Offshore Shipyard now does mostly minor repair work; lots of blacks work for contracting firms in oil; use air boats now instead of marsh buggies.

Judge Perez: Judge had a plan to build fence around Fort St. Philip, across the river from Ft. Jackson, incarcerate blacks - a mosquito-infested swampy area - but never went through with it; parish government got mad at judge so stopped maintaining the park set up for him as memorial; now apparently someone is cleaning it up; Chalin Perez (son) has cancer now; Clyde Giordano, a past parish president who is running again, is a Perez kin; Judge would visit Venice (present parish president never comes to Venice), and hand out \$75/monthly to widows/widowers.

Daryl and Liz Eshete

Houma

March 23, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB044

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Daryl Eshete through Ari Anand back in July of 2001. Ari met him at the library where he works and was turned on to the struggles with unionizing the oil field through Daryl. Daryl is from Houma and his family is an old oyster family. Daryl and his wife are highly educated and extremely liberal and have found it difficult to be in Houma but know that their presence is needed. Daryl is active in a local Socialist organization and is active in the political arena in Houma and the surrounding area. I interviewed Daryl and his wife, Liz, on a Saturday afternoon. It was interesting to get a "young" person's perspective on the crash of the 80's.

Daryl was born in Houma in 1976. His father is from a prominent, old oyster family. In the late 60's, his father worked as a trucker for a wireline company. Daryl's father got hurt in the early 80's and was disabled for the rest of his life. His family went from living to excess to being extremely poor, having to sell their house. His wife had a different story. Her father was involved in the gas business and during the crash he still had a good job. They moved up, as it were, due to the economy and everyone else losing their shirts. They bought a huge house because the prices were so low. Daryl works at the Terrebonne Parish Library.

#### Summary:

Family background: Daryl was born in Houma in 1976; His mother was from Pittsburgh; His father is from a prominent, old oyster family; Houma used to be quite separated into city and more rural areas, dividing line corresponds to what is now the Intracoastal; DE's grandfather worked in many different jobs before becoming a traveling meat salesman; DE's great-grandfather was an oyster lugger, and the family has a history of being in that business

Houma: Used to be much more rural, few English speakers, even in the 1960's everyone spoke French

DE's father served in the Army, then got a job in the yard at a wireline company, became a truck driver, and kept moving up the ranks until he was specializing in fishing tools, and was in management at Dunham Oil Tool Company in 1983 when he had a heart attack

Management: Used to be people worked their way up but now people come in at management level with little to no experience of the other positions; Often people are brought in from the outside now

Job market: Used to be very limited opportunities, in some ways it has opened up, but oil field is still a major employer; LE had a hard time finding a good-paying job, even with a college degree; Lots of people work in the industry, all other economic activity seems to be tied to it

Mid-80's: Lots of families left, DE and LE remember kids disappearing from school; Abandoned downtown, empty stores; Not much animosity toward the companies, people just left, following the money; People thought they were lucky to make so much money; Population in the area is not very educated, but many have been able to live well as a result of oil field jobs, live a working class lifestyle with middle-class wages

LE's father worked in natural gas, so the family was able to take advantage when the bust lowered the cost of living; others in the same position; Tendency of people, especially down the bayou, to stay close to home, people don't move in from outside very often

Unions: DE compares south Louisiana to Pittsburgh; expresses his feelings about unions, his family's experience with them in Pittsburgh; Unions work by majority rule, and that doesn't sit well with Louisianans because they are used to being in the minority; DE recounts how he became an atheist and a socialist and then became involved with Offshore Mariners United, writing pro-union pieces; people started contacting him anonymously and telling him about injuries and court settlements; CCFC (an anti-union group) won the battle for public opinion; Unions are different today than early in the 20th century when they were worker-controlled; DE explains that the CCFC is a front organizations started by a corporation to prevent its workers from joining a union, but people know that Chouest is connected to CCFC because of their overt support; Why hasn't safety become a union issue

Southern Louisiana has a one-trick pony economy that is overly dependent on gas and oil; Future of hybrid cars; Brain drain in southern Louisiana, DE and LE chose to come back to help Houma progress

Grandparents' generation spoke French, DE had to teach himself, LE wishes she could speak it

Living in Houma: it's a nice place to raise children; DE and LE tried to start a group of young progressives but it didn't succeed

Other industries: seafood and sugarcane, but the pull of the oilfield is great because of money, in spite of the injuries

DE's father had a heart attack at age 38, during the 80's bust, the family lived in borderline poverty, took 13 years for the family to recover financially, his experience of this is directly connected to his work with unions

CCFC's actions against DE, possibility of him making Houma a better place

Bill Esteveens

Lafayette, LA

August 6, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz, David DiTucci

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW018

#### Ethnographic Preface:

One of three boys, Mr. Bill Esteveens was born in New Orleans in 1948. His father was a salesman from Avondale, Louisiana and his mother was from Thibodaux, Louisiana. He spent his childhood and youth moving around with his family in Florida and later southern Louisiana; he graduated from Thibodaux Central Catholic High School in 1966. He spent a year up at Michigan State, but didn't like it, so came back to LSU for a year. In the face of war, assassinations, and no money, he left school and went to work for Hycatector, a mud logging company. After that he worked for year for Magcobar as a drilling fluid sales representative; after finding himself unsuited for the life of a salesman, he went to work for Hycalog. After he left Hycalog in about 1973, he got a job with Nitrogen Oil Well Service Company (Nowesco). In 1974-75, he decided he had enough of that work and enrolled at the University of New Orleans (UNO), where he spent two years in the Communications Department and worked on and edited the school newspaper. After he left school, he went to work for IMCO (part of Halliburton) as a mud logger. He was laid off from IMCO in 1980 and got a job with Exlog (Exploration Logging Company); a year later he received an associate's degree in petroleum engineering technology at Nicholls State. During the interview he provides detailed descriptions of the mud loggers' jobs and how they evolved over time with increasing technology.

#### Summary:

Early life: father grew up on plantation in Avondale; served in Navy during World War Two; mother was from Thibodaux. He was born in New Orleans in 1948. Father was a salesman but never very successful; mother worked for the state; one of three brothers. Moved around during childhood; graduated from Thibodaux Central Catholic High School (now E.D. White); received a merit scholarship and recruited by Michigan State; went to LSU year after that for another year.

Hycatector: first job out of school was with this small mud logging company (friend's father owned it); needed a car to work, father wouldn't sign for it, so got emancipated. Had on the job training for mud logging, but a difficult job to learn; lot of fellow workers were alcoholics.

Magcobar: after a few years, got job as drilling fluid sales representative; didn't like sales, so left after a year. Was married at this time and living in New Orleans; stayed out of work for about three months.

Hycalog: company started as mud logging operation in late '40s, but owner got into diamond bit business; company sold back and forth between owner and Schlumberger multiple times.

Describes logging unit and counter weight; initially it was all mechanical, but started using computers for logging in early '70s. He was a mud logger.

Hippies: in about '73 he had a mustache and that was a subversive sign; was ordered to shave off his mustache. Oilfield people were Wallace people, good guys people. Describes scene on the rig when Wallace got shot and a risqué foreign film playing in background.

Nitrogen Oil Well Service Company: left Hycalog in '73 and went to work for Newsco. Big Three Gases owner and air reduction pump; developed a way to use nitrogen gas to start the well flowing (describes process); Halliburton also using pumping wells with something like hydrochloric acid for the same purpose; later used soap to help break down surface tension.

Schedule and pay: when started out, pay was good (\$700/month) and worked 14 and seven.

Family life: wife's family background; wife graduated from University of Houston and Tulane; met her at Mensa meeting; she worked in insurance, child welfare, and social work. First lived together in New Orleans; describes one Halloween; social set had a more liberal outlook.

Communications: describes listening to radio in work car. Offshore, in late '60s, early '70s had to have an emergency to communicate with family (limited channels and operators); some of the more developed fields had subsea cables; mid '70s noticed they were using microwaves for communication (in rain and fog didn't work well). Working on inland wells allowed for a little better access to phones. Has worked offshore for 125-130 days straight, good for saving up a lot of money, but not worth it.

University of New Orleans: in mid '70s decided he had enough with the work he was doing and went to UNO to study journalism; describes Drama and Communications Department. Didn't feel that he was learning anything, so left after two years.

IMCO Services: part of Halliburton; in '76, '77 got a job as mud logger; drilling mud really has more to do with mining operations than the oil industry.

Drilling engineer: in his day, didn't teach you what you needed to know in petroleum engineering schools; the job requires a craft-based approach; learn through experience and observation.

Data: always attempting to have real time data gathering and monitoring; looking at data and graphs you could make inferences about the composition of the material you were drilling into.

Drilling: want to maximize drill rate while keeping yourself out of trouble; mud loggers responsible for picking casing points.

Mud logger: pure mud loggers ('40-60s) kept track of the drill rate, dissolved gases in the mud, tested the rock cuttings. Computers introduced in about '72 to make monitoring and testing automated, but it never replaced mud logger.

Alcoholics: some offshore men didn't get along with their wives; when came home on days off would go to stay in motels and get drunk.

Barite: Magcobar history; barite (or barium sulfate) is a very dense rock; suspended in drilling mud to increase the density, which helped control blowouts (a great technical advance of '40s).

Changes in industry: many other new advances came out in '60s; had cyclical lives. Means of measuring shale density. The d exponent (way to evaluate drilling rate).

Accidents: describes instance where he was first to notice the well had blown out; has seen people get into accidents, often when tripping pipe.

Nicholls: had been attending Nicholls while working for IMCO; commuting on days off from Algiers to Thibodaux and wife complained she wasn't seeing enough of him. Had accrued a lot of units.

Orde Evans

Lafayette, LA

February 25, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW042

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Orde Evans was born in 1922 in Basil, Louisiana. After WWII, he moved to Lafayette in 1947, to work in rig construction. In 1979, he started his own consulting and production company called Oracle, and later expanded his business to Houston and then international markets. He was part of the Energy Committee in Washington, D.C., where they investigated different types of energy. Eventually Evans brought geo-thermal energy to southern Louisiana. An entrepreneur, he also invented many products. He also discusses the changes that the oil industry brought to Louisiana.

#### Summary:

Early life: born 1922 in Basil, LA.

Employment: served in military during WWII at Guadalcanal. Came to Lafayette in 1947 because of lucrative rig building business; assembled steel rigs so drilling personnel could move equipment in; took three days to build it; made \$3.75 an hour, the highest labor pay at the time. Performed wide variety of tasks throughout career, including building board roads, rigs and bridge building, drilling, and production for oil companies; always attempted to find innovative ways to perform job more efficiently; after demonstrating his abilities to his employers, they encouraged him to go into business. 1979 began a company called Oracle; produced variety of oil-field related products and did consulting; started business in Lafayette, later expanded to Houston, and later to the international market as it was more lucrative; sold services to nations in Middle East, Africa, the Far East and Indonesia; ran this company for twenty-seven years.

Energy Committee in Washington D.C.: purpose of committee to study forms of energy; results of work from committee demonstrated potential of geo-thermal energy, or how to convert hot water to energy. Brought idea of studying geo-thermal energy and geo-pressure in South Louisiana; he was the first to experiment with this new idea in Vermilion Bay; tests demonstrated that heat generated from hot water and gas could produce energy. This committee studied other types of energy including wind, waves, oceans, and geo-pressure; was managing his business at same time he was on committee.

Inventions: invented devices for splash zone protection, modified plank boards for oilrigs, fender systems for ship docks and platforms; ended up with fifty-six patents; came up with innovative way to produce more sugarcane; eventually all farmers adopted this new method.

Lafayette: city grown over the years; built house on edge of city near pasture, now area is developed; influx of out-of-state people migrating to Lafayette; many lived in hotels until houses were built. Cheaper for oil companies to have offices in Lafayette than Houston or New Orleans; Heymann a huge help to getting the oil industry a permanent foothold in Lafayette, through development of Oil Center.

Oil Career: no regrets for choosing oil industry as a career, enjoyed it tremendously; not sure what he would have done if oil industry weren't present in Louisiana; other options available but didn't pay as well; oil industry was hard work but steady income.

Sam L. Evans

Houston, TX

April 9, 2002

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS002

### Ethnographic Preface:

Sam Evans was a geophysicist/seismologist first with GSI in the 1950s, then with several other companies. He worked on early seismic crews in the Gulf of Mexico.

### Summary:

Interview provides very good information on the methods and evolution of offshore seismic surveying in the 1950s and 1960s. He talks about the many practical problems with collecting and processing seismic data. Evans also reflects on the nature of the geophysical consulting industry - competition, the move to 3-D, etc., especially at GSI.

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Dale Fackler

Lafayette, LA

November 18, 2002, December 4, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA074, DA080p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Dale Fackler by Maryann Galletti, Val Rudolph, and Mitch Cancionne. I first contacted Dale in September 2002, shortly after Hurricane Lili had struck Lafayette, and he was busy cleaning up from the hurricane. We agreed that I would get back in touch with him on my next trip to the Gulf. He was very happy to get together at that time, and spent several hours with me sharing his experiences and perspectives. He had a collection of photographs and newspaper articles organized in an album, and he willingly offered for me to copy whatever I wanted from his collection. I returned in early December to review his materials and conduct a photo interview.

Dale grew up in Ohio. He moved to California two years after finishing high school, where he learned to SCUBA dive. He joined the service and was married. He and his wife returned to Ohio, but they soon made their way back to California where Dale enrolled in the Coastal School of Diving. He traveled to Morgan City with plans to work long enough to earn the money needed to get out of Louisiana. He worked for Ocean Systems, a diving company that had been formed by Union Carbide, until that company was sold to Oceaneering. He worked for Oceaneering until 1983 when he formed his own company, Wet Solutions, which he still operates out of Lafayette.

#### Summary:

Occupational history: Been in the Gulf of Mexico offshore oil industry since 1967; came from Ohio, went to diving school in California; interest in commercial diving because an avid SCUBA diver in the 1950s, thought it would be a good way to make a living; went to Coastal School of Diving; work was sparse in California, not much oilfield out there; there were jobs working on sewage outfall systems; came to Louisiana with a friend; arrived in Morgan City following letters we had sent out; went to Ocean Systems; they said you're a bit early; checked into a motel, sitting in a bar, they called and asked for anyone who wanted to work for Ocean Systems; next three weeks spent offshore trying to repair a pipeline for Humble Oil; worked for the same company from 1967 to 1977; had Navy contract, retrieved wrecked plane, almost anything related to offshore oil and gas

Safety: Started to see diver safety organizations about 1969; people got together and started talking about safety; mostly divers who had been injured; seen as union activity by companies, but lasted long enough to get Association of Diving Contractors formed; lots of good things came out of it; discussed equipment more than personnel; standardized things a bit, changed procedures; divers by nature want to get work done at all costs; divers were working on air to 400 feet with heavy gear; in 1967 had begun diving in over 600 feet of water on saturation

Changes: Main expansion of diving was in equipment; vessels, saturation equipment

Career: Ocean Systems closed so went to work on Cognac platform as consultant for Shell Oil; then to island of Borneo for Shell; going deeper; native divers working with SCUBA gear in the Malaysian section of the island; spent a little more than a year in Houston as operations manager for this region; Ocean Systems in Morgan City had been formed by Union Carbide; process company, liked to patent things; had just done dry hyperbaric, their intent was to patent it, but they realized there was not much to patent, sold the company; quite a few divers were creative using TIG method; Brown and Root began to use regular stick welding, filled habitat with smoke, had to have smoke extractors; Ocean Systems, sold in Houston till bought by Oceaneering in 1984

Return to Gulf: Had come back at the beginning of 1980, operations manager in Houston; require shore base and vessels operations; first company to put sat chambers on vessels; had to get work for vessels, bank was repossessing them; used 110 foot boat for liveboating; Oceaneering bought Ocean Systems, set many of the employees free; opened own company in 1983; supply consultants and company representatives to oil companies; have people out with all major diving companies in the Gulf of Mexico; work for Brown and Root, Shell, etc. as company eyes and ears at the location; more concern with safety today than in the past

Early consulting: For salvage work; people would hire salvage master, someone with knowledge of vessel, where to cut it; usually someone from oil company would go out with the divers; convinced them they didn't have enough knowledge of diving and that they needed expertise; Shell's Cognac project in over 1,000 feet of water; probably the first job with lots of consultant input on the job site; Taylor was on the job, all planned a year in advance; large platform set in three sections; I joined the group as the base section was being set; Shell had set aside the 37th floor of Shell One Square for the entire group of consultants

Early days: Oil companies would have an idea of what they wanted done, but the information they had was spotty; main difference was oil companies initially tried to do everything, had their own barges, drilling rigs; then by the time I started those were being contracted to drilling and boat companies; very rarely does someone from the oil company go out except on the platform; the task is farmed out to people like ourselves who have lots of field experience; frees engineers to handle more than one job from the office; transition to this approach sped up around the mid-1970s

Coming to the Gulf: It was like the wild west; a lot of guys came from California; there was lots of money to be made from the outset; I was paid depth to make a 700 foot dive in sat; you could do a full job in sat today for what they were paying us to make a two-man sat dive; made one dive in sat without life support in the chamber; it was miserable; you had to count your money to keep your mind strong; would hang out in Morgan City at the bars; all the companies knew where the divers would be; that was your office; most divers ran around with our own small compressor in a truck; you got the diver and paid rental for the gear; some local divers, others from California and other states

Equipment: Not much SCUBA gear; companies patterned equipment after that used by abalone divers; would use floating hose, mated it with communication cable and pneumofathometer; all work in California was with heavy gear and recirculators - commonly called Jap gear, Kirby Morgan had them built in Japan; I had no gear when I first came to the Gulf; at that time the usual time to become a diver was two years; I was only here six months before I was made a diver; they were looking for people who could dive in cold water in heavy gear; in 1969 we were doing surface gas work in over 300 feet off the coast of Venezuela; in California they were diving at about 140 feet

Gas diving: Didn't do any in California; there was a small club of people who did offshore work on the rigs and were going fairly deep here we were diving on tables developed by Union Carbide; we'd go down to one atmosphere, change to mixed gas, and then go back to air; I was lucky enough to work with a company where I could get hands-on experience with all aspects of the work; we rotated through positions, all participated in putting the equipment together; today they just go buy it

Safety: People began meeting and formed an organization, the Divers Association; it included some of the people who had been the first ones in the profession, several have been injured; the meetings got larger and larger, and the diving contractors took notice; later the diving contractors and members of the Divers Association sat at the same table, had divers involved when drafting regulations; about 1975-1976; it ended up with a union from Washington getting involved; Paul Woodhall was the business agent for the union

Unions: California divers were in unions, but there were far fewer commercial divers; they were doing dock work and sewer outfalls, which the carpenters and pile drivers union already did; when the oil companies began to do work on the west coast they were using the same people; here in the Gulf divers did a lot more work, would spend 200 or even 300 days a year diving, especially if working on a barge; if you could accumulate that much work in California you would be a wealthy person; people here are individualistic, a lot of people think they are making it on their own and don't need an organization; the union never did fly

Changes: Probably the biggest between the early days of diving and now is that safety is much more regimented; even if you personally have no fear of a certain activity, you don't do it because your company has told you not to do it; accidents still happen, but it is generally someone disobeying the dictates of the industry; my company now goes out for the oil companies to investigate accidents; in the early days many divers had no idea what the partial pressure of oxygen should be, even the U.S. Navy had no idea; the companies became more regimented in their procedures and the equipment became more standardized; we had trouble with poorly designed equipment; most of the injuries to divers were caused by industrial rather than diving equipment; we used high pressure water blasters, explosions would occur when divers were burning pipe because the gas was not properly vented; changes occurred slowly because divers are craftsmen and headstrong, believe "my way is the best way;" now have safety analysis meetings; the whole industry probably moved in this direction about 7 or 8 years ago, dictated by the oil companies

Diving consulting companies: Supply the company man on jobs; bring hazards to the attention of the diving supervisor; can cease work if supervisor refuses to follow rules; does not happen often; a few years ago people took uncalled for risks to get something done quickly; I remember jobs where we put anodes on structures in only 21 days; discussion of anode protection

Dry habitat welding: Hot Tap Tillie was the first underwater weld in a dry environment; about 1966 or 1967; used on damaged pipeline or to tie a new pipeline in to an old one; prior to hot taps would use mechanical means to clamp the lines together; description of hot tap procedure; Union Carbide started hot taps because clamps were failing; in first hot tap we welded on a flange for Tennessee Gas pipeline; Brown and Root then built some enormous dry habitats

Liveboating: Would inspect pipelines this way; would take forever if set complete anchor spread each time the diver had to move; would keep the boat moving and follow the divers' bubbles; today use satellites, sometimes survey so good you can find the exact spot where a problem is; for years and years we did liveboating without seeing much danger; it takes an entire crew of people who have choreographed it perfectly; have liveboated in 366 feet of water; thread diver's hose through a shackle and the clamp weight prevents the diver's hose from going to the propeller, which is the biggest danger; today liveboating limited to 220 feet

Biggest changes: Diving platform, boat got larger, better equipped to moor and hold position; lots of difference in personnel, don't think they are as well trained in the work; today they have lots more time to do a job because of sat; we did a lot on bounce diving where you had maybe 20 minutes on the bottom; we were faced with situation that if we could get the job done in a half hour we would not be committed to saturation, then had only 2 days in decompression instead of 7; divers used to put a lot of planning into what they were going to do on their dive, would come up and have a meeting; today it seems everything is controlled from the surface

Training: Most from spending hours and hours and hours in a tank learning to burn, learning underwater welding, wet welding; there was nobody to tell you how to do it; we had to make our own underwater welding rods, coat them, and test them; can only do structural work with underwater welding; to learn how to rig and handle equipment depended purely on experience and exchange of information between divers

Managing diving jobs: Never found secrecy to be an issue; most of the time there was a lack of information from the customer because they really didn't understand what they had in the first place; information on the job is now much better, have ROVs that first determine what the problem is; sent out people with the proper tools to do the job; divers were very dependent on each other, wanted a job to go forward every dive; people are not in the business as long as they used to be, today they come in for a couple of years and then are gone; there isn't as much money in the business anymore; can manage a job today with less experienced divers because more is controlled from the surface, much of what was next to be done used to be left to the divers; I find a different level of interest on the part of divers, divers don't seem to care

Industry ups and downs: Have huge surges and when things go down you lose experienced people; people can't sit around for a year or two and wait it out; much of the time in the diving business you are waiting on work, then you work till the job is over; have tried for the past few

years to get a vessel working full time for an oil company and then rotate people out, let them work 30 days or two weeks; can't do every job that way

Personal history: Went to California from Ohio in 1958, two years after getting out of high school; was fond of hot rods and interested in SCUBA diving; had done swimming in high school; bought tank and regulator, built wet suit; worked at Lockheed Aircraft in Burbank, had a SCUBA club, would go diving together; then went into the service, did not dive there; got out, got married, got money together, and went to diving school in California in 1966; had gone to California in a school bus made into a camper, it died in Morgan City in 1967; said we'll work and little bit and get out of terrible old Louisiana

Reflections: Absolutely would do it again; I've enjoyed the diving people, the work; really did like the work, still get a kick out of planning the work here, take pride in coming up with something that makes it easier for a diver

Jobs: Mobil platforms were made of wood, helped take some of them out; divers used to do a lot of work with explosives, don't do as much of that now; experience with explosives came from guys with a Navy SEAL team; outside the Gulf worked in the Bass Straits of Australia, on Echofisk off Norway, some work for the military, plane crash off Vietnam, Pan Am crash in Venezuela, some work off Thailand, a little work off South Africa on a pipeline, military plane crash in Lake Michigan, helicopter crash off Florida, installed the Honda platform off an island near Santa Barbara; three California companies came to the Gulf; Union Carbide first sold out to Singer Sewing machines, at that time Singer got into everything; they sold out to Sampson Cordage, a rope company; they also started a salmon ranch in Washington doing aquaculture; then to Ensearch, an energy company; today people don't know each other, we knew all the idiosyncrasies of each diver; your peers were the judges of your performance.

Summary of DA080p:

- 01: Dry habitat used to make the first underwater hot tap saddle weld; carried out by Ocean Systems, Inc, a division of Union Carbide; done for Tennessee Gas; Frank Pelia and representative from Tennessee Gas
- 02: Ocean Systems bell used for bounce dives
- 03: Diving bell that had been lowered about 80 feet on a drilling vessel
- 04: Artist's conception of Hot Tap Tillie, diving bell, and dry welding habitat
- 05: Artist's conception of a subsea habitat - not realistic
- 06: Ocean Systems diving bell used for bounce dives, prior to being plumbed
- 07: Diving bell, decompression chamber and winch on a drill ship, will lower electrical equipment and air and gas hoses
- 08: Vessel sinking, sank in 24 hours
- 09: Salvaging the sinking vessel; Lieutenant Commander Bartholomew
- 10: Teledyne's barge on the salvage job
- 11: Crane of the Teledyne barge
- 12: Debris removed from the salvaged vessel
- 13: Debris removed from the salvaged vessel
- 14: Exploding vessel during salvage job

- 15: Vessel on bottom, only stacks showing
- 16: Divers on stage off side of barge
- 17: Reviewing plans on a job, Fackler on right
- 18: Divers in heavy gear
- 19: Diver in heavy gear in cage to be lowered, brought up
- 20: Scuba divers from Ocean Systems' west coast office
- 21: Divers at reunion in Bush, Louisiana
- 22: Cover of Miller Diving Equipment catalog
- 23: Materials barge transporting jacket to South Pass Block 62 - from magazine
- 24: Two of Shell's giant platforms under construction at McDermott yard - from magazine
- 25: Ocean Systems office
- 26: Coastal School of Deep Sea Diving - Dale Fackler out front
- 27: Salvaged wellhead from blowout
- 28: Responding to salt mine fire, 22 people died
- 29: Responding to salt mine fire, 22 people died
- 30: Divers on the way down in the mine, in makeshift bucket built by divers
- 31: Pipe
- 32: Being lowered down into a pipeline to weld
- 33: Lee Hosmo
- 34: Deck of barge
- 35: Teek welding apparatus
- 36: Ocean Systems welding habitat on deck
- 37: Salvage of Pan American Airlines crash
- 38: Salvage of Pan American Airlines crash
- 39: Diver being lowered down on stage on airplane salvage job
- 40: Diver coming off stage - Dr. Joe McGinnis with camera
- 41: Ocean Systems equipment being hauled to surface - welding habitat
- 42: Salvaged airplane on deck
- 43: On deck
- 44: Flange repair job for Texaco - pipe damaged by anchor
- 45: Welding habitat coming to surface
- 46: Repairing crushed pipeline
- 47: Chamber on deck
- 48: Well control unit
- 49: Crew on deck
- 50: Diver in gear
- 51: Joe Arries and his brother in Guam
- 52: Riser
- 53: Pasqual jumping off platform
- 54: Scrapbook entry of jackup where Fackler and two others installed anodes
- 55: Diving bell alongside platform leg
- 56: Salvage of Navy plane crash
- 57: Old Shell wellhead that blew out
- 58: Fish swimming underwater past platform leg
- 59: Standing on stage off barge
- 60: Divers and tenders in front of cage; Dale Fackler second from left

Ted Falgout

Galliano, LA

March 14, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM033

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Ted Falgout, executive director of Port Fourchon, was one of our first contacts in south Louisiana, when we began the baseline study in 1997. We have tried to maintain contact with him and his assistant, Davey Breaux, during subsequent trips. The interview took place at his office. Much of the interview focused on the history of the port, from the formative efforts of Senator Rappalet to the countercycle expansion in the 1980's, when oil companies made strategic decisions to consolidate their operations at the port.

After graduating in fisheries biology from what was then the University of Southwestern Louisiana, Ted Falgout got a job with LSU as the first Marine Advisory Agent in the state. This was a new program being tested by the Sea Grant Program in cooperation with the cooperative Extension Service. Working with fisheries in Lafourche, Terrebonne and St. Mary's Parishes, Ted got to know the port commissioners for Port Fourchon, who convinced him to serve as the port's executive director. He has presided over the expansion of the port into a primary staging area for deepwater oil and gas operations. He and his brother Errol run an alligator farm above the Intracoastal Waterway in Larose.

#### Summary:

Port Fourchon: port has experienced phenomenal growth in the last 10 or so years especially, but it's a relatively new port, was established in 1960, by act of the Legislature. The Port Commission was established in 1960; targeted the development of Port Fourchon, had no infrastructure other than the channel. Belle Pass and Pass Fourchon made a fork and went out into the Gulf. Fourchon means "the fork."

A.O. Rappalet: Senator at that time, had a vision of developing a port at this site to accommodate the fishing industry; oil and gas was starting to develop. Some of the first offshore wells were off of this area, also take the banana trade from New Orleans, create a more efficient route for moving bananas. It took a little longer than he had anticipated to get the infrastructure in, to create this port, the trade went to Gulfport [Mississippi].

Infrastructure growth: Port developed over time; through the '60's just some basic infrastructure was put in place, with some aggregate roads, some levees for hurricane protection. The Port is a 3000 acre area down at the mouth of Bayou Lafourche. Water lines were put in in the early 70s, along with a couple of docks for public use, a shrimpers' marina, and two oil and gas slips. Two companies operating out of the Port in 1978; today over 130 companies, phenomenal growth.

LOOP: Louisiana Offshore Oil Port established Port Fourchon; became operational in 1981 and showed the logistical advantage of the port close to deep water. The channel improvements made it very attractive.

Marsh restoration: starting a rather unique project, a "maritime forest ridge" to recreate a ridge that once existed across that expanse of marsh but has subsided to below sea level; will have fringe ridge and plant center with woody species to accommodate the migratory birds that use this port area as a resting area.

Edison Chouest Offshore: came on after '95, not part of the original port, didn't even have a dock, virtually no presence other than some vessels working out of other docks in the port. In the early to mid '90s they decided to get into the logistical business; built a second facility in the port, and have a third one planned, looking at one in Galveston as well.

Airport: we have the capability for industrial park development surrounding the airport, which would again further support the port activity.

Floyd J. Fanguy

Houma, LA

July 16, 2001

Interviewed by: Ari Anand

University of Arizona

AA005

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Floyd Fanguy was referred to me by Andrew Gardner after a Petroleum Club meeting in Morgan City. The Fanguys live in central Houma. We did the interview at the kitchen dining table, where Mrs. Fanguy washed dishes for a while, and then joined in, intermittently, bringing albums of old pictures. After the interview, the Fanguys asked me where I was staying, and linked me up with a network of folks who rent their rooms out to tourists-mainly French tourists-as part of an effort to revitalize the Cajuns' French heritage.

Mr. Floyd was born in Montegut in 1926. His father started working for Shell during WWII. Floyd left high school to join the Air Force and then returned after the war to finish high school and then trade school. He joined the Shell drilling department in Buras, LA, in 1948. He began as a roustabout and helped drill Shell's first well at East Bay in 1951. He then became a welder. In the early 1960s when Shell got rid of its rigs, Floyd was transferred to production, where the pay was better. In 1971 he became gangpusher on Shell 65A platform. He retired in 1989.

#### Summary:

**Early Life:** Born in Montegut on February 2, 1926. Moved to Bayou Black. Father worked in sugar cane fields. Shell started drilling at Greenwood field. Father started working for Shell during the war. Left school in junior year to join Air Force; sent to Europe. Got high school diploma after war. Went to school in Tennessee for auto and diesel mechanics and welding; got out in 1946.

**Oil Industry Work:** Went to work for Shell in 1948 on rig out of Buras. Well blew up, destroyed by fire. In late 1949 or early 1950, Shell bought a Navy LST and converted it into a drilling platform, their first offshore platform. Drilled first well at East Bay in early 1951. Hired as mechanic but ended up as a roustabout, then a welder. Stayed on rig while it moved around. Cut that rig up and built the first platform off Cameron. Bad hurricane came through and killed a bunch of people in Cameron. Worked on rig for 11 years until Shell decided to get rid of rigs; transferred to production at East Bay in early 1960s. Describes operations and jobs on LST. Shell started rigs up again but he stayed as welder in production at East Bay until 1971. Then went on offshore platform as gangpusher and team leader. Retired in 1989. Gangpusher oversees repairs, equipment, and supplies. Became a gangpusher when it started paying more than welding.

**Early Work Years:** Very crude equipment when he started working. Describes "stiffleg" cranes and loading of drill pipes in late 1940s. First went offshore in 1951. Describes expansion of Shell Corporation. Went into oil industry because it was the only job around; only good paying job.

Got job through father's superintendent. Has one sister and four brothers; one brother worked for Shell briefly but they would only hire "one son" so let his brother go; two brothers worked in oil-related production and sales. First day of work, he moved beams on the new rig that later burned.

Schedule: Started at 14 days on, 7 days off; engineers complained that roustabouts made more than them so switched to 7 and 7 schedule early on. Worked 5 and 10 on that first rig. Schedule not too bad on family; wife had to take care of everything.

Employee and Corporate Relations: Workers came from all over, including Texas, Mississippi, Alabama. Some people got along, others did not. Gathering of Shell retirees every three months. Labor-corporate relations not bad but did get bad towards the later years. Company took good care of employees until the mid-1980s slump. Then company started cutting costs and "giving the glad handshake" (severance packages) to lots of employees. Employee morale fell. Shell Company used to give big banquets for employees.

Photos: Shares and explains various photos; describes LSTs and drilling in shallow waters.

Military Experience: Military training not useful in oilfield work. Went to gunnery school in Kingman and Yuma, Arizona. Went to Florida, then New Hampshire, then to Wales. Shipped to South Dakota after war ended. Then worked at discharge center in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Hurricanes: Stayed out on rigs during hurricanes. Some rigs turned over and men drowned, so the Coast Guard asked companies to bring their rigs in for three months during the stormy season. Workers would then go work on other rigs or just take vacation time. Each rig had an escape capsule that held about 20 people.

Photos: Again shares and explains various photos.

Family Involvement: For a couple of years in the late 1960s, Shell had a "family day" in which family members could visit workers at East Bay.

Comparison of Oil Companies: Working for Shell was about the same as working for any of the other companies except that Shell had a better savings plan. Wages/salaries and safety considerations were similar in all companies.

Technological Changes: Constantly improving. Shell experimented a lot; had water slide to abandon platforms if necessary, but it was too dangerous; laid prefab spooled pipeline from tank platform to wellhead, but the pipeline would not stay submerged; automated platform did not work well. Other companies often waited for Shell to experiment.

Environmental Regulations: Developed slowly. Environmental concerns emerged in 1960s. Used to throw old oil overboard, but then started to send used barrels of oil to land. Also had to send garbage to land. Did not really slow down the work. People really did not complain about regulations; when they realized overboard disposal was bad, most people wanted to comply with regulations.

Safety Regulations: Has hearing damage from working on boats, rigs, and military planes. People did not think about that much in the early years, but later provided earplugs/headsets and gave hearing exams. Also started telling workers if there were dangerous chemicals on board. These things came in the late 1960s, early 1970s.

Unionization: Could not have a union offshore because people do so many different tasks. One of the rigs he worked on was constructed and repaired by union workers, but union made the repair price twice what it would have been. Unions waste time and thus raise costs because they do not allow for task flexibility. Gives examples of how unionization slows down work. Adamantly "anti-union."

Benefits of Oil Industry: Benefited landowners. Gave people without land good jobs and retirement packages.

Future of Oil Industry: Currently, environmentalists have "got us in a bad place." There is no federal oil policy. Florida is blocking oil development, but with the right technology, oil development would not dirty the beaches. Environmentalists have the oil industry almost "shut down" but still lots of activity in the Gulf.

Technological Changes: When he started and when his dad worked, things were "crude." Workers had to lay pipeline by hand. Now there are all kinds of modern machinery that make the job a lot easier. Lots of big engines now.

Phillip Fanguy

Houma, LA

March 25, 2002, April 10, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB045, EB054p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Gip Talbot gave me Philip's name and contact information. When I called him, it seemed like he was really busy. He agreed to see me, and we met in his office at Duplantis Trucking out on the old blimp base. Phillip gives a lot of great information concerning the specifics of starting a business. He talks about getting loans, finding money, workers and jobs as well as what kinds of things his company had to do in order to survive as long as they have. Before he began with the company they purchased a mobile crane. Today, renting cranes has proven to be the money maker while the trucking side of things has faltered. Phillip talks about unionizing and what Duplantis offered its employees.

Philip Fanguy got into the trucking business when he married the daughter of Elwin Duplantis, the founder of Duplantis Trucking, in 1957. Elwin started the company in 1936 with a dump truck and a shovel. He got into the oilfield trucking business by buying trucks from the New Orleans Department of Sanitation. Philip and both his brother-in-laws worked for Duplantis, and Philip now runs the company.

#### Summary of EB045:

Beginning of company: Duplantis Trucking Company was started by Elwin Duplantis back in 1936. The original company began with a dump truck and a shovel to haul gravel. Elwin then got a moving van and started moving furniture on the North American Van Lines, and that's really where he made his capital to grow the business. Back then, banks weren't willing to loan you money for trucking or anything to do with the oil business. The oil business was started by people who were not local, and they weren't trusted immediately.

Oilfield trucking business: Elwin first purchased some used trucks from the New Orleans Department of Sanitation and converted those trucks into oilfield hauling trucks. He built beds on them and bought trailers. When the oilfield trucking business started in Louisiana, all transportation and public services were controlled by the Louisiana Public Service Commission. Elwin applied to that Commission for permission to haul all types of oilfield equipment and was successful. Back in the early 30's, there were only two oilfield truck lines: Addison Truck Line and Duplantis Truck Line.

Types of equipment: As soon as the oil business started in Louisiana, there was a need for the trucking business. They moved things like drilling rigs for drilling onshore, all kinds of piping, and steam boilers that were used to power the rigs. They moved all of the offshore equipment to the docks to be loaded onto ships for transport to offshore platforms.

Mobile Crane: In 1955, Elwin was asked to buy Mobile Crane. The cranes were more versatile for moving pipe and equipment around. The business just kept expanding. Duplantis also runs South Cranes with operators. They even built and sold cranes internationally in places like Nigeria.

Oil companies Duplantis worked for: Principal company here in Houma was Texaco. They were the largest. Then you had Gulf Oil, Kerr-McGee, Union Oil California. Only two original trucking lines operating until the 70's. Not much competition because people didn't have the money in gas and trucks to get started.

Trucking business: There were no great highways back then and everything was gasoline, no diesel. Very expensive maintenance costs on the trucks, especially during the war. There was no rationing on cars or gasoline or oilfield truckers - anything related to the oil industry was not affected.

Personal/family history: Philip got started in the business when he married the oldest Duplantis daughter, in 1957. Duplantis had three daughters, and all of their husbands came to work for the company. The other two have passed away, and Philip now has control of the company. He bought much of the stock from the other two daughters.

Houma growth: In 40-50 years, Houma experienced rapid, exponential growth due to the oil industry. It was the oyster capital of the world and also was a big agricultural area producing sugar cane - once people started seeing that there was money to be made in the oil industry, they wanted to work in the oilfields. The oil companies were offering retirement benefits and such that were very appealing - they offered more long-term stability.

OSHA/regulation: OSHA began to regulate the oil companies and trucking lines in earnest around 1985. Before then, you could walk onto an oilfield with no hard hat and no safety shoes were required. Nowadays, unlike early on, hauling of radiation and any hazardous materials is strictly regulated. Testing is done regularly, both on the contents of the trucks and the drivers. Drugs and alcohol the main problem these days. Employees are all drug tested, both on and offshore.

Recession: People left other jobs to work in the oilfields in droves in the 60's and the 70's. Then, we had the recession of the 80's, when people were forced out of their jobs. The trucking industry was deeply affected by the recession. Duplantis was running crews of 40 people before the recession. Now, total number of staff at the company is 10. They have gotten into the construction business, anything to make some extra money. Prominent work they do now is crane operation - the deregulation of the trucking industry also really affected their business.

Racial relations: Duplantis was one of the first companies to hire an African-American, in the 1950's, made him a truck pusher because he could read and write. There was a lot of resentment about his hiring.

Summary of EB054p:

01: A mobile crane handling pipe casing.

02: The first wench built by a southern machine in Houma - used for towing operations in Africa; one of the first offshore boats built, to work in Africa

03: Crane lifting wench off of truck to set on the deck of the boat.

04: Crane has lifted wench off of truck and is placing it on the boat deck.

06: Pipe being loaded manually from pipe racks onto a truck; black man in photo is supervisor, one of the first in his field.

07: Supervisor standing in front of the columns that supported the old lift hanger.

08: The first marsh buggy built by the Cheramie brothers in Golden Meadow, LA.

Warren R. "Dick" Farmer

Lafayette, LA

February 12, 2003

Interviewed by: Robert Carriker

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

RC003

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Warren "Dick" Farmer was born and raised in Lafayette, Louisiana. His father was a freight train conductor with the railroad industry. He graduated high school in 1945 and joined the Marine Corps. He studied physical education at Southwestern Louisiana Institute (SLI) on the GI Bill until 1949, but never finished his degree. During that time he worked for Frank Mosing Casing Crews as part of casing crew on a rig and joined the Air Force Reserves. He served in the Air Force as a flight engineer during the Korean War and when he returned he went to work for Hughes Rental Tool Company. He worked for almost five years as a salesman in Lake Charles and New Iberia, before becoming a district manager in Houma. Next he became the southeast manager in Laurel, Mississippi, and then eastern regional manager in Jackson, Mississippi. When he was made central regional manager, he moved to Dallas, Texas. Later on he did work in Denver, Colorado, and London, England. When he returned back to Houston, he was a vice president in the company. In 1990, after 37 years, he retired and moved back to Lafayette. He provides detailed descriptions of how wells are drilled, particularly the function of drilling muds.

#### Summary:

Early life: born and raised in Lafayette; attended SLI in late '40s and studied physical education. While in college worked on casing crew with Frank Mosing Casing Crews (friend's dad owned it); company had four casing crews, with five men per crew. Called into Air Force during Korean War.

Early industry: companies scattered across different communities - no central office complex; offshore started in Morgan City with a rig and everything operated off an LST. Traveled by crew boat and activity not very far offshore (15-20 miles at most). ODECO created first moveable offshore rig (describes).

Lafayette and oil industry: growth in Lafayette due to foresight of Mr. Heymann; built Oil Center on property that had grown camellias and azaleas; old home now ULL alumni house. Once Oil Center built, people started moving there and there was development. ULL started growing after World War Two with the GI Bill. In mid '90s companies started moving to Houston; Chevron only oil company left.

Housing: was a real need for homes for people moving into town; building outside city limits so no access to city services and utilities.

Drill bits: Hughes bits used worldwide; more difficult for him to work on offshore job because would have to be away from family.

Schedule: offshore crews started working 10 and five, but didn't like it; preferred seven and seven. 601 oil workers - from Mississippi; companies didn't care where they came from, just wanted qualified workers. Had three shifts on a rig.

Rigs: later on oil companies got rid of their rigs because less costly and easier managerially to hire a contractor to do it; charged by day or by footage; almost all offshore drilling charged by day.

Changes in industry: rigs got larger and holes got deeper. Use of helicopters for faster transport in late '50s (e.g., PHI); crews liked this because traveled on their own time; many of the pilots had served in the military.

Career with Hughes: rig salesman; district manager in Houma; southeastern manager in Laurel, Mississippi; eastern regional manager in Jackson, Mississippi (describes mining bits and how they were used); central regional manager in Dallas, TX; regional manager in Denver; in London where many of the drilling contractors in North Sea were from LA, TX, or OK; went back to Houston; retired and moved to Lafayette in 1990.

Changes in drill bits and fluids: most dramatic change in industry was evolution of drill bits, from steel-toothed to tungsten carbide; bits could drill more hole and last longer, they cost more but saved company trip time. Drilling fluids have also improved; describes purpose of drilling fluid - removes cuttings through its circulation and keeps pressure up to decrease chance of blowout; federal regulations disallow dumping cuttings overboard (but fisheries actually improved around old platforms), so now have companies that specifically deal with their disposal; mud weights and logging to keep track of what is going on in the hole; describes circulation of mud.

Drilling pipe: what size pipe you start out with depends on your final hole depth; drilling engineers plan the hole by consulting old logs from the area.

Education: didn't have formal education in oilfield, learned on the job and by studying on his own; degrees can get you in the door, but have to continue to work to keep your position.

Regulations: changed over the years with more concern about the environment and worker safety; insurance very expensive for companies.

Why oil industry: early years were fun; chose to go into oil because paying twice as much as he'd make being a coach.

Railroad: Lafayette used to be a railroad town; have crooked streets because they were bent to go to the railroad.

Family: wife enjoyed traveling with him; his two sons are petroleum engineers.

Mud engineers: main job was to continually check the mud weights. Mud would be a large drilling expense because used so much of it.

Evolution of drilling methods: started with cable tools; then had rotary rigs and the ability to better control blowouts with fluids. After development of rotary drilling, 90 percent of blowouts occurred when tripping pipe (i.e., coming out of the hole).

Hughes: had 3-4 competitors, but were the ones doing the research and development, so had 70 percent of the market; Howard Hughes' father invented first rotary drill bit used at Spindletop; Howard Hughes.

F.C. "Butch" Felterman

Morgan City, LA

October 3, 2000, January 17, 2002

Interviewed by: Rylan Higgins, Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

RH016, AG054

#### Ethnographic Preface:

We were referred to Butch Felterman by Jackie Paice. In the first interview, which was conducted as a pilot for the study, he talked about boats and his company. Andrew decided it would be a good idea to revisit him and talk a little bit more about his personal history, his company's history, and the history of the community of Patterson. Butch is pretty quiet, and the interview didn't go very long, but there are interesting things in here nonetheless. Interesting points of the interview include his descriptions of historical Patterson. Also, it is of note that he didn't become involved in the oil industry until well into the 1960s - later than Conrad Industries and some of the other boat companies in the region.

Butch was born in a logging camp on the shores of West Lake Verret. His family moved back to Patterson shortly after his birth, and he eventually graduated from high school there. During the summers of high school, he spent a fair bit of time working on the shrimpboats, and boats became the love of his life. He went to LSU for two years, but he eventually returned to Patterson, bought a shrimpboat, and became one of the youngest captains in the region. He slowly began to accumulate more boats. In the mid-1960s, he had a boat built specifically for service in the oil industry, and from that point forward, his business really took off. He had a variety of boats built and under lease to a wide variety of companies over the years. He sold his company in 1997, and at the time of sale, he had 26 boats in service.

#### Summary of RH016:

History: Butch first became interested in shrimping when he was ten years old. During high school, his dad bought his first shrimping boat and Butch used to go out with him during the summer. By the age of eighteen, he became the youngest captain on a shrimp boat. He and his brother began to save money and bought their own boats. In 1964, they built their first steel hull boat. Originally intended for shrimping, an oil company, GSI, rented it out to be a supply vessel for a seismography crew. In 1966, they built the first boats specifically intended for offshore support. They began to build up their fleet by continuing to build more boats for utility crew, small vessel supply boats and large vessel supply boats. They sold their company in 1997.

Shrimp boat life; on shrimp boats, their task consisted of hauling in nets, cleaning up the drag, de-heading the shrimp and putting them on ice, repairing the nets and cleaning and maintaining the boats.

Supply vessel work: The crew from shrimping to supply work did not change. They basically supported the crew with whatever they needed: groceries, fuel, etc.

Impact of oil industry on shrimp industry: When the seismograph crews first started coming offshore, they were disruptive to the shrimping business. They would have three boats: one for supplies, one for recording and one for dropping charges. The charges would not only scare the shrimp away, but would create craters in the ocean floor which shrimp nest would catch and tear on. The seismic crew would work right through where a fleet of shrimp boats were working. As a result, they began to beat the shrimp business. As a result, many of the shrimpers joined the oil business.

Summary of AG054:

Early history: Butch Felterman was born in 1927 in a logging camp near the shores of Lake Verret. His father worked for a logging company. His dad's job involved building and repairing the small railroad they built to carry logs to the mill. They could only get to town by boat from the camp. They kept a car at the landing. Eventually they moved back to Patterson.

The Depression: The Depression was hard on Patterson. The sawmills closed. There was one on his company's property. People had to sell land and houses to get by. His father made it through because he worked at the Widdell airplane company. The Widdell airplanes were very famous at the time. He describes how his father helped to build the airplanes.

Early occupational history: Butch graduated from high school in 1944, and he went to LSU for a short while. Before that, he worked summers on fishing boats. The fish houses provided some much-needed jobs to the people of the region as well. He left LSU and saved money to buy a shrimp boat. He was the youngest captain in the co-op. He went on to acquire several boats. He got the first shrimpboat in 1949, and in 1965 he converted a steel shrimpboat into oilfield work. That was the beginning of the oilfield business for him.

Boat company: For a while, the company owned both kinds of boats. In the early days, he didn't really take note of the offshore oil industry. But once the company had the steel hull boat in place, it grew. His company was Galaxie Marine service. They had both kinds of boats - other people built them, but the company ran them and rented them out. Later the company got into servicing other people's boats as well.

Boats: The first boat was rented. The company went through a couple setbacks, but it made it. He describes the second boat they put into service. It worked for Union Oil in the production sector. Later, the boats also carried crew out to the rigs.

Company operation: He sold the company four years ago, and it had 26 boats at the time. The size of boats grew as time went by. A lot of the laborers came from around Morgan City, but others came from Mississippi and other places out of state. The seven and seven schedules allowed all sorts of people to come down and work here.

Patterson: Patterson really boomed in the 70s. He talks about when they paved the main street in Patterson. There were some plank walks along the side for pedestrians. His family lived about six blocks from school. He describes the school. They had a movie theater for recreation. He talks about growing up in Patterson. He remembers hunting rabbits on the levee.

Success: Building a successful business required liking what you were doing. He also had good people associated with him, and he was a conservative businessman. He also talks about the importance of family. When he started in the boat business, only Tidewater was a dominant company. But as time went by, other major players began to emerge. He talks about some of the mergers that happened over the years.

Future: He thinks that the future in Patterson will be rough without diversification. He talks about tourism and some of the other industries in the region.

R.L. Ferris

Lakeaway, TX

December 17, 1998

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

SOC014

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. R. L. Ferris graduated from the University of Pittsburgh in 1941 and started working for Shell shortly thereafter. He had several assignments in the mid-continent and Tulsa areas before becoming division production geologist for the Oklahoma Division in 1948. He became Senior Exploitation manager and spent time overseas from 1955-1956. He returned to the U.S. and served as an exploitation engineer for New Orleans, Midland, and Houston. Later he was division exploitation manager for the Houston Area. In 1964 he became head of Production Development in the Hague, returning to the U.S. in 1966 as manager of economics for E&P. In 1972 he was appointed VP of the Western E&P region. He served in that capacity until his retirement in 1980.

#### Summary:

Free ranging interview that covered various aspects of Mr. Ferris's career. Comment on his time in Corpus Christi, Nigeria and Venezuela. The dynamics of his position in E&P, including forecasting technological change. Extended discussion of the Bay Marchand Blowout.

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Aubrey Fields

Morgan City, LA

July 30, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG042

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Aubrey Fields was recommended to me by Santo Rousso. I met him at his house in Morgan City. He was a friendly man, but for some reason this interview never really got off the ground. There are a few tidbits in here that cover new ground, but most of his answers were brief. He talks briefly about the Magnolia company union, about the quality of labor he supervised, and the first Kerr-McGee rigs out on the gulf. He also tells the story of his injury on one of the boats.

Aubrey was born in Morgan City in 1925. After returning from the war in 1946, he got on with Magnolia. He worked on one of the early quarterboats in the galley, worked his way through a pumping and roustabout job, and eventually made his way into production. He retired from Mobil in 1984.

#### Summary:

**Early Years:** He was born in Morgan City in 1925, and his father was a carpenter. He graduated from school in 1943, joined the military, and served in the China/Burma/India theater, guarding a pipeline that went to a base in China. In high school, he wasn't aware of the oil industry. There wasn't much around here.

**Early Career:** He went to work for Magnolia in 1946. They had a quarterboat called the Magnolia Inn out at Eugene Island. The radios weren't strong enough to communicate out there. When he first started, he worked in the galley on the quarterboat. The crews would come back there to sleep. You could see land from out there.

**Early Crews:** there were guys from all over, from Texas and Oklahoma. Most of them already had experience in the oilfield. Everybody got along alright.

**Advancement:** he went to radio operator, then he went to taking care of the engines, then to the drilling barges, taking care of the water pumps. He pumped for a little while, then he got a gang pushing job doing construction. But he had to take a cut in pay to take a roustabout job - you had to roustabout before you could push gangs.

**Union:** Magnolia had a company union. There wasn't anything bad about it. They would get a union rep out of some of the crews. It was no big deal.

Promotion and Offshore: he ended up being a production supervisor in charge of everything on land. But before that, he went offshore. The oilfield was growing. It used to be all you'd see out there was an occasional shrimpboat. He talks about some of the early blocks that Magnolia was working on. He was loading barges with oil.

Kerr and McGee: he remembers working on that quarterboat when Kerr McGee first found oil offshore. Governor Kerr and Governor McGee came out, and they had a big barbecue out on Eugene Island. They had some crazy equipment back then.

Labor and Contractors: he worked a lot of contractors and welders. Mobil always had the best people. Some of the less desirable laborers came out as contractors, but mostly people towed the line.

Injury: This came at a time when they were starting to be concerned about pollution. It was too rough to get the welding machine out. There was a big toolbox on the boat too. And a big swell came up, and the welding machine hit his knee and screwed up his leg. He was out for eight weeks.

Helicopters: after his injury, he'd move around by helicopter. That slowly became more common.

Environment: when he first started working, they would have to put a pan under everything. Then they made them put septic tanks in. It got worse after he retired in 1984.

Evaluation: Mobil was great for him. It put a lot of money in a lot of people's pockets. Mobil advanced a lot of good people. The oil industry saved this town's life. All they had was the shellcrusher and fishing, and fishing ain't so good.

Loyalty: When Mobil got ready to sell out, he knew everybody in that office. It's not like that anymore. He's glad he got in production, because they were less affected by the layoffs and stuff.

Texaco docks: he talks about working on the Texaco docks when he was in high school, working for 30 cents an hour.

Contract Rigs: It used to be that Mobil had all their own rigs, but then it was all contract rigs. The contract rigs came out with all brand new equipment. They didn't have the same labor burden.

Busts: there had been some other times when things slowed down, but it always picked up again. In the '80s it was really bad.

Retirement: his wife has Alzheimer's, and that's made things tough. He took his retirement as a lump sum.

Future of the Oil Industry: He doesn't know. Nowadays, though, you've got to have an education to get in the oilfield and do well.

Postscript: we talk in the garage about some of the guys who are still around. Most everybody's dead.

Clyde Fitzgerald

Galveston, TX

August 14, 2006

Interviewed by: Jason P. Theriot

University of Houston/History International

MMS069

### Ethnographic Preface:

Clyde Fitzgerald is a native of Houston. His father and two uncles worked as longshoremen on the Houston Ship Channel. He started working as a longshoreman in 1959. He worked his way through the ranks and became president of the International Longshoremen's Association (ILA), South Atlantic Gulf Coast District, which represents longshoremen union members from Brownsville, Texas, to North Carolina.

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Jim Florstedt

Lafayette, LA

June 5, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW053

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Jim Florstedt was born in 1944 and his father was in the State Department; the family moved frequently, never staying in a location for more than four years. He received a bachelor's degree from Eastern New Mexico University in geology and zoology in 1967. After graduating Texas Tech in 1969 with a master's degree, he went to work for Humble Oil Company in New Orleans. After spending four years in New Orleans, he quit Humble and moved to Denver where he worked for Tenneco Oil Company. In 1977 he asked for a transfer to Lafayette and has been there ever since. In 1989 Chevron bought out Tenneco; he retired from Chevron in April of 1999. He describes changes in technology and communications over the years and the impacts of regular layoffs in the 1980s and 1990s. Because of poor audio quality, verbatim transcription is not possible on the last 30 minutes of the interview; 10 minutes have been "transcribed" as best as possible.

#### Summary:

Education: first two years of college at Texas Lutheran College; when decided he wanted to study geology, transferred to Eastern New Mexico, a soft rock school; graduated with bachelor's degree in '67. In '69 got his master's in geology from Texas Tech. He's an outdoors person and that's probably what got him into geology; fortunate he got into it because he ended up with a career he enjoyed.

Career: began with Humble Oil Company in New Orleans in '69; quit in '73 because did not like New Orleans and wanted something fresh. Moved with wife to Denver where got a job with Tenneco Oil Company; in '77 decided to move back down South where both had family; requested a transfer to Lafayette where the office was growing.

Transfers: never moved around too much because he did not put himself in a position (i.e., management) that would require him to be frequently transferred; up until the early '90s, managers were moved about every three years.

Schedule: basically worked eight to five in office, unless going out in field. In early years, with primitive technology, had to go into the field more often; he's worked in fields in Florida, Louisiana, Colorado, the Dakotas, Montana, New Mexico, and west Texas; Jay Field job.

Fieldwork: would do logging using wireline tools (describes); less frequently would get core samples (describes). Might have to stay on rigs two to four days, but he enjoyed that; most of his fieldwork has been offshore. Had to accept that he would be away from family during this time.

Technology: with new technology allowing instantaneous data transfer via satellites geologists go into field less often. When started in '69 they were using two-way radios to communicate; conversations public, so sometimes used codes to communicate well information.

Women and minorities: took awhile for companies to accept female workers; now commonplace. Has seen very few geologists who are minorities; more females.

Getting into petroleum geology: had wanted to go into oceanography as a graduate student, but it fell through at the last minute; ended up in petroleum geology, which he knew nothing about. He found the pay good when he got into it, but that is not why he entered the industry. Other than petroleum, could have gone into mining, or gotten a job with the USGS or a private company.

Job security: '70s were pretty good; Tenneco started laying workers off in '85; sold to Chevron '89. Between '85-89 went through three periods where did not know if they would have a job the next day; traumatic and hard on family; made plans to go into teaching if he lost his job. In the '90s, Chevron had layoffs every three years; people seemed used to it. He took a voluntary retirement in '99. [Transcription ends]

Family: wife stopped working after the birth of first of two sons; sons not in oil industry.

OPEC embargos: created an artificial supply and demand. High price of oil and gas caused explosion in drilling in late '70s; courting of college students by companies to fill jobs; paid lots of money for leases. Artificial build up of industry and over production put in position for a big fall with drop in prices; "the higher you go, the further you fall." Natural gas follows more natural supply and demand; gases "bubble" burst much later.

Tenneco: became a conglomerate in early '80s (describes); they were huge. Had to sell 50% of assets to pay off bills.

Offshore TX and LA: TX has less offshore production than LA; differing state/federal offshore lines.

Bill Flowers

Tyler, TX

June 18, 1999

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

SOC031

Ethnographic Preface:

Bill Flowers had a long career with Shell beginning in 1948. He graduated from TCU with Masters Degrees in Math and Physics. His early career with Shell had him working in West Texas, New Mexico, and Louisiana. He became Chief Geophysicist in New York and later Director of Exploration Research in Shell's research center in Houston. In 1975, shell made him General Manager for Exploration, in 1980 Vice President for Eastern E&P, and finally President of Shell Offshore in 1983. During his career he was a key figure in developing the Gulf of Mexico, and an important component to the bright spot discovery.

Summary:

This interview covered elements of various lease sales from 1962-1974. He also discussed the Drainage Sale at Bay Marchand. Tied with this information he explained the discovery, importance, and implementation of bright spots. He also had commentary on 3-D seismic and seismic stacking. Also important was his conversation on the move to deep water.

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L.J. Folse

Houma, LA

March 17, 2003

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS017

#### Ethnographic Preface:

LJ Folse was recommended by Diana Edmonson as the banker with the most extensive experience in the area. She contacted him and got his approval for an interview. I met him at his office and we talked for about three hours the first time; in fact I ran out of tape and had to take notes for the last hour. I later met with him on an informal basis on March 31, when we talked for another four hours. He is very interested in the study, feels it is important, but also is aware it is an immense amount of work.

LJ Folse is a long term banker in Houma. He grew up in Thibodaux and considers himself to be "Cajunized" even though he is of German ancestry. After serving in the Navy in Korea, he completed a degree in personnel management at LSU, and began working for Patterson Industries in 1956. He started work at the Bank of Terrebonne in 1957, and rose up to Executive Vice President and Chief Operations Officer. In 1986 he was the organizing chairman of the First National Banker's Bank. In 1988, he joined the Premier Bank Group as chief operations officer and stayed with them after their 1995 buyout by Bank One. In 1998, he worked with a group of local investors to create Coastal Commerce Bank to serve the local community. At present, he is Chief Executive Officer of Coastal Commerce.

#### Summary:

Banking Oil Money: The shift from agriculture to oil "made" the local banks. For years, oil has been the principal source of revenue for Terrebonne Parish; it still is. Banks in the 50s and 60s tended to have a large amount of business financing oil and oil service companies, and so were caught in the 1980s Bust. Today, the large oil companies have their own financing to fund offshore activities, but local banks still provide loans to independent lease operators and oil service companies. His bank at present has about 25% directly related to oil work, but he also noted that a lot of construction and real estate loans are indirectly tied to oil work. They try to diversify as much as possible but there aren't many non-oil avenues available.

Local Oil Businesses: Rollins Patterson Corporation has trucking, oil services, and part ownership of Coastal Commerce Bank. Brady Engine is the major supplier of marine engines, which prospered from the oil fields. Bollinger and Edison Chouest both started as local fishermen but expanded with oil work. Edison Chouest is probably the largest operation in southern Louisiana. In the 1980s Bust, Chouest went into some long-term contract arrangements which paid off well when the work picked up again.

Community Problems: There were some problems with local corruption - "You didn't get anyplace unless you paid somebody off." The Texas Company was known to have paid off Huey Long. The oil companies weren't well respected by the banking community in New Orleans - "The New Orleans 'blue-blood' bankers chased the energy industry away," which is why they are consolidating in Houston. That process continues today. A major issue has been education, which was affected by local work - "We're one of the worst in education, and that's because we're livin' off the land and the sea." "Kids since the 50s have said, 'What the hell do I need with education, when I can work in the oil patch?'" Now it is hard for those people to go to work for the oil companies because they do need more education on the automated platforms.

Family Relations: The fishermen were away from home for long periods of time, and when the oil industry brought in the 7 and 7 schedule that made "two industries without a dad."

Blacks in the Oil Field: There was segregation in Houma and desegregation was hard, but "We were probably no different than any other place." He feels that the people from Oklahoma and Texas tended to keep Blacks out of the oil fields.

Montegut: In the early days, Montegut sat "literally on top" of the richest inland mineral leases in Terrebonne Parish. Texaco moved in strongly, and was at one time the largest employer in the parish. Montegut was also for a long time under the control of Royal Pellegrin, a political boss who had power over government activity in the area.

Environmental Issues: The land loss has multiple causes. The Mississippi levees stopped silt buildup. The Houma Ship Channel brought in salt water intrusion which destroyed much of the fresh water marsh habitat. The fisheries are in decline because of the loss of the estuaries. "The re-introduction of fresh water is the only way to save the land."

Community Change: People came to Terrebonne for the jobs and then they would usually send for their families. ..."it brought many people from so many diverse backgrounds together." "Before the oil patch started there wasn't a Mason in Terrebonne Parish." They tended to be better educated and came in as managers. They often brought in other people to work for them. "Plantation Syndrome" - outside managers came in with money and control over jobs and exploited the situation. They took the lion's share of the profits and gave the local people some jobs to keep them happy. The oil patch people were not involved in local civic and government affairs, did not invest in the community. "It was worse than the plantation syndrome because the minerals are gone..." "The worst thing is that it was all too easy; it was all there for the asking...we all thought we were pretty damn smart."

Mike Forrest

Houston, TX

June 29, 1999

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

SOC015

### Ethnographic Preface:

Mike Forrest got his B.S. in geological engineering from St. Louis University and joined Shell Oil in 1955. He moved through the company and became Senior Geophysicist for the New Orleans E&P area. It was here that he documented the bright spot phenomenon that changed the way Shell and the industry searched for hydrocarbons. He continued working for various branches of the company with the highlights being from 1965-1975. During that time he discovered bright spots and was heavily involved in preparing for various Gulf of Mexico lease sales. In 1978 he became Division Exploration Manager for the Frontier Division, Western E&P, and in 1979, Pacific Frontier Division. He became General Manager for Shell Offshore in 1984. Finally, in 1987 he was elected president of Pecten International. He served in that position until his retirement in 1992.

### Summary:

Tremendous interview from an important figure in offshore exploration. Extensive discussion of bright spots including discovery, documentation, implementation, and how where the term came from. Chronological discussion of lease sales from 1960 until 1974 and then more discussion on the move to deep water. Excellent information on the quality of various fields, Cognac, Alaska, etc. Insight into his years with Pecten including mention of Brazil and Cameroon. He ends the interview with a commentary on the 3-D Seismic.

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Joe B. Foster

Houston, TX

April 22, 2002

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest, Joseph Pratt  
University of Houston/History International  
MMS003

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Joe Foster worked for Tenneco for 31 years, last serving as chairman of Tenneco Oil Company and executive vice president and director of Tenneco, Inc. He was born in Arp, TX and received petroleum engineering and business degrees from Texas A&M. He managed Tenneco's extremely successful exploration and production operations in offshore Gulf of Mexico. Foster is famous in the industry for opposing the decision of the Tenneco board in 1988 to sell the Tenneco oil company to use the proceeds to salvage some of its less-profitable companies. In 1989, he founded Newfield Exploration Company, which became one of the top producers of oil and gas in the Gulf of Mexico, largely by applying 3-D seismic technology. He retired from active management in 2000, but remains a highly respected and influential figure in the industry. He lives in Houston.

#### Summary:

The interview provides great insight into Tenneco's success and strategies in the Gulf of Mexico beginning in the 1960s, moving to diversify its gas supplies and acquiring large acreage in the gas-prone blocks of the Western Gulf of Mexico. Talks about how Tenneco improved its exploration efforts by learning to manage risks better. Good anecdotes on pipelining, Gardner Simonds (Tenneco CEO and chairman), and developments in the 1970s. Some discussion of 3-D seismic and Newfield start-up.

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Robert Fournet

Lafayette, LA

June 11, 2002

Interviewed by: David DiTucci

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

DD002

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Robert Fournet graduated in 1952 from Southwestern Louisiana Institute with a degree in geology; during his college years he did some roustabouting and roughneck work. Upon graduating he worked for Superior Oil Company as a roughneck, but was soon called into service with the Navy for a year. When he returned he went to work for Hycalog for two-thirds of a year and then for Eastman Oil Well Survey Company, where he stayed for 10 years. After leaving Eastman, he took a job with Directional Engineers, Inc., where he developed and operated a surveying division for eight years. His wife and he formed the Bob Fournet Company and bought the division he had been operating at Directional Engineers; they ran the company for 25 years, until they sold it in 1996 to a Canadian company. Mr. Fournet stayed on with the company for two more years as a consultant before retiring in 1998. He talks at length about the early offshore industry, particularly about specific companies. He then discusses his own company.

#### Summary:

Career: got a degree in geology at SLI in 1952; got into a training program with Superior Oil Company, but drafted into the Navy for a year; went to work for Hycalog when returned for about eight months; worked for Eastman Oil Well Survey Company for 10 years; formed and developed a surveying division with Directional Engineers for eight years; his wife and he bought the division and renamed it the Bob Fournet Company; after 25 years, sold the company to [Computerlog?] in '96; retired in '98.

Early offshore: J. Ray McDermott early on were probably the only people who had the capability to build offshore platform and installation of those platforms; in '46 built a piling platform off Cameron, probably first move offshore. Things were primitive; used a rope to swing from boats to structures; service personnel supplied their own food and didn't have sleeping quarters. ODECO and Laborde; submersible barges. Before that were working off fixed platforms. PHI started as a branch of the American Exploration Company.

Schedule: always worked as service personnel so length of stay offshore varied from hours to days; on 24-hour call.

Louisiana vs. Texas offshore: developed earlier in LA because in TX they fought the federal government for definition of offshore in the courts; more productive in LA because had immediate success.

Danger: enjoyed the exposure to new things, but sometimes it was very dangerous; got caught offshore during a hurricane (drill barge Scorpion).

Surveying: with Directional Drillers developed a kind of downhole surveying with gyroscopes, '67.

Bob Fournet Company: worked all over the world surveying; tools and method.

1980s bust: went into survival mode; went from 155 employees worldwide to only 18 domestically; took himself off payroll. Started to turn around in '87-88; began hiring people again but only domestically; became profitable again. In early '90s created measurement while drilling (MWD) system (describes).

Finding workers: hired 17-18 ex-Marines who had been part of a geodetic surveying platoon. Didn't have trouble finding workers because had knowledgeable people and a training program. Because they worked for government agencies, they needed to have minorities on their payroll. They rewarded workers with percentages of their sales.

Competition: when they started they were the only independent surveying company in the world; people quit larger companies to form new companies to compete against them.

Sons: his three sons worked for him during college during the summer; none were interested in the business, which made it easy on him.

Industry effects on Lafayette: provided jobs; helped grow the population. Today have more economic diversity (banking, medical, education, manufacturing); not dependent on oil like they used to, so could better survive another industry bust. Oil Center now houses many other types of offices and businesses; Oil Center and surrounding small towns (Crowley, Opelousas).

Blizzard: after going to work for Hycalog, sent to Montana at Christmas time to relieve some older men on a mud logging unit; marooned on rig during a blizzard.

Antoine "Tee" Francis

Dulac, LA

July 23, 2003, January 19, 2005

Interviewed by: Scott Kennedy, Betsy Plumb, Joanna Stone

University of Arizona

SK002, JLS03

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Mr. Antoine "Tee" Francis by his sister Corine Paulk. He and his wife told me that he had had a stroke the previous year that made it difficult for him to remember the details of his work and to completely understand my questions. Mary helped us with parts of the conversation, and it seemed to me that he could figure out my questions better if they were asked in French. It appeared to trouble him that he could not remember well enough to give me more information, but we had a pleasant conversation despite some of the communication difficulties.

The second interview was conducted as part of the study of the links between WWII and the offshore industry. Tee's sister, Corinne Paulk set up this interview and brought Tee to the church for the interview. This interview focuses mainly on his childhood and the almost five years he spent in the Army during WWII. During the interview he was wearing a badge designed for Native WWII veterans.

Antoine Francis is Houma Indian and was born and raised in Dulac, Louisiana. Throughout his life he worked as both a tugboat captain and as a fisherman, often following seasonal work. As a tugboat captain he transported barges carrying oil and equipment both in and out of the Gulf of Mexico. He worked for Golper Brothers for ten and a half years without missing a single day, and retired from Western Company at the age of 63. He now lives with his wife in Dulac.

#### Summary of SK002:

Personal history: Born in Dulac, LA; Served in military

Employment history: Tugboat captain, fisherman, shrimper, worked for LBM Towing, the Golper Brothers, and L.T. Candice; Towed 200 ft barges with crude oil or equipment; Seasonal work was common before and is still practiced; Cost of living has increased more than wages

#### Summary of JLS03:

Tee was one of a small group of people who had served in WWII and been involved in the early development of the offshore oil and gas industry in the Gulf of Mexico and was interviewed in a joint project of the University of Arizona, U.S. Minerals Management Service, and the National D-Day Museum. In this interview, Tee talks mostly about his experiences during WWII.

Personal history: Tee was born on December 4, 1923; His mother was pregnant many times, but because of difficulties getting to and from their house, the doctor was unable to attend some of the births and only ten children survived

Childhood: Tee went to school until the 4th grade, when he had to leave to find work because his father was sick; He had fished since he was younger, so he worked mainly in that, trawling and shrimping; He was young during the Depression, but he remembers it as a difficult time; The first house he remembers was in Four Point, and the roof was covered with palmetto leaves, the children helped to construct it; His family left that house when he was 2 years old and kept moving up the bayou; He remembers catching alligators, frogs, and hunting throughout his childhood; He spoke French at home but learned English in school

Military service: Tee was drafted into the army at age 18; He served in the infantry and was trained in reconnaissance; He was sent to New York and Virginia and then to Europe; His knowledge of French got him a transfer off the front line and he went to work with the officers at headquarters doing interpretation; He tells a story of crossing the Rhine River, they went as far as the Siegfried Line; They had to dig holes to sleep in and take turns eating; He tells a story about taking three German prisoners on one of his reconnaissance missions; He was part of the 46th tank battalion, reconnaissance company; He was at the Battle of the Bulge and remembers it as being very cold with a few feet of snow, that was the first time he had seen snow; When the war ended, he didn't have enough points to come home, so he stayed in Germany for 3 more months, doing guard duty; Upon his return to the US, he went to New Orleans and Hattiesburg, Mississippi and then went to visit his sister Josephine who was in Illinois; In total he spent about 5 years in the Army.

W.D. Frazell

Lafayette, LA

July 31, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz, David DiTucci

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW015

#### Ethnographic Preface:

W.D. Frazell was born in 1913 in Resell, Texas, a small town near Waco. He received a BS degree at Southern Methodist University and a Master's degree in Geology at University of Texas at Austin in 1935. He worked for United Gas Line Company before going into the Navy during WWII. He moved to Southern LA in 1955, where he was responsible for drilling many oil wells. He also discusses the oil industry's impact on Lafayette.

#### Summary:

Early life: born 1913 in Resell, TX near Waco; father a farmer.

Education: earned a bachelor's degree at Southern Methodist University; brought a cow with him, lived with his sister and her two small children; gave milk to the children and sold milk in neighborhood. He received a Master's degree from University of Texas, Austin in 1935.

Employment: worked for United Gas Line Company after graduating; transferred to Shreveport, LA, worked as a scout; kept United Gas Line aware of what other companies were doing; one job duty was to take well cuttings and examine the sample to compare with other wells drilled in the area.

World War II: volunteered for the Navy; sent to work in the code room in Seattle, WA; then sent to Princeton University and the Naval Gunnery School. In 1942, after training, was sent to Gulf of Mexico to practice; put on Navy Merchant (liberty) Ship with a Navy Gun Crew; sent to Omaha Beach in France during the D-Day invasion; unloaded the equipment and troops for the invasion, made about thirty trips across the channel; went to the states and prepared for the Japanese invasion, but the Japanese surrendered.

After WWII: returned to Shreveport, found another scouting job, but did not stay long at that job; found a different scouting job with Wellford Willness Oil Company in Aberdeen, Texas. In 1955, Mr. Frazell noticed that South Louisiana was very active; moved to Lafayette, LA; worked in Lake Charles and Elton before Lafayette; was responsible for drilling a number of wells that produced oil and gas.

Review of work in oil industry: would research old oil logbooks to see which on and offshore wells look promising; now better technology to produce more oil than in the past; started the Lafayette Log Association; had about fourteen members; regrets that they sold their library to a company in Houston; subsequently formed another called the Acadia Log Library; many log

libraries now in existence; logs show where sands are located, the curves show where the wells are; logs are now very complicated and are harder to read than in the past.

Final thoughts: moved to Lafayette in 1955, during an economic boom; had a hard time finding a place to live. People of this state were nice to him when he moved here; enjoys the food especially the crawfish and seafood. The oil industry made Lafayette; Heymann was instrumental in his role in building the Oil Center; retired in December 1996 and has no regrets about working in the oil industry.

Larry Frederick

Lafayette, LA

February 17, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW040

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Larry Fredrick was born in 1938 in Abbeville, Louisiana. His father drove truck and later worked for about 40 years for a farm supply company, Victor Supply Company. At the age of 16, he lost one of his legs. After graduating from Mount Carmel High School in 1957, he studied mechanics at a trade school for two years. After that, he sold parts and worked at a service station. In 1964, he went to work for Young Towing, a crew boat company. After work there went sour, he returned to working at a service station. In 1967 he was hired as a crew boat captain by Cajun Marine (later Acadian Marine, then Lafayette Crew Boats). After the company sold out in 1988, he retired for about a year, before going to work for the City of Abbeville's water treatment facility. He quit as a supervisor in 1996. He describes his relationship with his boss and the people with whom he came into contact. He says he would do it all over again in the blink of an eye and that he is satisfied with his life.

#### Summary:

Early life: born ('38) and raised in Abbeville, LA; father started out as truck driver and went on to work for Victor Supply Company for 40 years; graduated from Mount Carmel High in '57; after high school, went to a trade school for two years (studied mechanics); sold parts; was let go, jobs hard to find, went to work at a service station, but didn't make enough money.

Crew boats: had experience racing hydros; went to work for Young Towing in Abbeville in '64; business soured, went back to work at service station.

Cajun Marine: was hired as their first captain in '67; first job was on the Atchafalaya River for a workover rig; company grew a lot, lots of boats were built, got to be one of biggest crew boat companies in LA; company changed its name to Lafayette Crew Boats six or seven years after he was hired. In the late '80s, business died out; he was the last one to leave in '88.

After oil career: worked for City of Abbeville waste water treatment plant until '96; went to Massachusetts for five years and did missionary work; moved back to LA in '01; now a part-time security guard and is semi-retired.

Atchafalaya Workover: contracted crew boat from Young Towing for a year; worked four and four, but almost 24 hours day when on; would help change crews and haul supplies; describes what workover rigs did.

Penrod Drilling: were drilling for Exxon out of [Carmal?]; contracted with Cajun Marine; worked seven and seven, with two boats splitting the days on; would make three to five runs a day for the drilling rig; life on the rigs; worked for them for about eight years.

Going offshore: when changed name to Lafayette Marine, started servicing offshore rigs; "That's when things started getting hairy" - more responsibility, bigger boats, rough conditions; took a special person to work offshore. Best part was meeting lots of new people (e.g., Brazilian man from Petrofina, conversed in French); missed his family really badly - kids grew up fast, but wife raised them well; part he regrets is two people he lost offshore.

Handicap: lost a leg when 16; not many employment opportunities for handicapped - insurance concerns; Landry didn't know he was handicapped when he hired him.

Darrel Landry: owner of Cajun/Acadian Marine and Lafayette Crew Boats; Frederick had a close relationship with him; had a scene with Frederick's wife that they still joke about; describes their relationship.

Hurricanes: went through three offshore; once almost lost his life, but a pack of Camel cigarettes saved him.

Life offshore: had a good Cajun cook, popular for his gumbo; would play poker with roughnecks, sometimes all night; some guys would spend their seven days off drinking and never make it home; there was a lot of good people, but some bad people, too. Boat captains had bad reputations; a few bad apples. While offshore, they gambled within limits; no one ever got hurt. Would pull jokes on people; describes how his leg was stolen several times; knew they liked him because they picked on him. New people on the rig had to earn others' trust.

Logan Fromenthal

Morgan City, LA

July 6, 2004

Interviewed by: Jamie Christy

University of Houston/History International

MMS037

Ethnographic Preface:

Logan Fromenthal was from Morgan City. He went to the University of South Louisiana in Lafayette and went to work for Shell Oil as a laborer in 1964 at the age of 19. He worked West Delta Block 30 and West Delta Blocks 105 and 133 and was promoted to gauger. Mr. Fromenthal transferred to the Domestic Raw Material Supply (Shell's transportation group) and worked there for 30 years. He worked another two years in production and when he retired was responsible for all of the crude oil storage facilities in Louisiana. He cleaned up several spills in southwest Louisiana. He retired from Shell Oil in 1996 and continues to do sales work in the oil field.

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Lester Fryou

Morgan City, LA

July 6, 2001

Interviewed by: Rylan Higgins

University of Arizona

RH007

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Garver Watkins told me that Lester Fryou had worked at McDermott most of his life and was one of the people hired on in the 1950s. He also told me that Lester would likely be interested in participating in the project. Lester and his wife live in a small home in Morgan City. When I showed up, Lester was the only one home, but his wife showed up part way through the interview. Lester offered me a Coke, and we sat at the kitchen table and started the interview. During the interview, Lester referenced a few of the old pictures that he had, so after the interview, we went into one of the bedrooms and took a look. An entire wall is devoted to various framed pictures of platforms, cranes, and workers, and there are also a few framed certificates indicating some of the awards that Lester has received from McDermott over the years.

Lester was born in 1932 and moved to Bayou Chene as a young child. He went to work for McDermott in 1951 at the age of 18. He began as a general laborer on a dredge barge and transferred to fabrication in 1956 when the company opened its fabrication yard in Amelia. He worked as a crane operator until the 1980's when he was promoted to rigger leaderman, foreman and finally superintendent.

#### Summary:

**Childhood:** Lester was born in 1932 and moved to Bayou Chene when he was four years old. He talked for several minutes about his childhood: he went to school in Gibson; he traveled mostly by boat; his "daddy" trapped and fished for a living.

**First day at McDermott:** In 1951, Lester went to work for McDermott when he was 18 years old. He started as a general laborer on a dredge barge. He talked a bit about this first day, and how busy he stayed that day. McDermott was very small then. They had five bucket dredges and a couple derrick barges.

**Fabrication:** In 1956, Lester transferred from McDermott's dredging division to fabrication. That year, in April, McDermott opened its fabrication yard in Amelia, and Lester went to work in the new yard in September.

**Crane operator:** The dredge barges required skills similar to those of a crane operator, so Lester started as a crane operator in the fabrication yard.

Promotions: He worked as a crane operator until the 1980s. At some point in the early 1980s, he was promoted to rigger leaderman—he was in charge of all riggers. Later in the same decade, Lester was promoted to foreman and then superintendent. In these positions, he was in charge of moving equipment in the yard. He was responsible for 185 other workers when he retired.

Aluminum jackets: In the late 50s, McDermott was building aluminum jackets that were being used in Venezuela. They fabricated several of these types of structures before oil companies realized that aluminum did not work in salt water. After this point, steel was the only material out of which McDermott fabricated structures.

Depth: Lester discussed the progress the offshore industry has made regarding the depth of water in which companies explored for oil. In the 1950s, 100 to 200 feet of water was deep. Now, in 2001, they are exploring for oil in 7000 feet of water.

Labor and loyalty: When Lester worked for McDermott, they company treated him well. If you did your job well, they were good to you, and, at retirement, "you were set for life." He says that is different now. He cited cutbacks and new, stricter safety regulations as the most apparent differences.

History of fabrication: Lester talked for a few minutes about the history of fabrication. He brought up Dupont, Raymond and several oil companies. He talked about some of the first wooden structures and about some of the early buyouts.

McDermott's yard: Lester talked at length about the makeup of the fabrication yard during the 1950s and 1960s. The yard went through an evolution as technology and demand for structures changed. Cranes were the focus of his discussion. The first cranes were steam powered, which caused a lot of problems. By the 1960s, the yard had more sophisticated cranes.

Why fabrication: I asked Lester why he had gotten out of fishing and gone into fabrication. He told me a story about the difficulties of being a fisherman. Other fishermen had regularly been stealing his hoop nets. These nets were the main type used in gulf fishing, and they were very labor intensive to craft and maintain. He got frustrated with the theft and decided to get out. He had always liked tugboats, and, after some looking, got a job on one.

Unions: I asked Lester about early union activity. Lester talked briefly about union activity between 1959 and 1960. He remembered the union vote, which failed. He commented that there was no reason for a union back then. There were no benefits and the pay was compatible with that given in other types of work.

Bill Fullerton

New Iberia, LA

March 19, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA042

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Bill Fullerton at the divers' reunion on March 10, 2002. Bill was a tender for George "Dog" Taylor, and the three of us spent some time talking about oilfield diving during the 1960s and 1970s and especially efforts to increase safety. Bill agreed that I could call him for an interview and was happy to set up a time to meet. We met at his house in New Iberia. Bill has lived in New Iberia since 1974 and is considering moving back to New Orleans, where he began his diving career. During his interview he talks about the Bourbon House in the French Quarter, a major diving hangout and important feature within divers' networks. He also talks about the importance of hurricanes in providing work for divers and his experiences working offshore in the Gulf of Mexico.

Bill's father worked for Gulf Oil Co. After his parents broke up, he was raised by his grandparents in northern Louisiana. He moved to New Orleans in 1960 to take a position at the Times Picayune. When that fell through, he took a job teaching school. He soon met some divers at the Bourbon House in New Orleans. His friends got him a job as a tender in 1962. He then went to diving school in Oakland, CA, did a little abalone diving there, and returned six months later to New Orleans to get into the diving industry full time. He retired from diving in 1980.

#### Summary:

Early occupational history: got a job as a tender in 1962, went to diving school in Oakland, CA, tried abalone diving for six months, then got into the diving industry full time; a hurricane had caused lots of damage, and companies needed lots of divers right away for inspection purposes; lots of construction work offshore and in laying pipelines and salvage work in the Mississippi; estimated that 80% of the work offshore is laying pipelines

Entry into diving: went to college to major in journalism; went to school in Northern Louisiana, journalism department was not so good, so switched to English; got a job teaching in New Orleans in Chalmette; lived in the French Quarter; used to go to Bourbon House there; divers, artists, and writers hung out there; got to know a lot of merchant mariners and divers, got interested; went for one hitch offshore and was hooked; money was great, there was nothing boring, no matter how shallow the water it was always interesting and challenging.

Early jobs: lots of diving in the river; it was dangerous, no visibility, had to learn to do things completely in the dark that you are really not prepared for; good stepping stone for working offshore where there was good visibility; dove in the Mississippi River only to 150-160', past the French Quarter, and then to 185' down around Algiers where lots of tug boats sank; at that time,

the insurance companies would inspect them and would not even try to raise them; would make the inspections and do work for insurance companies; later on worked for diving companies contracted by the oil and pipeline companies to inspect pipelines and install risers from the pipelines to the platforms; sometimes would get inside the leg to make a burnoff or remove the platform; that was very dangerous, only a few people got good at it; some lost their lives.

Career: in later years, involved almost entirely in inspection; going behind the construction and pipeline divers, making sure there was no damage; sometimes making repairs; worked for James Dean Divers, entirely an inspection company; 90 percent inspection divers; would walk the pipeline, diving close to 200' on air; generally not safe to work that deep on air, but with a small company had a lot of redundancy - decompression, diving stages - and felt could dive safely on air; most companies at that time were using mixed gas for anything over 180'; they have longer decompression times; can get more divers in and out diving on compressed air; at first get disoriented and nitrogen narcosis, but learn to pace yourself and keep a clear head; would use mixed gas for 185' and beyond; James Dean Divers had at one time about 25-30 divers and at least that many tenders.

A diving job: depending on water depth; less than 80' would require two divers; number goes up with depth; would have 7-8 divers on a small boat; usually stayed on diving boat unless could find quarters on the lay barge; the diving company usually owned or leased the boat; generally work shut down in the winter; barges would push as long as they could, into December, and then shut down until the end of March; March was the end of the fiscal year for the oil companies, money had usually dried up by the end of the year and projects would not begin until early spring; throughout the rest of the year there would be dry spells when had to find other things to do; I purchased distressed properties, rented and sold them.

Specifics of job: never know length of job, depends on how much damage sustained; generally know how long to lay and inspect pipeline, generally took longer than thought due to equipment breakdown, weather; stayed on boats or on barges; in the early 1960s kind of a strain between barge companies and divers, but once they got to know you and know you were honest and doing your job you got along; had to go through a period of being accepted; attribute tension mostly to pride among divers, most were ex-Navy divers, later divers had come up from tending; initially divers furnished all own equipment; started with old Navy gear, but that was mostly gone by the mid-60s; still good to use when extremely cold conditions; they began designing wetsuits using hot water pumped down to the divers; the diver would be half-freezing and half-burning.

Equipment: Savoie helmet designed in Gulf; communications were clear, no static, could talk like over a regular phone; used lots of Desco masks, they were easy to put on and off; could turn it up and reach under to hold nose and clear ears; Kirby-Morgan mask developed, kept being redesigned; new helmets designed for mixed gas breathing; learned of new equipment through dive shops; one in Morgan City was really good, you could call them and they'd make up a section of hose and send it out offshore for you; one in Westwego good.

Occupational timeline: worked from James Dean on and off from 1968-1978; worked for Taylor Diving a bit in the beginning; before that first with Sanford Brothers in Morgan City, then Norman Knudsen in Morgan City, then S&H Diving in Morgan City, run by Jack Smith; Dick

Evans Divers became McDermott Divers, did a few dives for them; worked for Global Divers when they were just starting out; worked for representatives of Lloyds of London in New Orleans, raising tug boats and barges in the river; once raised a drilling rig in Mexico; George Taylor became a salvage master on that job.

How get jobs: know people in the industry and they call you; if didn't live in the area divers came and made applications to diving companies, they would let you tend for a few years before putting you in the water; if they liked you, they'd put you in the water sooner; had to do with ability and people you know; Bourbon House hard to describe; had been around a long time; place to go to meet anyone in the industry, writers; Tennessee Williams use to hang out there; two parts, one was mostly gay, people would go there and recruit extras for movies; was in 2 or 3 movies; was open through the 1950s and 1960s; when I returned from Venezuela in about 1966-67 it was closed; they had a funeral for it, had a casket; article was written in the paper about it.

New hangout: divers went to Johnny White's bar, adjacent to Pat O'Brien's on St. Peter; also lots of hangouts on the river, the West Bank; also Seven Seas Bar in the Quarter; have gone to Seven Seas when I needed a tender, or got one of my artist friends, especially in shallow water; all they had to do was hold the hose; some started working in the industry; usually there are other people topside who would teach newcomers what to do; those days are long gone; haven't been that way for about 20 years; usually every tender now has been to diving school; major companies have their own training schedule and tanks.

First day offshore: first time in water, was tender for old Navy divers working for Sanford in Morgan City; first time was scary, didn't know how to clear my ears, at night couldn't see anything in about 65' of water; worked as tender, then hurricane hit; companies were calling around, needing divers; Norman Knudsen called, asked how long I had been diving; I lied, said two years; went out and got the job done, doing inspections for platforms, took measurements and pictures that were then sent to Houston; it was a strange dive, the first time I was face-to-face with a shark; got away, he stayed there the whole time; never had any real problems with sharks; saw migrating hammerheads, describing it all to the guys over the phone, they didn't believe me.

Biggest changes: some things never change, personal aspects like making friends do not change; when find someone who is honest and totally committed to safety should hang onto them; companies not always receptive to having people point out problems; it usually meant shutting job down; they'd look at the bottom line before safety, some of those things are still happening; one friend told me his company told him he was too safety conscious, not long after that somebody got killed, about 7 weeks ago in the Gulf; doesn't generally make the press; when it does it's just mentioned as another offshore accident; Coast Guard usually has an inquiry; a lot of people died working in the river in the early days; the river is so strong you have to tie yourself down where you're working, couldn't see; before I got in I heard about divers getting caught by logs.

Laying pipeline: marine surveyors laid out the line, checked to see if crossing another; usually there would be one of them on the pipe-laying barge with the diving inspectors; sometimes problems between diver and topside, the diver would come up and describe what he saw,

different than the plans, they'd send a more experienced diver to see what he had, even then they would look 3-4 times to come to a decision; we'd come across a lot of that on platforms designed by Houston engineers, things that were not there that were supposed to be there according to the blueprints.

Into oilfield: father worked for Gulf Oil Co., parents broke up, raised by grandparents in northern Louisiana; did not imagine getting into oilfield; had roughnecked, had minor injury after first year, decided to go back to college; few years later back in oilfield, saw more injuries, story of deckhand on whom welding machine fell, was dying, nobody helping, he was in shock; I had been medic in the Army, went and raised his legs, put oxygen mask on, barge captain and others told me to leave him alone or I'd get in trouble; I took a picture of the wire rope that broke, it should never have been used, he never should have been standing under it; I took the picture, was pretty naïve at the time, gave the roll of film to the barge captain; they relieved me shortly afterward; I didn't even make the dive; not only the barge captain but the insurance company did not want to know about the rope; "That was my first introduction to insurance companies and the callousness of people who worked under those conditions." about 1964; that attitude persists, a lot of people so concerned about litigation they don't want anything to do with it.

Attitude of divers toward each other: they'd do whatever is possible to do; doctors have to go into chamber with divers; only a few; we had treatment tables to 300' for compressed air; tables have evolved, but can never be perfect; have to add some time, get the guy off the bottom to first decompression stage, add a couple of minutes, then a little; a lot of major companies back then would do a lot of repeating, you're out of the water 4-5 hours and they want to put you back in; repetitive diving on jobs going around the clock; after several repetitive dives divers start getting hurt; think they stopped doing that because of Coast Guard regulations; not many Coast Guard regs, mostly OSHA came in; they almost put a stop to live boating, where tender and boat skipper are following a diver's bubble; everyone has to know each other and not have too much current; I was fortunate, worked for companies where we all knew each other, decided how much bottom time we would have; usually divers scheduled to go next would be up watching tenders, listening.

Changes with OSHA: attempt to organize a union, never got off the ground; that's what brought OSHA in, divers getting killed or hurt; George Taylor had meeting at his house, probably around 1972, 1970; actually organized a union, but nothing came of it; called International Divers' Association; Taylor divers not able to join; practically whole Gulf of Mexico is anti-union; have unions on the west coast and divers make twice as much money and are twice as safe, same in Alaska.

Why stay in: money still good, daily rates and extra per foot; could make a couple thousand dollars for one day's work, 15-20 years ago; now a lot of people are on salary and day rates, don't make as much as they used to; money was the prime reason, also being on the water; moved to New Iberia about 1974, did diving in Texas, out of Intracoastal City, New Orleans; boys in school, mother lived in New Iberia; was gone most of the time, so didn't matter where I lived; did not know any other divers in New Iberia at the time; most divers lived in Morgan City or New Orleans, some in Houma; beginning in the mid-70s lots of employees were from Seattle; a lot of people moved across the lake in the 60s and 70s, could buy property at a reasonable price;

in the 70s, started diving for companies, did not need your own equipment anymore; looking back, don't know how successful I would have been if I had done other things; don't know if I would have had the same enthusiasm I had for diving; every job presented problems you had to figure out; example of friend recently injured when told he had to do a job under dangerous conditions or they'd get someone else; don't think they can say that to them today; tried to salvage the Andrea Doria.

Taylor Diving: Mark Banjavich, Humpy Taylor and another guy out of the Navy at the same time, bought equipment and started company; Humpy the only one with money, so they named it Taylor; Humpy got out, Mark sold to Brown & Root; Walt Daspit and his brother had one of the first diving companies in New Orleans before Taylor Diving.

Education: met a few people who were college grads, but we would never admit it, would never let anybody know; after they knew you it was okay, show you can do the work; at first you don't act like you've graduated from high school, much less college; did not put that on any applications; a lot of divers didn't have high school education, the best divers were mechanically gifted; they could fix anything; lots of good divers died on the road, drinking or driving too fast, including Neal Landry who built the Landry phone; could use without turning off air as had to do with earlier models.

André Galerne

Scottsdale, AZ

December 17, 2001

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA021

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to André Galerne by Jim Doré, the president of the Association for Diving Contractors. André is a former president of ADC and has been on the board of the organization for much of the past 25 years. Jim called André for me from his office in New Iberia, and André was very friendly and agreed to talk with me. André lived in New York for almost 40 years and had moved to Scottsdale in the past few years. When I learned he was in Arizona, I suggested that I could visit with him some time. André was very amenable to the idea but told me it would be better to wait until the end of November because he was going to Liverpool to speak at the annual meeting of the Historical Diving Society. I waited until December and called to set up an appointment. André remembered our conversation and said he was happy for me to come by. He gave me specific directions to his very large house in Scottsdale. A very old French fountain with a metalwork sign, "les fontaines" let me know I was at the right house. André is an amiable character with a fascinating history. This interview cannot do justice to his life and experiences; we focused mostly on the origins and function of the ADC and his perceptions of the Gulf of Mexico.

André is 75 years old and arrived in the United States from France, via Canada in 1962. He worked with Jacques Cousteau on Calypso and then found he was more interested in working underwater and started his first diving company in 1952. He started the International Underwater Contractors in New York in 1962. He did not get into offshore work until around 1970 when things got serious in the Gulf of Mexico. He became involved with ADC in 1976 and president around 1980. ADC was formed by a group of five diving companies who were operating in the Gulf and decided to fight unionization. Their goal was to establish standards so that the government would not start imposing regulations on the diving companies. André's specialty was in mixing gas for deep diving. He worked as a consultant for NASA on the Gemini and Apollo space programs. André's company was unionized because it was from New York, and he did not do too many jobs in the Gulf because the divers received such low pay and worked under dangerous conditions. André argued that one of the main reasons he joined ADC was because there were so many accidents in the Gulf that it was affecting everyone's reputation and insurance rates.

#### Summary:

Early history: company in France; worked with Cousteau; 1959 to Canada; started company in United States in 1962; nothing offshore until 1970; started company in Bermuda.

History with ADC: 5 diving companies from Gulf formed ADC to fight the union; feared regimentation; now ADC International with chapters in South America, etc.; joined in 1976; coonass way of doing business; on board 7 years but kicked out; only Yankee in the middle of the coonasses; agreed to be president when the ADC president had to move to Aberdeen with company; before his first meeting Bill Doré informed him the board wanted his resignation; presented his plan; at that time very violent, one or two fist fights at every meeting; one president shot by his wife; reorganized ADC to increase representation of members, tie dues to company profits, allow all equal vote; upgraded the magazine; ended verbal agreements.

Safety: ADC has subcommittees on safety; lots done to insure safety of the divers; compared to France; fear of lawsuits, company pays whether following the law or not; now working to get subcommittee for ROV safety - have powerful generators on surface, fear people will be killed by electrocution.

IUC history: involved in northeast and Canada in building bridges, installing underwater cable; salvage; specialty was gas mixing for deep diving; put man at 1,100 feet in 1968; worked four years, one week a month, on Gemini and Apollo projects; quit when they did not follow his recommendations and killed three astronauts using pure oxygen; problem with NASA module; had begun his study in France because wanted to become test pilot until problems with Germans forced him to run away.

Start in diving: after WWII in France working with programs for alienated young people; did spelunking to challenge the young men; found underground river; got diving equipment, learned to use it; stayed with deep sea diving; student's uncle worked with Electricity of Friends, company that owned all dams, etc.; asked to help with a drilling project under lake; got job that lasted 8 years, with 8 guys from his group; had too much work, started school to train people, designed a chamber because doctors did not know what they were dealing with; divers were also civil engineers.

Working in the Gulf: not easy for a union company from New York; divers working in Gulf not stupid enough to claim the same pay and benefits as they did in NY; lots of divers down there were union members but never let on to companies; left Gulf and went to California in 1992 because they were paying divers too little; exploiting divers because they wanted to dive; would have less problems if "moving shit" because people wouldn't want to do it and would demand more money; 2 unions in NY worked with general contractors association and paid much higher wages than in Gulf.

Early problems in industry: before ADC lots of divers killed; no standard on training, equipment; guys from Gulf were courageous but not well educated in the industry, loss VERY bad, looked bad on everybody; loss often avoidable; early days many more divers from Louisiana; organized ADC into chapters so each region could focus on problems of their region; saw problems in the North Sea; they needed divers over there, brought in people from the Gulf, but they were not used to diving under those conditions, lost lots of divers; civil engineer divers and offshore divers completely different people; companies split domestic and international; domestic are the coonasses, very hard workers but clannish and don't know the world; international know how to work in other countries.

School in NY: training divers all the time; lose money; level of education of divers in the Gulf was very low; André's school developed gas mixing tables, etc.; divers had to learn how to use them; come in with high school degrees; equipment he developed is found all over the world except in the Gulf because they don't know how to mix gas on the job; mixing the gas on the job costs less, but requires understanding.

Changes from early days in Louisiana: would dress a guy and put him in the water, see if he comes back; few diving schools before 1980; ADC started diving book where divers record their experience; all but one of early diving companies started and run by divers; now have managers of diving companies who aren't divers; dream for every diver is to have a diving company; now have ROVs, most divers not capable of becoming technicians.

Mary Ann Galletti

Houston, TX

July 26-28, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA057

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Mary Ann Galletti at the president's reception of the Association for Diving Contractors meeting in New Orleans. Mary Ann's husband, John Galletti, was a co-owner of J&J Marine Services, one of the few Texas diving companies that was able to get jobs in Louisiana in the early days. John was one of the founding members of the ADC. The ADC named an award after John after his death from cancer in 1977. Mary Ann and I talked with a couple of divers and company owners at the reception and then went to dinner later at the motel restaurant. We talked for several hours and arranged that I would interview her on my next trip through Houston. I drove to Louisiana for the July field session so that I could stop at several places on the way back. I called Mary Ann, and she was happy to arrange an interview. We agreed that I would meet her at the office of S&J Diving where she is now employed. We talked a bit at the office while Mary Ann finished up work, and then we went to her apartment. I spent the next two days talking with Mary Ann and going through several large boxes of files that she has from the days of J&J. Though John was the company's owner, Mary Ann ran the office, scheduled the divers, and kept things going. After John's death, she kept the company going for several years until finally selling it to CalDive. I taped our first two conversations, but Mary Ann was not comfortable with the tape and asked that we talk without it. The latter part of this discussion is recorded only in my notes.

Mary Ann was born in 1938 in Galveston, Texas. She began working at age 10 at a neighborhood store owned by John's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Galletti. John was gone for many years; he was 11 years older than she was and had left Galveston to enter the SeaBees. John returned to Galveston and worked at a couple of jobs before beginning work as a commercial diver. He and Mary Ann were married in February 1956 when she was 18. They moved to Pasadena, Texas in August. Mary Ann had their first of five children in 1957. From the beginning, she worked with John, first helping with billings and repairing gear and later, as the company grew, managing the office.

#### Summary:

Introduction to diving: married in February 1956, 18 years old; John was independent commercial diver; had Galletti's Diving Service; began freelancing with Doyal Short, a diver with his own company; had a few customers in Galveston, Lake Charles and stayed very busy; Mary Ann worked for insurance agency before married and through June, then moved with John to Pasadena where he could be closer to other divers in the area; John was gone about 50 percent of their first year of marriage; would not know when he was going or when he was coming back.

Early years with company: had first child by March 1957; stayed home full time and helped with billings, repairing gear; still didn't know what they were doing out there; communicated through marine operator; close friends were engineers or other divers; when home he was working on diving equipment, talking to customers; started with Mark V helmets, diving suits, Navy radios; John got ammo box and made a new radio; worked with a fellow at a TV repair place; gross earnings were about \$15,000 a year, no payroll taxes, no insurance; charged for 8 hour shift and anything else was overtime; divers got \$60, tenders \$30; charged for gear rental.

Other divers: first 3 or 4 years pretty much worked among 6 people; one would dive, one would tend, split pay; group worked pretty closely together; whoever did the hiring kept the gear rental pay; most of the work through Doyal Short and for Brown & Root; John also worked for plants in Lake Charles, Texas City, Houston Lighting and Power; relationship with Doyal ended with large job out of Corpus Christi when Doyal brought in other divers; John and Joe Carroll were sort of blackballed, decided to run their own company; John had two complete sets of diving equipment, don't think Joe had any, eventually got Brown & Root as customer and brought in more divers from the area; bought first truck.

Decompression: by early 1960s hired Peter Edel to work on dive tables; all done from home in the garage; Peter worked with slide rule; he started at \$1,000 a month, a tremendous amount, we didn't know from month to month if we could pay his salary; don't remember when bought first chamber; divers did decompression in the water.

Machine shop: Hurricane Carla hit in 1962, flooded large areas, including machine shop John used; man's son didn't want it so John bought it all for \$3,500; bought building in Pasadena for \$7,500; when not on dive jobs, he spent his time in the shop working on the old machinery; able to put together their own compressors, pumps; business was in our home the first 10 years, Mary Ann did billing, payroll, correspondence; stay up after putting the kids to bed; John would leave a list of things to do; had 5 kids.

Changes in business operation: in first 10 years government stepped in, had to pay payroll taxes; could subcontract if someone advertised in the yellow pages, otherwise paid FICA, etc.; in those years problems with insurance began to crop up; no one familiar with divers' insurance; found man through yellow pages who stayed till sold the business; paid \$9.68 per \$100 worth of payroll; later it started going up and really escalated; as got more equipment, charged for each piece, money went into more equipment; continually expanding; J&J was probably the biggest independent diving company in Texas; like Continental and S&H in Louisiana; no large, publicly owned companies back then; John continued to be gone, went out as supervisor.

Getting divers and jobs: at first tenders became divers, then a couple of schools opened; mainly training in the service or one of the schools like Coastal School of Diving in California; guys would contact you looking for particular divers for jobs they had; we might send 10-12 guys out; after about 15 years John stopped going out, by then more competition; lots of trial and error; John got interested in diving in SeaBees, didn't go directly to diving, first had poultry market, then to electronics school in Chicago, then to International School of Diving and taught by E.R. Cross; in school with Murray Black who created DiveCon; John's last job was on a tanker that had totally disappeared in the Gulf - the VA Fogg; had diver on experiment from Chino Prison in

early 1970s; he went down and cracked the safe on that tanker; a year or two later John was diagnosed with cancer; he lost one lung.

Hydraulic business: John was talking to someone with Bowen-McLaughlin; they built and sold Army tanks, would discard parts they didn't use; John got them; our little shop was used for making our own tools, would plumb our own chambers; business grew with the increase in offshore work and in depth of water; if worked well for one customer they kept you busy; worked and lived off barges.

[tape off for first session]

Payment: at first whatever the number of hours you worked up to 8, you'd get paid for an 8 hour shift; if went over 8 hours you'd get paid for a second 8 hour shift; at that time, Taylor Divers worked for Brown & Root Pipeline, J&J worked for Brown & Root Marine Operators; Taylor came up with 12 hour day, 8 straight and 4 overtime; things were getting competitive; originally you got paid for 3 dives if you did 3, then they changed to where if you did more than 2 dives you'd get paid for only the deeper one; that's when John had a fit; they should have stuck together; in order to compete you had to do the same thing; then insurance went up, whether we worked or didn't we had to pay \$20,000 a month 20 years ago; why I sold the business.

[tape on again 7-27-02]

Learning to drive: didn't know how to drive; depended on John to go to the store, occasionally Doyal Short's wife; more difficult after the baby was born; 1957 was unusually busy because of a hurricane; John had been gone almost all summer; he was home a short while and went and bought a new Oldsmobile; went and learned to drive while he was gone. I told him when he came in, then he wouldn't drive me anymore "No, you've learned to drive, so go do it."

Managing the home and business: anything bad happened when he was gone; my brother was killed in a car accident when John was in Panama, called and asked John to come home; he made arrangements and I went to pick him up; he was more excited about his trip, I had to deal with it on my own; another morning a car crashed into our house, John not home until 5 or 6 that evening; one of the engineers from Brown & Root came over, brought champagne; thought my strength would come from John, but it didn't; I started developing anxieties; became exhausted; up to me to see that the kids would get to school on time and all; it was my place to fit that in around everything else that was going on; I even closed on the second house and moved by myself; did all my own housework the first 10 years.

Hurricane Carla: summer 1961; John had surgery on hip, wanted Mary Ann in hospital all the time; hurricane coming in, told doctor he had to let John go home; tow boat company having trouble, came to the house so John could get the divers out; he'd be outside on his crutches loading diving gear.

John gone during critical periods: birth of first baby John gone, needed money; many Christmases he didn't make it in until Christmas Eve and would leave Christmas Day; he never missed a Christmas; went with him on a few jobs; fun time because we were able to be with him.

Lionel Galvan

Lafayette, LA

June 3, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW052

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Lionel Galvan was born and raised in Texas. He went to Texas A&M for about a year and then, not wanting to be drafted into the Army (this was after the Korean Conflict), volunteered for the Marine Corps, where he served as a mechanic/crew chief for four years. After serving, he got his Airframe and Powerplant license from Spartan School of Aeronautics and, in 1961, got a job with PHI, Incorporated in Lafayette. He started out as a mechanic, but worked his way up to crew chief, and is currently a pilot mechanic. He provides a detailed description of some of the work he has done serving the oilfield as a helicopter pilot.

#### Summary:

Getting into industry: after left Marine Corps, went to Spartan School of Aeronautics and graduated with A and P license; invited for interview with PHI in '61.

Career with PHI: started out as mechanic in "strip shack"; promoted to crew chief; worked 10 and five for about a year and a half; went to South America twice. Got his helicopter rating and became pilot mechanic; flies and maintains his own aircraft.

Servicing offshore: normally would fly 4-5 hours, but on crew change days would fly eight hours; while on rigs waiting for customers, would do 10-15 maintenance work jobs. In the '60s, helicopters would go about 65-70 miles an hour; rigs could be 50-70 miles offshore. FAA limits pilots to eight hours of flying per day; during summer, helicopters would fly more because more daylight hours. On a normal day would take off and land 30-40 times; highest he ever had was 118 takeoffs and landings.

Offshore work: "toad stool" platforms; gaugers would run downstairs to check production and would change charts once a week (would take 4-5 minutes). Maintenance jobs took longer (changing a valve could take 4-5 hours); lots of different people on the rigs.

Schedules: never liked 10 and five or five and five; seven and seven was best schedule because it was regular (always broke and went back to work on the same day of the week).

Moving to Lafayette: narrates his near arrest the night before his interview with PHI in Lafayette; rented a room from an old couple in walking distance to PHI; just had a basic tool set when he started working. After a month, moved into an apartment with five coworkers.

Schedules and pay: people worked different schedules depending on the jobs they were on; early on, they used a sliding scale for paying overtime. Pay was good for him when he started (85-90 dollars a week); never considered working offshore even though it paid double); back home in Texas, job opportunities limited to farming and ranching.

Marine Corps: enlisted after a year at A&M so that wouldn't be drafted; learned to fly because they were short of pilots and as a crew chief was put in the copilots seat; made crew chief, but started out as engineering clerk; taught everything about flying except emergency procedures; stationed in Hawaii.

Piloting at PHI: didn't want to fly because happy with crew chief job; pay was better. PHI was expanding and hired a lot of former military men; lot of mechanics just wanted to do that and not go into the oilfield, became increasingly specialized.

Early life: from south Texas; graduated from a high school in Crystal City.

Lafayette: PHI's workers were from all over; during the oil boom, prices in Lafayette were so high some people could not live there and would instead commute from other communities nearby or out of state. Lafayette was small in '61; then it exploded; local people also hired by oil industry. Lafayette was an easy town to live in; a lot of pilots quit because their wives wanted to move back home.

Family: his wife is from Gueydan; two daughters (in Sarasota and Houston). Would spend more time offshore than at home.

Change in PHI: change in ownership; now is more business-like, before more family-run.

Crashes: biggest problem is complacency; describes first crash (engine failure); in flight school taught to deal with engine failure.

Unions: never liked unions; in early years, pilots didn't want a union (didn't want anyone messing with their job).

Conclusion: has had good mechanics working for him, that's why he was able to work so long; has enjoyed his work.

Ray Galvin

Houston, TX

January 29, 2003

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS021

#### Ethnographic Preface:

A native of Cisco, TX, Ray Galvin graduated in 1953 from Texas A&M University and joined Gulf Oil Corporation. In the 1950s and 1960s, he served in various natural gas production engineering assignments with Gulf, eventually in 1975 rising to district engineer in New Orleans. In 1979, he became Gulf's vice president of production, U.S. operations, and vice president of the company's South and East offshore division in 1981. After the Gulf/Chevron merger in 1985, he became regional vice president of exploration and production for Chevron's domestic oil and gas operations. He retired in 1996 as president of Chevron U.S.A. Production Company (a position he was elected to in 1992). A highly visible leader in the industry, Galvin was chairman of the Natural Gas Council and the Natural Gas Supply Association in the mid-1990s.

#### Summary:

Good discussion of Gulf Oil's early production activities in offshore Louisiana. Mentions specific fields and blocks. Moves on to the marketing of natural gas, especially the corporate warranty contract with Texas Eastern in the early 1960s. Talks about gas pipelines and compressor stations, natural gas shortages of the late 1960s and early 1970s, 1960s lease sales, and his work in natural gas acquisitions to supply the Texas Eastern contract. Some information on platform technology and the impact of hurricanes in shaping industry knowledge. Some discussion of the Gulf-Chevron merger and the challenges of integrating the two organizations.

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Ben Garacci

New Iberia, LA

November 21, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW029

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Originally from Franklin, Ben Garacci first forayed in the oilfield as a roughneck with Humble Oil in 1948 and worked out of Grand Isle. Wanting to be home at night, he left the industry for a bit, but after he found he made much less money, went back into the industry by taking a job with Rowan Drilling Company. After two years and feeling that he was being passed up for promotions, he took a job with a smaller drilling company; when they looked like they were going to go under, he rehired with Rowan and stayed with them about six years. At that time he hired on with Movable Offshore (later Teledyne Movable Offshore). He started out as a driller and then became a toolpusher, where he spent some time overseas in Nigeria. In 1970 he was promoted to superintendent and later went to Singapore where he acted as project engineer on the construction of a number of rigs. When he returned to the area, he was promoted to assistant operations manager, where he stayed until he retired in 1992, after 30 years with Movable. After retiring, he worked as a private consultant helping to move rigs.

#### Summary:

Early career: with Humble Oil, hired as roughneck out of Grand Isle in '48; worked three years. Was married and wanted to be home at night, so took a job at carbine pipe plant in Bayou Sale; about starved to death and had to sell car to pay grocery bill. Went to work for Rowan Drilling Company; passed up for promotions, so went to work for a small drilling company; after a year and a half went back to Rowan.

Schedule: with Humble worked a quarter boat schedule (five-and-two); with Rowan worked every day.

(Teledyne) Movable Offshore: hired in '62 as a driller; '64 promoted to toolpusher; '70 promoted to superintendent; in '72 went to Singapore to build jack-up rigs; returned with rigs in '76. Cost of building rigs; moving rigs. Retired in '92.

Grand Isle Block 18 and early offshore: used World War Two PT boats with diesel motors for crew boats; had crew quarters on LSTs; widowmaker connected them to platforms. Food always great. Lack of mechanical equipment; cat line.

Regulations: developed for years, but really hit in the early '70s and hindered companies; MMS took control of wells. Some of the environmental controls were good, but go too far. Required training of roughnecks and licenses for key personnel on the rig. Worked with Coast Guard in early '70s to build and implement regulations (describes).

Pay: industry might not have had best hourly wages, but workers accumulated many hours; not many other employment opportunities in the area (mostly fishing).

Industry downturns: people who were laid off during downturns generally did not come back; lost a lot of good people in the industry.

Indonesia: describes how one of his workers was killed after being robbed.

Education: only regret is did not get a college education; he went to work to help his father support the family and put his siblings through school. Didn't do too bad for an old country boy.

Drugs: since the '70s have been a constant problem offshore; drug searches; reactions to failed drug tests.

Women and minorities: hiring quotas established in late '70s; women mostly had positions in the kitchens and as roustabouts; caused problems.

New workers: 10 years ago was amazed because young workers had low literacy. He compensated for his lack of education by reading lots of technical things related to his work.

Charles "Pete" Gardner

Franklin, LA

July 5, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG033

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Pete Gardner and his wife were recommended to me by Clyde Hahn. Clyde suggested Pete would be good to talk to about his career with drilling contractors. I met Pete at his house in Franklin. His wife was there, and both participated in the interview. Clyde was right about Pete - he had a lot to say, and he didn't mince words. He spends a lot of time talking about the negative impact of college graduates on the oilfield, and there's an interesting story about the declining welfare of his brother's drilling business. There are good descriptions of the early fields in the region, and what it was like for Pete and his wife to move around like nomads.

Pete was born in Texas in 1916. In 1934, his brother got him a job outside of Lafayette at the Boscoe field, and Pete went on to drill some of the first holes in a variety of fields in the area. He moved between various contractors before and after the war. He eventually became a drilling superintendent for a drilling contracting company owned by his brother. That company went broke, and he got out of the industry by opening a filling station in Franklin.

#### Summary:

Early History: Pete was born in Scurry, Texas in 1916, and his father was a sharecropper. There was no oil in that area, but there was 100 miles east at the East Texas field. His family lived in a rural area. He graduated in 1932, right in the middle of the Depression. We were all poor, but we were all just alike. Never owned a bicycle, never owned a pair of skates. They survived. They had a telephone only for a short while. When he got out of high school he worked on their farm there.

Oilfield: he got into the oilfield in 1934. An older brother was working in the old Boscoe field in Louisiana as a driller. Pete came out to visit him near Lafayette, and somebody dropped out of the crew, and Pete went out to replace him. He worked two days and made \$13. He had been working for 50 cents a day at a grocery store in Texas. That was his first day in the oilfield. He remembers they sent him to overhaul a pump. They were making fast holes then, before all the power tongs. They made the pipe up with a spinning rope. The derrick man kept trying to whip him with the rope.

Boscoe field: They were a tough crew - you had to be tough. That's the one that opened up Southern Louisiana. That was the Superior Oil Company drilling there. They had 11 rigs running out there at one time. Old steam rigs. He was working for a contractor. He went back with his brother six months later.

Texas: he went back to Texas in 1935, and started working below Houston, and he's been in ever since. He started as a roughneck. He was working for contractors. He worked mostly on wildcats rather than in producing fields. He went a year or more without picking up a joint of tubing. You didn't know where you were going until they called you.

Wildcatting: They were in Hackberry working, and they called and said they wanted him in Morgan City the next day, got into Morgan City at one in the morning on New Year's Eve. They were like a bunch of nomads. The wives had everything packed up in the car.

Lafayette: Anyway, he came back to Lafayette in 1936 from Texas. Lafayette was nothing but four corners back then. Lafayette was an oil town back then. It was home base. Once he got to Louisiana, he worked on the discovery fields at Charenton, Paradis, and a lot of other places. He was working for Smith and McDaniel, contracted to Pan Am. It's Amoco now.

Labor Crews: in those days, crews stuck together, and when your rig moved, you moved with it. The wives too.

Texans in Louisiana: they never had any trouble. He has more trouble with people from Texas. They made jokes about Cajuns and coonasses. He had never eaten rice and didn't like seafood. He changed his mind about that.

Drilling and Offshore Work: He was mostly working on dry land and on barges. He didn't want to go offshore. It was a safety thing. If something went wrong, he could swim or walk on the bottom if it's on a bayou. But when you get far out, no way!

Injury: they got married in '38, and he lost an eye on the rig. There's no such thing as an accident - it's always someone doing something stupid. He tells the story about his accident. He shouldn't of looked down that pipe. He was working for Tidewater at the time. He went to the hospital and they took care of him. He got a \$4000 settlement. No, it was \$1650. Today you'd get a couple million for it. He was out for four months, and then he went back up the derrick. He started working the derricks in 1938.

Franklin: Franklin hasn't changed that much. There's just not as many sugar mills around as then. They inherited a sugar farm around here, and he still goes out there to work off his frustrations.

The Forties: he worked for Dixie Drilling in the forties; he went to Golden Meadow and drilled down there. At that time Laughlin brothers, Noble Drilling, and Smith and MacDaniel were the biggest contractors around. He was still working for Dixie when he got drafted. By that time he was a driller. The company was only allowed so many deferments, and they didn't think they'd take Pete because of his eye, but they did, and when he got back his old derrickman was a superintendent.

Service: He did his service in California on Alcatraz guarding the entrance to the bay. He's see the ships come in with their front ends blown off, and the shipbuilders were unionized, arguing about whether they would work or not. They should've turned the guns on them.

Unions: People down here are too individualistic for that. They tried to unionize the crews. You knew they were around.

Wartime Oil industry: they picked up anybody they could. Everything was booming by the time he came back. He stuck with Dixie until 1952 when his brother bought some rigs. He worked for him as a drilling superintendent until 1962. Then he went to work for the Sharp Gulf Drilling Company until he got out in 1964 - the company went broke. He bought a service station in Franklin, and that was that.

Leaving the Industry: he's adaptive, and he didn't miss it too much.

Superintendent: It wasn't that hard back then to find good employees, and you could run one off if you wanted to. But after the war they weren't loyal to the company any more. The whole world changed after the war. Everybody was hustling for himself. Most of the companies don't deserve loyalty anymore.

College boys: after the war, it all had to be college graduates, and they didn't have any sense at all. You were nothing but a figure. He can remember when the man from Texaco could go out into the field and call every man by his first name.

Living Quarters and Schedules: by the time he was superintendent, he had living quarters on the rig. With the land rigs he was home every night, but later he was out for a long time when he was working for his brother. He'd have to go to New Iberia on his time off to sit in the office. He talks about changing the family when he came home. She had to be tough because he was gone so much.

Contractors: the biggest difference was that they never got a retirement package or benefits. Shell had a great savings plan. But the duties were about the same. All the majors were pretty much the same. Those big companies really focused on safety, but most people went to sleep in those meetings. And they'd do the stupidest things. He tells a story about this.

Going Broke: He talks about why his brother's drilling business sank. Fast women and slow horses ... he drank, he couldn't change with the times. He still thought a handshake was all you needed. But it's not like that with the cold-blooded college graduates.

Blowouts: he talks about the two blowouts he had to deal with.

Environment: One of the big problems was saltwater in the fields. They've known it was a problem all along. But he thinks that no one would even be able to find the spots he drilled at. The oil companies shouldn't have carte blanche, but they haven't done anything other industries haven't done. He thinks we ought to close the valves on Florida and California.

Steam rigs to Diesel: not a big transition for him. He likes the old steam rigs, though ... he just likes to hear that old engine run.

Family: all his kids avoided the oilfield. They found other employment. One son worked in the oilpatch for a while, but the boss let him go right before he made 10 years.

Future of Industry: they've got to find another source of energy. It's not going to last. Too many automobiles. He rails against the waste of Air Force One.

Evaluation of a Career in the Oil Industry: he can't complain.

Lloyd Gaudet

Houma, LA

July 10, 2001

Interviewed by: Ari Anand

University of Arizona

AA002

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Lloyd Gaudet was referred to me by Fr. Freddie Decal of St. Gregory's. When I called, I spoke only to Mrs. Gaudet, who set up the interview. The Gaudets live very close to the center of town. I knocked on the front door and waited a while before going round to the side door, where I was let in after knocking twice. Mrs. Gaudet watched TV in the living room, while Mr. Lloyd and I went to the dining table in the kitchen. Mr. Lloyd was not very loquacious, and I had a hard time getting him to talk.

Lloyd was born in 1923 in Lafourche Parish. He was drafted into the Army and served in Europe during WWII. He returned home to work as a deckhand on a boat for Texaco. He was laid off and went to work as a cook on a patrol boat, a job he held for some 30 years with Louisiana Land and Exploration.

#### Summary:

**Early Life:** Born in 1923 in Lafourche Parish, around St. Charles. Living during the Depression, when they created Social Security and the CCC under President Roosevelt. The U.S. was just recovering from the Depression when WWII started.

**Military Service:** Got drafted into Army, did basic training in Oklahoma, transferred to 79th division that was going over to Europe. Ended up in Scotland, then moved to England when prepping for the invasion of Normandy. Injured during the invasion of Normandy, in hospital in England for about three months. On furlough when the war ended. Talks more about the final months of the war, including the use of the atomic bomb and the German and Japanese surrenders. Stayed in the military for about three months more. Daughter was born while he was in Normandy so he did not get to see her for two years. Son was born before he went into the Army.

**Oil Industry Employment:** Texas Company (Texaco) had four oil drilling ships on Caillou Island below Terrebonne Parish. Pumped oil into ships, then barges would come with tugboats and load up the oil to deliver to Port Arthur. Became a deckhand on one of the ships anchored at Caillou Island and did that for six or seven years. Then the company decided to run a pipeline from Port Arthur to somewhere so they could pump the oil to Port Arthur. Lived on the ship, 10 days out, 5 days in. Texaco paid good money. Started working for Texaco because jobs were scarce after he came back from the war. Worked for Texaco for 10 years and then got laid off.

Post-Oil Employment: Louisiana Land and Exploration Company (LL&E) had been formed so he started working for them on a patrol boat in the marsh. 7 days out, 7 days in. Worked for them for 31 years before retiring. Has been retired for 18 years. Worked as a cook on one of the patrol boats. Four men per patrol boat.

Changes around Houma: Not many changes that he noticed while working 31 years for LL&E; not much happening in the area. The community has become really built up since then. More people moved to the area because of job opportunities. Lots of fishing and shrimping going on. His father-in-law was a fisher all his life. Work did not really change either; trawlers maintained same routes. Texaco no longer has an office in the area. Lots of employment now is in fishing, recreation, and construction. Wal-Mart wants to build a super-center near Houma but residents do not want it even though it would provide lots of jobs.

Changes in Marsh Management: During his tenure with LL&E, they starting building water control structures to prevent erosion. Thousands of water control structures along the coastline.

Reasons for Working in Oil Industry: Offered the best paying jobs. Did not want to be a fisherman so not many other options.

More About LL&E: Description of water control structures. Not much interaction with oil companies. Oil companies leased from LL&E and had to give LL&E a certain percentage of their oil take. Liked working for them because they had good benefits and great retirement package. Main office is in New Orleans. LL&E had better benefits than most oil companies. Good relations between main office and auxiliary offices.

Unionization: No need to unionize because employees were satisfied. Employees got yearly raise and bonuses.

Environmental Regulations: Did not impact his work for LL&E because they were an environmental company. LL&E also trapped muskrats to prevent degradation of marshland. Environmental regulations affected oil companies much more. LL&E did not believe in dumping oil and toxins into the water.

Benefits of Oil Industry: Supplies for oil rigs in the Gulf came through Houma.

Future of Oil Industry: It is slowing down drastically. They have to dig farther and farther out in the Gulf. Now companies are trying to dig close to shore in Florida. Thinks that we will eventually need to find an alternate source of fuel.

Food on Oil Boats and Patrol Boats: Describes food served on the oil boats. Supply boats would restock the rigs. Patrol boats just took all the food they needed for seven days with them.

Oil Industry Downturn: Downturn in 1983 did not affect him, but limited the job opportunities for young people. Oil industry is dying. Discussed proposal to drill in the Alaska Wildlife Refuge.

Positive and Negative Aspects of His Job: Liked making a living for his family and appreciated the security. Hard on his wife, who had to take care of the kids all by herself when he was out on the patrol boat.

Arthur "Tuts" Gautreaux

Larose, LA

September 25, 2001

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM016

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Arthur "Tuts" Gautreaux had been identified by Windell Curole as the head of the Texaco retiree's group in the Lafourche area. I met with him briefly in July to explain the project; he was busy at the time, but agreed to locate other retirees for interviews. Several calls to "Tuts" in September ultimately produced not an interview with oldtimers, but a session with his son, Murphy, and one of Murphy's friends, Keith Doucet (both in their mid 50s). During the interview, in Tuts' kitchen, Tuts himself had little to say; he worked 32 years for Texaco, primarily as a safety engineer, and now keeps busy as a sales representative for a company dealing in safety equipment. Our initial discussion centered on the enhanced security at that facility following the September 11 events.

#### Summary:

Technology: subsea completions; Gemini project; logistic differences between bays/lakes and offshore; shutting down offshore if Leeville Bridge goes out.

Safety changes: accidents affect everyone up the line, due to interruptions in production; with Texaco, everything was "safety;" communication improvements with satellite systems; protective equipment now required; MMS has demanded safety changes; companies had put safety on back burner; now, with litigious society, everyone will sue, so companies concerned with safety as it may affect productivity and profits; companies now take proactive stand, particularly vis-à-vis contractors; changed when corporate leadership changed; OSHA in early 1970s didn't apply to offshore work.

LOOP: created by Congress, so brought federal regulations to bear on safety in design and construction in late 1970s; corporate mentality vis-à-vis personnel i.e. outsider executives not as sensitive to local people.

Loyalty: changed a lot; years ago, was personal; now companies are bean-counters; with mergers/downsizing, you're just a number; departments within companies are in competition with each other; people at top not worried about those on firing line; job security not there anymore; companies worried about stockholders.

Retirement packages: if under 50, more likely to get laid off; now CEO's saying why should I pay packages to guys I'm going to lay off? "golden handshake" offered to employees to accept or reject; Murphy got caught in downsizing because he was under 50, but got severance package (1 year salary); many become consultants after being retired; lots of companies hiring consultants at

a day rate without benefits; Keith retired at 50 with lump sum after 33 years even though Houston headquarters didn't want him to, since he was the lead operator on the project.

Schedules: Texaco was 6/6, now 7/7.

Contract drilling: Shell was last one to have own rigs, mainly training rigs; now all employ contractors; majors use contractors as screening for potential company employees; contractors have training programs; "worm" has to wear red hat; don't want more than 1 or 2 "short-service employees" (SSE); Petroleum Education Council does basic orientation and issues "PEC" card; OMSA also does training; training [hands-on] vs. orientation; most drilling companies not specialized.

ECO training facility: primarily for his own people; lets LOOP use it; mom and pop boat businesses going to be caught by STCW.

Consolidations: Seacor buying up everything, e.g., Gilbert Cheramie; Seacor second only to Tidewater, wants to be biggest; to compete, have to be as large as the other ones; Chouest keeps buying up people; rig people doing same thing; big service companies losing business to small ones so will buy them out.

Port Fourchon: still needs infrastructure; bridge should be an overpass; port has potential to keep young people here; 2 miles from port to open gulf, vs. other ports where you can get caught in fog and not get out; with all that money the feds are getting we should have what we want; 3 to 4 vessel-vessel bumps a week.

Accountability: profit is bottom line; most efficient boats are mini-supply boats: liquid and solid cargo; "boat-sharing;" half the CEOs wouldn't know what a rig looks like; LOOP had so many bean counters, owned by 5 companies; didn't hire people with pipeline experience; 20-minute video on LOOP.

Texaco: slow to move offshore; last one of majors in deep water; had so much stuff onshore; accident on Eugene Island jackup rig - a "punch-through" caused by rig supervisor moving rig too fast; underground blowout; was Texaco rig involved in accident at salt dome by Avery Island at West Cote Blanche Bay in 1978/1979.

ROVs: deepwater rigs all have them - rented at \$7K day (with 3-man crew); have to have it there when you need it; with Coonass ingenuity, rigged up crab trap to ROV to catch deepwater crabs in 4000 feet of water.

Unions: unions good years ago when people weren't treated well; small boats companies won't survive if they have to pay union wages; Murphy thinks things run relatively well and is concerned about motives of organizing; concerned about culture being changed, would be "culture shock;" contractors are going to have to wake up and start offering benefits if they expect workers to be loyal to company.

Cycles: favoring major oil companies now, will favor boat and rig companies later.

Murphy Gautreaux, Keith E. Doucet, and Arthur "Tuts" Gautreaux

Larose, LA

September 25, 2001

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM016

#### Ethnographic Preface:

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#### Summary:

Technology: subsea completions; Gemini project; logistic differences between bays/lakes and offshore; shutting down offshore if Leeville Bridge goes out.

Safety changes: accidents affect everyone up the line, due to interruptions in production; with Texaco, everything was "safety;" communication improvements with satellite systems; protective equipment now required; MMS has demanded safety changes; companies had put safety on back burner; now, with litigious society, everyone will sue, so companies concerned with safety as it may affect productivity and profits; companies now take proactive stand, particularly vis-à-vis contractors; changed when corporate leadership changed; OSHA in early 1970s didn't apply to offshore work.

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Retirement packages: if under 50, more likely to get laid off; now CEO's saying why should I pay packages to guys I'm going to lay off? "golden handshake" offered to employees to accept or reject; Murphy got caught in downsizing because he was under 50, but got severance package (1

year salary); many become consultants after being retired; lots of companies hiring consultants at a day rate without benefits; Keith retired at 50 with lump sum after 33 years even though Houston headquarters didn't want him to, since he was the lead operator on the project.

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Accountability: profit is bottom line; most efficient boats are mini-supply boats: liquid and solid cargo; "boat-sharing;" half the CEOs wouldn't know what a rig looks like; LOOP had so many bean counters, owned by 5 companies; didn't hire people with pipeline experience; 20-minute video on LOOP.

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Unions: unions good years ago when people weren't treated well; small boats companies won't survive if they have to pay union wages; Murphy thinks things run relatively well and is concerned about motives of organizing; concerned about culture being changed, would be "culture shock;" contractors are going to have to wake up and start offering benefits if they expect workers to be loyal to company.

Cycles: favoring major oil companies now, will favor boat and rig companies later.

Ron Geer

Houston, TX

December 12, 1997

Interviewed by: Bruce Beauboeuf and Joe Pratt

University of Houston/History International

SOC016

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Ron Geer was born in West Palm Beach, FL in 1926 and received his B.S. in mechanical engineering from the Georgia Institute of Technology in 1951. That year he began his 35-year career with Shell Oil and became a principal contributor to Shell's overall pioneering offshore technology efforts in developing deep sea floating drilling vessels and subsea wells. In the 1960s, Geer was Shell Oil's manager of marine technology and also helped found the Offshore Technology Conference. In 1984, he received the OTC's "Distinguished Achievement Award for Individuals" for his contributions to deepwater oil and gas production technology. He also was a principal engineering contributor to Shell Oil's ice-resistant platforms in Alaska, Project Cognac, a milestone in fixed platform technology, and the deepwater drilling program conducted by the *Discoverer Seven Seas*. Mr. Geer retired in 1984.

#### Summary:

Interview discusses wellhead design and has interesting information on the Bluewater 1. The impact of waves on design. He has extensive commentary on sharing information within Shell and throughout industry. Extended discussion of California including the Santa Barbara blowout. He explains the move from fixed platforms to TLPs. Ends interview with notes on MAFL exploration.

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Lloyd Geist

Gray, LA

June 28, 2003, January 10, 2005

Interviewed by: James Sell, Colleen O'Donnell, Lauren Penney

University of Arizona

JS024, LP002

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I (Jim) had known that Lloyd Geist was the pioneer aviator in Houma, who set up the first flying service after his military service in WWII. CJ Christ set up the interview as a way of recording Lloyd's experiences in both WWII (he was a combat fighter pilot) and the oil field. The interview with Mr. Geist then represents a view of aviation pioneering in the area. Also present on this interview were CJ Christ, Lloyd's wife Marilyn, and Charles Bush, a friend, who was there and interested. Also present for part of this interview was Lloyd Geist Jr., who is a pilot who flies for a local lawyer, and perhaps someday would be a good interview on his own. He promised to try to find his father's old air photos of the area and send copies. Mr. Geist was identified to be reinterviewed because of his additional military service during World War II. He brought a notebook that listed information on his life during the war and his flight log. The second interview was conducted as part of the study of the links between WWII and the offshore industry.

Lloyd Geist started his real interest in aviation from the age of nine, when in 1930 a pair of barnstormers landed in a field near his house. In return for his keeping the other children off the fabric wings, he was given a free ride. He continued his interest in aviation through high school. When he graduated in 1938, he worked as a roustabout for Texaco for a short time. That same year he joined the US Army Air Corps, but became a mechanic when he found that only college graduates could have pilot training. World War II changed that and in 1942 he was trained as a pilot. After serving as an instructor in the US, in 1944 he was placed in a special fighter squadron formed of all pilot instructors to fight in Europe. Arriving in England in April 1944, his squadron was assigned to P-47 "Thunderbolts" and assigned to escort and ground support missions. He flew cover over the D-Day invasion, but did little because, he noted, only one German fighter was even seen near the invasion beaches, and he kept his distance. He did shoot down a German fighter, but mostly flew ground cover for the ground troops. In November 1944, he and the other two surviving pilots of his squadron returned to the USA, and by winter of 1945, he was released from the service.

In 1946, Mr. Geist opened up a flying school in Houma, giving lessons that could be paid on the GI Bill. In 1948 he began flying for Texaco. In 1950, he started Geist Seaplane Service and opened up a base on the Intracoastal Canal. Most of his work involved "hotshot" flying, transport of personnel, or pipeline inspection for the oil companies. In 1969, he sold his company to Billy Wurzlów and moved to Colorado. By 1978 he was back in Houma, flying for oil service companies until he retired in 1992.

## Summary of JS024:

**Pioneering Before WWII:** When Lloyd was 9 (1930), Dr. Barrios, who owned the property around the Geist property, cleared off a strip for two barnstormer pilots, at June Drive near Geist Street. Lloyd was asked to watch the planes, in return for a free flight. Also some good information about residents of Bayou Black and the Houma Tourist Court. That strip was used very seldom and not used much more than two years. In 1934, Texaco brought in a Keystone (amphibious biplane). It was located on a grass strip near Little Caillou, where the airport is today. This was the first Texaco airplane in the Houma area, used by the superintendent, Gus Trotter, to check on the fields. The next plane Texaco brought in was a Grumman Goose, in 1937/38. He worked in the oil field as a roughneck after graduating from high school in 1938, but joined the Army Air Corps in December 1939.

**Flying School:** He opened the first flying school in Houma, which could be run under the GI Bill of Rights. This covered the range of private and commercial pilot training, used war surplus aircraft. Bought a Republic Seabee, an amphibian for oil field charter work. "We didn't have anybody to check you out, so the only way to learn to fly it was to take it and go."

**Floatplanes:** "Seaplane" is a misnomer, they were designed for inshore, lake, and channel work; they couldn't land or takeoff in the rough water beyond the barrier islands. Lloyd had landed and taken off in the Gulf, noting it was a matter of timing the swells. Mis-timing the swells could mean flying "downhill" when trying to take off, or landing nose first into a swell. At the time he started, he had to qualify himself on floatplanes, there was no one around with experience. In fact, they had to put their own floats on, and pretty much develop the technology and techniques of their use through trial and error experience. There was discussion of the types of floatplanes, differentiation from amphibians (which were "flying boats" with wheels so that they could taxi onshore).

**Seaplane Base:** Lloyd started his base in 1950, near the intersection of Pecan and Gum Streets, on land next to the Intracoastal Canal leased from Cenac Towing Co. By the 1970s there were four seaplane bases on the Canal. The floatplanes could land on the Intracoastal and be hoisted up to hangar storage (Charlie Hammonds got his start doing this for Geist Seaplane Service in the late 1950s). He started with a war surplus Seabee (an amphibian airplane) there, but went to a Cessna 170 on floats, and later switched to Cessna 180s. Many of the service companies brought in their own planes and stored their planes at Geist's base. At peak he had about 20 planes there. At one time there were four seaplane bases. Now the last one (June 2003) is up for sale.

**Scope of Operation:** "Everything from the Mississippi River to Cameron." He worked for a variety of companies, including fishing as well as oil service. Much of his work was flying for pipeline companies, bringing out superintendents and inspectors, then afterward patrolling for leaks. He would bring in light equipment or supplies, like the powder or bullets for shooting.

**Landing/Taking Off in Water:** Current to contend with, landing in crosswinds or downwind, rough and smooth water. Catching and tying up were difficult. "In real slick water it's harder to get off than if you've got some waves. The airplane doesn't want to get on the step as quick,

when the water's slick." ("Getting on the step" is to raise the plane on the floats so that just the keel is in the water, preliminary to taking off.) The Seabee had a reversible prop, but the Cessnas didn't. No air traffic control or radios for air safety, they just relied on visual contact. But there were relatively few accidents.

Gulf Landing: He used to land in the Gulf, used to meet seismic crews. He didn't know he wasn't supposed to do that. He would time the swells to land and take off.

Helicopters: The oil field business went offshore and seaplanes couldn't land in the rough water.

Air Photography: Bernard Davis did most of the air photography in Houma, and Geist had to fly him around. They tried to take photos with the door off. They got a trainer (BT-13) and cut a hole in the bottom for photos. Davis took pictures for all the major oil companies for years.

Seaplane Experience: Geist has about 30,000 hours logged in floatplanes, about second to Charles Hammonds. Hammonds worked for Geist from about age 14.

Oil Community, and Environment: A large amount of land has been washed away. "And the oil fields had a lot to do with that." Dredging canals, leaving them open, was the start. Boats moving through widened the channels, salt water moving in killed the vegetation.

Summary of LP002:

Lloyd was one of a small group of people who had served in WWII and been involved in the early development of the offshore oil and gas industry in the Gulf of Mexico and was interviewed in a joint project of the University of Arizona, U.S. Minerals Management Service, and the National D-Day Museum. In this interview, Lloyd talks mostly about his experiences during WWII.

First exposure to flying: Lloyd described the Texaco superintendent's (Gus Trotter, Sr.) Keystone plane. When he was in high school he got to go out with him, his son (Geist's friend), and pilot Embry Hunt. [note: story also provided in previous interview] The first time they went out was to Lake Pelto.

Early career: Lloyd graduated high school in 1938 and worked for Texaco for less than a year. He entered the Air Force in December 1939. He mistakenly thought he would be able to fly, but found out later that he had to have at least two years of college to do that. So, he put in for aeronautical mechanic's school and was sent to Tulsa, Oklahoma. After he got his mechanic's rating, he was to MacDill Field in Tampa, Florida. It was being built at that time. He worked on B-18s and later worked on B-17s and B-24s. After several months there, he put in for propeller specialist school in Illinois; after he got this training, he was sent back to Tampa.

Pilot training: After Pearl Harbor ('41). In January 1942, he went to flying school. Because of a pilot shortage, they were now allowing anyone with a two-year college education equivalency to get pilot training. He and two others studied for this and two of them passed their equivalency. He was a Staff Sergeant at this point. He graduated in September 1942 and his whole class was

sent to Clearwater, Florida. Was in an Overseas Training Unit (OTU) and most of his instructors were fighter pilots who had had at least one tour in the Pacific. He and two of his classmates were kept there as instructors when the class was deployed. He felt somewhat honored to be chosen for this. He instructed for several months before being sent to Harding Field to meet up with another OTU. Then he and two others were sent to service Thunderbolts. They were experimenting with how the airplanes would handle "desert" conditions. Lloyd described how he would sit in the cockpit and they would heat up the fuel and firetrucks would surround the plane before he would take off. After a few months the three pilots went to Bartow, Florida to meet up again with their OTU. He described the different types of engines in the planes they were flying.

**Fighter group:** In January 1944, the Air Force formed a fighter group of 16 instructor pilots. Lloyd's group was the 404 Fighter Group. They left Bartow for Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. They trained in P-39s and thought they would get P-51s in Europe. They shipped out from New York, forming one of the largest convoys in the Atlantic. They went to Christchurch in England. Their airbase was little more than a dirt field - they had no buildings, only tents. They were to fly P-47s, though only about 30% had ever flown one (he was one of them). So for about a month, the pilots had to build up time in P-47s. Every night they would hear Germans flying overhead, but they were never shot at.

**On being a student pilot:** Lloyd related a few stories from his pilot training days when his instructors were experienced fighter pilots. "Learned a lot in a school like that." They lost about six pilots during this time due to "wild flying." They learned how to handle an airplane through experience. [Note: This is how oilfield workers also learned their jobs]

**Missions:** When he went overseas, he was a 2nd Lieutenant. His first mission was on May 1st in a fighter sweep over France; it was uneventful. The next biggest event was when they stopped using P-47s only for aerial combat and started using them for dive bombing. Because the aircraft was heavy (seven tons), it would fall fast, however it had no dive flaps to help slow it down. He described the armament and ammunition that it carried.

**D-Day:** The pilots found out D-Day would happen at 11 p.m., the night before. Their job was to patrol over beaches. They saw only three enemy aircrafts on their first mission. The number of boats and the color of the beach (black) stood out to Lloyd. The beach was colored from oil from the boats and from bodies. They flew three missions that day. The next day, they went dive bombing.

**Moving into Europe:** On July 5th, they moved to a base in France. It was another grass strip with wire matting. They were very close to the front lines. At this point (and throughout his tour) they started working closely with ground troops. The troops would call them when they needed help. They were involved in dive bombing and strafing. He was hit twice, but made it back to base.

**Rest Leave:** After 50 missions (in Belgium), Lloyd was given a week of leave and went to London. He was soon ready to go back to Belgium because there was lots of bombing activity in London. After 68 missions, he took a five-day leave to Paris. On the fifth day of this leave, a captain came in to tell him that he was being sent back to the States. He didn't believe him and went back to Belgium. There he was told he could go home as a 1st Lieutenant tomorrow or as a

Captain after they got him a replacement. Both of his two friends had been killed and only four of his original squad were still alive (i.e., not dead or a POW), so he decided to go home right away.

Souping up his engine: The planes were so heavy and the landing strips so short, so they changed something in the engine of their P-47 so they could get more power. They never told anyone what they did to it, but people wondered how he could get off so quickly.

The price of liquor: The pilots were allotted a certain amount of whiskey for each mission. Lloyd was not much of a drinker and traded some of his for different things. Once, he traded a fifth of whiskey for a BMW motorcycle. When he got back to the U.S., he gave it to Cotton, his crew chief.

Shooting down planes: He shot down one plane. A FW-190 on October 28, 1944. He described the event - flying over Bonn, shooting the plane, the plane crashing into the Rhine River. Was able to look up information on the internet about all the German planes that were shot down. He thinks that the one he shot down was never found.

Interacting with civilians: He described two of his interactions with civilians - buying beef in France and living in a town in Belgium. Noted he was only sick once during the war (a cold) and that he has a book about his war experiences. His brother (younger than him by two years) served in a field artillery battalion.

Back in the States: In January 1945, he was sent to Kingman, AZ. They were supposed to be practicing in P-53s. Next was in Merced, California for a few months; they wanted him to be an ATC trainer - he thought of this as a demotion though they did not. Next in Abilene, Texas, where they were busy overhauling airplanes. He flew many different aircrafts here. In August 1945, he was discharged under the points system. He wanted to get out at this time because he had a child and they were always having to move. He wanted to go back to Houma and fly there.

Business ventures: Lloyd bought his first plane in June 1946 and began "hopping" passengers in Houma. He did not make enough money to live on, however. Next he opened a flying school in Houma with two of his friends. They operated under the GI Bill. He bought an amphibious airplane (a CB) and only used it a little bit, because it was expensive to fly. That is when he started getting calls from oil-related companies and he began thinking about going into business on his own. He left the school in '48. Went to work for Texaco in November '48. They had a Gremlin Goose and a Gremlin Widgen, then they got a Mallard. Quit in April 1949. He bought a CB and got into the charter plane business. At the time, the service and supply companies found that they could use seaplanes to their own advantage; they housed their planes in his facility. Two years later, he decided to get float planes (Cessna 180s and 185s). He stayed in this business until 1970, when he sold out and moved to Colorado where he tried his hand at ranching.

Skills learned in Air Force: His early plane training (esp. in primary flight school under his instructor Dawson Ransom) was very good. He learned how to handle airplanes and to fly using the feel of it. He said pilots today do not know how to work without things such as airspeed indicators.

Amphibious aircraft training: He taught himself how to fly CBs. His partner had some water time, so that helped. However, teaching himself gave him limited knowledge of what the aircraft was made to do - for example, he didn't know that it could take off and land using something other than a straight line and that others would not land them in rough Gulf waters. He got his job at Texaco because they needed a pilot, not necessarily because he had contacts there. They must have known about him because he had the flying school.

War and oilfield connection: Most of the Texaco pilots had not been in the military (Dan Mitchell had been, though). Some of the companies used military landing crafts (LSTs) for carrying mud and in the flying school, they used some military equipment (e.g., surplus aircraft).

Communication: They did not have radar in airplanes during the early '40s. If they got lost, would use triangulation to get a fix on the plane (the pilot hummed into a microphone). He tells a story about getting lost and about a British carrier that mistakenly started shooting at him over the English Channel.

Al George

Lafayette, LA

August 13, 2002; February 4, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW022; SW037

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Al George was born in 1928 in Alexandria, Louisiana. His father was a railroad man but lost his job during the Great Depression. As a result, his father resorted to farming to feed his family. After the Depression, he was given his railroad job back. He graduated high school in Winnfield in about 1944 and went to LSU on a football scholarship. At LSU he was in ROTC, studied mechanical engineering, and got married; he graduated with his degree in about 1948. Upon leaving school he had several job offers, but decided to take a position with Humble Oil and Refining even though he knew almost nothing about the oil industry. After three months of working as a roustabout and then roughneck, he was brought into the Crowley office as a junior engineer. Over the next eight years he made moves to New Orleans and Bayou Sale, and then accepted a job offer from Lamb Rental Tools in Lafayette in 1956. After 10 years he decided to venture out on his own and opened a business (Al George, Inc. or AGI Industries) that relied on his hydraulic expertise and problem-solving capabilities. As they developed new products, they also developed new companies such as Sling Shot Incorporated and Sidewinder Pumps. During the interview he talks about early offshore operations, living in the Humble camp at Bayou Sale, the rental tool business, running casing and efforts to make this safer and more efficient, and other tool developments. The first interview ended prematurely and plans were made for a follow-up interview.

In his second interview, he discusses what Lafayette was like when he arrived in 1956, how it has changed, why the oil and gas industry came to Lafayette, things that have aided the development of offshore oil and gas, and the reputation of the oil industry in the United States.

#### Summary of SW022:

Early life: born in Alexandria in '28; father worked for railroad; always felt he was stupid because he was big for his age and poor. Went to high school in Winnfield and attended Huey P. Long Memorial Trade school; got a football scholarship to LSU at age 16; studied mechanical engineering because always had been mechanically-inclined; was in ROTC and had just missed the draft for World War Two.

Humble Oil and Refining Company: recruited him on campus; did not know a whole lot about the oil patch; Humble trained their engineers as roustabouts and roughnecks; they needed trained engineers, so he moved through training in about a quarter of the normal time. Promoted to junior engineer and sent to Crowley office; then sent to New Orleans office; then to Bayou Sale.

Beginning of offshore: describes second Humble offshore rig (platform mounted) out of Grand Isle; used old LST as drilling tender with supplies and living quarters. Worked five days offshore, but could put in your time in three and a half days. Fed you like kings.

Hurricane: in '48 had first hurricane; had little warning; had to secure everything before coming inshore; most gruesome chore was storing the anchor chain. Ran into problems getting workers off the structure and had to use an LCI, which sparked later development of better ways of getting off boats.

Conservation reports: monthly reports of well tests and everything done to a well had to be given to the Conservation Commission (P-11-11 reports); interested in conserving minerals, not the environment; had to produce well at a "reasonable rate." No market for natural gas at that time; developed systems to recover the gas instead of burning it off.

Price of fuel, boom, and bust: cheap fuel in U.S. responsible for success of nation and standard of living; people in U.S. don't understand what it costs to drill a well and low odds (1/10) of actually drilling a productive well. Describes oil traps and piercement type salt domes. Oil embargo of '73 raised price of oil; people borrowed money to drill wells based on this price, but when OPEC later dropped the price of oil, those ventures became less profitable; many companies suddenly went bankrupt. His companies (in fabrication and finished goods) only survived because they had everything paid for.

Bayou Sale: had an active drilling program on land, inland water, and offshore, as well as lots of production; he wrote monthly reports on equipment tests and speeches for the superintendent. Raised his kids and had his fifth child there; lived in company camp, which was a community (almost like a tribe) and a good place to raise kids; camp living hard because on 24 hours a day and everyone knew what was going on for everyone else.

Lamb Rental Tools: in '56 went to work doing sales, public relations, etc, in Lafayette; provided them his engineering expertise and industry experience. Wanted to establish a home, live in town, and not move around as much. Rental tool companies came into being because of the expense of owning equipment. Major aspect of rental tools was casing tools and crews; describes running casing. Also rented drill pipe (had multiple sizes and different grades).

Developing new tools (detailed descriptions): intended to increase safety and speed up running casing. Stabbing guide was first patent he ever got. Quick release thread protector. Replaced spinning rope with hydraulic and air-powered casing tongs. Pneumatic-powered stabbing board. False rotary.

Al George, Inc: describes scripture that helped him decide to open his own business. Started small, but got reputation for being problem solvers. Developed a number of pieces of equipment that they produced and manufactured (describes): power subs, mono- and multi cells, sidewinder pump. Sold all his companies, but not the Sidewinder Pump Company, to his two oldest sons.

Deeper offshore drilling: possible because of larger rigs, high strength drill pipe, better direction control machinery, and pick-up and lay-down machines for handling the pipe.

## Summary of SW037:

Lafayette '56: when first arrived there was a shortage of residential rental property; roads were congested with traffic. His home on Grand Avenue was outside the city limits; city lacked funds for sewage systems and water systems, so no incentive for residents outside the city to push for incorporation; most paid no property taxes (under Homestead Exemption). Ten rental tool companies there, but he was the only engineer working for one.

Oil Center: Herbert Heymann was the motivator of that; prior to it being built, oil-related companies worked out of offices downtown above other shops; Oil Center encouraged out of town companies to move into Lafayette because good facilities, centrally located, and eased exchange of information between different entities. Heymann had foresight, was a visionary, was generous (during the Depression had over 100,000 dollars of credit on his books), and was community spirited.

Development: Heymann also helped develop the medical center and "style center." University had fewer buildings in '50s; tearing down of old dorms and Columbia Space Shuttle.

Religion - Baptists: when arrived joined the newly developed Emmanuel Baptist Church; was involved in church and describes other churches he's attended. Number of Evangelical churches in Lafayette have grown over the years; lot of growth due to community growth, which due to oil industry; because people would move often (e.g., due to promotions), lot of members were transient.

ULL: one of the reasons they were attracted to Lafayette was because of the university; probably influenced other people's decisions to move there, but first priority is going where there is work, while kids' education was secondary.

Politics: followed local, state, and national politics; registered Democrat, because only way to vote. Worked with Louisiana Association of Business and Industry (LABI); small businesses hurt by litigiousness of society; describes being sued for lack of sexual affections by a woman he'd never met.

Hurricanes: working off Grand Isle in '48 when hurricane came; hurricane warning systems have improved much since then, which has helped offshore develop.

Offshore development: improved by bigger rigs, higher strength drill pipe, power tongs, make and break machinery, pick and lay down machines, new and lubricated bits, no wall stick drill collar, better muds, and better geophysical technology.

Oil industry reputation: people think industry does nothing but destroy the environment; but without the cheap fuel it has developed, country would not be as great as it is and would have not seen a rapid increase in quality of living. OPEC controls price of oil, which causes problems in U.S.; need to lighten up restrictions on domestic oil production; greater chance of spilling oil by transporting it from Middle East than by producing it here. American people don't appreciate the oil industry for what it is.

Beverly Cowart George

Metairie, LA

July 23, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA053

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Beverly George at the Desk and Derrick Club meeting in New Orleans in March (see also DA036). She was one of the early members of Desk and Derrick and shared that she had been Doc Laborde's executive secretary. When I asked her if she would be willing to do an individual interview, she agreed and told me to contact her the next time I was in New Orleans. I called her in July and arranged to meet her at her house. We spent several hours talking about her history, went to dinner, and came back and talked some more. Parts of the interview were recorded, but parts she felt were too personal and shared with me just to give me a better idea of life in the days when she was working in the industry. She shared information about her own life and about working with Doc and ODECO in its formative years.

Beverly is from New Orleans. She started working as the secretary for a lawyer and then worked at Lever Brothers. She had an automobile accident and was out of work for about a year and was let go by Lever Brothers. She got a job working for the production manager of Southern Natural Gas in 1953. In that capacity she typed letters, kept regulatory records and permits, and did other secretarial work. She was the only female in an office with about six men. She joined Desk and Derrick during that period. In 1957, she went to work for Doc Laborde, the president of Ocean Drilling and Exploration Company (ODECO). There were about 13 people working in the office when she began; she stayed there until she was asked to retire in 1983. At that time there were over a thousand employees. Though she was one of the few females working for ODECO, she earned the respect of the men. She was given considerable responsibility and was the only woman involved in some of the company's confidential business dealings.

#### Summary:

First jobs: with Southern Natural Gas in 1953; secretary for Web Jay, production manager; working on typewriter, no computers; joined Desk and Derrick; went to Ocean Drilling and Exploration Company (ODECO) as secretary for Doc Laborde, president; no coats or ties like in former office; casual office; men offshore much of the time; was going to quit but Doc was never in the office and wanted to give resignation to him because he hired me; grew to love the company; stayed till forced to take early retirement; Doc had even temperament; called on to give lots of speeches, would type his speeches; have a copy of every one.

At work for ODECO: helped out with all jobs, even switchboard, ordering, sweeping floor; dressed for work in heels, stockings, gloves; wore mink stole on Friday; typed notes from board

meetings, no tape recorders; indexed notes from meetings; liked to work, liked my job; when I retired the company had vans to pick us up

Working in oil industry: from Southern Natural Gas was out of work for a year due to automobile accident; saw ad for ODECO in the paper and went to apply, got the job; Murphy was the parent company; moved to old Travelodge Hotel at Canal and Claiborne; George Bush came in one time before he was elected president; he was close friends with Doc; after being at ODECO awhile realized that offshore drilling was really big; Doc looked up to Mr. Dikestrom; Doc did not like to go to cocktail parties; went to do business; lots of business done with a handshake; Henry Zach Carter was president of Avondale, made deal over the phone, no lawyers; would type contracts for rigs, sometimes a hundred pages long, type and retype; lawyers started being involved in contracts in the early 1960s

Biggest changes: regulations stricter, started being enforced; more paperwork; dress code went down; I was the first to wear pants to work; it got around that I had them on; in those days you told the employees how to dress; wanted to decorate the office, Doc said that good furniture and flowers don't make the rig good; women were not paid competitively; as if women were not smart enough; did very confidential work, such as buyouts; trash had to be picked up and shredded; was the only female ever involved; was responsible for all the secretaries, in charge of about 13 ladies; when Hugh Kelly became president, went to work for Jack McGregor, the vice president, and formed the environmental department, in about 1979-1980; then worked to help set up office for Bermuda office that was being closed and brought to New Orleans; had lots of foreign offices, brought the people to New Orleans once a year and had a big dinner; had an American school in Norway because so many employees over there

Office relations: was treated like one of the boys; they respected me, knew I would keep what they said confidential; had common sense and loved my job; in the beginning the other guys did not want a secretary; one other woman there was the file clerk and then they hired me an assistant; ODECO wanted to live up to equal opportunity laws and started hiring blacks - in the 60s? some became good friends; by then had a personnel department to take care of hiring; so much paperwork, had a file department bigger than this house; every letter typed had green copy to go across Doc Laborde's desk for his reading file; he routed them to other departments to keep people informed of what was happening; he read everything that went out; built up trust because I was a loyal employee; you did not quit a good job; the industry was good

Community among oil industry people: it was definitely close; had the Petroleum Club; it was not cheap; I was given privileges to go under Doc's name; to take someone from another company to lunch; everybody knew everybody; once in the petroleum business you never wanted to leave

Working in the industry: people lived well; the big shots had expense accounts, not many women did; in many companies lots of things were subsidized as salary; Doc looked over his expense accounts very carefully; was conservative; there were some ladies in the company, in the land department and in accounting; Doc was very even tempered; he had a lot of responsibility; hurricanes were bad; Doc would not send out college students because he was afraid they would get hurt; families would call in during storms to see if everyone was all right; day rates for rigs

kept going up during most of the time I worked; there was tension in departments that had to keep the rigs working

ODECO and other companies: would contract with Tidewater when needed supply boats; had a diving company, Subsea Diving, in the 60s; had an overseas division; now the drilling is gone and what was ODECO is Murphy Exploration and Production; lots of men got transferred to El Dorado, Arkansas, to work for Murphy; at first ODECO did not do billing and paychecks came out of El Dorado; Mr. Murphy never missed a board meeting; lost a lot of experienced people when the industry went down; they started other careers and won't give up what they have; ODECO had planes at one time; they offered a package to our pilot in 1983, he did not take it; one woman 84 years old still in communications; working with Murphy was not like working for a large corporation; New Orleans was a party town; ODECO was not exorbitant with gifts and perks; not much turnover; wore pantsuit when leg was hurt and got lots of stares

Industry in New Orleans: women in this industry dressed up; everyone worked downtown so you met them on the street or in coffee houses; had few friends not in the oil industry; people in New Orleans looked up to those in the industry; clothes were cheaper; Daddy told me to get a job with security, try to go work for a big company; first job was for a lawyer and not secure; wanted to work for the FBI, but would not leave my family; brother would not leave either; family proud when I went to work for the company president; was the only one in the family in the industry, it was accidental; also worked for Lever Brothers, but once in the oil industry never thought of leaving; got work ethic from father; he spoiled my mother and me

Philip and Eleanor George

Larose, LA

September 25, 2001, January 21, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA009, DA024p

Ethnographic Preface:

Philip George was referred to me by Katherine Richardelle. He and his wife, Eleanor, were present throughout the interview. At first, Philip did not know if he would have much to share, but after four hours and dinner, Eleanor laughed and commented that she had not heard him talk that much in the fifty years they had been married. Eleanor was born in 1935. Her family is from Golden Meadow, and her father worked in the oilfield there from 1939 to 1950.

Philip was born in 1933 and grew up in and around Larose. He got married at 18 and started shrimping and fishing with his father-in-law. He started in the oilfield in 1955 when shrimping had declined and he could not make the payments on his car and home. At the time, he had never been on a rig. Philip's father owned a restaurant, and after a couple of short jobs with service and construction companies, Philip was able to get on with Humble Oil through a man who was a regular at the restaurant. Philip was caught in the downturn of the late 1950s; although he was demoted back to a gang, Philip managed to keep his job. He remained with Humble and then Exxon until his retirement in 1986.

Summary of DA009:

Overview: grandfather from Lebanon; salesman; made his way to Mississippi and then Thibodaux; would walk to Grand Isle with bags of clothes on his back to sell; father went into bar and restaurant business; Philip married young, started shrimping and fishing with father-in-law; into oilfield in 1955 when shrimping down; first night sent to watch trucks unload; then to Bollinger for 1 month; back to roughnecking in oilfield; Daddy knew Operations Superintendent from Humble Oil; interviewed one day, offshore the next; caught in the bust; brother laid off; kept job; transferred closer to home when things picked up; nine or ten years in Breton Canal; promoted to mechanical foreman offshore; wanted to send him to Florida; refused; six years later promoted to field foreman; spent 22 years offshore as field foreman.

Getting started at Humble: first day April 19, 1955; was making \$1.60-\$1.70 per hour on onshore rigs; Humble paid \$2 per hour; lived on LST; majority of others from east and west Texas; came because things had shut down for them there; switch from steam to power rigs; "Needless to say, we had plenty accidents;" 1957-1958 bust; worked on 2-3 rigs per month; constantly working with new people all the time; limited to one phone call per hitch; shrimping was worse - could be gone a month and home 3-4 days; name changed to Exxon in 1972.

Experiences: changes in technology; engineers used to have to roughneck to see what was really going on; now have computers; people got along; Texans had superior attitude; steam rigs were

the best, so easy to work, could regulate the power; injuries; did not tell right away; lots of accidents; group had bad safety record and Humble did not like it, so tried not to report accidents; contractors even worse; not much turnover; Texans left in 1970s when things picking up because they wanted to go home; burned in fire in natural gas engine; hernia not identified until physical two years later.

Workers: never short handed; in 1970s workers from Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama; brought in blacks and women; a few problems; main job personnel-wise was to get people to learn to operate; women started about 1982-1983; will never forget the first one, had to have separate sleeping quarters and showers; good opportunity for person to better herself.

Hurricanes: had plenty; three phases of response; caught out in Hurricane Juan; shut everything down and hope for the best; main thing not to have anyone have a heart attack or slip and fall; no way to get in; Coast Guard not coming for workers: when first started about 30 people on a rig, also had LST, cooks, people running the water makers, crane operators; after the bust got rid of the company rigs; more contract personnel; noticed influx of contract personnel first after 1950s bust; used them to keep things going when started shutting down; did not have to pay insurance, retirement; Brown and Root provided contract workers for Humble, then for Exxon; people took contract jobs because they were hungry, had less education; they were willing to work, dependable; some would get hired by the oil companies; another increase in contract workers in 1980s when things started to tighten up, instead of hiring people the company did not know it could keep.

Changes in regulations: would report sheens; when MMS there company would respond; restrictions increased, became tough.

Early days in Golden Meadow: Eleanor's grandparents lived there; derricks everywhere, children would play out there; dig little pits and smell nothing but oil; go to sleep to the sound of pumping wells; oil everywhere; Eleanor's father went to work in the oilfield as a roughneck around 1939 and stayed in until 1950 when he bought his own shrimp boat; father let the oil companies store their equipment on his property; the companies built board roads to truck in the equipment; people were excited because money was coming in; they worked 7 days a week, 12 hours a day; Eleanor's daddy worked night shift, would come in and have breakfast; kids had to stay in the yard while he rested; low pay; built his shrimp boat with Philip.

Conditions at work: shrimpers and oilfield workers worked together; only problem was things thrown overboard; divers would come out to do bottom inspection; welding machines and other things found on the bottom; people started getting educated and stopped throwing things overboard; still lots of things end up in the water; MMS and Coast Guard helped; companies got fined enough then they started preaching to their people; people were made aware of what pollution would do to the environment; from 1955-1986, 200 percent difference in cleanliness.

Highlights: learned a lot from it, can do a little bit of everything; learned a lot about people; got to know the people better than your own family; made some really good friends; worked with people on South Marsh Island 73 for ten years; took early retirement when Exxon made offer in 1986 during bust; Op Sup called at 6am to the rig, said he was sending out a plane with packages

for everyone on the platform; also sent fed-ex to each house; anyone with 15 years or more or at least 50 years old could take early retirement; were going through so much change in upper management, happy to retire.

Eleanor's perspective: French-English-German descent; lived all her life in Lafourche; moved 12 miles when married; raised in oilfield; married at 16, baby at 17; every emergency he was offshore; would take care of house and yard so family could travel when he was off work; would save all year to take boys on a vacation; preferred 7 and 7 because gave family time to do things together; hard when kids were sick, teenagers; in early days communication limited; after phones out there could call home every afternoon, company would foot the bill; worried constantly; media would report accidents but not enough details; especially helicopter accidents; fortunate, in more than 20 years had friends on only 3 helicopters that went down; first cousin crashed and died on what he had decided would be his last trip offshore; sons now working offshore; Exxon took good care of the family.

Offshore living: so much food would get sick of looking at it; would fish to blow off steam; people catching fish to sell inshore; overloaded helicopters; preferred working oilfield to shrimping; many changes; did everything manually in the beginning, but were younger and it was fun; people inventing things all the time; Exxon had a "coin your idea" program; looked at photos, plate; Century of Discovery: An Exxon Album from 1982, 100th anniversary; company newsletter, The Wildcat; Humble News; Floyd Sonnier limited edition print.

Summary of DA024p:

01: Platform inspection, performed daily to monthly, with Phillip George and the maintenance foreman, and a gauger.

02: Land and Ship Tanks, (LST), living quarters, connected by a ramp to the rig.

03: Phillip George being presented with his 30 year plaque by an operation superintendent with Exxon; they gave us a luncheon that night, and then we had family with us and they'd kindly tell you all the good things that you were supposed to have done; they had awards for 5 years, 10 years, 20 years, 30 and 40; few made 40.

04: Phillip George at meeting with Exxon, fire fighting safety seminar

05: Phillip George attending a school on compressors and engines in Kilgore, Texas; Phillip is in back row, fourth from left; I was a technical foreman and mechanics; this was a pretty tight school, they were trying to cram a lot in you in a short time

06: Phillip George attending a school on gas turbines.

07: Phillip George receiving a plaque for eight years without an accident on the platforms he supervised; really it was an incentive to see, could we beat the other guys at Grand Isle and so forth on how long we could go without a chargeable accident

08: Photo from Humble News when Betsy came through (photo missing)

09: Description of platform - Supervisor's structure, Vermillion 330, living quarters to left, escape capsule hanging off the back, crane and compressor

Jimmy Gibbens

Metairie, LA

July 16, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG035

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Jimmy Gibbens by Jerry Shea in New Iberia. Between the time Jerry recommended an interview with Jimmy and the day of the actual interview, I bumped into quite a few Texaco hands who knew Jimmy, and not a single one of them had a bad word to say. Jimmy used to work for Jerry's grandfather back in the 30's, and their families have been friends ever since. Jimmy and his wife have a nice house in Metairie, a few blocks from the lake. He is by far the most senior oilman I interviewed over the summer, and this is a fine interview on several fronts. There are quite a few valuable sections in this interview, as well as some clear chronologies of oilfield activity.

Jimmy was born in Hopeville, LA. He comes from an agricultural family and got into the oilfield in 1934 after a storm damaged a lot of Texaco installations. The company hired people to make repairs, and Jimmy worked his way up from roustabout to vice president before retiring in 1980. He knows the equipment of the field, the history of Texaco's exploits in the region, and many of the men who made it all happen. Most of the men I talked to had fond memories of Jimmy arriving in one of the Mallard planes and talking with the men on the rigs and platforms.

#### Summary:

Personal history: born in Hope Villa, description of the Great Depression. His family was an agricultural family, and they spent some of his youth running the farm at the Angola state prison. The levee broke around that time. He went to high school in Thibodaux. He describes Thibodaux. After high school, Jimmy worked a lot of different jobs, including dairy, sugar cane, and other things.

Early Occupational History: The storm of '34 damaged a lot of the Texaco installations in the region, and they needed people to fix them. He started work at that time, and has a funny story about lying about his age to get the job. Texaco, he notes, was on the water in 1929. Louisiana Land (LL&E) owned nine salt domes, and Texaco made a deal with them to drill - that was called the "28 Contract" because it was established in 1928. Texaco needed marine drilling equipment for the areas near the domes, and they made a deal with Abercrombie. That company built the camps and drilled, but they defaulted and couldn't handle the work, so that's how Texaco got into drilling.

Early Equipment Description: There were no barges back then. 1933 MacBride designed a floating drilling rig. Jimmy gives a description. In 1934 they found a captain that had a patent on a submersible drilling barge, and they built it and named it after him - the Giliasso. Then they

started building their fleet up, and Texaco built a lot of rigs because there weren't enough contractors around for all the drilling that needed to be done.

**Drilling and Business:** A lot of companies got out of drilling, but Texaco hung on for a long time. They recognized the drilling rig as a good training ground for personnel, especially engineers.

**First Day of Work:** Jimmy remembers laying pipeline in the marsh, carrying it on his shoulders. There were a lot of guys from other places working at the time. Lafitte field was really productive.

**Work History:** He roughnecked from '35 to '39, in '39 he became a driller at Bateman Lake. He made drilling foreman in 1943, and field foreman in 1944 at Lake Pelto. The field foreman position meant that he was in charge of both production and drilling. In 1947 he went to the Houma office as the Assistant Superintendent of the Houma district, and in 1956 he went to New Orleans as assistant general superintendent. In 1960 he made general superintendent. In 66 he made assistant division manager, and in 67 he went to Houston as assistant to the VP. That was a training job, and he handled the US and Latin America. In 68 he came back to Louisiana as division manager, and in 69 he became regional manager. In 1970 he made general manager, which meant he was in charge of the eastern half of the US. In 1973 he made vice president, which was an elected position, and he held that until he retired in 1980.

**Rigs and Schedules:** we look at some pictures of floating rigs, talk about the 28 contract, talk about the 12 and 4 schedule that was popular before WWII, and he notes that they were really short of people during the war. That's why they went to 10 and 5. Couldn't get some completion supplies, so they drilled but didn't complete.

**Labor Quality:** The post WWII laborers were great, good workers. Texaco got into offshore late because they had so many landholdings around the salt domes. They began to go in the 1960's. Shell was the deepwater leader. They were doing underwater completions. Shell is a good organization. In the 1950s Texaco moved to contract drillers with diesel rigs. They also bought Bay Drilling. Texaco had four or five dozen rigs through the 80's.

**Safety:** Jimmy talks about safety, policy, and its evolution within Texaco. It was always around, but received more emphasis as time went by.

**Environmental regulations:** He thinks it's like a pendulum that's swung too far. He remembers engineers looking for oil slicks on the water back in the 1940's. Not as much attention to it back then as now, though. Oilfield has been good for the environment - just look at shrimp and fish populations. He describes the shrimpboats as being like junebugs gathered around the rigs and platforms sometimes. Dumping mud on oysters will kill them, though.

**Unionization:** he thinks the reason they never unionized is because they couldn't get all the offshore workers in one place. When the guys came onshore, they just wanted to go home. There were a lot of attempts at unionization in the 1950s.

Reasons for his personal success: He attributes it to luck, working for good people, good teachers, etc. Some good stories about his own promotions and the advice his dad gave him.

Advancement in the current oilfield: you can't work your way up like that anymore. It's good to know the technology of the oilfield even when you're in the office, but the office guys don't come up the hard way anymore, and that's a bad thing. He says there's a big difference between a geologist and an oil finder.

Changes in the labor force: he says the quality of labor in the 1960's didn't really change that much. The oilfield is a tough schedule, but it's not that much time when you look at it, and it's good for people to work there. He tells a story about Cajun captains being valued in the North Sea. Texaco was aware of their impact on Acadiana. They made people some money down here, the jobs were good, but they were making money down here too ... Lots of it. But they were charitable, they donated land for high schools and things.

Acadiana and Texaco: before he retired, 89% of Texaco's money was generated in southern Louisiana. We talk about old man Shea, and how Texaco kept the workforce happy. He used to go and visit the boys on the rig a lot, pat them on the back. They had four Mallard planes that they would fly around in. It doesn't happen like that anymore. Chairman of the board used to go out to the rigs back in those days, but not anymore.

Future of Industry: Fed and state governments are screwing it all up. Story about a journalist he befriended in Florida.

Jim Giblin

Houston, TX

June 30, 2006

Interviewed by: Jason P. Theriot

University of Houston/History International

MMS070

### Ethnographic Preface:

Jim Giblin, a native of Virginia, lives in Friendswood, TX. He spent more than 40 years in the maritime industry. He joined the Merchant Marine in 1942 and served on tankers and Liberty Ships during the war delivering oil and supplies to the Caribbean, Mediterranean, and the Pacific. His ship, the Stephen F. Austin, was torpedoed off the coast of North Africa in '43. After the war, he took a job with Ogden Marine on tankers out of the Port of Houston. He made his way to captain and eventually became the company's port captain, overseeing the daily tanker operations. After his first retirement, EXXON hired him to be a pollution and safety inspector for their tank handling operations.

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Selwyn "Sebby" Gilmore

Bourg, LA and Houma, LA

July 8, 2003, January 11, 2005

Interviewed by: James Sell, Betsy Plumb, Lauren Penney

University of Arizona

JS028, LP003

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Selwyn Gilmore was first referred to me by Ed Henry, who knew him from their veterans' organization. Ed had contacted him and gained his prior approval for an interview in Winter 2003. He was also recommended by Lloyd Dagenhardt, who considered him a very good friend, whose friendship developed at first by radio contact alone. I was able to finally obtain an interview just before I left Houma in July. Mr. Gilmore is in excellent physical and mental shape. When I mentioned I was from Tucson, he told me he was stationed at Davis-Monthan Airbase just before shipping out with his B-29 squadron to the Pacific. The first interview itself has a number of references to WWII, and it is clear that there was an intermixing of oil work and war in that period of his life. Mr. Gilmore was identified to be reinterviewed because of his additional military service during World War II. The second interview was conducted as part of the study of the links between WWII and the offshore industry.

Selwyn Gilmore is a long-term Texas Pipeline hand. After finishing high school in 1941 in Berwick, he went to work for the Army Corps of Engineers, building levees. After war broke out, he continued to work for the Corps for almost a year. Although a person working for the Corps was "frozen" in his job for the duration of the war, Gilmore started work with Texas Pipeline January 1943. He was drafted in August 1943 and trained as an aircraft gunner before shipping out to Guam with his B-29 squadron. After discharge in 1946, he resumed working for Texas Pipeline. As the pipeline system developed in the 1950s, he moved around with it, working in Berwick, Petersburg, and Paradis, before settling into the Houma/Cocodrie area. His work ranged from pipeline inspection to tour engineer, relief supervisor, and technical assistant. He retired in 1985 as one of the highest seniority personnel in the company. His son works for the same company, now owned by Shell.

#### Summary of JS028:

Work and World War II: Working for the Corps of Engineers in a "protected" job, building levees for hurricane protection. First job with The Texas Pipeline Company in 1943 while waiting to be called up for the draft. Military training and service as a gunner in B-29s in the Pacific. Christmas 1944 in Tucson. Pipeline laying was hard physical work, "movin' gumbo mud." His high school education was an advantage, he was soon moved to office work.

"The Wettest Inch": Cocodrie Station was where the inshore/offshore pipelines came to land. He would do gauging, then was tour engineer and relief supervisor. Cocodrie was reached by one poor road. When there was a hurricane, they would have to go by boat. Hurricanes would flood the station.

Injuries: The work was hard and dangerous. He ruptured a disk on the job, required surgery. After he returned to work, he wasn't able to continue field work and transferred to the office as station operator. This was a demotion but made him able to continue with the company.

Port Texaco: This was the port where oil was loaded from barges to tankers for shipment to the refineries. When the pipeline was built in 1951, Port Texaco was no longer needed.

Offshore: Laying pipe offshore was rough work. At one time, he was inspecting on the lay barge and worked 16 days straight. The water was so rough they couldn't relieve him.

Work Relations: Texas Pipeline was like a family. They even kept track of retirees, until cutting it out because of the expense.

Field Work: Their duties were to monitor, repair meters. Some meters weighed upwards of 300 pounds and had to be replaced by winch, which was dangerous work on a swaying barge. Ste. Elaine was loaded with gnats and they had to wear hoods. For awhile they weren't allowed to eat at the camps (Texas Pipeline was treated as a separate company from Texaco), but eventually worked out some informal arrangements.

Major Changes in 1990s: After Hurricane Andrew in '92, the pipelines were consolidated. In '98 Texaco and Shell Pipeline merged to become Equilon Pipeline. When Chevron bought out Texaco, the government made them split. Then Shell bought out Equilon and changed its name to Shell Pipeline. Now all the offshore pipelines end up in Houma.

Summary of LP003:

Mr. Selwyn was one of a small group of people who had served in WWII and been involved in the early development of the offshore oil and gas industry in the Gulf of Mexico and was interviewed in a joint project of the University of Arizona, U.S. Minerals Management Service, and the National D-Day Museum. In this interview, Mr. Selwyn talks mostly about his experiences during WWII.

Early life: He was born in Bourg, Louisiana on August 19, 1924. He had four brothers and four sisters. His dad was a game warden and worked for the Department of Revenue. His father also worked in a shipyard during World War I. He went to school through eighth grade in Berwick and to Morgan City for high school. He graduated in 1941; they only had 11 grades. During the summers he worked in filling stations for \$1 a day; he did things such as fix tires and wash cars.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers: He got a job with the Corps and worked on levee jobs as a rod man (building repairs and on air bases and airports. [Note: he describes this in detail in his previous interview] When he was moved to New Orleans, he had his expenses cut and was not given a raise when he was supposed to, so he talked to his boss about quitting. His boss told him that he could not quit because he was frozen to his job because he had been exempted from service. He told his boss he was going to enlist. So, in 1942, he went to the draft board to enlist and was told to wait for them to call him. He waited a few months and then got a job with the

Texas Pipeline Company in January 1943. He recalled his first day; it was freezing and they couldn't move the mud. He ended up working for the company for 43 years.

Stateside service training: While with the pipeline company, he was transferred to Erath and then Barre. He received his draft notice and asked his boss to allow him seven days off before he left. He reported for duty in August 1943, at Camp Beauregard; he stayed there three months before being sent to Shepard's Field, Texas. Somewhere he took a test to get into aerial gunnery training, which he graduated in February 1944. He went from Salt Lake City to Tucson, where he flew awhile, but was grounded for medical reasons. He liked Tucson - there were no curfews or dress regulations. He then went on to Texas and then Pratt, Kansas where he was assigned to the 29th Air Force. In December 1944, he headed for Fort Lawton, Washington, where he shipped out on the 19th.

Traveling to the Pacific front: They stayed Christmas Eve '44 in Honolulu, however they were not allowed to leave the ship. He said that if they had let them off, they would have had a lot of AWOLs. He recalled how some had managed to get alcohol aboard and the hula dancers that gave them a show. They were finally allowed off the ship. While on the ship, they slept on bunks in the holds. He had breakout detail - "best detail on the ship." He brought special food back with him to his buddies (e.g., apples). They were on board a Dutch ship. One of the crew, Jerry, was very good to them and gave them good food. He describes being scared when they fired a three-inch gun and running up on deck.

Guam: They arrived in January '44 and slept several nights in puff tents on coral while they cleared the area. Their missions started soon after they arrived and they had few breaks in between them - "constant." [note: sounds like his work in the oil industry]

End of war: Related a story about a flare gun. Said he had a good outfit and that their squad was lucky to have only lost a few planes. One plane blew up at night on takeoff and lit up everything. Another was a plane that he helped to load and had been talking to the crew; after that, he shied away from talking to crews. He had been a 9-11 gunner, but changed to 5-11. He was good with the 50-caliber machine guns; he could handle it and put it together without looking at it (same with other small weapons).

Base during the war: They watched movies at night; they sat on logs and carried raincoats because it always seemed to rain at 9:00 p.m. They had church services in a chapel, complete with steeple. Their barracks were long and made of plywood. Though the island was secure, there were still some Japanese around - e.g., saw small footprints and were randomly fired upon. They were well protected by the nearby Navy base (Pacific headquarters), so they did not have air raids (their sirens did go off, though).

Area veterans: 15 guys from his area were veterans and they got together periodically for ice cream. His buddy, George Stansbury (GS), was from Morgan City, and was in the Marines. They spent time together in the Pacific. GS went to Iwo Jima and survived.

Medal of Honor: Mr. Gilmore described the bombs on B-29s and told the story of Henry Irwin, a Medal of Honor recipient. Henry's plane had released a phosphorous flare out the door, but it

came back into the plane. Henry grabbed it in his arms and threw it out the copilot's window. "Remarkable" that they saved him. Badly, badly burned. Henry only recently died. At one time, he was in danger of losing his house, but an anonymous donor paid what he owed. He described another man, Godfry, from his squad and another veteran from Houma.

Liquor rations: They were given rations of beer, six cans at a time (12 at Christmas). He did not drink, so he sold his. He talked about GI ingenuity and tricks they used to get more beer. He noted that they had a few alcoholics in their outfit. While they were Stateside, they had 3-2 beer (beer that was 3.2% alcohol) and would get sick off it. On payday they would go to the service club because it was too expensive to go to town.

Job on Guam: His job was to clean the guns, but did not think they needed him to do this, so he went to help the guys on the line. He usually did not carry a weapon, but he did when working with water. He would have gotten Staff Sergeant if he had done something with weapons, but he wanted to get out at that time. He regrets not going for it now and getting a higher rating. His crew was in charge of caring for three planes. He hurt his back once while using the equipment. He described going to see the dentist (he used a pedal drill) because the side of his face went numb. The nerve had shattered and the dentist had to pull it. He spent Christmas '45 in hospital because he had a knot in his hand.

Powdered milk: The military usually issued powdered milk, but he would not drink it. They had fresh milk in the hospital and he would drink as much as possible. When back in the States, a lot of the men would get ice cream because they didn't have it during the war.

People: He was shipped back with a guy from Morgan City. He described a few other men from his area and the diversity of the service people. They had both good and bad characters. His best buddy was from Los Angeles. He had a six hour layover in L.A. and met up with him. He described a guy from Baltimore.

Growing up: "Grew into manhood in the service really." He was out on his own with different people. Learned who to associate with; differentiate the good from the bad. He also learned how to work with the bad, but not hang out with them. He learned discipline, to obey orders, live, and grow up together. Some guys were older than him (he was only 19). He thinks everyone should have to serve at least two years in the military. His son was a first sergeant and worked with the Houma kids recently killed in Iraq - "Quite a blow."

Going home: He returned on the Liberty Ship. He came into Oakland and recalled the Golden Gate Bridge, fog (everything got soaked), and Alcatraz (lonely, lonely place). He received a furlough and got to see his mom and have his leg operated on. He was discharged at Fort Sam. As he was leaving an MP warned him to be careful because discharged soldiers were being robbed for their discharge money.

Weather: while in the Pacific, he became acclimated to the warm weather, so he was cold when he returned home. Before leaving, he had broken up with his girlfriend and she didn't recognize him when he got home because he had lost so much weight. He later married her.

Air Force: He went into the Air Force because that's where he was drafted. His IQ was high and he just missed getting OCS (Officer rating). But, he preferred the Air Force. Some of the guys he came in with were taken out of the Air Force and put into the infantry; he noted his cousin Jimmy went from the infantry to the Air Force, later worked for Shell, and was called to serve in Korea. After being discharged, Selwyn signed up for inactive reserve. One day a sergeant showed up at his house and asked him if he would like to reenlist. He said no and gave three reasons: (1) he was married with a child, (2) he had a good job, and (3) he was a civilian. His work building airports in the Army Corps did not make him partial for the Air Force. His brother, Jerry, was in the infantry and had told him not to go into it. He described Jerry's job guarding the Supreme Headquarters in Europe and of his meeting with General Patton (wouldn't let him by the gate without seeing his identification first).

Education and his job: "Fit back in" to civilian life. He didn't go back to work right away and regrets that he did not go to school through the GI Bill. His job used math and education would have helped him. He thinks he should have gone into construction because it would have given him more experience than he got at the pipeline stations. His work in the oil industry gradually became more electronic. He worked his last three years in the office and could not stand it - "like putting me in a cage." Most of his 43 years with the company were spent outdoors.

On not flying and MPs: He regrets he was grounded during his service, but recalled that he was one of the fortunate ones because no one was shooting at him. He described two of his dealings with MPs.

What he took from Air Force to oilfield: Nothing really. His service work was completely different from what he did in the oil industry. When he came back from the war, they would not give him back his old job and he did not want to take what they offered him (gang position) because he would have had to move. It ended up that he had to be given seniority because he had worked eight months before he left. They gave him three \$50 bonds when he returned. His oilfield work was fast and he had to coordinate it with dispatch. He trained himself how to operate the equipment, though sometimes he got help from his older coworkers.

Back problems: He had to have back surgery for a ruptured disk. His back went out several times during the course of his career. He first hurt his back digging a bell hole in the '40s at Barre Station. He was off one week for it. Later he started seeing a chiropractor, but had to battle to get his insurance to pay for it. When he ruptured his disk they tried to call it a recurrence of an old injury in order not to pay for it, but his doctor said it was a new condition.

Co-workers: A lot of interactions in the oilfield were done via phone. "Ordinary people like I am." At one time they issued a Pipeliners Book of Retirees, but stopped after 5-6 years. A lot of his coworkers were from Texas and one of his best bosses, Bob Hawkins, was from Illinois. In the oilfield he had to make decisions on his own. Coworkers learned to cover for one another; related two stories of this. They can't do this anymore because there is electronic monitoring of everything.

William E. Gipson

Houston, TX

May 9, 2003

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS024

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. William Gipson graduated from the University of Texas in 1949 and joined the Ohio Company (Marathon) as a geologist. After 3 years, he became an independent consulting geologist and later a partner with Bill Liedtke, brother of Hugh Liedtke, who ran Zapata Oil with George H.W. Bush. In 1962, Gipson and Liedtke consolidated their partnerships into a corporation called Stetco, which they then merged into Pennzoil in 1963. After Pennzoil acquired United Gas in 1967, Gipson became head of exploration for the whole Pennzoil Company. In 1970, he headed up the organization of Pennzoil Oil and Gas Operators (POGO), an entity formed by Pennzoil to explore and produce in the Gulf of Mexico. When Pennzoil spun off POGO as an independent entity in 1977, Gipson became its president. He retired from POGO in 1990 but remained on the board until the late 1990s.

#### Summary:

Interview begins by discussion the businesses and mergers that led to creation of the modern Pennzoil Company in 1963 and the merging of Gipson's Stetco interests into it. Discussion of the acquisition of United Gas and the strategy behind it. Creation of the group, led by Scotty Holland, in 1968 to study offshore play in the Gulf of Mexico. Story of raising money for the creation of POGO in 1970. Unique organization with guarantee to investors. Story about sale itself and POGO's successful bids. Eugene Island 330 field. Talks about spinning off POGO in 1977 as an independent entity. Creation of PLATO, Pennzoil Louisiana and Texas Offshore, in 1973 for the 1974 Texas sale. Never the success that POGO was.

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Jake Giroir

Morgan City, LA

May 8, 2001, July 31, 2001, January 7, 2005

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner, Colleen O'Donnell, Diane Austin

University of Arizona

AG015, AG044p, DA128

#### Ethnographic Preface:

A couple of different people pointed me in Jake Giroir's direction. Jimmy Hebert in New Iberia suggested I catch up with him, as did Lou Trosclair. Jake also participated in our last project in the region, so he was familiar with the team. He eats breakfast every morning at Manny's, and I bumped into him there. We made an appointment to meet for an interview at his house. Jake met me at the door, explaining that his wife was sick, so we could meet out back on the covered patio. We started talking, and continued until the tape ran out. I returned later for a follow-up interview based upon a set of photographs he shared with me. We talked for quite a while about the tasks and duties involved in his various positions, and he told a couple of great stories about the incompetence of some of the company engineers with no real experience. Near the end of the tape, Jake starts to talk about some of the changes to the community and environment in the Morgan City area. The third interview was conducted as part of the study of the links between WWII and the offshore industry.

Jake started work in the 1930's in the area around Morgan City, working for Shell. The company hired him and a bunch of friends to help lead the survey crews around the swamps in the area. His knowledge of the swamps was drawn from hunting and trapping there, and he was a success as a Shell employee. Then he started drilling the Gibson field as part of a crew there, and eventually moved to roughnecking at the West Lake Verret field. He worked a couple of other places, including White Castle and Galveston Bay. Then war was declared, and he joined the Navy. When he got back, he started in production at Weeks Island. He moved up quickly through the ranks.

There's a variety of valuable information in this interview, all magnified by Jake's penchant for detailed and witty storytelling. Note that the follow-up interview contains more than just a description of the photographs - we went on to talk about some of the questions we missed in that first interview.

#### Summary of AG015:

Starting out: Jake started work in the oilpatch on August the 9th, 1936, for a Shell surveying crew working the swamps around Morgan City. He got the job through personal contacts, and they wanted him because he knew the swamps well. They asked if he knew any other fellows who could help, so they hired a bunch of his friends. He gives a vivid description of cutting right-of-ways through the swamp. He talks about how some of the out-of-state guys were unaccustomed to the swamp.

Working the swamp: He talks about carrying the pipe on their shoulders. Sometimes they couldn't complete the shot at the exact location because the big cypress trees were in the way. They left for work at 7:30 in the morning and got out of the swamp just after dark.

Other jobs: He talks about working at the sawmill prior to that. They worked in the high water during the floods, too. They also used mules. The job eventually carried him to Texas. He finally got some time off, and he was hanging around Morgan City on his vacation when a guy from the new Gibson plant Shell had just built asked him if he wanted a job. Back then, you could move from one part of the company to another like that, so he took it. He describes the Gibson field, the equipment, and the complex. His first job there was managing the trucks bringing in equipment. Then Shell moved on to West Lake Verret, and Jake went to work there. They built everything on pilings back then.

Schedules: He talks about the schedules they worked. In the early days, you could swap hours with guys, so they would swap time around so they could have a couple days off. He tells a story of rescuing a cat line from the swampy water. His boss was so happy they gave him time off.

Roughnecking: He roughnecked at West Lake Verret in '38. He talks about the first Shell steam rigs, the first barges, etc. He talks about a job that almost didn't work out. The Schlumberger guys would look at the tailings for "bugs" that indicated the presence of oil. Finally they found them - it was at the last minute.

In the military: In '39 they transferred him from West Lake Verret to Galveston Bay, where they were drilling in seven feet of water. He drilled a well there, but then he signed up for the Army. He was on Galveston Bay when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor. He had a couple weeks before they shipped out, and he was hanging around in New Orleans. He bumped into a sailor, and the sailor asked him about working in the oil industry. Jake said he fired boilers, drilled wells, worked the derricks, all of that. The Navy guy offered him two stripes in the Navy - he could be a second class watertender. So he ended up joining the Navy.

WWII: His service carried him to the South Pacific. His ship was lucky to make it back. He was on a heavy cruiser, the USS Boston. He was in charge of the second fire-room. He tells some lengthy war stories.

Production: When he got back, he didn't go back into drilling. He had gotten married, and he wanted to stay in one place, so he got a production job at Weeks Island. He started off as a gauger. We talk about some mutual friends from the Weeks Island field. He talks about some of the other oil companies that were working offshore in the early days. They had three rigs at Weeks Island, and Jake eventually made maintenance foreman there.

Work in drill and construction: Jake went back to drilling and construction because Shell was more active offshore. He was working on platforms in 40+ feet of water. Eventually, they transferred him to Cameron, just after Hurricane Audrey tore everything up down there. He talks about some of the engineers they would send out - Jake knew how to run that equipment a lot better than they did. He tells a story about this.

Texans: He worked for Shell for 41 years. We talk about the Texans who worked in the oilfield in the early days. He says that they didn't have any problems - the Cajuns and the Texans. He also says that most of the oil companies were the same, but he says that Texaco was a hard company to work for. He also tells a story about a bad experience with the Superior Oil Company.

End of career: He says that Shell was strict, but they were a great company to work for. At the end of his career, he was in charge of workover rigs. He had a lot of paperwork. He talks about the responsibility of running a large division. He also talks about the changing quality of labor - there were some good ones and some bad ones. It's always been like that.

He never had a well blow out on him - he counts himself as fortunate for that. He tells a story about a close call.

Morgan City: Then we talk about how much Morgan City has changed over the years. The oil industry used to be big around here, but all of the action is offshore now.

Summary of AG044p:

Work History: Jake began as a laborer in a "geophysical gang", then he went to work a construction company building platform for oil companies. After this he went to work as a roughneck for two years before he went into the service for several years. Once out of the service, he went into production and maintenance on Weeks Island. He retired in 1976.

Unions: The oil refineries had unions and tried to convince his fields to unionize, but they were resistant. The resistance came from the fact that they got all the benefits (at least working for Shell) that the refineries, and they didn't have to pay union fees. Shell treated their employees well with pension and savings deals, medical care and stock options. This changed when Royal Dutch took over the Shell companies in the 1990's; they forcefully bought back all the employ stocks for much less than they were worth

1. Shell production platform in block 192, Cameron, built by Higgins fabrication company in New Orleans.
2. A top view of the Shell platform in block 192, Cameron.
3. West Verret Shell production platform with living quarters, constructed for 10-14 ft of water.
4. West Verret Shell production platform under construction, side view.
5. Higgins Company building the platform, large cranes raise sections onto the platform.
6. View of Shell production platform number 7 under construction by Higgins Company.
7. Another view of Shell platform number 7 under construction.
8. A section of pipe connected to the dehydrators on platform 7.
9. An overhead view of pipe sections being installed on platform 7.
10. View of the top section of the production platform, 40 X 40 feet.
11. Pipe section installed on Shell production platform.
12. The large tank is the dehydrator to dry the gas, on a platform off Cameron.
13. Dehydrators and tanks for gas to the right, on the platform set in the Gulf.

14. View of the platforms in the Gulf, living quarters to the left, well and production to the right.
15. The pipe carrying the oil from the well curves like a spring to provide room to stretch in bad weather. Jake Giroir on Block 88 gas platform.
16. Bill Shalic production foreman, left, with Jake Giroir, at West Lake Verret, with oil compressors in the background.

#### Summary of DA128:

Jake was one of a small group of people who had served in WWII and been involved in the early development of the offshore oil and gas industry in the Gulf of Mexico and was interviewed in a joint project of the University of Arizona, U.S. Minerals Management Service, and the National D-Day Museum. In this interview, Jake talks mostly about his experiences during WWII.

**Early history:** Jake was born in Gibson in 1911. In the 4th grade, he moved to Morgan City with his family. Shortly after, his granddad died and his family moved back to Gibson to take over the family farm. They then moved back to Morgan City, where Jake began the 8th grade. He showed proficiency in both math and English. After the 19th grade, he had to leave school because his father had broken his arm and had to work to support his family. He worked for Public Utilities and as an Iceman. Then the depression hit.

Before Jake got a position with Shell in 1936, he was working in a sawmill working twelve ten hour days at 15 cents an hour. His cousin had informed him of a position at Shell being on a surveyor crew. Because of his experience hunting and trapping in the swamps, he was an ideal candidate for leading the surveyor crews through these areas. During the down time, he went to Texas and got a job working on the rigs in West Lake Verret.

**Military:** In 1942, Jake enlisted in the Navy because the recruiter promised him a position as Second Class water tender, because of his experience as a deckhand. After basic training, they left from Boston, through the Panama Canal then to San Diego for fire fighting training. After this he made First Class, due to his experience working with boilers. From San Diego they went to Honolulu then to Iwo Jima, where he has several battle stories. After the war, he came back to New Jersey in 1945 and got a job delivering mail for the service until he was discharged.

**Returning home:** Jake returned home to Morgan City. Later, he started working for Shell as a gang pusher, then as a maintenance foreman in offshore production. He would work seven days on and seven days off. After Shell, he went to work for Harris Well Service as a salesman for 14-16 years. He retired in 1979.

Maxie Gisclair

New Iberia, LA

June 3, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG023

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Maxie Gisclair at the Shell retirees' dinner in New Iberia, Louisiana. I was finally able to set up a time for an interview. The Gisclairs live in a nice house in one of the satellite subdivisions in New Iberia. Maxie had a stroke in 1995, and as a result, he has trouble with numbers. His wife sat in for the interview, participated, and helped Maxie through some of the questions. The Gisclairs talk about the impact of moving around for the oilfield work, and what it was like raising a family under such conditions. There's an interesting section about the Shell training program for engineers. Once that program ended, the engineers were inexperienced, and that was one of the reasons Maxie retired - he was scared. We talk about steam rigs for a while. They talk about what the oilfield meant to Cajun people. There's a great story midway through the tape about pollution, the drinking water, and a pond catching on fire. There's a nice discussion of the conditions from which they came at the end of the interview.

Both Maxie and his wife come from the greater Abbeville area. Maxie went into the service after high school, and when he returned home, he spent two years in college and then started working for a seismograph crew. Through the help of his brother, he was able to get on with Shell. He worked on drilling rigs for a while and then made the jump to production. He stuck with production for much of his career, but shifted to workover rigs at the end. He retired from Shell at age 62.

#### Summary:

**Family History and Class Relations:** Maxie's family and his wife's family are both from Vermillion Parish. He was a gauger for the Pan American Company. Grew up near Abbeville, her father was a sharecropper. "They weren't going nowheres and we knew it, horse and buggy." Parents had no education, known as Cajuns, and were looked down upon.

**Early Work History:** Maxie's brother was working for Shell, and he got him on the rigs right after the war. He went to USL for two years after the war, worked on the seismograph crews for a while. We talk about the first day of work - starting off the beach with the seismograph crew offshore. Most of the work was off Cameron, but they worked as far as Texas. They had to stop for a while. The company he was working for went to Mexico, but he didn't go. That's when he went to work for Shell. He was near Grand Isle working when his daddy died.

**First Day of Work:** the first day in the marsh was different. They had to dig little pits, and then the water would come in. They'd put the dynamite in there. Then they would record the seismograph waves. Then, they were working in 90 feet of water, and they thought they'd never

be able to drill in that deep of water. All this seismograph work was for American Exploration. Most of the guys he worked with were from around these parts. Schedule was four days off every other week. Sometimes you'd get extra time off if it was too rough to work.

Working for Shell: Maxie started on the drilling rigs for Shell. They had to move all the time for that. Moved twice a year - after the rig was done, they'd have to move. Weeks Island to Gonzalez to Welch, Burkeville, Ioway, Weeks Island again, and so on. Just renting apartments. After three years of that, they bought a house in New Iberia, and shortly after that Maxie went into production. There was just one rig running for Shell, so they put him in production. Worked at Buck Point for 12 years, then went back to Weeks Island.

Workover Rigs: Since he had some experience, they asked him to work the workover rigs. Entirely different from drilling rigs. Enjoyed it because it was a challenge. We talk about the first day on the drilling rigs. About three weeks after working on the drilling rigs, he thought there must be something else he could do - it was too much. He was going to quit, but he changed his mind at the last minute.

Steam rigs: he started on a five boiler steam rig at Weeks Island. Steam rigs were noisy. They didn't have any bathrooms. Water was no good. Story about the pond catching on fire, and a guy got burned. They were drinking water with gas in it. Guys working at the time were from all over.

Engineers: they would go through a Shell program, roughneck for six weeks, and so on. They were engineer trainees. The good engineers came from the iron industry. Good engineers ended up leaving or retiring, though. He was 62 when he retired. He was getting scared because the engineers didn't know what they were doing. Some had never been on a rig. That was one reason he retired. He was scared that someone was going to get hurt.

Children: Talks about their children. They were able to raise good kids despite moving around all the time and living in small apartments. People helped each other out back then. Oilfield people were like one big family. We talked about retirement, Maxie is able to walk to everything from where they live now. They've come a long way. Neither of their boys thought about going into the oilfield.

Oilfield Work Today: Even today, he would recommend working in the oilfield. Salary is good. They talk about the Shell savings plan for a while. They didn't know anything about managing money, so she's happy that Shell took it upon themselves to save their money.

Loyalty: Besides the money, in those days, that job seemed like a good job. Inflation. There was a sense of security with a job like that. The higher-ups were loyal to the workforce too. They'd come on the rig and talk to you in the old days. In the years before he retired, though, he was just a number. It's different today, and there's nothing you can really do to change it.

Oil Industry and Cajuns: the industry changed things around here. It was a boost to the economy. When Maxie got out of high school, he worked one summer shipbuilding, and then went into the service. When he got back, he didn't know much about the oilfield at all.

Unions: there were a few little local unions around, but that was about it. Humble Oil had a little one, but it was more a grievance group or something. The union did some good when they started up north, but it's like everything else - too much graft. Refineries were all union though. The fact that they stayed in one spot had something to do with it. Also, the unions didn't try with the Shell employees because they had such a good deal from the get go.

Environment: did the oil industry change the environment? There were some bad things that happened, cleaning out wells in the marsh and whatnot. They got more and more strict about that stuff as time went by. Environmental regulations have affected more than just the oilfield - sugarcane too - and he told his boys to get into the environment thing.

Safety: Shell had a good safety program from the beginning, but they weren't as strict as they are now. He talks about a foot injury. Running the boilers in the heat, no worse than picking cotton in the field.

The Old Days: Life was simple, you had your necessities, you didn't have luxury. They have no regrets. Awesome description of farm life.

Andrew M. "Boom Boom" Glynn

Houma, LA

September 18, 2001

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB018

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Andrew "Boom Boom" Glynn was the first person I interviewed at the Terrebonne House, an assisted living home. The director, Gayle Wink, introduced me to Boom Boom. She warned me that his memory came and went and that he was very suspicious sometimes. We met in Boom Boom's room, which was musty but clean. He did not want me to tape the interview because he was afraid that it would get back to the oil company and make things hard for him. His saying of the day was, "it ain't none of your damn business." He is passionate when talking about southern Louisiana. "There's no place in the world like it." He loves the weather and the people and especially the food. Some of the most popular dishes he was asked to cook were the local favorites. Everything was ordered in bulk from New Orleans. When I asked him whether or not he remembers there being a budget he had to adhere to he didn't remember prices ever being an issue. They were allowed to cook whatever they wanted and use good quality items. They would also get fresh vegetables from New Orleans.

Andrew M. Glynn, or "Boom Boom," was born in 1914. His father was a trapper and fisherman, and they lived in the swamp of Bayou Black. He worked for 40 years in the oil field, 5 years for Shell in the seismograph crew before the war. Shell would hire only local boys to do the early seismograph work because they knew the area like the back of their hands. While in the navy, he was a cook on a submarine overseas. He claims to have been his commanding officer's head chef. When he got home he decided that working in the water was going to "get him" health wise, so he went to cooking on the offshore rigs. He worked for Texaco for 35 years as a cook at Lake Pelto and Grand Isle.

#### Summary:

Background: Boom Boom's wife was from Gibson and they both had high school educations. They had 2 boys, but one has already passed away. His other son lives in Florida and sends him pictures often. Boom Boom had to help his father feed his 9 brothers and sisters. He remembers when you could catch as many fish as you wanted and not have to worry about those "damn silly" regulations. In thinking back about his life in the oil field Boom Boom made this comment, "when I was leaving the camp I'd think about it. It's something to think about you go to work for half your life on the water, but you don't have to put up with the damn public, they can't walk around you." I saw Boom Boom a week later and he didn't remember talking to me. He did, however, let me tape his retirement rap this time around, but with the strict instructions to keep my damn mouth shut.

## Retirement Rap

Tea's on the table and coffees in the pot  
come on sweetie, get it while it's hot  
Mr. Ben says the work ain't hard  
but we'll all go back to Camp Beauregard  
The engine's on the main line the coast is a swift, 72 hours rest is all I get,  
working 72 on and 72 off for Texaco in the Gulf of Mexico  
but for 10 years now I'm tired and retired and I don't did that no more.

Richard Goodroe

Houma, LA.

January 18, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB024

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Richard Goodroe lives across the street from Burleigh and Molly Ruiz. I had stopped by to visit with the Ruiz family, and Richard stopped in to bring them some fruit from his trees. We got to talking and decided that he would be a good person to interview. He worked for BJ Casing Co. for many years but had experience in many aspects of the oil industry. We set up the interview for the next week. Mr. Goodroe speaks fondly of some oil field memories but also speaks to the extreme amount of stress that everyone was under the entire time they worked.

Richard Goodroe came from an oil family as his father, Cecil Goodroe, was a big man for Texaco. He grew up in the Bayou region, graduating from high school in Golden Meadow and then moving to Houma after that. His grandfather owned the "Houma Times" when it was still downtown. He worked for Noble Drilling for awhile in 1954 until he went to LSU and then was drafted. When he returned, his father was working in the Houma District, and company policy required Richard to work elsewhere. In 1961, he got a job with Kerr McGee as a dispatcher. The company moved him to Cameron where he worked for 9 months straight with no time off. He couldn't take that anymore, so he went to work as a roustabout offshore for a couple of months. In 1963, he got a job with B.J. Casing. He worked there for 16 years and then quit because of a disagreement with a boss. He went to work for the competition, Western, as a field foreman offshore. He retired early in 1999 because of health problems.

#### Summary:

**Background:** Richard Goodroe was born in 1935 and raised in the Bayou region. He came from an oil family - his father worked for Texaco. His grandfather was the owner of the Houma Times newspaper. He attended grade school and high school in Golden Meadow, where he would drive boats during his summers off from school.

**Oil Business Background:** He began working for Noble Drilling in 1954 in an onshore position and worked there until he went to LSU to major in petroleum engineering. During his time at LSU, he was drafted - he joined the Air Force in 1957. In 1961, he returned to look for work, but couldn't look for work in Houma District because his father worked there.

He got a job with Kerr McGee as a dispatcher, but they moved him to Cameron where he worked for 9 months straight with no time off. He quit after 9 months and went to work as a roustabout offshore for a couple of months. In 1963, he got a job with B.J. Casing. He worked with them for 16 years and then quit because of a disagreement with a boss. He went to work for the competition, Western, as a field foreman offshore. He retired early in 1999 because of health

problems. Mr. Goodroe speaks fondly of some oil field memories but also speaks to the extreme amount of stress that everyone was under the entire time they worked.

Robert J. Graebner

Dallas, TX

June 13, 2002

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS007

### Ethnographic Preface:

Robert Graebner spent nearly his entire career at GSI, where he provided a crucial interface between research and operations. He received a bachelor's degree in engineering physics from the Colorado School of Mines in 1948 and joined GSI the next year. He became a geophysicist of international stature at GSI. He held a series of management positions at GSI, including Senior Vice President, President and Chairman of the Board, and Vice President of Petroleum Exploration of Texas Instruments. When GSI was purchased by Halliburton Physical Services in 1988, Mr. Graebner was named Chief Geophysicist with the new organization. He retired in 1993 after 45 years of service and currently does consulting and is Senior Research Fellow for The Bureau of Economic Geology at the University of Texas at Austin. He is recognized as one of the individuals most responsible for the development of 3-D seismic technology in the gas and oil industry.

### Summary:

This is one of the best interviews available on the origins, development, and commercial application of digital seismic technology. He divides the history of geophysical technology into three major "discontinuities," the transition from refraction to reflection in the early 1930s, the move from analog to digital in the early 1960s, and the shift to 3-D in the 1970s and 1980s. Good background on the relationship between GSI and its parent, Texas Instruments. Discusses difficulties in getting oil companies to buy into digital recording and processing, and the evolution into 3-D processing. Explains the recent trend toward "multicomponent" seismic and commercial difficulties faced by the geophysical contracting industry.

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Charles de Gravelle

Lafayette, LA

July 26, 2002, December 2, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz, David DiTucci

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW012; SW030

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Charles de Gravelle was born in Thibodaux, LA. His father was a doctor and graduated from Tulane University. In 1930 he began attending Louisiana State University, where he received his undergraduate and law degrees. While at the university he met his wife Virginia. He went to work for Stanolin Oil and Gas (later Pan American, then Amoco) in 1937 and was stationed at Lake Charles. In 1940 the company moved him to Lafayette to open an office; he worked in Anse La Butte buying leases. He continued to work land deals and was the first person to hire women landmen. At some point, he also got into the abstract business. He took early retirement in 1971; however several days later he was given a job in Cameron and continued working until about 2000. During his first interview he discusses the corruption surrounding oil and gas leases, the influx of oil people into Lafayette, and making lease deals in Anse La Butte. The follow-up interview mostly involves discussion of politics in the area and the ways in which people related to the oil and gas industry helped to build up the state's Republican Party.

#### Summary of SW012:

Early life: raised in Thibodaux by aunt and uncle; father was a doctor and mom died in flu epidemic. His wife and he graduated from LSU, he with a law degree, she with a master's. Went to Lake Charles where two friends practicing law; got a job with Stanolin Oil and Gas in '37.

Stanolin: subsidiary of Standard Oil of Indiana formed for the purpose of buying out Yount-Lee Oil Company in '35; Yount-Lee history; bought for 47 million dollars. By '37 Yount-Lee's leases were running out and he was sent to Anse La Butte to buy and renew leases. Worked for them for 35 years before taking early retirement in '71; immediately rehired to work in Cameron Parish; continued working until '00. Stanolin later became Pan American, then Amoco.

Anse La Butte: sent to work there because he spoke French better than anyone else at Amoco, though he really didn't speak it; usually somebody in the home could speak English, so no need for a birddog/translator. Made good friends in area. People had been making oil deals since early 1900s, so knew what they wanted; no real big landholders; went with a prepared lease.

Landmen: no dealings offshore; lease buying process.

State corruption: Sam Jones; dealings between Harvey Peltier and Texaco; incident with Leander Perez over a tract of land.

Oil Center: geologist convinced Heymann to build it; oil people that came in provided city with a shot in the arm; oil people accepted immediately. Doesn't remember big influx of money; but some money came in that helped city grow.

Women: he was the first to hire female landmen; over time he hired 19 women.

Employees: at Amoco never hired anyone on a permanent basis except secretaries because never knew how long the job would last; his number of employees varied, but usually had 8-9 on staff.

Bust cycles: when you're a success in the oil business, you know you're a paper millionaire; had to take out a mortgage on his house in '80s.

Summary of SW030:

Beginning of Republican Party in LA: "lonely years" - only a few registered Republicans in the area; in the early '50s, held a meeting to run Republican candidates for office, even though they knew they would not win; Republican Party in LA grew after that due to World War Two veterans returning to the area and influx of oil people. The oil people who moved into the Lafayette community liked it and did not want to go back to where they came from.

Amoco: began working for them in '36 in Lake Charles; head of the company was a big Republican and was involved in Operation Eagle Eye in Chicago.

Republican Party: wife was a member of the Republican National Committee (RNC); he was elected chairman of the state party in '65 or '66 and, with his wife, represented LA on the RNC. Failure of party in recent state and community elections and breaking of Reagan's eleventh commandment. Legislation pushed by Governor Edwin Edwards streamlined primaries.

Lyons: Charlton Lyons was president of Lyons Oil Company and ran for governor as a Republican in '63; lost, but carried north Louisiana; changed peoples' attitudes about the potential success of the party and helped build a Republican base.

Running elections: learned as they went, no one to teach them; early on, had a hard time finding people to run as Republicans. Although people were slow to change parties, they were glad someone was challenging the Democrats; no social or business repercussions for being a Republican. Estimates 90% of people working for Amoco voted Republican; oil people were good contributors.

Personal life: moved to Lafayette from Lake Charles in '40; was not drafted into World War Two because was a father and over 30 years of age.

State party chairman: was "chairman" before he was officially elected; went with his wife to RNC campaign schools and created tapes using local TV and radio personalities. Ran against Harvey Peltier for a position on the state board of education even though knew they would lose.

Pictures

Karen Gray

Thibodaux, LA

July 18, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA051

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Karen Gray and her mother, Moye Boudreaux, at the Le Fete de Ecolgie festival hosted by the Barataria Terrebonne National Estuary Program and Estuary Foundation in September 2001. The two women had walked under the tent to rest out of the sun and happened to see our booth. They started talking about their experiences in the oil and gas industry. I asked them if they would be willing to participate in the study, and they said they would. I met with Moye several times (see DA014 and DA023) but had been unable to coordinate schedules with Karen. During this visit Karen was able to meet me during her lunch break at work. Her discussion focused on the problems facing the first wave of women who worked offshore.

Karen is third generation oilfield. Her grandfather moved his family to Plaquemines Parish from Texas in the early days of the oil industry in Louisiana. Her mother, Moye Boudreaux, and father both worked for oil companies. Karen grew up in Houma and started college majoring in geology, but she did not finish her degree at that time. She left college to take a job with the phone company. Then in the late 1970's, oil companies were forced to allow women and minorities equal access to offshore jobs. Karen applied and was hired by Exxon in January 1981. She worked offshore for two and a half years until she injured her ankles and was moved onshore into a secretarial position at half the salary. She remained with Exxon for 19 ½ years, during which time she finished her bachelor's degree and then took a package during the company's merger with Mobil. She used the money to return to graduate school and got her job with the Department of Natural Resources after finishing her degree.

#### Summary:

Early history: grandfather was an old driller from East Texas; I majored in geology in college but didn't finish; first job was working on the fleet for the phone company; this gave me a mechanical background; in the late 1970s under EEOC the oil companies had to allow equal access to women and minorities; in the early 1980s with the boom there were lots of jobs and good money; we had to take the same test, everyone was ranked blindly; was hired by Exxon in January 1981; they had had women since the late 1970s; went out in January working 7 and 7; had separate quarters for women; one other woman on my hitch; two on the other hitch

First day of work: it was really bad weather, had to go through the safety orientation for flying in helicopters, being on the platforms; January has really bad weather, so they started us then, they knew they would get rid of this little girly girl; I was slight; at the end of the first week we had to use the swing ropes to transfer from the boats to the platform; the weather was rough and some

guys stayed on the platform; I had grown up in Mississippi at my grandmother's and had swung in lots of trees; I was not about to stay on the platform and was able to get off and go home.

Working offshore: during the summertime it was the opposite, there were heat extremes; lots of the platforms had decks made of creosote boards, they turned to oil; the others were steel and radiated heat; you stayed below deck if you could; my first offshore job was as a maintenance specialist, which is a production roustabout; lots of work changing out flowline, tubing, working with mechanics; I had to go through lots of training; firefighting school is the hardest thing I've ever done; it was a great job, the work was good; it was hard and heavy; the main problem I encountered was discrimination and harassment; it was institutionalized from the top on down.

Women's response: most quit; the way I responded was to file two formal complaints; it was very political, job positions were competitive; the good old boys would get the promotions; I stayed in the same field, found out who would stand up for you; most women quit or transferred out; none of the platforms were much better than the others because the management changed so often; the field superintendents and foreman had been in for at least 20 years so the attitudes were entrenched; stuff that's illegal today, like throwing stuff over the side, was not thought of twice; I had problems with most of the younger guys; the older men were more helpful and would teach you; there were about 20 employees plus at least that many in contract personnel at any one time; only the central platform had bathrooms; that was a major hardship; you had to go to the Plus Ten deck and get everyone to leave to go to the bathroom; some of the guys would hang over from above and try to watch; you had to interrupt everyone who was working on taking a break; eventually the Coast Guard made them get portalets, but those were never cleaned.

Company versus contract personnel: got more respect from contract personnel because you were the "company man;" I never had trouble with contract personnel; never came across any women working for contract companies in drilling, Brown & Root or any of them; they never had any women because of problems with accommodations.

Career path: I never got promoted out of maintenance specialist, but I relieved people in other positions; that's how they often do it, you get the pay of the position you are relieving but you don't actually get the promotion; we didn't have a union, had a federation; I turned my ankle and it never healed properly so after two and a half years I was given the option to go into the office in a clerical position or leave; I started out doing low level clerical work, then transferred to drilling accounting, then materials accounting; my last assignment was in regulatory; I got my degree but they wouldn't promote me into a professional position because of a standing written policy that they would not do it.

Working in clerical: it was awful; clerical workers didn't like me either, had the attitude that I deserved to be hurt - what was I doing out there in the first place? took the job at half what I was making offshore; most men who were hurt came inshore but stayed at the same salary level; 2 or 3 women I knew who were hurt were also offered only a clerical position.

Federation: a quasi union; negotiated things like cost of living raises; did not offer any support for women because management of the federation were the same good old boys with the same

philosophy; each platform had one representative, we did not have enough numbers to get someone in; the minorities had more strength and more numbers, they had been in their struggles since the 1960s and knew the proper channels.

Interactions with MMS and USCG: MMS would visit every few months; I developed an expertise in safety, only the second person to get 100 percent on the MMS test; also they'd send me with the inspector saying I would distract him because I was a woman; only got boarded once by USCG when they flowed an oil slick into the Gulf; it was a common practice back then; no one challenged the dumping; people had lived in Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi their whole lives and believed that we had to get the oil out of the ground and that the tree huggers were causing all the problems.

Family influence: working in the oilfield was in my blood; I was a tomboy; grandfather used to take me out to his drilling sites; dad took me to drilling sites all the time; I always thought it was interesting, had mechanical aptitude and inquisitiveness; learned to work on machines in first job working on cars; some things I could physically not do, but some of the guys couldn't either and they could get help or were transferred to a more modern platform; dad and mom thought it was cool that I went to work for Exxon; mom worried most about the things that actually happened - the harassment and all; I know of women who were attacked out there; some of the contractors were unsavory characters, they'd get cooks out of the homeless shelters; I would make friends with big guys; my gang pusher was a black guy from Viet Nam and I made friends with him.

Moving on: after 19 years and some months with Exxon when the merger with Mobil came I had graduated with my degree in environmental studies so I took a package and used the money to go to graduate school; I enjoy the work I'm now doing in coastal restoration; if I were to do it over I would have gotten my degree in geology or engineering; geology was a hot and cold field; it may not have been the right career choice, but it was my interest.

Grew up in Houma when it was more rural, blue collar, more fishermen; if you weren't in oil you were a fisherman, crabber, or farmer; nobody my mom knew had a college degree; it was expected of me.

B.T. Green

Metairie, LA

July 31, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG043

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met B.T. Green in his home in Metairie. He was recommended to me by Jimmy Gibbens, who lives nearby and also worked for Texaco. B.T. was a very knowledgeable participant, and because of his position with Texaco, we covered a lot of ground in this interview that was beyond the purview of many of the other study participants. This interview includes a description of Texaco's early geological procedures, a description of the program Texaco maintained through which personnel destined for corporate jobs went through a training program that involved work on the rigs and platforms, a description of some of the cooperative efforts in which Texaco joined forces with other oil companies, good discussions of the environment and regulation, and of the impact of the oil industry upon the people and communities of southern Louisiana.

B. T. was born in New Orleans in 1920. His father was president of a company that baled and sold cotton, and he went to a preparatory high school and then on to LSU. He started as a geologist for Texaco in 1942 and quickly advanced up the corporate ladder. His last formal position with Texaco was assistant division manager, but even in retirement he continues to help out in a variety of ways.

#### Summary:

**Early Years:** He was born in New Orleans in 1920 and didn't really know the Depression was going on. His father was the president of the Union Company. They baled cotton and sent it overseas to Japan. New Orleans was a different place then. He used to walk - they didn't even have bicycles in those days. He went to Lee's school. It was all grades through 7th. He went to high school in New Orleans as well, to a preparatory school for Tulane. As a kid he wanted to be an Eagle Scout.

**More Early Years:** His dad told him to go to the University, and he wanted to be a geologist/engineer. Tulane didn't offer that, so he went to LSU. He was fascinated by engineering, and he liked the electives in arts and sciences. After his first year, he set his sights on the petroleum industry.

**Summer Employment:** after his freshman semester, his dad got tuberculosis, and he had to stay out a year from LSU. He worked at a Gulf filling station. A friend of his father's said, "What are you doing here?" So his father's friend helped him get a scholarship. He had to work in the summer. He worked as a common laborer at a wallboard factory. He would take the ferry across the river, and he got promoted the next summer. These friends of the family who helped him get

the scholarship followed his project. Also, he worked the manual scoreboard at LSU baseball games. He met his wife there.

Texaco: he was in the ROTC while he was in school, and he graduated into the Corps of Engineers. In '42, they gave him a furlough to go to geology camp. When he came back, he went to Camp LeJeune, and they discharged him because of a heart murmur. About 90% of his group never came back from the war. Geology camp was in Colorado Springs. He came back and graduated, and both Humble and Texaco offered him a job. He liked Texaco, and he knew a few of the people there.

Core Laboratory: He started work for Texaco in '42. He would examine the cores for permeability, porosity, etc. to figure out potential oil reserves. The lab was in the NBC building in New Orleans. Then they sent him to the plant in Erath. He liked that because he felt he was contributing. They had five rigs coring all the sands at Erath. There were 18 sands there. Various companies had leases on the shallow deposits, but below 8,000 feet it was a cooperative effort. The gasoline they made there helped Patton run his tanks in North Africa.

Texaco in Southern Louisiana: he was aware of the scope of Texaco's operation because the office was nearby in New Iberia. The district engineer would bring cores from other places - Vermillion Bay, Lake Fausse Point, etc. The toolpusher at the Erath Unit was finally made head of the New Iberia district, and he talked to him about the other fields as well.

Cooperative Operations and Geology explanation: it was very unique. When they put the unit together, the cores would help determine what percentage of the reserves belonged to each company. The gas was for cycling - they'd get liquids out of it by injecting it. It was unique to Louisiana. It wasn't fractured in faults like other places, and you can't inject under those conditions. He explains sands and strata.

Engineer: he didn't feel any animosity from the roustabouts and roughnecks. They were helpful. He was the boss when they were coring, and the toolpusher took over when they were drilling. They would drink beer together.

Bugs: Paleontologists would look for bugs. That wasn't his job. His job was determining the economics of the drilling job. The paleontologists were looking at shales. They would figure out what geological period they were looking at.

Core Drilling: Core drilling uses the same rig, but different bits. He explains this process.

Roughnecking and Roustabouting: His boss told him he had to go into the field and learn the rigs. So he roughnecked, roustabouted, pumped, and a bunch of other things for 2 ½ years. He's so glad they gave him that opportunity - he got an appreciation for the people and processes involved in drilling, and he figured out ways to make the job more efficient. This made the working conditions better and safer. He mostly worked in the bay areas. None were offshore.

Rig Life and Camps: They went by boats, but the toolpushers went in the Mallard planes. The camps were immaculate, the food was good. It was just like the Navy.

Senior Engineer: After his time in the field, he became the reserve engineer, calculating reserves for all of Southern Louisiana. He would also research what other companies had in terms of reserves. This was in the late 1940's. He went back to Houma first as an operational engineer, and then he became the reserve analyst.

Comparing Companies: In the South, and in Southern Louisiana, Texaco was the leader in producing oil and gas. Gulf was second at the time, then Shell, Humble, Tidewater. Flaring gas really bothered him - they were burning it, and there was no market for it unless it was really close to town. In 1953 they put the flares out. His boss came up with a plan to gather that gas and bring it to Paradis, and they would sell it up and down the river. Texaco was a leader in gas. They kept their distribution in Louisiana to avoid federal interference.

State Regulation: State officials would come out and inspect all the time. And you couldn't produce over a certain rate. These were called allowables. It was called the Houma District Conservation Office. The Commissioner was up in Baton Rouge. All of the majors did a good job of dealing with the state. There were some fly-by-night outfits around. They looked for a drilling permit, being bonded, where the location was, that you could take care of it. Then there was a compliance section - did you do the right job to protect the shallow sands, did you wait for the cement to set? Also, there was a pollution man.

Regulation of Water Quality: We were friendly with the pollution people, but not so that you could get away with anything. There wasn't much federal regulation. The pollution man worked for the state conservation department. It was there ever since B. T. was in the field. They were there in the forties. They would check out blowouts and everything. They added regulations and rules. We look at the handbook for the oil and gas industry. He served on the committee that created it for several years. He describes the process.

Promotion: he was promoted to assistant division manager, and he had geologists working for him then. They were interested in joint drilling programs with other companies because the wells they were drilling were expensive. He wasn't involved in Texaco's move offshore more than 20 miles out. That happened later.

Committees: he talks about the development of directional drilling. He retired in 1989. He talks about some of the committees he had underneath him. There was the royalty committee. He talks about their duties. The offshore committee looked into getting permits from the MMS. They also sent him to deal with drilling in other countries, to form units between companies. He also worked in the North Sea to form a unit between Shell, Texaco and Chevron. He talks about working with Shell - that was a lot different than a company from Southern Louisiana.

Retirement and the Environment: It's been good, but he's still under contract with the legal department. He's helping to deal with the lawsuit between Texaco and the state. He's working with Jimmy Gibbens and a cleanup company to clean up a spot out in Golden Meadow. Cleanup is a big chore. There's so much red tape. He describes the process. There was a lawsuit from the oyster industry against Texaco as well. Texaco ended up winning that one. Then he describes

how shrimpers would get tangled up on the pipes, and they would sue for a new net. There was no intentional pollution.

Impact of the Oil Industry on Southern Louisiana: economically it was one of the most rewarding things for a lot of the uneducated people. It paid for police forces, for their children's education, and so on. In fact, he doesn't know how they would have competed with the Vietnamese and others that came in later.

Environment: he talks about how people say the canals led to erosion, but people don't consider that the hurricanes really do the damage. Hurricanes and tropical storms are doing the eroding. He talks about the shipping canal to the port and what a bad idea that was. But the Cajuns are rich in culture too. They have a wonderful family life.

The future of oil in southern Louisiana: it's on a downturn. It's too bad that no other state will step up. Louisiana has to shoulder the burden for the whole union. Deepwater is still there, though. He doesn't think it will get back to where it was. The future will be different for companies depending if they're involved in upstream or downstream. He enjoys the fact that he's still involved in the industry.

Ed Gremillion

Lafayette, LA

May 20, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW051

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Born in 1930 in Port Arthur, Texas, Ed Gremillion was raised in Sunset, Louisiana. His father worked for Humble Pipeline and his mother was a cook. He went to Southwestern Louisiana Institute to study commercial art and then entered the Navy; after his two-year trip was over the Korean Conflict erupted and he was forced to stay in until 1954. In 1956, he went to work as a sales representative for Wilson Supply Company in New Iberia. In 1959 he was recruited by Lamb Rental Tools to open and run a rental tool yard in Marksville. The yard, however, never was built and Gremillion stayed in Lafayette working for Lamb as a sales person. During the interview, to which his wife contributes heavily, he describes flying planes to and entertaining customers, particularly noting his legendary cooking skills.

#### Summary:

Early life: born '30 in Port Arthur, TX; raised in Sunset, LA; studied commercial art at SLI; went into the Navy. When returned in '55 went to work for Wilson Supply Company.

Lamb Rental Tools (now Tong Specialty): in '59 recruited by the owner to open a yard in Marksville, LA; yard never opened, so he stayed in Lafayette. Flew light twin engine and amphibious airplanes to call on customers; one of the company planes crashed in Houston killing four people.

Entertaining customers: job involved entertaining customers and potential customers; Lamb had a villa on Mexican coast they used; given unlimited expenses. Entertaining them helped make them feel obligated to use Lamb, also functioned as "thank you's" for past business. Known for cooking catfish and seafood for customers and friends; picked it up from his father, who worked on Humble pipeline; has special cooking equipment he took out on rigs.

Schedule: works essentially every day; whenever there is work to be done, he does it.

Customers: worked with a lot of the independent companies, and Exxon and City Service.

Salary: does not make a tremendous salary, but it is good; lived off his expense account. But people started expecting more and more gifts and it got out of hand.

Change in industry: less personal today; he calls on his old customers and allows younger salesmen to handle the new stuff. Never used to have to ask for permission to do things.

Father: went to work for Exxon in '30; left for LA after an accident nearly killed him; worked on a pipeline crew. His father might have influenced him, but he really got into oilfield to make more money to support his family.

Moving to Lafayette: moved in '64; Lamb helped them buy their house by giving him a raise that would cover his mortgage. Mrs. Gremillion discusses edge of Lafayette during early '50s when she was a student at UL.

Industry slowdowns: remembers three ('58, '70s, late '80s); survived layoffs because he was with good companies. Percentage of Lafayette population working in oil-related industry has dropped.

Billye Grice

Morgan City, LA

February 11, 2004

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA122

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Billye Grice at the Morgan City Archives in the summer of 2003 when I was there reviewing the archives of the Morgan City Daily Review and the vertical files on the offshore oil and gas industry. Her husband, Jesse, created a business doing oilfield photography in Morgan City during the 1960s, 1970s, and early 1980s, and she has donated his collection to the archives. She and I began talking about her life, and I asked her if she would be willing to participate in an interview for the history project. She agreed and I promised to come visit her on my next trip to Louisiana.

Billye Grice moved to Morgan City in 1954 with her husband, Jesse. At the time, Jesse was an engineer working for Phillips Petroleum Company and was being transferred to Morgan City. During her early years in Morgan City, Billye was responsible for managing the household. She and Jesse expected to stay in Morgan City only a few years until they were transferred elsewhere. Jesse had studied photography and worked in a studio at Louisiana Tech when he was in college, and he began taking photographs of industry-related equipment and events as a hobby. He began including photographs in his company reports. Word got around, and Jesse began receiving requests for his photography. When he realized he was making more money selling photographs than in his regular job, he left Phillips and started his own business. At that time, Billye was raising children and doing community work. She soon found herself helping with various aspects of the business, from the bookkeeping to working at the retail store. The business suffered tremendously during the downturn of the 1980s. When Jesse passed away, Billye sold the business. She stayed in Morgan City and became involved in other community activities.

#### Summary:

Morgan City: BG moved to Morgan City in 1954 from Texas when her husband was transferred by Phillips; Expected the worst, but was pleasantly surprised by how friendly the oil people were; Expected to leave in 3 or 4 years; Had a company house and lots of free stuff; Thought about leaving many times but never ended up actually doing it, property values are low; Morgan City's reputation; Housing scarcity, overpopulation, traffic, not enough doctors, Sunday parades, speaking French, laid back attitude toward time

Photography business: BG's husband worked for Phillips, taking pictures offshore as a hobby, eventually left Phillips and started a photography business; Grew gradually with customer needs, selling cameras, processing photos, framing, portraits, school photos, passport photos,

yearbooks, movies and underwater photos for oil industry; Most employees were not local; Reinvested as business grew so they didn't have to borrow money

Economic downturn: They felt the effects in the early 1980's; Hard to get a loan to open a store in Houma; Oil industry business slowed down substantially; Did purchase orders for companies, bought cameras at Wal-Mart and added their percentage; Bought inventory at Wal-Mart for resale; Had rental income

Personal history: BG and husband went to Louisiana Tech; He had been in the service and worked for Sun Oil Company, she had worked for a doctor; While they were in school, she worked in a high school supervisor's office for 3 years; Her husband had a lot of job offers after graduation, chose Phillips because they offered the highest salary; The couple moved to Texas

Women working: BG didn't expect to keep working after having kids because women didn't do that, but eventually she got involved in bookkeeping for the photography business; Took some of the accounting home to do when she had a chance

Socializing: Women got together almost daily to have tea or coffee or play bridge

Labor: The photography business had some Vietnamese employees and customers; Most employees were educated people from outside the area

Education: Wyandotte school was the best; Kids from Mobil and Kerr McGee camp attended

Company housing: Kerr McGee had camps from the mid-1950's to the 1980's; Phillips had 20 to 25 company houses in the area in a subdivision, sold them to employees or local people; Had to build houses because nothing was available for employees

Fringe benefits of oil industry: Phillips' employees were like family; Suppliers entertained; Wives of suppliers entertained other women; For employee's houses, company had top soil brought in, trees planted, constructed back porches, fences, sidewalks, kitchen cabinets, painted; Some of the families were only around for 3 or 4 years

Economic boom: Money from oil leases, renting out boats, starting small businesses; People who had never had much money suddenly had a lot

Education: Oil industry people from outside the community influenced some local kids to think about getting more education

Investment in Morgan City: New shopping centers; other companies wanted to come in but utilities were expensive

Husband working offshore: As an engineer, only went offshore for certain jobs for a few days at a time; Mostly office work, also helped with house inspections

Evolution of photography business; selling equipment after store closed; Changes in Morgan City: Growth in size;

Activities for kids: Scouting for boys and girls

Socializing: Oil field people hung out together; Wives supported each other, watched each other's kids; Companies transferred employees often, continuous cycle of people

Abraham Griffin

Golden Meadow, LA

July 23, 2001

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM008

#### Ethnographic Preface:

After several failed attempts to see Harrison Chermie, Sr., proprietor of the Port Fourchon Marina/Motel, I drove down there one Saturday. He was there, tending the bait shop he operates at the marina. He asked me who I had been talking to and who else was on my list and scoffed at most of the names (either they didn't know anything, or that they had crossed him over past Port Commission business). He gave me some names but told me to start with his uncles, Abraham Griffin and his younger brother, Jarvis. These guys, he said, actually worked their way up in the fields. So I called Abraham, 79 years old. He told me to meet him at his boat; I met him there, and we went back to his house, about a block away. He had just returned from buying a gallon of paint. His wife was on the boat; Abraham told her to stir the can awhile, or just quit and come home. It was a hot afternoon, too hot to work on the boat - a Lafitte skiff he was preparing for the opening of the skimmer shrimp season in August.

Abraham Griffin quit school at 12 to work on a shrimp boat; he "retired" in 1985 from a career that intertwined contract drilling and shrimping. After that, he only shrimped. While drilling, he worked for a number of contractors; he preferred the old steam rigs to the power ones - they were cleaner. He, like others, was involved in the 1938 shrimp strike that Glen Pitre recreated on film [Norbert Bouziga's wife, 10 years old at the time of the strike, was one of the actors/extras in Pitre's film. She was paid one penny for her work and still has the penny].

#### Summary:

Early work and career: when young boy, would work in a garage after school and on Saturday and Sunday. When a little bit older, made ice, worked from 6 in the evening until 6 in the morning, making \$2 a day, had a large family and it came in handy. Started working on shrimp boats at 12 years old, had to quit school to go to work to help raise the family. Went to work in the oilfield for a man named Lewis Gear in Golden Meadow, rough-necking for \$.50 per hour on oil rigs. Worked up to driller; kept shrimp boats. Stayed in the oil field 43 years, retired in 1985. Worked contract, at times for two different companies. "I could take off and make my season. Whenever I would finish my shrimping season, I would go back to work. I did that through Williams Drilling Company in Baton Rouge and with Lee Guidry's rig. Those people, whenever I needed a job, I would call them. Whenever they needed help, they would call me."

Offshore work: worked for Chevron (California Company) in Fourchon. Big mistake to leave; didn't know too much about retirement in those days. Made more money on the big rigs.

Drilling: Williams Drilling contracted out to Humble Oil Company and Dick Guidry contracted mostly to Texaco. Worked as driller, then toolpusher; didn't like it much. Also it was \$200 a month less. I had a family to raise. I wanted to make the money.

Steam rigs: much cleaner, have a lot of power. Ran them 24 hours a day, three crews working 8-hour shifts; now two shifts and 12 hour days. "I've seen as many as 12 steam rigs running through town here. You could almost jump from one to the other."

Shrimping: last 3 years was good. A man could make a living, couldn't get rich, but you could live. Right now, people are making more money shrimping than they ever did before.

Slowdown in 1980's: was rough for the guys on the offshore boats. Many boats were off work. The price of the boats is going down again.

Vietnamese shrimpers: don't like them at all. "They are taking over everything and they get help from the government to do it. In Leeville, they have two shrimp buyers that are taking over everything. I know they have to live, but they aren't going to push me out."

Ira and Cecile Grow

Morgan City, LA

October 5, 2000, July 18, 2003

Interviewed by: Rylan Higgins, Diane Austin

University of Arizona

RH017, DA106

#### Ethnographic Preface:

While sitting around the breakfast table with a group of the men that meet at Manny's each morning, one of the gang gave me Ira Grow's name and told me to call him. When I did, he was eager to participate. We chatted for a few minutes and Ira told me to come by after dinner the same day. Cecile, Ira's wife, met me in the driveway with a big welcome to her home. Ira and Cecile were both very friendly and talkative. Cecile would lightly smack Ira on the arm each time she made a point that contradicted Ira or when she remember something he could not. Diane returned for a follow up interview in 2003.

Ira started his career in the oil industry in 1950, as an engineer on a supply boat. He eventually made his way up to captain. He left for military service, returned in 1952 and was with Kerr-McGee for 34 years when he retired in 1988. He was injured in 1987. Shortly after retirement, the insurance agent who was handling his injury case asked him how he was doing.

#### Summary of RH017:

Kerr-McGee: Ira enjoyed working with Kerr-McGee, he felt that they treated the employees well. It is for this reason that the employees of Kerr-McGee never unionized, they promised to give them whatever the unions were getting. When working offshore for Kerr-McGee, he used to work 21 days out and 7 days off, then it was 14 days out and 7 days off, it later changes to 7 and 7.

Impact of oil industry: When the oil industry moved to Morgan City, it was a great economic boost. It provided many jobs on and offshore. Many professionals moved in to start up a business like doctors and dentists. People from all over the world arrived to work offshore. With such an influx of people, inhabitants made extra money through renting out their sheds for people to live in. The oil business also slowly pushed the shrimping business out of Morgan City.

Retirement: Retirement was tough for Ira and his wife, especially for the first three years, it required major readjustment. He knew many couples, with the husbands working offshore, that after retirement got divorced because it turned out that they could not live with each other.

#### Summary of DA106:

Background: Ira born and raised in Morgan City, Cecile born in Patterson, mother and housewife, grew up on a camp boat, 9 siblings, no running water, lights, gas, father went to work

for Chicago Bridge and Iron, got new shoes, dresses, father wounded in WWI; mother died in 1941, father died in 1947; Cecile raised by older siblings

Chicago Bridge and Iron: located where Kerr-McGee and Magnolia were; daddy would take his rowboat to work, dock at the back of the place; people came in from swamps to work, Cecile's family never owned a car; had skiff and pirogue, went to christening for one of the dry docks, people got jobs by word of mouth; young people were going to war; two of Cecile's brothers were in the war; anybody who couldn't go to war worked in the shipyards; CBI improved the local economy; Young Brothers leased the land to CBI, let them put in a railroad spur; Ira's dad and brother worked at CBI, Addison was a guard and Daddy, Eugene, was a carpenter foreman

Ira Career: quit school at 15, not old enough to work at CBI, went to work on boats; went into Navy at 17, stayed three years, went to Arabia (Kuwait) in 1949 working for Kerr-McGee marine department running a speedboat in the Persian Gulf, returned to Morgan City in 1950 and worked offshore, staying on an LST, had supplies for a year on the ship; at 15 worked for Butch and Arthur boat company, could go to the ice plant, where the tugs would stop, and get a job; out of Navy signed up for Merchant Marine, Kerr-McGee needed someone with Merchant Marine card; in Kuwait the drilling was being done by Amanoil out of California; there was nothing in Kuwait at the time; quit after one year, back to New Orleans, got back on with Kerr-McGee and then quit again; went to work for Pure Oil offshore on a rig, quit and went back to Kerr-McGee working on a crewboat, in the late 50s; Tideland's deal came up, all the rigs got laid off, got a reduction in pay for about a year, when the rigs went back to work Ira went back on a rig; easier working on a rig, didn't have to fight the fog, rough weather, just stayed on the rig 7 days and came back in, worked as roustabout, crane operator, retired in 1989.

Schedules: for Kerr-McGee worked 21 days on, 7 days off; then to 14 and 7, then to 7 and 7, could not imagine working five days every week

Family Life: Got married in 1955; Ira was working on a boat 21 and 7; would be glad to see him after 21 days; most people in Morgan City were working that schedule, would work 100 hours a week, got paid 23 hours for a day if didn't get five and a half hours of sleep, made the money in overtime; crane operator and roustabout didn't have reliefs, others worked 12 hour shifts

Rigs: most of the time spent on self-contained rig; would put the rig together piece by piece, might stay 2 years and drill 18 holes off one platform, directional drilling, called it whipstocking back then, got more sophisticated as they went along

Being home: was not home for most of the babies' births; superintendent would say, 'you gotta be there for the makin' but you don't have to be there for the launchin'; wife's sister would go, not her husband; could communicate with him through the marine operators but could not afford the calls; had radio contact with the rigs if there was an emergency; only time Cecile called, she called the office when her brother died, he was moving a rig and couldn't get off; everyone could hear your conversation on the rig

C.E. "Whitey" Grubbs

Baton Rouge, LA

March 20, 2002, September 30, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA043, DA061p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to C.E. "Whitey" Grubbs by Jim Doré of Global Industries. Whitey had recently retired, and Jim said he was a wealth of information and was considered the father of underwater welding. I met Whitey's son at the 2002 Underwater Intervention in New Orleans when he was there to receive an award for his father because his father had been ill. I told him about the study and that I would like to talk to his father but was concerned because of his illness. He told me to call him at home. After a few rounds of phone tag at various motels and places I was staying, I finally reached Whitey at his home near Baton Rouge. He agreed to a meeting. We met at the Holiday Inn in Baton Rouge. Whitey arrived with a heavy briefcase filled with two large photo albums that he had prepared for our meeting. He talked me through the various projects and achievements of his career. Much of the information is quite technical and requires at least a basic understanding of welding and working under pressure. I met Whitey again in September for a follow-up and photo interview.

Whitey began his career in 1939 with Chicago Bridge and Iron, worked his way up through that company, moved to CBI Ltd., retired and formed his own company, D&W Underwater Welding Services, and then went to work for Global Divers and Contractors, Inc. He became manager of technical services where he was responsible for supervising underwater repair. In 1989, he and a group of divers/welders qualified wet welding procedures at 325 feet. At age 81, he retired from Global as the director of underwater welding research. He is considered to be the father of underwater welding.

#### Summary of DA043:

Brief occupational history: started with Chicago Bridge & Iron, worked his way up to managerial, then to CBI Ltd. in Venezuela; formed separate company, SeaCon Services, to expand and include all kinds of offshore work, including laying pipe; underwater welding became a very important though small part of business; didn't think the people at CBI Ltd. knew what they were doing; retired and formed D&W Underwater Welding Services; sold assets, went to work for Global.

Timeline: Chicago Bridge & Iron - 1939; to Venezuela - by 1955; General Manager and VP of CBI Ltd. - 1969; SeaCon out of business - about 1981; sold out to Global - after 1984.

Early experiences: at CBI Ltd. had emergency problem; crude oil storage tank "burped" (listed sideways); had more diving experience than others in the company, transferred to marine operations as assistant manager; primary responsibility to develop underwater repair procedure;

research department had worked 1 year trying to develop repair procedure with no promising results; had a little welding experience, hired best man - experienced diver and one of the best welders - sent him to diving school because had to have someone in the crew who knew how to use decompression tables; made 131 carefully selected experimental welds at 33', 1 atmosphere pressure.

Proving value: had just gotten started when the vice president of welding said you're wasting your time and the company's money; called to backwaters of Mississippi River out of Memphis; sheet piles driven out of interlock at fabrication facility for nuclear power plant vessels - will send complete description of this with depths, etc.; found splits in sheet piling, zero visibility, used tube attached to face mask to displace water couldn't see through; successfully completed job.

Development of underwater welding: goes back to WWII for salvage work; had to modify welding techniques for new jobs that came along; 600' Houston ship channel dock caved in, center of piling corroded, out of service; 1,400' of vertical half-inch fillet welds; put sheets in to span corroded areas; used wet welding on offshore structure - K brace.

Role of offshore oil and gas - in almost all cases had visibility offshore; everything goes better in seawater because of conductivity; welds look better, slag cleans off far easier, mechanical properties are better; already had learned most significant things onshore; always more offshore work than onshore work; offshore made up about 99 percent of work; however, had depth differential - offshore down to 325'; example - replaced a member on Chevron's "Heidi," filled up a hole and butt welded a plate on it, brought in a new member; 15 years later all the other joints had failed, those put in and reinforced with double plates were in perfect condition.

Workers: trained our own divers; one year put 32 CBI experienced welders through diving training; majority of work is fitting and design of the repairs.

Innovations: patented electrode transfer tool; repaired corrosion damage down to 170'; impressed invert system - had generator on deck, pipe anodes on deck emitting current to protect it; system on deck interfered with radio communication, would turn it off and leave it off; improper grounding of welding machines on barges and boats; problem with unanticipated leads - too shallow for groundswells and waves; get bending, results in fatigue cracks; went back to hotel room and worked out solution.

Wet vs. dry welds: dry hyperbaric welding far more expensive but in some ways better; state of art now is stainless steel and nickel where wet welds are far superior to dry welds; wet welds fall short because have not been able to eliminate porosity, have greater bend radius.

Doing a job: called in when something happens; example - dropped pile cap onto structure and damaged structure; sometimes they have divers on site, others no; divers go down and produce diver inspection report; the company sends out underwater welders to see what we're going to do about it; for us to get the call may take only a couple of days or, if someone discarded the diver's report, much longer; may bid a job for a lump sum or at a day rate; more profitable to do lump

sum if you come up with a good estimate; customer who has used the company before and has confidence prefers day rate.

More innovations: electrode transfer capsule - special process to "water proof" the electrode - two coats of liquid material, baked between coats; arranged with diving company for experienced workers, worked out of their facility and bought equipment as we needed it; then opened facility with warehouse, offices, and 33' tank in Prairieville, LA; got welding engineer and metallurgist at Memphis, guidance in selection of materials.

D&W: started with 10-12 people; immediately went to training welders from scratch; went for 29 years with only one diver lost in an accident; one year put 32 welders in the water that had no diving training; all but 2 made it; only sent 1 man to diving school in 29 years; would put man in the water at 40' and have someone above him to watch out for him.

CBI - at one point bought a passenger submarine; one of the executives thought it could be used for underwater work; they assigned me to make a study of its potential capacity and what it would cost to give us capability; I recommended getting rid of it.

Global: went to work for Bill Doré; had done some work for them; he talked about buying D&W because he wanted underwater welding capability; I left D&W, sold my share, went to Global for 6 months, stayed 15 years; in 1989, we qualified a welding procedure to 325'; took deck decompression chamber attached to hyperbaric facility in sat; 5 companies invited to bid; Oceaneering and Taylor declined; Subsea International and SeaCon tried and failed; then it was our time; Bill Doré never had a discouraging thing to say; we tried for a week or so; tried once, brought divers out of sat to hotel; put them back in a week later, qualified 5 welder/divers at 325'.

Dealing with pressure: gas of the electrode generates bubbles; as go deeper, the bubble shield that protects the arc decreases; at 33' it's half the size as at the surface; have to increase the volume of gas; stumbled onto an electrode that worked at 33'; went to France, took 2 welder-divers, trained welders there to make multi-temper bead; biggest and last advance in wet welding - explanation of process.

North Sea: no underwater welding; everywhere in the world see straight polarity, if use reverse polarity get a good weld; in North Sea have reverse polarity, magnetism in the rocks; first use of multi-temper bead - Amoco (UK) Montrose Alpha Platform; going to replace vertical member; removed damaged one and reattached.

Chamber for dry hyperbaric welding: to 1200'; connects to vertical tank decompression chambers on outside of building; can make welds at 3000'; chamber had been around yard, built to pressurize something; converted it for testing.

Funding for Research and Development: at CBI no problem because they needed research for big jobs; because successful they kept funding it, only 3 people; at Global Divers, MMS had just recently passed ruling that structures would have to be inspected underwater; Bill Doré saw opportunity for wet welding that had never existed before; never spared a penny.

Qualifying welders: wrote set of standards for qualifying underwater welders; available from the Welding Society, covers wet and dry welds; Type A (dry hyperbaric), Type B (wet), Type O; was chair of the committee for 15 years; committee formed in 1972, no specs until a couple of years after that.

Finding people: at Chicago Bridge & Iron had an unlimited supply; took some of the key people from SeaCon when formed D&W; immediately started training young welders just out of high school; at Global brought in some of the people from CBI, D&W, SeaCon and brought in some outsiders; in Venezuela, all welders were expatriots; "I made up my mind if I ever became boss we would eliminate American welders," called in a guy and said pick out 4-5 natives and teach them to weld.

Communication: we had what no others did - interdiver communication, so if a guy had suggestions or needed help he could share with other divers right there; most diving supervisors are under the opinion that divers should not be able to talk to each other.

Spread of ideas: did not spread fast; at CBI lost only one man; he took the information and went to Oceaneering; didn't catch on until Global; today we've just about eliminated wet welding competition with one exception - Oceaneering has contract with U.S. Navy, kept a man with capability; a little group of 4-5 guys broke away from Oceaneering and formed Phoenix, but they did nothing; one of my men went to work for Phoenix, was severely injured on the job; they dropped a crane boom on him, he settled out of court for a big settlement; in North Sea, only do dry hyperbaric - Comex; D&W still doing some welding, but not much.

Personal history: grew up in Oklahoma, went to college 1.5 years, All American football player; one summer went to work for CBI, making more money than the professors so stayed; traveled all over, worked all over the southwestern U.S., some Illinois, then to Venezuela; when first started built refinery vessels, oil storage tanks, on a bull gang; no formal training in design - just horse sense - never took engineering courses; sometimes a lack of conventional information can lead to better ideas, more originality.

Review of career: would do it again; the most wonderful part was working with the people; the sense of accomplishment and the association with the people; 3 milestones in wet welding - (1) established the fact of when you would get cracks and with which electrodes; (2) first to do wet welding in the North Sea, made possible because of undeveloped multiple temper bead technique; (3) qualifying at 325'; The really big one was the development of the multiple temper bead; retired in January 1999 at age 81; working to complete a paper for the Journal of Underwater Welding.

Summary of DA061p:

Detailed description of underwater welding process incorporated into discussion of photos

01: Damaged platform leg

02: Damaged pipeline

03: Repair of underwater storage tanks in Dubai, four photos on prepared photo sheet.

04: A bottomless, oil storage tank floating in the Arabian Gulf that was built on land in Dubai,

United Arab Emirates, by Chicago Bridge and Iron Company.

05: Two divers completing an underwater welding job.

06: The Khazzan offshore oil storage complex.

07: Diver involved in underwater welding job.

08: Diver involved in underwater welding job.

09: Diver involved in underwater welding job.

10: Diver involved in underwater welding job.

11: 4 photos of the process of completing a repair mock-up before making actual welding repairs underwater on rig at -320.

12: 5 men on deck with champagne standing in front of storage tank.

13: Diver involved in underwater welding job.

14: Stub of missing VD brace on offshore platform.

15: 5 Comex divers walking on offshore platform.

16: Hyperbaric Welding Chamber for Hot Taps, four photos on prepared photo sheet, (same as Grubbs W03).

17: Montrose Alpha offshore platform.

18: New 16-ton brace being installed.

19: Two photos - a damaged section of piping being removed from underwater and the new fabricated piece ready for installation.

20: 4 photos of the Global Divers Research and Development Center: hyperbaric facilities, living quarters, decompression chambers and dry welding chambers.

21: Typical scalloped slip sleeve; diagram with sleeve detail and color photo

22: Detailed diagrams of one of the hurricane damaged nodes.

23: 4 images of the Houston Ship Channel and repairs.

24: 4 images of first successful wet weld repair, August, 1970, CBI Memphis.

25: Drawing of first underwater wet welded structural repair, 1971.

26: Sleeve going down for trial fit on stub.

27: Sleeve being welded to new VD brace.

28: Photo of welder completing dryweld.

29: Photo of completed weld.

30: Pulling out jackup leg for repair

31: Dry habitat welding repair

32: Accessing structure for repair

33: Divers on barge preparing to enter water

34: Tender preparing Whitey Grubbs for dive

35: Whitey Grubbs and another diver preparing for dive

36: Divers on stage entering water for dive

37: Divers on stage being lowered for dive

38: Tender on deck

Anna Belle "Rusty" Guidry

Bush, LA

July 16, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA048

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Rusty Guidry has been a friend of Walt Daspit since they were in school together in Lafayette in the middle 1940s. When I was at Walt's house on July 10, he suggested I should try to get in touch with some of the rig builders and their wives because there are few of them left. Many of them came in from Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas and built the rigs in the swamps, marshes and lakes. When things moved offshore they built the rigs there as well until the jack-up rigs eliminated the need for them. Walt called Rusty and arranged for us to meet her at Carmine's restaurant in Bush. She was at the restaurant when we arrived, and we joined her in a back room. We were the only ones in the room so we were able to talk. She did not mind the tape recorder, so we did the interview before and during lunch. Walt was quiet for much of the interview but commented here and there. Rusty was married four times; her second husband was a rig builder and third one a diver. She met them in bars and has the language and toughness of a woman who bragged that she could take care of herself among the men. Rusty is candid about living among the rig builders, which she describes as "never dull." What comes through as she relates the stories is the persistent cycle of work, alcohol, and fighting that defined the existence of many rig builders, divers, and other oilfield workers.

Rusty was born and raised in Lafayette. She was born in 1930, and the oilfield she and Walt Daspit knew during their childhood was the one at Lonesome Butte. At that time, Lafayette was a railroad town. Rusty married her first husband at age 16 and was divorced a few years afterward. She met her second husband, "Pie," in 1950 when he came to Lafayette as a rig builder. The rig builders were a rough group, and most of them had served time in the penitentiary. There were six men to a crew, and five of the six in Pie's crew had been in prison. Pie served time in Huntsville, Texas for breaking a man's neck during a fight. Being strong, fighting and drinking were defining characteristics of the rig builders. After she divorced Pie, Rusty married an oilfield diver. That marriage eventually ended because of drinking.

#### Summary:

Early history: born and raised in Lafayette; oilfield was near town and would spray houses and cars whenever a new well was drilled; Lafayette was a railroad town then; had a group of about 40 young people who hung out together; Pie came into town as a rig builder, met in a bar; six men in a crew, took four days to build a rig and two days to tear it down; five of the six had served time; Pie hit a man in Houston with his fist, broke his neck when he fell into a parking meter; met Pie at Frank's bar; men from East Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas.

Lafayette: Odessa, Texas was oil center of the west, Lafayette was oil center of the south; rig builders came from all over, were a rough bunch; daddy was a mechanic, mama stayed home and ruled the roost; sugarcane, rice, and railroads were center of the economy, good jobs were with the railroad because of the pay; brother got hired but slapped a superintendent and got fired; joined the Navy at 17 during the war; none in family went into the oilfield; mama's brothers were pilots on riverboats, raised on the Atchafalaya River and could only get there by boat.

Early years with Pie: I was sort of wild as a teenager, mama didn't like it; met Leonard Ray Becker - "Pie;" ran off with him to Utah; went into business with one of the guys he built rigs with in Odessa; stayed there for a year till he got in a fight in Newcastle, Wyoming, threw the sheriff through a plate glass window and had to get out of town; returned to Lafayette; in Lafayette they'd put him in jail and let him sober up; Pie was born in 1922; raised in Dayton, Texas; started work at 12 when his parents passed away; was 6 feet 2 inches and weighed about 260 pounds when they were married.

Work: workers would meet at the Four Corners Restaurant in Lafayette, they'd get on whatever crew had an opening; lived in Houma for six months because there was lots of work there; six men to a crew, two picked out the iron and four would put up the derrick; would go watch when they worked on land; kept tools in their leather belts; worked for McDermott and companies like that; every major company had an office in Lafayette; checks would come every two weeks from whatever companies they went out for; sometimes they'd have checks from four different companies in a single pay period; stayed pretty busy, especially building offshore rigs; those were bigger than the ones on land; Pie worked a lot, was one of the best they had; "It takes somebody with no sense to do that job;" didn't use the blueprint because they knew how to build the rigs; after the first layer was up they'd bet each other who could get up to the next layer first; they put a winch on the back wheel of a car and used it to help hoist up the iron; it took about two years to break a man in; to get started a man had to know a rig builder and the rig builders had to know he could make it; one way was to get in a fight with a rig builder and beat him.

Building the rig: first wooden and then iron; they'd put the iron in a square, start with the biggest one and go up from there; four pedestals 160 feet high; they'd put one man on each corner; some used belts but Pie wouldn't wear one because he said it was more dangerous; Johnny was killed wearing a belt when a beam to which his belt was tied fell and killed him; would work 10-12 hours in a day and then go to the bar; Pie died in the late 1970s back in Dayton; died of a heart attack; had had open heart surgery, stopped at an auto wreck and helped pull a car off a woman.

Drinking and fighting: Pie liked to fight when he was drunk; left for Wyoming in 1950, back to Lafayette in 1951, to New York in 1956 or 1957 building radar towers; stayed there six months traveling all over and then back to Lafayette; would move, rent an apartment in town; rented a trailer in Wyoming because there were lots of oilfield people; they'd hang around together and drink; would go to the bars when they finished a job; when Pie first came to Lafayette he went to Liberty and would get drunk; had an ex-Texas ranger, the only one Pie would listen to, would chain him to a tree and bring him whiskey for six or seven days until he'd pass out for 24 hours, wake up, and be ready to go back to work.

Life together: he was good to me; brought me the checks, I'd pay the bills; slapped me once and I beat him up with his custom cowboy boots; after that he didn't slap me; I weighed 95 pounds; the way we were raised, if somebody does something to you you get him back any way you can; when we separated I had a restaurant, he came in busting up the place; Carlo, the chief of police, helped raise me and ended up sheriff of Lafayette Parish, came from Patterson to Lafayette for college, was champion boxer of the south in college; died in 1984 of cancer; after I left Pie he followed me around crying but I did not go back; Scotty, another rig builder, had a bar and shot up his place; I picked up his wife and she stayed with me a couple of days; one time she called Pie to come get her because Scotty had all her clothes in a pile and had soaked it with gasoline to burn it; could tell a million stories, man who beat up his wife so she almost died; was the nicest, politest man you ever met when he wasn't drunk.

After Pie: stayed in Lafayette almost two years and then went to Chalmette, met Richard Duncan, a diver; at first it was all right because he only drank once or twice a year; then he "fell into the bottle" and we separated in 1976; we had two sons; estimate that about 99 percent of the rig builders had alcohol problems; was married four times in all; when I was coming up you could not live with anybody, so you got married; Richard worked for Daspit Brothers Diving Company, run by Walt's brother, Roland; Roland blackballed him; that goes against how we were raised to take care of people.

More on Lafayette: when Walt left in 1945 there were about 23,000 people; when Rusty left in 1960 the oil industry had hit, they had the oil center, and it was still growing; a bunch of the guys in their high school cohort went to sea after leaving school; they used to hang out in front of the post office; would go to L'acadien Bar in Lafayette; Rusty's mom would show up looking for her and everyone would split; Rusty's grandfather was one of the first to ship fish out of St. Martinville Parish; he had a grocery store and boat; uncle would take the boat and deliver groceries because lots of people didn't have transportation or money to pay; they moved the grocery store to Henderson; father's father owned land on Marsh Island; federal agents came to put grandpa off the land when my daddy was 16; he told my daddy and uncles to go get a can of gasoline because he was going to set their boats on fire and leave them stranded on the island; he got dressed, took a boat to Lafayette, drove to New Orleans and told them not to send anybody else because he would burn their boats; he left Lafayette, his kids, and wife and went to Texas to get shrimp boats.

Walt's school and background: went to Cathedral High School; during the war the public schools had no sports programs, so he went to the Catholic school so he could box; 30 people in his graduating class; dad retired from the railroad; mama ran the grocery store, which she opened with \$100 she borrowed; anybody who worked for the railroad could get credit because they knew the railroad would pay them; Southern Pacific had a fare yard; Lafayette was a railroad hub.

John Allen Guidry

Larose, LA

March 26, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB047

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Diane Austin passed me John Guidry's name. He was just retiring at the time of the interview (March 2002). He hadn't gotten used to not working and knew it was going to take some time.

John Guidry was born in 1947 and raised in Larose. He initially wanted to be a fisherman, but found out that it was difficult to make ends meet. In 1965, he trained as a diesel mechanic and applied at several different oilfield contractors. In 1970, he was hired on by Texaco in a field clerical position, and he spent most of his career at Bay de Chene before retiring in 2002.

#### Summary:

Background: John Guidry was born in 1947 and raised in Larose, LA. When he completed high school, he tried going into commercial fishing, but found that it was difficult to make a decent living. In 1965, he entered into a training program for diesel mechanics, and in 1969, he began applying to several oilfield contractors.

Oil Business: In 1970, he started his career with Texaco in a field clerical position. He was in charge of making sure all the necessary paperwork and forms were being taken care of. The clerical position at that time was high stress and frantic. John lived out at the camp 7 and 7 just like everyone else. John knew how many barrels of oil all the Texaco wells were producing at any one time. He explained the hierarchy of the paperwork side of things and how important his reports and numbers were.

Richard "Dick" Guidry

Galliano, LA

October 4, 2001

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA018

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Dick Guidry was referred to us by many people. Tom and I first interviewed Dick in 1996 when we were spent one month in southern Louisiana working on the baseline study of three Gulf Coast communities. Dick did not remember that visit, but he was happy to arrange to meet for this study. I met him at 8am at his house in Galliano. His wife was present for the first part of the interview, but she left after about an hour to go to her bridge game.

Dick was born in 1930 in south Lafourche. His family was in the grocery business and people congregated around the store, so he grew up exposed to information about what was happening in the area. He got into the oil and gas business when he graduated from high school. He became the youngest state legislator when he was elected to the position in 1951 and became involved with numerous endeavors throughout his career.

#### Summary:

Early oil development: started in Leeville; first rig built for Lincoln Oil Company about 1932; drilling in Golden Meadow started in 1936; in came Gulf Oil, Texaco, Superior, Valentine, and oilfields started popping up all over; Gulf build first offshore structure, on pilings, but a hurricane blew it off; Gulf abandoned it and Chevron took over, got 1 billion barrels of oil from the field; spread across the Continental Shelf, mostly gas.

Personal history: when oil industry started, father built 32 rental houses; roughnecks helped him drill a methane well on his property to provide gas to the houses; Dick acquired his first drilling rig at 29; worked for Texaco and Business Enterprises (Sid Richardson) for about 25 years; in 1953 started wildcatting in Kentucky; lost everything in Michigan when drilling dry holes; started building tugboats in 1970s; brought tugs to bury pipelines in the North Sea; active until 1985 when went under; went broke five times, all peaks and valleys.

Early days in Golden Meadow: not many accommodations; Marshland Hotel built; locals did not know about oil and gas industry, had to learn; many people who became major players in the industry stayed at his father's boarding house, started out as roughnecks; did not need permits for anything in the early days; under the Huey Long administration, they robbed the state blind; chairmen of the Department of Conservation gave the water bottoms away.

Arrival of Texans: father built store in 1922 and boarding house in 1936, died in 1952, family closed store around 1980; when Texans arrived people were oystering, trapping, had to stay out

on lakes for long periods without coming in; average wage \$30 a month; Texans started paying \$.25 an hour and let people work overtime; by 1950, roughnecks getting \$1.25 an hour.

Start of drilling company: talked to major company about needs; went to Bethlehem Steel, then to Regan Equipment, a shipyard in Morgan City (Regan Equipment still in Morgan City) to build workover rig; Avondale in Harvey built second rig; signed general contract to work for Texaco, Gulf, Chevron; lots of dry spells - workover rigs always treated like stepchildren; Business Enterprises in Louisiana since early 1900s; became Bass Enterprises; bought Community Bank from American Bank, lost everything when went broke in 1985.

Other endeavors: in boat business from 1964-1985; in legislature 1952-1956, 1964-1976; while in legislature pushed for state to recover bonus money; in 1964 got levees built (with Rappaport); biggest problems getting decent highways; build Leeville Bridge, could not go higher because of formula based on number of residents; mother was the dynamo who took care of problems in the family; didn't speak English until 7 years old; anyone who did not speak French called "Americans;" difficulties in school; business transactions in Golden Meadow through mother; Cut Off had company store for plantation; someone in every community educated and handled transactions for others; supported desegregation; while in legislature came up with idea to put in water pumping stations; fishing with Leander Perez and learned about deal proposed by Harry Truman for percentage of offshore revenues, Perez did not accept.

Boat business: saw profits of people in boat business; American Offshore - pipe laying, support vessels, anchor handling, docking supertankers - for 18 years; hauled steel to Venezuela till sunk a barge; loose joint venture with Nolte Theriot in North Sea; Nolte needed more boats; Nolte all shot up in WWII, died young; easy to find employees in those days - oyster and shrimp boats; differences between inshore and offshore.

Regulations: in past not bothered as much as today; Coast Guard in your face; labor unions; OSHA with foolish regulations; more accidents in shipyards since OSHA moved in; no Coast Guard inspections on tug boats; new licenses a disaster; "I'd hate to be in business with the new regs".

Actions in legislature: created levee district; Quick Take Act; created levee board with Nolte Theriot as president.

Vince Guzzetta

Morgan City, LA

July 1, 2004

Interviewed by: Jamie Christy

University of Houston/History International

MMS038

### Ethnographic Preface:

Vince Guzzetta was born in Berwick, Louisiana in 1936, a small town across the Atchafalaya Bay from Morgan City. After three years at Louisiana State University, he and his father, Vincent Sr., started a seafood business in Berwick called Deep South Seafoods. He was hired to pick shrimp. The company also received packaged, processed, and froze imported Mexican shrimp and put them in Deep South's freezers to send all over the United States. In the mid-1960's, when the oil companies moved to Morgan City in large numbers, Guzzetta and his father converted their seafood business into an oil field service company and renamed it Guzzetta Offshore. In general, they took seismic crews out and carried mud and pipe and other supplies to offshore rigs. They worked in Bahrain and the Middle East, South Africa, Nicaragua, Colombia, Panama, Venezuela, and other sites in the Gulf of Mexico. The company dealt with Geophysical, Pennzoil, Texaco, Conoco, and others. A Guzzetta and GSI crew were seized in Somalia, causing Mr. Guzzetta to deal with the State Department, Rome and the Somalian government. The Guzzettas also owned Guzzetta Oil (distributorship for Conoco) and owned seven gas stations in Morgan City area. They phased out of both Guzzetta offshore and oil in 1990.

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Clyde Hahn

Franklin, LA

July 2, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner, Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

AG031

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Clyde Hahn was recommended by Roy Parr. Roy warned me (Andrew) that Clyde could talk up a storm and wouldn't mince words, and he was right! Emily and I met Clyde at his house in Franklin. His grandkids were down for the week, so we made ourselves at home in the den, and we had a long, interesting, and lively conversation. As one can tell from listening to the tape, Clyde moves fast in conversation, and although the topic of discussion jumped around quite a bit, his ability to tell a lively story is unparalleled. There are some vivid descriptions here of his recollections of the early oilfields he saw as a child. Clyde was sensitive to the environment and pollution from the beginning, and talks about the different attitudes about this subject on the rig. He also talks quite a bit about the changing character of the labor pool from which employees were drawn. We talked briefly about unionization as well.

Clyde Hahn, born in 1927, has been around the oilfield his whole life. His grandfather worked in the oilfields in Illinois, and his father passed through Illinois, Kentucky, and Arkansas on his way to Texas. They were there for the big boom, and Clyde started working on the rigs early. He worked for Standard Oil for a while, squeezed in a little college, and eventually got on with Humble Oil, which would later become Exxon. His choice to work for Exxon instead of Magnolia had to do with a layoff period that Magnolia went through around World War II - he didn't trust them. He worked in drilling until 1965 and then in production until he retired in 1986.

#### Summary:

Ohio Oil Company: his grandfather was employed by the Ohio Oil Company, and as a boy they used to go up to Illinois and visit. He remembers the old rigs up there. He describes them. Hooks and rods. Clyde was born in 1927 in Texas, west of Fort Worth at one of the boom fields. His dad was born in Indiana, went to work in Illinois at the age of 14 after his father was killed, and then went on down to Texas to work. His father went to Kentucky oil fields, then to Smackover. He talks about the mules, and that there were injured and dead oilfield workers at the hotel. Then he went to the Ranger field in Texas.

Texas Oil Fields: They had belt houses and were drilling with cable tools, punching their way down. To drive it, they had an old gas engine that pulled belts and beams. His father ended up working for Magnolia and drove a team of horses moving tools on wagons. They'd pull the boilers. The horses were well trained. He talks about the way the horses used to work like a bulldozer.

Oilfield Family: He didn't move as much as other people. His dad stayed in that place in Texas for a while. He talks about the rain and the ruts in the muddy road. His dad worked for Magnolia. Clyde wanted to go into the war, and he joined the Merchant Marine at 17. By the time he got to the Pacific, the war ended. He came to Louisiana and went to college for a while. He thought he would work for Humble. Mobil was laying a lot of people off, and he didn't like that ... he didn't trust them.

Working for Humble: Clyde started working for them after college in 1954. He went to college before that. He worked during school for a while. He started as a rotary helper, and was able to keep his seniority from Standard. Humble didn't run people off. He had worked as a roustabout before that.

Working in the Summers of College: he loved it. There were two kinds of people out there. Contractors were one kind. He talks about looking for oilfield jobs. He came down for a summer job in Louisiana, and never left.

First Day Offshore: first thing he did was clean tools, and he lost the key down the cracks in the floor. Now they have platforms. He describes the old barges and ships they used as platforms. He talks about rough water, and one old driller they had to help up onto the rig. He talks about barge rigs and how easy they were. Barge rigs were less work than land rigs, but they finally got rid of them. He says that the company rigs were faster than the contract rigs because those guys knew how to work together.

Contract Rigs: Contractors at the time would just lay everybody off. He talks about when his dad worked as a contractor, and how when the job was up you couldn't put food on the table. His dad was able to stay employed for most of the depression. They were eating cactus back then. That was real poverty back then. It's not like today.

Union Representative: Clyde talks about being the union representative. He put up a flag once, and they told him to take it down. Maybe it was Vietnam that caused this attitude.

Labor Quality: It didn't change that much, but the moral quality of the whole country went down. Hippies. He tells a story about when a hippie came out on the rig. They made him cut his hair because it was a safety hazard. We talked about blacks on the rigs. Some of them were great workers, some of them were the sorriest workers. It wasn't a color thing. German genius vs. nigger riggin'. He talks about women on the rig. They shouldn't be ganghands, but there are other things they can do. He knows one woman who drove down from Tennessee to work. He tells the story of one black woman who dumped a bunch of oil into a pit.

Promotions: he didn't get promoted that much. He was in drilling until 1965. From then on he worked mostly in production. He didn't want to be promoted - he just wanted to be left alone. He tells a story about how bad the hands were sometimes. They'd just go in and sit down. Part of the problem with the black workers was that they were hiring them on the streets of New Orleans ... they couldn't climb a rope, they couldn't do anything.

Environment: it wasn't so bad with Exxon. It didn't change things that much. He was worried about oil leaking in the Gulf from the beginning - the regulators weren't worried about it at the time, but he knew it was coming, and Exxon was one of the best. They didn't worry about it as much back then, but he knew changes were coming. He knew polluting was wrong, and that was an unusual attitude. Some of the oldtimers didn't worry about it, but as a kid he had seen all the dead trees in the Smackover field.

Regulators: the first ones that came out were learning how to regulate from Exxon. They told them what to look for and things like that. He tells a story about a joke they played on him with a fake inspector. He talks about Rebel Drilling as part of the story.

Unionization: Exxon had their own union. You've got to have them, but you take a lot of shit from them too. He remembers when the union stewards came to his ship after the war, and they wanted to figure out what was wrong, but there wasn't anything wrong! Unions can cause a mess. Standard once shut down a whole plant in Texas rather than go union. At one time, they tried to tell him he had to join the union.

Exxon Union: We talked about Adam Welcome for a while. He's smart. He was able to get the company to stop saying no to everything. If you did your job, the company took care of you. He's got a son that's working over at Bluewater gas plant, and he wouldn't be surprised if he got laid off one of these days. It's not like it used to be.

Camps: they were in the out of the way places. Most of them are gone now. They would build houses for employees too, but they don't do that anymore. The kids these days working out there, though, have a different attitude. He gives an example from the National Guard. He talks about why people join the army now. More talk about the military.

Texans in Cajun Country: he likes it over here. Once Humble got you across the creek - into Louisiana - they kept you here!

Blocks He Worked at: He names the blocks he worked at and how deep the water was at each. Deepest he worked was but 55 feet. He retired in '86.

Future of the Oilfield: it's been good for Cajun country. They'll go out even deeper. He worries about the stability of the governments around the globe where they're drilling. He also worries about ships dragging their anchors and whatnot. Accidents could happen really easily out there.

Charles Hammonds

Houma, LA

December 6, 2002

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS004

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Nearly everyone I talked to at the airport said I need to see Charlie, including Earl Hicks, the Houma-Terrebonne Airport manager. Charlie Hammonds has been in aviation in Houma all his life. Born in Jennings, LA, where his father died in an oil field accident when he was three, Charlie grew up in the oil fields. He began washing airplanes at the Houma airport when he was 12 and was a licensed pilot and flight instructor by the time he was 18. In 1960, he started his own business, Hammonds Air Service, while also earning more pilot certificates (instruments, multi-engine land and sea rating, airline transport, and aviation management degree). Another aviator noted that Charlie probably has more flying time in float planes than any other pilot in the United States. He also gave me a copy of his paper on the history of the airport.

Charles Hammonds has been operating his own business at the Houma airport since 1960. He specialized in fixed wing aircraft, especially float planes, and before 1983 operated a commuter airline along the Gulf Coast. His primary service area was to the inshore oil fields, which were well suited to float plane service, especially before helicopters were strong enough to carry heavy loads. The float plane/commuter business peaked in the 70's, and was hit very hard in the bust of the mid-80's. His current business is a fraction of what it was then, mostly pilot training and recreational charters. The offshore rigs today are serviced by helicopters, not float planes. We talked about this boom/bust sequence and the history of the Houma Airport.

#### Summary:

Aviation Development: Charlie saw the development of offshore aviation from the perspective of commercial aviation. The heyday of aviation at Houma was when both the inshore and offshore fields were producing. The demise of the fields in the calmer waters of the inshore areas and growth of the offshore platforms in the rougher water of the Gulf meant that Charlie had to scale back his float plane operations. The cost to him for investment in helicopters to service the offshore market was too high in terms of equipment and insurance. His experience in the 1980s downturn made him much more cautious and inclined to grow his business more slowly.

Change in Air Service: Charlie ran a commuter airline for about 10 years. The length of the mid-80s downturn caught many people by surprise. It never has recovered to 1970s levels. In the mid 70s, there were 90 floatplanes based in Houma, now (2002), there are only 7. His company went from 170 employees to 12. The inshore fields are depleted. Big companies have sold out to smaller contractors, and much of the information-gathering service is done by satellite. The whole industry has changed. This may reflect overall airline industry problems as well as the oil industry.

Oil Dominance in The Gulf Coast Economy: oil industry affects everything along the coast. In the bust, "good solid businesses went broke." Oil companies pulled out without cleaning up the mess they made, but overall the oil work was good for the people of Houma. The offshore work now is primarily helicopter based, and takes a major investment of money. Since Hammonds Air Service is an oil field business, it will probably not have float planes after 5 more years.

The 1980s Bust: Charlie spent about a million dollars on hangar space, and made a lot of money, but in one year, he lost \$3-4 million, the downturn was so sudden, "like turnin' a valve off." He is now much more cautious about expanding his business.

Houma Airport: Houma is "off the beaten path as far as aviation is concerned." The airport hasn't changed much in the last 15 years. Hammonds Air service teaches flying, does maintenance, sells fuel. His son does air tours, charters for fishing and hunting. He is very careful about expansion.

Controls on Business Expansion: Insurance is a major factor. In the last two years, his insurance went from \$76,000 to \$140,000. There is also an influence from regulation. Louisiana doesn't have the restrictions on float planes that other states have, so it is difficult to expand operations to other states.

Michael Harris

Grand Isle, LA

March 18, 2003

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM060

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mickie Harris was on Jean Landry's list of contacts. After several messages left on his answering machine, he called me at the motel and we set up an appointment. As it turned out, he had been up in Jefferson Parish court. Much of the interview dealt with local and state politicians, including the incorporation of Grand Isle so that it could get water and gas service.

Mickie Harris, now 76, was a jazz player from New Orleans who went to several colleges supported by musical scholarships and the GI Bill. After meeting his first wife, he ended up on Grand Isle in 1956 and became the first mayor, serving from 1959 to 1968. He operated a contracting business including construction of clamshell roads.

#### Summary:

Grand Isle incorporation: passed petition promising to get water and gas, went to court; Judge Adams was main opposition to incorporation; ran against me to dismantle the corporation; I became mayor because I was only one with college education; sworn in at 3 o'clock one morning when Earl Long was on trip to Texas; originally 4 wards on GI; Humble oil site with 200 families was Ward 1; now you can run at large

Business: in contracting business, selling clam shells for roads; bought property with slip from Exxon along Bayou Rigaud; pile driving

Politicians: friends of Hale and Lindy Boggs, but we became more conservative than their crowd; Sen. Jules Fisher from Lafitte wanted each coastal parish to have gulf frontage, so GI ended up in Jefferson Parish; Hale helped get trailers to GI after Hurricane Betsy; Lindy was brains behind Hale; Harry Lee, Jefferson sheriff, is good friend

Father-in-law: Fornest Millit from Gretna; hard-nosed businessman; head of highway department here, was in the Longs

Route 66: TV show filmed episode down here, hired bunch of people but didn't pay them; got my chief of police to stop them at the bridge

Oil companies: changed quite a bit when Exxon took over; Humble had own churches; didn't want their people to mix with local people; after Slim Waffer let, it changed, started to assimilate; Freeport good for local people; Freeport platform subsiding because they were removing sulphur, McDermott called in to raise it up; was biggest platform in gulf at time;

Mickleberry was chief; "CAGC" was Continental, Atlantic Richfield, Getty, and Conoco, but were competitors;

Churches: Baptists came in to serve Humble's workers/families; Methodists serve engineers and professional people

Hurricanes: Betsy covered up gas lines; Flossie cut island in 2 spots; Rappelet was senator, in sand hauling business, got contract to repair storm damage repair

Locals: A.M. Landry owned supermarket, from elsewhere; mover and shaker; Clyde Prejean of Grand Isle shipyard, second mayor

Rappelet: Fourchon wouldn't have developed without him, of course he made money on it; he deserves to have statue out there

Water line: one of Chouest's boats tore up a piece of it; engineer of project didn't bury it; supposed to be 4 feet deep, but has barnacles on it

Relations with Lafourche Parish: Jefferson Parish wanted to close school down here, so movement to join Lafourche

Sport fishing: Charley Sebastian and wife publicized it; Hector and Hamilton Landry had charter boats

Labor: always training competition; got out of business because of this, couldn't keep workers; I'd hire Texaco people on their 7 days off; all the good people had jobs

Grand Isle Shipyard: used to have work with Exxon; now doing lots with Texaco, so moved office up to Golden Meadow

Otto Candies: had dock right next door; with Exxon, couldn't rent boat unless you went through Candies; Paul Candies knows oil business; now big barges and tugs going to South America

Danziger: Humble needed property, Danziger was biggest landowner, "you need to buy me out;" Humble ended up with about a third of GI; wasn't a local family; Danziger Bridge over industrial canal in New Orleans.

Henry Harrison

Lafayette, LA

August 8, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz, David DiTucci

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW019

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Henry Harrison was born in Arkansas in 1928. In 1936, because of the Depression, his father was forced to abandon his work on his family's plantation and in favor of work in the oilfield. His father was a driller and tool pusher, and the family moved around a lot while he was growing up. He graduated from a high school in Florida in 1946 and went to work as a roughneck. After a year he decided he wanted to be an engineer and enrolled at the University of Florida. Over the next 10 years he continued his study, with a four year break wherein he served in the Air Force during the Korean Conflict; he graduated from Louisiana State University with a degree in engineering in 1957. He got an engineering position with the California Company in Venice and stayed there six years before taking a job as a district engineer with Signal Oil and Gas Company in Lafayette. In 1965 he became the district manager for Signal. He remained with the company when it was sold to Burma Oil and Gas (and was vice president of overseas operations for a time), but was fired in 1978 after it was sold to Aminoil. The following year he opened up a small rental tool company with his ex-boss; they sold the company in 1983 after it went bankrupt. After that he began consulting, something he continued until recently, and moved to east Texas. He describes the secrecy and competitiveness surrounding the lease bidding process and hiring employees with experience.

#### Summary:

Early life: born 1928 in Arkansas; father in oilfield (driller and toolpusher), family moved a lot; family owned plantation in Arkansas that went under in Depression; oilfield offered a means of feeding his family. Graduated high school in '46 and went to work as roughneck; year later decided he wanted something better. Went to University of Florida, served during Korea, went to Kilgore Junior College, and got engineering degree at LSU in '57.

California Company: hired in '57 and assigned to Venice; company had a camp there. On the job training, had practical experience from roughnecking, but no engineering experience; late '50s was an industry downturn and companies preferred hiring people with experience. Working six and three; did not see family much; describes living quarters; paid 16 dollars a month of everything - inducement to get workers.

Food at camp and rigs: had a mess hall at the camp; on rigs they had a catering service; sometimes inland barges had cooks for toolpushers or boat man; would eat on Halliburton boats sometimes. Good, hearty food offshore.

Venice: California Company had 43 homes in their camp; certain amenities not available (food, shopping, doctors); children bused to schools in Buras. Problems registering to vote; Leander Perez.

Lafayette: welcomed with open arms in '63; first home on edge of town; better logistics and amenities than in Venice. Car accident driving near Livonia.

Signal Oil and Gas: first was a district engineer and would take helicopters out to rigs; gradually did less work in field. District manager in '65. SLAM (Signal, LL and E, [Amalaw?], and [Marathon?]) operating group. When head of company died and nephew took over, company wanted to diversify and get out of oil part of it; sold to Burma Oil and Gas.

Burma Oil and Gas: subsidiary of Burma Company, British shipping outfit; embargo left them in financial trouble and they sold Signal to Aminoil (American Independent Oil Company).

Aminoil: subsidiary of R.J. Reynolds Tobacco; wanted company to solve instability of availability of gas (from embargo) for curing systems. When bought company, laid off many old Signal employees (he was regional manager and replaced with an accountant) and shut lots of operations down.

South America: Burma had a concession in Ecuador and worked with multinational group in Peru. Went to Peru and drilled two good wells in Amazon Basin, but too costly to produce them.

Rental tool business: started with old boss at Aminoil in '79; did well, but sold in '83 after went into bankruptcy.

Consulting: started a simple consulting business. Went to Texas in '88 and drilled 92 wells in two years; describes field (hard rock drilling).

Sexism in Lafayette: man at lumber yard would not sell his wife nails; seen as a nonperson.

Bidding and lease sales: people working on lease sales (geologists, engineers, reservoir people) wouldn't know what specific property they were working on because projects given code names; only a few people in the company knew what block the properties were on; done to protect company in bidding process. Example, Delta Block 79; companies would send scouts in helicopters and boats to check out fields near potential lease; boss used a scramble phone to report logging information; swept his office for "bugs"; lots of paranoia because of how much money involved.

Going into oilfield: had other options (many of his kin were professionals), but had seen enough of oilfield to have a romantic idea about it; he wanted to be in charge. Wife's family in oil business (dad a toolpusher with Penrod), so she was used to lifestyle.

Pay: in '56 with California Company was making 475 a month and get cost of living increase before even starting work; got cost of living raises each January. Paid 1,000 a month in '63 with Signal.

Accidents and safety: saw a man killed running casing. On a drilling rig, there's a "snake" around every corner. Companies real concerned about safety; had lots of drills; used helicopters to airlift seriously injured people. Smaller service companies weren't as concerned with safety; workers were more transient.

Job security: in the companies he used to work for they were always undermanned so that in downturns they didn't have to always lay off people.

Experience: used to look to hire older people with experience, but today trying to let go those older workers because too costly. Describes competition for older, experienced personnel.

Unions: tried to start a few times, but instigators got thrown off boats and had tires slashed.

Carol Hartgen

Reston, VA

November 22, 2002

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS016

### Ethnographic Preface:

Ms. Carol Hartgen received her bachelor's degree from Georgetown University in Foreign Service and a master's degree from NYU in economics. After graduate school she went to work for the U.S. Census Bureau for two years and then in 1969 took a position as an economist in the BLM working on the OCS program. She worked variously in economic analysis and environmental evaluation for the BLM and as head of the leasing branch. Toward the end of her career, she also worked in international activities. Ms. Hartgen retired in 2000.

### Summary:

Good detail and history on the federal OCS leasing program from the late 1960s forward. Ms. Hartgen talks about joining the program just after the Santa Barbara blowout and the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act. She talks about the move to "tract selection" and methods used to try to assess the "fair-market value" of given tracts. Discusses the opening of "frontier" areas (MAFLA, Alaska) in the 1970s and the OCSLA amendments requiring experiments with different kinds of bidding. Interview covers the move into deepwater leasing, from first area-wide sales in the 1980s to the development of the five-year program and the Royalty Relief act under President Clinton.

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Harry Hasenpflug

Sugarland, TX

August 22, 2002

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS008

### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Harry Hasenpflug grew up in St. Louis and studied geophysics at St. Louis University, graduating in 1954. He joined Shell Oil out of college and worked in various technical positions in research (seismic processing) and operations (geophysical crews) for the company until he retired in 1989.

### Summary:

Interview discusses Shell's early refraction work and salt dome interpretation. In 1960, Hasenpflug was made party chief for Shell's Party 88. He talks about the development of continuous profiling, giving a detailed description of how shots were made, recorded, plotted, and interpreted. Some anecdotes about living and working in Morgan City, LA. Other topics include the development of stacking technology; the discovery of South Pass 62; the introduction of new computer systems and Shell's work on seismic processing in the 1960s; Harry's work on deconvolution at the Bellaire Research Center in the 1970s; his position as manager of technical coordination geophysics in the late 1970s; and key figures in Shell exploration during his career.

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Betty Roth Hebert

Thibodaux, LA

March 4, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA035

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Betty Roth Hebert by Kerry St. Pé of the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program. Betty is a lifelong resident of Thibodaux and had expressed interest in sharing her history and observations about the area. I called Betty for an interview, and she was very willing to participate in the study. We met at her house, which is located in the old section of Thibodaux and is next door to the house in which she grew up. Betty collects antiques and occasionally shows her home to visitors as a museum.

Betty Roth Hebert was born in Thibodaux and has lived there all her life except for a few years during World War II when she moved to Shreveport while her husband was overseas. Betty finished college at Southern Louisiana Institute with a major in home economics and minor in chemistry. She married one month after graduation and worked at the Layton Plantation while her husband was in the war. Betty's husband was an instructor pilot during the war and then took a job as a bank teller when he returned to Thibodaux. He retired as bank president. Betty and her husband had three children. Betty worked as a substitute teacher and has been active in community affairs throughout her life.

#### Summary:

Early history: lived in Thibodaux entire life except during WWII when lived a short time in Shreveport while husband was overseas; husband was instructor pilot and bank teller, returned to bank after war, retired as president at age 65; father-in-law owned the block on which they lived, rented out homes; finished college at Southern Louisiana Institute with home economics degree and minor in chemistry, married immediately after graduation; husband to WWII, flew over Germany 49 times; she hired to work at Layton Plantation, worked one season, blew horn at 6am to wake up men who worked there; German prisoners were brought in to cut cane

War years: was in college from 1940 to 1944, came back ditches were being filled, streets paved; due to oil and gas industry, people coming in to rent places and find work; were bedroom community, careful about who came in; Industrial Committee formed of businessmen who made suggestions about town; husband started as barber, went to bank as teller, retired as president, continually getting an education; served as president of banking associations; had farm property back to Acadia Woods, didn't want industry here; community grew so much; plantations sold for subdivisions

Before 1940s: small town, bad roads to New Orleans; little stores, grinding was big thing; dad and uncle owned Roth Drug Store, now Freeman's; build in 1910 by grandfather; many people

didn't pay bills till January waiting for end of sugar season, could charge for a year; mostly French Acadians

Change: people moving in from Texas and Mississippi; accepted, made lovely friends; many moved back, this was not industrial town but grew rapidly in the early 1940s; lots of people had rent homes; some men in community only for grinding season; men from Thibodaux would go to Puerto Rico, Cuba; plantations provided boarding houses; WPA brought workers here; camps across Bayou Lafourche, people lived in tents and worked; mother worked for Red Cross, would take them lunch, take me and brother along in car

1970s: people had more money, able to handle their lives up and down the bayou; people bought land and houses; bust of the 1980s felt, not personally devastating; had three children, husband, did substitute teaching for ten dollars a day; community had women's clubs for years; antique show; Nicholls just celebrated 50th anniversary

Earl Hebert

Morgan City, LA

December 5, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA082

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Earl Hebert by Steve Shirley. Earl worked in the offshore oil and gas industry for more than 30 years and also held several civic positions such as Justice of the Peace, Port Commission and Hospital Board. We met at his office at Diamond Services in Amelia where he is still working as an office manager. Although he was uncertain that he would have much to offer, he provided important information and insights about the industry and its effects on the communities of Morgan City, Berwick, and Amelia.

Earl was born in Berwick in 1932 and has lived there all his life. He went to work for Diamond Services in 1969. The company was started in 1962 by Wallace Carline. Earl was the office manager and responsible for a wide range of tasks including personnel and purchasing a building. He was with the company when it went public in the early 1970s and again when Mr. Carline took it back seven years later to operate privately.

#### Summary:

Early history: born in Berwick, still lives there; graduated from Morgan City High School in 1950, spent four years in the Marine Corps, sold cars for TriCity Motors for a year; enrolled at Nicholls State; had two children and expecting third; became Berwick town clerk; then managed Berwick Lumber company for four years till 1964; sold insurance for Prudential for 5 years; joined Diamond Services in 1969, still there; spent 12 years as Justice of the Peace; 20 years on the board of Hospital Service District #3; was on St. Mary Parish Home Rule Charter Commission; was on Port Commission and secretary for 10 years

Diamond Construction Company: when started in 1969 it was primarily a dredging operation, pile driving, bulkheading; general oilfield contractor; was the office manager, responsible for accounting, safety, and other jobs; in those days not departmentalized; lack of transportation infrastructure was a problem; took one to two hours to get from Amelia to Berwick; had to stop managing Little League team when took the job; in 1969 this type of work was just beginning; had three dredges, self-propelled utility vessels; kept them working all the time; four people in the office; today there are 20; had about 40 total employees; at height had about 750; today have 160; different type of personnel; started crew boats about 10 years ago

Jobs: dredges dig canals for access and then larger area on which rigs are set; drove concrete piles and set deck on top for production facility; drove 8-10 pilings together in clusters; people from Morgan City and surrounding areas; not hard to find workers at first; at peak of activity it

became a problem; people came from all over the United States; some caused problems with law enforcement; then it calmed down; no problems in the last 10 years

Finding workers: advertised; word got out across the U.S. that Morgan City was hiring; had people at the front door almost constantly; today it is harder; importance was not placed on safety in those days; changes were evolutionary; about 10-15 years ago safety became an independent department and all of this evolved from that; work ethic was stronger in 1969 than today; loyalty was there; one guy has been with the company 32 years; oilfield always had lots of turnover; in the early days people changed because they could make 25 cents an hour more; today they change because they want a different life; crews work 24 & 7; 14 & 7; 30 & 14; I worked in the office, 5 and a half days a week; use Saturday mornings to catch up

Surviving the downturn: due to the versatility of the people; always an oilfield service company but during the downturn got a sidewalk paving project; kept our core people; we would do what it takes

Effect of oil industry on Morgan City: people started coming in 1945; people came from West Texas; got my best friend out of the initial group; they caused the local people to become better people; they brought in new ideas, helped us grow; it was not easy; this was a dead community, very quiet; there was a shell crushing plant here and shrimping; this area has always been a one-industry economy; when others came in they started opening their eyes to other things; built tennis court, new schools; had to think about things; also people from here went to work in places like Nigeria and London and broadened their perspectives; still had controversy between people who wanted to grow and those who wanted to maintain what it was

Oil companies in Morgan City: first one oil company put a warehouse here; then they started transferring people to work in the warehouse; then an oil company leased two floors of the bank building because they wanted engineers closer to the job: they left 11-12 years ago; about 6 months ago the last 30 people left; another oil company built office space adjacent to the waterways; about 10 years ago the oil companies started to consolidate in New Orleans, Lafayette, in Houston; the mergers eliminated jobs; the thing that has affected business in this area the most is that the oil companies have to set up further offshore; they can ship from many places and broaden their scope; this hasn't helped Morgan City; also, the lack of depth of the waterways has hurt us

Dredging: Congress passed a law mandating a 20 foot channel - before my time; fluff is the pudding-like stuff that sits under the channel, you end up with 12-13 feet; modern boats can't pass; has caused an exodus of the big companies out of Morgan City; Tidewater is still here; there's a move underway to get a 35 foot channel; \$4,400,000 feasibility study to try to prove economic benefit; the Corps of Engineers is constantly dredging this to try to maintain the level; fluff seems to come back as fast as they dredge

Chicago Bridge and Iron: Cajuns learned welding during WWII when Chicago Bridge and Iron came in and built a shipyard; they hired people here as laborers; that was the beginning of the trade here; a lot of the old timers worked for CBI; the company left after the war; there was such a spirit of unity at that time

Personal history: mom had a grocery store, dad had a dry cleaning establishment; I didn't want to work outside; went to Nicholls to study business administration; was a junior college but grew each year I was there; had two colleges, business administration and education; was nine hours short of a degree when hired to replace retiring Berwick town clerk and tax collector; left to work at lumber company to make more money; had 4 or 5 kids by then; then to insurance company for better opportunity; not what I wanted to do; Mr. Carline needed an office manager, I had been calling on him to sell insurance; found this job fascinating; we took the company public and 7 years later took it back

Going public: between 1969 and 1972 everybody wanted to go public and be part of a bigger company; could acquire additional capital, buy better equipment; by the mid-1970s this changed; guys were entrepreneurs, used to operating from the seat of their pants; not answer to a board of directors; people would leave and start another company or buy company back; biggest difference is that public company has to make money to pay shareholders and show a profit; private company wants to reduce taxes to a minimum; darlings of Wall Street came down here in the 60s; by the 1980s we were back to doing it ourselves

Reflections: was offered \$10,000 a year more to move to Houston but would not have helped me with the cost of living there, and had kids and a wife; the most successful part of my life has been my children; they've become successful and that was worth whatever I gave up

Berwick: good place to raise kids; knew the teachers, town clerk; could get more help with your kids; oldest daughter is co-producer of ER; another is assistant U.S. attorney in Washington; sons are stock broker, work for Continental Airlines, and in construction; they couldn't do the things they wanted to do here; did not want them to go into the oilfield at a low level job

Impact of people on community: oil company people made a great contribution; belonged to PTA, PTO, Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce; infusion of ideas; got into politics supporting people for office; got rough during the peak when I was Justice of the Peace; saw an increase in volume but same types of crimes; human nature is human nature; prior to influx constable or chief of police would have mediated a lot more; less personal response as numbers increased; shrimpers were rough, but though they would fight rarely would a guy pull a knife; started to see more of that as time went on; labor camps had more people and did not associate with the locals; the employers were glad they were here

Amelia: McDermott shipyard was next door but sold it to Bollinger; subsidiary companies are no longer here; big companies left and locals moved in; lots of Vietnamese settled here; most in fishing industry and have fishing boats; some work here

Community development: had some Cubans that came about 20-25 years ago; didn't buy altogether but filtered into the community; have to give people credit for trying to build infrastructure to accommodate the growth; best thing to happen to Bayou Lafourche was Nicholls; just prior to 1948 the government wanted to put Nicholls here; some people didn't want it

Schooling: my parents pushed school; my dad did not go to school a day in his life; mother went to fifth grade and got her GED; they pushed me to go.

James "Jimmy" Hebert

New Iberia, LA

April 17, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG003

#### Ethnographic Preface:

James Hebert does the taxes for Susan Lissard, one of the teacher-researchers from the last project. He's a retired Shell employee, and vice-president of their local retirees club. Points of interest here, including the history of the term "roustabout", some detailed explanations of the process of drilling for oil, the process by which royalties are distributed, the way that separators work, and so on.

James Hebert worked in the oilfield since the 1950s, and has a detailed knowledge of many different parts of the oilfield. He worked his entire career at Weeks Island, so he has a pretty good knowledge of the historical operations there. Most of his experience is in production or other related portions of the industry. Furthermore, he spent several decades managing the secret Shell fallout shelter on the island.

#### Summary:

**Seismology and Royalties:** Jimmy provides a description of the process of finding oil, seismograph work, and the way that royalties are distributed to landowners once oil is found. This ties in to the leasing issue, which he also describes. He goes on to talk about oil stratigraphy for a while. He then discusses separators and the way royalties are calculated at that point.

**Personal Work History:** Jimmy talks about the early years of his career with Shell on Weeks Island. He then talks a little bit about the history of Weeks Island as one of the premier oil producing salt domes in southern Louisiana. This leads into a discussion of modern technology and oil production.

**Injury:** After talking a little bit about the history of the term roustabout (it comes from the circus, actually), he talks about the injury he had on the job, the way that Shell dealt with his injury, and the transfer that resulted. The injury resulted in his continuance at the Weeks Island location.

**Refining:** Jimmy talks more about the process of refining oil.

**The Fallout Shelter:** Jimmy ended up taking care of the Shell fallout shelter, located in the salt mines on Weeks Island. The plan was that the executives in New Orleans and their families would relocate there in a time of nuclear war, enabling them to continue operating the corporation as best as possible. His job was to keep the place ready. When the threat of war

passed, Shell used the mine as a storage facility for valuable documents and other materials. This was very secret at the time.

**A Career with Shell:** Jimmy talks about the fact that he was able to work his whole career with a single company.

**Weeks Island History:** Jimmy talks more about the history of Weeks Island, and he provides some specific descriptions of what it took to get at the oil beneath the salt deposits. For quite a while, the deepest wells in the world were at Weeks Island - a lot of records were broken there. Salt and oil production coexisted there as well - these industries are a part of the island's history. Jimmy talks about

Shell's sale of Weeks Island to Texas Meridian, and how this was part of their strategy to devote their resources to offshore reserves.

**New Drilling Techniques:** Jimmy notes that the techniques for drilling for oil have really changed since his day. He describes some of these changes, including directional drilling. The development of offshore fields was the major driving force.

Dolores Henderson

Morgan City, LA

July 16, 2001, March 7, 2003

Interviewed by: Rylan Higgins, Diane Austin

University of Arizona

RH011, DA104

#### Ethnographic Preface:

During June and early July, when I interviewed McDermott retirees, I would asked them about Black workers who were at McDermott during the early history of the company. Several of the people I interviewed told me that Caleb Henderson would have been a great person with whom to talk, but that Caleb had passed away. I mentioned Caleb to a friend, and she told me that Dolores Henderson, Caleb's wife, could tell me lots about him. Dolores is pleasant, easy to talk to and dons a nearly permanent smile. We sat at the dinner room table, and she brought out a couple old photo albums full of pictures of her husband at work and playing with their children. She offered me a soda, and then I asked her to talk about her husband. She was not sure how to start, but once started, she had plenty to say. Her discussion focused mostly on Caleb and his work and less on their family life. The interview lasted about 45 minutes, and, as I left, she invited me to come back anytime I wanted. In March 2003, Diane contacted Dolores again. Dolores remembered her conversation with Rylan fondly and agreed to be interviewed again, this time focusing on her life rather than Caleb's.

Caleb Henderson joined McDermott after serving in the Navy during WWII and working briefly for the shell plant in Morgan City. He took advantage of the GI Bill to study refrigeration and radio, and he turned down a college scholarship so he could go to work and begin building his own home. Upon recommendation of a friend, he was hired at McDermott and remained there until he retired. He developed a new technique for loading platforms and was eventually promoted to supervisor, the only black in that position at McDermott in the 1960s.

Dolores was born in Morgan City and lived in the community all her life. She and Caleb raised two sons and one daughter, all of which they sent to college. Dolores credits her mother for her attitudes toward education; her mother wanted her children to have more education than she did. Her mother left school after the third grade and worked as a domestic all her life. After graduating from high school, Dolores went to Baton Rouge to live with her blind uncle and attend college. She fell in love with literature and became involved in oration, so she studied to become a librarian. She married Caleb during this time. When she finished school, few schools were hiring black librarians, so she became a teacher-librarian. She took a job in Slidell and stayed there during the week, returning home on weekends. She got a job in Houma for one year, took a year off to have her daughter, took a job as a librarian in Thibodaux for six years, and then got a job at Hattie Watts High School in Patterson, where she stayed until she retired. Dolores began storytelling after the schools were integrated and the high school was turned into an elementary school. She organized a library and reading program in her home and remains very active in community service. She has been recognized with numerous awards and received The Angel Award in 1996.

## Summary of RH011:

**Caleb's Early Adulthood:** Caleb joined the Navy before he could legally do so. At 18, he and Dolores got married. Caleb had always wanted a home and worked two non-oil jobs directly out of the Navy trying to save up enough money. He went to work for Shell before he went to work for McDermott. A man named Woodrow Parker helped Caleb get a job at McDermott.

**Supervisor at McDermott:** After starting working at McDermott, Caleb was recognized by some of his co-workers and bosses for his skills, intelligence and hard work. A supervisor/manager with the last name of Campbell promoted Caleb on these merits. Also, Caleb had helped design a new technique for loading platforms for transportation. However, his promotion to supervisor in one of the yards did not go over well with most workers at McDermott. Dolores blamed other workers' racist attitudes for this.

**Racial Issues at McDermott:** Dolores discussed how she and Caleb used to talk a lot about racial issues at McDermott. The environment within which Blacks worked varied according to which area of the yard they were and changed when different people came to occupy important positions in those yards. Campbell died, and when he did, racial tensions at McDermott got worse. Campbell had been relatively just in his treatments of Blacks, and with him gone, certain Whites were more free to express racist attitudes through both formal and informal channels. This caused problems in the yard.

**Racial Issues as a Supervisor:** Caleb was the only Black supervisor at McDermott in the 60s. Dolores said that, while Caleb got respect from some workers and some other supervisors, it was still difficult to be Black and work at McDermott. There were times when the difficulties were because of his supervisor position. She mentioned that she and Caleb were usually not invited to social events organized for or by the other supervisors, including company picnics.

**Hiring Other Blacks:** Dolores discussed how Caleb had tried to get other Blacks to come work for McDermott. His position allowed him to hire other Blacks, and he felt like he could inspire Black men to do better for themselves if they got a good job and stuck with it. He also hired local Black schoolteachers in the summer, when they were out of work.

**Quitting McDermott:** Caleb eventually quit McDermott. He quit because things had gotten too unfair, according to Dolores. He was out of work for three months. Dolores "thanked God" that Caleb's work reputation followed him, because he was able to get another stable job.

## Summary of DA104:

**Family and Origins:** In Morgan City entire life; Caleb and Dolores were childhood sweethearts and married almost 50 years when he was killed; have one daughter, a professor of early childhood education and anthropology, and two sons, one who does contract work for an environmental group and another who designs computer programs; sent all the children to college; mother finished third grade and worked as domestic; she wanted her children to have more education than she did; moved to Baton Rouge to live with her uncle after graduation; "You made it because you wanted to make it and you worked hard at surviving." Mother's

mother was from Morgan City and died in an epidemic leaving Dolores' mother to take care of herself and two younger sisters

Study and Travel: In college became excited by English teacher; stories told of wonderful places, was able to go to Europe in 1972 and 1990 and see many of them; discusses trip to Europe with a Negro spiritual singing group; trip to Paris in 1972 and to South Africa in 2000

Making a Home in Morgan City: Hardly anybody would sell land to Black people in Morgan City; finally Mr. Finklestein let some of his land go to black people; Caleb was working at McDermott and had a vision, built the whole house; got lumber a little bit at a time from the lumberyard; when first married Caleb was working two jobs and building a little house on Arizona Street; had come from the service and got a job at the shell plant at night and delivering furniture during the day; Dolores working as librarian in Slidell; saved money

Morgan City in the 1940s and 1950s: Blacks were either domestics or drove trucks; a few worked at the shell plant; the lumber mills were going out; some ladies worked at the shrimp and crab factory; schools were separate, books were always out of date; blacks could not go to the public library, could go to the store but not try on hats; stories of mother's experiences as domestic; Mrs. Dreher, librarian at the public library, let us play with her grandchildren; "I'll never forget the day she took me into the library - against all rules." Library in high school had about 100 books; Dolores read them all a couple of times; visited schoolteacher in Franklin who used to get the New York Times and would talk about the new books and what was on Broadway; she quit teaching during the war to go to Chicago to work in an ammunition plant; husband went into the service when he was 14 because some lady signed for him; he came home at 18, went to adult ed and finished high school, got married, did not take a scholarship to college because he wanted to build a house; at the first house, the roads were shell; the churches were the Baptist, Catholic, Methodist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian

Career: Started as a teacher-librarian in Slidell because they were not hiring black librarians; rode the bus but came home on weekends; Caleb stayed home, saved; were so proud to buy the first car; Caleb got the job at McDermott from his friend, Woodrow Parker, who had come to Morgan City working with a cement company and then got hired at McDermott; McDermott was a chance for a better living; Caleb and Dolores both had the ability to get along with people; Mother always said treat people like you want to be treated and don't be jealous of anyone; after Slidell worked in Houma for one year; took one year off to have daughter; got job as librarian in Thibodaux and stayed six years; called by principal at Hattie Watts High School in Patterson and stayed till retirement; spent money on educating and achieving something of value; still lots of people who are jealous

Community: Morgan City did very well as far as integration went; we knew we were separate; what was bad was that you wanted to be able to do better; people lived separate but respected each other; across the track were Black people and Italian people; Morgan City was built kind of on the style of New Orleans, with alleys for servants; midwives delivered babies; has always been a transient place; people came in with the railroad and left, with the sawmill and left, and with the oil industry and left; there were always those who worked in Morgan City but did not live in the city

Reaction to Oil Industry: Everyone was accepted in the Black community; with the oil people came an affluent society; people started having sports cars; still everyone spoke to everyone; when shrimp industry grew people came from Florida; with oil people came in from all over because they knew jobs were here; Walter Cronkite did a story when the oil industry was developed, and lots of people came here; it was like a tent city; people lived out at the lake; many did well; McDermott built the subdivision

Moving: Caleb got a job in Florida, but Dolores stayed in Morgan City so the kids could finish high school, they went to be with him in the summer; he then worked in Wyoming and Dolores went up in the summers; Dolores started storytelling when after integration the high school became an elementary school

Changes in the Community: Children are being made to grow up too fast; many have no drive to make themselves better; the system is failing them; teachers must teach to the test; schools are too big and too impersonal; Black people were more compassionate than now; children who can achieve don't because they want to be accepted; people make fun of each other, see on TV everyone doing derogatory things to each other; dope plays a role, those who have been to jail now cannot get a job

Impacts of the Oil and Gas Industry: Up front it really gave the community an economic boost and a cultural boost; then there came a decline in the socialization of people; discusses music; Cajun, dago, and nigger were all dirty names; there were a couple of Black shrimpers, the freezer to freeze the shrimp was across the tracks

Ed Henry

Houma, LA

November 18, 2002, January 24, 2005

Interviewed by: James Sell, Diane Austin

University of Arizona

JS002, DA138

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Merian Henry at Southdown Museum, where she volunteers. She recommended that I talk to her husband, Ed, as a person who spent his career working for Texaco. Ed has a strong interest in Cajun and family history, and is active in the local veterans group. He also recommended a number of other people to interview. Diane returned for a second interview in 2005. The interview was conducted as part of the study of the links between WWII and the offshore industry.

Ed Henry grew up in Montegut, in the area near the original Henry grant from the Spanish in the eighteenth century. His father was originally a trapper who went to work for the Texas Company in the 1930s as a boat captain. After serving in the U.S. Army in Burma during World War II, Ed began working for the Texas Company production department in 1946. He worked in production his entire career, mostly in the Bay Ste. Elaine field, retiring in 1980.

#### Summary of JS002:

Background: Ed is 78, and started work for Texaco in 1946. His family came in the original migration in 1785, got a 640 acre land grant from Spain (near Bourg), and has been in the region ever since. His father worked for Texaco (boat captain) from 1931 until retirement. Ed didn't finish high school, went into the army in 1943 (medical corps), and his father got him a job with Texaco (The Texas Co.) when he came back. He regrets not finishing high school and getting a couple years of college, but felt he did well with oil work.

Work Schedule: 6 days on, 6 off. Suggested need for 6 day calendar to schedule activities and holidays. The commute was an hour boat ride from the docks. The work days were 12 hours, with time and a half for overtime.

Production Process: Checking gauges for content - oil, gas, water, "basic settlement" or "bs." If water content is too high, the oil is bad, so chemicals need to be added to the treater to clean the oil. The depth bracket allowable is the state-established production quota for the well; the company wants to produce up to that level. His work was to travel over a field of 40 wells by boat, checking production each day.

Ways to Increase Production: Gas lift, pumping natural gas into the well to lift the oil out. Water flood, inject water into the well to force up oil.

Father's Work: Texas Co. Marine Division starting in 1931. "Miss Francis" was his boat, used to take workers out to the fields, pull barges for oil transport before pipelines were set up. The steady work enabled his father was able to buy 40 acres of the original Henry land grant from the Ellenders. This was sold in 1999.

Camps: Two shifts - day and night, 12 hours each. The off time was spent at the camp.

Sulfur Drilling: pumped boiling salt water into the holes to melt the sulfur. Then it was pumped into barges to transport to Port Sulphur. The transport barge was a kind of "thermos bottle" to keep it in liquid form.

Accidents on the job: Ed has seen some deaths and has been hurt himself. One graphic description was of a friend who was blown in half by a boiler explosion, leaving the upper half with its arms wrapped around a pipe; killed instantly. Another story was about a man who had just returned from a year tour in Vietnam, who was caught in a steam jet, "that went right up his pants leg and cut him completely open (illustrating that with a hand gesture slicing from groin to neck)." His worst injury was when a pipe slipped and fell just in front of him, missing his head by inches. Unfortunately it bounced up and back down on his feet, crushing them. He was wearing steel-toed boots, which were crushed into his feet; they had to cut them out. It also took a 3 hour boat trip to get to treatment. He is recovered from that injury.

Summary of DA138:

Ed was one of a small group of people who had served in WWII and been involved in the early development of the offshore oil and gas industry in the Gulf of Mexico and was interviewed in a joint project of the University of Arizona, U.S. Minerals Management Service, and the National D-Day Museum. In this interview, Ed talks about his experiences during WWII.

Family history: Eddie grew up on a 40 acre lot of land that his father purchased. It had originally belonged to his third great grandfather which he received through the original Spanish Grant before the Louisianan Purchase of 1803. Before Texaco came, the local economy consisted of sugarcane agriculture for part of the year and trapping and hunting for the remainder. From November to February, Eddie was pulled out of school to spend those months on a houseboat to hunt and trap furs with his dad. This later stopped because he kept falling behind in school.

Texaco: In 1930, Eddie's dad got a job with Texaco when the company first arrived, working as a deckhand and then later as a barge captain transporting inland oil on ships. At first, Texaco would bring in its own drillers, excluding the locals from this economic niche. After twenty years, Eddie's dad stopped working for Texaco because they installed pipelines, which eliminated his job. He then built his own boat and went into business for himself.

Military service: Eddie went back to school once he finished helping his dad hunt and trap and went up to the 11th grade where he dropped out to join the service, which he talks about at great length. Once back from the military, he got a job working in the shipyard due to his dad's experience with Texaco and his military background. There he learned to weld then went to work as roughneck. Shortly after this, he was called back into the military and served several months

as medic at an understaffed hospital. When he was discharged again, he was able to get back on his old crew as a roughneck with Texaco.

The remainder of the interview is spent discussing photos.

- 01 Texaco crew boat on water.
- 02 Oilfield.
- 03 Ed Henry's dad on barge, 1930's
- 04 Closeup of barge.
- 05 "Oil Calendar."
- 06 Group photo on rig.
- 07 Workers on rig.
- 08 Duplicate of workers on rig.
- 09 Group photo on rig.
- 10 Group photo on rig.
- 11 Workers on rig.

Merian and Ed Henry

Houma, LA

July 15, 2003

Interviewed by: Jessica Piekielek

University of Arizona

JP003

Ethnographic Preface:

Jim Sell had interviewed Ed Henry on an earlier trip to Houma and suggested that I get in touch with Merian to see if she might be willing to do an interview as well. I called the Henrys and after clarifying that I wanted to talk with Merian, she agreed to do an interview. They have a home in Summerfield, on the west side of Houma, in a quiet neighborhood. Although I had explained to Merian and Ed both that I was interested in Merian's perspective, Ed stayed for the interview and contributed as well. Merian prefaced her interview by saying that she didn't really know much about the oil field, because Ed rarely talked about work while he was home. She said that only recently has she learned more about Ed's job and experiences since he has begun telling stories to his grandchildren.

Merian Henry was born in New Orleans, then moved to Houma as a child. She married Ed Henry who worked for Texaco. Merian Henry received her bachelor's degree in 1958, as part of the first class to receive a four year degree from Nicholls State University. She taught seventh and eighth grade for 30 years, first at the Dulac Indian School, then at Bourg Elementary, and finally in Houma.

Summary:

Personal: Merian Henry was born in New Orleans, then moved to Houma as a child. Met Ed on blind date; married at 24; was considered an "old maid" when she married; had two kids.

Career: Merian Henry received her bachelor's degree from Nicholls State University in 1958, first class to complete four year degree at Nicholls. She taught seventh and eighth grade for 30 years; then worked in real estate 15 years

Dulac Indian School: Taught first four years (until 1956) on temporary certificate at Dulac Indian School; school went to 8th grade, no high school for Indians until 1965; taught 6th -8th grade in one classroom, approx. 35 students; had hand-me-down text books; 1 principal and 6 teachers; stove pipe stove; teachers drove to school in one car; kids traveled to school on bus; first graders (no kindergarten) came speaking only French; nuns taught catechism in school; Merian supervised the 4-H club but club could not go to Achievement Day in Houma because of segregation

Life in Dulac: Dulac Indian children and parents friendly and generous, would bring home shrimp, fish from families; parents worked at shrimp factory, in oil, on boats, as trappers; sometimes kids would go trapping with families, gone for 6 months of the year, kids would miss

their confirmations because bishop only came to area once every three years; families lived in wooden frame houses, sometimes 2-3 families living together. Methodist mission was across the street; they provided medical care, health and hygiene education, had daycare for small children,

Bourg Elementary: Then taught at "country school," Bourg Elementary; believes that unequal education in South had more to do with city-country school divisions than racial divisions; country schools had more temporary certified teachers, "city schools" had newer desks, newer text books, more sports;

Managing career and family: Returned to teaching when position opened at school around the corner from house; kids stayed with her mother and deaf sister; later had someone come to house to watch kids; then found nanny, Lois, to watch children and clean house, nanny stayed with family for 8 years. Having both parents working, with Ed on 7 and 7 shifts, might seem difficult, but Merian loved teaching.

Scheduling: Ed and Merian liked 7 and 7 schedule, when first married before they had kids, they could both have their own lives, especially because they married later than others, they were used to having their own lives, Merian could have time to do what she liked, visit her family and girlfriends; when daughter was born got harder because was hard for daughter to say goodbye every seven days, would cry; Ed would have schedule for whole year, printed by a local bank, could plan holidays, vacation and travel during summer when Merian was not teaching; Ed's friend came up with idea of having bank print yearly schedules for oil men in 1960s; Merian couldn't call for "trivial" things while Ed was out, but could call for emergencies.

Changes and impacts: Merian felt oil industry positively impacted community; brought "top echelon" of state to Houma; hired local people for lay jobs, who could move up if interested in learning; influx of new families brought grocery stores; new families had specific academic expectations for kids in schools, were better educated, parents got involved in PTA, extra-curricular activities, women from other areas were more assertive than traditional French women and helped improve school system; if the oil industry hadn't come, Houma would still be a small town with maybe a little bit of tourism. At first there was resentment within community about outsiders, because they didn't understand French people, but this quickly gave way. Merian thinks parish did not have strict enough conservation laws to prevent the industry from "raping" the land.

Cliff Hernandez

New Iberia, LA

May 1, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG007

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Cliff Hernandez was referred to me by Jimmy Hebert. I met him at his house just outside of New Iberia. His wife Emily was there as well, and after the interview we ate lunch. They are a great couple, and Cliff is a great storyteller. He worked for Shell most of his life, and he has a brother up in White Castle who did much the same. There are some great quotes here about a guy advancing by pimping out his wife to the bosses, a good discussion of the environment and the oil patch, and a description of the work going on in East Bay.

Cliff was born in White Castle, Louisiana. His father ran the ferry across the Mississippi, but Cliff got in to the oil industry the first chance he got. He started working in 1947. He worked as a driller for various contractors, including Harris Drilling, and then finally got on with Shell in 1963. He did a short stint in production, but returned to drilling for the rest of his career. His work for Shell also carried him to Cameroon and Brazil.

#### Summary:

**Early Years:** He was born in White Castle, his father ran the Mississippi ferry, and he started as a roustabout in 1947 for a contract driller. We go over his early work history, his work with the Laughlin brothers, during which he was injured, and then about getting hired on with Shell. He worked 34 years with Shell.

**Roughnecking:** Cliff describes roughnecking on Shell Rig 1, what production was like at that time, the practice of flaring gas, and some of the production accidents that occurred. He tells a long story about that.

**Company Loyalty:** talks about the 10 year and over parties Shell used to host. Then we talk more about drilling, and how Shell shifted its efforts to drilling. He talks about some of the bossy bosses he worked for over the years, and how one goes about fixing a blowout. At some point, he got a little frustrated with his boss, and ended up working overseas. He worked in Africa and Brazil. He describes a blowout in Africa. He didn't want to work 28 and 28.

**Experience and Labor:** Cliff talks about working in Brazil, the pay cuts that were going around at the time, the value of having experienced bosses and the lack of experience common with some of them. He talks about running people off, the connection between cooperation and safety, the quality of the labor pool, the attitude of incoming workers, and some of the bad hands that would show up.

Labor and Family: impact of the local labor pool on the enterprise of oil drilling; his sons also involved in oil industry.

Drilling Rigs: He talks about steam rigs, eating lunch on the rig, he describes various Shell Drilling Rigs (7,8,9,10,11) and he provides a long description of Shell Rig 1.

Safety: We talk about safety and awareness for a while, the expendability of labor, the environment, accidents. He says that a lot of the bays out there are filling in. He talks about erosion, and what's going to happen when the levee breaks. We talk about the bust. He mentions some photographs, and then we talk about accidents in the oil field.

Weeks Island: he talks about the history of Weeks Island, the process of recycling gas, Shell's activity in East Bay. Then we talk about White Castle for a little while.

Paul Hingle

Port Sulphur, LA

March 12, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM031

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Burt Turlich's neighbor, Paul Hingle, came over to borrow a ladder from Burt during an interview for the history project (see TM030). Paul mentioned that he had worked for Phillips for 20 years, and agreed to be interviewed the next day. The interview, and subsequent talk after the tape ended, contains very frank observation of working for a company undergoing the downsizing process - Paul is rather bitter about it. He also discusses community and politics in Port Sulphur, and some of the changes occurring after the schools were integrated.

Paul Hingle, Jr. was born and raised in Plaquemines Parish and is now 50 years old. His father owned a ballroom and a little hotel right down the road from where Paul now lives. After high school, Paul started working for the parish, then became a commercial fisherman, doing that for about nine years. He then worked in the oil field for Phillips until he got laid off in June of 2002, for reasons that he still can't understand. He was looking forward to retiring with the company at age 55. For Phillips, he was a boat captain and field operator, working 7 and 7 shifts. Subsequent to getting laid off, he took a 7 and 7 job with a contract company operating a gas tank battery. He got married after high school, divorced, remarried, and is now a single parent.

#### Summary:

Jobs: parish water works for a year; uncle in tug business pushing grain barges; became commercial fisherman for a living, not part-time like most fishermen now; fished rod and reel for speckled trout and redfish when you used to be able to sell them; sold shrimp to shrimp docks; shrimp industry dying due to ponds and overseas shrimp; fishermen always complaining; this year worked with friend after I got laid off; I have worked oysters in Texas and Mississippi

Vietnamese: came 20 years ago at least; government took care of them; they work hard, like Slovonians; when my son in high school, kids started trouble, but it was a fad; stay to themselves

Oysters: I bedded on reefs owned by "Tackos;" fished public grounds

Politics: too much politics down here, frustrates me; it's like who do you know

Crewboats: daddy owned one; I got hired on with company that used to be owned by John W. Mecum; I was boat captain; then 16 years with Phillips; running in inland waters, 20-minute run; now I work for a contract company at tank battery

Phillips: got rid of offshore properties, now mainly overseas except for the field here; sent newsletters, but it was waste of paper

Schedule and pay: 7/7; I enjoy my time off; always in woods hunting in winter; my relief lived in Houma, but most of the rest were locals; Viet. crew did painting, but they weren't from here; we got cost of living raises, but contract company I work for doesn't give them; lots of frustration with Phillips, due to stress; high turnover of supervisors; want to go back to crewboats but scared of fog on rivers, don't trust radar; big boats will run over you

Company: laying off but still keeping supervisors; don't know why I was laid off; consolidated from 4 facilities to 1; boy that took my place had to go to school to get license; getting laid off changed my life so much; they laid people off who had 28 years with company; got rid of own roustabouts, now use contractors; I was operator, maintaining, repairing wells, doing paperwork; Phillips would do workover in winters; Phillips bought out BP refinery even though they were laying people off to save money;

Hunting: lease in Alabama; too dangerous to hunt on public land, too many people who don't know what they're doing

Contract companies: don't offer much, no raises; if you're not satisfied, we'll find someone else; boring work on tank battery, stay there 7 days, not good living conditions

Oyster leases: much of it is to get money from oil and pipeline companies; make fast money quick and become rich; best year I had was when river was highest; oil spill stays on top of water, won't kill oysters; Phillips bought out leases around well so they wouldn't get sued if anything happened

Land loss: marsh almost gone; freshwater diversions too late

Changes in community: people moving out because of the schools; started integration when I graduated; sent my boy to Catholic school to 8th grade, then to Buras high; Port Sulphur High is 95% black; when Freeport shut down, big change; nothing for kids any more.

Robert Hirsch

Navasota, TX

November 26, 2003

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS039

### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Robert Hirsch went to Texas College of Mines at Texas Western (later University of Texas at El Paso), and briefly worked for Magnolia in 1953. He went back to school and graduated with degrees in physics and geology. He worked for Mobil on seismic crews and geophysical research in his early career. Later, he worked in various capacities throughout Mobil including exploration manager in 1972. He left Mobil in 1976 to join Superior. In 1980, he left Superior to form Conquest Exploration Company where he stayed until 1990.

### Summary:

This interview covers the evolution bright spot technology (hydrocarbon indicators) in great detail. It also covered his early experiences on seismic crews, various state and federal leases, partnerships with other corporations, and a discussion of Mobile Bay. He also has significant information on geophysical contractors.

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Fannie Hobbs

Bayou Vista, LA

July 23, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA109

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Fannie Hobbs at the Morgan City Archives when I was reviewing back issues of the Morgan City Review. As I talked with Fannie about the offshore history study, she informed me that she had worked for several oilfield companies. I asked her if she would be willing to be interviewed, and she consented. I met her at her home for the interview.

Fannie Hobbs was originally from Texas, but she moved to Morgan City, Louisiana in 1963 when her husband, Barney, got a new job as Port Steward for a catering company. At the time, Fannie and Barney had four children and another one on the way. Barney was responsible for providing crews for seven rigs but soon his responsibilities grew and he was in charge of 53 rigs, a situation that Fannie is certain contributed to his massive heart attack in the late 1960s. Because of her husband's disability, Fannie had to go to work to support the family. She worked for Avondale Shipyards, Diamond M Drilling Company, Cactus International, and several other companies. She joined the Desk and Derrick Club in 1970 and served as the chapter president in 1980-1981.

#### Summary:

Employment history: FH started working when her youngest child entered school because her husband's health was deteriorating; Started at Avondale Shipyards (1970-71); Was the first woman to work in the Purchasing Department; Got a job at Diamond M Drilling Company, taking a pay cut to spend more time with her family (1971-75); Negotiated higher pay, insurance for her whole family and moving costs when a friend asked her to help open an office for Progress Drilling in Lafayette (1975-76); Took a course in the Fundamentals of Petroleum; Worked at Cactus International as Insurance Administrator, Personnel Manager, and assistant to the Safety Director (1976-1985); Employees at Cactus were 'one big family'; Worked at Sea Horse, a boat company, as Insurance Administrator (1986-87); Did archival research for Lela Lehman (1989-92)

Husband's employment history: Worked for a seismograph crew; Had a small café; Worked for J. L. Richardson company as a steward, took over for the Port Steward (In charge of catering for offshore rigs, including groceries, linens, personnel like stewards and galley hands), eventually became the District Manager for the Gulf Coast

Husband working offshore: FH's husband worked 14 and 7, commuting from Louisiana to Texas; Move to Morgan City; She had to be father and mother; didn't know anyone in town; Ladies' Petroleum Club; Helped her husband

Labor: Sometimes it was hard to find a crew, especially during holidays

Women working: FH was hired as a receptionist at Avondale, but also had to check in crews, extend purchase orders and tie them up, answer three phone lines and screen calls for the Purchasing Agent; No exceptions were made for her as the only woman in the office; Men were very helpful; Hiring her was a kind of experiment, they hired more women later; FH worked as a Purchasing Agent at Diamond M, which was closer to her home; There were six women working there; FH regrets not having been able to spend more time with her family; Her husband was always considered the head of the household, even when she was the only one working

Social networks: FH met people in the community mainly through her husband's business contacts; Joined Desk and Derrick in 1970 (for women who are employed in the oil industry or related industries), held offices as Corresponding Secretary, Program Chairman, President; Stories from their skits

Progress Drilling: Helped to open branch office in Scott (suburb of Lafayette); Main offices were in Houston; FH set up the office, hired two girls, in charge of \$5000 petty cash account for moving expenses, helped Safety Director determine which crews would get safety work; Semester-long class in Fundamentals of Petroleum

Cactus: At that time (1976), jobs were plentiful; Employees were one big family; Worked as Insurance Administrator, Assistant Personnel, Assistant to the Safety Director, did waste surveys for different companies, made arrangements for certification classes for drillers, derrickmen, etc., coordinated evacuations during hurricane season; Awards for safety; Stories about helping workers and their families to claim insurance money

Economic downturn: FH was the last woman to be laid off at Cactus because she had such varied responsibilities; Cactus closed their office in Morgan City and moved to Lafayette for six months before they closed that office too; 125 families in the community were affected by the office closing; Lots of families were in debt because they had overspent during the oil boom and then were unable to make payments; Lots of people moved away in search of work

Changes in Morgan City: Rapid growth from the 1960's to the 1980's; After 1985, there was still growth, but not in the oil industry; Empty offices; Serial murders in the 1980's; Even during the oil boom there wasn't much crime, just alcohol-related problems

Herb Holdridge

Houston, TX

August 4, 2006

Interviewed by: Jason P. Theriot

University of Houston/History International

MMS071

### Ethnographic Preface:

Herb Holdridge grew up in Galveston, Texas, where his father worked at Todd's Shipyard. Herb joined the Navy V-12 program at University of Texas during World War II and majored in chemical engineering. He started at Amoco in Texas City in 1949 and worked in R&D for 10 years before moving into personnel. He retired from the refinery business in the 1980s.

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D. Scott Holland

Houston, TX

February 3, 2003

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS025

#### Ethnographic Preface:

David Scott Holland, Sr. was a geologist for Pennzoil Oil. Mr. Holland was born in 1931 in Arkansas. He attended school in Abilene, TX. He joined the Air Force and served in the Korean War. He graduated from the University of Texas in 1957 with a degree in geology. He worked for the Ohio Company/Marathon for ten years before he joined Pennzoil in 1967. In 1968, he headed up a major study for Pennzoil of offshore prospects in the Gulf of Mexico. He worked for POGO as head of exploration and then in 1977 became exploration vice president for Pennzoil. In 1984, he was made president of Pennzoil E&P. He retired in 1990.

#### Summary:

Interview starts with biographical background and Holland's move from Marathon to Pennzoil. Discusses exploration experience offshore Alaska. Role in heading offshore Louisiana study group in Lafayette beginning in 1968. Strategy of examining long Tertiary trends extending from onshore to offshore. Had premonitions of bright spots, first in Alaska and then in the Gulf of Mexico. Secretive nature of the work. Stories about formation and structure of POGO. Stories about the 1970 sale, bid meetings, tracts won, and approach to drilling and developing the tracts. Story about the first discovery in Eugene Island (either 270 or 330). Talks about 1972 Louisiana sale and 1973 Texas sale, where Pennzoil overbid. Creating PLATO. Spinning off POGO. Discusses key figures: Hugh and Bill Liedtke, Bill Gibson. Importance of relationships. Mentions Pennzoil and API offshore PR films. More discussion of technology, geology, and strategy of playing trends.

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Bob Howard

Houston, TX

May 18, 2000

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

SOC033

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Bob Howard graduated from Rice in 1959 with a degree in Mechanical engineering. He began working for Shell that same year. In 1963 he became a facilities engineer in New Orleans for the Delta Division. He continued working for that position until 1971 when he became off shore production division manager. In 1973 he worked in the pinnacle reef play in Michigan. He then was made GM of mid continent in 1975. In 1985 Shell made him VP of New Orleans area, and in 1991 he was made VP of domestic E&P. He retired in 1995 He had a strong impact in the Michigan play and CO<sub>2</sub> project in West Texas.

#### Summary:

Interview covers three main areas, the Michigan play, CO<sub>2</sub> project, and the move to deep water. Michigan conversation includes geologic issues and the overarching narrative, but he adds information about gas pressure and fires in the area. He also mentioned some information about Pigeon River. He explains the CO<sub>2</sub> gas project in detail including information about archeology. The move to deep water is a little freer ranging, but he discusses the technology behind the move and major successes.

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B.B. Hughson

New Orleans, LA

June 26, 2002

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS009

### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. B.B. Hughson graduated from UC-Berkeley and joined Shell Oil in 1942 as an assistant seismologist. He worked as a seismologist and geophysicist in Shell's New Orleans area, running the marine geophysics group in the late 1950s and early 1960s. He worked in various Louisiana divisions, but mostly in the marine group, until he retired in 1985.

### Summary:

Good but somewhat disjointed interview discussing early offshore seismic operations. Mr. Hughson talks about Shell's work in gravity surveying and the company's discoveries of the big fields in the South Pass area. Interesting discussion of triangulation methods of determining positions offshore. Stories about geophysical work for 1962 federal lease sale. Talks about various mapmaking tasks and various people for whom he worked. Story about making the map for Auger.

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Steve Huttman

Galveston, TX

August 23, 2006

Interviewed by: Jason P. Theriot

University of Houston/History International

MMS072

### Ethnographic Preface:

Steve Huttman spent 22 years in the U.S. Coast Guard, serving various capacities in maritime security and rescue. He moved to Houston in 1998 and began at G&H Towing as a mate on a harbor tug. He is currently the Port Captain for G&H Towing, a harbor tug business that operates a fleet of 28 harbor tugs from Corpus Christi to Freeport and the Houston/Galveston Ship Channel. The fleet performs ship assist, particularly for the pilots bringing in large oil tankers and container ships.

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Tom Hynson

Schriever, LA

October 9, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA065

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Tom Hynson by Willie Brown. Tom and Willie dove together for many years; Tom told me that Willie was one of the best divers in the business. Tom, too, had a long and successful diving career. When I called, he was happy to set up an interview, and we ended up spending an entire morning talking about his work and then looking at photos. We selected some of the photos to scan and did a photo interview after the regular interview was concluded.

Tom was born in Marshall, Texas in 1935. He moved to Louisiana in 1956 to work as a rigger for McDermott. His cousin was a rig builder, and Tom worked with him for a short while. However, he discovered he did not like high places and that divers made more money, so he went to California in 1957 to go to diving school. He returned to Louisiana and began his diving career working for Don Inman and Brown & Root out of Buras. He also did freelance diving and stayed in the business until 1986 when he became a deckhand and spent his next ten years working on boats.

#### Summary:

Early history: born May 18, 1935 in Marshall, TX; came to southern Louisiana in 1956; started working as a rigger for McDermott offshore; went to diving school in CA in 1957; first job as diver for Brown & Root out of Buras, LA; worked mainly in shallow water of East Bay; used Desco masks, surplus stuff; communication via hand signals; F&L out of New Orleans made radio, but short battery life; used Jack Brown and deep sea suits, war surplus; started getting Japanese suits; bought one in 1960; far superior to Navy suit; started diving on gas about 1963 or 1964; oilfield was in its infancy; lots of people almost killed; story of getting oxygen poisoning, convulsions

Why diving: was rig builder for McDermott; didn't like high places; went to work on derrick barges; divers said they were making lots of money; saw articles about diving school in skin diving magazines; got out of diving school, bought a compressor and hose; first dive under tug boat in Thibodaux; worked for Don Inman when he was in Buras; he went bust; went to Brown & Root, back to Inman till he went bust again; then freelance diving

Changes: equipment improved; never thought about quitting, but didn't think I'd live this long; tremendous recession in '58 and then in '86; quit diving in '86 and went to work on the boats; let the younger ones have it; worked as deckhand and mate; never ran as captain because hard of hearing; worked for Offshore Express for a few years; worked for Bob Smith; worked on the Galveston, it sunk four days after I left it

Differences among diving companies: all about the same; some had less work; insurance had a lot to do with it; had to have insurance to work for oil companies; Merrihue didn't have insurance so worked out of the rivers; Mike Hughes and Johnny Johnson got money from someone in Oklahoma, had hold harmless clause; insurance an issue when Hilda came through in '64; by '66 or '67 diving companies wanted divers to just work for them and not freelance; companies had to come up with \$2500 for every diver hired; wanted a stable group of people; diving companies could not get insurance; insurance companies would put diving companies in a pool and draw; ended up companies got bigger

Diving community: when I started there were only 36 people diving, we all knew each other; I knew people in the west, not the New Orleans group; I never hung out with divers, not part of the drinking crowd; specialization came later; no two jobs ever the same; rigging helpful, learning to burn iron; those who could not work would weed themselves out; when freelance had to provide own tender; only one diving chamber at the time - Ronald Daspit had it; if were diving deep enough would get chamber from big companies; Al Warriner and Bill Cunningham in Houma got chambers; Bill was one-man shop, ran his insurance through Delta Ironworks; Don ran his through AquaTerr

Working: for Brown & Root, I'd get tow sack full of canned goods and go out on barge; found someplace to sleep; anybody your tender, nearly killed twice; stories of other divers who had problems; played with the fish; rub the bellies of the big jewfish; will try to eat you at certain times of the year; most of the time down there diver can't see nothing; Willie Brown is the best diver I've ever known; good diver can't be claustrophobic; not scared of fish; those who can do the job are usually the quietest

More about work: worst job was when everything went wrong; working for J&J - tells story; everybody gets the bends once in a while; the 170 foot tables are not too good; Handelman Brothers adapted the tables one time, hooked up with WorldWide Divers; people wouldn't work for them, so they straightened up; wanted to squeeze more work out of divers; Handleman left to go to CalDive on west coast; first west coast divers I seen were Associated Divers; then the Todd boys; we got along okay with some of them; they never brought their whole companies out here; were around when you needed extra bodies; they worked deep water, for Ocean Systems - Union Carbide - at the time; when gas came in anyone could work deep; P.D. Dale outfit dove on gas first in the Gulf, nearly killed himself; Navy already using gas but hadn't done much with it in a work situation; gas made you cold, even in chamber

Equipment: were using recirculators, had soda sorb to suck up CO2; had Jack Brown dry suits; tried to wear wool clothes underneath; first wetsuits in early 1960's, real thin; had to use can of powder to put on; Navy started using Penguin with Seals team, first good wet suit; then everyone started making them; bell divers used hot water suits; would read in chambers; food did not taste the same; describes putting up jacket for ODECO; remember first jackup rig in 80-90 feet of water; Kerr-McGee had a semisubmersible; worked on Mr. Charlie; built one rig on creosote pilings

Rig building: cousin (Raymond Hall) worked lots of land jobs; McDermott had two rig building crews; then three; describes putting up 128 foot and 140 foot rigs

Working on barges: in early days barge captains could not tell depth, did not understand diving; worked for one who told me, if you're going to decompress we can't use you; got along pretty well if knew the crew; later got to where did not know anybody; worked and lived off boats and barges; for Brown & Root, no living quarters, used to sleep in wheelbarrow, had to bring our own food

Diving and danger: worked with Willie Brown on chlorine job in Natches; never thought about quitting because that's the way I made my living; never did diving for fun; Willie hurt by cable, I thought he was dead; never been on a job where anybody killed, just nearly killed; had stuff blow up on me; could tell with young ones if they were going to make it

Community: moved to Schriever in 1960; just trees, no running water or gas; more people moved in

Women: first woman I saw offshore was in 1980 or '82; cook; no living quarters earlier, lived on old quarterboat in the '50s and early '60s

Accidents and pollution: pipelines burst all the time; one time company paid news commentator to say a Greek ship spilled oil; in old days ran the rigs with steam; 1961 put out oil well fire started when ship hit platform and knocked it over; never out in the Gulf during a hurricane; was in the water off Buras when Betsy hit; had to hang off in the water on the way up (decompression stops); got seasick; had filled suit with water so it would not pinch so bad, forgot it then weighed 500 pounds, couldn't climb out

Communication: used to make our own, in early '60s; had Navy phone, used batteries up too fast; F&L made radio with mercury batteries, went out fast, did not use much; used hand signals; have set jet sleds with hand signals; lots of people killed on jet sleds

Types of jobs: 1964 storm knocked down a bunch of rigs; had to put choke on them while lying down; used whatever had to kill wells; after hurricanes everyone lives well for a while; worked average of 110 days a year; some years way more; could not get permanent job in off times because had to be ready to go out; respond quickly to calls for search and rescue after rig and helicopter accidents; never knew anybody who made money off salvage; would do it all over again, have had a good life; 1997 inducted into Texas Divers Hall of Fame (showed framed certificate)

Union: were going to start divers' union about 1958; me and Merrihue, all 36 divers in area, went; voted people to represent us; Buck Frolich, Eric S. Isyak, and two more; they fixed it so only they would get rich; said diver had to be in the business ten years to have a company; would set prices, were going to give diving test, have different levels such as journeyman, master diver; later went to New Orleans for another effort, but people could not get together, everyone had a different idea; those meetings had to do with safety; insurance companies really got the safety

stuff going, don't like to pay out; they got Ben Miller, too; he came around in the 60s, lived in Gibson when he started making his hats

Career and diving helmets: dove for 29 years; didn't tell many people because lots of people think you're crazy; lots of divers were drunks; worked with Ben Miller's brother; Ben moved to Texas; Bob Radcliff started making Rat hat in 1966; Savoie already had his; would loved to have a Savoie hat, but cost \$1,200 at the time; Swindell hat was like having a slop jar on your head; Rodney Crews had air compressor business for a while; remember when Mike Hughes was as poor as I was; he had an education when most people in the diving business did not; now most have college education.

H.L. Jackson

Houma, LA

January 30, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB037

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met H.L. Jackson at the Exxon retirees' luncheon with Andrew Gardner. After our talk he was one of the first ones to come up and ask to be interviewed. He said he'd been involved in the oil field for a long time and had a lot of stories to tell. He and his wife Shirley both talk a lot about what it was like to live in the camps for so long in such a little town. Their descriptions of community and their teenage daughters' lives are vivid and full of details.

H.L. was born in Texas in 1923. His father had worked for Humble in the early 1900's. After his military career (he was in Okinawa in 1945) he worked for contract companies until he could find a stable job. In 1947 he began working for Humble on a drilling rig offshore. In 1955 he was transferred to Grand Isle. H.L. and his wife Shirley raised 2 daughters down there. H.L. Jackson retired in 1983.

#### Summary:

Background: H.L. Jackson was born in Alameda, Texas in 1923. His father worked for Humble since 1917 on a steam rig - they were transferred to Humble, TX. In 1941, H.L. graduated from high school, attended Baylor for a year or two before he was drafted into the Navy. When he returned in 1945, he worked for several different contractors. In 1947, his father got him a position with Humble on a drilling rig.

Drilling Rig: It was a 6-man crew, worked five days on and 2 off. There was a lot of competition between drillers. They fired boilers, worked the derricks as "rotary derrickmen"; had "clutch foot" so bad.

Grand Isle: In 1955, he was transferred to Grand Isle. He and his wife raised both of their daughters in the camps. Humble would furnish pilings and wood and people would build their own houses there. Exxon sponsored the construction of a Baptist Church in the camps. A bunch of their friends and neighbors built a Methodist Church there. He worked as a driller for awhile, a compressor operator in production, and then as the head of a warehouse for drill tools.

Recession: Oilfields first started going down in the 70's.

Retirement: H.L. Jackson retired in 1983.

Pierre Jackson

Berwick, LA

June 8, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG029

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Pierre Jackson is an African-American male in his early 60's. He was recommended to me by his former boss at Texaco, Bill Williams. In the years prior to the possibility of Blacks working in the oil fields, Pierre was a shoe-shiner at a local barber shop. He was well known by many around town, and when the time came for Texaco to start hiring Blacks, they brought him in. He wasn't willing to directly address the difficulties of being Black in the oil field. He knew most of the fellows he worked with from his days at the barber shop, and he notes that he didn't go out there to start trouble - he went out there to work. He also was injured on the job, and although some of his friends tried to talk him into suing the company, he didn't. He provides a description of the conditions of this work in the early 1960's for various contractors and yards in the Morgan City area, and loading mud offshore. We talk a little bit about what it was like managing roustabouts as a black man, and we also talk about the quality of labor that worked at the plant in the later years. He also describes the difficulty of being a family man with an oil field schedule.

Pierre Jackson was born in 1934 and raised in the greater Morgan City area. He worked at a barbershop and in a variety of capacities related to the oilfield prior to his employment with Texaco in 1967. Once employed with Texaco, he worked at the Bateman Lake plant and then moved to company's new cryogenic plant in 1973. He was promoted several times and was a member of the local union. He was one of the first African-Americans to work in the oilfield.

#### Summary:

**Early Life:** Pierre grew up in Berwick. He was born in 1934. As a young man, he worked in the barbershop shining shoes, and he remembers the early oilmen coming in and talking about the rigs offshore. He talks a little bit about the fights between the shrimpers and the oil industry.

**Starting Oil Work:** He did a variety of odd jobs in the oil industry before Blacks could go offshore. They would load mud onto the rigs, for example. He went in to the service for two years, worked more odd jobs, and finally got on with Texaco in 1967. Before that, he remembers seeing blowouts. Once he started working for Texaco at the plant, all he did was cut grass for three months. He thought that's all there was to the oil field.

**First Job:** His first job was at the Bateman Lake plant, and then he worked at the new cryogenic plant in 1973. He made various promotions, and was never bumped back. As he remembers, he was one of the first Blacks to bust out in oil. He talks about how he was hired, and he notes that he doesn't really feel he was ever treated poorly.

Companies: Before Texaco, he worked for Seward Sea Craft as an electrician. But the pay was better at Texaco. He talks about some of his different bosses and the difference they made in whether it was good to work in the oil industry or not.

Gas Plant Infrastructure: He talks about the infrastructure of the gas plant, the various gas lines through which gas for sale was piped out, and where it went. He says that he was treated well - he didn't go out there to start trouble. He just worked hard.

Union: He talks about the union. He says that even those who didn't want to pay the dues always wanted to know when the next raise was coming down the pike. They did more than negotiate pay - they also worked out the schedules. There was a union representative who would come by from time to time and tell them what was going on with the other local chapters. Even today, it's difficult for unions to make it in the oil industry. They watch you very closely if you're a union guy.

Duties of Head Operator: He talks about being a head operator and the duties of the job. He talks about his particular attitude toward the men who worked for him. The quality of labor changed as the years passed - guys didn't want to work as hard. There were some contractors who worked out at the plant, too.

Offshore Pest Control: After he retired, he went to work for an offshore pest control service, and that was the first time he got to ride in a helicopter. He got to see what it was like on the offshore rigs, too. Then we talk about the gas plant a little bit, and he says that when he was working offshore for the pest control company, all the hands were scared about the impact of the mergers.

Company Loyalty: We talk about loyalty to the company. It used to be that when you worked for a big company, you knew you had a job for life, but it's not like that anymore. Everybody's worried all the time. And now, with contract labor, they don't have to pay benefits. Pierre feels he was blessed.

Work Schedules: We talk about all the different schedules he worked, how difficult it is to raise a family on those schedules, and how difficult it was working the night shift.

Environment: We talk about the environment. In the old days, they would flare gas all the time, but now the state regulates it. And they're always watching for spills, too. He recalls some of the situations he faced with the regulators.

Mud Barges: We talk about his work on the mud barges offshore when he was a young man, and he recalls what he saw offshore.

Blacks and the Oil Field: The key to his success in the oilfield, he thinks, is that he took a chance and could handle the responsibility. You just have to work hard out there. And it changed the Black community around here. There was more money for people. Nowadays, everybody wants to be a bookworm, but he remembers the college boys coming out there and really messing things up. But he also got some training through Texaco. He talks about two other Black guys who came in to Texaco the same time as him, but things didn't work out so well for them. He

also remembers that they wouldn't let him work with the other Black guy out there. We talk about some of the other Black guys that might still be around, and then he remembers his retirement party, and we talk about that. We end by talking about some of the other folks who are still around

Jesse des Jacques

Lafayette, LA

October 8, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW025

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Jesse des Jacques was born in 1934 in south Louisiana. His father was a truck driver. He joined the Navy in 1954 and when he got out in 1959, he went to work for Halliburton. He started out as a cook and then took a job as a marine service operator (MSO). He worked for Halliburton for 26 years before taking an early retirement in 1986. In all his working years, he never had a land job.

#### Summary:

Early life: born in 1934; father was a truck driver; in Navy '54-59.

Career: through a friend, got a job as a cook for Halliburton in '59, working out of Venice; transferred to cement department, becoming a marine service operator (MSO or "cementer").

MSO: did a number of jobs (e.g., cement jobs, squeeze jobs), but mainly did pumping jobs and mixed cement; describes pumping jobs, cement plugs, and other elements of his job.

Working offshore: worked a seven-and-seven schedule, but offshore was on call 24 hours a day; always had to be ready; how long jobs lasted depended on the type of job it was and what trouble was encountered. Spent free time playing cards (Pinochle, Boureé), watching TV, and sleeping. Consequences of not being ready when needed or messing up - "run off" or suspension with no pay; take samples of dry cement and test water to cover self if get in trouble. Assignments to rigs.

Slowdown: really busy in the 60s; things slowed down in early 80s; by '85, they were laying people off and offering early retirement; scared he would lose his job, so retired at 51 years of age.

Responsibility: as MSO, he was in charge, so if something went wrong it was on him; reporting and explaining goof-ups (he had to do this about three times).

Technology: improvements in technology made jobs easier.

Food: offshore, fed four meals a day; overall, food was pretty good.

Women and minorities: began seeing women offshore in late 70s; first women he saw were four Black roustabouts; many of the women quit, but some stayed; were expected to work like a man.

Black men started coming offshore in the mid-60s; never saw any problems between Black and White workers.

David Jefferson

New Iberia, LA

January 7, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA087

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to David Jefferson by Rose and Chuck Joseph. David was one of the first blacks hired to work offshore, and he had a very successful career with Texaco. After several attempts to coordinate our schedules, we arranged for an interview on January 7. David's wife was sick in bed with the flu at the time, and during the interview he commented that he, too, had the flu. He was nevertheless very animated throughout the interview and had lots of information to share.

David finished high school and went to work for Martin Chemical because his wife's father worked there. He was laid off after one and a half years, drew unemployment for six weeks, and then got on with Allied Van Lines in Lafayette. He drove for about a year and then joined a friend who was working for Bienville Furniture out of New Iberia. He stayed with that job about six years and was then able to get a job with Texaco in 1967. He was hired as a land roustabout and was the only black person on his crew. He learned that he would have to work on rigs to advance within the company and then requested a transfer to a rig. A month and a half later he was working on rigs, and within five years he had advanced first to derrickman and then to relief driller. Soon he advanced to driller, and in 1980 he went offshore as a drilling supervisor. He returned to work on land in the early 1990s when he was sent to West Texas to supervise a crew there. He retired in 1999 as a drilling supervisor for the offshore district.

#### Summary:

Occupational history: Started in the oilfield on September 1, 1967; married with three children; was working as a long-distance truck driver, saw a guy who worked for Texaco and decided to get with a company that paid retirement; applied for an office job but it was taken by another black guy; was hired as a land roustabout; duties included cutting grass, maintenance, painting the Christmas trees and around tank batteries; was the only black person; guys ranged from 18-41 years old, all still roustabouts; said you have to work on rigs to advance with Texaco; asked if could transfer to rigs; a month and a half later was on rigs working 6 and 6; started roughnecking, advanced to derrickman after a year; after 3-4 years was relief driller; after six years regular drillers' job; went offshore as drilling supervisor in June 1980; back to land work in the early 1990s when on loan to West Texas district; worked 7 and 7, would break on Thursdays; worked 32 years with Texaco; was drilling supervisor for the offshore district for the last 19 years

Work setting: On most rigs was the only black; lots of people from Mississippi working offshore because not a lot of work in Mississippi; Pool Offshore, Diamond M, and ODECO had blacks and whites; Circle Bar and Quarrel hired only whites; never had any problems; would

communicate well; they respected my position; even in 1967 when started, wife would worry that we were working in the cane fields; I heard things I did not like but overlooked them; was never given an assignment others wouldn't get; was passed over for advancement from time to time, but so were the whites; no way of knowing where I was on the pay scale

Experience of work: Retired April 1, 1999; like my job, making good money, but figured it was time to stop; worked under some fair people; learn as much as you can and keep your eyes open; out of high school went to Martin Chemical, wife's father worked there; was laid off after one and a half years; drew unemployment for six weeks; truck driver needed help unloading his truck; got on with Allied Van Lines in Lafayette; drove about a year, joined friend working for Bienville Furniture out of New Iberia, stayed about six years; then got on with Texaco, got my friend on later; work on land was too slow, preferred rigs; offshore was Drilling and Production Foreman, later dropped Production; four districts, worked in all four; started 1967 in New Iberia; 1970 - Harvey; 1975 - Houma; till 1980 when went offshore; later cancelled all the districts; differences among districts; people in production stayed in the same district, but on the drilling rigs would go from one to another; working offshore would fly from Morgan City to Galveston to Matagorda Island

First day offshore: Didn't know the terminology for a lot of things; everything looked big, which it was; inland stay in camp on pilings; started with 6 and 6; inland would drive to camp, eat a meal, catch a boat to rig, in New Iberia maybe 20-30 minute boat ride; in Harvey sometimes an hour boat ride; pay not good, depended on whether working weekends or not, no overtime; offshore went to 7 and 7, pay always the same; got 6 hours overtime for riding the boat

Time offshore: Would come in Thursday, get the yard cleaned up, lay back for the weekend; fished a little bit, didn't travel much; did some rabbit hunting in the wintertime; had just moved to Lafayette, to the country; company wanted to send me elsewhere, thought we would have to move; started attending class in Lafayette; gone a lot, but to advance have to show with them 100 percent; company I had been with did not pay retirement, hospitalization; land work 5 and 2; then 6 and 6; had to quit classes

Training: USL did not have classes on every other week schedule; lots of guys got Petroleum Technology degree, it helped them later; everything I learned was on-the-job training; roughneck repetitive, got to learn some of it; as derrickman helped motorman, would do his job when on vacation and got to learn everything on the rig; Texaco rig had 6 man crew; best times were working on the derricks, before supervisor job; you didn't have as much responsibility as drilling; as drilling supervisor, entire rig is yours, toolpusher under you; in the late 1980s Texaco got rid of all its rigs; bought Bay Drilling Company; pay flat rate to drilling company for tax purposes; at one time Gulf, Texaco, Shell all had their own rigs; Texaco the last to get rid of them; differences among companies

People: People in 1968 worked different than in 1998; in 1960s holler at people and we respond; didn't phase me to get cussed at; supervisor could say anything and the company would back him up; in 1990s if you talked to a person wrong they'd call you into the office; I never had that happen, said I could work with a group of men without treating them like dogs; learned to manage people coming up through the ranks and seeing what worked and what did not; story of

stopping rig to stop toolpusher from yelling at everyone; had supervisor training in the offshore district; was by myself first hitch offshore on a rig; after three months they put somebody with me; had never been offshore in my life; riding out in the boat the guy told me he was not going to my rig; mud engineer showed me how to do the reports; found out I had been transferred offshore when I came in from a hitch; had a certain date to get to Morgan City; out on the rig I didn't want to sound too stupid so only called once or twice over the radio to ask for help; in the early 1980s everything was booming; they didn't have two foremen on any rig; was working with good people who knew the rig

Inland to offshore: On the drill floor the work is the same; lots of different support people, like the barge engineer, subsea people, on jackup have to keep an eye on the weight; equipment is bigger; don't handle sacked material - it is bulked in; never seen a blowout; usually when you have a blowout you have some indication; faulty equipment can cause a blowout; problems with shallow wells; could not pick crew; can get on rig and not know anybody on it; as company man could call in every day; worked 20 years and never worked a Christmas; in inland waters Texaco would shut down for Christmas; went offshore in 1980, figured out break and went 7 years without missing Christmas; missed lots of Thanksgivings; would have to look at my work calendar to plan things

Food: Inland cooks were Texaco cooks, couldn't run them off if they didn't cook well; offshore used catering companies, would run them off if they didn't cook right; you eat all the time; hard to watch an entire TV program because we never would finish one; used to watch the soap operas religiously; a lot of the guys set work schedules offshore around the soap operas; guys wouldn't go to lunch because would miss the Young and the Restless

Satisfaction with job: Did not know anybody else on T Bayou working on rigs; some people were in the galley, a few blacks as cook's helper; wife worried about me being the only one, the first in production, worried about me out on the water; worried when I was driving trucks, too; oilfield considered a good job; making over \$7 an hour roustabouting; salt mines paid well, but not that much; Texaco was a good job, rain or shine; Dad was a gardener for rich folks in New Iberia, didn't work in the rain and made no money; would do it again; the same route; did what I was supposed to do with savings; started planning for retirement the day I started with the company; got in stock program after a year, took the maximum amount every time

Family and work: Oldest son got on with Texaco but got laid off, then with Pennzoil, then with Phillips, then contract company and now Exxon; second son worked on rigs for drilling companies but not any more; girls are in healthcare and an architect; one brother coaching high school, other retired from Texaco, youngest laid off after 13 years with Texaco and now with Unocal; I got a lot of blacks on with Texaco, some white guys too; we had to work even in high school; parents from Olivia, I can't stay on the bottom

Work ethic: Never heard any union talk; on the rig you just did what needed to be done; was raised that way; kept driving trucks until made supervisor and someone said I should not be doing that; Texaco didn't want you working; if you got hurt they had to pay you; got work ethic from mom and dad; Mama would clean houses; we raised okra to sell, gave mama the money; if you spoil a kid they're useless; would have to pay back money if borrowed from mama

Regulations: We're regulating ourselves out of business; some people making laws don't know what they're making laws about; got along well with the engineers; before my time they didn't treat engineers very well; then no more guys were coming up through the ranks and the office was being run by engineers; started switching over in the late 1970s; when they first came out, the engineers had knowledge but no experience; story of guys calling; we preached safety, looked at the safety record when we hired a rig; not like that when first started; back then, everything was speed; used chain instead of tongs, hand slips instead of air slips, ran for everything; crew would brag how many foot of hole they had dug and how fast; I relieved stress jogging on the heliport or lifting weights.

Jimmy Jett

Morgan City, LA

July 3, 2001

Interviewed by: Rylan Higgins

University of Arizona

RH005

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Jimmy Jett was born in Morgan City, Louisiana in 1924; he attended grammar school there and before high school, his parents moved to Greenville, Mississippi. After graduation, he enlisted in the Navy, and was on a submarine in Pearl Harbor. He completed two semesters at the University of Kansas while in the Navy and then was discharged in 1946. He moved back to Morgan City and got a job at a gas station. Jobs were hard to find, but his persistence (and personal connections) paid off within a year and he got a job at Mobile. He worked at Mobile from 1946 till his retirement in 1985, working his way up from being a dishwasher, holding jobs as a boat operator, boat engineer, barge captain, crane operator, construction foreman, production supervisor, and marine supervisor.

#### Summary:

Early days: If you didn't do the work, you were gone; changes in name of company to Exxon Mobile; Crews worked twelve hour shifts; Had 2 small boats, 35-foot long, steel hulls; Then got air conditioning and heating over time; First started with rigs on platforms, then put them on barges; He worked the first barge load of oil that was brought directly in from the Gulf-into the tank battery; Schedules were seven days on, seven days off; Sometimes worked long stretches with no break

Changes: Dupont brothers fabricating small platforms; Aldman McDermott buying them out; Mobile started out with one rig on a platform; Eventually they had six drilling barges plus other platforms; Later they had submergibles and semi-submergibles; Going into deeper and deeper water; Mobile put out a little newspaper telling employees about overseas operations

Labor: Jobs were hard to find; He estimates that 75% of the original people in Morgan City ended up working in the oil industry

Family: Married in 1946, had two children; Working offshore was hard with the family; My wife had to raise the children; Son worked in the oil industry as well; Companies would hire son if father was good employee

Economic cycles: From the time he was hired till 1985, things were going well, but there were fluctuations; Periodic layoffs, every eight or ten years, based on seniority

Safety: In the early days, they told you to do something, and if you thought it was too dangerous, they would just let you go; Safety became an important issue around 1980; Not too many accidents before that, though

Employees: Were like a family, because you had to be; Picnics for workers and families; For retirement they received a lump sum, better than annuities; The company got rid of the experienced workers and then called them for advice

Unions: ACAW tried to get them in a union, but they voted it out because they already had the Mobile union that gave the same benefits without striking, and they didn't want to pay monthly dues; Most of the union supervisors were just regular workers; Mobile superintendents always attended the meetings; No major conflicts

Changes in workforce: In the early days, workers did what they were asked to do because there were always people waiting for their jobs; Now, if you get fired somewhere, you can go down the street and get another job; There was always a good mix of ethnicities; Not many blacks in the early days; Never any race problems

Employee benefits: Good opportunities for advancements with the oil companies, paid time off, benefits, good salary; Made the employees loyal

Companies moving operations: Retired employees were disappointed when Mobile moved out of Morgan City

John Johnson

New Orleans, LA

January 11, 2005

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA129

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Johnny Johnson, along with Michael Hughes and Lad Handelman, is one of three co-founders of what is today Oceaneering International. I had tried to contact Johnny on several occasions but had been unsuccessful. When I was at C.J. Christ's house, C.J. asked me if I had talked to Johnny and I explained that I had been unable to reach him. C.J. then picked up the phone and called Johnny at home. Johnny was very willing to participate in an interview. We arranged to meet at the Hilton Hotel in New Orleans during the MMS Information Transfer Meeting.

Johnny Johnson was born and raised in Tennessee. After graduating from the University of Tennessee and serving in the U.S. Army in Korea, he joined his friend, Mike Hughes, and began commercial diving as an adventure. He moved to southern Louisiana and freelanced in the Gulf of Mexico for about six months, working out of his garage. In 1964, he and Mike co-founded World Wide Divers, Inc. in Morgan City. In 1969, World Wide merged with other companies to form Oceaneering International, Inc. in order to establish a company large enough to work in the growing offshore industry in the Gulf. Johnny soon found himself moving out of diving and into management. He also served as the president of the Association of Diving Contractors from 1980 to 1982.

#### Summary:

Early history: from east Tennessee, grew up living and working around water, went into commercial diving business with Mike Hughes, not much work, went to Korea, then to Gulf of Mexico, working out of Mike's garage, basic equipment, shallow water, offshore pipelines and platforms in less than 200 feet, company formed 1964, Worldwide Divers; scuba was unsafe for this type of work, needed topside air compressors and communications to the topside

Equipment: used volume tank, converted from old oxygen supply for pilots in C1-30, military coax cable for communications, put radios together from off-the-shelf components

Diving Companies: in 1969 formed new company, Oceaneering; needed larger company, greater financial strength; Worldwide did mostly pipeline inspection work, primarily in the Gulf of Mexico; diving just a mode of transportation; used cameras to add value for customers, had professional photographers, taught them to dive, mid-1960s

Work: early platforms rudely constructed, work not too difficult, learned as you went; putting clamps along pipelines to attach them to the legs of the platforms, came up with using air drilling

wrenches to make up clamps, speed up job, went to Stanley Tools for hydraulic wrenches; no financing in the early days, you work you get paid; were bound and determined to succeed, diving industry is close-knit network; divers find out what work is out there and what specialties are needed and call you up

Employees: some freelance divers out there who were really good, pick them up for a job and they'd move on; moved to having full time employees as soon as could afford to, train them properly; used to know everyone's families, birthdays; would go help through hurricanes; lots of ex-military divers, knew decompression tables, maintenance tables but had an adjustment to civilian life, some didn't make it; also some local guys who worked topside and picked up on the work; getting the Navy and local divers to work together properly was an accomplishment; egos; make sure you did not burn up the bottom time of specialists having them do standard jobs; maintain rapport with people from the companies that had jobs for you to do; some customers would wait on us because they were confident in what we could do

Schedules: get the call you have to go; baseball leagues would have three times the number of players needed because never know when someone will be called offshore; jobs come in, look at who you have, a juggling act

Getting jobs: would find out about jobs by watching what the major oil companies were doing - construction, engineering, pipeline, and drilling; call on people ask for opportunities; inspection work flourished because people wanted to know what was going on underwater; then came up with underwater TV system, could videotape and show engineers on the top; equipment would malfunction, I would fly it in for repair; I was company pilot; got to where we could process film on the boat or rig; started video in '64 or '65, with Hurricane Betsy; lose revenue while the hurricane is in the Gulf because you can't get offshore to work

Development of company: Used explosives, have to be careful; lots of studying going on in Dallas for the design of the charge, etc.; Wellex; would stay abreast of what was going on; get customers where it's almost the same job, can put the same crew back on without too much learning curve; customer developed confidence; offshore everybody's looking out for everybody else; Worldwide Divers grew quickly; then in deeper water had to have decompression chambers, all the support equipment; communication is key

Close calls: story of nearly getting trapped when putting on caisson; working on jack-up barge, barge started turn over, had to swim out underneath, everybody got out alive; get to know who to trust by watching them work, get people out of training schools

Company growth: had about 25 divers in '65; some divers wanted to be where the big boats were, had family oriented people who wanted to stay in one place; they traded the value for the big bucks; some married divers, other young ones often with grandiose ideas about diving; once formed Oceaneering became more international; made adjustments to move into deeper water; diving bells, ROVs, started in the 1970s; bought company that did survey work; MMS came out with regulations requiring regular platform inspections, that boosted work; replacing anodes was a regular job

Interactions among companies: McDermott and Brown and Root had their own companies; that work was off limits unless they got more than they could handle; companies came together on safety issues, wanted minimum standards because if invested in the equipment and training didn't want someone coming along and underbidding us; created the Association for Diving Contractors; was pretty hectic and competitive for a while; compare to pilot, have safety checks, make sure equipment is checked out; had been in the Army, concerned to see professional divers not in good physical condition; had EMTs, safety officer

Flying: became a pilot by taking lessons when at Fort Hood, then bought a plane and flew it to Morgan City; stories of flying trips; got a company plane in 1964, set us apart, had to compete; Mike would pull in things that competitors wouldn't get for six months to a year; got an answering machine; story of rig that turned over, had some fatalities, one of my first jobs; helicopter fatalities

Changes: got Chino divers; burying pipelines, didn't have to bury them in deeper water, had to check orientation for other companies to tap into in the future; some divers good at construction, others not; got into sat and bell diving in the '70s; took a lot of people from the Navy, they were bringing knowledge and success; changes in helmets; hard to get people used to purchase orders when had been running to the store to get what they needed; by the '70s difficult to start a diving company, limited number of customers, manpower available; got more international work; major revenue coming in from ROVs, design has really improved since the '70s; when first started they kept divers busy getting them untangled

Managing divers: got input from brother with PhD in psychology; had supervisors go offshore and give critique of job, do whatever we can to meet customer's expectations

Back to history: was in ROTC, went to Korea; got degree in business education; enjoyed doing it back then, don't know if I would enjoy doing it now; with deep water companies either went into deep water or stayed in shallow water, the latter are not able to do both; advantage of small company was that did not have to go to Board of Directors to make a direction; could respond quickly, became part of the oil company so to speak; make decisions in their offices

Women: had female secretary; no women diving in early days; once they started, came out of school, able to do certain things, keep them in the sphere of what they could do; safety issues, bathroom facilities

Clyde Johnston

Morgan City, LA

July 24, 2004

Interviewed by: Jamie Christy

University of Houston/History International

MMS040

### Ethnographic Preface:

Clyde Johnston was born in Norplet, Arkansas and his father worked for Texaco for 48 years. The Texas Company transferred Mr. Johnston's father to New Iberia, Louisiana. Mr. Johnston grew up in that area and got a degree in business administration from Southern Louisiana Institute in Lafayette (now ULL). He worked for Bethlehem Supply Company in Morgan City and south Louisiana many years. He began as a clerk for Bethlehem and then worked as a field salesman. He later became assistant manager in Leeville, Louisiana and then regional manager. He also worked for Ralow Oil Field Supply. Mr. Johnston retired and then went back to work for Red Adams at Oil and Gas Rentals in Amelia, Louisiana.

### Summary:

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Rose and Warren "Chuck" Joseph

New Iberia, LA

November 14, 2002

Interviewed by: Lois Boutte Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA071

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Rose and Warren "Chuck" Joseph had participated in the 1998-1999 study of the impacts of the offshore oil and gas industry on individuals and families in New Iberia and Morgan City. I called Rose in July to tell her about the history study, and she had me call Chuck at his job at the funeral home. He was interested in participating in the study, and we arranged for me to stop by his house to talk more. I spent an evening with Rose and Chuck as they discussed the industry and its impacts on their family and on the black community in New Iberia. They suggested several other people who should be included in the study, and we agreed that I would return later for a formal interview. I contacted the Josephs in September, but between the hurricane and their niece's campaign for district judge, they were too busy for an interview. I contacted them again in November, and we set up the interview. Though Chuck is officially retired, he works part time at the funeral home and also prepares rolled turkeys. When I arrived at their house, he was working to finish an order for a couple who were coming by that evening. Rose and I sat in the living room and he joined us later in the evening. Ellen Placide, one of the teacher researchers working on the project, joined us shortly after we began.

Rose and Chuck are from New Iberia. They knew each other in high school and married when Rose returned to New Iberia after finishing teacher's college. She worked for the school district for 31 years. When he first started out, Chuck went to the barber's college, and he opened up a shop in New Iberia. In 1965, he began trying to get a job in the oilfield and, in 1971, when Texaco started hiring blacks, he was offered a job. For the next 15 years, he worked for Texaco and continued to work at the barbershop in his time off. He started with Texaco at the lowest level and worked his way up to gas lift operator. During the cutbacks of the late 1980s, he was bumped back several times and then forced to take early retirement.

#### Summary:

Family history: Rose married to Warren Joseph who worked for Texaco for 25 years; born in New Iberia, went to college and returned to work in New Iberia; have three children; Chuck had a barber's license when they married; Rose taught school, hers was the only consistent check coming in; wanted to buy a home and make the kids feel like they belonged; had one car, Chuck walked to work; he applied to the oilfields when they were trying to increase the black-white ratio; could not believe the first check, living so well; problem was the schedule, Rose had to take responsibility when he was not home, went through a lot of things emotionally trying to deal with being mother and father; was brought up in a house where mother took care of things in the home; Chuck was happy he could be the real breadwinner in the family; through that income able to purchase land and build a house, able to provide private school and college for kids

Chuck in the oilfield: Was eager to learn; before long moved up a notch, started training under someone who really mentored him; black guys did not get into the oilfield until they were older, so the man was younger than Chuck; as a barber the income was very inconsistent; even with the negative things, the work, being away from home, the partying when they got out, but still able to stick together; for blacks it was a wonderful experience for those who had not gone to college to get the on-the-job training; while Chuck was barbering they could only afford a small wood frame house; without an education for blacks the only jobs were in the oilfield, the salt mine, the cane field, and some construction; teachers had to go back to college; bartending and railroads; railroads was a good job, that and the salt mine were kind of like the oilfield in that way; guys that worked for the railroad would be gone from home a lot; the oilfield was a sacrifice in being away from home but then you had 6 days off

Offshore lifestyle: Chuck was not the kind to argue or get emotional; he would just do what he had to do; it was hard for Rose not having a sounding board; the most important thing was that Rose's family congregated at her mom's house on the weekends and she could spend lots of time with her family; Rose's family accepted Chuck and that he had to be away from home; Rose learned from her father because he was away from home a lot; he worked for the electric company and they had him on the road a lot; Rose had a hard time understanding he had to be gone, but then during the crunch when lots of guys were being laid off she said he could go and work 14 days if that was what it would take to keep his job

Retirement: When he was forced to take early retirement the family's lifestyle was threatened; in the teaching profession there will always be kids there to teach, take it for granted; had to realize the retirement money was not much because if he were working he could have made that much money in about a year and a half and that was expected to last the rest of your life; at first Rose was angry but then she realized the part she played in not preparing for it because the signs were there; he was forced into retirement at age 57; he could have worked several years longer, had a good attitude, a good work ethic

Working in the oilfield: Rose's brother-in-law got in before Chuck did, then her brother got in after Chuck; he is still in; Texaco filed bankruptcy after Texaco bought Getty and Tenneco sued Texaco, and they began laying off guys in 1989; they closed down the office on Jane Street; all the boys in Rose's family looked like they were getting into the oilfield except one brother who worked at the salt mine and another who was driving a Greyhound bus; they would brag on the money they made compared to what teachers made; back in 1971 carpenter labor was paid \$1.25 an hour; in the oilfield with no experience a guy made \$3.59 and \$3.69 with experience; Chuck was working for the oilfield and then barbering on the weeks off until 1986; with the cutbacks he was demoted from gas lift specialist back to operator; then came the layoffs; lots of guys had a bitter taste in their mouths, but Chuck figured Texaco had provided him with an average, middle-class living and just having had a check stub with his name attached to it had meant a lot; without it you had no borrowing power and no benefits; had tried to buy a house when still a barber and the bank said no; in the early days the family had to drive Chuck to work because they only had one car

Reflections: Had to take the bitter with the sweet; retired in 1994, quit drinking in 1990; when you work 7 & 7 you drink 7 & 7; that started in 1986 when no longer working in the barbershop

and didn't have anything to do; you live two different lifestyles in the oilfield and have to adjust; appreciated coming home in December 1989, it was so cold the bay froze; men stayed out there 60 hours with no showers, so cold they could not feel their hands; never talked about what happened at work when at home; drinking would drown it out

Getting on with Texaco: Got call when at barbershop, be at the Texaco office at 1pm; walked in, piece of paper to sign, said Mr. Joseph they need you at Black Bay at 5:00 today to take the 5:00 boat; did not own a pair of khakis, jeans, or work clothes; caught the boat, took 30 minutes to get to camp; was Friday afternoon, they said everybody would get up at 5am; whole first day spent going around the lease looking at different work areas; Saturday evening back to camp, 8 miles out, never been away from home before; Sunday again rode around all day; then Monday they decided to show the greenhorns how it was done, worked all day laying pipelines on the barge; after six days it was not as bad

Rose observation: When he came home and said he had gotten a job in the oilfield he was all excited; he had never worn steel toed shoes or a hard hat before

Living quarters: had about 12 rooms, 6 on the front and 6 on the back; 8 and 10 beds to a room; showers between the two rooms; had a kitchen, dining hall, game room, foreman's office; didn't have to make the beds, the food was delicious; workers paid \$1 a day for "three hots and a cot;" no problems with social relations; had just come from a job dealing with different people every day; grew up in a community with more blacks than whites; the people from north Louisiana thought the folks from south Louisiana were crazy

Chuck's perspective on race issues: The way I looked at it, you respect me for ten days and I'll respect you; people went their separate ways after work and did not socialize; always worked around positive thinking guys; had to work for a white boy because there were no blacks in the position to teach me; was the only black guy on my crew in the Atchafalaya Basin; on another job some of the guys took Larry's (a black man) bed apart; C.P. English was in charge, came in and said anyone who does not want to sleep in here with Larry can get on my boat and go back to the landing; some of the guys from work started meeting me on Hopkins Street, bringing me fish and crabs; had more problems with the guys from north Louisiana; after a while they learned they could not do anything about it; every summer would have the kids of the big wheels out of the New Orleans office, had interesting conversations with them

The downturn: It became so competitive in the oilfield where one would step on another; Chuck was bumped all the way back to roustabout from pumper; now have guys out there with college degrees; in the early 1980s had to have a high school diploma or know somebody

Effect on black community: Brought in lots of growth; people in education left to go into the oilfield; when Rose went to college in 1956 most blacks who went to college got an education degree and went back to teach; they were held in high esteem for coming back to teach; by the time the kids graduated from high school not a one wanted to be a teacher; their opportunities had expanded; when Chuck got into the oilfield he and Rose had the borrowing power and benefits; the crunch really hurt the black community; many families used the money to educate their children so they would not have to come back to the community; those who felt they did not

have to go to college because they could work in the oilfield could not compete; lots of fields they study in college take them away from home; daughter had gone into mechanical engineering to come back and work in the oilfield and get one of the top positions, but then came the crunch; would do it again but start at an early age; started trying to get on in 1965.

Kenneth Kaigler

Lafayette, LA

June 25, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW005

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Born in 1929 in Weslaco, Texas, Mr. Kenneth Kaigler went into the military service after he graduated high school in 1946. He then went to Texas A&M University, where he graduated with a degree in petroleum and natural gas engineering in 1952. During the last two years of college, he roughnecked for Humble Oil and Refining. Upon graduating he went to work in Venezuela as a drilling engineer for Venezuelan Atlantic Refining Company (Varco). He moved to Lafayette in 1957 to work for British American Oil Producing Company, where he worked as a drilling and production engineer until 1964. Over the next five years he was an offshore drilling engineer for ODECO in New Orleans. Not liking living in New Orleans, he came back to Lafayette to work for Signal Oil and Gas Company. In 1973, he became a manager for C and K Petroleum. In 1978 he took a job with Tenneco Oil and worked off Rhode Island and in Trinidad. After that he was transferred to Marlin Drilling Company where he worked as a rig manager in Brazil. In 1987 he formed his own consulting business that deals with oilfield-related insurance claims and litigation. During the interview he discusses the explosion of offshore drilling during the mid 1960s due to increased demand for oil and gas, as well as technological advances that made deeper water drilling possible.

#### Summary:

Early life: born in TX in '29; graduated high school and went into service '46-48; graduated from Texas A & M with degree in petroleum and natural gas engineering in '52; started roughnecking in '50 for Humble. Grew up in oilfield town (Kingsville, TX) and had family and friends in business.

Career: worked for Varco as drilling engineer in Venezuela '52-56. Worked for British American Oil Producing Company in Lafayette '57-64 as drilling and production engineer. Worked for ODECO in New Orleans as offshore drilling engineer '64-69. Signal Oil and gas '69-73. C and K Petroleum '73-78. Tenneco '78 and then Marlin Drilling Company where he worked in Brazil as rig manager. Formed own consulting company in '87.

Offshore engineering: did not have a set schedule; went offshore to perform specific jobs (e.g., running casing) or address problems; usually transported by boat. Describes general activities. Paid a flat monthly salary; pretty good money; other incentives included bonuses, profit sharing, insurance, savings, benefits.

C and K Petroleum: offered a job when they opened an office in Lafayette; was a manager and did not go into field; able to go home every night.

Transfers: some companies operated by ordering workers to go different places; usually he was given a choice whether to work different places ("given the opportunity").

Safety: his job was not dangerous; sprained his ankle once while on a rig; companies took care of employees and might find office jobs for those too scared to go back offshore. Companies differed in terms of benefits, demands, and leniency.

Family and moving: wife adjusted to moving around and the life very easily. Communities they went into generally accepting and really wanted the oil companies (brought in money).

Changes in industry: basic drilling equipment and procedures the same; main difference has been in communication (describes limitations of early radios). Bigger rigs have allowed for deeper drilling; also have evolution of different types of rigs (describes). Better equipment developed in mid-60s as price of oil came up. Depth bracket allowables. Market for natural gas in North arose around World War Two. Good changes include improved technology and communication; bad change is less personal.

Boom and bust cycles: use of consultants; cheaper overseas oil led to bust in '80s and layoffs. He was laid off from Marlin and he started own company.

Injuries: most of his work in personal injury litigation; problems surrounding keeping injured employees; severance packages.

Oil Center: oil was centered in New Iberia until Heymann built Oil Center; Lafayette was a good central location; having companies based here allowed for communication between people; brought in support industry too.

Competition: not a lot between production and drilling companies (e.g., joint ventures); competition cutthroat in support/service industry.

Unions: compared to Northeast; hard to organize people here because people coming in from all different areas and turnover.

Leasing: offshore blocks leased by federal government; five year leases unless producing; do seismic surveys before leasing. Risky; ODECO did a lot of farm-outs (explains).

Environment: big misconceptions amongst public about damage drilling has on land; oil companies have really cleaned up their acts; directional drilling has helped.

Altha Lee Kennedy

Lafayette, LA

May 1, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW048

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Altha Lee Kennedy is a life-long resident of Lafayette and is the sister of J. C. Chargois. She was born in 1915 and began working for Sun Oil in 1942 as a stenographer. She worked for them, making her way up to personal secretary, until she retired in 1970, when Sun Oil merged with Sunray DX. Throughout the interview she stresses that Sun Oil was family oriented when she worked for them, but is no longer like that. She describes how oil business moved into Lafayette during the 1930s and the town, particularly the location of different things, during that time period. She provides a vivid description of the floods that inundated the area in the late 1920s.

#### Summary:

Petroleum club: had some very risqué parties in the mid '40s.

Oil industry: began moving into Lafayette in early '30s; oil people had a terrible reputation; renters charged oil people more money.

Employment history: went to work for Sun Oil Company in '42; worked out of several buildings in town. First job was with an insurance company (Dupre, Jimmy Parkerson, Dwight Andrews); Sun Oil paid her double when she went to work for them. Retired in '70 when Sun merged with Sunray DX because would have been demoted.

Sun Oil Company: came to Lafayette in '32; owned by Pew Family in Philadelphia.

Oil people: received with a very watchful eye; parents did not favor their daughters going out with the oil men. But Lafayette owes a lot to oil because before it was strictly dependent on the railroad.

Lafayette: grew too fast too quickly when oil came; development did not have enough foresight. Expansion started after World War Two. Everything located downtown, but buildings not kept up-to-date, so businesses looking for new places.

Downtown: Heymann's Department Store had dollar day; Saturdays people from the country would come to town.

Oil Center: although her boss at Sun Oil helped negotiate to get Heymann to build the Oil Center, the company did not have an office there because of a disagreement over parking.

Membership in Petroleum Club first reserved for people in the oil business, but opened up to public after industry downturn.

Job security: people used to be assured of their job and that they could work themselves up in the company; nobody thought about changing jobs. Different today.

Maurice Heymann: was very generous (orphans at Christmas); was strict employer; he knew how to make money and he knew how to make his money work for him.

Big flood: many people came to Lafayette from outlying areas; animals floating dead and bloated in the water.

Family: her mother (Mrs. Chargois) was known as the mother of recreation; describes how recreation was started. Father was in law enforcement. Had two younger brothers; Paul ran Shags (a popular restaurant). Chargois Springs.

Southside School: in the '20s had a soup kitchen that helped feed children from the country; those students came into school on wagons. No discipline or drug problems. Tore down because it was sinking.

Richard Chargois: her great-grandfather who immigrated from France with two brothers; a bricklayer; built the [San Suis?] in the mid 1800s; it has been used by many different people over the years (describes).

Craig King

Houston, TX

August 7, 2006

Interviewed by: Jason P. Theriot

University of Houston/History International

MMS073

### Ethnographic Preface:

Craig King was born and raised on the Texas City Ship Channel, where his father worked as a welder at a refinery. He graduated from the Texas A&M Merchant Marine Academy in Galveston in 2000 and went to work in the industry. He has traveled to most of the ports in the US and worked on a dredge boat in the Chesapeake Bay before coming back to Houston to work for G&H Towing Company. In 2003, he was assigned to work as a First Mate on the Harbor Tug "Shannon," one of only 2 tugs working on the Houston Ship Channel that are equipped with new "Z-Drive" technology for assisting large tankers and LNG ships into port.

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Earl King

Morgan City, LA

September 28, 2001

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA013

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Earl King, Jr. during the family study in 1999. He was very open and willing to talk about the alliances that were being formed at the time and how they were affecting the trucking business. When I called Earl about participating in this study, he was pleased and said he would be glad to help. I arrived to find him in his office, and we sat near the receptionist's area to talk.

Earl has been the owner of King Trucking and in the oilfield business for 33 years. He got started in 1967 and considers himself a newcomer, but he knew the guys who got the oilfield trucking industry started.

#### Summary:

Early history: family members were truck drivers for Texaco; passed on stories of the early days; no highway infrastructure; oilfield trucking incubated around Jennings, Louisiana; used old steam rigs, oil companies had own transportation companies to get them from place to place; to start trucking business had to go before the Public Service Commission; family contact helped; oil companies coming into Houma - Superior Oil Co., Texaco - had their own trucks; "in those days just about everybody's daddy worked for Texaco".

Pre-WWII: family worked in swamp, logging cypress trees, trapping, some planting; oil companies in late 1930s, early 1940s; leased land, built infrastructure; Thunderbirk family in Houma owned small oilfield trucking company in the early 1940s.

Post-WWII: oil industry jobs were the good jobs; C.R. Patterson from Lafayette went to work for Thunderbirks; left and started own company, Patterson Trucking, in 1945; by late 1950s Texaco got rid of all its trucks; contracted everything; not only Texaco but Texaco suppliers needed trucks; small, closely knit group; people with money controlled everything; Texaco made many, many millionaires; Bourg Truckline in Larose second local company.

Early companies: germinated from oil companies and oil company vendors that needed transportation; Pat Hay from Lake Charles; Sammy Broussard from New Iberia; political influence was key; Rex Trucking/Transportation; Service Truckline germinated in Jennings, stayed small, moved to Intracoastal City, now out of business; Howard germinated by Texaco in 1950s but now gone, did not transfer lease; Ace, Acme, and Venture are newcomers; Patterson sold out to J.H.Walker.

King Trucking: only three companies - Patterson, Howard, and Broussard when started in 1967; Texaco germinated Howard in New Iberia/Ivanhoe District and King; family always had ties with Texaco; Broussard originated owner-operator concept; was in place in other commodities, but Broussard brought it to the oil field some resistance from other companies, but now the mode of operation; King began as apprentice to Broussard in early 1960s after graduating from college; guy from Texaco had bought trucking permit at auction; King started with him and three years later bought him out.

Changes: infrastructure, from 2-lane highways between Houma and Houston; equipment, had to roll pipe off manually; if accident at Texaco, both people at fault and suspended; Texaco employees could get turned in for buying gas elsewhere; the drilling department got a list of who was buying what products and would select contractors accordingly; use of contractors began in the late 1950s; uncles had to retire because no more trucking jobs with Texaco; no one investing in blue collar workers; saw many oil companies and now service companies consolidate; no more loyalty; guys not proud to be hauling Texaco loads or McDermott loads; no pride.

Jobs: The early days of the trucking industry contrast sharply with the offshore vessel industry. Because of the limited number of operating permits, from the beginning, trucking was under heavy political influence. Only later, after the owner-operator system came in, could individuals enter the business and work their way into a small company. The stories of early loyalty to the oil companies take on a tainted appearance in light of the fact that employees would be turned in for buying gas at non-Texaco stations.

Huey Kleinpeter

Lafayette, LA

August 6, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW017

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Huey Kleinpeter was born in 1924 and grew up down on the bayou, six miles out of Plaquemine. His father rambled out West in the oilfields a bit, before serving during World War One, and then making a career as a river pilot. Starting in high school, he worked summers on boats (e.g., towing timber in the Atchafalaya swamp) to buy school clothing. His two older brothers dropped out of school early to go work on the river, but he stayed in school and graduated in 1942. After graduating, he registered to go to Louisiana State University (LSU) to become a civil engineer, but received his draft notice. While waiting to be officially drafted, he worked as a timekeeper in Kansas City Bridge Company's Plaquemine yard. He ended up serving in the Navy on the USS Detroit in the Pacific. He went back to working on the boats with his father when he returned in 1946, but after finding out he could not get his pilot's license because of his eyesight, he decided to change trades. He went to work again for Kansas City Bridge Company, where he had various jobs including assistant payroll master and ironworker; during that time he also worked on the Big Inch Pipeline. After six or so years with them, he was laid off, and in 1956 he went to work for an independent producer, Temple [Hall Grove?], as a gauger in the Choctaw Field. He also worked as a roustabout for a time, but then decided to quit and returned to construction work as a welder. After leaving construction work, he went to work for a company (that was later bought out by Midland Enterprises) for about 11 years as a shipyard captain and port captain. At the age of 55, he went to work for BSF in general maintenance and retired from them 11 years later in 1990. The first half of the interview consists of them looking through pictures mostly from offshore construction work he did during the 1950s and 1960s. Throughout the interview he describes the various jobs he has had related and not related to the oil industry.

#### Summary:

Photos: house on Bayou Plaquemine; discusses oilfield in Bayou Choctaw; boat used to transport people to oilfields.

Family: father a river boat captain; two older brothers quit school and began running boats as captains when 18 or 19; learned trade from father when they were very young. Uncle Ed built a boat and towed barges and rigs.

Photos: Shell Oilfield between in early to mid '50s; worked on Kenner City Bridge for about a year during that time doing construction (describes). Eugene Island Lighthouse.

Offshore: worked offshore for about a year; big steam rig with quarters; no entertainment, but would fish and read; 12 hour work days; didn't have a cook, would eat lots of cornflakes.

Worked for about three weeks at a time (finish one to three jobs) and then came back in. Got caught in a hurricane once; it was rough. Had VHF radio for communication.

Photos: barge; steam rig and its boiler room; barge towed behind rig with equipment; barge with tool steel sank near Vicksburg and had to send divers to recover steel.

Construction: worst job he had was wrapping cable around piling and nailing the cable to clump piling together; he liked to be a lead man, but it was a dangerous job; he never got seriously hurt on the job. Pilings needed to keep the drilling rigs steady. Was also in charge of welding caps on the pipe. Depth of water they were working in varied, but wasn't very deep. To hold work barge in place would drop steam winches on sides and anchor in back.

Photo: rig from early 1900s in Texas or New Mexico that Uncle Ed was a driller on; did not drill back then, but pounded the hole in and made shallow wells. Father worked for a while as a tool dresser. Uncle Ed married to an Ohioan woman, Louise, whose father was an independent producer and Ed worked for him.

Early life: graduated high school in '42. During summers starting at 14, worked with father and brothers (J.B. and Paul) on a chartered boat towing cypress in Atchafalaya swamps (describes); made 50 cents a day working from sun up to sunset. In '43, was registered to go to LSU with his cousins to become a civil engineer, but got his draft notice; drafted into Army, but volunteered for Navy and served in the Pacific during World War Two (describes). Discharged in '46; goes back on boats, but can't get his pilot's license because eyesight not perfect; decides to change trades.

Kansas City Bridge Company: had worked for them a few months before going to war as a timekeeper in the Plaquemine yard; at that time, they were building wooden barges for the federal government. After the war, was sent to help do the pier work on a bridge in Lake Charles.

Family and schedule: married in '50; while working construction would work two to three weeks on at sites all over the state; wife was used to it; he was used to it, too, because that's what his dad had done.

Kansas City Bridge Company: between '46 and '47 he worked in the office doing payroll and various other things. Describes bridge building; piers; sand hogs; decompression chambers. Didn't want to work in the office anymore, so sent to the Plaquemine yard as a welder helper where he learned to weld; joined ironworkers union; worked as a welder five or six years before being laid off. During that time they also laid pipeline under rivers (describes); worked on Big Inch above Livonia, LA (describes).

Union: ironworker job paid about as much as you could get (two dollars an hour); even though union, would do other jobs if they needed to be done while on the job site; union was greatly strong in those days and being in it could almost guarantee you a job.

Temple [Hall Grove?]: in '56, through church connection with a superintendent, Mr. Smith, got a job as a gauger with Temple [Hall Grove?], an independent producer; worked out of Choctaw

Oilfield near Plaquemine. Job consisted of checking pressure and production, changing out chokes, dealing with heaters and compressors, working with charts, making reports, running pipe; dangerous work because out there alone; lots of rattlesnakes; mostly worked the night shift, but then worked relief shift. Didn't like not having a stable schedule, so went to work for a roustabout for a bit. British America bought company out; required lots of paperwork and forms; quit after six months because construction work picking back up (worked as welder).

Records and money: ever since a young man has kept records of everything he has done (employment, pay, particular jobs he's worked on). Although pay was less and things were cheaper back in the '50s, relative prices haven't changed that much. His family did well (middle class) and kids had what they needed.

Shipyard and port: After leaving construction work, he was a shipyard captain at Port Allen for three and a half years; was in charge of building dry docks, a machine shop, and 500 workers. Then was made port captain at company's main office and in charge of all the boats; brother Paul was general manager and brother J.B. was superintendent of boats; did that for seven and a half years before retiring because stress was getting to him (age 55).

BSF: At 55 went to work for BSF in general maintenance; didn't want a supervisory role; retired in '90.

Leadership: on all his jobs, people wanted to move him up into leadership positions; leaders cannot be afraid of making decisions and must know that they'll make mistakes sometimes; you might get chewed out for doing something wrong, but if you do your job, you probably won't get fired.

Lee Kleinpeter

New Iberia, LA

January 24, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA029

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Lee Kleinpeter's daughter-in-law was one of the researchers in the family impact study we did in New Iberia in 1999, and Lee was interviewed during that study. He was very willing to be interviewed again. I met him at his office at Cajun Wireline Services in New Iberia. He then asked to do a videotape interview of his company and the wireline equipment. His nephews played a major role in the interview.

Lee began in the wireline business in 1947 when he went to work for Otis Pressure Control in New Iberia. He worked for them from 1947-1952 until he had had enough of working offshore and started working for Shell at Weeks Island. He was convinced to go back to Otis again and then resigned again and went into business with Perry Decuir to begin Klein Deco Wireline Company. That company grew to have over 160 people working for it but was sold in 1976 to Schlumberger. Several years later, Lee began Cajun Wireline Service.

#### Summary:

Early history: with Otis Pressure from 1947-1952, moved to Houma for Otis, couldn't handle the seasickness, worked at Weeks Island for 5-6 months, lived next door to Otis manager, back again until 1955; founded Klein Deco in January 1956, serviced oil and gas wells in southern Louisiana and Mississippi until 1976; seen a lot of ups and down in this type of services, lots of different operations with oil companies.

Wireline operation: job is to keep the oil and gas producing; provide .09 diameter tube on 20,000 foot wheel; tensile strength of 1,800-2,000 pounds straight pull; very durable as long as you don't abuse it; go into the wells and remove sand, paraffin; have control devices and safety valves to put in the well at the company's request to reduce the hazard at the surface.

Otis: was farm boy, had no experience; applied for work during the summer; 24 hours a day on-call; lived on LSTs and worked off them on the wells; stayed out till jobs done, every day, longest hitch was 26 days at one time; first trip was out of Morgan City for Kerr McGee, Block 18 in about 20 feet of water, "enough to rock you real good;" out of New Iberia by pickup truck to dock, out to rig, operator and assistant, after 2 years became operator; have to be mechanically adept to know what's down the hole, visualize in your mind; the wire would often break, have to do fishing job to recover the wire; the most dreaded conversation with the company, "my line broke".

Work environment: worked on wells, would drill more than one well from a platform; would work on the floor alongside those drilling; very ticklish, would never know when they'd drop a tool, hit the wire; now more safety conscious; working with complete strangers; sometimes had problems with group trying to sabotage your equipment so they could take time off; had a few close calls out in the Gulf; a hell of an experience to me, a landlubber.

LSTs: they'd rock the whole time; ramp from LST to platform called widowmaker; big change today, solid, nice quarters; back then had to fight for a bunk, everything was so crowded; service companies were the stepchild, not treated too good.

Working: Otis started in New Iberia with 4 trucks, was land based, didn't start moving into Gulf until 1948-1949; then had to have skid units instead of trucks, big tool boxes; got to and from locations on shrimp boats hired out to oil companies; old crusty guys and their boats; sit wherever you could; from Morgan City to platform took 6-8 hours, get off shrimp boat and onto LST, put on work clothes, talk to production supervisor, start work and keep working till complete, could take up to 8 hours; sometimes have to stand by and wait; repeat the same process, then bottle up the equipment, next day if a boat was available come onto the bank, or get a call on the way back to port and be diverted back out; that happened many times, caused a crushing, sinking feeling; one Christmas Eve got about to the Atchafalaya River and had to go back.

Competition: initially only Otis; Klein Deco became their first major competition; liked the work but just not being offshore rocking and rocking; became successful with the help of good people; to compete against big company like Otis required decent help and determination; took a lot of hard work and diligent calling on customers; Perry and Lee kicked it off and then got 3 others from Otis over the next 5 years; always a problem to find people, hard work, 24 hour call; people from varying backgrounds, safety is the main thing and how the worker handles himself.

Equipment: special skid units that could be put on the boat and left there, crews go out in the boats when they need them; started with speed boats without jackup facilities, then someone came along with the jackup and it worked perfectly, provided a stable platform to work off; trucks now have hydraulic booms and don't require manual labor as the old gin pole did; now just back up to the well and raise the gin pole, less problems with backs and injuries; crews still have 2 people.

Ups and downs: lean times in the 1960s - 1962, 1963 were iffy and uncertain, a few others in the early 1970s, but not severe; the 1960s downturn was a cycle everyone more or less conceded to; 1970s didn't take off until 1978; problems in the 1970s caused by competition all over, lots of wireline companies; several smaller companies started in 1959, 1960, some also in Houma, more wells were being drilled and produced; leveled off in the mid-1970s; we sold in 1976, 1977 was kind of quiet, then everything took off; things went down again in 1982-1983; I thought it couldn't last much longer and jumped back in in 1984; got back one of the wireline trucks Schlumberger bought from Klein Deco, refurbished it, back to square one with myself and a helper; then bought the jackup boat from Schlumberger, started with boats again; Schlumberger sold off the wireline because it was not as lucrative as before; with Klein Deco worked for

majors and smaller companies, now mostly the smaller companies who have taken over the older fields.

Customers and accidents: Klein Deco's first customer was Texaco, was our number 1 customer; started to expand to Humble, Pan Am (now Amoco); oil companies now give you the basic safety program they want; much more stringent now; changes began in the late 1960s, brought about by the spread of working offshore and hiring of people who had no experience and hiring just to get the job done; accidents became a little more prevalent as the boom continued, if something happened, attitude was "let's hire another one;" we were very fortunate with accidents considering how things were back then.

Working for Shell on Weeks Island: were stringing pipeline in the marsh; was sweating away in the nice, warm sun in mud ankle deep and looked out and saw a wireline truck on a barge; neighbor from Otis said don't you want to come back; said I would if I didn't have to go offshore; stayed 2 years till they said I'd have to go offshore again.

Summary: was a very good living, taught me a lot, met a lot of nice people, enhanced my educational background; some bad times, not enough time with the family; have thought about what would have been the difference if stayed working for Shell, friends my age retired at 65, don't know if I could have done that; have too much ambition and not enough sense to know any better; just get out there and work harder, convince yourself that you can do it; change in today's workers, from late 1980s and 90s; different breed of young people coming up, have had an easy living, things they get they want at the drop of a hat; have a problem with young people not having more initiative, wanting to do your best and not just get by; this business is still great, people is going to be our big thing if we can keep them going; that's our main cog in the wheel, can have the best equipment and best everything, but if we don't have the people we don't have nothing.

Lee and Tommy Kleinpeter

New Iberia, LA

November 14, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz, David DiTucci, Diane Austin,  
University of Louisiana at Lafayette, University of Arizona  
SW028

Ethnographic Preface:

Lee Kleinpeter began his business, the Cajun Wireline Service, Inc., in New Iberia, LA in 1956. Tommy, Lee's nephew is his "able-bodied assistant." They are full service slickline providers and help fix problem oil wells that are not working properly. Lee and Tommy discuss at-length various jobs they do and the tools they need for these procedures.

Summary:

Wireline service: Lee started wireline business in 1947 for Otis Pressure Control in Dallas, Texas. In 1956, started his own business, Cajun Wireline Service, Inc. out of New Iberia; works with nephew Tommy. Service oil and gas wells of Louisiana, Texas, and Mississippi; full service slickline provider, both on land and water; business revolves around troubleshooting - either well stopped producing or is nearing a "blowout" and needs to be plugged.

Typical procedures: First step - ask client pressure of the well; this information enables him to bring the right type of equipment to job site; if client cannot tell the pressure of well, then they will bring the necessary equipment to examine the pressure; common problems: well has stopped producing or well needs to be better controlled; usual solutions are to produce a blow out or to plug it. A typical job lasts 2-3 hours; charge their customers by the hour. Many techniques and services are old; in many ways, things are still the same, even though industry has evolved with new procedures, regulations.

Equipment: Tommy describes in great detail how company services an oil well; describes various tools to measure depth and pressure of the well; if well is stuck, use a slick iron to see what is blocking the well. Like all industries, the tools have evolved throughout the years; he developed and patented new tools to suit his needs, such as a special recovery tool.

Depth of wells: Some very deep, some shallow; furthest Lee ran wire was 13,670 feet underground

Photos: not too many, before camera days; first set from Golden Meadow in 1950s, where he was hired to reduce the pressure of a rig; used sidewinder trucks.

Offshore experiences: Worked on a Kerr-McKee barge 1950 running wire into well; wonderful experience; living conditions on barge terrible, "antiquated to say the least."

Grand Isle: deeper water, different type of barge; bigger and floating; widow maker - a platform that attaches rig to the barge; have railings, but many men have fallen off.

Gloria Knox

Lafayette, LA

November 6, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW026

#### Ethnographic Preface:

In 1906, Gloria Knox was born in north Louisiana (Coushatta) to a family of teachers; her father sold Singer sewing machines and her mother was a teacher. When she graduated from Shreveport High School at the age of 16 she went to business school. After which she was hired as the first women for The Texas Company. She met and married her husband in the company; her husband was their wildcat drilling superintendent. While her husband was moved around, she worked in the office for a variety of companies, including MacMillan, Federal Petroleum Company; all the time she studied gas cards, which led her into doing land title work. They settled in Lafayette when her son was nine years old in 1935. Around that time she was the landman for American Republics. She was one of the committee members who urged Mister Heymann to build the Oil Center. During her interview she discusses the development and impact of the Oil Center, the way that the Heymanns and the oil industry have made Lafayette what it is today, and female landmen.

#### Summary:

Early life: born in Coushatta, LA; graduated from Shreveport High School; went to normal college. Family were teachers and father was a salesman. After graduating went to work for The Texas Company; husband was wildcat drilling superintendent for them.

Career: moved around with husband (El Dorado, AR; Houma; New Iberia; Lake Charles) and worked for various companies (e.g., MacMillan, Federal Petroleum Company); was office manager. Was an eager beaver and studied gas cards, eventually getting into land work.

Oil people's reputation and early Lafayette: in early '30s unable to move to Lafayette because people did not want oil people there because they thought they were real roughnecks; only City Service and Sun Oil had offices there. Finally got a house in '35 and she told husband's boss they would not move anymore; son unable to make friends because moving so frequently.

Landman '30-40s: was landman for American Republic and in charge of the four gas states. With a scout and a geologist, she leased land. When World War Two broke out, they had to do twice as much work because men going to war.

Postwar boom: more companies started moving in after the war; companies brought in workers from Texas and Arkansas, but hired local college graduates, too. Had to know French or Cajun to lease land or you would get gypped.

Changes for workers: today new technology and industry ups and downs have made things hard for people. Son went into broadcasting and two grandsons uninterested in oil industry.

Offshore expansion: did not take away their land business; offshore was more expensive.

Oil Center: member of committee that begged Heymann to build it; at that time oil offices spread out around downtown (describes); companies moved in as best they could. Part of various other committees to get other facilities (e.g., auditoriums) built.

Impact of oil on Lafayette: helped improve college. Have a nucleus of native-type people and newer people who have brought in changes. Religious composition shifted from 90% Catholic. Built new houses and roads (describes). It's oil and the Heymanns that made the town.

Women: not allowed to be members of the Petroleum Club; could go to social functions in evenings. Today female landmen still do not make as much as male landmen; women better with computers and running records.

Ed Kyle

New Iberia, LA

September 23, 2001 and September 27, 2001

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA007

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Ed Kyle was an important early figure in Morgan City's oil and gas industry activity, and he was first interviewed by Rylan Higgins and Tom McGuire in 1999 during the family study. Ed's sisters, Virginia Hine and Barbara, live in New Iberia and are friends of Barbara Davis. Ed suffers from dementia and now has a live-in caregiver. He spends weekends with his sisters, and Virginia suggested it would be most appropriate to interview Ed during one of his weekend visits. I arrived at Virginia's home a few minutes before Barbara and was greeted on the front porch by Ed. He was pleased about the interview and began sharing information with me before we ever sat down. Virginia and Barbara Davis joined us within a few minutes. Barbara and I had spent an entertaining afternoon with Virginia several months earlier; Virginia is a remarkable storyteller in her own right, so I expected we would have an interesting afternoon. I was not disappointed. Virginia collects information about mules, and I had several photographs I had taken in Muleshoe, Texas for her. She brought out the copy of the December 19, 1785 thank you letter from George Washington to King Charles III of Spain regarding the Royal Jack Asses that she has framed in her kitchen. We soon moved on to talk about the oil and gas industry. Because of Ed's condition and the makeup of the group, the interview topics ranged widely and jumped around quite a bit.

The Kyle family has a long history in New Iberia, and the family wealth is still displayed in Virginia and Barbara's plantation home and personal servants. Among the family enterprises is Kyle Taylor Lumber Company. Ed was born in 1917. He worked for his daddy's lumber business from 1937 until he went into WWII. His daddy got into the oil and gas industry with a mud business in 1946, and Ed worked there when he returned from the war. Ed was one of the group of ten people who helped Doc Laborde start Tidewater. He also was instrumental in starting the Petroleum Club in Morgan City.

#### Summary:

Early history: out of the service in 1945, daddy established mud business in 1946 on Atchafalaya River; mud came in on train in sacks, was ground barite; men would transport sacks to rigs via barge; then developed tank with pressure, would mix mud with water and pipe it to barge; operated until around 1974; Ed and Barbara worked in the business; Virginia back from Cuba in 1960s, only lasted a few days working; built dock, now lease it to Texaco; used docks to load pipes, other oilfield equipment on barges; speed was key; companies would request pine needles, Kyles would contact someone at Slidell and get them sent; used old LTC bought from military surplus; one time captain didn't show up, put houseboy on as captain; Brown and Root delivered camellia trees for clients; had 45 percent of mud business.

Tidewater: Doc Laborde had idea to start Tidewater; first got Mr. Charlie floated and drilled for Shell; put together ten people, including Ed, to put up \$1,000 apiece to start Tidewater in late 1950s, 1963; got broker involved who got the financial backing; Doc came down with Zapata Oil Company, was the head of all Zapata's boats; Zapata drilled in 48 feet of water, Doc went out and stayed until job was finished; did Mr. Charlie for Kerr-McGee; Murphy Oil Company built first rig but backed out; Zapata went into menhaden business; Boxdale had the first rig; Doc stayed out there for days at a time; brought in his brother John, Birch Williams; Birch got money from Prudential.

Business operations: would get to know top people, send wives roses on their birthdays; board met in suite on St. Charles Street in New Orleans; John stopped the free flowing whiskey and women, moved the meetings; Birch really ran the company; first boat - Rip Tide, \$30,000; supply vessel; food offshore was remarkable; early contract from Phillips - anything that went wrong Phillips' responsibility; Twenty Grand was first, Vic Guarisco's company; eventually Tidewater took it over; then 2 or 3 companies from Texas came in; then SeaCor; Chouest had man on payroll close to Benny Johnson, had tugs in California; Russell Long was Ed's fraternity brother; Chouest trying to shut Tidewater down with new legislation, Customs planning to treat water as cargo; went to Washington with John; Ed took Long to lunch and got things straightened out.

Petroleum Club: wanted club in Morgan City; worked for 2 years to see how other clubs were run; got copies of all oil company's books; got names of service companies; said won't do business unless join; came up \$30,000 short, got 15 people, made them members of the board, each had to sign a note for \$2,000.

More background: influence with Coast Guard, head of Wildlife and Fisheries; problems with Louisiana schools; Ed in Navy during war, became head of PX, learned how to take care of people on top; started school at University of Southwestern Louisiana, finished at LSU.

Alden J. "Doc" Laborde

New Orleans, LA

January 13, 2005

Interviewed by: Diane Austin, Betsy Plumb

University of Arizona

DA130

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Alden "Doc" Laborde is the founder of ODECO. He also served in WWII, so he was interviewed for the study of the connections between WWII and the offshore oil and gas industry. I contacted Doc at his office, and he agreed to be interviewed. Betsy Plumb of the National D-Day Museum and I met him at his office for the interview.

Alden "Doc" Laborde was born near Alexandria, Louisiana, the son of a school principal. Like others in his town, when he finished high school he enrolled at LSU where he joined the ROTC. He entered Annapolis in 1934, graduated and served as an ensign from 1938 to 1940. He then returned home and remained in the reserves until WWII began. At that time he was called back to the Navy and remained there until the war ended in 1945. Upon his return, Alden got a job working on a seismic crew and then took a job working for Sid Richardson Oil Company on a barge in the marsh. He used the opportunity to learn about drilling and then in 1948 was hired by Kerr McGee as director of marine operations. During his four years with Kerr McGee, he became convinced that offshore drilling should be done from a movable unit. When he could not convince others at the company, he quit and went in search of partners. With backing from Murphy Oil Company, he founded Ocean Drilling and Exploration Company (ODECO) and built the first movable offshore rig, named the Mr. Charlie. He remained with the company until Murphy merged its drilling and exploration companies and sold its rigs to Diamond Offshore.

#### Summary:

Early history: father was schoolteacher, principal in Marksville, Louisiana; listened to the radio in the evening; about tenth grade decided to go into the military, West Point; went to LSU, got into ROTC, stayed one year; no space in West Point, Senator Overton suggested Navy, Annapolis; took year off to work with painter; went to Annapolis in June 1934; during Depression worked one summer laying natural gas pipeline

Military experience: describes Annapolis, attempt to assimilate everyone; training, treatment of freshmen; graduated in four years; first assignment on Battleship Tennessee, operated in and around Pacific; did not get permanent commission because of eyesight; came home 1940 and went into Reserves; went to Lafayette, build a warehouse, WWII came along, went to the Navy, called to active duty February 1942; assigned to Submarine Chaser Training Center in Miami; assigned command, skipper of destroyer assigned convoy work in the North Atlantic; headed for invasion of Japan when atomic bomb dropped; got married before went to North Atlantic, she moved to New York then, our home base, rented apartment; convoy runs, no confirmed hits; memory is of terrible weather conditions and monotony; convoys slow, never lost a ship; went

into Casa Blanca once; transferred to the Pacific in early 1945, on the way to Okinawa when war ended; on shakedown cruise; did minesweeping for six months

Home: discharged at the lakefront in New Orleans, brother know oil company working in Marksville, seismic crew; got a job, running the crew after about a year; Sid Richardson doing exploration in New Orleans, drilling wells in Plaquemines Parish, said they needed old Navy hand to help them; worked on barge from end of 1946 until mid-1948; learned as much as I could, heard about Kerr McGee's offshore discovery; good opportunity with my seaman background; became Marine Superintendent for operations

Designing Mr. Charlie: became obsessed with idea of moveable unit; could not sell it to Kerr McGee, quit to work on it, spent a few months going to companies operating offshore; finally Murphy Oil from Eldorado, Arkansas became enamored with the idea, formed Ocean Drilling and Exploration Company; built first one in yard in New Orleans, named Mr. Charlie after father of owner, tried near the mouth of the Mississippi River; made great discovery on first well, built more; early 1960s; built rig called the Ocean Driller designed specifically to drill anchored in floating position; developed new technology for hooking up the blowout preventers; Texas gave it a try, started the semi-submersibles; changed designs; kept innovating; learned a lot empirically; ODECO did oil and gas exploration; 1980s decided to get rid of rigs. Merged companies and took over production

Benefit of Navy experience: willing to work hard and long, give up a lot of things; integrity and straight shooting; several ex-Navy personnel in company, broad-based engineering background, all ships steam propelled; designed on yellow pad and then turned them over to Naval architect

Changes: principles of drilling haven't changed, strength of materials, muds, seismic exploration has improved

Compare to military: less structured, can't be as heavy handed with employees, lots of similarity in organization, service operation; started Tidewater to service rigs, started out with lots of Navy surplus vessels LCT; could build a better vessel, move the pilot house and the living quarters forward, the whole rest of the vessel and the stern clear; built the Ebb Tide, strange looking but became standard; brother took over Tidewater, busy with ODECO; used other Navy surplus vessels at Kerr McGee, aircraft rescue vessels, surplus tugs, Navy YF barges, converted them for oilfield use

ODECO environment: in early days two or three of us building a rig, hired more people, evolved, had to get more formal, learn how to keep books; had about ten people and hired secretary, hired a guy to do accounting; ODECO purchased diving company; new tools like transfer baskets and blowout preventers helped; as onshore matured could find workers to go offshore; some out of Merchant Marines, best were shrimpers, fishermen from south Louisiana; went to North Sea a few times, rough, lost a rig there, big storm came and beat it to death; we were underdesigned for that environment; not many companies drilling there when we started

First woman: engineer, beginning to require women, some women activists sending people to apply for work, main problem was morale of the men and their family life at home; some

marriages not all that stable; problem with blacks, family life not stable enough to tolerate two or three weeks gone

Effects on Louisiana: affected whole economy; people learned to accept it; early days people did not want to have much to do with people from Oklahoma and Texas, now better; Cajuns and natives have moved in and taken over some of the oil industry as well; infrastructure had to be developed; now have Gulf Island Fabricators, fabrication similar to drilling, high risk work, good hardworking guys

John P. Laborde

New Orleans, LA

June 26, 2002

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS010

### Ethnographic Preface:

John Laborde, brother of Alden "Doc" Laborde, founder of ODECO, was the long-time president and CEO of Tidewater, Inc., the undisputed worldwide leader of the workboat business. Born and raised in Marksville, LA, Laborde served in the Army Infantry in the South Pacific during World War II. He returned to LSU after the war and worked as a Lawyer for Richardson and Bass until 1956, when he agreed to become president of Tidewater, a company his brother was organizing. He was president of the company until retiring in 1994. At 78, he remains on the board and is still active in the business.

### Summary:

Interview provides a nice long-term perspective, from the key individual, of Tidewater and the workboat business since its inception in the early 1950s through the consolidations of the 1980s and 1990s. Laborde discusses the formation of Tidewater and background on Doc Laborde and the other original investors. He talks about building up Tidewater's fleet of boats and the changes in design and technology over time. Other topics include the move into offshore provinces overseas, methods of contracting with oil companies, stories about specific representatives from oil companies with whom Laborde dealt, cyclical financial woes of the service industry, Tidewater's acquisitions and diversification, and the quality of personnel in the company.

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Alfred Lambson

Lafayette, LA

August 15, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW023

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Alfred Lambson was born in Lawtell, Louisiana, in 1917. His father was born in Massachusetts and raised in Chicago; his father moved to the area in about 1910 when he got a 40-acre piece of property in a lottery; his father later worked for the Federal Land Bank. After a year at Western Illinois University, he came back to Opelousas in 1936 to be a secretary for his father in order to make money to get married. Through this work he made contacts with land men and, attracted by the work and money, went to work for an independent land broker, Mr. R. L. Whitlow, in 1937 and moved to Lafayette. After Whitlow died in 1940, he went into the brokerage business for himself, where his French language abilities gave him an advantage. During World War Two he entered the service and served three and a half years stateside. While waiting to be discharged, he roughnecked for a month or two on a drilling rig in south Texas. When he came back to Lafayette in 1946, he went to work for another broker and after nine months had made quite a lot of money. He really wanted to drill wells as an independent operator, so made a deal with a consulting firm, Bates and Cornell, that would allow him to learn from them in return for doing their land work free of charge. After doing that, he partnered with his brother-in-law (Sam Bennett), a petroleum engineer, and for 26 years they promoted, drilled, and operated a number of land wells. When the partnership broke up, he continued along in the same line of business by himself.

#### Summary:

Early life: born in Lawtell, LA in '17; raised in Opelousas; one year of college at Western Illinois University. Father worked for Federal Land Bank; had moved to the area from Chicago in about 1910; mother was a German immigrant from Chicago who died when he was a youth; father also worked as a school principal and a rural mail carrier, and owned some farms. Left college after a year, because he needed to go to work so he could get married to his fiancé (who was from Illinois).

Secretary: worked as a secretary for his father, who was working for the Saint Landry Farm Loan Associations, the Evangeline Farm Loan, and the Avoyelles Farm Loan; made 45 dollars a month and worked up to 60. While working, would meet oil people (land men and brokers); liked what they represented; would type their leases at night for tips (two to 10 dollars); told dad he wanted to go into the industry, his dad regarded it as a game and not a business.

Brokering - Whitlow: asked Mr. Whitlow for a job; did secretarial work; had to type accurately, otherwise you could lose your lease; paid 75 dollars a month at first and raised to 100 after two months; moved to Lafayette in Oct. '37 to go to work for him, operating out of the Gordon Hotel.

Early oil industry in Lafayette: in the late '30s, oil men operated out of office downtown, but weren't many of them; Mayor Roy liked oil people and liked what they were bringing to Lafayette; different sectors of the oil industry went to different communities (geologists, land men, and geophysicists settled in Lafayette). Exploration people had a bad reputation (rough bunch of people); story of girl whose father would not let her date men in the oil business and of being charged more for rent. Lafayette attractive to oil business because had railroad access, a university, and kind of centrally located.

Brokering - on own: went to work for himself doing brokerage in Feb. '40; more oil people coming into town, oil people more readily accepted. Did not get many jobs because young, ambitious, and charged more; charged more because worked harder than anyone else and spoke French; speaking French gave him an advantage in getting leases. Left for three and a half years to serve in the military during World War Two; was less successful when he got back and went to work for another broker; paid a dollar an acre commission and after nine months, had made enough to last several years.

Bates and Cornell: consulting firm that drilled wells as independent operators; made a deal with them to work for them in order to learn that line of work.

Independent operator: to promote, drill, and operate wells, partnered with brother-in-law for 26 years; one of first companies to move into Oil Center; because many more oil people coming in, had talked to Mr. Heymann about building such a center.

Oil Center: needed a place where oil people would be close together so they could exchange information, even with sometimes competitors. Mr. Heymann was a wonderful old gentleman; did a lot for Lafayette and Opelousas (story of teachers during the Depression); bought property from him for his business' building after much pestering.

Onshore and offshore drilling: onshore drilling has diminished over the years because of not as many places to drill (a lot of it has already been produced). Offshore has a number of disadvantages, including being expensive to operate and having to contend with hurricane season, but you don't have titles to worry about.

Price: industry has slowed since '80s; oil got up to 35-40 dollars a barrel and gas got up to 8-10 dollars per thousand cubic feet. In early years, he remembers oil being a dollar a barrel and being hard to sell at that, while gas they just burned off; slight exaggeration, but driving at night from Lafayette to Houston you didn't even have to turn on car lights because of all the gas flares. In old days, sold gas as a [spot?] market, but then started selling on contract, which was problematic for oil companies when gas prices started to rise.

Independent operator - working with majors: preferred to deal with majors because you were always gonna get your money; would drill the well for less than it would cost the majors to do it, and would get a quarter share of the production; assumed all the risk and made all the decisions.

Women: the few women land men (including his current wife and daughter-in-law) are called "land men"; are smart, professional, and detail-oriented.

Blacks: has seen a few Black engineers; oilfield never as racially integrated as other industries; if Black, takes guts to work with White offshore people (could be rough).

Lafayette community: estimates 90 percent of oil people coming into Lafayette had some college education; basis for a good community. Served on school board for four and a half years in early '50s; considered an outsider and an independent.

Jim Lampton

Cold Spring, TX

July 2, 2003

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS041

### Ethnographic Preface:

Jim Lampton graduated from LSU with a degree in geology and joined Shell in 1951. He had worked part time while in school in a lab, and Shell hired him as a paleontologist. After the 1962 federal sale, Lampton moved to research. Later in his career he spent time in Michigan, South and Central America and Indonesia. He finally retired in 1981 after 30 years of service.

### Summary:

Interview covers basics of paleontology and its role in production. Discussion of paleo's role in the 1962 sale including the study group on salt domes. He told the "lead pipe cinch" story. Talked about deep water and turbidites, the Michigan basin and early seismic.

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Patrick Landry

Grand Isle, LA

January 23, 2003

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM059

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Pat Landry was "volunteered" to our project by his wife, Jean, whom I had met briefly on an earlier project while she was working in the Chamber of Commerce office in Cut Off. She is now running the Nature Conservancy operation on Grand Isle and has provided us with a list of local contacts. The Landrys operate a bed and breakfast on the island, in the compound where Pat grew up.

Pat Landry is 64 years old; his grandchildren are the 7th generation of Landrys on Grand Isle. His father and grandfather were oystermen; his great grandfather was a farmer. After graduating from high school, Pat went to work for the Texas A & M Foundation's research project on the island and adjacent Grand Terre, studying the effects of oil activities on oysters and the coastal environment. "Project 9" generally absolved the oil companies of blame for oyster mortalities, and in the process, discovered "Dermo," a viral fungus affecting oysters. The researchers wanted Landry to pursue a degree in marine biology, but he opted to go into the oil business. He retired in 1996 as Conoco's Grand Isle base manager.

#### Summary:

Growing up: learned to read and write in French; grandfather was real stickler for proper pronunciation; great grandfather was farmer, grandfather and father were oystermen; 1954 father sold oyster business and built charter boat; father's older brother had converted shrimp boat to charterboat; I was deckhand while not in school, then got captain's license at 18, would fill in for him; graduated high school then went to work for Texas A & M Research Foundation; dad had worked for them on and off with oyster boats; study effects of oil on oysters; closed labs down about 1960; went to Service for 2 years, came back and started working in oil fields.

Life as oil started: farmers or fishermen, some merchants; late 40s/early 50s, oil companies came in, build platforms, needed help; no one down here had expertise to get high-end jobs; Exxon came 48/49; jobs paid pretty good, even as contractors, welding, crane operators, whole array of jobs, people here sharp with hands; sister graduated from school in Lockport, went to business college, hired as first women to work in office - Exxon's division office here; production platforms enhanced fishing

Drift away from farming: land split up so many times for children, no one had big enough plots; cucumbers was main crop because sandy rich soil and mild climate; get first crop into French Market, then had time for second crop before winter; also vegetables as secondary crop;

Plantations: 3 big ones, sugar cane farming, also at Grand Terre; soil getting depleted; Grand Terre became big orange orchard; Leeville also in oranges

Work: 70% of population went to work in oil; Conoco came in with tank battery and separator; then Free port Sulphur; brought in jobs for boats; local people formed welding contracting companies; helicopter bases here

Exxon: built own town, since not a lot of rental to their standards; "Humble Camp"; created subdivision for their helicopter division; Humble owned them, Rotary (later PHI) operated them

Conoco: chartered PHI; had company housing on base, never a town; living quarters out in field

Town: incorporated early 60s; needed natural gas, but Exxon had already built pipeline; made deal with Conoco to buy gas; life more industrialized, lot more traffic, but we had tourists way back in plantation days; slave cabins became tourist cabins; had big hotel, Beach Club, largest billiard room in world, but 1893 storm demolished it before it was finished; 1915 storm but no lives lost

Landry family: tract of land at Cheniere and here, left after storm of '93; had cut down all the oak trees at Cheniere, wouldn't do it here

Cheniere: was mostly fishing, most of population lived there, 1st Jefferson Parish school there (19th century); shrimp drying platforms

Changes: oysters were sold locally or up the bayou; finally put in road in late '30s, could bring ice down; that put shrimp drying platforms out of business; Orientals and Filipinos manned platforms; still some drying in '50s, small packages for stores

Freeport: living quarters out in gulf; working 7/7; so didn't set up town

His career: after service, wireline for 2 years, then offer from Conoco as roustabout on tank battery here; after Betsy in '65, flooded everything; requested to go offshore, became pumper, 7/7, for 20 years, then asked to come back because I had captain's license and Conoco's transportation was all screwed up, as transportation manager in 1980; tough job trying to make drilling and production work together; had 42 boats, 7 helicopters, seaplanes, own air controller; also in charge of security, when drugs became problem and things were disappearing; hardly ever home, always responding to EPA regulations on drilling mud; expanded base, went from so-so operation to top notch operation, but I had good supervisors that would back me up

Safety: became real concern, people suing like crazy in early '80s; had to document everything;

Bust: people used to spending big money, then faucet was shut off; people couldn't adjust fast enough, went belly up; companies run as family business mostly survived, could get back to lean mode of operation

Depression: dad would take people fishing on weekends, rent their house, mod/dad/sister would sleep in the shed; spent you money on sugar, flour, cooking oil; always had fish, oysters, crabs, eggs; swap with neighbors; these houses built in 1931, had own power plant, battery plant, houses run off battery power, we had electric lights, "lap of luxury"; had electric lights in the outhouse

Incorporation: biggest reason was water; started putting in shallow wells, but couldn't drink it, too much iron; saved rainwater for cooking; people wanted pipeline; gas was secondary; electricity in, I guess, '38, by the time they had a road

Otto Candies: sweetheart deal; Otto had boats, had contacts, boats had to work for Otto; rent them out to Exxon, grew like crazy; made sure they got what they wanted; held that until '80s when they finally started to go out on their own

Conoco: pioneered TLPs in Green Canyon, now sold everything, little operation in Fourchon; retirees' supper in New Orleans; Phillips cutting out insurance, everything; my medical went from \$285 and \$825 a month

Oyster lab: right on Texaco property; had most of inland drilling, and thus lawsuits, so they built the lab; Dr. Mackin led the research; we found Dermo disease, in summer, rainfall low, salinities high, river flood low, little fresh water; snail was big enemy, my dad knew that; fresh water would kill off predators; "if you don't put a whole lot of oil, they can survive; but they will have an oily taste" but they'll purge themselves

Father's oyster leases: 25 miles north, 2 camps; every 2 years, get seed oysters at mouth of the river to replenish, speed up process; had guards; because they had these foreigners that worked at the mouth of the river, they'd dredge all night long, clean you out; guard had to stay all summer long; would sell at French Market for \$.25/sack; then with road, trucks would come down, made life easier; everybody who stayed in oyster business made good money, prices escalated; daddy loved the business, had to know cash flow, because you made money in winter, then upkeep on boats in summer

MMS: if your compressors went down and you had to flair gas, you'd lose gas revenues and MMS would charge you for the flared gas; they even had windfall profits tax, they took some more out; big companies, any little slip, Coast Guard and MMS would be on you like bees on a honey pot

Sylvia Jean Landry

Thibodaux, LA

January 21, 2005

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA135

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Jean Landry works for the Nature Conservancy and is an active member of many southern Louisiana organizations and civic boards. She was recommended to us as an excellent point of contact for Grand Isle and helped us identify and arrange interviews with people from the island. However, she had never been interviewed. I called her and explained that I was interested in interviewing her and she agreed. We met at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux.

Sylvia Jean Baugh Landry was born in Arkadia, Florida. Her father was a drilling roustabout until 1963 when he went into business for himself running B & J Wireline. From age 2 to 15, Jean and her family moved from place to place in Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. She moved to Grand Isle, Louisiana in 1962 and remains there to this day. When her father started his company, her mother went to work for him as a bookkeeper and Jean helped in the office. Jean graduated from high school and realized she wanted more education, so she enrolled at Nicholls State University in Thibodaux where she studied secretarial services. She met her husband when he was home on leave getting ready to go to Korea. They married when he returned. Jean's husband worked first as a drilling roustabout and then got a job with Continental Oil Company; he worked a 7 and 7 schedule for 15 years. The couple had and raised four children. They also started a diesel rental business and developed a trailer park, both of which Jean managed when her husband was offshore. In 1980 Jean went to work for an optometrist, then for the Grand Isle Tourist Commission, and finally as manager for the Nature Conservancy.

#### Summary:

This interview is about the family and community impacts of the oil and gas industry.

**Early years:** Jean was born in Acadia, Florida shortly after her father returned from the war. Two years later, they moved to New Iberia, Louisiana when her father pursued economic niches with the oil and gas industry at Sunnyland Drilling as a roustabout. Then went to work for Booker Drilling until 1963, at which point he started his own business. While working offshore, he would work 21 days out and 7 back. The father's absence and constant mobility had great impacts on the family life.

**Schools:** By the time she was in the fourth grade, Jean had been in twelve different schools and had lived in Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. In response to such mobility, they inevitably bought a mobile home. When she was eight they rented a house in New Iberia and her and her 7 siblings, all brother, lived there with their mom. With the father gone, every one had to pitch in more, especially when one or two would be sick. Whenever there would be a crisis, they had to

rely heavily on extended family. On the land they rented in New Iberia, there was a pecan grove, which they would collect during the fall months and sell for Christmas money. The surrounding properties Due to high mobility, Jean adapted by being able to make friends fast, as well a much closer bond between herself and her siblings. Jean defines her youth, up till the age of 16, as being at school then coming home to help her mom, in part due to the fact that she was the oldest. At 16, she got her first job away from home working as a waitress while living in Grand Isle.

Grand Isle: The community responded well to the oil industry because it brought with it economic growth. More stores, more services, renting of homes, etc. the population grew from 2,000-9,000 during the oil boom, then in the eighties with the oil crisis, the town gradually got smaller again over a five year period down to it's original size. To accommodate such a fast growing population, hotels went up and individuals would rent house by the month. Exxon also established an Exxon camp where they built homes. Fortunately, tourism had been part of the local economy for the last hundred years, and when the economic bust from the oil industry subsided, the tourist economy stayed relatively stable. The tourist season is from April to October. The only time the tourism economy suffered is when hurricanes would strike.

Ken Lerner

Golden, CO

September 24, 2002

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS011

Ethnographic Preface:

Dr. Ken Lerner is Charles Henry Green Chair of Exploration Geophysics at the Colorado School of Mines. Prior to his academic career, he was vice president of geophysical research at Western Geophysical, one of the leading seismic contractors for the oil and gas industry. Lerner has received the highest awards from various geophysical professional organizations for his contributions to the science of seismic data processing. He did pioneering work on deconvolution, noise and multiple attenuation, dip-moveout correction, statics correction, and migration.

Summary:

Interview covers the history of Western Geophysical, company pioneers, such as Carl Savit and Booth Strange, and research at Western. A good part of the interview discusses the technology of seismic migration and the processing of 3-D seismic data. He also talks about the problems with managing technology and the cyclical swings in the geophysical contracting industry.

William Dudley Lastrapes

Lafayette, LA

February 25, 2003

Interviewed by: David DiTucci

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

DD013

#### Ethnographic Preface:

William "Dud" Lastrapes was born in New Orleans, but moved to Opelousas, Louisiana when he was about three weeks old. After graduating from high school there in 1946, he went to Southwestern Louisiana Institute (now ULL) where he completed his degree in 1950. He worked in radio broadcasting for a few months before joining the Air Force in early 1951. When he returned, he went back into radio for six months, before joining Channel 10 (KOFY) TV. In 1970, he left the station and went into banking and later insurance. In 1972 and '78 he was elected to the school board. From 1980 to '92 he served as mayor to Lafayette. From 1990-92 he sat on the MMS board as an appointee of President Bush's. In 1992, he was elected to a two-year term as State Chairman of the Republican Party. Since that time he has done health and life insurance in Lafayette. During his interview, he discusses in-depth the local Republican Party and some of the things he dealt with during the economic down and upturns the community experienced while he was mayor. He particularly describes the local utility system.

#### Summary:

Summary of career: grew up in Opelousas; went to SLI, graduating in '50; went into radio broadcasting; in '51 joined the Air Force and served four years; came back and went back to radio; six months later (June '55) joined Channel 10 television in Lafayette; in the '70s went into banking and then insurance and was elected to the school board; in '80 became mayor; since leaving office ('92), served as State Chairman of the Republican Party and got into health and life insurance work.

Involvement in politics: got into it because liked to follow the news and had spent years covering politics; inspired to get into broadcasting because of an uncle who was a pioneer in radio in New Orleans; television work helped give him exposure that helped give him name and face recognition when running for office.

Political parties in '50-60s: he became a Republican in '59; Republicans rare (90% Democrats), though many moderate to conservative Democrats; had closed primaries and 90% of election activities took place in Democratic Primaries; in '70s governor Edwards established open primaries (describes and evaluates system). Registrar of voters would tell people their vote would not count if they were registered Republican; thinks competition between parties and in general is good. Over time, people saw that Republicans were not that bad and some switched parties; many people today don't just vote along party lines; some people vote Republican, but cling to Democratic Party affiliation because of tradition. Some positions like U.S. attorneys and

postmasters were appointed by Republican presidents, which brought Republican officials to the area. Early Republicans evoked more puzzlement, rather than animosity from Democrats.

Influx of oil-related people: oil people made community more heterogeneous; over the years local Cajuns and out of state oil people have blended; thinks most of the oil people tended toward the conservative side - continues to impact local politics; oil people and the ideas they brought were fairly well-accepted in the community.

Running as Republican for school board: before open primaries; Charlie Patterson and he were maybe the first two Republicans to be elected to the school board; south side of Lafayette was and is heavily conservative, many residents are employed in oil-related work. Easier to run for mayor as Republican in '80; by that time, "a lot of ground had been plowed"; party tickets were not as important.

Being mayor: during his 12 years, economy was high, low, and on a comeback; Nixon-established revenue sharing coming to an end under Regan, forced adjustments in local budgets, which was good because made them more independent from feds; sewage plant built. Downturn in economy also forced adjustment.

Vision Lafayette 2000: year-long project begun in '86; committees, established short- and long-term goals for different sectors of the community; unemployment at that time was about 15 percent and this gave community members something to get involved in and sparked a little bit of positive activity. Committee on education looked at a merit system for teacher's pay used in Tennessee; liked system, but LA education controlled by state.

Lafayette Utilities System (LUS): serious asset for city; describes how structured - engineering firm oversees to protect bond holders; after paying bond holders and operation costs, remaining revenue goes to city's general fund.

Local sales tax: two percent; first percent added in '61 and second added in '85; describes percentage of each of those that go for different parts of the city budgetary funds.

Local energy: in late '70s, under concern over oil and gas shortages, city built a coal-fired generation plant up near Alexandria, Louisiana Energy and Power Authority (LEPA); has long-range coal contracts to buy coal from Wyoming; plant produces 70-80 percent of city's energy; LEPA is partnership between several LA cities. Because coal is cheap, utility rates in city have remained low and the system has been able to grow; but in a sense it's been very disturbing in that an area that produces so much gas, this city could not be a major gas customer.

Maurice Heymann: M. Heymann helped dream up and develop the Oil Center; was acquainted with him; M. Heymann was known as an entrepreneur-philanthropist.

MMS work: appointed by President Bush in '92; only thing he did was try to show that nature and oil industry could coexist.

Current politics: people tend to focus on state and federal elections; would like people to lean less on higher levels of government and get things done locally. Discusses Homestead Exemption. Higher levels of education might not be for everybody, some can learn a trade and do quite well in life.

Bud Latham

Madisonville, LA

July 16, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM047

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Bud Latham, owner of Bud's Boat Rentals in Venice until a couple of years ago, had been contacted earlier by Diane Austin. I interviewed Bud at his home in Madisonville, on the North Shore. He has a large pond in the front yard, which he stocks with catfish.

Originally from Mississippi, Bud Latham started as a roustabout in Cameron, then went over to Venice in 1953 as a roustabout with a contractor. A job opened up with Chevron, and Bud took it. Working for an oil company was thought to be the best job, but he found himself working twice as hard, with a cut in salary, so he quit and went back with the contractor. He bought a 32 foot shrimp lugger and put it to work for McDermott, which had a contract to lay a 30" pipeline from Southwest Pass to Larose. At one time, Bud's Boat Rentals had 32 boats, from 105' crewboats down to 26-27 foot utility boats, and the company was well known throughout the Gulf. He went through a Chapter 11 bankruptcy in 1984 but recovered. He sold out to Mr. Gary Circovich, a local, because of frustration with the Coast Guard, the huge costs of insurance - companies requiring \$5 million on a boat - and an increase in frivolous injury claims.

#### Summary:

Boat rental business: no such thing as a contract - all have 5-day cancellation clauses; oil companies get boat people to compete against each other, but you control your own price; his jobs are primarily checking wells, and hauling personnel and materials; he's borrowed from some big lenders - CIT, GMAC, Associated Discounts - but they try to put you out of business; boat business is up and down - he sold 2 years ago, had 14 boats left, and after 6 months, the new owner had boats sitting up, no work; Tidewater and ECO have monopolies, which government should be looking into.

Tax credits: used to be able to get 7% investment tax credit for building/buying boats, then you depreciate boat; had to keep boat for 7 years, after that you didn't care about it; this hurt us [e.g., too many boats?]; had lots of "lawyers" buying boats, trying to run them through existing boat companies.

Coast Guard: he doesn't even like to be around them; inspectors are from New Orleans, not Venice; always changing regulations and certifications for equipment, e.g. fire extinguishers, life jackets.

Labor: always been hard to get and keep good hands; his workers came from all over, would follow demand and money - e.g., skip around for more money; some "colored" work offshore

and on boats; safety records not getting any better or worse - people will hurt themselves no matter what you do; 85% of offshore workers live out of parish.

Hurricanes: lost his house in Betsy, but didn't lose any boats; would tie up boats in their slips, with bridle allowing them to move up and down with water level; barrooms in Venice were first things to open up after hurricane.

Cycles: oil companies can make money at \$15/bbl, but aren't doing much work; Gulf/Chevron/Shell selling marginal fields, but smaller companies not doing much workover.

Verdie Laws

Patterson, LA

November 18, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA075

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Verdie Laws by Steve Shirley. Verdie moved to Morgan City in 1958 when her husband took a job at Cameron Iron Works. She raised two children and went back to work in 1978 after she and her husband were divorced. She worked at Oceaneering for nine and a half years and was laid off in 1987 when the oil and gas industry hit a low. She then had several jobs both in and out of the oil and gas industry but preferred working in the industry. She continued working full time until 1999, ending her career working for a boat construction company.

#### Summary:

Occupational history: Originally from Eunice; moved to Morgan City in 1958 with husband; went back to work in 1976 and worked full time till the end of 1999; worked at Oceaneering International for 9.5 years, then at local supermarket chain for one year during the recession; then McDermott for 1.5 years, then to hospital as assistant to the CEO for five years; then to Service Marine Industries for five years, they were building casino boats and repairing offshore vessels; then briefly at Swift Ships before retiring

Personal history: Moved from Beaumont, Texas; severe recession in 1958, Morgan City was the only place husband could find a job; machinist for Cameron Iron Works; Verdie did not work while children were young; married 8.5 years before had children; Morgan City very closed, not friendly or accepting when arrived; took a long time for it to change; at McDermott there were 9 men and Verdie in the office, used to call her a Yankee because from north of I-10; divorced and went back to school when 40 years old; he moved to Saudi Arabia, needed to make a living for the children

Oceaneering: Started as secretary for the bell and saturation managers; then promoted to secretary to the vice president of the Gulf Coast Division, then executive secretary to the general manager; then personnel manager for the whole division; was the odd duck, 99.9 percent men; always accepted; at one point 500 people employed, 23 women; about 200 people in the company when started; at one point was crew changing 52 people out of Brazil every month; 2 offices in Brazil, one in Trinidad; responsible for the logistics of crew changes; each contract called for different things; divers on company payroll, mostly worked 28 and 28; would call the divers, office in Brazil, arrange to have them picked up; before you could dial direct, had to call overseas operator; had telex machine for communicating; forever in meetings

Issues: Safety was of paramount importance; never told anyone when someone was offshore because it might endanger his family; not a lot of turnover in those years; everyone pulled

together when an accident; no fatalities during years at Oceaneering; guys would come in and tell their problems; knew of marital problems, Johnny Johnson had hunting accident, would go to his home twice a week to get jobs to parcel out to various managers; he made sure everyone was informed; good sales staff, excellent repair people; had to keep up good PR with the community, divers didn't behave all the time; had to take good care of families; if the wife is not happy, the diver is not happy; used to arrange socials for wives, rented the Petroleum Club; they had to feel they could come to somebody in the company with real problems; get wives together so they could get to know each other and support each other

Perceptions in community: Divers not viewed favorably; had to work on reputation; United Way, Toys for Tots; many of the divers were single; had to be a little crazy to be a diver; bell and saturation divers made more money; had pay rates for descending, ascending, time down, decompression chamber, and special jobs like wet welding; divers could make a lot of money in a few years

Finding divers: Worked in personnel for five years; would generally hire tenders and grow them into divers; at one point was given responsibility for hiring because things got so busy; hired a lumberjack from Washington; at the time did not hire anyone who had not been to diving school; Oceaneering owned a diving school on the west coast, still not enough; of 200 employees, 150 were divers; they came from everywhere; could tell which ones would make it; no females at the time

Downturn: First big layoff at Oceaneering was in 1987; general manager agonized over it for two weeks; first anyone reporting to him took 10 percent pay cut; then further cuts, then layoffs; people who were laid off moved out of the community; came to call Atlanta the Ville Platte East, a community east of Lafayette; did not move because children had had enough turmoil, had house in Morgan City; there were lots of boarded up stores; less attendance at church, school programs; very scary; didn't know if you might have to move; was out of work August 1989 to May 1990; children grown and gone; Louisiana only gave six months unemployment; ended up in supermarket

Jobs: Not happy, took cut in pay to go to McDermott in new department; McDermott had contracts with the Navy; stayed 1.5 years but offered job with better pay at the hospital; liked the oilfield better; saw ad in paper for Service Marine; was 60 years old but was hired; company had been repair facility, but the owner actively went after the casino market; had 500 people; different end of the industry, but similar to diving

Working in Male Environment: Could not be a shrinking violet; had to hold your own; there's a good old boy network anywhere; in general never had a problem; oilfield paid better, and could meet lots of interesting people from everywhere; Service Marine went into Chapter 11; got call from Swift Ships; saturation diving relegated small companies to certain segment of the industry because they could not compete; working at Oceaneering was such a change, had led a sheltered life until then; had to learn so many new terms; was very fortunate that they would answer questions; diving was a whole new environment, things had never heard about; helped compile a glossary; learned by asking questions

Reflections: Never in my wildest dreams imagined working in the industry, especially with reputation; ex-husband could not believe it; lots of women were aghast when they learned where I worked; I always came to the defense of the divers; Dr. Daniel Youngblood was hyperbaric specialist, consultant for the whole company; was interviewed by four people before got the job; son worked at Oceaneering during his senior year in high school in program where work half day and go to school half day; daughter said no thank you; when left Oceaneering did not know how to use a computer; took business course at Young Memorial.

Herman LeBlanc

Cocodrie, LA

January 27, 2002, January 29, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB032, EB036

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I received Herman LeBlanc's name from Diane Austin. She had received his name from Jerome Zeringue. Herman was said to be related to the Lapyrouse family of Cocodrie who opened a general store back in the 30's and 40's. We decided to meet at the general store as I had never been there before.

Herman worked on boats all his life. In 1955, he began working on crew boats full time. He made captain in two years and was working with his father from then on. He and his father started up a boat business running crews and supplies to the rigs. All of the initial jobs were inshore jobs; in 1960, he began running boats offshore, mainly for Exxon.

#### Summary of EB032:

**Background:** Herman was born and raised in southern Louisiana and has worked on boats his whole life. He worked on boats during the summers off when he was in high school. He says the best, most stable income comes from running boats and that Cajun fishermen were the best boat captains.

**Crew boats:** He began working on crew boats in 1955 and made captain in 2 years. After that, he was working with his father most of the time. They began a boat business running crews and supplies to the rigs. The oil field was expanding so fast that you didn't have to look very hard to find jobs. All of the initial jobs were inshore jobs. In 1960, he began running boats offshore, mainly for Exxon.

**Unionization:** Herman wanted to unionize the boating industry. He saw how companies would just fold because they didn't have enough contacts or that one boat company would work for less money. In 1957-58, he was in a bad wreck and hurt his back badly. That changed his ability to work on the boats full time, so he increasingly did work in the office and got more into the politics of the job.

He conducted an interview with the Miami Herald in the late 80's about unionizing, and it caused such a stink that Peter Jennings came down to Louisiana to interview him. According to Herman, the interview was never aired because it stepped on too many toes within the industry.

## Summary of EB036:

Family: When the oil industry first arrived, the local economy consisted of agriculture and fishing, both of which were unreliable source of income. The oil companies offered a steady job and paycheck which attracted many workers. This, in turn, caused changes in family life. Men who were home a great deal of the year, were now working 14 days out and 7 days in, resulting in the men being gone for half the year.

Company loyalties: At first, companies were loyal to their employees and the employees reciprocated. This began to change in the early seventies when labor "quarrels" began to arise in certain companies. Then, during the Reagan era, things got really bad. "Reaganomics" wanted to break up the oil companies to produce more competition and lower gas prices for California. At the same time, through a Supreme Court decision, the oil companies won the right to hire "contract hands" which did away with the protection of unions as well save the companies money, due to the negative financial impacts of "Reaganomics", with not having to pay for benefits and bonuses. These two events acted as terrible catalyst for what happened next. This caused a decrease in employee loyalty. The advent of contract hands depressed worker wages causing conflict amongst the laborers. After this, the companies began to rally together to suppress inter-company competition and raise oil prices. Next, mergers began which consolidated the profits and control of the resources. Without competition, this gave the companies the means by which they could raise the gas prices and the consumer was helpless to stop it because they were dependent on the gas.

Joseph LeBlanc

Lafayette, LA

August 8, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW020

### Ethnographic Preface:

Joseph LeBlanc was born in 1939 and raised in Abbeville, Louisiana; his father was a salesman and died when he was 13 years old. After graduating from high school in 1957, he went to college at Northeastern where he studied pharmacy, then transferred to USL and studied chemistry. He tired of school after two years and enlisted in the Army. In 1962 he went to work for Cardinal Wireline Company in New Iberia; over the next nine years he worked his way up from helper to senior operator. At the request of Union Oil of California (Unocal), he went to work for them in 1970. He retired in 1997. He provides details of his first job offshore, accidents, the relationship between offshore operations and the MMS, and he reflects on working in the industry, his choice to retire, and the impact offshore work has on workers' families.

### Summary:

Early life: born ('39) and raised in Abbeville; father was a salesman and died when he was 13 of heart failure. Graduated high school in '57; went to Northeast and USL but didn't graduate. Joined the Army in '59. In '62, he was out of the service and married, so got a job with Cardinal Wireline where he could make a decent salary.

Cardinal Wireline: started as a helper and when he left in '70 he was senior operator. 120 hour work week was pretty normal; describes typical day; describes first job offshore (Kerr-McGee platform) where not enough sleeping quarters and was up working for four nights straight; got paid for a minimum of 12 hours a day when working offshore; not much to do offshore.

Wirelines: did not do wireline at night; used to involve a lot of manual labor, but today cranes and such are used. Paraffin buildup impedes production (describes); allowables.

Accidents: was in several helicopter crashes (describes); eventually industry developed strategies to decrease helicopter accidents. Describes incident where he broke his ankle and leg offshore; describes incident where man on an oil tow died; fire on a Shell platform. Oil companies always responded immediately to accidents.

Radios: each company had a frequency; could transmit farther than you could receive.

Unocal: had worked jobs for them with Cardinal; they asked him to come work for them; thought about for two years before accepting the job because would make less money. Worked seven-and-seven (less than before) mostly offshore; in mid '70s was promoted to production foreman; worked some construction. Today have better training, safety, and schooling; more paperwork.

MMS: some of what they did was very good for the oilfield; raised awareness about safety. Early inspectors were not knowledgeable and inspections were a joke; over time MMS and industry realized they needed to shape up; lots of paperwork. Garbage, sewage, and water systems.

Workers: needed to know how to fix problems because on platforms usually just a few people; farm boys made good workers because familiar with machinery and weren't afraid to tackle a problem. Needed commonsense and would learn through experience.

Retirement: in late '90s realized he was not going to advance any higher and didn't want to learn anything new; had heart trouble.

Technology: early calculators were expensive. He got into computers as a hobby before introduced in his work; teaching crew how to use computers.

Offshore: had "shelters" on platforms for emergency quarters; food was pretty good (steak).

Families: working offshore hardest on families; wife had to be a very strong woman. Holidays and sneaking crews back onshore. Hurricanes and assistance from Unocal; Unocal was more family-oriented than other companies.

Women and minorities: describes one female who worked for him who was pregnant. Saw some blacks in the '60s, more in the '70s; most were very conscientious workers. Never noticed any prejudice; only problems were if somebody did not do their work.

Industry cycles: never thought that he might lose his job; Unocal never laid anyone off until the '90s; always were understaffed.

School teachers: some worked in industry to increase their income; good office workers and good with paperwork.

Harry and Gladys LeBoeuf

Morgan City, LA

January 2, 2003, July 21, 2004

Interviewed by: Diane Austin, Jamie Christy

University of Arizona, University of Houston/History International  
DA083, MMS062

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I (Diane) was referred to Harry LeBoeuf by John Ryan. Harry goes to the exercise club where John's wife works out, and he and John sit, drink coffee, and talk. I called Harry on New Year's Eve, the day he got out of the hospital after having stents in his arteries cleared. He was in the shower when I called, and his wife, Gladys, told me to call him back in a half hour. He was happy to meet with me, and we scheduled the interview for the 2nd and said he would be feeling fine. When I arrived at his house, he told me he did not know if he would have much to say but he was willing to tell me what he knew. Of course, that turned out to be quite a bit. I invited Gladys to join us, and she listened through most of the interview and then participated when we started talking about the effects of the industry on the community. Jamie Christy returned to reinterview Harry in July 2004.

Harry was born in Houma-Montegut, Louisiana. His father was a fisherman and a trapper. Harry graduated high school in Houma then went into amphibious operations in the Navy in 1944. He participated in landings at Okinawa and Iwo Jima. After World War II, Harry came back to Montegut and began working for Texaco, which he continued throughout his entire career, beginning in February 1948 and retiring in September 1987. He began as a roustabout, advanced to gauger/pumper onshore, and then moved offshore where there were more challenges and more money. In 1962, he was Texaco's first pumper offshore, and a couple of years later he became the company's first production foreman, a job he retained until about 1974. In that year, he moved into Texaco's offshore district office in Morgan City as production supervisor in charge of all Texaco offshore production. After retirement, Harry contracted for Texaco until 1992. Harry's wife, Gladys, worked as a schoolteacher throughout her career, moving from her hometown in Montegut to Morgan City in 1975. Gladys began teaching during WWII when teacher shortages were acute, and she continued in that profession until her retirement.

#### Summary of DA083:

Personal history: From Montegut, Texaco was the predominant company there; everyone looked at Texaco as "The Company;" grew up wanting to go work for Texaco; started at age 21 working on 6 and 6 schedule, after 15 years switched to 7 and 7; good way to work because did things during time off; wife was teaching school; started as roustabout, then gauger/pumper onshore; then went offshore; Texaco developed offshore department; more challenge, more money; in 1962 was first Texaco pumper offshore; stayed out on platform with drilling rig and quarters; good food; contributed to heart disease

Harry work history: Started February 1948, worked till September 1987; went offshore before Texaco had offshore department; drilled the first offshore wells about 1960; then Texaco founded offshore district with office in Morgan City; prior to that, three district offices in south Louisiana were in Harvey, Houma, and New Iberia

First day offshore: Went out at night; on Mr. Gas II drilling rig, a jackup rig; rough waters, boat backed up to the rig; told to get in the basket, no idea what they were doing to me; was sent to test the well, lots of leisure time before the well was drilled, had three or four meals a day; describes testing a well; only had FM radio for communication; could not communicate with home, ship-to-shore telephone

Gladys: Retired teacher; moved to Morgan City in 1975 during the boom; from Montegut; drastic housing shortage; only two houses for sale, none to rent; started teaching during WWII during teacher shortage; had been good student in school, principal asked if interested in teaching; took the job, went to school nights and weekends; got married in 1947

Harry career: Was in the Navy; then got out and drove crew boat for Texaco seismic crew; had to be 21 to work for Texaco, so kept applying for job till got on with the company; worked for brother on crew boat hired to Texaco to drill surface wells; brother had two small, shallow water boats

Gladys career: Started teaching at mid-term in 1946 in first and second grade; ended up teaching about every grade; has as many as 40 students at a time; school built in Montegut in 1912; Montegut was blossoming at the time, had every convenience; the ward had several large oilfields and was rich, the policy jury spent a lot of money in the town; had a large auditorium, children were safe; about 250 in the school; were rebuilding the school in Point Aux Chenes; taught the Indians in a one-room school; Baptists had a school down there; Catholic priests concerned so urged superintendent to open school for Indian children; tiered system for whites, blacks, Indians; Indians had the barest necessities, spoke French; Gladys' father was Ruiz, Spanish; Gladys hired Cuban babysitter

Cubans: South Coast Sugar Mill brought Cuban chemists, Gladys only one able to speak Spanish so hired to tutor their children; Cubans came seasonally, about three families, mostly for grinding season; company provided housing; moved to Montegut when three years old, during Depression, daddy went to work for sugar mill; Gladys' Family had farm in Valenzuela outside Donaldsonville

Texaco: Had leases on the land; was the jumping off place to the lakes; had shipyard for drilling rigs; got drilling muds, dug with shovels; about 7 miles below Montegut community started, company provided housing for 2-3 executives; Humble had community, provided housing near Humble Bridge, wood frame; Texaco houses all gone, moved to Houma about 1955-1960, once they started concentrating on offshore; Texaco had yards in New Iberia and Harvey; Harvey yard started 1948, all came out of Houma before that; everyone worked out of an old houseboat - The Quarterboat Hooks, gradually built everything up over 2-3 years

Moving over water: Started inshore over the lakes; 40 people on a platform; offshore when drilling a rig would have 60 or 70 people; just 10-15 during production; anything over 3-4 people required a cook; Harry worked as production foreman in Lafitte two years; first time Texaco had production foremen; toolpushers were both drilling and production foremen; worked 6 and 4 till about 1963 or 1964, then went to 7 and 7; in first offshore district, lived in Montegut and would go out 7 days till about 1974; in 1974 moved into office in Morgan City as production supervisor in charge of all Texaco offshore production; responsible for getting platforms built; went from floor with grating to solid decks so fluids then piped to vessels; went to higher levels of gas processing to get ready for sale; platforms increased in size to accommodate equipment needed to comply with federal regulations; then got smaller again; regulations mainly about water quality; until then everything would just go overboard, no regulations; the regulations were generally seen as good, but a lot was hard, hard to figure out why company was asked to do certain things

Education and training: Change happened because people sent to school, including top management; pollution control schools, firefighting schools; started firefighting school at warehouse; everyone working offshore had to be certified by T2; built the furniture for the school in my carport; held classes 8 hours per day for a week; on off days because could not spare the workers during their shift; would have continuous school; MMS had to approve and observe all classes; no one in Morgan City doing schools; Shell and Mobile started doing their own; Brasseaux started a school in New Iberia; BWB in Houma; started about 1980, regs evolved little by little; not much turnover offshore or anywhere; at that time if you went to work for Texaco you went to work for life; became superintendent after Texaco bought Getty and did restructuring; was a non-engineer in the position, they were trying to get engineers in as superintendents

Schedule: Worked 5 and 2 schedule when moved to office; used to do lots of house wiring, plumbing in time off; moved to Morgan City when began 5 and 2 and had to buy a house that was already built; no time; it bothered me for a long time; got more hours and lots more work; with 5 and 2 are on all the time; after retired did consulting work for the Ventura Office; Texaco acquired property in California when bought Getty; had platform in the channel and built a new one; completely automated; also did some inspecting in Korea on platform there; stayed in consulting about 2 years after retirement; Getty and Texaco operated in two different modes; went to every field in California, they had a treater blow up, no safety stuff on it; were taking shortcuts

Finding employees: Had mandate to hire blacks, but terrible time finding them; we didn't know them, knew nothing about them; some we hired were bums; hired from south Louisiana, none from Morgan City; they would hire the engineers right out of school, lots of turnover among the engineers because someone would offer them a dollar more and they'd go; lots of them did not like Morgan City, nothing to do on their time off; lots of turnover to Lafayette to Superior and Marathon

Morgan City: Schools were overcrowded; Gladys left a class of 23 to teach a class of 38; never had had discipline problems before, but discipline was rough; many teachers were the wives of people working in the oil industry; raised two children, youngest was 12 when came to Morgan

City, did not want to come; things stayed good for 5-6 years, now lots of businesses are closed; when first came people shopped locally; downturn came in 1987, both were retired and didn't notice it too much; Harry was in California for a couple of years; Gladys ran the household the whole time they were raising kids; her daddy was a farmer, home all the time, but the mother still raised the children

Starting with Texaco: Harry had been working 15 and 4 before getting on with Texaco, so that was an improvement; he worked doing house wiring and plumbing in his time off; living in a small town, everyone helped each other; Texaco was the only employer at the time he was looking for work; Arco and other companies came later; never considered working for the sugar mill because could not advance; Harry's dad died when he was 7, mother raised him, principal asked Gladys to help get him through high school

Communities: Montegut was an oilfield town; a bus ran from Montegut to the Texaco office to Houma; Morgan City different; Montegut was family oriented, Morgan City was business oriented, a partying town; Harry joined Country Club in Morgan City so daughter could go swimming and make friends; social groups were strictly related to the oilfield; had an engineering group for people from Mobil, Kerr-McGee, Chevron, Texaco; service people were tied in with the engineers, party every night; used to have crawfish boils every other day; when the offices closed most people moved with the company; Harry and Bill Wilson are among the few from the Texaco office who stayed in Morgan City; Texaco kept a warehouse in Morgan City, a few people stayed

Changes: It was an abandonment; a lot of businesses closed, lots of houses for sale; in the past few years have had a complete breakdown of Texaco; CEO sold it out; it's a feeling of abandonment, lost something you were proud of and enjoyed having; younger people don't have a sense of belonging; people who worked together back then were also friends; children are beginning to go to college and branch out into anything; Gladys has five brothers, four worked for Texaco, fifth and Daddy worked for sugar mill; nephew worked for Texaco before the sellout; grandchildren don't even know we had a Texaco; when first went offshore, several supervisors pushed to have Texaco people in every position; now they are going to contractors and not hiring company people; no loyalty in a contractor; one of the major changes in the downturn was the way the industry turned; in the 1960s and 1970s it was still running smooth; in the 1990s it went to pot

Reflection on career: Would do it again, but would try to get a little more education and get in the engineering end; enjoyed working too much in the early days to make time for school; built first home when 24 years old; worked with another fella to make the set of blueprints; intended to go into the home building business but FHA got into it, inspections, discouraged me; still did work on a few homes; Gladys turned off from teaching by all the regulations, can't really teach, no enjoyment

Regulations: People who wrote them didn't have anything to do with the oilfield, misconstrued a lot of them; asked for input but did not change them the way we wanted them to; most were needed; in the early days, would just flow the oil out into the open water, didn't know it would hurt anything; they had to show it would hurt organisms we couldn't see; the original regulations

were awful, could tell they had been written by jackass in Washington; new regulations regarding labor came in about 1970, desegregation in the schools started in 1969; black schools were so far behind; training equipment had to be invented and built

Food: Offshore was better, being the boss was better yet; supervisor instrumental in hiring caterers; decided on how contract would read; about 3 caterers in Morgan City, one in Schriever, two or three out of Texas; they went out of business

Inventions: Platforms are smaller now because less people and more automated; now don't have anyone you can talk to and invent things; have 2-3 inventions with Texaco; patent on a downhole pump and relays; would do this at night; TV wasn't too good, noisy, did things like that to pass the time; most of the people who worked for Texaco did things like this; all the foremen who worked with me did

Drug Testing: Was responsible for all the drug and contraband searches, which put me on the bad side of a lot of people; steamrolled from a little bit to where it happened more and more; couldn't ignore any report or suspicions from anyone; became real strong in the 1970s and 1980s, especially the 1980s; story of problem with helicopter mechanic; inspections got more intense; after one inspection in Venice wound up with a truckload of guns and ammunition, had to take it off the premises; with contractors only thing we could do was escort them off the premises and turn narcotics over to the sheriff's department; not too many problem with Texaco people, but lots with contractors; would come like a wave, contractors were picking up people from anywhere; inspecting the boats would find a lot of seeds, marijuana; can't think of any time drugs caused a problem offshore in the 1950s and 1960s

Bay de Chenes: Only the toolpusher and pumper lived there; others lived at Lafitte; finally built a camp there, stayed 15 years; built that place from scratch; started with one well and a tank battery and left with 40 wells; brought in houseboat, improved offices; when not working people would generally play Dominoes, go in and look at the logs, study the wellhead, draw blueprints, do lots of reading

Changes in company: Years ago would hear that Gulf, Shell, Exxon had laid off employees, would smile because Texaco never laid people off; you had a job for life; that changed completely in the last ten years; Texaco always was conservative, didn't have a fancy office; acquired Getty and had office in downtown Los Angeles.

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Arthur Lee

Houma, LA

November 13, 2002, January 11, 2005

Interviewed by: Diane Austin, Lauren Penney

University of Arizona

DA069, LP004

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Arthur Lee by Earl King, Jr. Earl owns and operates King Trucking in Morgan City and told me that Mr. Lee had worked for Mr. Patterson of Patterson Trucking, one of the earliest oilfield trucking companies in the area. Though it took several months to coordinate our schedules, Mr. Lee was happy to be interviewed and asked me to meet him at Saadi's Haberdashery, where he is currently employed. The second interview was conducted as part of the study of the links between WWII and the offshore industry.

Arthur Lee was born in Abbeville on a rice farm, but his father moved the family to Texas when he was only two years old. His mother died when he was 16, and two years later, when his father remarried, Arthur moved to Lafayette to be near his older brother. There he began working and enrolled in Southwestern University. He finished college in January 1943 and spent three years in the Pacific during WWII. When he returned, he worked for a furniture company until being recruited to Houma to work for Mr. Patterson in his trucking company. Although the elder Mr. Patterson died in 1952, Arthur stayed with Patterson Trucking until he retired in 1986. During that time, the Pattersons also operated a mud and chemical company, a pipeyard, and a rental tool company. Four years after retiring, Arthur began working part time for Saadi's Haberdashery and is still employed there.

#### Summary of DA069:

Occupational history: Started in the furniture business; met Patterson in Lafayette when going to school at Southwestern in 1938; became good friends; Patterson moved to Houma in 1939; managed oilfield truckline that hauled pipe and tubing; bought two little trucks, started Patterson trucking, mud and chemical company on April 1, 1945; wife and I would stop in when came through; asked me to come work for him

Getting into the industry: Had finished Southwestern (ULL) in 1943, gone to service in February 1943, spent three years in Pacific; back to Lafayette to work, met wife; Mother passed away in 1936 when I was 16; dad remarried; brother went to Lafayette, I followed him to go to college and work; Mr. Patterson gave me job in Houma working for Oilfield Truckline between semesters in 1940 or 1941

Patterson history: In Lafayette Patterson had worked with Continental Supply Company for 20 years; he had been in Texas, transferred to Lafayette by that company; moved to Houma to manage trucks for J.M. English; J.M. English pulled out, Patterson went to Oilfield Trucking until 1945; I was working for National Manufacturing and Sales and they wanted to send me to

Durham, NC; had wife and two children; wife said let's go to Houma; moved in September 1951; Mr. Patterson passed away December 15, 1952; his son was 26 years old at the time, he and his mother kept the company together

Job at Patterson Trucking: Patterson moved me out of the office to the field; was general manager in 1953; company hauled oilfield pipe and machinery, had drilling muds and chemicals; served land and inland water rigs; never involved in offshore [note this is contradicted later]; kept growing, adding secondhand trucks, then new equipment; got equipment to start moving drilling rigs on land; had facilities in Morgan City and Houma, some of the best there were at the time; in 1973 Mr. Patterson (son) wanted me to be administrative assistant to the president, decided to sell to Robbins, Inc. out of Atlanta, Georgia; were dealing \$10 million a year, 33 percent profits; in 1981 a big drop in the oilfield, year before that had \$16.5 million and profit still 33 1/3 percent; no one determined why Mr. Patterson sold; in 1986 I was 65 years old and they asked me to retire; stayed retired four years and then started at Saadis' in 1990

Business in the early days: Drove 20-ton tandems, would move big drilling rigs by latching onto drawcocks and hauling to the next location; mud and chemical company had boats and barges to move the mud out to the inland rigs; company was doing so well that the manufacturer decided to distribute its own mud; bought us out in 1958; in 1961 the company ended up in Morgan City with the largest stock of oilfield pipe in the world; had docks on the water, bulkheaded it, loaded onto offshore or inland barges; in 1962, 1963 was just handling the stuff out of the Morgan City yard, making over half million dollars a month; also had big pipeyard in Houma; developed 50 acres for pipe storage in 1955; steel mills came down, wanted us to handle their pipe, we maintained inventories in and out, billed every time we touched the pipe; worked long hours, but good people

The Company: No differences between inland and offshore; all had to do with drilling a well; U.S. Steel had 56 different types of pipe, based on size and grade; everybody was trying to perfect the equipment on the rig to drill; always changing what we were hauling; down here they had to use drive pipe to drill or the dirt and mud would flow in; had great guys working for us; most drivers couldn't read or write; the company grew from 2 trucks to about 150; would get with trucking manufacturers and get trucks designed to do what we needed to do; first two trucks were used from Dupont Wholesale Company, were Chevrolets; Patterson rigged oilfield beds on them where could put up gin poles; later had trucks from Ford, White Motor Company, International, Mac Trucks; had dispatchers, drivers, office personnel; started with 5 or 6 people

More Patterson: He was in the oilfield 20 odd years, everybody knew and liked him, why he was successful; when I left we had about 150 people in all the companies; old truckline started rental tool company in 1959, that became our biggest money maker, is still going; Patterson Truck Lines sold out a couple of years ago to Walker in Houston; back in 1951 also had Duplantis Truckline and S. A Bourg out of Lockport; Ace Trucking in Jennings, now they lease; several were around at the time; go to meetings in Baton Rouge with the Louisiana Public Service Commission and would run into competitors; everybody handled their business, it never got dirty; there was plenty of work for everyone

Getting property: First big piece of land we purchased was in 1955 in Houma; could get boats and barges in; property was split by the bayou; leased from 1955 till late 1990s when the truckline was sold; 50 acres, 38 from one side and 12 from another; bought the Morgan City property from Eddie Kyle; we took over his yard, leased all the property he had leased; eventually had over 200 acres in that area; worked out well, still own a couple of acres and have a pipe inspection company building on the property; that's a big business too; lots of companies won't run pipe unless it's been tested; also had inspection company with the truckline; we controlled costs by having dock and rail spur and inspection yard; mills would manufacture pipe according to needs of the oilfield

Pipe: Would roll pipe, rack it until the oil companies were ready to use it; then we'd load it on trucks to land rigs and barges to inland water rigs; oil companies would buy direct from U.S. Steel, tell us where they wanted it, we charged the steel mills for storage and handling; oil companies ordered a certain weight and grade, tell us to inspect it, pressure test or run it through electronic units to find weak spots; we'd hire people who knew the testing business; we set up the testing business on property we owned, had the men and equipment to test it, would haul the pipe if the company needed any other testing; eventually we had so much pipe to haul that we got out of the rig moving business

The Industry: 20-ton tandems were real expensive, most injuries were due to rig moving; drilling companies had their own trucks, not profitable; had specialized companies to drive pipe, handle coil tubing, rental tools; when we were in rental tools we had trucks in Houston, Morgan City, Houma; had 10 stores in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi; I kept records of all revenues; during the year things would go up and down, over the years they kept going up and up till the downturn in the early 1980s; drilling contractors got to where they couldn't pay for services; would tell you how much they would pay and you couldn't do it; service companies had been taking advantage of the situation, LPSC controlled the rates in trucking, but in rental tools you charged what you could

Drivers: All local, people we knew could do the job; had a real safety thing; for accidents I'd review the board because the insurance company was looking to drop us; no formal training, most of the time the men had already driven trucks; when they passed more rules and regulations, we had to make them comply; thank God I got out before that; not many rules and regulations at first; originally the drivers couldn't read or write but could work and drive and handle the mud; by the time we had to keep logs, most of them could read or write; think it was in the 1960s but can't remember

Association and Business Louisiana Truckers Association; Mr. Patterson was president at the time he died; also had a national association of oilfield haulers; policies changed over the years; Ed Kyle was our competitor in the mud and chemical company; his office was next door to ours on the Berwick side; saw Patterson was doing well with the pipeyards and started that too, we bought him out; we started dealing with him in the 1960s

Changes: Pretty steady; got better drivers; had a slogan, maybe 1945 or 1946 "We may doze but we never close;" we worked 24/7, get calls from the oil companies all the time; not much

turnover; people would leave if they died or got too old; truck drivers are a rare breed; they had to work hard; at first they were on salaries, but then they got on commission, made more money

Family: Had direct line at the house, but they only called me if they got in trouble or something unusual; it was hectic; kids did not go into the oilfield, "I wouldn't impose that on my kids;" oldest son in marketing, oldest daughter married to Hunt Downer for 32 years, youngest daughter works for Coastal Insurance in Houma, boys in Lafayette with battery business and another is architect in Baton Rouge; wife stayed home, never worked out of the house, kids all did well; sent them to Vanderbilt and St. Francis.

Influence of oil on the community: Offshore played the biggest part, guys on shifts; people from all over the country came to work offshore, not in trucking or rental tools.

Personal history: Born in Abbeville, Louisiana on a rice farm; birth not even recorded; when two years old daddy moved all to Texas, doing construction on high school and then drove truck for bakery; had two brothers and two sisters, had nothing; mother died in 1936; dad remarried in 1938; I left home and went to Lafayette; lady owned eatery and I worked there; she made me go to school; I lived in room, worked summers to get clothes; started out wanting to be dentist but could not pass chemistry; enlisted in reserve corps in 1942 to keep from being drafted; finished school in January, called in February; was head cheerleader for 3 years; went to Lafayette because brother was living nearby on a farm, went to work for lady with eatery; students all came in to eat and dance, so we knew everybody; met the Pattersons because they lived a block down.

Biggest changes in Houma: grown a lot; lots of people from lots of different places; people with money, big homes, mall; when moved here only the downtown area was here; Terrebonne the largest parish in the state, but all marshland; no hospital; early companies were Oilfield Truckline, Patterson put them out of business; Duplantis, Picou went out of business; S.A. Bourg in Lockport was only competitor; lots of service companies catered to the oilfield; whatever the oilfield needed at the time but didn't want to invest in; lots of insurance companies and real estate companies as a result; lots of lawyers came to town.

Reflections: "I wouldn't live in any other house or any place but Houma;" would do it over; "The oilfield paid for them (my children) to have a better life than I did."

Summary of LP004:

Arthur was one of a small group of people who had served in WWII and been involved in the early development of the offshore oil and gas industry in the Gulf of Mexico and was interviewed in a joint project of the University of Arizona, U.S. Minerals Management Service, and the National D-Day Museum. In this interview, Arthur talks mostly about his experiences during WWII.

Early history: Arthur was born in Abbeville, LA in 1921. He had two brothers and two sisters. He was originally born on rice farm, but his dad was not making any money so the family moved to Texas when Arthur was two years old. His dad only had a 5th grade education and drove a

bread truck to support his family. During high school, he worked in a drug store. He graduated high school at the age of 15. He then followed his brother to Lafayette to work in a restaurant with him. The woman who owned the restaurant, in exchange for work, gave him a place to stay, food and paid for his education. During college, he would work 5-6 hours a day in between classes. In 1943, he graduated with a degree in economics and business.

**Military service:** Shortly after graduation, Arthur was drafted; after basic training he went to officers school. He was then sent to the South Pacific and worked as chief clerk of the 24th Army Corps headquarters.

**Return home:** In 1945, Arthur was discharged and began working for Sun Oil Company. He then went into the furniture business and later returned to the oil business transporting mud. He eventually became the general manager for Patterson Trucking and Patterson Mud and Chemical until 1986 when he retired.

**Trucking mud:** The companies originally transported the mud and chemicals in sacks on flatbeds. Everything was moved by hand. Later, they started buying mud in bulk and had to purchase cranes and tanks to transport it.

Griff Lee

New Orleans, LA

June 26, 2001

Interviewed by: Rylan Higgins

University of Arizona

RH001

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Jackie Paice at the Frame Shop in Morgan City told me about Bill Bailey. She knows Bill and his wife and suggested that I call them. When I did, I only spoke to Bill's wife. She informed me that Bill has a tracheal tube and that, though he was interested in doing the interview, it might make it hard to record. She and I scheduled the interview, and I drove to their home, which is located in a wealthy neighborhood in New Orleans. Bill was there with Griff Lee, whom Bill had contacted earlier in the morning and asked to join us. Bill explained that he and Griff had worked a lot together over the years and that Griff would have much to add to the conversation. And he did. We sat in the living room. Infrequently throughout the interview, Bill rang a bell for the servant to come. He would ask her to bring us drinks or tell her to answer the phone. The two men are both in their early 70s, and though Bill's tracheal tube slows him down a bit, they were both talkative and articulate. They spoke as two individuals telling their own stories, but they did reference each other often, and also told stories as a duo. They both talked with a rather intense nostalgic flare, often referencing the pioneering nature of their ideas and work, especially during their early adulthood, when the industry was young.

Griff earned his degree in civil engineering from Tulane University and went to work for Humble Oil Company at Grand Isle until 1954 when he took a job with McDermott. At McDermott, he helped build and launch the first platform that was constructed on land and then hauled by barge to a location in the Gulf of Mexico.

#### Summary:

Technology: Before the recording started, Griff talked a bit about offshore oil technology. He said that in the early years, "there was no technology." He said there were no technical papers; everything was very informal.

Bill's early adulthood: Bill worked for Humble Oil Co. before going to work for McDermott. He talked about going to McDermott in 1956 to open "the first fabrication yard in the world." He stayed with McDermott until he retired in 1973.

Griff's early adulthood: Griff got a civil engineering degree from Tulane University. He, too, worked for Humble for a few years (at Grand Isle) before coming to work for McDermott in 1954.

Idea to launch platforms: According to Griff and Bill, they came up with the idea to build platforms on land and then launch them on barges to their locations in the Gulf. They also claim to have come up with the idea of building platforms on their side.

First launch: In 1955, they built and launched the first platform in this manner. Griff and Bill gave a fairly detailed account of the launch. They tied a buoy to the platform before sliding it off the end of the barge. Having never attempted this type of operation, they were not sure whether it would sink or float.

Platform design: Around the same time (1955), Bill and Griff also designed a particular structure type. The idea for this new platform construction came from an Austrian bridge builder. Bill had somehow come across this person's idea on how to enhance the structural integrity of bridges-which was never successfully implemented in bridge building-and applied it to the building offshore platforms. It has something to do with the angles at which pieces are welded together.

Going public: Bill talked a bit about the company going public, which he remembered happened in the late 1950s.

The beginnings of McDermott: Griff talked about the nature of the company before it went into fabrication. R. Thomas McDermott started the company. At first, it was contracted out to do onshore operations. The company dug canals and built board roads for inland oil and gas exploration.

First offshore structures: McDermott built their first offshore structure for Superior, and Brown and Root built their first structure for Kerr-McGee.

Raymond Concrete Piles: Bill talked about how Raymond Concrete Piles played an important role in the early fabrication industry. Some early structures were made out of concrete.

Bayou Boeuf Fabricators: Bill talked about how R Thomas McDermott was hesitant at first to associate his name with the company. He thought the company would likely fail, so the company was called Bayou Boeuf Fabricators during the early years.

Labor: Bill and Griff discussed the need for trained workers in the early years. They said the company had to train nearly everybody back then. They hired blacks from the cane fields and hired whites from outside the area. Griff said the type of welding they were doing was unique to the industry.

Unions: Griff and Bill discussed the early presence of unions in the area. They said that local law enforcement helped stave off the unions through ostensibly legal forms of harassment. For example, they would stop and ticket union organizers for driving one mile/hour over the speed limit.

Pershing and Ophelia Lefort

Larose, LA

March 5, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM029

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Cullen Curole, an attorney with the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program's Foundation, had been organizing a focus group of Texaco retirees. Cullen himself had once been a Texaco employee, before he crashed a boat into the Texaco dock in Leeville. Pershing Lefort agreed to participate, but wanted to be interviewed at his home in Larose. His wife Ophelia participated in much of the interview. The interview covered Pershing's jobs with Texaco, some observations on the company's financial troubles in the 1980s, and the retirement process. There are also observations on the coming of the industry to Golden Meadow. Pershing's father had to move house and family up to Galliano after a well blew out in the late 1930s.

Born in Golden Meadow in 1924, Pershing J. Lefort was a lifelong Texas Company man, working in production at several of the company's fields run the Harvey and Houma districts. He served in the Army in the Pacific during World War II, took advantage of the GI Bill to get a degree from Lafayette, then after additional service in the Air Force and several years working on drilling rigs, got on with Texaco. His last job was to develop an experimental tertiary recovery process using CO<sub>2</sub> at the Paradis field. His wife Ophelia is an accomplished artist, painting local scenes on materials such as oyster shells and muskrat-drying boards.

#### Summary:

Entry into oil work: grew up admiring drilling activity in Golden Meadow; started working on pipeline job from Bay Marchand to Ostrica terminal on the river; then on drilling barge contracted out to Texaco in Leeville/Golden Meadow fields; made friends with Texaco company men, who hired him as roughneck on a steam rig; after seven months filling in vacant spots of rigs, changed to production and stayed in it for 29 ½ years

Tertiary recovery process: pipeline from Boutte gas field to Paradis oil field; separate injection wells to inject gas into oil formations that were not producing anymore

Job security: Texaco never had a general layoff; makes you want to work more when you know your job is secure; he did work offshore occasionally but mostly on land fields - Valentine, Golden Meadow, Leeville; retired in 1984 at age 59 ½, with a package; Texaco retired a lot of its people in that year, then hired some back as consultants

Golden Meadow blowout: about half the town moved out, particularly those that had some money from oil leases; asked if people were mad or complained: nobody to complain to, so they

complained to each other; no laws or regulations back then; didn't have blowout preventers; but oilfield made GM prosperous, "we would have stayed poor forever"

Marsh loss: due to blocking off of Bayou Lafourche; "they had interrupted nature"; oil canals also changed ecology

Promotion: Mac Rome (Pershing's cousin) wanted to promote him, but he would have had to move to Houma; he was raising his family and didn't want to move.

Houston LeJeune

Morgan City, LA

March 22, 2004

Interviewed by: Jamie Christy

University of Houston/History International

MMS027

### Ethnographic Preface:

Houston LeJeune was interviewed on the history of Sun Oil. He went to work for Sun at the age of 18 in 1945 in Opelousas, Louisiana and worked for them for nearly 29 years. He worked around Sunset, Galveston, Padre Island, Laguna Madre, Bay St. Louis, and many other places in Texas and Louisiana. Mr. LeJeune came to Morgan City in 1948. He performed primarily seismic work for the company and relates laying shot and the difficulty of working in the swamps. He remembers special problems with blasting caps and power lines. Mr. LeJeune was drafted in 1951 for the Korean War (Air Force). He remembers a big change in leadership and Sun Oil. He says workers in the early days were measured by "integrity." He discusses the Great Depression, WWII, and the oil boom and bust. He was 77 years old at the time of the interview.

### Summary:

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Hartwell Lewis

Houma, LA

October 4, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM053

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Hartwell Lewis was referred to us by Tom Becnel as, simply, a banker. I interviewed him at his home, where he has an office. The interview covered a number of topics related to business in Houma and Hartwell's activities as a venture capitalist, lending money to companies that had trouble borrowing from banks. He prides himself on building these companies up to the point where they can approach standard lenders.

Hartwell Lewis came to Houma in 1950, as an accounting machine salesman, traveling a 5-parish area. Born in Abbeville, he spent a summer in high school working for a drilling company as a roustabout. After high school he went into the Navy, and served in Navy intelligence. He returned to get a business administration degree at Southwestern (ULL). In 1954, living in Houma, he was offered a job managing an insurance agency, and began a career as a venture capitalist, loaning money to struggling companies. Mr. Lewis is active in the Houma Rotary Club, serves on local boards such as the YMCA, and has been named a Citizen of the Year.

#### Summary:

Influx of people: Patterson family, Texas people who had moved to Lafayette to manage English Truck Lines; merged with Rollins; transferred to Houma, started insurance company; Logan Babin came in, also Mr. Rhey; oil was becoming biggest player in town, replacing sugar and fishing; in time oil companies started hiring locals

Intracoastal Canal: Mr. Dupont promoted Intracoastal, ended up being barrier between Houma and east Houma; Dupont envisioned marine traffic as economic benefit to community, "he swung a pretty mean bat;" being on ICW is dangerous due to barges, so it hasn't really developed; better to get off to the side, on tributaries

Navigation channel: proposing locks on navigation channel; fabricators want to enlarge it

Dupont Store: had everything you wanted, groceries, would deliver to house; clothing and hardware; affected by opening of A&P Store, then mall in north Houma in 1960s was disaster for Main Street, it dried up

MLK area: started in early 1980s

Slump in 1980s: companies went broke; people lost homes, expensive property sold below market value; I survived by moving office to house, my money was in small companies that went broke; I took deferred compensation from insurance company

Banks: only 2 in 1950s; I helped start Progressive Bank and moved out of downtown environment, to tunnel approach; larger banks become more nationally oriented

Venture capital: helped people who couldn't find bank capital, then send them to regular bank when they got on their feet; I take greater risk, need greater reward; I found a niche right under commercial banks; did startups in early 1980s, was like Russian roulette; better to lend during dips because it can only go up; doctors and lawyers invested in boats

Rapid depreciation: Carter reversed rapid depreciation and just about broke Travelers' Insurance in process, happened in boat industry; savings and loans busted; I would offer loans at 15% (below 21% commercial bank loans) because I could take advantage of rapid depreciation; old rules did stimulate overcapacity in building and boats

Local politics: says he wasn't much involved; doesn't want to talk about local issues; "I still have to live here"

Air base: was a grass field that Texaco had base; during WWII, quickly constructed pad and building for blimps, but by then, German subs had moved back to north Atlantic so blimps never saw a single sub; C.J. Christ is local historian, presentation at Rotary Club; city got property for \$1; built runways, lease out land for revenues to operate facility; had a railroad spur at one time; tanker planes that spray oil spills; John Monteiro had trouble in 1980s with his oil company

Port: final process of getting slip dug; will help out Fourchon since we have better roads and labor pool, do some things here and barge it down to Fourchon; voted tax/bonds down so slow to get moving; also manage marina for transient sailboats

Houma: construction mind-boggling; now a regional shopping and medical center; now have cancer center; oil shifting from exploration to production, so more stable; Hwy 90 stimulated growth at interchange; Houma can be bedroom community for workers at McDermott in Morgan City; for years here large landowners wouldn't sell land

Sugar: couldn't survive without import tariffs

Delta Construction Company: Robert Marmande; 5 men formed Delta Services.

Eugis "Shorty" Lirette

Theriot, LA

July 17, 2001

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB006

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Corine Paulk knows Eugis Lirette's wife, Penny, from church. Penny was born in 1964 while Eugis was born in 1932. They are expecting a child in late November of 2001. Eugis is very hard of hearing, which made the interview a little difficult as I had to yell most of the time and he misunderstood a lot of what I said the first time around. Penny sat in and helped clarify some of the questions she knew he couldn't understand very well. Eugis was willing to answer my questions but did not give extraneous information.

Eugis is from southern Louisiana and graduated from high school in 1950. He worked for a towing company until he went into the service in 1953. After leaving the Army in 1955, Eugis Lirette started on a crew boat for Superior Oil. The next year, his brother got him a job as roustabout on a drilling rig. He worked his way up from roughneck to tool pusher, sustaining a serious injury to his hand in the process. He worked for several smaller companies such as Pool, Bateman Drilling Co, and Southern Louisiana Drilling Co. He worked for Pool just over 17 years and retired in 1995.

#### Summary:

**Early history:** Eugis graduated high school and began working for a towing company in 1950. In 1953 he went into the service. He went to Korea and was 101st Airborne. He got out in 1955 and began driving a crew boat for Superior Oil Co. His uncle worked there and helped him get the job.

**Early Oil career:** His brother was working for Laughlin Brothers and helped him get on as roustabout in 1956. He then moved to drilling and was a roughneck for 2 years. Next he went to S. Louisiana Drilling Company and worked his way up to a motorman for that company. Each job change was b/c of more money.

**Accidents:** His hand was badly injured in 1972 when it got caught in the gearbox of a crane. He was out for 3 months with benefits. He had limited use of his hand after that so he began training to be a tool pusher.

**Pool Oil:** While he was pushing tools, they began moving him all over S. Louisiana and Texas. In 1978 S. Louisiana Drilling Co. was sold to Gibson. Eugis then went to work for Pool Oil, the 17th largest oil company at the time. He was pushing tools on a jack-up barge. Pool began moving him around again but he didn't care to be away from home for very long so he quit and went back into drilling. He spent 16 years on one rig after that point. Describes Pool as a family,

also said they were big on safety, made them cut their hair every month and get a new uniform every 3 months.

Retirement: Eugis retired in 1995 and now works on his shrimp boat most of the time. There is a great quote from him in regards to how much things have changed concerning the "iron roughnecks" who are now running the company.

Current: When I went back to get the permission form signed, Eugis was having trouble with his boat. Penny talked to me a bit about how excited she was about the baby and how she hoped it was a girl as they already had 2 boys, ages 11 and 13. The oldest is being sent away to military school for a while. Penny sent me home with some of her homemade shrimp jambalaya.

Melvin Lirette, W.F. "Bill" Lirette and Wayne Lirette

Houma, LA

July 27, 2001, September 11, 2001, January 15, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier, Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

EB013, EB015, AG051p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I got in touch with Melvin Lirette through Burleigh Ruiz. He worked with Melvin's brother Bill for many years. Burleigh called Bill who said that he thought it would be a good idea for him to be present for the interview. Burleigh was going to come along as well but ended up having plans on the day that the first interview was scheduled. I drove up to a modest, yellow house with a boat parked out back to find Melvin sitting on the front porch waiting for me. Melvin is the oldest of my interviewees thus far, and has one of the best memories. The first CD of the first interview was lost due to battery trouble. The second CD sounds good and still has a lot of good information on it. The second interview also consists of two CD's, both of which are clear but difficult to decipher in some parts. The second interview deals mainly with clarifying information from the first interview. Melvin swears like a sailor, still doesn't take any crap from anyone, and is one of the kindest people I've met. He can still remember names and block numbers of some of the rigs he worked on and tells stories as if they happened yesterday. Melvin talks extensively about unionizing as well as some of the "bad" times in the oil field during the 50's.

Melvin was born in 1910, began the oil field in 1929 and retired in 1975. He was 91 years old at the time of the interview. He began work in the oil field at age 19 in 1929. He began with Abercrombie as a contract worker but then was hired as a regular hand by Texaco, or "The Texas Company," as he knew it most of his life. He worked as a driller for 46 years and retired in 1975. He comes from the generation of people who didn't have any education except for life itself. During the interview he said several times that the best measure of a man was how hard they worked. He retired during the boom era and got a good retirement plan.

Bill Lirette is Melvin's younger brother. He was born in 1919, began in the oil field in 1949 and retired in 1983. He is only 85 years old and worked for Texaco his whole life as a mud engineer. The first interview does not have a lot of information about Bill on it. The second interview has extensive information about mud engineering, including, but not limited to, the different weights of the mud, the pipes, wires and machines associated with mud engineering and the amount of school/training necessary to be a mud engineer. He is a jovial guy who obviously loves his brother (he calls him Old Man) very much. He tells stories; they almost come off as legends, about Melvin's antics in the industry as well as how respected he was by the men who worked under him as well as the bosses. Bill is a very opinionated man who is not afraid to tell you what he's thinking.

Wayne Lirette is Melvin's son who also retired from the oil industry. He retired in 1998 from Texaco. He worked as a compressor mechanic for most of his career. The first interview second

CD has a lot of Wayne's opinions about unions, blacks and environmental regulations. Wayne was not present for the second interview.

#### Summary of EB013:

Unions in the Oil Industry: Pay was legit. Wage scale was based on Port Arthur Texas, and they were unionized. Texaco also paid employees enough money that people were happy. There was some talk of unionizing by union people, but most didn't have an opinion about it because most didn't know what to think about it. Bill says that union workers specialize in their craft and in the oil field you can't do that. They were able to make enough overtime to offset the union pay scale. You have to work together so that a rig runs smoothly. Wayne says that there is a sense of pride in going in to the tool pusher and knowing that everything is finished and done right and he tells you Ok, thank you good job. The oil company was caught between the downtime and the inventory.

Costs of Drilling Wells: The oil company has to be run like a well-oiled machine. Everything was figured out before the hole was even drilled and you had to follow that piece of paper to the letter or there was hell to pay.

Bosses: Melvin says there was some "damn studying" going on there, trying to save a nickel here and a penny there. Some were easy to work for, others are overbearing (on ego trips, wanting to show-off). At night they go to sleep and if everything is finished in the morning they don't bother with you. Wayne liked nights and Melvin worked nights his entire life. He said the bosses would leave him alone because they knew he was doing his job.

Camp Life: Melvin would fish and his fireman would get up and clean the fish but at 8pm he went to bed. He and his friend had a system that allowed them to take home all the fish they wanted.

Accidents: Melvin saw a lot of accidents. He only had one bad one when he broke a boy's arm. But they fixed him up better than new. Bill says that Melvin was an old iron man, but many of the men who worked for him worked their way up to tool pusher and gang pushers. He expected a full day's work out of them but was fair.

Jokes in the Oilfield: Lots of jokes going on in the field. Melvin and Bill tell a couple of stories about putting poo in a bag for the men to find and the foreman pissing in the coffee pot when the men messed with him too much.

Family, Their Daddy: Remembers Ackland Robicheaux, worked for his dad who was a blacksmith. All the boys learned the blacksmith field. Mr. Miller invented a new bit that would open up with pressure. Helped his dad b/c he had to beat that metal so many times before it would bend.

Biggest Changes in Oil Field: Regulations (Melvin). Ordinarily a good man won't give you any trouble. Talking some about Blacks in the field. Melvin says that Blacks would work just as hard. Bill talks about improvements in the machinery, which helped with the safety measures.

Melvin talks about threads, in the beginning they were using real thread. Then they brought in tool joints and you could go deeper. Speed then increased. Wayne threaded tool joints for a living. Putting it together was time consuming. Technology (Wayne), technology was used to save time and money. Wayne says that time is money and anything invented was invented and used to save time and money. "There's just no comparison to today" Melvin.

Offshore vs. Inshore: Bill worked offshore. Wayne and Melvin worked inshore. Wayne worked with Burleigh Ruiz. Burleigh was messy b/c he'd keep everything oiled so well.

Gossip: Talking about F.J. and Burleigh Ruiz. Working with them on oilrigs. They tell me that I have to talk with Bruce Matherne, F.J.'s brother. Melvin says he wouldn't give two bits for him.

Pictures: Vermillion Bay, Steam Rigs, with gas coming out. Called a Devil's Hawk. Pictures of old steam rigs when he was working for Terrebonne Gas Co. Killed one man and the boss lost an arm; 2) tools that they used; 3) Melvin painting a slip; 4) blow out again, old truck on the rig; 5) after moving the rig off the hole. Water lilies would disintegrate; 6) 9 & 5/8 casing showing the blowout. Didn't know anything about mud back then; 7) water well, where they'd get water to run down the well; 8) Wooden barge with 500 or 5000 sacks of cement on the barge. Had to load and unload all of them by hand; 9) After they had the blowout capped; 10) Clayton Callahan, Pat Babus, Bob Dasby; 10) a rig; 11) Melvin on the brake; 12) the blowout again, can see the valve and a turnbuckle running through it; 13) that's when it killed that fella'; 14) camps; 15) some guy who they picked up in Florida; 16) Old planes they used to use; 17) after the blowout the rig was all messed up; 18) we just pulled some pipes out of it before it got the best of it; 19) Slim Verret, boss that Melvin worked for.

Summary of EB015:

(Not too much info on oil field, we eat crawfish at the end)

Gifted in the oil field: To mix with everyone, needed passion to do the work. Just like education, what good is it to you if you don't know how to apply it. Needed to know how to apply yourself in the oilfield. Going up the ladder quicker than others. Never turn down extra work. Had to be able to take the joking, picking. Don't keep a grudge. Grudges in the oil field ran deep. Intuition was important. If you knew your boss was wrong, you still had to do what he told you. If it messed up the office would know about it and it would be his fault.

Promotion: Melvin stayed at Lafitte in WWII, one of the drillers didn't come back so Melvin go the drilling job. Contractors wanted to hire Melvin but he was loyal to Texaco. If you did your work Melvin didn't have a problem with them, but he had a quick temper. Click and Betty Arceneaux, good to talk to. Bill roughnecked with Peanut Crochet.

Community: very close to people they used to work with. They all go to the wakes and funerals. Houma changes every year. The roads got torn up. Buildings that he remembers are not there anymore.

Summary of AG051p:

In this interview, Melvin describes the pictures of the blowout in Vermillion Bay.

Melvin is making his own drop nets because he gets bored. He explains how to make a net. He doesn't just want to sit and do nothing.

His father, Emil Lirette, was an easygoing man but if he said something he said it one time. He worked at a sugar refinery, and then farmed and he worked for Terrebonne Gas Co. He was a blacksmith, made drill bits. Melvin took after his father.

Wayne Lirette

Houma, LA

July 27, 2001

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB013

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I got in touch with Melvin Lirette through Burleigh Ruiz. He worked with Melvin's brother Bill for many years. Burleigh called Bill who said that he thought it would be a good idea for him to be present for the interview. Burleigh was going to come along as well but ended up having plans on the day that the first interview was scheduled. I drove up to a modest, yellow house with a boat parked out back to find Melvin sitting on the front porch waiting for me. Melvin is the oldest of my interviewees thus far, and has one of the best memories. The first CD of the first interview was lost due to battery trouble. The second CD sounds good and still has a lot of good information on it. The second interview also consists of two CD's, both of which are clear but difficult to decipher in some parts. The second interview deals mainly with clarifying information from the first interview. Melvin swears like a sailor, still doesn't take any crap from anyone, and is one of the kindest people I've met. He can still remember names and block numbers of some of the rigs he worked on and tells stories as if they happened yesterday. Melvin talks extensively about unionizing as well as some of the "bad" times in the oil field during the 50's.

Wayne Lirette is Melvin's son who also retired from the oil industry. He retired in 1998 from Texaco. He worked as a compressor mechanic for most of his career. The first interview second CD has a lot of Wayne's opinions about unions, blacks and environmental regulations. Wayne was not present for the second interview.

#### Summary:

Unions in the Oil Industry: Pay was legit. Wage scale was based on Port Arthur Texas, and they were unionized. Texaco also paid employees enough money that people were happy. There was some talk of unionizing by union people, but most didn't have an opinion about it because most didn't know what to think about it. Bill says that union workers specialize in their craft and in the oil field you can't do that. They were able to make enough overtime to offset the union pay scale. You have to work together so that a rig runs smoothly. Wayne says that there is a sense of pride in going in to the tool pusher and knowing that everything is finished and done right and he tells you Ok, thank you good job. The oil company was caught between the downtime and the inventory.

Costs of Drilling Wells: The oil company has to be run like a well-oiled machine. Everything was figured out before the hole was even drilled and you had to follow that piece of paper to the letter or there was hell to pay.

Bosses: Melvin says there was some "damn studying" going on there, trying to save a nickel here and a penny there. Some were easy to work for, others are overbearing (on ego trips, wanting to show-off). At night they go to sleep and if everything is finished in the morning they don't bother with you. Wayne liked nights and Melvin worked nights his entire life. He said the bosses would leave him alone because they knew he was doing his job.

Camp Life: Melvin would fish and his fireman would get up and clean the fish but at 8pm he went to bed. He and his friend had a system that allowed them to take home all the fish they wanted.

Accidents: Melvin saw a lot of accidents. He only had one bad one when he broke a boy's arm. But they fixed him up better than new. Bill says that Melvin was an old iron man, but many of the men who worked for him worked their way up to tool pusher and gang pushers. He expected a full day's work out of them but was fair.

Jokes in the Oilfield: Lots of jokes going on in the field. Melvin and Bill tell a couple of stories about putting poo in a bag for the men to find and the foreman pissing in the coffee pot when the men messed with him too much.

Family, Their Daddy: Remembers Ackland Robicheaux, worked for his dad who was a blacksmith. All the boys learned the blacksmith field. Mr. Miller invented a new bit that would open up with pressure. Helped his dad b/c he had to beat that metal so many times before it would bend.

Biggest Changes in Oil Field: Regulations (Melvin). Ordinarily a good man won't give you any trouble. Talking some about Blacks in the field. Melvin says that Blacks would work just as hard. Bill talks about improvements in the machinery, which helped with the safety measures. Melvin talks about threads, in the beginning they were using real thread. Then they brought in tool joints and you could go deeper. Speed then increased. Wayne threaded tool joints for a living. Putting it together was time consuming. Technology (Wayne), technology was used to save time and money. Wayne says that time is money and anything invented was invented and used to save time and money. "There's just no comparison to today" Melvin.

Offshore vs. Inshore: Bill worked offshore. Wayne and Melvin worked inshore. Wayne worked with Burleigh Ruiz. Burleigh was messy b/c he'd keep everything oiled so well.

Gossip: Talking about F.J. and Burleigh Ruiz. Working with them on oilrigs. They tell me that I have to talk with Bruce Matherne, F.J.'s brother. Melvin says he wouldn't give two bits for him.

Pictures: Vermillion Bay, Steam Rigs, with gas coming out. Called a Devil's Hawk. Pictures of old steam rigs when he was working for Terrebonne Gas Co. Killed one man and the boss lost an arm; 2) tools that they used; 3) Melvin painting a slip; 4) blow out again, old truck on the rig; 5) after moving the rig off the hole. Water lilies would disintegrate; 6) 9 & 5/8 casing showing the blowout. Didn't know anything about mud back then; 7) water well, where they'd get water to run down the well; 8) Wooden barge with 500 or 5000 sacks of cement on the barge. Had to load and unload all of them by hand; 9) After they had the blowout capped; 10) Clayton Callahan, Pat

Babus, Bob Dasby; 10) a rig; 11) Melvin on the brake; 12) the blowout again, can see the valve and a turnbuckle running through it; 13) that's when it killed that fella'; 14) camps; 15) some guy who they picked up in Florida; 16) Old planes they used to use; 17) after the blowout the rig was all messed up; 18) we just pulled some pipes out of it before it got the best of it; 19) Slim Verret, boss that Melvin worked for.

W.F. "Bill" Lirette

Houma, LA

July 27, 2001, September 11, 2001

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB013, EB015

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I got in touch with Melvin Lirette through Burleigh Ruiz. He worked with Melvin's brother Bill for many years. Burleigh called Bill who said that he thought it would be a good idea for him to be present for the interview. Burleigh was going to come along as well but ended up having plans on the day that the first interview was scheduled. I drove up to a modest, yellow house with a boat parked out back to find Melvin sitting on the front porch waiting for me. Melvin is the oldest of my interviewees thus far, and has one of the best memories. The first CD of the first interview was lost due to battery trouble. The second CD sounds good and still has a lot of good information on it. The second interview also consists of two CD's, both of which are clear but difficult to decipher in some parts. The second interview deals mainly with clarifying information from the first interview. Melvin swears like a sailor, still doesn't take any crap from anyone, and is one of the kindest people I've met. He can still remember names and block numbers of some of the rigs he worked on and tells stories as if they happened yesterday. Melvin talks extensively about unionizing as well as some of the "bad" times in the oil field during the 50's.

Bill Lirette is Melvin's younger brother. He was born in 1919, began in the oil field in 1949 and retired in 1983. He is only 85 years old and worked for Texaco his whole life as a mud engineer. The first interview does not have a lot of information about Bill on it. The second interview has extensive information about mud engineering, including, but not limited to, the different weights of the mud, the pipes, wires and machines associated with mud engineering and the amount of school/training necessary to be a mud engineer. He is a jovial guy who obviously loves his brother (he calls him Old Man) very much. He tells stories; they almost come off as legends, about Melvin's antics in the industry as well as how respected he was by the men who worked under him as well as the bosses. Bill is a very opinionated man who is not afraid to tell you what he's thinking.

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Family, Their Daddy: Remembers Ackland Robicheaux, worked for his dad who was a blacksmith. All the boys learned the blacksmith field. Mr. Miller invented a new bit that would open up with pressure. Helped his dad b/c he had to beat that metal so many times before it would bend.

Biggest Changes in Oil Field: Regulations (Melvin). Ordinarily a good man won't give you any trouble. Talking some about Blacks in the field. Melvin says that Blacks would work just as hard. Bill talks about improvements in the machinery, which helped with the safety measures. Melvin talks about threads, in the beginning they were using real thread. Then they brought in tool joints and you could go deeper. Speed then increased. Wayne threaded tool joints for a living. Putting it together was time consuming. Technology (Wayne), technology was used to save time and money. Wayne says that time is money and anything invented was invented and used to save time and money. "There's just no comparison to today" Melvin.

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#### Summary of EB015:

Gifted in the oil field: To mix with everyone, needed passion to do the work. Just like education, what good is it to you if you don't know how to apply it. Needed to know how to apply yourself in the oilfield. Going up the ladder quicker than others. Never turn down extra work. Had to be able to take the joking, picking. Don't keep a grudge. Grudges in the oil field ran deep. Intuition was important. If you knew your boss was wrong, you still had to do what he told you. If it messed up the office would know about it and it would be his fault.

Promotion: Melvin stayed at Lafitte in WWII, one of the drillers didn't come back so Melvin go the drilling job. Contractors wanted to hire Melvin but he was loyal to Texaco. If you did your work Melvin didn't have a problem with them, but he had a quick temper. Click and Betty Arceneaux, good to talk to. Bill roughnecked with Peanut Crochet.

Community: very close to people they used to work with. They all go to the wakes and funerals. Houma changes every year. The roads got torn up. Buildings that he remembers are not there anymore.

Gary Don Little

Houma, LA

December 12, 2002

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS005

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Don Little is the father of Christi Triche, who was one of the teachers who started with the study. We met at Christi's house, and the interview was designed to give her an example of how to do the work. Don has worked for Halliburton most of his career.

Don Little left college after marriage in 1972. After working in highway construction for two years, he was able to get a job with Halliburton in Enid, Oklahoma. At first this was stimulation/fracturing, but by 1975 he was cementing wells. In 1977, he transferred to the Gulf Coast to cement wells. In 1981, he was running well service tools for Halliburton in Houma. In 1986 he went offshore doing cementing. By 1992, he was an office supervisor, and in 1999 was supervising integrated services, in charge of drilling rigs and workovers. As company units changed through sales and mergers, he felt it was best to transfer back to the cementing unit, which he saw as the core of Halliburton's business.

#### Summary:

Halliburton: Started as a cementing service, then later developed other oil field services.

Cementing: In Oklahoma, he had a whole field of wells to cement, worked a 6 and 2 schedule, but it was hard to keep up. When he went offshore in the Gulf, he only had to service the wells on the platform, and had free time.

The Gulf of Mexico and the Oil Industry: Many of the tools used offshore were developed in the Gulf. 15 years ago an underwater production platform was set up to be serviced by a floating vessel, which was tested in the Gulf before using in the North Sea. The first foam cementing, to increase the elasticity of the cement, was developed in the Gulf. Many people who worked for Halliburton and moved up into management learned their work in the Houma district.

Background: Don Little grew up in Oklahoma. While he had a grandfather who worked in oil for awhile, Don is the first in his family to make a career in the industry. He also noted that his two daughters did not work in the industry, nor would he encourage them to do so. He felt that his kind of oil work was too rough for women.

Oil history: Don left college in 1972, working for two years on highway construction. His reason for leaving college was the need to support a family. He shifted to oil work in 1974, taking a job with Halliburton in Enid, OK. He initially started working on fracturing/stimulation, but within a year was working in cementing. In 1977 he transferred to the Gulf coast, working out of Grand

Isle. He worked on both the inshore and offshore rigs. In 1981, he was running service tools, going back to cementing in 1986. At that time, he shifted from a 6 and 2 work schedule to a 14 and 14, as the work moved further offshore. In 1992 he was an office supervisor. In 1999 he worked in the Integrated Services unit, supervising on drilling and workover rigs. When Halliburton sold Integrated Services, he shifted back to cementing with Halliburton, citing concerns that there would be layoffs at the former unit.

Changes in the industry: He keyed in on several technological changes, including the underwater production platform and foam cementing, as well as computer-aided automation. He also noted the change in company management, citing a loss of the managers who learned oil work from the ground up. Currently the management is dominated by people trained in accounting or management, but not oil. His reference to the "Old Houma Mafia" was an example of a past management team dominated by people with hands-on oil work. One difference in management attitudes today is greater concern with the needs and wants of the shareholders rather than the employees, and maybe the customers.

Changes in labor force: He discussed the changes in the labor force, noting that new workers today tend to not know how to work, and seem to be looking for opportunities to make money in accident litigation. This is a significant problem for oil companies. Their solution is to assign mentors on the rigs, and also use some rigs as training grounds and weed-out sites for new workers (find out where these are). We discussed this as a consequence of the baby boomers tending to shelter their children from hard work.

Lillie Loftin

Lafayette, LA

March 29, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB049

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I received Lillie Loftin's name from P.J. Trahan while talking about the upcoming Exxon retirees' luncheon. She was in charge of organizing all of the Lafayette members for the event.

Lillie was a secretary in the oil industry for over 30 years. She began working for Exxon in 1955 in Grand Isle and stayed there for four years. She was transferred inshore to New Iberia and then on the Lafayette due to a slowdown in the oilfields. She married her husband in 1961 and quit her job when she got pregnant, taking time off to raise her kids. She returned to Exxon in 1972 and retired from the oil industry in 1986.

#### Summary:

Background: Lillie was born in 1936, attended high school and one year of college before taking her job at Exxon in Grand Isle in 1955 - job paid well, a secretarial position. She's in the third generation of oilfield workers, so was quite familiar with the business. Her grandfather was one of the first roughnecks in one of the first rigs, daddy worked in oilfields, looked after some wells and pumps; mom was a farm girl.

First job: most of her friend's daddies worked in the oilfields - One friend's dad helped her get the job at Exxon so that she could room with his daughter in the Grand Isle camp. Lillie worked for the engineers, typing up procedure reports and such, learned a lot about drilling techniques and such; work was very structured back then - 15-minute coffee breaks to the minute; everything was done manually - sent coordinates from the rig, she would do calculations - oil business was very technical, but manual

Grand Isle camp: Lillie got tours of the rigs by helicopters, men were very nice, polite, never felt intimidated by them; Grand Isle camps - few women lived there, lots of guys, lots of fun - they would leave for the weekends to go to New Orleans or go home. She worked there for 4 years there - 1955-1959; there were recessions, some bad fires, and helicopter crashes due to mechanical problems.

Inshore work: Lillie moved to New Iberia inshore, to a new office of 25-30 people, stayed there about 1 and ½ years, then moved the office to Lafayette - same jobs, just getting bigger and expanding - electrical/petroleum/civil/chemical engineers, geologists. She typed up lots of bids for contractors, some bribery took place where people would get presents and such for accepting particular bids from particular companies. Exxon had a policy forbidding any kind of favoritism.

Family life: Lillie got married in 1962, her first son was born. She quit her job at that point to take care of the baby. 1972, she returned to work because she needed to make some money and the two children were in school by that time.

Opportunities for women and other minorities: there were increasing opportunities for women in the early 70's, but the job market was extremely tight. They also started hiring minorities, which Lillie thinks contributed to a loosening of the atmosphere around the office. She went to the office of Exxon and said she wanted her job back. She was hired on as a computer operator, went to school in Houston for some training.

Bust of the 80's: Things started getting bad at Exxon way after things were already getting bad at other companies - lot of engineers and geologists lost their jobs, some drilling remained but more resources going to the production side of things. Houses were for sale everywhere, whole town was affected, whole region was affected, people moving out, moving to Florida and Georgia, many never came back, people looking for jobs - practically impossible, salaries were about 1/3 what they were with the oil companies - some people went back to school.

Environmental regulations: didn't really keep track of spills in the old days, but now they are much more strict; accidents have always been a big concern of the company - that has not really changed over the years. "The Exxon Way" - they were always more strict, more conscientious than other companies - it's the "Exxon Way."

Retirement: Lillie worked a number of other jobs when she got out of the oil business and finally retired in 1986.

Bob Long

Morgan City, LA

June 7, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG026

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Bob Long was recommended to me by Jerry Cunningham, one of the teacher-researchers in Morgan City. Bob is a retired African-American oilfield worker, and he's missing both his legs (unrelated to oil work). He lives in a small but nice house off one of the alleys near downtown. He quickly described the segregation common in Morgan City in his youth. Bob got started out in the oilpatch a bit earlier than most Blacks in the area, because he was employed by one of the contractors. He is knowledgeable about other Blacks working at the same time, the kind of things they did, and the kind of hurdles they faced offshore. There are stories here about sleeping on the mud barges, rumors of Blacks getting thrown off the rig, and many descriptions of what it was like out there for Black men. His descriptions are vivid and heart-wrenching.

Bob was born in 1934 in the Morgan City area when segregation was common. At the time, Blacks were not allowed in the Gulf as fishermen, shrimpers, or any other purpose. In 1954, his father started working as a diesel mechanic on boats serving the oil and gas industry. In 1961, Bob began working in the oilfield as an electrician doing contract work. When he was sent offshore for 5 days, there was nowhere for him to stay, because at that time Blacks were not allowed offshore. He remained in the industry, working for companies such as Service Marine and Cameron Iron Works until his retirement in the mid-70's.

#### Summary:

**Early Years:** Born in 1934, right in the Depression. The community was a lot different back then, and as a Black boy, he couldn't stop and get a drink of water in the park. There was an opera house, and they were only allowed upstairs on the balcony. It was rough in the 40's. They didn't realize it though, because people in Morgan City generally got along. He didn't think about the oil fields as a boy because Blacks weren't allowed in the Gulf. Shrimping or anything ... they'd shoot at them.

**Oil Work:** He started working in the oil industry in 1961, he worked as an electrician doing contract work. He went out for five days once. There was nowhere for him to stay. He worked on one rig onshore, and they wanted him to finish working offshore, and his boss stood up for him. But he didn't go ... and there were stories about guys throwing Black men overboard. Education didn't make any difference.

**Blacks Offshore:** A lot of Blacks were working on the mud barges, and that was really bad. They had to sleep on the mud, rain, sleet, whatever. There were no sleeping quarters for them. Later,

he used to fly out there every day for Conoco. Anyway, they accepted it because that was the way they grew up - they were segregated.

Family History: Bob's dad started in the oilfield in '54 working on the boats as a diesel mechanic. His father worked on a boat. There's a story about him bringing one of the boats in.

Racism: Things started to change in the 60's. Bob has some friends, now deceased, who were some of the first to work in the Gulf. We talk about some of the first Blacks to go offshore. The first were working as cooks. One guy went out, they put him in the crow's nest, and he fell out two or three times. It wasn't easy, but it was a break. We did all the hard work.

Cameron Iron Works: Bob worked at Cameron Iron Works in the 70's. He was only there for a while, because they brought in a new foreman, and he wanted Bob to sweep the floor. He tells the story of this event. They were repairing valves and Christmas trees at the new job. There were problems with racism there. So he quit.

Service Machine: he worked for Service Machine for a while repairing offshore rigs. He was just a number to them - they didn't care about labor at all.

Unions: he heard about them, but they could never get it to work out here. Anybody who was for the union was fired. The working man didn't realize that the unions set wages. In the oilfield, you better not even talk about it.

First Day Offshore: He was amazed. It was like a city out there, people everywhere. It was exciting. He went out in a helicopter once. He had never seen anything like that. Then the personnel basket! Swinging out was bad too. Everything was over water.

Safety: the oil fields are dangerous. Helicopters are dangerous - they drop right off those platforms when they take off. A lot of those platforms didn't have sleeping quarters for Blacks, and when they finally did, they put little aluminum huts out on the end of the rig. Even today, though, a Black man can only advance so far. He's got a nephew with Mobil. He should be in the office by now, but they send the Black boys overseas.

Impact on Black Community: Blacks were mostly delivery boys. But with the money, Blacks now have their own homes, they were able to retire. They suffered out there, though. Description of the conditions.

Racism: talks about a job where he was the boss of a white man. He retired in '75 or '76. We talk about some of the other people I might talk to.

Blacks in the Oil Industry, a lot of the Blacks they hired were from somewhere else. The local Blacks didn't want to deal with the pressures of working offshore ... that's why Blacks from other places got the jobs.

Miner Long

Houston, TX

July, 16, 2003

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS050

### Ethnographic Preface:

Miner Long working for Shell shortly after he graduate with a degree in physics from Oberlin College in 1948. He took Shell's geology training course and ended up on a seismic crew. He went back to school and did work at John Hopkins in geology, and after graduating in 1953 he rejoined Shell as an exploration geologist. He served as in Denver, Tulsa, Pittsburgh, Houston, Lafayette, and New Orleans during his career. He joined the offshore division in New Orleans in and took part in the 1967 lease sale. Shell tapped him to be chief geologist for offshore in 1968, and he served in that postion until 1976. He became Shell's fist general manager of geology in 1977 and served in that capacity until his retirement in 1984.

### Summary:

This interview covered geologic trends and trap analysis for the offshore Gulf. He spent an interesting period in Pittsburgh experimenting with recovery techniques. Discussed the 1967 lease sale and its failures and the 1968 Texas Sale. Long also described the role of geology, bright spots, and the Arco affect in the 1970 sale.

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Robert "Bob" Looper

Golden Meadow, LA

February 22, 2003

Interviewed by: Debbie Z. Toups

University of Arizona

DT003

#### Ethnographic Preface:

A friend of mine, Brent Duet, who owns a shipyard in Golden Meadow, dealing with large boat repair, told me of Mr. Robert Looper and his history with the oil field. I asked Mr. Duet if he would contact Mr. Looper regarding possibly speaking to me about his experiences during his many years of employment with Chevron. After being told that he would like to speak with me, I contacted him by phone to introduce myself and explain the purpose and procedure of the interview. He was very friendly and willing to tell his story. I later called him to set up a definite date and time. I interviewed him in his home in Golden Meadow where he lives alone with his dog, Fluffy. He was very friendly and willing to elaborate on detail when requested. My husband, Philip Toups, accompanied me to the visit to Mr. Looper's home. You may hear him at times, on the tape, commenting on Mr. Looper's conversation. Mr. Looper has been retired since 1987. He has taken an interest in local history and genealogy, although he is not originally from this area. He has put together several books on local history and families of this bayou/gulf area. Mr. Looper did not have any photographs on hand to share with us. He reported that he has donated his photos to the local library and will try to send some to me to include with his recorded interview.

Mr. Looper's career with the oil industry began in 1946 when a friend told him that The California Company was looking for engineers to work offshore. His first job was as a first assistant engineer on the first off shore structure in Bay Marchand (Platform A). Mr. Looper did not actually work on the rig itself, but worked on a converted World War II vessel, called a Landing Ship Tank (LST), which was tied up to the rig and supplied the rig with necessary equipment and supplies. Later he became a chief engineer on the same vessel. Mr. Looper's account describes what the ship looked like and its purpose and significance. Later he was promoted to assistant to the manager of the marine department in Harvey and again later was moved to Leeville where he remained until his retirement.

#### Summary:

Early Years: Robert Looper was born in Detroit, Michigan on December 27th, 1922. He graduated from high school and went on to Wayne State University in Detroit to study Aeronautical Engineering. Before he was able to finish, World War II started and Mr. Looper joined the Merchant Marines. He worked his way up to chief engineer and was stationed in New Orleans. The shipping industry slowed down and he tried selling heavy equipment at which he said he was not very successful.

Experiences Offshore: A friend told him that The California Oil Company was looking for engineers to work offshore. He applied and got a job working on the first offshore platform in the Gulf. He did not work on the rig itself, but on the vessel tied up to the platform, which held the equipment and supplies for the rig. His job was to keep up the machinery, which allowed for the transfer from the tender to the rig. The boat was a converted World War II vessel used during the war to go up on the beach. Its large doors would open to remove tanks and trucks. The converted vessel is referred to as a Landing Ship Tank or LST. It had an open hull with deckhouses to the rear. There was a flight deck over the deckhouse to land helicopters. There were masts, winches, and derricks to transfer the supplies to the rig. The boat was permanently tied up to the platform and was moved only if there was a hurricane or if the drilling was completed. They would then cut the 3 large anchor chains holding them to the rig and move to another drilling rig, or dock at a safe location, in the event of a hurricane. The boat had sleeping and eating accommodations for those working on it. They worked 2 weeks and were off for 2 weeks. They were transported to and from the boat by helicopter. Mr. Looper worked on the LST for 8 years.

Experiences Onshore: Mr. Looper was promoted to Assistant to the Manager of the Marine Department in Harvey, Louisiana. He resided in New Orleans during this time. He worked in this capacity for 5 years and was then sent to Leeville, Louisiana where Chevron was experiencing problems with management. He was told to go there to straighten things up, but remained there until his retirement in 1987. He was in charge of base operations. He did all the purchasing of materials and cars and the leasing of vessels.

Furthering his Education: During Mr. Looper's off time he attended college and managed to get a Bachelor's Degree in Liberal Studies, a Master's Degree in Economics, a Master's Degree in Management, and a Master's degree in Human Relations. These were specially designed intensive courses to allow a person to get college credits during their time off from work. He managed to accumulate the above in a 10-year period.

Changes In Industry: Mr. Looper reported that changes are obvious in the equipment being used now, but the people working the industry are very much the same and the jobs are the same. He did comment that things are done faster due to advances in equipment and technology. He also commented on the impact the oil industry has on his community. When the oil field is active there is a "beehive of activity" but when it slows, you begin to see businesses closing and people moving.

Family and Retirement: Mr. Looper met his ex-wife while working in Leeville. They are now divorced but remain in contact with each other. Mr. Looper has no children of his own, but is close to his stepchildren. He lives alone with his dog and enjoys researching local history and genealogy. He contributed photographs, which had been used in a research project he was involved in. They are not actually his personal photos, but depict oil industry scenes from way back.

Rufin Lowry

Lafayette, LA

February 27, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW044

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Rufin Lowry was born on February 20, 1921 in Jackson, Mississippi. He graduated from University of Mississippi Law School, practiced law for a year, but left in 1947 when he got a job with Pan American Production Company in Lafayette. He mostly handled land issues for the company. In his interview, he discusses the Oil Center in Lafayette, Louisiana Mineral Law, and the impacts of the oil industry on Lafayette.

#### Summary:

Early life: born in 1921 in Jackson, Mississippi, where father was State Treasurer and State Insurance Commissioner.

Education: graduated from University of Mississippi Law School ("Ole' Miss Law School")

Employment: practiced law for a year in Mississippi; then moved to Pan American Production Company in Lafayette in 1947; was attracted to possibility of more lucrative benefits; admittedly a person had a one in ten chance of finding oil; dealt with inshore oil drilling; work schedule varied a lot since he traveled; worked there for ten years, then became an independent contractor. Job was cyclical like oil industry; plenty of other job opportunities, not just the oil industry; was able to survive during the down times.

Oil Center in Lafayette: in 1947, all oil related offices scattered throughout city; severe shortage of office space; Lowry and others urged Mr. Heymann to build new office space in what is now the Oil Center. Mr. Heymann built these offices on what was a nursery and donated land for the Petroleum Club; a booming time for Lafayette. Lafayette chosen over neighboring cities because they weren't receptive to people associated with oil industry; negative stereotype associated with the roughneck; many people came from out-of-state for new opportunities in oil industry; primarily came from Texas, Mississippi, Oklahoma.

Typical work day with Pan American: went to various courthouses to run records, then to landowner for an affidavit to the title, to ensure no legal defects; used a local French interpreter, which was a great help when dealing with local residents. Many people suspicious of oil companies, but as far as leasing was concerned, no one really had an advantage; a typical lease lasted approximately five years; landowner received bonus when he signed a lease, covering the first year; then lease specified a rental for every year; also option of not renewing the lease and letting it expire.

Royalties: if company found oil they paid the landowner certain percentages of the profit, typically percentage was between four to twelve percent.

Louisiana mineral law: quite different than other parts of the country. In Mississippi and Texas, when mineral rights are bought from a landowner it is permanent, but in Louisiana rights only good for ten years, unless well is in production; rights are good for length of production; if no production, rights go back to landowner. The U.S. never had a comprehensive energy program, much to the detriment of states like Louisiana.

Typical process: worked with a geologist, looked at available data to find good prospects; then get short-term loan from bank to buy the lease from landowner; then rent the lease to the oil company, who in turn, paid royalties to the landowner as the well came into production. Offshore oil boom did not affect inshore business; much more expensive to drill offshore than inshore.

Lafayette: many changes since moving to Lafayette in 1947; used to be small sleepy town; a great influx of people from different states, which changed the city's ethnic composition. Population growth caused highway congestion. Lafayette has continued to grow ever since he moved there; several local landmarks have changed considerably. Mr. Heymann was a very intelligent, civic minded, generous man; a successful businessman before the oil boom; owned various stores, land, a nursery, sold food and clothes.

Life reflections: only regret is that he did not get enough good oil wells (jokingly); lived a very interesting life full of great friends and other fascinating people.

Ed and Juliet Lucas

New Iberia, LA

June 26, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW058

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Ed Lucas was born and raised in Texas. His father worked as a pump station operator for the Texas Pipeline. In 1943, at the age of 18, he was working as a welder in Houston when he went to work for Texas Pipeline in south Louisiana. They moved around the New Orleans area quite a bit, before settling in New Iberia in 1957. During his career with the Texas Pipeline he was essentially a welder, but later got into inspecting and supervising construction maintenance. He retired in 1985, as third in command in south Louisiana. During the interview he describes laying pipe offshore, and discusses safety, education, and natives and oilfield trash.

Juliet Lucas was born and raised in south Louisiana to two prominent families in the area. She met Ed Lucas while going to nursing school in New Orleans; they married in 1948, at which time she was not allowed to continue her studies. During their marriage they had four children. At the age of 46 she went back into nursing. They have a son who currently works as an oil traffic coordinator for the Shell Pipeline (which used to be the Texas Pipeline) and another who is a prominent teacher and counselor in New Iberia.

#### Summary:

Early life (EL): born and raised TX; father worked for Texas Pipeline at pump station. In '43, at 18 y, was welding in Houston; chose to go work for Texas Pipeline because could make a good living and had good benefits.

Early career: after hired, sent to build pipeline Paradis-Port Arthur; needed workers. Met and married wife in late '40s. Moving '48-57-Gretna, Des Allemands, Paradis, Marrero, New Iberia.

Job security: never had to worry about finances; laid off unskilled labor. By time he retired in '85, employee population had been whittled down to nearly nothing.

Schedule and pay: shift work and paid flat monthly salary; depended on contractor and the job. Describes long stays in motel while on a job; family visited. Youngest daughter did not know him at six months because gone so much; missed some holidays. Benefits and retirement are good.

Pipelines: describes different lines; pressure maintained on lines with booster stations. Laid some pipe offshore off a lay barge (describes); used steel pipe; laid at least 3 feet under ocean floor.

Safety: just as dangerous as you want it; accidents and deaths inevitable, but learn to live with it. Companies had safety programs for prevention (start around mid '30s); safer when working with same people all the time. Company took care of injured workers; describes injury to his finger and to another worker; can keep working for company if don't sue them.

Education: in past did not need high school ed to work, but today need at least this; advancement limited by education; he went to trade school for drafting; more technical and specialized today.

Benefit of industry: oil and oil-related companies have been a blessing for country; provided lots of good paying jobs. Lafayette built up because of industry; New Iberia has decline with less industry presence. Super port.

Oilfield worker reputation and natives: some were rough, but most basically good people. Still viewed as an outsider, though people are friendly to them; ignorant to call them oilfield trash. Because JL was a native from two good families, they got some acceptance (describes incident with tax assessor). Oilfield provided sense of belonging and social network.

Alistair Macnab

Houston, TX

July 24, 2006

Interviewed by: Jason P. Theriot

University of Houston/History International

MMS074

### Ethnographic Preface:

Captain Alistair Macnab is from Scotland and began his maritime career with a Scottish Steamship Company. He spent 29 years in the international shipping/trade business, spending most of his later years working from the USA, including serving as company port captain in New Orleans in the late '60s. With the emergence of containerized cargo, his Scottish shipline left the USA market and relocated to Europe; Macnab married a Yankee and stayed behind. He took a job at the Port of Houston with the Greater Houston Port Bureau and has served as its director for 9 years. He is on the board of directors for the Houston Maritime Museum.

### Summary:

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Jim Manzilillo

Houston, TX

June 23, 2006

Interviewed by: Jason P. Theriot

University of Houston/History International

MMS075

### Ethnographic Preface:

Jim Manzilillo, a native of Pennsylvania and U.S. WWII Merchant Marine Veteran, is the founder of the Houston Maritime Museum. He owned and operated a ship building company for the Mexican Government and for the United Nations. He is a naval architect and world traveler.

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Rufus Marin

New Iberia, LA

August 1, 2002

Interviewed by: David DiTucci, Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

DD006

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Rufus Marin was born in New Iberia, Louisiana, in 1921. His father worked as a ticket agent for the railroad before owning a grocery store and working as a salesman. His first job in the oil industry was in the Red Fox Machine and Supply Company office, where he worked for about a year; his sister also went to work there and was the assistant to the boss for 44 years. In 1955, he went to work for his cousin at Laperouse Abstract Company, where he learned how to abstract land titles. They worked together for four or five years in Vermillion Parish; for the next 30 years he stayed with the company, working all over south Louisiana. When work slowed down in 1991, he was laid off and went to work on his own. He retired in about 1999, but has continued to do some contract work during the summer. During the interview he provides detailed explanations and descriptions of the abstracting process and the way that land ownership, royalties, and minerals rights work in Louisiana.

#### Summary:

Early life: born '21 in New Iberia; flood of '27; father owned a grocery store, but worked for railroad before that in Morse.

Career: in '55 was out of work and cousin owned an abstract business (Laperouse Abstract Company) and needed help; cousin taught him how to abstract. Before that had worked a year with Red Fox Machine and Supply Company; during the war had been working in Morgan City; sister got a job at Red Fox and worked there 44 years.

Training: no institution you could go to learn how to be an abstractor; had to have some legal knowledge; was specialized skill and lawyers often taught people. He was taught by his cousin, who was taught by his cousin (Lionel Laperouse), who was taught by, maybe, Jerome Broussard.

Land: start from first holder of land (sovereign - federal or state); "patent" is the first sale out of the sovereign; in land entry books, land described in terms of section, township, and range (explains each).

Abstracting: first check to see if land released from the sovereign; then make up a chain of title (ownership) from present owner to first owner; was common to be able to make a complete chain, but might run into problems if it was in irregular sections or was in a large grant; descriptions of land got worse the farther back in time they were written. Next step is to run all the records for each of the owners to find out everything they did with the property and make up a worksheet. Typists would then type up the worksheets; abstracts usually about 300 pages each;

an abstract is the history of a piece of property from beginning to end; abstracts given to examining attorneys to make a decision as to whether the leaser's title is good (almost all the time it was good).

Mineral rights and royalties: oil company would buy a lease from the mineral owner; pure royalty is when rights owned by someone other than landowner; during hard times, landowners might sell all or parts of their mineral rights to put food on their tables; rights and royalties are just like right ways - 10-year limit if not used.

Length of time: usually takes two to three weeks, but not more than four weeks to create an abstract; problems that could delay it include difficulty finding heirs or locating property.

Waterways: sections with watercourses termed "irregular"; traversable waterway's bottoms usually belong to the state; disagreement over Acadian-Vermillion Rice Irrigating Company canals.

Pay and schedule: early on charged oil companies by type-written page; now charge per diem (100-175 per day). Would go to the office each morning to get their assignments and then go to wherever they were working; when first started working would work in courthouse until it closed at four thirty and then go back to office to put it together; after go married, allowed to come home after courthouse closed. Was reimbursed for mileage and meals.

School board: in Vermillion Parish, the school board owns every sixteenth section; with money they got from leasing property, able to pay teachers better.

Employment: most abstracters were contract men; had to pay own social security and didn't have health benefits. Laid off in '91 after 44 years when Laperouse ran out of work; during '80s they were very busy because they did good work and laid out abstract properly.

Complexities: other problematic issues that made title sometimes unclear included suits, settlements, maiden names, and succession; title curer would be called in to fix defects in title. Naming oil wells. [Orcants?] instead of acres. Language.

Oil's impact on southern Louisiana: the guiding force in leading region out of rural economy; lots of people involved in the industry.

R.H. Marmande

Theriot, LA.

April 9, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB053p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was put in touch with Mr. R.H. Marmande through Phillip Fanguy and Billy Coyle. They knew him from being a successful business owner and tool inventor in the oil field. He owned 2 tool companies at different times during his oil career. He was extremely knowledgeable about the history of offshore commissions and mineral rights. He was also very matter of fact about the damage that has been caused to Louisiana's coast line as well as how the state got in the predicament it did. He had some pictures that he took out of the old tools, boats and rigs and we talked about them at the end of the interview.

Mr. Marmande was born and raised across the street from where he now lives. He was in the Navy for 4 years and would work at Texaco when he was at home. He went to college on the G.I. Bill and earned a petroleum engineer's degree. He decided to work in the service industry supporting the ever-growing oil field. The first business he was involved with was Delta Iron Works. He worked for that company for 30 years and then started his own business, Dolphin Construction, in 1980. He retired in 1997 when he sold his business.

#### Summary:

Background: Bob Marmande was born in 1922; parents were sugar cane farmers; they had a mill to process the cane as well. Starting in 1929, depression and crop disease affected their business, cut yield to half. Bob worked for Texaco for two years before being drafted into the Navy.

Early work with Texaco: 1940-1942 - was a flunkie, did some cooking, dishwashing, worked as a radio operator, did clerical work 12 days on and 4 off - camps were all over the lakes at that time - played cards, fished and ran around the camps during free time. 8-hour days but lots of breaks between meals - helped to prepare lunch meals to send to the rigs and camp meals for dinner and breakfast.

Service: Bob spent two years in New Orleans - was in until 1946.

Delta Iron: Bob finished an engineering degree in college in 1951 and left the oil company to work with service industry implementing contracts that serviced the production end - well engines, sandblasting, tank management, rig crews. Delta Iron grew and grew into Delta Supply Company - Delta Shipyards hired 800-1000 employees with work for Texaco, mostly local people - Texaco was the biggest client for awhile, but eventually did contracts with Sun Oil, Shell, etc. Texaco went into a slump in the 1950's which impacted the community due to the price of oil. 1969 - Delta merged with Comwall Company that is traded on the New York Stock

Exchange. Delta went public after the merger; not much change though, because Comwall was not in the oil business.

Recession: Bob left Delta in 1980 as the Manager of the Natural Resources Division; sensed reorganization and another downturn ahead. He left to start another construction company with one of the other engineers in 1980. Lucky thing since Delta went broke in 1982 - recession in oil field and they had overextended themselves.

Dolphin Construction: Their business housed a fabrication shop and a mechanics shop; it was a volatile time in the 80's with contracts for companies being cut back and the Middle East controlling the flow and price of oil around the world. In 1981, they had 75-80 employees, at one time had a job with Exxon in Mobile where they had 450 employees working. They sold the company in 1996 to Gulf Island Fabrication; Bob's partner got Parkinson's Disease, couldn't work anymore.

Labor: Bob knew everybody over at Delta; when they went under, Dolphin took the cream of the crop and still had good people knocking on their doors. Unions had a hard time organizing because the employees were in the field so scattered around; never really heard employees talking about wanting to unionize. He tried to maintain a good relationship with his employees; had 401K plans.

Earl Marquardt

Lafayette, LA

June 26, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW006

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Earl Marquardt was born in western Kansas in the late 1920s and was raised in a family of six on a cattle farm. Facing few job opportunities, he went to work in the newly developed Hugoton oil and gas field in Kansas. In the late 1950s or early 1960s he was transferred to Lafayette. He was a district superintendent for General American and was charged with overseeing the whole Gulf Coast. He retired from the company in 1984 when Phillips Petroleum bought out the company. Over the next two years he worked as a district engineer for First Energy in Houston. After leaving that position, he began consulting, a practice he continues today. He describes how the oil and service industries made Lafayette what it is today and how the industry, particularly in terms of loyalty and trust, has changed. He ends the interview by describing his one and only experience with a blowout, noting how he felt helpless when he saw the well on fire. Unfortunately there were audio difficulties during the first portion of the interview and there are no notes describing what was discussed.

#### Summary:

Oil in Kansas: oilfield careers were best paying jobs; western Kansas was sparse and weren't many opportunities; oilfield provided him a way to make a living. Hugoton Field just developing, lots of activity.

General American: bought by Phillips Petroleum in '84; at that time was district superintendent in charge of more than 200 wells and 35 employees; company didn't believe in having a large staff. Chose to take retirement instead of work for Phillips. While working there, was given a lot of leeway in terms of making decisions; also had good benefits; nobody ever quit.

Family: able to put his four children through college on his salary; his sons said they didn't want to make a living in the oilfield; work interfered with family plans.

Later career: worked for First Energy in Houston as district engineer, but they sold out in '86. Came back to Lafayette to be a consultant; worked for five years for [Altermore?] Oil and Gas in Houston.

Booms and busts: bust in Kansas in '56 when things starting in the Gulf; came to Lafayette at or after that time, where it was slow until about '63; slowed down again in early '70s; picked back up mid '70s and got crazy in early '80s. He never missed a paycheck.

Lafayette: the Oil Center is the secret behind what Lafayette is today; only a few Oil Center buildings had been built when he arrived, but they built more very quickly. Life in Lafayette has progressed since that time; city has been good to him and his family.

Oil industry today: would not recommend it as a career path to someone just starting out; drilling on ocean floor; no loyalty or trust; gotten worse for employees and companies.

Money: made a lot of money just working for a living; had to learn how to handle his money.

Blowout: story of the first and only well he had blowout on him; saved the well by pumping blind rams shut and shutting in the well.

Jimmie Martin

Galliano, LA

June 7, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM037

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Jimmie Martin by Ronald Callais, Weber Callais, and Wilbert Collins, all during the same week, after not hearing of him before in the project. I called the office; his secretary located him on a cell phone and she immediately called back to set up the interview for the next morning. We talked in his office, one filled with a marvelous collection of duck carvings, a large desk with a display case containing carved fishes, and several photographs of a modest shrimp skimmer where he entertains clients and shrimps for fun.

After the interview, we toured the office, where he showed me photos of the type of junk they pick up, and walked me through the storage area where he keeps his inventory of nets used to clean up and certify removals. He invented the "gorilla net," a large-mesh trawl net worked from one of his 3 shrimp trawlers to remove debris. He got the idea from an Irishman he met at a boat show, so the mesh is probably one used in deepwater trawling and seining in northern waters. He has a patent on the net, but admitted to having trouble enforcing it through the courts.

Jimmie Martin has three lines of work - cleaning up and certifying platform removals in waters up to 300 feet, which is the depth to which the Federal Contingency Fund covers [for damage to fishing gear/boats], running 3 utility and 2 crew boats, and building and renting (occasionally selling) portable crew quarters for rigs and platforms, quarters that conform to Coast Guard fire and safety regulations. The "B" of B and J Martin is his father, Beauregard. His father was born in Galliano, went to work for Texaco, went to the war, and returned home to enter the Coast Guard. In the mid-50's, he built a shrimp trawler which he later converted to an oil field vessel. Jimmie stayed in fishing until 1977 when he expanded into his current line of work.

#### Summary:

Family: Father, born in Galliano, went to work for Texaco in 1937, then to the war; went into the Coast Guard after the war, then built a 72 foot shrimp trawler in 1950; mid-50s, needed CG certification before going to work for oil industry; manning regulations not as strict on 65 footers or less, so he cut it down.

Boats: late 50s, early 60s that people started designing oilfield boats; kept them under 100 tons so they could go with captains with 100 ton or less licenses; local shrimpers never could pass test for something bigger; new steel boats being built at Universal Shipyards in Houma; now building 160 footers that are under 100 tons - a matter of knowing how to put the steel in; early wooden shrimp boats were torn up too much in oil work.

His business: involved in utility and crew boats; verification with 2 trawlers, portable living quarters - complete steel box to meet fire regulations.

Early days: in 30s, all rigs made of wood; Texaco did all own work; subcontractors came into play mid-late 50s; with Texaco, steady paycheck, possibility of some kind of retirement; I stayed in fisheries until 1977; Mr. Ivy Bouzigard had some oyster luggers and went to work for Texaco. Regulations: sits on Underwater Construction Committee; for years, oil companies dumped everything overboard, assumed they could never fill up Gulf; 10-12 years ago, came to realize they could fill up Gulf with trash; now cleaning up "orphan sites;" sits on MMS board for site clearance verification; fishermen have Federal Contingency Fund, file claim; once you file, a radius mapped out and no one else can file in that area - but map got all filled up with claims; 1990 tried to come up with new plan: "Notice to Lessees" that after they used sonar and divers, you bring in a local fishermen to trawl the area of the removal; 100 platforms/ year being removed; state also has contingency fund for state waters; feds maintain certain level of money, then go back to oil companies to replenish it.

Trash: file cabinets, tires, sinks; until 80s, when told to clean up platform, meant you threw it over the side; 10 foot deep trash under platforms installed in 1950s; once contingency funds set up 30 years ago, fishermen contented because they got their lost time and gear; then it got so bad; 1988-1998 - 1321 platforms removed, 1576 installations; housekeeping has improved - we were getting extremely close to polluting the whole GOM; MMS doing their job re cleanup; contractors need to know oil company policies; major and some independent companies very environmentally conscious; our boats do major job backloading trash; contingency fund brought things to a head; pre-1960 [then changes it to pre-1970] platform - you'll pick up 200 tons of trash; platform installed in 1985: 1 ton of trash; after hurricane, everything washes off platform; on pre-1970 site clearance verifications, our costs are \$250K, to \$25K on post-1985 platforms.

Clearance: Gorilla net material imported from Northern Ireland; if platform has lot of trash, start with this, then come in with verification net - a standard shrimp net; "verified" if you pull the standard net and not get torn; we do 25-30 sites/year, more than any other companies; northwest quadrants always the worst, due to prevailing winds and currents, and that's where most of the cranes are; I have two trawlers, getting ready to build another - a 98 footer, with a bigger house; keep them on the job all the time; we're a one-stop shop - do own marketing, nets, etc.; regulations only go out to 300 feet, fishing not that great beyond that.

Living quarters: sold a couple to Mexico; yard in Alabama - Bayou La Batre; can't afford the labor in Louisiana - too much work here, not that much in Alabama; oil companies starting to move there; steel workers are all Vietnamese there - they want to work, they are "real Americans;" mom and pop business.

Mexico: lots of changes; environmentally, they are where we were 50 years ago; sheen of oil on water at all times.

Coast Guard and MMS: in 50s: if you're going to transport people for hire, you're going to have an inspected boat; Mr. Callais frontrunner in inspected boats; inspected boats have carried over into trawlers - safer now; cut fatality rate in fishing by 1/3; re MMS majors don't have the

problems that independents do; MMS not making companies remove shelf platforms after they've dried up - so long as they maintain their lease; those fields will become property of small companies that will go bellyup, with no one to clean them up; some oil companies just have paper assets, won't clean up.

Deepwater: will get active; you don't throw anything overboard - if you want to get a ride home fast, throw something over; want a superfast ride home - throw a piece of plastic.

Education: sons, daughters with college degrees; doesn't guarantee anything; no future in oil business anymore, so kids not interested.

Trapping and oil industry: store advanced you credit all winter; sell pelts and immediately broke; if lucky to get on with major oil company, could break out of this.

Mergers: now can't count on retirement.

LL&E/Burlington: sell property for hunting rights; new owners drive pipe into canal cuts to keep people out; pipes rust out, someone's going to get killed on these.

Small-scale shrimpers and other locals: old days, did gardening, worked in shipyard off-season; now only wants to shrimp and make a living in 2-3 months; used to be a man who could live off the land; referred to Wilbert Collins - raised in the old school - jury's still out on one of his sons, the other is a real hard worker.

Future: only 3 families still involved in oysters; less than 10 big shrimp boats where there were 100; kids being raised to go to college; I haven't sold out because of two boys coming up behind me; I'd have offers but not sweet enough; I'm 59 years old; we're having trouble getting quality crews on boats; captains we have today my daddy wouldn't have hired as deckhands; we have a crew change every Thursday on Cocodrie - we won't let them drive a \$25K pickup there, but we let them drive a \$1/4 million boat - something seriously wrong with this picture.

Unions: I'm going to retire, if these kids want to fight the unions, they can have it; union activity slowed down now that the industry has slowed down, lot of equipment out of work.

Cycles: always up and down, but now as an employee of e.g. Chevron, you never get out on a platform; contractors came after 1960; at the time that the first employees retired, like daddy who started working in the 30s; companies realized that contractor may cost you more up front but don't have to pay benefits; my friends were offered a package and they were only 50 years old, sounded like a good package, stock market went bad, they are out working again; in 80s, oil companies lost old experience and knowledge; some companies cleaned house - rehired them as contractors when it picked up, but with no benefits; in the boat business, in the mid 80s, we lost a generation.

Roy Masters

Houma, LA

January 29, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB035

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Roy Masters at the Halliburton breakfast in Houma. He had interesting stories about what it was like to work in the swamps after he had been used to dry land for so long.

Roy was born in 1932 and began working in the oilfield in 1951. He is from Texas and worked there for 13 years before being transferred to Houma in 1968. He worked his way up to supervisor before retiring in 1985. He is now in the used car business.

#### Summary:

Background: Roy Masters was born in central west Texas near Abilene where his father was a farmer. He finished high school, working in the summers on a rod and fuel machine, pulled rods out of the oil wells and cleaned them, sent them back down. The job paid good money and was not too dangerous because that area of the country was a low-pressure oilfield, not high pressure like South Louisiana.

Contract work: After high school, he needed a job with medical benefits and didn't want to stay on the farm. He went to work in the oilfields as a roughneck in Abilene, TX - real hard work, back in 1951. He worked all over west Texas, but still couldn't land a solid job - seemed like you needed to know someone in one of the big companies to get on with them.

Halliburton: He did know one guy with Halliburton, knew they had good benefits and retirement plan. In 1953, he went to work for Halliburton in Hanson, TX - started out driving a truck locally for two years, promoted to senior. Both of his kids were born in Hanson, transferred to Abilene in 1955, worked in Abilene for 5-6 years, transferred to Coleman, TX for 5-6 years, closed that camp down, and then transferred to Houma, LA - had a wife and two kids. Kind of a bad deal - all these transfers - but they would pay for you to move.

Transfer to Louisiana: Houma was the only area really working in LA, and Farmington, NM as well - he had a choice of LA or NM - he chose Houma - more work, warmer than NM. They moved in 1968.

Work on the water: Different as night and day - did the same work once you got to the wells, but getting to the wells was altogether different - travel by barge, pickup, boats through the lakes - the water travel was very different. He had never been around this much water growing up in central Texas - amazed by it - a barge weighs thousands of pounds - 150 ft. long - how can you move really heavy objects like that on the water relatively easily

Offshore experiences: Also amazed by the bad seas, the helicopter travel, one time waves were 30ft high - pulled supply ship up to the rig, walked from ship up the ladder (called "widowmaker") to the rig floor - platform is still, ship is moving up and down, had to time your jump just right, he's seen people get hurt pretty badly. One storm was so bad - 35ft. seas, cables would snap, supplies would go sliding overboard, had to call an ocean tug for a rescue - everybody was sick.

Quitting: Often times, he would get back onshore, think about quitting - then he'd think about his wife and kids, and go back out - he'd stay offshore sometimes 15 days and then get off for 5 days for a vacation with the family. Closest he came to quitting, on a 100ft crewboat with supplies, got on at 5 or 6pm in the afternoon, tried to lie down, slept in pretty rough seas, at midnight calm as could be, went back to dock to get on another boat, ride another 16 hours - almost quit. They had set up portable sleeping quarters out on the platform, working for Amoco - kind of overcrowded on the rigs, so they had to sleep in the portables, that night lying in bed - heard a bunch of noise, rig electric line had snapped and hit the portable and flipped everything over in a driving rainstorm, slammed into the side of the rig, suffered some injuries and hypothermia. Company man from Amoco got him helicoptered out of there which was kind of a big deal - only bigwigs rode in helicopters, the peons rode in the boats.

Overseas work: Roy was promoted to a tool operator job - still went to the same rigs. By the time had made supervisor, overseas assignments came up working 30 and 30 (days on and days off) - wife went sometimes - worked off the coast of Brazil - job for Shell in Spain.

Biggest oilrig fire in history: Shell platform fire 258 dead - rigged up two barges to go out and kill those wells, 10-15 pumps on each rig, few months of work as a firefighter. Had a well blowout off the coast of Australia, he went to work it - gone about 90 days - 60 days on the rig.

Job responsibilities: Sometimes you had breaks of a week or two between jobs, but you had to be tied to a phone, so you couldn't go off and fish or hunt. Beepers and cell phones would have been something. Life has changed so much.

F.J. Matherne

Bourg, LA

July 11, 2001, September 11, 2001

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB003, EB014

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I got F.J. Matherne's name from his niece, Sue Olin. Sue is a friend of Corine Paulk's and active in Indian Education. F.J. has turned out to be my best contact and a friend as well. I was at his house doing the second interview the morning of September 11. He and his wife, Mavis, were extremely helpful, kind and supportive on an extremely difficult day. Sue Olin had informed me that F.J. was quite a character, and he didn't disappoint! We started off the first interview with F.J. telling me a couple of jokes, the majority being slightly dirty in nature. F.J. is a smallish man with a twinkle in his eye that you catch as soon as you are welcomed into his modest house with a beautifully manicured lawn. The next thing one might notice is the lack of digits on both hands. He is missing the middle finger on his left and part of his pinkie on the right hand. He received the first injury during the first couple of years in the oilfield and was out for 3 months. The injury precipitated his move into production from drilling where he began. F.J. is a prolific storyteller remembering smells and colors as if the events had happened yesterday instead of 50 years ago. He has some wonderful stories about working with WWII German prisoners on a sugar cane farm where his daddy was an overseer. He and his brothers were all born near the house where he still lives today in Bourg, LA. He loves to travel and work in his yard. He also gardens a lot and is active in his church, which happens to be the same church that Corine attends.

F.J. Matherne began working for the oil field in 1952 as a roughneck for Laughlin Brothers and Southern 6. He began working for Texaco in 1956 starting off as a roughneck. He went into production after his finger got cut off on some air tongs in 1960. He worked his way up to gang pusher. His last 3 years at Texaco he was a barge foreman on a clean up barge. F.J. retired from Texaco in 1987.

#### Summary of EB003:

Growing up: "the early years"- He talks extensively about cane farming and his daddy's work in sugar. His family farmed for a long time in the same area where he still lives. His brothers all live close as well. The reason he gives for not going into farming was the pay. He says that he would have gone into farming if it were unionized. During the second interview I asked about this statement as it related to the oil field. He was against unionizing the oil field because you didn't need it. He tells some great stories about working with German prisoners and different things he remembers about WWII.

Early oil field: Talks a lot about the noise of the rigs. Says he preferred to work on the steam rigs b/c they were quieter. Paints a picture of the oil field as rushed, "whatever it was, it should have been done yesterday." One of the biggest differences for him was doing everything by hand

during the early years. If you needed 110 lb. sacks of mud unloaded you did it by hand. He recalls that "safety wasn't the greatest" during the early years.

Contract firms: F.J. worked for contractors the first 4 years he was in the oil business. He wanted a stable job after awhile because he needed a little time off to court a specific young lady.

Texaco: Started working 7 & 7 from the get go. He very rarely got 7 days off because he was on the extra board all the time. He'd make more money but would usually only have 3 or 4 days off and sometimes none at all for a month or so. In the mid 1950's they shut down the Texaco office because business was slowing down. He worked wildcatting during that time. He talks about it never being cold, hot or rainy in the oil field. This is the first time I ran into this particular saying but it's definitely not the last!

Hurricanes: Does not talk extensively about hurricanes but tells a couple of stories about being stuck on the rigs during a few bad storms and one hurricane.

Positions: F.J. is the first to tell me about all the different positions on the drilling rigs and the production platforms. He walks me through it all with patience.

Camps: he gives a detailed description of how a typical camp would be set up. He talks about the "flower fund" which each camp had to buy flowers for the family and friends of people who were killed while on duty. He said that sometimes the flower fund would get to be a couple of hundred dollars. When it rose that high they would buy T.V.'s and crawfish, and have parties. He told so many good stories about the food that he had my stomach rumbling by the end of the interview. F.J. got extremely passionate when telling a story about a young guy who called the food "slop". He holds that the youth back then weren't appreciative of what this country had to offer.

Accidents: talks about how he got his fingers cut off, how painful it was as well as how much time he lost due to the finger not healing correctly. He tells a great story about how a cup of coffee saved his life. He said that he almost lost his life a couple of times but was lucky. When I asked him whether or not he ever got angry about the conditions they had to work in he said no. F.J. comes from the school of people who expected a days work to be nothing short of grueling. He is a staunch advocate of "putting in an honest days work."

Technical notes: F.J. enjoyed telling me about the different jobs on the production side of the house as well as how the different machines, compressors and separators worked. I got the feeling that he wanted to make sure that I knew what was going on. It was the first time that I felt like I understood how oil came out of the ground.

Safety: He began going to safety school in the mid-60's to early 70's. He said everything changed then, especially when he got to be barge foreman on a clean up barge. Those jobs were non-existent for much of his oil career. Drillers were the most dangerous people because they were trying to go so fast and were so rough that they were a bit scary. Tells a vivid story about seeing someone get killed b/c the driller yanked the chain so hard it broke and hit someone in the head.

Summary of EB014:

Main Position(s): Production jobs, roughneck, roustabout, pumper, meterman, gang pusher

Establishment of Level and Calibration Laws: The process for getting oil out of the ground and to land. Mainly getting it off the barges and keeping track of levels of oil that come out of the ground. State and federal government decide amount of oil allowed to be produced. If you go over you hold it in the barrels for next month.

The LOOP: Description of what it is (a company), where it is. His brother in law works the LOOP as a meterman. Talks a little about the massive scale we're dealing with in barrels of oil. "Fooling with big stuff".

Differences between Rigs and Production: Spent 24 years at Lake Barre. Lowest position is flunkie, but anyone can move their way up. Description of production jobs: (Meterman) Calibrate flow lines, prove tank was calibrated to the state of LA. standards, calibrate meter charts. Had to keep track of what gas you're using and selling. Very descriptive. (Pumper) one of the only ways to become a pumper was to get a reference from your tool pusher.

Experiential Learning: Learn a lot on your own, he learned from Burleigh Ruiz. Had to fix and figure on your own. Nothing better than experience. Engineers were smart but a lot of times they were dumb b/c they had bad judgment b/c of lack of experience. Some didn't want to show others what they knew to stay a little bit ahead of the curve. Had to learn to rely on people to do their jobs, can't be two places at once. Have to help yourself as well. Gave guys several chances to prove themselves before they would get "run off". F.J. didn't care about color as long as you worked and did what he asked you to do.

Minorities in the Oil field: A challenge to get used to simply being around Black people, never went to school, worked with them or fought with them and then had to learn to live with them. Kenny Wilson, a friend of F.J.'s who worked in the kitchen. When he went out on the rig put him with F.J. He also scraped paraffin, a little bit better than roustabouting and better than carrying pipe. Sent him to be a compressor operator after pumping.

Accident Story: Story about Delvin Crochet, their boat skipper, and laying line to the tank battery. Working 7 & 7 at this time. Working with Peanut at this time. Sat on the side of the boat instead of on the barge that saved their lives. Mistake by the roustabout pusher. F.J. has lots of stories about how he almost died. His wife Mavis says that he wouldn't tell her many of the stories b/c he didn't want to scare her.

Contracting Companies: They did the same thing the company men did but were cheaper. They were usually given the hardest and dirtiest work. Difficult to do the same work and make half the pay with no benefits. The contracting firms made money from cheating their men. Those that couldn't get on at big company or who didn't have a high school education worked for the contractors. Old oilfield men worked for the big companies without an education but only because they began before or right after the war.

Working during the Boom: You didn't stop working for anything. You might stop and eat but you would take turns with the other crewmembers. Many were fond of the drink. Tells story about C.J. Bonny or "Loureauxville" who was sent to rehab by the company to get sobered up, he was one of F.J.'s gang pushers. Jimmy Gibbons worked for Loureauxville as an engineer.

Drugs and Alcohol Problems: didn't know of too many who had problems that bad. Many liked to drink. Now the dope is the problem, many people got run off b/c of dope.

Unions: didn't go into farming b/c it wasn't unionized. Doesn't believe in unions, they did their work already in the 1920's. The company treated you good and paid you a decent wage so no need. Thinks farmers should have unions. Price of labor is so high that's why work is going overseas. Can't satisfy the unions. Thinks most union people are stealing the money anyway. Thinks that people from overseas are the ones who are trying to bring the unions to South Louisiana area now.

Environmental degradation: People in Baton Rouge let the oil companies rape the state. Ripped the land up. State of LA should have had harsher regulations.

Clean up barges: Things started going down in the late 70's. Always operated by seniority so when it came time to cut back on employees F.J. got bumped to the clean up barge while Harold Benoit stayed at Barre. Enjoyed his experience but difficult to get used to all the different rules of the bosses on the barges. Made the time go by faster. Had more time off b/c they would work land jobs. A lot more dangerous job b/c fooling with poisonous gas. Had to go to a lot of school before working on the barge b/c of safety precautions. Don't recall having an accident on barge. Built the barge b/c the contractors who used to run the companies blew themselves up several times.

End of career afterthoughts: Liked meterman's job b/c it was by himself and didn't have to worry about a bunch of guys. Worst job was roughnecking at night. Working extra board was horrible as well. You were on the extra board if you weren't on a regular crew. Only way to get on a crew is for someone to die, get fired or leave.

Success in the oil field: Had to have a lot of drive, pride in your work and get along with people. Success was measured not only how far up the ladder you got but HOW you got there as well. It didn't hurt to know the right people. Lots of people got up the ladder by brown nosing. Gave up production job b/c moving them around too much.

Larry Mattei

Lafayette, LA

January 31, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW035

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Larry Mattei was born in 1939 in New Orleans and raised in Houma, LA. Mattei earned a degree in Engineering from Southwestern Louisiana Institute in Lafayette. He discusses employment with Texaco, Magcobar, and Superior Oil who was bought by Mobil in 1985. His work often interfered with family life, but he ultimately enjoyed working with the oil industry.

#### Summary:

Early life: born 1939 in New Orleans, raised in Houma, LA; father a general hardware salesman, sold products to oil industry; father told stories about oil companies storing oil in sunken WWII Landing Crafts in the late 1940s. Mother worked for bakery chain owned by her family.

Education: attended Nicholls State, graduating from Southwestern Louisiana Institute in Lafayette with degree in Engineering.

Employment: in high school and college, worked for Texaco as galley hand in training program for college bound students; then became a mud engineer 1959 for Magcobar, a subsidiary of Dresser Industries; attributes this job to his then girlfriend, now wife. She worked for a two-way radio company that supplied Magcobar; she knew someone there, whom she persuaded to hire her husband; he worked his way up to senior engineer. 1978 became completion fluid manager in Lafayette; began work with Superior Oil in 1980. Then became drilling fluid supervisor for Superior; mid-1980s, during downturn, Mobil Oil bought Superior; Mobil wanted a drilling specialist so Mattei kept his job. Sold gas to pipelines or to various buyers or refineries. Mobil drilled mainly in Louisiana and Texas. Retired during another downturn in 1996 because it would require too much moving around; after a year, he became a consultant to Mobil, until the Exxon Mobil merger took place; time for him to pass it along to someone else.

Family life: nature of his work was very difficult on family life; many birthdays and holidays were missed due to work; he and his family adjusted because he financially benefited from the industry. Talks about wife extensively, describing her as an independently minded woman; she had to manage all the family affairs during his time offshore.

Living offshore: small and compact; safetyman very rarely seen unless there was an accident; everyone had to look out for themselves. Major problem back then was transportation; before helicopters travel was by boat; a man was put into a basket to be transported from boat to rig. Early days filled with trial and error; it paved the way for professionalization of the proper procedures and standards as far as safety and production.

Reflections: enjoyed his time working in oil industry; would not have changed his decision to become involved in it.

Terry Mayon

Morgan City, LA

March 3, 2004

Interviewed by: Jamie Christy

University of Houston/History International

MMS042

Ethnographic Preface:

Terry Mayon is from Morgan City, Louisiana. His grandfather went to work for The Texas Company in 1925, and his father went to work for Texaco in 1945 and then for Kerr-McGee. Mr. Mayon worked for Kerr McGee for 22 years. He was also an air-traffic controller for many years. Mr. Mayon specialized in safety at Kerr-McGee and discusses World War II veterans in the oil field, accidents, unions, and women and Blacks in the oil field.

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Jack McCord

Lafayette, LA

January 8, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW032

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Jack McCord was born in Austin, Texas, and spent part of his youth in Houston. Beginning in 1949 in Houston he worked for Tidewater Oil Company, for Tennessee Gas as a geological draftsman, and for an independent oil operator. He moved to Lafayette in 1962 to go to work for his wife's father, who owned Gulf Coast Rental Tools. However, when his father-in-law died six months later, he got into the lease brokerage business. During the 1980s, in response to demand, he opened up an abstracting section in his company. He remained a landman until he retired in about 2002. Transcribing ceased 48 minutes into the interview due to poor audio.

#### Summary:

Early life: grew up in Austin, TX. Went to the University of Houston for about a year.

Career: went to work for Tidewater Oil Company in '49 in Houston; next worked for Tennessee Gas as a geological draftsman; worked for an independent oil operator (Mr. West) where he did some land and courthouse work. Moved to Lafayette in '62 to go to work for his father-in-law at Gulf Coast Rental Tools; after his father-in-law died, he got into the lease brokerage business; partnered with a geologist on some drilling deals.

Lease brokerage: worked as an agent for many oil companies; would buy leases for their accounts and do their land work. Got into abstracting in the '80s when there a shortage of abstractors; waiting on an abstract cost money. Leasing, abstracting, and title process starting from a geological idea. Block busting was a strategic way of buying leases; didn't happen often.

Buying leases: early on, some of the older landowners didn't speak English; he sent out brokers that spoke French, which made things easier and more comfortable. Larger landowners might go through an attorney. Some mistrusted brokers, depended on previous experience with brokers. He acted as an in-between for his clients and the landowners' interests; had to be able to quickly size people up; negotiations over prices. Complications with titles; pipeline rightaways.

Schedule: describes typical day at the courthouse or his office; once he had an operations manager he was able to spend most of his time away (e.g., Dallas, Tulsa), visiting potential clients and keeping the business coming in.

Industry cycles: it was always up and down; companies started partnering together on projects; if your clients had money, you were busy.

Oil industry: had excitement because it could make you very wealthy; the harder you work, the luckier you get.

Lafayette: attractive to him because of the industry activity, which made the city seem progressive; small town feeling. Oil Center attracted many companies to Lafayette; this helped create jobs and grow the community. Cyclical nature of the business helped show the weakness of depending solely on oil for community's economy; had to diversify. Initially planned to return to Houston after making his fortune, but decided to stay in Lafayette and raise his family.

Patsy McCord

Lafayette, LA

January 30, 2003

Interviewed by: Robert Carriker

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

RC001

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Patsy McCord was born in Mansville, Louisiana. Her father worked in the oil field, so she and her family moved around to various states while she was growing up. She went to college at the University of Southwestern Louisiana and graduated from the University of Texas, Austin. She worked as a secretary at Texaco for three years and had a series of jobs before ending up in the real estate industry. Patsy spends much of the interview talking about the changes the oil industry brought to Lafayette.

#### Summary:

Early life: born in Mansville, LA, about 45-miles south of Shreveport. Father worked for Hassy Hunt; a roustabout, then roughneck, driller, tool pusher, and superintendent; later he opened a tool rental company; common for oil employees to work every day; rarely saw father while growing up. Moved around to various states while she was growing up; lived in Mississippi, Texas, Illinois and back to Louisiana; one reason her family moved so much is that back then, oil companies drilled very shallow wells.

Education: attended University of Southwestern Louisiana, graduated from University of Texas, Austin.

Employment: after college, moved to Houston and became secretary to the division accountant for Texaco; worked for a year, got married, then worked for two more years. Returned to Lafayette in 1961; father offered her husband a job with his company. A year later her father was killed in a plane crash; her father's share in the business was sold to his business partner; her husband Jack became a land man. She helped set up appointments for a photography studio based out of Houston. In 1978, became involved in real estate and worked for June Welsh for seven years. Many women were involved in the land aspect of oil industry. She next worked for T. Anderson for three years. Husband's business slowed down due to the industry downturn in 1980s; she needed to make up the lack of family income; left Anderson and worked for Van Eaton, the most successful and largest real estate company in the area.

Changes in Lafayette: such profound changes in Lafayette - most people will never see anything like this ever again. Lafayette was a small town; most people who owned vehicles only had one. While growing up she, like most people at the time, did not consider class; never thought of who did or didn't have money; believed everybody was the same; Lafayette was a good place to grow up, safe. Economy based on farming. Oil Center was key to changing Lafayette; Heymann leased office space to develop Oil Center; he had a lot of foresight and was a very generous man who

gave back to the community. Most people who moved here came from TX and OK; many people stayed because they liked the culture and food. Lafayette was changed by influx of diverse cultures and acceptance of oil business. Native people initially suspicious of oil people and saw them as a lower class. Once the natives began to get to know oil people they were more accepting. Natives in Lake Charles did not want to change.

Negative effects: quick growth caused by oil industry; people became extremely materialistic right before oil crash; some people flew to New York for lunch, sent their children on plane trips, and bought their children expensive sports cars; the positive side of the oil downturn was that it brought people back to reality.

Further changes in Lafayette: political leadership helped attract more business and people to Lafayette after the oil boom; mass movement to leave the area when oil bust occurred; value of houses went down, people could not sell their houses because they would sell at a net loss; many people left town in the middle of the night. Nothing else impacted Lafayette like the oil industry; almost all new subdivisions were built as a result of oil industry; diversification of the economy - medical, higher education, wetlands, and oil; everybody eats out now because both the husband and wife work; cuisine changed as well - new ethnic foods like Italian and Chinese; seafood was always a staple of the diet; religion changed due to the influx of out-of-state oil people; Lafayette not as staunchly Catholic as it used to be, more Protestants came in. Political changes resulted from oil industry; birth of the Republican Party in Louisiana a direct result of the oil industry; more Republicans came in 1961; before they were non-existent.

Jack McCully

Des Allemands, LA

January 18, 2002, January 19, 2002

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner, Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

AG056, EB025p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Jack McCully signed up to be interviewed at the Exxon retirees meeting in Houma that R.J. Cheramie invited Emily Bernier and Andrew Gardner to attend. Andrew gave a short 3 minute talk about the project and then asked for volunteers. Jack is a tall man with a firm handshake and a broad smile. He told us that he had pictures that we might want to look at. Andrew called and set up an appointment for January 18, 2002. When we arrived, Jack was snoozing on the outside swing but jolted awake as soon as he heard the car. He jumped up and gave each of us a quick hug and then we took pictures, all three of us. Jack's lively personality was contagious and we couldn't help but smile and try to keep up with his conversation.

Jack McCully is a transplant from Texas. He worked for Abercrombie in Texas when he was 16. He began working with Humble in Texas and was then transferred to south Louisiana in the mid 1950's. Included are photos of steam rigs and discussion of drilling problems.

#### Summary of AG056:

Personal history: Born in 1927 in Brownwood, Texas; At age 16 worked for Abercrombie for one year; Joined the Merchant Marines, did two tours with them; Spent 4 years in the Army in Europe during the Korean War; Worked for drilling company BB&M; Then got on with Humble

During the Depression, times were hard; During WWII there was a labor shortage, all the men were going overseas

Texas oil industry in the 1940's: Rationing, gas going overseas, used to flare the gas, but it attracted offshore submarines; Sinking of several ships in the Gulf; Shrimp boats would go for survivors

Abercrombie: Worked there for 1 year as a roustabout, built firewalls, fixed separators; Describes drilling under railroad tracks; Drilling in the swamps

Pipeline blowouts; the importance of spacers as safety measures

Father, uncle and brother all worked for Texaco at one time or another

Humble: Started with them in 1952 in Texas, transferred to Louisiana in 1957 when wells became depleted in Texas; Describes two serious accidents; Transfer to Louisiana, move to barge rig, finally gets a job as a mechanic; Decision to stay with the company; Southern Louisiana

similar to Texas, now he's settled in; Steam rigs; Lost his finger laying pipe, you just have to be careful; Switch from Humble to Exxon didn't change much; Schedules were 8 hrs on, 8 hrs off on the land rigs, 8 hr shift work on the barge rig; Week on, week off; Preferred working offshore because it saved gas and paid more

Rough weather: Story about Merchant Marines; hurricanes in southern Louisiana weren't as bad; Crews sent in when weather was bad; One time he got stuck for a week on a platform; Hurt his leg in accident during Hurricane Edith

Exxon was a good company to work for; he liked most of the employees; hands-on training of engineers

Unions: Didn't want a union, had company federation; didn't have to pay dues or strike; company gave them stock

Impact on community: Oil industry hasn't hurt Acadiana, always had plenty of fuel

Changes in oil field: Technology always improving; deeper water; now you need higher education; not much of a difference between steam and diesel-powered rigs

School: Humble sent him to Kilgore to learn the fundamentals of compressure and to learn about different engines

Contract workers: They were always around; periodic layoffs

Changes in the community: Fast food businesses, oil companies, chemical plants, refineries, economic growth

Camp: He lived in a Humble camp; crew cars would take them to the rig so workers' cars weren't nearby in case of accidents; Close social ties in the camp, but little interaction with neighboring community

Future: Technology is improving all the time; need a college degree now but no education necessary when he started

Summary of EB025p:

Photos 1 and 2 are of drilling rigs and workers.

Photo 3 is of a rig in 1957, with discussion of drilling problems in soft shale.

Photos 4 and 5 deal with drilling in Texas.

Photo 6 is the Texas rig, with doghouse and steam boiler.

Photo 7 is the Texas rig.

Photo 8 is an offshore rig

Photo 9 is a helicopter, with a discussion of an accident.

Photo 10 is a derrick that fell in Crowley, LA. Also included is a discussion on standard vs. jackknife derricks.

Photo 11 is an offshore rig with a "stiff leg" crane.

Photos 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 are of a blowout.

Photo 18 is of a rig in the late 1950's, with living quarters and a traveling block.

Photos 19, 20 are of the last platform McCully was on, about 1973. The weather was too rough for them to get off by boat. Also discussed a later blowout there.

Photo 21 is a spill with a slick.

Photo 22 is a night view of a burning rig.

Photo 23 is of Jack fishing, with more discussion of fishing and race relations.

L.D. "Mac" McQuaid

Larose, LA

July 11, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM042

#### Ethnographic Preface:

L.D. McQuaid was referred to me by Butch Renois (their friendship seems to come through the Masonic Lodge, more than through oil-related jobs). At one point in the interview, we broke so that he could show me his gun collection - he still does some upland hunting and works in his wood-working shop in back of the house. After the interview, his wife Meredith cooked biscuits and made coffee. A plate on the kitchen wall: "Mac and Skinny."

L.D. "Mac" McQuaid was born on a farm in Illinois and went with his father and mother to hit the East Texas oil boom - in Luling. After serving in the war, he went back to Texas looking for work. Humble Company sent him to Golden Meadow to work on drilling barges. He went to Grand Isle and met friends of the family from Texas, working for Humble. He was offered a job with Humble Offshore, then was transferred to Rockport, TX in 1951 when things slowed down in Louisiana (the Tidelands dispute period). Houston Oilfield Material Company offered him a job in directional drilling and schooled him, and he ended up working all over, even down to Tierra del Fuego. He worked his way up to a supervisor for HOMCO, working on a salary plus commission. Then he got into sales - selling the company's directional and fishing tool job capabilities -- before he retired. He is 83 years old now, living with his wife, of the Golden Meadow Alario family. He bought several house lots from the Alario family, in what is known as the Alario-Curole Subdivision.

#### Summary:

Family: father and brother both went down to Luling, worked for Humble, retired in Hawkins, TX in 1960s; father was mechanic for Humble, then gauger; would determine how much usable oil was in tanks, as opposed to "BS and W," "w" being water.

"Hot Oil": east Texas supposed to have allowables, but lots of hot oil in Depression; dad had to certify everything because he worked for Humble.

Transition from land rigs to offshore: dealing with hurricanes; seasick; original Humble people were from Texas, then hired locals.

Humble camp and operation at Grand Isle: one area for married/families, for certain types of workers; mess hall for single men; Humble treated people real well; supervisor personnel in camp houses; 5/2 shifts; fields 40-50 miles on boats; used fast boats similar to PT boats.

Directional drilling: worked for HOMCO, retired from Wilson Industries, a service company; sold out to Smith International; he was supervisor; he would work up to 72 hrs, with little catnaps; had pretty fair expense account, club memberships; drilling from land into Straits off Tierra del Fuego, battered by 80-mph winds; oil company would call Houston office, I'd take my directional and fishing tools with me, and a plot of where the well needed to be moved; had good following of customers; worked for "Peemex," [PEMEX]; jobs might last as much as 90 days, because geology is only an educated guess; flow line heaters in S. Chile because oil would congeal; would have own quarters at rig; dealing with snakes, plane rides in South/Central America; predominantly native drillers, but American supervisors and toolpushers.

Land loss: around Leeville Bridge, due to digging of canals; should have closed canals to stop water surge.

Sulphur: Humble leased it to Freeport.

Sales: sold directional and fishing-tool jobs; used "slip-sticks," [slide rules] to calculate directional jobs, calculate number of days and price of job; had retirement party, then woke up, looked in garage - no company car, after driving one for 35 years; proud of track record on driving.

Retirement: retired at 64 in 1984; had profit-sharing and stock ownership; sold stocks and bottom fell out 6 months later; things were slowing down and I wanted to get out of it anyway.

Family: wife had little grocery store in GM; I liked stuffed olives, went to store met wife, got married; son in Fort Worth - dairy processing plant; quite a few of us married local girls.

Masonic Lodge: been member 58 years, but saw no lodge down here when he got here, so we built one; I'm Lutheran; I'm last of original members; first become Mason, then a Shriner; we take groceries to widowed women; social get-togethers; brother-in-laws are Knights of Columbus; Knights and Masons got together, had big banquet; lots of animosity gone out of it; likens locals to Amish - a little group; but I like it down here.

Murphy Melancon

Point-Aux-Chenes, LA

July 21, 2001

Interviewed by: Ari Anand

University of Arizona

AA008

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Murphy Melancon was referred to me by Lucy and "Dee" DeHart and Joyce and Frank Naquin. I interviewed him at a camp off the main road at Point-Aux-Chenes. The location was difficult to find, and I arrived about 15 minutes late. Murphy, his wife Marie, and her sister and brother-in-law had gathered for an evening of cards. Marie Melancon was very warm and friendly, ushered me in, and introduced me to Murphy. While the rest played cards and talked at the dining table, Murphy and I conducted the interview on a sofa at the far end of the room.

Murphy Melancon was born in Thibodaux in October 1926. After two years in the military, when he was posted in Germany, he returned to the U.S., where he did odd jobs and then joined Halliburton in 1946. Mr. Melancon began working for Texaco in 1952, and worked there for 35 years. He began as a roustabout at a shipyard, and became a welder. In 1965, he joined the oilfield as a roustabout, then worked as a pumper. Around 1980, after stomach surgery, he began working on a gas compressor and remained in that position until he retired.

#### Summary:

**Early Life and Work History:** Born in Thibodaux in 1926. Father was sugarcane farmer; worked with father until 18. Completed 9th grade. Drafted at age 18; served two years in Germany. Worked a few odd jobs then began working for Texaco in 1953; worked there for 35 years. First job after getting out of the service was boxing pork fat in Marrero for four months; then worked for Halliburton for two months; then worked for construction service company for four years. Then worked at Texaco until he retired in 1987.

**Texaco Work:** Went to work for Texaco because they paid more. First worked as roustabout in shipyard; then became welder for 13 years; closed shipyard in 1965 so worked as roustabout in the oilfield for about two years; then became pumper for 12-15 years; then ran nitrogen pump for 3-4 years. Had stomach surgery in 1980 so got "easy" job working on a gas compressor until he retired. Describes pumping work; 7 & 7 schedule. Married in 1947, but schedule did not affect family too much.

**Offshore Work:** Put on drilling rig when shipyard closed. Did not like drilling work so became roustabout. Describes fast pace of life on drilling rig. Roughnecking was the most difficult offshore job. Loved working for Texaco. Has good retirement; had good bosses.

**Unionization:** Oil companies could not have operated with unions, because tasks are so diversified and unions create task specialization. Well paid so no interest in unionization.

Changes in Oil Industry: Texaco now not as strict on employees. Started computerizing everything after he retired. When worked as pumper, there were limits on how much could be taken from each well per day; now they have unlimited take. Worked with same crew for years. Most workers from Southern Louisiana the whole time he worked. Big changes in environmental regulations; when he started work in oilfield, waste oil was put into pits; by the time he retired, could not put anything in pits. Regulations did not create a lot more work.

Benefits of Oil Industry: Brought lots of jobs to Southern Louisiana. Would recommend oil industry work to youths. Oil industry work still promising, but there are fewer jobs now.

Mid-1980s Bust: Did not affect him; does not know of any Texaco employees who lost their jobs. But Texaco did not replace people who retired.

Benefits of Military Experience: Made a "good man" out of him; was spoiled when he went into the service. Would recommend military to young men.

Worker Relations: Crew was all "good buddies." Hung out with some of his crew while onshore.

Lyle Mellington

Lafayette, LA

June 19, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW056

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Lyle Mellington was born in 1925 near Sedan, Kansas, the southern part of the state. His father was a pumper in the oilfields and moved the family to Oklahoma when Mellington was about 10 years old. He graduated from high school a few months early because he was drafted into the Navy at the tail end of World War Two (1944); during that time he was trained in international Morse Code and spent time in the Pacific. When he returned to the U.S. he spent a year at a school in Missouri learning American Morse Code and in 1947 got a job with Interstate Pipeline Company (an affiliate of Standard Oil of New Jersey) as a telegraph operator in Oklahoma. In 1949 he was transferred to the Carter Oil Company (also affiliated with Standard Oil of New Jersey) in Kansas; there he worked on a gang and did a myriad of different jobs; later he worked as a foreman supervising drilling operations and workers. Carter merged with Humble Oil Company in 1958 and Mellington was transferred to Lafayette eight years later. After doing relief and drilling work for a few years, he got a permanent position in production in the Avery Island and Weeks Island Fields; he was later promoted to senior field superintendent there. During the 10 years before he retired in 1986, he was the senior field superintendent in the North Crowley Field, as well as in charge of the gas plant in Opelousas.

#### Summary:

Early life: born in 1925 in Kansas; father a pumper in oilfield (was not paid well); went to small, one-room school until 7-8 years old. Moved to Oklahoma when about 10; lived in Osage and then Okemah; describes oilfields. Drafted into Navy and graduated high school in '44; radio operator school at Texas A&M; served in Pacific. Came back and went to school in Missouri to learn American Morse Code to be able to work for railroad; found pipeline companies paid more.

Interstate Pipeline Company: affiliate of Standard Oil of New Jersey; hired in '47 in Wewoka, OK on a pipeline gang and doing relief telegraph operator work; moved around a lot and stayed in hotels.

Carter Oil Company: transferred to them in '49 and moved to Washington, Kansas; worked on a gang and did relief work. Drilling boom in early '50s in OK panhandle and southwest Kansas; sent on temporary assignment to Liberal, KS in '53 and worked as a foreman (describes work they did); in '56 given permanent position and moved family there.

Family: hard being away from family; didn't get to see them much. Married wife in '48 and had two boys in early '50s. Weren't able to have too good a home life because of work; being in a

supervisory position you were on-call 24 hours a day. Not sure he would do it again, but job paid off in long run.

Oilfield jobs in '50s and '60s: jobs with Humble and Carter were pretty good; wouldn't have quit his job for anything. Didn't have amenities that they do now (e.g., bunk houses, cooked food). Drilled wells more quickly than they do today; in panhandle region were drilling on average about 6-8,000 feet. Morrow sand and Hugoton Oil and Gas Field.

Humble and Carter: merged in about '58; called Humble Oil and Refining Company, Carter division; later dropped reference to Carter. Humble later became Exxon.

Humble: transferred in '66 and did relief work and drilling all around southern Louisiana. After a few years got a permanent position in production working out of Avery Island and Weeks Island.

Production vs drilling: preferred production; drilling 24-hour operation and less likely to get to go home at night; production seemed more stable and involved less moving around.

Danger: production work not necessarily less dangerous than drilling work; describes well fire at Weeks Island (called in Red Adair).

Allowables: regulated by the state (onshore); different types of allowables (zone, depth, unit); not supposed to produce more than the allowable. Have allowables to keep companies from gutting the wells and to preserve reservoirs.

End of career: promoted to senior field superintendent while at Avery and Weeks Island; transferred to North Crowley Field and a gas plant in Opelousas in '76. Retired from there in '86; along with about 2,000 other Humble/Exxon employees took a packaged deal; companies were cutting costs around this time and didn't replace all the people who retired; anyway, can't immediately replace somebody with 39 years experience.

Son: his younger son, Craig, works for Exxon; describes his career; Hoover Diana project.

Public perception: people don't understand what it costs to drill an oil and gas well.

Bob Merriman

New Iberia, LA

November 15, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA073

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Bob Merriman by Tom Angel, who described Bob as the expert on saturation diving. Bob was still working for Global Industries at the time of the interview, and I met him at the company offices at the Port of Iberia. We spent a couple of hours talking in a conference room, and then Bob gave me a tour of the training facilities and chambers.

Bob joined the Navy in 1956 and spent 20 years as a Master Diver in the Navy. He was recruited from the Navy by J Ray McDermott and worked for the company as offshore diving supervisor until 1981. Then he went to work for Santa Fe Offshore Construction and remained in the same job through the company's merger with Global Industries. During his diving career, Bob was involved in the development of saturation diving, the modification of decompression tables, and development of gas reclamation systems.

#### Summary:

Occupational history: Joined Navy in 1956; spent 20 years in Navy as Master Diver; began working for J. Ray McDermott in 1976, was offshore diving supervisor until 1981; went to work for Santa Fe, Santa Fe combined with Global, same job; operations manager, now equipment manager; started in shallow water diving, with air; did mixed gas and saturation diving in the Navy

Evolution of diving: With shallow water did not need a lot of training, whoever was willing to put on a hat could go into diving; got more serious and tightly controlled as got deeper and went into mixed gas; with saturation diving have unlimited bottom time; now the limits are only the physical limits of the diver; diver wears hot water suit, mixed gas reclamation system, use vessels with dynamic positioning systems; max out in diving at about 1,000 feet; diving past 2,000 feet is out of the question; I ran Navy dive at 1,600 feet, divers have real performance problems; once off the outer continental shelf the water gets a lot deeper, way beyond anything a diver can do; has been and still is an interesting business

Getting into diving: Was always interested in water; station at torpedo systems in Navy, had second class air diving school, asked if I could go; was also electrician; got involved with U.S. Marine Corps, trained reconnaissance divers during Viet Nam; worked with one of the first saturation diving system, then to Experimental Diving Unit and spent four years there; then to commercial diving but mostly topside; was approached to work offshore while still in the Navy, by both Taylor Diving and Salvage and McDermott; McDermott had 20 diving supervisors, all but three were ex-Navy master divers; very easy to come out of the Navy and get a job topside;

Navy and commercial diving very different at the bottom; in 2001 worked on salvage job for Navy using Global System and Navy divers

Experimental Diving Unit: Joined as Master Diver in 1972; were working on sat and decompression tables, part of Sealab I, II, and III; Man of the Sea program; established that you could work on the bottom and stay there, that you can live topside in a pressurized habitat; made dives to 850 feet with the Mark I; worked on sat excursion tables, important tool for working on risers and other places where need to travel up and down within about 300 feet; really expanded what you could do; developed beginning with Haldone's theories; used computer models and then experimented on divers, bring them up until they get bent; the more you learned the easier it was to develop probabilities that would work; decompression tables for regular sat had already been set; in early days they did not know what to call us - aquanauts, etc.; sat decompression not changed since first sat dive in the 1960s; oxygen level has gone up and down a little bit; have to stay below about 0.6; guy may be in sat for 2 to 5 weeks, start getting pulmonary problems with long-term exposure

First saturation dive: Lots of fun; made 850 foot dive about 1968 or 1969; total time was 22 days; 6 guys in the chamber; divers run 3 8-hour bell runs a day, off 16-18 hours before go back in; chamber is comfortable but crowded, rigged up music, TV systems; it's great if you're working; when come off work are tired so eat, shower, sleep 8 to 10 to 12 hours; problem comes when you are down for the weather; read thousands of books; but much, much better when you are working; that makes several days click by; 850 foot dive was great till started decompressing, spent 9 days in decompression

Differences between Navy and commercial diving: What divers have been trained to do; commercial divers do work every day, go out, have a lot of repetitive jobs; put flanges together, clamps on, jet pipelines, take measurements for oil companies; divers in Gulf of Mexico probably overall the best in the world when it comes to performing underwater; diving is only a means of transportation to the work site; "You can teach a chimp to dive;" good diver is a good mechanic

Diving schools: John Manhouse started Divers Institute of Technology in Seattle; very good school; in 1960s and 1970s were getting lumberjacks; everyone complaining about cutting trees down; they were dynamite divers; got lots of ex-lumberjacks in diving in the 1970s; diving pays well; pay has gone down, with inflation it makes it a lot less; not quite as good anymore; competition from ROVs, 1 atmosphere suits; they are doing things formerly only a diver could do; also not putting in as many platforms or pipelines

Prisons: Prison system in California turned out divers for a while; they were the first ones to come out here and work for me; were hand selected, they came out of rehab in good shape and ready to go; then politicians got involved, could not hand pick prisoners anymore; quality of diving deteriorated badly; started getting criminals; things were getting stolen, some got busted for drugs; started in 1973 or 1974, before I came to McDermott; there were some on my first job with McDermott; all of them were good tenders and became good divers; about 1978-1979 we started getting the other ones; I told the superintendent I did not want those guys; prior to that

had been pleased with the Chino School; idea came from a Navy diver; the Navy gave him tools and the prison set up the program

Personnel: Have had a change in the young people who come out; diving looks like an exciting and glamorous job, but it's not; used to get a lot of good divers, good people from the military but not many coming anymore; Navy doesn't have as many divers; those who do dive are all career people; have lots of ex-Navy people at Global; still get some SEALS guys, but all they have is SCUBA diving; not necessarily interested in starting out as a tender, working their way up; since Clinton/Gore the whole military is smaller and have started consolidating divers; now if they need work done they have commercial diving companies do it; if it involves sat diving they have to go out to commercial companies; Phoenix International has Navy diving contract now

Type of work: With McDermott was offshore diving superintendent, wanted to do something else; went to Santa Fe and was working in the office, still going offshore occasionally with Research and Development; got involved in gas reclamation systems, about 1981; British developed systems ahead of U.S. because gas costs more there; we took their system, fiddled around with it, made it better

Equipment: We used gas reclamation on some systems; used rebreathers in the Navy, with a canister to take out the carbon dioxide; to extend the length of the dive; Navy ships limited in how much gas they could carry; then to demand systems; various people developed closed circuit rebreathing systems, very dangerous; our systems had little danger; went from air to mixed gas to saturation; added heating systems; now push to put hyperbaric rescue systems, escape pod if ship sinks; in the early days the good divers were from Louisiana; shallow water, lots of bottom time, good learning curve; in Europe the water got deep quick, did not have the same learning curve which is why most companies in Europe used U.S. divers

Pressure on divers: The real killer for divers was mixed gas diving; used a big barge, lots of people waiting, limited bottom time; to reduce pressure get the best diver you can, get him the best tools; recognize that the guy own there is the key to the job; get everything rigged up in advance; in the end, it's still the diver; person who is not a good diver gets eliminated because he is not called for the good jobs; we assign a mentor to every new hand

Women: There have been women divers for years; they didn't start coming to the oilfield until the 1970s and still there are not many; we have about 4 female divers and 2-3 tenders out of about 60-70 divers; have never seen an international woman diver

End of Santa Fe: Santa Fe International Co was bought by Kuwait Petroleum Co.; Santa Fe Offshore Construction was small part of it, Mr. Dore worked up a merger.

Drew Michel

Houston, TX

July 26, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA056

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I first met Drew Michel at the 2000 meeting of the National Ocean Industries Association in Washington, D.C. I saw Drew again at the Offshore Marine Services Association meeting when I announced we would do the history study and then at Underwater Intervention, an international conference for the commercial diving and underwater operations industry that is organized through a partnership between Marine Technology Society's ROV Committee and the Association of Diving Contractors International, that I attended in March, 2002 in New Orleans. Drew gave me his card and said he would be happy to participate in an interview for the history study.

Drew is originally from Morgan City and got into the diving industry in 1966 after a short stint with NASA. He created a job for himself at Ocean Systems working in electronics. When Halliburton bought Taylor Diving and created a research center in Belle Chasse, Louisiana, Drew went to work for that company. He helped introduce remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) into the oilfield. He began his own company, ROV Technologies, in 1986 and eventually sold it to Global Industries in early 1996. He reacquired the company in early 2002 and is still an active owner.

#### Summary:

Getting into industry: came from NASA in 1966; was in San Diego, transferred to Bay St. Louis, MS; too bureaucratic; stopped in Morgan City on return to San Diego, heard about diving companies; walked into Ocean Systems in October 1966 and created a job for myself; Union Carbide owned company at the time; held the world record for offshore working dive - 632 feet. Art Podgett and Glenn Taylor were in the chamber, had one oxygen analyzer, no carbon monoxide analyzer, no automatic controls; chamber was on the deck of a barge with a tarp over it to keep it cool; Ocean Systems was still diving in heavy gear, one of my first jobs was changing the speakers in the hard hats.

Moving on: was at Ocean Systems 18 months; Don Terry showed me article that Halliburton bought Taylor Diving to build a research center; drove over and knocked on the door - June 1968; I said I wanted electronic systems; a few years later we had 75 people in the electronics department and were revenue producing; spent 18 years at Taylor Diving, went from hyperbaric welds on shallow dives to 1200 foot open water dives and 1600 foot chamber dive; Taylor was the largest company at the time; was trashed with politics during the downturn in 1986.

Beginning of ROVs: in 1972 when working on the electronics end of the diving industry guy with Hydro Products in San Diego took me into a back room and showed me the U.S. Navy's flying eyeball; my first RCV (remotely controlled vehicle); they were preparing to offer it as a commercial product; told my boss about it, we procrastinated for a year and a half; other companies started buying them; I got serial numbers 4, 5, 6, then got 9 and 10. Wound up buying 10 in the beginning, lost 7 of them; lost the first 2 I took offshore; one was found 60 days later by Brown & Root welder, had to pay \$5000 reward to get it back; in those days they cost \$500,000 and were not insured; hadn't even crossed our minds to try to insure them; I worked for Ken Wallace at the time, he was mad at me for two days, then said, go get \$1 million and get back to work.

First RCV job: Cognac platform in 1030 feet of water; divers were sat to 1000 feet; had to decompress 100 feet per day; RCV able to go down and untangle lines; we fashioned hooks on it, saved us days of barge time; several companies started producing them (gives details); went on that way for years till the 1980s; last vehicle I personally purchased was in 1988; the oil industry had collapsed, I got a job inspecting a tunnel in Bath County, Virginia; took one year to plan and engineer, 14 days to do the job; got award for outstanding engineering achievement.

Activity other than oil industry prior to collapse: very little; only military could afford; academia could not begin to raise the funds like the military and oil could; I lectured twice at MIT, once at Scripps; they had no programs in place; it started in the military, but the military bogged down; we were working 365 days a year, 24 hours a day; both the Navy and the oil industry saw that whatever it cost it was cheaper than the alternative; once beyond 1000 feet could not practically explore unless had ROV technologies; cost and risk to life even at 1000 feet was too great; when you have men in the chamber at 1000 feet you walk around with your heart in your throat; now the companies are in water depths of 7-8000 feet; still developing new tools today.

Interaction between divers and ROVs: first divers were mad as hell; would put them out of business; then positive reaction because the divers had to go rescue them all the time; in the long run the ROVs did put the divers out of work; cost for ROVs is much less; manned submersibles were going to take over pipeline, etc; I rebuilt a Perry PC9 boat in 1972; but they never got off the ground; a lot of the old divers had been good divers and good diving supervisors saw it was happening and became ROV supervisors; they knew how to run a crew, a job, knew the barge superintendents and the customers.

Getting the company on board: had a unique relationship with Ken Wallace and others at Taylor; retired Navy divers; all they knew was diving; I came along with a background in electronics; they might have resented me, but they respected me; in those days money was flowing freely; customers had been reading about ROVs; at first we were so busy with sat diving and had our heads down, not thinking of alternative solutions; started envisioning use of ROVs around 1972, 1973.

Relationship with Navy: everyone at Taylor was ex-Navy diver; founders were Mark Banjavich and Hemy Taylor; started hiring their old bosses; called Taylor the Navy retirement home; only two people in management that were not ex-Navy divers were myself, Navy electronics and Tony, air force; most had military clearances; Taylor did a lot of work for the Navy; Duke

University was doing physiological research, had only a small chamber; Taylor was developing techniques, proving tasks could be done; doing underwater welding research; qualifying welding procedures, dress rehearsals for customers; some commercial research on diving equipment, breathing apparatus.

Research: started in 1966 when with Ocean Systems; created hyperbaric weld chamber; I bought shop drop lights, found those that could take the pressure; took pictures to document the dive; was on project with world's deepest free dive in 1967, professor from Sweden; Dr. Robert D. Workman developed Navy diving tables; got guys to do the trials, a macho thing, some extra pay; they were totally fearless and they trusted us and would just do it; built trust by playing, living, working together; built Belle Chasse facility in 1970.

Communications: came in in 1966; still using hand signals; started putting electronics in water; evolution of speakers, microphones in divers' helmets; tried many alternatives; diver communication always a problem, always trying to take something from topside and adapt it; started PDC Enterprises out of my house to build dive phones in 1974-1975; helium caused Donald Duck effect; Navy built helium unscrambler, ran off 110 volts, shocked person operating it; Jim Helle started developing unscrambler, was standard for years; sold out to big electronics firm; biggest thing in diver communication was video camera; wanted to take TV camera in June 1968, Banjavich said, "Son, TV does not work underwater and you're not going on the job"; about a year later had TVs on bells; cameras caught on fast, one diver to do the job, another to hold the camera; evolution of cameras.

Other developments: very important were the pieces and parts you never hear of, the umbilicals and connectors; most problems were in connectors and cables; technology of underwater connectors continued to evolve; pressure affected seals; for real deep stuff went to glass epoxy; don't remember an incident of a diver being shocked; would get hit by welding and burning; recently had a fatality with an ROV - up to 4300 volts on ROV umbilicals.

Sharing across companies: shared anything to do with diver safety, helmets, equipment; did not share information on underwater welding, etc.; Association of Diving Contractors formed late 1969, 1970, guys all friends, could not keep anything from one another; as a general rule did not interact much with NASA.

Early history: born in Morgan City, went into Navy out of high school; wanted LSU but parents could not afford, so went to Navy for a little more than 3 years; went to school full time as well; began working for Honeywell Electronics last year in Navy; out of Navy got promoted, not called engineer because no bachelor's degree; saw ad in paper for NASA and went for short period; then back to Morgan City and Ocean Systems; one child, pushed him to be a computer geek but he's more of a poet than engineer, has degree in film appreciation; encouraged him NOT to go into oil and gas; too many ups and downs, too much heartbreak; now he's working for company.

Response to the downturns: Taylor was extension of Brown & Root; in late 1970s, early 1980s, Brown & Root was king, exported technology around the world; bunch of cowboys in charge; made the mistake of believing no one else could do what they did; Italians were coming, had the

technology; everything of Taylor's was built around Brown & Root barges; at one time they were gouging people, later they cost too much to operate; Halliburton said they had to find work on their own; brought in a couple of guys, slowly destroyed Taylor; went from 1500 people offshore and 300 at Belle Chasse facility to 17 people when I left; I was made Senior Vice President, spent 1985 cutting things down, then left; started ROV Technologies; Brown & Root pretty much out of the offshore business.

ROV Technologies: incorporated March 3, 1986; spent 10 years doing neat things, sold to Global Industries December 1, 1995; went after government work when the oil work was dead; got project for Virginia Power in 1988; May 1989 went to work for Shell as consultant; by 1996 myself and 11 other guys on payroll at Shell; 1997 started to get into corporate management stuff at Global, away from ROV till 2000; March 2001 left Global because not having any fun; doing ROV consulting again.

If had to do over: would not have sold to Global; made lots of money but not worth it; stayed at Taylor Diving too long; probably should have gotten a degree; for the last 36 years played with the best toys in the world; traveled all over the world had an incredible time; was in the right place at the right time; will be more opportunities in AUVs.

Peggy Michel

Houston, TX

March 21, 2005

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA139

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Peggy Michel when I arranged a meeting with her husband, Drew, to go over the photos he had contributed to the project. Peggy came in to listen while Drew and I were talking, and I discovered that she had worked in the offshore oil and gas industry as well. I suggested that I should interview her as well, and she began by telling me she did not know very much. However, when I assured her that I was interested in her story, she agreed to an interview and ended up having much to contribute.

Peggy Michel was raised in San Diego. She met her future husband, Drew, while in college. Peggy graduated with a degree in art history in 1965. The couple married and lived in San Diego for several years before deciding to return to the south. They ended up in Drew's hometown of Morgan City where Drew began working for Ocean Systems. Peggy began looking for work and discovered she was overqualified. After changing her resume to downplay her college experience, Peggy got a job as Personnel Manager for Twenty Grand. Much of her time was spent helping applicants who could not read or write. When Drew got a job in New Orleans several months later, the couple moved and Peggy went to work as Personnel Manager for Crestwave Offshore. She left around 1970, had a son, and then she and Drew started PDC Enterprises, a company that manufactured and sold electronics equipment such as dive phones and unscramblers for diving companies. Peggy was responsible for sales and managing the company. She and Drew closed the company after ten years and Peggy returned to college to earn a degree in accounting. She worked in the financial field and for the Foreign Service during the 1980's and early 1990's.

#### Summary:

Early years: Peggy was raised in San Diego where she received her college degree in art history. This were she also met her husband, Drew, who had a degree in electronic. A few years after marriage, they moved to Morgan City, Louisiana where her husband got a job at a rocket test facility.

Morgan City: Peggy had a hard time finding work due to that fact that she was overqualified. After rewriting her resume, she got a job as a personnel manager with Twenty Grand. She basically helped illiterate applicants fill out their forms. Due to the oil boom taking place, Morgan City was rapidly changing and expanding. A strong blue-collar culture developed there which, due to greater educational attainment and being modest drinkers, both her and her husband were marginal in the social fabric.

New Orleans: After a few months, they moved to New Orleans in 1965 where Drew got a job in the offshore business. Due to his technique of using sonar to find pipelines, they were marginalized again by the blue-collar workers because many of them were divers and his technique eliminated their jobs. At this time Peggy got a job Crest Wave as a personal manager. She would interview and make hiring decisions. But, due to the oil boom, there was a greater demand for laborers and not enough laborers. They had to hire many unqualified people just to keep up with demand.

Getting into business: In 1971, Peggy left Crest Wave, and moved to the suburbs with her husband and prepared to have a child, which came in '72. They then started up PBC, which basically marketed and sold dive phones and helium scramblers that Drew had developed while working for Taylor Diving. Later, Peggy went back to school and got a CPA degree and worked in the accounting field for a while.

Mick Mickleberry

New Orleans, LA

July 16, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM046

#### Ethnographic Preface:

This interview was set up by Art d'Aquin of Crescent Technologies, the "outsourced" engineering, safety, and environmental wing of Freeport McMoRan in New Orleans. I had been introduced to Art by Camille Howard (sister of Kerry St. Pé), and Art had agreed to line up several former Freeport Sulphur employees. At a previous visit, Art brought J.V. Russell and Dave Singleman into the office for me to interview; this time out, I was told to start with Mr. "Mick" Mickleberry. I interviewed him at his home, fairly modest, near the lake levee in Metairie. A photograph in the 1977 edition of the Plaquemines Parish Orange Festival program showed Morgan Mickelberry (sic) as vice-president for operations, Freeport Sulphur.

Mick was born in Garyville, LA, a logging town, got a degree in petroleum engineering from LSU after serving in the Pacific in the war, and started with Freeport in 1949. He retired in 1989, after 40 years with the company, then worked as a consultant for another 11 years. His main pride is that he convinced the company that there was economic sulphur off the delta. The mine at Main Pass 299 was Freeport's last, closing down prematurely as the supply of sulphur from "sour gas" overwhelmed the market. He decided to retire when Main Pass closed down - "They didn't need me after that."

He requested to read what we want to publish on Freeport, and, at the end of the interview, acknowledged that he had avoided any sensitive issues. At one point in the interview, I asked for more details on the process by which Freeport was able to convert sea water to a usable quality for its sulphur extraction method. He said the company doesn't talk much about that - other companies were interested in the process.

#### Summary:

Sulphur mines: first Freeport mine was in Freeport, TX; Freeport started 1933 at Grand Ecaille, built canal out there, built 5 drilling barges, used for Lake Pelto, Bay St. Elaine, Venice, Garden Island Bay; domes on lease from state by Texaco; Grand Ecaille was Gulf/Shell/Humble property; Gulf had townsite below Buras; Bay St. Elaine was in brackish water, we developed process to heat sea water without scaling; Chevron had Main Pass 299 but didn't develop it; we did for sulphur and for Chevron's oil since it was near our platform; Main Pass is largest Frasch process sulphur mine in world; didn't fully deplete Main Pass due to market conditions; large distribution center in Tampa because of phosphate rock (for fertilizer).

Port Sulphur: on shell road, subject to tidal flooding; 200 homes; power plant there to heat water to inject in mine; freshwater reservoir at GE; sediment reservoir at PS; administrative offices

originally at Grand Ecaille; school and hospital at PS; started selling houses when GE got depleted.

Salt domes: piercement-type domes; Ralph Taylor of LSU wrote book on theory of salt domes; seismic developed but couldn't tell thickness of caprock over salt dome, which is where the sulphur is contained.

MMS: knew Rankin, succeeded by Rod Piercy; very professional; offshore sulphur sale in 1962 but MMS thought bids not high enough; was misunderstanding about how costly it is to build mine, power plant, not like oil well where you can tie into existing pipelines; I sat down with Rankin and Piercy and went over costs; in '80s, MMS nominated 52 domes for sulphur.

Life history of sulphur mine: drill exploration well; then wells spaced 200' apart; can lose wells due to subsidence, shifting of caprock; at GE, put sulphur in vats, carry it in on barges; 1948-49, built liquid barges with little boiler that would circulate oil; had own drilling barges and lost some due to hitting of pockets of gas but Freeport never lost a life; lots of domes across LA discovered by oil companies; GE had skid-mounted rigs; natural gas for GE supplied by Texaco pipeline from Lafitte.

McMoRan: was originally McMoRan Oil and Gas; merged 15 years ago, Jim Bob Moffet became CEO.

Braithwaite nickel facility: Castro took over Moa Bay; facility now is just scrap.

Indonesia operation: was VP/mine manager from 1973-1971 copper and gold, mine at 10,000', townsite at 6,000'; had many ex-pats, trained locals; built schools for natives.

Howard Middleton

Houston, TX

July 16, 2006

Interviewed by: Jason P. Theriot

University of Houston/History International

MMS076

### Ethnographic Preface:

Howard Middleton is from Centerville, Texas. Throughout his career, he served as an educator, public servant, and consultant. He was the first black man to be appointed as Port Commissioner (1976-1994).

### Summary:

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Ronnie Miguez

Lafayette, LA

January 14, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW034

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Born in 1942, Ronnie Miguez was raised in Iberia Parish; he spent most of his school years in New Iberia, living with his grandparents, but went to middle school in Weeks Island. His father did a number of jobs, but spent 27 years doing carpentry work for a briquette plant. After graduating high school in 1962, he spent a few months working as a butcher, before getting a job with Peanut Well Service as a derrick hand off Avery Island. After two weeks he thought he could do better than that job and went to work for Weston Auto, but after six months of that he found it was not enough to support his family. Over the next few years he worked for Wilson Supply in Houma and Harvey, and for Schlumberger in Broussard. With Schlumberger he worked as a hot shot driver and was appointed liaison to the company grievance committee. After being fired, he spent three years doing work with floor covering. Since 1975 he has done contract drilling and construction work as a crane operator for a variety of companies both in the U.S. and abroad. Currently he operates a crane for Fluid Crane out of New Iberia. He describes how politics eventually led to his termination with Schlumberger. He also discusses safety and accidents offshore, and how some company men continue to use intimidation to get workers to do unsafe things. He talks at length about life on the rig in terms of horsing around, harassment, drugs, and alcohol.

#### Summary:

Early life: born and raised in Iberia Parish (Weeks Island and New Iberia); graduated from high school in New Iberia in 1962; father a trapper and carpenter.

Peanut Well Service: started with [Peanut?] breaking pipe, working on a job for Exxon off Avery Island; didn't know anything about drilling rigs; daylight operations, seven days a week, making \$6.50 an hour; quite after a few weeks.

Education: got first job because he had a high school education, when that was the ticket.

Draw of oilfield: drawn to it for financial reasons; tried working in sales for Weston Auto, but could not support his family on that.

Wilson Supply: drove hot shot in Houma; worked up to office manager and then ran a store in Harvey; turned down a job in Venice, and went into fishing tool division where he learned downhole fishing tool end of business.

Schlumberger and after: when industry slowed in late '60s, transferred to production side in Broussard; personality clashes and politics leading to his dismissal. After that went into floor covering business, but after a handful of years ran out of patience for dealing with the public. In '75 he got back into the oil industry doing construction; currently working as crane operator for Fluid Crane.

Schedule and pay: schedules are better today; some companies tried to go to 14 and 14 schedules to cut expenses - led to more accidents; after being on for seven days, workers minds become less focused; BP's policies about days on and off. In terms of pay, production people paid more than drilling people and drilling people paid more than construction people. Independents might pay well, but benefits might not be as good.

Employees: cyclical nature of industry, layoffs, and training; today enticing workers with things such as signing bonuses. Training rigs.

Offshore: today have state of the art facilities (wash clothes, phones in rooms, good food); hurricane evacuations - some companies wait too long.

Safety: BP has brought a lot of safety into the Gulf (evacuations, preslung). Accidents he saw involved young workers and third-party personnel, and disregard for safety policies; extended description of accident that killed a young roughneck; mechanical failure on a crane killed four people; recent near fatality offshore. Company men might use intimidation to get people to do what they want you to do now; doesn't happen as much today as it was 15 years ago; MMS established regulations about that.

Women: today there are women all over offshore; sexual harassment situation; all women catering crew - fantastic. In past, night and day crews would wash one another's clothes. Sex segregated living quarters. See more women doing production office work; heard some women roughnecking on land.

Roustabouts and roughnecks: roustabouts do everything on the rig; train to be roughnecks by relieving them; promoting to roughneck.

Crane operator: his strongest asset is his ability to communicate with people; 90 percent of his job as crane operator is listening and talking to everybody on the rig. Many crane operators are quick tempered and holler at other workers; he was a roustabout once and he'll treat a man with respect as long as he's respecting himself.

Current downturn: company training schools might be cut; workers take pay cuts and take on other positions to stay on payroll; wouldn't recommend a young man get into industry.

Education versus experience: companies look at people with degrees before people with experience; this irks old oilfield hands. Some companies will send out young, inexperienced men with seasoned, experienced men.

Personality clashes: when personalities clash, that's when communication becomes important; Coast Guard will pick up and put in jail people who get in physical fights offshore.

Horseplay, initiation, and harassment: lots of horseplay 20 to 30 years ago; not so much now because of risk of lawsuits. When men first came offshore they used to "dope" them - spread pipe grease all over them; two men came down with cancer. Also spanked men with a hand saw. Male worker's sexual harassment lawsuit went to US Supreme Court; this helped cut down on a lot of harassment. Describes worst case of harassment he ever heard about and what he did with one of the men involved. Even some of the pranks involved chemicals and so were risky. In years past, they did not have a company man on duty at night, so they didn't know what was going on. He doesn't allow horseplay among the workers he's responsible for; you got to set the guidelines early.

Alcohol and drugs: saw many galley hands with problems; weren't paid much so stayed offshore for many weeks at a time; would drink Listerine. In 1980, had more drugs offshore than onshore; had drug dogs; still do random drug tests; saw drug use on the job both offshore and at the port. Drugs today not nearly as bad offshore as they were because companies are staying on top of it; some companies will pay for workers rehab; many companies would hire a man back after he was busted for drugs.

Current drilling: only going on in deep water; companies buying oil from overseas, but this is getting expensive. Environmental stipulations in US hinder more drilling - makes it more expensive.

Gambling: have regular card games and football pools; describes big time gambling and regular drinking he saw working in the Gulf for a French company.

Language: communication problems working on French construction/pipe barge; many toolpushers don't like people speaking French offshore.

Port Fourchon: describes pipeline going to Port Fourchon. On the French pipe laying barge for that job; had Vietnamese catering crew - had problems with them.

Laying pipe: time it takes depends on distance, weather, and size of pipe; code it, x-ray it, and pass inspection. Clean the pipe.

Multinational crews: example from North Sea in '75 and problem with British divers.

Drug bust: describes crew member being busted for bringing drugs on barge; man was making 6,000 to 8,000 dollars a month selling dope offshore.

Charles Miller

Houma, LA

August 11, 2004

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA126

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I learned about Charles Miller and his work for McDermott during my interview with his daughter, Lillian (see DA124, DA125). Though Charles had been very ill, he agreed to be interviewed for this study. I met him at his home in Houma, and we sat in the living room with copies of Jaramac, the McDermott company magazine, as we talked.

Charles Miller grew up in Oklahoma, finished high school, and went to welding school. In 1960, after working in Seattle, serving in the military, and returning to farming in Oklahoma, Charles moved to Louisiana. After attending Delgado Trade School where he studied pipeline welding, he got a job with McDermott. At that time, the oilfield in southern Louisiana was really starting to boom. Charles began in the Marine Department, working inshore, in the shop, and on lay and derrick barges. He spent some time working in the swamps at the time the barges would go into the swamps to lay pipeline. As the industry expanded offshore, the platforms, pipelines, and other associated equipment got bigger, and Charles adapted to working in the Gulf. He retired and bought a small farm.

#### Summary:

Work history: started with Jerry McDermott in 1960, worked on pipelines, in the repair shop, offshore on barges; grew up in Oklahoma, went to welding school in Oklahoma after finishing high school there; went to Seattle where cousins were living, worked in shipyard about 6 months, went to Marine Corps, to San Diego then to South Pacific, discharged, back to Oklahoma, started a farm, met and married his wife; continued farming, had brother living in Louisiana, came down to work, started in oilfield, stayed with McDermott until 1979 when broke a foot, got medical discharge, bought property and started bed and breakfast, had peacocks and other animals

McDermott: friend recommended Charles for job, went to trade school to learn pipeline welding; got the job, worked long hours, on 24-hour call; they paid well, got paid double time for Christmas, worked mostly with pipelaying and jet barges

First day offshore: wind blowing about 30 miles an hour, cold

Barges: From 125 to 250 feet, up to 400 feet; about 250 people working on it, would work 14 and 14, sometimes 21 and 7; had small bunks, would sleep four to a room; didn't know much in advance what sort of job it would be; used to go fishing off the barges, could fish day and night (discussing photos from McDermott magazines throughout the interview); some people would stay two or three months straight to make extra money; could fish, watch movies in free time,

would have church services on Sundays; Charles would set up store to sell cards, crackerjacks, cigarettes to guys on the barge; lots of work was repair work; McDermott would bid, get the contracts, and we would do the work

Biggest changes: offshore barges bigger, laying pipelines and jetting them down; cooks would provide four meals a day, galley hands to clean rooms; work was about the same but scale was much bigger – bigger jobs and bigger platforms; liked doing the work, better than on land, but kept away from home too much; nice out in the Gulf, pretty sunsets, sunrises, not as dirty and dusty

Divers: would have their chambers, work right off the barges, had their diving equipment on the barge; divers pulled out helicopter after crash; quite a few emergencies

Environmental problems: now there are problems with erosion; problems in 1975 when they sprayed the cane, the snakes and fish died; started snake hunting in the 1960s to earn extra money

Family: wife was a registered nurse, working at the hospital; daughter went to work offshore as galley hand

Jim Miller

Lafayette, LA

June 20, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW004

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Jim Miller was born in 1937 in Iowa and grew up in Missouri. The two degrees he earned in geology at the University of Missouri were broken up by a summer working for the California Company in Colorado and a stint in the military with service in Korea. In 1963, he got a job with the California Company and moved to Lafayette. Over the next 36 years he moved between Lafayette and New Orleans several times, spending two years working in Angola, before he retired from Chevron in 1999. During his retirement, he continues to work part-time as a consultant for Sydboten and Associates. He describes how Chevron handled new hires and terminations during industry downturns. He also details how his two sons and his wife handled the family's moves between Lafayette and New Orleans. He expresses that he has no regrets for his career in the oil industry, and that Chevron was good for him and his family and that he was good for Chevron.

#### Summary:

Early life: born '37 in Iowa and grew up in Missouri; bachelors and masters in geology from University of Missouri; military service during Korea; had summer job with California Company in '59 in Colorado - probably best job ever had in oil business. Married in '61.

California Company/Chevron: hired as geologist in '63 and assigned to Lafayette; on Chevron's "I-10" plan (multiple moves between Lafayette and New Orleans). Spent some time in Angola during a civil war; interest of both sides to protect oil business. Retired '99; year and half later missed oil business and went to work part-time as consultant for Sydboten and Associates.

Moving to Lafayette in mid '60s: many people spoke French; ate crawfish instead of using it for bait; spicier food. Bustling with many people his age - camaraderie.

Education: typical for big companies to hire personnel out of school with no experience; smaller companies tend to hire more experienced personnel so they don't have to train them. Most of the major companies required geologists have master's degrees; idea to start with major company, get experience, and make lots of money with an independent.

Job security: he didn't worry about being laid off; Chevron tended to be understaffed in earth sciences, which protected workers during downturns. Just before mid '80s downturn, Chevron offered a lot of positions to newly graduated people; sucked it up and accepted the offers they made. As a manager he had to fire a few people and got better at it with experience, but never fun.

Moving: describes how moves affected two sons; wife worked as a teacher - had to quit jobs she liked and find new ones when he was transferred.

Geology: with exploration geology, most of it was office work; with development geology, would occasionally get in the field to log wells. Got into geology because thought it would allow him to be outdoors and saw that his uncle was successful at it. Oil business has employed many geologists - big money side of geology, but high-risk because risky business; allure of money isn't what drove him to go into and stay in geology.

Unions: essentially never been a movement to unionize oilfield professionals; Cajuns too independent to want to work for a union; industry generally well-paying anyway. Unions strong in parts of the country where there is a history of strong unions.

Women: didn't see many in geological end of oil industry until '80s; saw fairly rapid increase in '90s. When he was in college in '50s women took education or secretarial science courses, that's why not many in higher up corporate positions. Wouldn't serve women at Petroleum Club until early '70s because had to work in the oil industry to eat there.

Lafayette and oil industry: oil industry compatible with south Louisianan people; today Lafayette less of an oil town than it was in '63.

Lafayette through the years: in mid '60s Oil Center fairly new; describes several roads; building boom. In '70s town was booming more than '60s; harder to find a place to live. In late '80s many empty office buildings; surprisingly few good housing deals.

Lillian Miller

Lafayette, LA, Houma, LA  
August 10, 2004, August 11, 2004  
Interviewed by: Diane Austin  
University of Arizona  
DA124, DA125

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I learned about Lillian Miller from Deborah Schultz and Kerry St. Pé at the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program. When I first contacted Lillian, she was unable to get together for an interview because she was taking care of both her father and her aunt who needed assistance. We exchanged many phone calls and had talked a number of times when we finally were able to arrange a meeting in October 2004. Lillian picked me up at the train station in Lafayette and we spent a day and a half there, talking about her experiences in the oilfield and looking at photos. She and I then traveled together to Houma to interview her father and also continued our interview.

Lillian was recognized by ODECO in 1974 as the first female roustabout to work offshore outside the galley in the Gulf of Mexico. She had begun working offshore in November 1973 as a galley hand for Offshore Foods and Services. Lillian was home from college trying to find a job and make enough money to go back to school. Her father, who had worked at McDermott since 1960 (see DA 126), came home one day and told her the catering company was hiring women. She wanted to show him that she was serious about trying to get a job, so she applied. She applied for the job and ended up going to the personnel office every day for a month until her father convinced a superintendent to give her a chance for at least one hitch. She was sent out on her first job with several other women and was the only one to survive the hitch. She overcame the challenges of working in a male-dominated environment and, due to her interest in drilling and mud engineering, she was encouraged to go back to school. She entered the petroleum technology program at Nicholls, working 7 days offshore and going to school during her 7 days at home. After a few weeks in the class, in 1974, she was hired by ODECO as their first female production roustabout. She graduated in 1977 with an associate's degree in petroleum technology. She advanced to gauger. Her career in the oilfield ended in 1981 when she suffered a serious fall trying to shut in a well.

#### Summary of DA124 and DA125:

First job offshore: As a galley hand for Offshore Foods and Services in 1973; she was trying to make some money to go back to college; went to offices every day for a month, finally her father convinced the superintendent to give her a chance; she and the other women hired felt like pioneers; she was the only one who survived the whole hitch; also had to clean the bedrooms; a toolpusher tried to force himself on her, so she slapped him, and since they were in the shipyard she walked off the rig and told her parents she quit; when the supervisor found out he moved her to a new rig; new supervisor was a retired Army cook who worked the galley hands very hard

Learning mud engineering: in her spare moments she would ask the mud engineer about what he was doing; went to 5 companies in Houma but none would give her a mud-drilling fluid manual, so she wrote them letters as if she were a student and they sent her the manuals as well as slide rules, etc.; so she studied on her days inshore, she would run tests behind the mud engineer to see how hers compared to his; learned to prevent blowouts, etc.; took brownies and hot chocolate to mud floor when it was cold and miserable; was offered a job in El Paso with large drilling fluid company but didn't want to live in a motel in the desert; Enrolled in the 7 and 7 program at Nicholls; they attended classes when they were inshore and watched tapes of the ones they missed

Family: LM's father worked for McDermott since 1961; one brother worked for Santa Fe and the other for McDermott; at that time it was easy to get a job; her brothers worked on and off in the oil field; her mother read up on the technology

LM's love of the industry: she subscribed to the trade journals; she also loved the technology; being offshore was like being on the moon

7 and 7 program: Students would learn from each other's experiences when they hung out in the Student Union; George Dupont contacted her through it to offer her a job as a production roustabout; she eventually became convinced to give it a try; had to sleep in the same room as men but her own time in the bathroom

Became first female roustabout to work outside the galley in the Gulf at age 29 in 1974; ODECO wanted some publicity, and she eventually agreed to appear in their newsletter, she agonized over what to wear

First day as a roustabout: LM was terrified, men didn't know how to react to her; some made sexual jokes; she thought she would have to go back to being a galley hand, but the field superintendent transferred the one who gave her the most trouble; then no one wanted to teach her anything; a welder who knew her father helped her out, earlier a boat skipper had taught her a trick for lifting sacks of chemicals; all the welders knew her dad (nickname "Snake"); her nickname was "Lilly Marlene" or "Lily of the Field"; Her father had done some welding on the platform she worked on; her job brought them closer together

7 and 7 program: Students shared stories; Dupont told her about it when he heard of her interest in drilling fluids; had to take some general education courses as well; two year program, was going to be four year as well, but never materialized; USL (now ULL) also tried a similar program but stopped after a semester; would be associate's degree in petroleum technology, but could get 4 year degree in safety engineering; she graduated in 1977; first went to college in 1967, then took some time off

In 1975, LM got together a letter asking for pay raises to Doc Laborde, along with supporting evidence; got the field hands to sign it; had to wait 6 months for a response; they got a 50 cent an hour raise but were told it had nothing to do with the letter

Relationship between drilling and production: production is secondary, both chronologically and because it is less complicated, also more wells are drilled than ever produce; at the time ODECO was the largest offshore drilling contractor in the world with 40 rigs in 1974; being a roustabout in drilling was much more physically demanding and dangerous

Women offshore: Later, companies hired more women and gave them separate living quarters; OSHA regulated sexist conditions

In production there was no cook unless there was a big crew, she made bread for the others, they usually had 5-7 people, worked 12 hour shifts because someone had to be on duty at all times; contract hands would stay on the platform with them; temperature was always very cold; she wore coveralls to bed and had no problems with the men

Jobs for women: Not until after LM's time did women achieve the rank of "company man" or toolpusher; women worked as engineers and geologists; ODECO also hired the first black person in production; urban vs. rural difference; before LM quit, ODECO hired two other women in production but they both got hurt right away swinging on ropes

Production: Interesting because every well was different; describes her job as a production roustabout, running tests, then as a junior gauger changing the pig trap, then in order to advance she had to work where she would swing on a rope to the platform, she had an accident

BEGIN TAPE 2

Injury: LM hid it, but the boat skipper suspected, cleaned it out for her and taught her how to swing, he also kept her secret because she would have lost her job if anyone had found out

In 1977, LM is a gauger looking after satellite jackets; works long days, taking showers and drinking coffee to stay awake; worked 100-110 hours many weeks, kept a journal for posterity and recorded what she learned about mud logging in her notebooks

Platform F: LM was in charge, not much to do, but she had to fire two people for not working; they retaliated, and she learned why it was customary to wait until crew change to fire people

Safety: She has always been concerned about it, especially seeing injuries that could be prevented

Working offshore: In 1979, LM in charge of production and hook up on 101 and 102; there was an accident resulting in a death; she was supervising a crew of 33 welders, mostly very young; getting 101 and 102 operational took 4-5 months; LM moved to ShipShoal 113 (also called SOB), safety system didn't work; faking production; accident with Transco pipeline that shut down other companies as well; using pins to keep producing on antiquated equipment; round barge flipping; main goal was to keep producing, pipelines ran to New England; LM moved to SS 127, had real safety meetings there but the crew didn't appreciate it

Training program: ODECO started to send them to do some training required by USGS: firefighting, crane operation; but she had the idea to create a full program where employees could get hands-on experience with many of the problems that come up in a safe environment; formed group, developed manual, found abandoned equipment to do simulations, wrote letter; worked on this for a year and a half; met Martha Utley, who was trying to develop a training program for mud loggers; everyone in the group was motivated, they turned it in to higher management

One spring: Martha died, Lillian found out her marriage was over and she had a serious accident

Alligator Annie: received awards for her conservation efforts on Louisiana's disappearing coastline

LM moves to 222 to keep the production going while they were drilling; had 18 producing wells, weren't fixing the holes over every well, were in danger of the government shutting them down, promising to fix it, LM wrote a note warning that the situation was very serious and someone could be killed

LM's accident: she was covered in mineral oil and system was leaking, she climbed up to unscrew the pressure gauge when the wrench slipped, she fell headfirst and her foot caught on the wing valve; resulted in a badly injured hand, three skull fractures; thought she could go back to work but eventually realized she couldn't; made 16-page brochure for her church's family life center; also worked on the Library and Cultural Center in memory of Martha Utley as a publicist for 7 years; had one year to hire a lawyer, was advised by a judge; worked with a ballet teacher friend to re-learn sequencing

### BEGIN TAPE 3

Safety: LM would practice swimming on her days off so she'd have a chance of survival in the cause of a blowout; they did practice evacuations in production every month but not in drilling because it cost so much to shut down the operation; she never stayed through a hurricane; describes a helicopter crash in a hurricane, took them 12-14 hours to secure everything before evacuation; would watch storms as they came through the Gulf

Letter of resignation: After graduating from 7 and 7 program with degree in petroleum technology LM had a misunderstanding with a head gauger she had known which she resulted in her inadvertently quitting ODECO; LM reads her letter of resignation

Forklift company: after leaving in June 1977, she went to work for Spider Forklifts through a family connection; she bought forklifts, designed and supervised the construction of a plant in Houston, chose the president and drilled a water well; then she quit, took a forklift back to Houma, where she ran into a supervisor from ODECO who offered her job back, she had missed offshore work, but they still wouldn't hire her as a drilling or workover foreman

Company loyalty: went to work as a gauger, was also offered a job by USGS, but felt she couldn't ethically shut down ODECO fields as a former employee, now she questions that decision; she also admired ODECO's history

Safety: cheaper to allow accidents to happen than shut down the rig

Hierarchy: decision-making, couldn't go over someone's head, could steal but based on your rank

Positives of working offshore: exciting, lots of time off, good pay, it's a separate reality, adrenaline high from solving problems

Also had a job selling ads for oil industry magazine

Family history: moved from a farm in Iowa because of the weather in 1960, times were rough, her mom worked as a nurse, eventually her father got on as a welder with McDermott; her father had a small accident but was diagnosed as a result, McDermott continued to pay him and still helps with his medical bills; she wouldn't work for McDermott because it's not a good place for women; her mother thought it was exciting to have her family working offshore; when the family moved to Louisiana, LM and her brothers were the only Protestants in school; had culture shock with French and Cajun customs

BEGIN TAPE 4

LM lists the rigs and jobs she had; for a promotion someone above you had to leave a position open

Training program: kept LM at ODECO; thought it would significantly affect the industry

After the accident: got involved in various publicity projects, the library, learning sequencing; then went back to Nicholls and got her bachelors in 1988, interned at Channel 3, writing stories and then producing news, including a short piece explaining what a lift boat is

Lynda Miller

Houma, LA

June 28, 2006, June 29, 2006

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA141

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Lynda Miller was referred to me by Lillian Miller. Both women were among the earliest female pioneers in the offshore petroleum industry and had met each other on an earlier occasion, drawn to notice one another by the similarities in their names. They are not related. On my June 2006 trip to southern Louisiana, I went to visit Lillian and learned that she had invited Lynda to her house to participate in an interview. Lynda had brought along a trunk full of outstanding photos and slides. We began with the photos and slides on the evening of June 28 and continued the interview on the morning of June 29. Malisa Mayon of the Morgan City Archives kindly assisted with the scanning of the slides during the following week.

Lynda Miller studied oceanography during college and graduate school and went to work on offshore service vessels in the Gulf of Mexico in the summer of 1972, becoming one of the first women in her position. She and her husband worked in the Gulf throughout the spring, summer, and fall of 1973. Over the next couple of years they moved back and forth between working for the offshore oil and gas industry and working on research vessels. In addition to their work in the Gulf of Mexico, they worked in Greenland and off the coast of Peru.

#### Summary:

##### Summary of photos:

- 01: Helicopter on Indian Seal, a seismic vessel doing seismic survey among icebergs in Greenland; Lynda Miller was cook; dogs on deck
- 02: From heliport on Indian Seal looking towards stern; built out house to protect seismic crew from cold weather
- 03: Indian Seal in Greenland, iceberg in distance
- 04: Helicopter on Indian Seal, a seismic vessel doing seismic survey among icebergs in Greenland; Lynda Miller was cook; dogs on deck
- 05: Helicopter landing on deck of Indian Seal at sunset
- 06: Heliport and deck of Indian Seal in Greenland
- 07: Sun over the mountains in Greenland, early morning
- 08: Fishing boat in Greenland
- 09: Helicopter owned by Shell Canada, leaving the Indian Seal
- 10: Almost sunset above the Arctic Circle on the Indian Seal
- 11: Helicopter landing on deck of Indian Seal; came in every 3 weeks to bring fresh produce; no contact between flights
- 12: Pilot house; can see frost building on outside
- 13: Indian Seal in harbor in Greenland

- 14: Indian Seal in harbor in Greenland
- 15: Back of Indian Seal in Greenland
- 16: Variable pitch propeller from the Indian Seal
- 17: Indian Seal in harbor in Greenland
- 18: Indian Seal up on drydock in California
- 19: Indian Seal up on drydock in California
- 20: Bow thruster on the Indian Seal; one of the early boats with bow thrusters and variable pitch propellers
- 21: Stern of Indian Seal showing rudder and propellers; boat was sand blasted and painted in drydock
- 22: Stern of Indian Seal showing rudder and propellers; boat was sand blasted and painted in drydock
- 23: Indian Seal in drydock; crew lived on the boat, used ladder to go in and out
- 24: Working on underside of Indian Seal while in drydock
- 25: Back deck of Indian Seal in Greenland after all stuff taken off
- 26: Engine room of Indian Seal; main engine in background - EMD; caterpillar generator in front (yellow)
- 27: Engine room of Indian Seal
- 28: Valves for pumping from tank to tank
- 29: Engine room of Indian Seal, generator
- 30: Engine room of Indian Seal; looking back toward main engines
- 31: Engine room of Indian Seal; piping and gear box
- 32: Engine room of Indian Seal, pump to move liquids
- 33: Main engine of Indian Seal
- 34: Tool area in engine room of Indian Seal; shaft coming down in foreground
- 35: Engine room of Indian Seal, taking out broken turbo charger
- 36: Mess left by mechanics repairing turbo charger in engine room of Indian Seal
- 37: Mess left by mechanics repairing turbo charger in engine room of Indian Seal
- 38: Mess left by mechanics repairing turbo charger in engine room of Indian Seal
- 39: Indian Seal in drydock
- 40: Greenland; freighter out near iceberg
- 41: Sunset over the Gulf of Mexico
- 42: Mr. Gus II in the Gulf of Mexico; standby boat getting towed
- 43: Worker being lowered to satellite jacket from crane on platform; taken from Pacific Seal; the boat was working in this field because the standby boat broke down going out to service the jacket
- 44: Worker being lowered to satellite jacket from crane on platform; taken from Pacific Seal; the boat was working in this field because the standby boat broke down going out to service the jacket
- 45: Kitty that deckhound found snuggled up to dog in galley of Pacific Seal
- 46: Kitty and dog in galley of Pacific Seal; deckhand's jacket on chair to get kitty's attention; renamed extra stateroom the "Cat House"
- 47: Kitty eating fish caught by deckhand on the Pacific Seal
- 48: Mr. Gus II in the Gulf of Mexico
- 49: Trying to tie up to Mr. Gus; backing up; crane operator will lower line; deckhand will catch the port line first and then captain will swing the boat around for the starboard line

50: Trying to tie up to Mr. Gus; backing up; crane operator has lowered line and personnel basket  
51: Pacific Seal backed up to Mr. Gus, roustabout from the rig on the boat deck  
52: Offloading supplies from the Pacific Seal workboat; couldn't tie up because of rough water, sitting with engines holding the boat at its station; could not drop anchor because of too many pipelines  
53: Water rushing over the deck of the Pacific Seal; pipeline racks on the side  
54: Water rushing over the deck of the Pacific Seal; pipeline racks on the side  
55: Pacific Seal deck; old external tanks for pumping mud; company man in red suit; hose is pumping water; blue tanks in background are mud tanks  
56: Roustabout on Pacific Seal keeping watch while pumping water  
57: Deck of Pacific Seal while pumping water; blue external mud tanks in back  
58: Guys fishing from deck of Pacific Seal; one with hardhat is roughneck from the rig  
59: One of the ropes tying off the Pacific Seal  
60: Diver in the water off the Pacific Seal inspecting leg of Mr. Gus  
61: Leg of Mr. Gus  
62: Roustabout on Pacific Seal sent down from rig to help  
63: Two guys on deck of the Pacific Seal  
64: Pacific Seal backed up too close to the Mr. Gus  
65: Roustabouts from the rig on the boat deck  
66: Diver going in the water from the Pacific Seal to check out the leg of the Mr. Gus  
67: Diver going in the water from the Pacific Seal  
68: Diver coming out of the water, tender helping  
69: Diver coming out of the water, tender and other person helping  
70: Marlin rig with LeTourneau legs; diver in water on rope  
71: Marlin rig with LeTourneau legs; diver in water on rope  
72: Diver coming out of water at Marlin rig  
73: Diver being pulled up with crane  
74: Diver being pulled up with crane  
75: Baxter IV off Texas coast  
76: Pacific Seal serving as platform for Subsea International Divers, tied to Shell platform off Mississippi River  
77: Diving bell going in  
78: Diving bell coming up  
79: Diving bell coming up  
80: Diving bell being brought on board Pacific Seal  
81: Diving bell being brought on board Pacific Seal  
82: Diving bell being locked onto sat chamber on Pacific Seal  
83: Diving bell being locked onto sat chamber on Pacific Seal; gangway to platform  
84: Hooking diving bell up to sat chamber  
85: Pacific Seal outfitted for work with Subsea International on Shell platform; drill pipe on boat  
86: Diving bell with chamber, ramp, platform in back  
87: Stern of Pacific Seal as seen from platform; pipe, diving bell, chamber, oxygen and helium tanks  
88: Back of Pacific Seal pulled up to platform; pipe on deck; ladder shallow water divers used to get on and off;

89: Back of Pacific Seal, ladder shallow water divers used to get on and off; diver going in  
90: Looking straight down at what's happening on the platform; pipes, men standing on second level of platform getting anodes ready to be put on legs  
91: Men on deck getting anodes and pipes ready  
92: Lowering something down platform leg, sending it down to the divers  
93: Lowering something down platform leg, sending it down to the divers  
94: From above boat looking straight down  
95: From above boat looking straight down  
96: From platform, view of entire boat  
97: From platform, view of entire boat looking from stern forward  
98: View of Pacific Seal from above  
99: View of front of Pacific Seal  
100: View of Pacific Seal from back of boat  
101: Eye level view of Pacific Seal with anchors extending out from bow  
102: View of Pacific Seal from platform looking down  
103: View of Pacific Seal from port side with frame for diving bell  
104: Pacific Seal from boat looking back to platform; control shack for crane on left, control for gases for divers on right  
105: Pacific Seal from front  
106: Shell platform with boat alongside  
107: Shell platform with boat alongside  
108: Shell platform with boat alongside  
109: Shell platform with boat alongside  
110: Galveston port, workboat next to freighter  
111: Boat coming into Galveston, sun behind  
112: Galveston dock  
113: Campeche Seal, sister ship to Pacific Seal  
114: Campeche Seal, sister ship to Pacific Seal  
115: Rig with storm coming in, Gulf of Mexico  
116: Rig with storm coming in, Gulf of Mexico; seas 12-15 feet breaking over pilothouse  
117: Rig with storm coming in, Gulf of Mexico  
118: Rig with storm coming in, Gulf of Mexico  
119: Rig with storm coming in, Gulf of Mexico; photo was on the cover of Offshore Magazine  
120: Platform in Gulf of Mexico with sun setting  
121: Mr. Gus platform in Gulf of Mexico with sun setting  
122: Mr. Gus platform in Gulf of Mexico with sun setting  
123: Platform in Gulf of Mexico with sun setting  
124: Platform in Gulf of Mexico with sun setting - Baxter IV or Mr. Arthur  
125: Platform in Gulf of Mexico with sun setting - Baxter IV or Mr. Arthur  
126: Pacific Seal in Pier 41 in Galveston  
127: Pacific Seal in Pier 41 in Galveston  
128: Mr. Arthur with Pacific Seal alongside off Louisiana coast  
129: Mr. Arthur with Pacific Seal alongside off Louisiana coast  
130: Loading from Mr. Arthur onto crewboat  
131: Roustabout coming down from platform in personnel basket to help unload boat  
132: Platform legs

- 133: Guys in personnel basket in rough water
- 134: Guys in personnel basket in rough water
- 135: Roustabout from rig helping offload workboat
- 136: Roustabout resting on pallets of mud
- 137: Falgout boat - first triple screw boat in Gulf of Mexico
- 138: David White - green crewboat
- 139: Crewboat at crew change, lowering worker in personnel basket
- 140: Pacific Seal going into Dulac; almost sunk because load too heavy
- 141: Lower Terrebonne Parish
- 142: Crewboat going into Dulac
- 143: Shrimpboat near Dulac
- 144: Mr. Gus platform in the Gulf of Mexico
- 145: Dog (Tasha) on boat
- 146: Dog watching kitten eat
- 147: Deckhand feeding fish head to kitten
- 148: Two workboats
- 149: Workboat with mud tanks
- 150: Mr. Gus II in the Gulf of Mexico
- 151: Drill pipe on the ramp on the Mr. Gus
- 152: Platform with LeTourneau legs off of Corpus Christi
- 153: Vessel being moved by push boats at Corpus Christi
- 154: Rim Tide platform a couple of miles off the coast of Cameron; had a blow out the night after this photo was taken
- 155: Rim Tide platform a couple of miles off the coast of Cameron; had a blow out the night after this photo was taken
- 156: Crewboat pulled up for a crew change
- 157: Crew on the Pacific Seal - l to r Gary, Jim, engineer
- 158: Shutting the rig down, pulling all the pipe out, and putting everything on the boat
- 159: Shutting the rig down, pulling all the pipe out, and putting everything on the boat
- 160: Rim Tide platform a couple of miles off the coast of Cameron; had a blow out the night after this photo was taken
- 161: Rim Tide platform a couple of miles off the coast of Cameron; had a blow out the night after this photo was taken
- 162: Workboat rigged for seismic
- 163: Boats tied up at Pier 41 in Galveston
- 164: Captain Tasha (dog) on Pacific Seal
- 165: Kanakeoki research vessel showing A-Frame and scientific gear
- 166: Terry II, first boat Lynda Miller worked on
- 167: Kanakeoki research vessel units for monitoring
- 168: Kanakeoki research vessel lowering dredge
- 169: Dog on Kanakeoki research vessel wearing life jacket
- 170: Throwing out explosives from Kanakeoki research vessel for seismic testing
- 171: Explosion during seismic testing from Kanakeoki research vessel
- 172: Replacing the wire on a pulley on the Kanakeoki research vessel
- 173: Crewboat pulled alongside Pacific Seal
- 174: Throwing monkeyfist to boat that ran out of fuel

175: Preparing fuel line to refuel other boat that ran out of fuel  
176: Refueling boat, rig in background  
177: Backing up to Mr. Gus, roustabout waiting for line; mud tanks in lower left, P-tanks; held mud or cement, after transfer had to wash boat before cement dried  
178: Crew of Pacific Seal, l to r Larry, Gary (Linda's husband and boat captain), and Randy  
179: Engine room; Linda in middle of photo, was sent down to check the generators  
180: Galley and recreation room on Pacific Seal, brought on plants and other items to make it as homey as possible  
181: Pilot house of Pacific Seal  
182: Unusual tug boat; pilot house up on post  
183: Pacific Seal coming into dock in southern Louisiana bayou; stern line on first  
184: Pacific Seal loading pipe; P-tanks at bottom of photo  
185: Unloading pipe at the rig  
186: Backing up to Mr. Gus with pipe  
187: On Mr. Gus; man in middle of photo  
188: Pulling pipe on the Mr. Gus  
189: Men working on platform  
190: Christmas tree from below  
191: Personnel basket being lowered to boat; mud engineer at left  
192: Pulling pipe out of the hole and laying it down  
193: Mud engineer in his shack on the drilling rig  
194: Pacific Seal coming into dock fully loaded  
195: Approaching peaceful bayou on return trip  
196: Pacific Seal and platform from helicopter; boat rigged for diving  
197: Bringing diving bell onboard the Pacific Seal  
198: Diver in front of diving bell onboard the Pacific Seal  
199: Diver entering the water, tender on deck  
200: Diver entering the water, tender on deck  
201: Diver in wetsuit entering the water for deeper dive, tender on deck  
202: Diver in wetsuit entering the water for deeper dive, tender on deck  
203: Diver preparing to enter water (this photo precedes MillerLy200)  
204: Kanakeoki going into drydock  
205: Impacts of seismic blasting on stern of Kanakeoki  
206: Kanakeoki with anchor chain out for inspection  
207: Engineer Charles Kelly looking at engine room after Kanakeoki sank; note water line  
208: Pacific Seal in drydock; stern  
209: Pacific Seal in drydock; bow  
210: Rudder and propellers of Pacific Seal, in drydock  
211: Radio room on Indian Seal  
212: Galley on Indian Seal  
213: Making a gingerbread house aboard the Indian Seal  
214: Propeller and rudder on Indian Seal  
215: Message in Chinese fortune cookie Lynda Miller got before getting assignment to Greenland; photos of icebergs  
216: Rig with Galveston Bay in background  
217: Platform in tow in Houston ship channel

- 218: Galveston from the air
- 219: Captain (left) and engineer looking at rope tied in propeller
- 220: Changing out damaged propeller
- 221: Managing hoses onboard the Pacific Seal
- 222: Baroid dock in Dulac
- 223: Changing out main engine in Pacific Seal at Galveston Pier 41
- 224: Changing out main engine in Pacific Seal at Galveston Pier 41
- 225: Changing out main engine in Pacific Seal at Galveston Pier 41
- 226: Changing out main engine in Pacific Seal at Galveston Pier 41
- 227: Jackup rig under tow
- 228: War Admiral crewboat; all company's crewboats were named after racehorses
- 229: Four men repairing something on the jacket
- 230: Storm Drill IV rig

Charles Mills

Pearland, TX

June 27, 2006

Interviewed by: Jason P. Theriot

University of Houston/History International

MMS077

Ethnographic Preface:

Charles Mills is a native of Galveston, Texas and spent fifty years in the maritime industry. He joined the U.S. Merchant Marine in the late 1930s and sailed for Lykes Brothers Shipping. During this time he joined the National Maritime Union. In WWII he sailed out on the first Liberty Ship build by Brown Shipyard in Houston. He nearly lost his life during a U-boat torpedo attack in the Atlantic in 1943. After the war, Mills became a representative of the Union and lived on the East Coast. He returned to Texas in the early 1960s and continued service with the union. He is now retired, but continues to be active in numerous Merchant Marine organizations.

Summary:

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Roland Mitchell

Houma, LA

March 13, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB038

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I received Roland Mitchell's name from Amy Whipple and Daryl Eshete at the library back in July. He has been on the contact list since then. I stopped by the main branch library to talk to Daryl and asked about Roland again as I hadn't met any other helicopter pilots. I called Roland and told him about the project and he was eager to help in any way he could. He told me that he had been in the army for over 20 years as a helicopter pilot and then was in the oil and gas industry for over 20 years as well. He mentioned on the phone that he'd flown in Vietnam, and when I interviewed him, his army story turned out to be as interesting as his time in the oil and gas industry. He is a tall man with a shiny bald head and talks very fast at times. His wife sat in for the entire interview and added bits and pieces that she thought were important. Roland has a cough that he and his wife attribute to Agent Orange from the Vietnam War. He is a jolly fellow who has a sharp memory both of his army days as well as his days flying crews and supplies.

Roland was born in Cameron, Texas in 1936. He began working for Dow Chemical as a day laborer and, in 1954, went into the Army. He was a Green Beret and did three separate tours of duty in Vietnam. He worked for Petroleum Helicopters for 22 years as a pilot in the oil and gas industry, beginning in 1976. He retired in 1999, never having "broken" a helicopter or been in an accident. He attributes his flawless record to his careful approach to flying. When I asked him how he maintained such a flawless record he said that he was careful, "because the more careful you were the longer you were likely to be around."

#### Summary:

**Early Days:** Born in Cameron, TX. in 1936. His father moved his family to Freeport, TX. after WWII due to the need for men in industry. He began as a laborer for Dow Ethel Chemical and then later learned to operate the plant. When he was 18 (1954) he went into the Army.

**Army Days:** Began in the airborne infantry and then became interested in Special Forces. Became a green beret and was in Vietnam in 1967. When he came back he saw an advertisement for flight school. Met his wife in 1961 in Kentucky. Graduated flight school in 1966. Did his second tour in Vietnam in 1968, says it was 'the worst' because they got to Vietnam right when the Tet Offensive had begun. Went for his 3rd tour in Vietnam in 1970. They lived in Fort Bragg N.C. after that. One of their sons is a helicopter pilot for the oil and gas industry as well. Knew that if he hung in the Army for 20 years he'd have his retirement. Roland had a friend who had moved down to Louisiana to become a helicopter pilot for the oil and gas industry. Roland then decided that he would retire from the army in 1976 and begin his second career. He would still be able to fly, which is what he loved.

To Louisiana: Moved to Houma in 1976. Didn't want to move to Houma at first because of the Intracoastal Canal running right through the middle of town. When he got here he really liked it. It was really difficult to find housing at the time because the oil and gas industry was really booming and there wasn't a lot of housing available.

Houma: Talks about what the town was like when they moved here in 1976. Lots of agriculture along with oil and gas. Says those were the two major industries in the city at that time. Much more sugar cane than there is now. A lot of loss of farmland to urban development. Thinks that they made a lot more selling off the land in parcels than they could with sugarcane. Son worked at the old Southdown Plantation sugar mill during the summers off from high school. Youngest son lived in Houma, two older children lived elsewhere.

Nature of Job: Came down to interview for job while he was still in the Army, held the job for 2 months. His friend who had been in the Army with him had explained the job to him. What kind of helicopter you flew determined what kind of job you did. The smaller helicopters stayed out in the field and flew from platform to platform. Medium size flew crews from offshore to land. Large helicopters which held 12 - 14 people would make crew changes from land to offshore.

1st day in the job: Began with a training period. Most were military trained (99%!). Many had not flown over water and were uneasy so much of the training was getting to know the rules of the company as well as flying over water with an instructor. Copters had floats on them and could float if they had to land on the water. 1st job was with Gulf Oil Company. He was flown out to pick up the smaller helicopter to fly people from platform to platform. He had never been on a platform and really seemed to like it. Says that when you were a "new" pilot they were a little leery of you, tried to test you a little bit. Worked for the same guy for 7 months, 7 & 7, with Andy Dishman, the foreman on the platform. New guys went to offshore b/c it was an undesirable job. After that he was stationed in Houma for over 19 years, home every night, unless he worked overtime. Wanted someone who lived in Houma b/c then they wouldn't have to provide housing for them.

Hurricanes: Summer of 77' was his first hurricane. Was flying for Amoco. Important to keep your calm in tight situations. Said they would watch the weather very closely. Would take several trips to bring all the crew in using the helicopters he was running at that time. Sometimes would have to move the copters inland if the storm was going to hit the coast. Felt like flying in the War didn't prepare him for flying in hurricanes, only way to prepare you for hurricanes is to do it. Had rules that you go by but if you have enough experience you know when to fudge a little bit. "Some people might think they are better than they are, and that's when they get into situations." Closest situation he was in wasn't even a hurricane, just really bad storm.

Accidents: Most had to do with pilot error. Petroleum had one of the best records for accidents. Says it was because they had the best training department that didn't push the weather. They stressed safety and not getting there at all costs.

Foreign Pilots: After the pool of military pilots ran out the helicopter companies began hiring foreign pilots from Ireland, England, and France. They could come over here and get trained for half of what they could be trained for back in Europe. Companies want you to have 2,000 - 3,000

hours of flight time before they would hire you. The foreign pilots would work here for a while and get experience and flight hours to go back home and fly in the North Sea. Began hiring foreign pilots in 1996. Pilots tend to accept other pilots no matter where they're from. Bare minimum for hiring a pilot is 1,000 hours.

Competition: 2 main ones, Petroleum Helicopter and Air Logistics. Several small operators would come and go but couldn't stay in business b/c it took so much money to operate helicopters. Needed a large fleet to make any money. Almost every customer wants you to have backup copters for emergencies and "spares." The spares were leased out for specials. Specials were one time only day use such as flying lawyers out to inspect accident sites or bring accident victims in or to bring seismic crews in and out once or twice a month. Specials were almost twice as expensive as other oil and gas use. When he was flying the copters cost \$75,000 a month just to rent it and then \$700 an hour.

Turnover; didn't lose his job b/c he'd been working for over 5 years. Copters had very large turnover b/c many came out just to get their 135 qualification (air taxi). A small business might want a copter to fly for them but not have enough money to train them for their 135 certification so they'd send them down to LA to get it and then they'd quit.

Explanation of different helicopters and the jobs they performed. Largest was the Super Puma. Pay raise for # of years, and step up with helicopter size. Most of the jobs were the same except you could carry more people. When he first began (1976) the pilots flew VFR (Visible Flight Rules) and not using instrumentation. Began flying instruments in 1980 or 1981. Felt that instruments were safer in a way because you had more control.

Vacations: Let them build up for a few years. Didn't travel much b/c they didn't have too much time off. Go and see their children but that's the only places they go. Description of jobs their children have. Son is a pilot, daughter is studying to fly as well.

Unions: Helicopters weren't unionized. There was a push for unions but they were never able to come in. Guys who had been in the military didn't know about unions, heard stories about them being controlling, but didn't know what the reality of the union really was. Talks about the gentleman who formed Petroleum Helicopters (Robert L. Suggs), he had built the operation from nothing and didn't want anyone telling him how to run it. Eventually they were unionized, two years after he left. Mrs. Suggs ran it for several years. Employees were clamoring for a union, tried to keep it out but felt that that's one of the things that ran her off. Doesn't know anything about the boats being unionized. Says that's all Chouest, doesn't want to lose control.

Boom/bust cycles: There was a mass exodus of people b/c there was no longer a need for all the businesses. Several mergers as well. Bad for the parish b/c the wages weren't there to support the infrastructure. Had come back very slowly, but not the same as before. Lots of Hispanic people around b/c the need for the workforce was there after the industry came back up. Down for 4 or 5 years and then slowly came back up. Local people lost a lot of their businesses.

Businesses that survived the bust: helicopter companies, some boat companies.

Richard Molaison

Houma, LA

January 31, 2003

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS011

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Richard Molaison is another retired oil worker involved in the Houma-Terrebonne Council on Aging. He and his wife, Virginia, were involved in the interview. Virginia, in fact, asked to make a statement about the good treatment she received from the oil companies in maintaining family contact.

The son of a streetcar/bus driver, Richard Molaison dropped out of high school to serve in the Marines, from 1939-45. When he returned, he was given his diploma and attended Tulane University for two years. In 1948 he transferred to Soule School for a business certificate. He began working in the office for the Swanee Fruit and Shipping Company that year, but in 1949 began work in the chart department of United Gas Pipeline Company, when it was creating a regional pipeline system that eventually extended offshore. He worked for United at Montpelier and and Kosciusko, Mississippi. In 1955, he shifted to Union Producing Company, United Gas' sister company, and worked as a lease operator (production) at Lake Quitman, near Houma. He returned to office work in Houma in 1970 and stayed at the Houma office through the Union/United merger with Pennzoil. In 1984 he returned to field production, until retirement in 1986.

#### Summary:

United Gas Pipeline: Combined with sister division, Union Production. UG (with Brown and Root as contractor) built a pipeline system to US Midwest, eventually extended offshore. Water and gas distillate were separated onshore, dry gas was shipped through Napoleonville, which had a compressor plant. Gas shipped to Montpelier, Mississippi, was linked to the Texas Eastern Pipeline. The fields at Lapeyrouse (Lake Quitman) and Bayou Dularge were gas condensate, which was ready to burn when pumped out. The Union Gas boats tied up at Dulac. In 1972, Union merged with Pennzoil.

Office vs. Field Work: Office work was static; he worked on production, safety, insurance, and credit union paperwork. Field production was more interesting and paid better.

Family in Oil Industry: Three of five sons working for industry - BHP, Pennzoil/Devin, Texaco (the one who worked for Texaco worked offshore). Virginia noted the chief executives of Pennzoil were quite responsive to wives when their husbands were in the field.

Offshore Pioneers: The first companies to venture offshore were Magnolia, Pure, and Sunoil. Pennzoil's first offshore platform was built in 1951.

Community Effects: Overall, the oil and gas development was good for Houma. However, the industry "is consuming itself."

John D. Monteiro

Houma, LA

July 5, 2003

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS026

#### Ethnographic Preface:

John Monteiro was recommended by a number of people, including Diana Edmonson and Earl Hicks. After discussion with Earl, I wrote John a letter, explaining the study and asking him to participate. This Earl gave to him at a meeting of the Houma-Terrebonne Airport Commission (he is chair of that commission). He called on July 3, and we arranged to meet for an interview on the afternoon of July 5. At his house, I met his son and daughter, as well as his wife, who stayed for part of the interview. His son, Bucky, has built a successful boat company, and would be interesting to interview for a more contemporary history. After discussion at his home, we moved to his office (at the other end of the home property, in the house he and his wife originally lived in through the 1950s and 60s) and looked at some photos taken of his construction work. He volunteered to have his secretary scan them and we discussed them on July 10.

John Monteiro is a trained engineer whose story is one of rising and falling with the inshore oil fields. After serving in the army in 1945-47, he enrolled at LSU. His first summer job was as a roustabout with the "California Company" (Standard Oil of California), then Chevron. He graduated with an engineering degree in 1951, and went to work for McDermott. With McDermott, he worked on wood platform and timber piling design, as well as design of a sulfur mining operation. In 1954, he started working for Schlumberger. In 1966, he started John D. Monteiro Construction as an independent contracting firm, specializing in oil field construction. While the firm had twenty years of success, it was not able to survive the oil bust and Texaco pullout of the 1980s, and went out of business in 1986. After bankruptcy, he started another construction firm (non-oil field) and an engineering and planning consulting company. He is one of those people who found floatplanes essential to his work and has about 9000 hours of flying time. This interest got him onto the Houma-Terrebonne Airport Commission in 1980. He currently serves as chair of the commission.

#### Summary:

Early Barges: Started (1953) working on a McDermott "barge and wing" - a drilling barge with two other barges connected to the side. Living quarters on the barge were limited, people practiced "hot bunking"-sleeping in the same bed in shifts. Soon after McDermott built Derrick 7, which was the first "modern" barge. This work "offshore" was in about 10-20 feet of water. Worked on a "top secret" structure in 300 feet of water.

Schlumberger: Primitive signal system, logs at the time. Worked for Schlumberger as a sales engineer.

Engineering and Construction: Started in 1966. Work area along Gulf coast from Texas to Mississippi, as high up on Mississippi River as Port Hudson. Built pipelines and timber structures. Pollution concerns were addressed by pouring concrete over the wooden decks. This evolved to the pre-cast concrete deck. "The oil field is not high tech." "All of our work was on water, very little was on land. And when we'd get a land job, we really weren't too good at it. Because we didn't have the equipment, we'd have to rent all the equipment. Our people were used to working on the water, a whole different game."

Doing Business: He started with a \$2000 bank loan, raised some money from family and friends. That gave him the money to make the initial expenses and payroll. At first, he would take the invoices to the bank and borrow money to pay his workers. His son was able to get started in the boat business buying four boats for about \$1.7 million with no money down.

Aircraft: Every company had one or two seaplanes. In 1982, Houma Airport was the second busiest in the state. Airplanes have become expensive. Helicopters have taken over as the industry moved offshore.

Community Activism: This was accentuated by his need to house workers and their families before their first paycheck. Many workers came into town with their families and little else. He would hire workers and find himself with the personal obligation to help them find housing. At the time, there was little public housing available in Houma. He worked out a deal with the Salvation Army to house the workers families and "hire" the workers to fix up the housing facilities in their spare time. He would deduct their rent from their first paycheck and turn it over to the Salvation Army. This led to his deep involvement in community service issues in Houma. It also led to his early discovery that Texaco planned to pull out of the parish - they refused a charity contribution because they were planning to leave.

1980s collapse: Texaco and most of the majors pulled out of inshore and the economy collapsed. Smaller independents moved into the inshore fields and did make a profit on workovers. "When they got out they just left... I don't think they'll ever clean up those fields out there...They left a big cleanup job and kinda left a bad taste in people's mouths"

Changes: Boats got bigger, steel hulled. Creosote was phased out for environmental reasons. Helicopters moved into offshore work.

Houma Airport: He learned to fly in 1963. "It was just a country airport then" Was appointed to airport commission in 1980. At one time, Hammonds was the largest commercial airline based in Louisiana. Hammonds, Geist, Donald Brignac, Hesselgrave, Sea-Air, Houma Air Service (Christ), and Walker Watts Aviation kept many aircraft at the Houma Airport and seaplane bases. The future plans are to strengthen the runway to handle heavier, jet aircraft. "A lot of us learned to fly in seaplanes."

Oil Field Relationships: "Everybody knew everybody else." Hammonds was always helpful. If he had a trip out to a rig where John was, he would offer to fly him home on the return trip for free. Contractors would borrow from each other. "Back in those days, everybody trusted everybody else." Major oil companies would "contract" for work on oral agreements. If the

contractor ran into a problem, the companies would help, whether or not it was in a contract. "Everybody down here was making money, everybody was paying their bills, nobody was trying to beat anybody; like I say, it was just a good atmosphere: and everybody in the oil field just about knew everybody else. Since we all came out of the service we were about twenty years old, so we kinda grew up together. Those you didn't know personally knew of you."

Texaco: "For years this was a Texaco town. You either worked for Texaco or had some kinda deals with Texaco, or you really weren't very much."

Roy Montgomery

Lafayette, LA

February 27, 2003

Interviewed by: Robert Carriker

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

RC005

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Roy Montgomery was born in 1920 in Lafayette, Louisiana. His father died when he was four years old. He attended Lafayette High School and then went to the University of Southwestern Louisiana from 1940 until 1941. In 1941, when his brother went into the service, he took his place as a rod man for City Service Oil Company. By 1942 he had been promoted to driller and volunteered for the Army Air Corps to serve in World War Two. When he returned from Europe in 1945, he went to work for Lane-Wells Perforating Company, where he started out cleaning and loading perforating equipment and moved up to helper and truck driver. In 1949, he went to work for Spartan, which was almost immediately bought out by its competitor Halliburton, which fired him. He came back to Lafayette, looking for a job and hoping to get out of the oil industry. After taking care of his invalid mother for awhile, he went to work for Citcon in Lake Charles. He retired in 1985 or 1986.

#### Summary:

Early life: born ('20) and raised in Lafayette on East Vermillion Street; family donated the Montgomery School to the school board; father died '24 and mother died in '61. Went to SLI from '40-41.

City Service Oil Company: took his brother's place on a seismograph crew as a rod man when he went to war in '41; then took a position as a helper to a driller and then filled in for drillers while they were on vacation. Had left SLI to work for City Service because he knew he'd be going to war soon. In '42 he volunteered for the Army Air Corps and served in Europe during World War Two.

Lane-Wells Perforating Company: went to work for them when he returned from service in '45; worked out of Lake Charles. Describes how they would perforate wells (gamma rays and perforating guns) to produce them. He cleaned and loaded equipment at first, then was a helper on the truck, and then drove a Ford truck with wire. Quit mid year in '49.

Spartan: started by ex-Halliburton employees; his brother-in-law also had worked for Halliburton and was in charge of Spartan's work in Louisiana and Mississippi. When Halliburton bought the company, they fired everyone who had worked for Halliburton or was associated with it, including Roy. After being fired, looking to get out of oil industry, didn't like to be on call 24-hours a day; goes to Lafayette and takes care of mom.

Citcon: lab formed in Lake Charles via partnership between City Service and Continental Oil Company; brother was working for them and helped him get a job. In 33 years of working there, he never moved there permanently (had an apartment and would drive back to Lafayette when off); Lake Charles blue collar and Lafayette white collar.

Lafayette: in the '50s, economy in Lafayette was based on railroad, SLI, and wholesale distributors; small town you could walk around; most families only had one car.

Citcon job: started out picking up wax and oil samples; wax was graded and refined like oil and used for many different things. Retired in '85 or '86.

Family: bought a house with his sister in Lafayette after their mother died; moved in Bayou Shadows Apartments where he met his wife; married at age 70.

Lafayette - during his childhood: location of Lafayette Senior High; local swimming pool and Rex McCulloch; town was small, people might not know your name, but they knew where you lived.

Lafayette - influx of oil: Heymann and the Oil Center; railroads and SLI had been the biggest employers before the oil business came. People started immigrating; new people could not understand the food (e.g., crawfish); once people were there, you "couldn't kick 'em out," because of the Cajun hospitality. Rivalry with Lake Charles.

Childhood mischief: relates stories of the trouble they got into (e.g., stealing watermelons from Chargois). Teenagers today.

Sharon Moore

Patterson, LA

February 27, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA094

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I arrived at Perry Flying Service to interview Val Mullen, and Val told me that Sharon Moore, one of the few female helicopter pilots working in the Gulf, happened to be in because no flights were going offshore due to fog. She said that she would trade her interview time so I would get the chance to talk with Sharon. Sharon agreed to be interviewed, and she and I went into Val's office to talk.

Sharon was raised near Dallas, TX, not far from Love Field, and got to know many pilots and stewardesses when she was growing up. She joined the National Guard after high school and remained there for 13 years. In 1990, she began flying civilian helicopters where she worked in the Pacific Northwest, Hawaii, and the Grand Canyon before taking a job with TexAir Helicopters in the Gulf of Mexico in 1996.

#### Summary:

Occupational History: Helicopter pilot for TexAir Helicopters; came to the Gulf because I needed a job; had been shuffling from one type of flight environment to another; had six month contract in the Grand Canyon doing charter work; had talked with guys from Mississippi who worked in the Gulf, but they scared me away; worked first in logging, Grand Canyon, and Hawaii

Personal History: Raised near Dallas, not far from Love Field; lots of pilots and stewardesses in the area; joined Ohio National Guard, they were offering tuition reimbursement; stayed with the National Guard in Ohio for 13 years; started civilian flying in January 1990; working in the Gulf for six years

Experience in the Gulf: Challenge to let passengers think they are on a joy ride but also in the hands of a trained professional, relieve them of their worry; especially as a female pilot; they let you know when you do a good job, which is what is endearing about working here; enjoy coming to work because of the environment; passengers will fight for the pilot they want; was looking for job before left Grand Canyon, Houston Helicopters was advertising for pilots for long-range helicopters; sent TexAir my resume, interviewed, and got hired; strictly offshore contract work; about 50 helicopters, all in the Gulf, I'm the only woman flying; have heard there other female voices in the Gulf

Working in male environment: Try to be feminine without being prissy; female can break the tension; flying offshore go through beautiful area, point it all out; some of the prettiest cloud

formations are in the Gulf; the guys appreciate my enthusiasm; I spend a lot of time on the platform, see schools of dolphins, barracuda, fish

Contract work: Companies lease a helicopter to support a contract; company owns the platform and a bunch of satellites; need parts and people transported among them and from the beach; contracts run 1-3 years and are then up for renewal; work basically 7 & 7; went to 14 & 14 with one pilot; as industry has gone farther offshore, change from shallow water, light duty helicopters to deepwater and larger aircraft, more fuel efficient; describes helicopters; lots of contracts keep you maxed out on weight, problem if you get out and have weather and wind needs and need more fuel; supervisors overseeing the job can push the aircraft to the limit where there is not a lot of room to change; it's always a give and take between weight and load; pilots are the final authority, 100 percent responsible for the decision; all covered by General Aviation regulations, Part 91; in the Gulf also have to worry about Part 135, transporting people for hire

Association: Offshore Oil Industry Helicopter Association, trying to establish a safer environment for all helicopters, a common radio frequency for all pilots in the Gulf; have bases in Morgan City, Cameron, etc; these are not federal airport areas, just a hub

Licenses: Commercial license allows pilot to fly up to a certain point; airline transport pilot license for larger planes; in Gulf all have to be instrument rated; have to have special training and check ride for each type of helicopter; fewer than one percent of the pilots come from Louisiana; many from Texas and Mississippi; initially pilots stayed in the Gulf a long time; they came with the intention of making this their careers; now it is more like a foot in the door, high turnover; insurance plays a big role in how many hours a pilot has to have to fly here; companies with large helicopters operated by two pilots can put people with low flight time in the right seat; companies will pay higher premiums for good pilots; in the past you had to meet the minimum hours in the helicopter the company owned or they wouldn't talk to you, now all have reduced those minimums; helicopter pilots can work in medivac, news reporting, touring, VIP transport; estimate that 20 percent of the nation's helicopter pilots work in the Gulf

Reflections: Love it, hope to stay; lots of pilots come here out of the military, think only about the money; go to the tour industry where you fly 8 hours a day, 6 days a week, end up exhausted; lots of challenge out here; like being a taxi driver in New York City, plus have to stay up on maintenance; pilots help each other out here; they know it can be a deadly environment; pilots don't get together much because there is a feeling of competition between companies; TexAir pilots are the most open to everybody; other companies establish regulations keeping their pilots independent and private, don't let them talk on the open radio frequency; for the most part people stay with one company; no pilot's association for Gulf area, not many associations among helicopter pilots - retired Viet Nam Pilots Association and Whirlygirls, the female pilots association; pay much less than for airplane pilots, average pay after 30 years \$31,000; do it because it is not boring; here in the Gulf there are people to share the environment and excitement with; not just a job, sharing a memory.

William Hugh Mouton

Lafayette, LA

July 31, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz, David DiTucci

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW014

#### Ethnographic Preface:

William Hugh Mouton comes from a family of lawyers. He graduated from Tulane Law School and now works with legal title issues in the oil industry. In his interview, he discusses his job, the Oil Center, and Louisiana mineral law.

#### Summary:

Early life: came from family of lawyers; father an attorney in 1930s, who dealt with titles for oil and gas operations in South Louisiana; member of Bailey and Mouton firm until 1972; father one of the few title lawyers at the time.

Education: graduated from Tulane Law School.

Employment: 1957, he started doing abstract work for Delahoussey firm; the duty of an abstractor is to find out information on ownership of the land; most of the contact between landowners was the responsibility of the company's land department, not the abstractor's or the title lawyer's.

Oil Center: The oil companies wanted to be located together to share information, assignments, and costs of projects. In 1956 there was much competition between different communities to host the Oil Center - Lafayette won; Mouton grew up across the street from Heymann's flower nursery, where the Oil Center was built.

LA mineral law: different from other states; owners of mineral rights in Louisiana do not own minerals but own the right to explore and dig. If they don't use that right within ten years, it reverts back to the service owner; but in Texas for example, there is no time limit.

James Movable

Lafayette, LA

June 27, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW060

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. James Movable was born in Opelousas, Louisiana in 1943. His father worked for the Department of Agriculture. He went to the University of Lafayette (UL) for three years in pre-veterinary medicine, but after not making it into Texas A&M for veterinary school, he went to work as a laborer roustabout in a Texaco pipe yard near Vermillion Bay in 1965. Two and a half years later he was transferred to a gas plant in Erath, where he worked in a metering station. During that time he worked a swing shift and went back to UL under Texaco's tuition aid plan and received a degree in agricultural business. After he got his degree, he went to work in as a materials coordinator in the New Iberia office, where he stayed for about 10 years. After that he was transferred to the Henry Gas Processing Plant as a materials supervisor. He stayed there until he retired in 1999; since that time he has spent his time working on his cattle farm in Opelousas. During his career, he dealt almost exclusively with natural gas and describes the processing of natural gas and the market for it.

#### Summary:

Early life: born in Opelousas, LA in '43; father worked in Department of Agriculture; went to UL for three years studying pre-veterinary medicine; didn't make it Texas A and M quota; went to work in oilfield.

Roustabouting: started out as a laborer roustabout in a pipe yard south of New Iberia for Texaco in '65. Hard work, exposed to elements. Jobs pretty easy to get in the mid-60s. Worked there for about two and a half years.

Going back to ULL: studied ag business under Texaco's tuition aid plan; was working a swing shift (worked two days and two nights a week).

Metering station: while continuing at ULL, was working in a metering station at a gas plant in Erath; would calculate offshore production of natural gas; schedule was straight days with two days off during the week.

Natural gas: describes how gas would come in from offshore, be calculated, be processed, and be sold. "Allowables" related to liquid production; government controlled; discusses overproducing (sanding up) and controlling the volume of production. Natural gas condensate - separating the liquid from the gas. Early on, no market for natural gas, so it was burned off; Henry Recycling Plant (south of Erath; built in '40s) would put the gas back into the ground; stopped burning off

natural gas when it was developed as a fuel and a market was created for it; liquefied natural gas being developed as a fuel for engines; some Texaco trucks ran on propane.

Materials coordinator: after got his degree, promoted to materials coordinator in New Iberia office; job mostly involved procuring oilfield equipment; his schedule was straight days.

Getting into oil industry: attracted to oil industry because he was interested in it and it had secure employment.

Management: early on, you would know several layers of management; supervisors knew what you were supposed to be doing, but later on that changed; in later years, supervisors and managers did not go through the ranks of the business.

Henry Gas Processing Plant: transferred there after 10 years in Erath as a materials supervisor; similar job, but with different equipment and more urgency in some of the purchasing; it was a big operation.

Safety: safety became a much bigger issue with developments in technology; companies realized that time lost due to accidents was more expensive than safety equipment; company now gives workers much more safety equipment. He only had one accident (pulled muscle in his back in pipe yard); never saw a serious accident.

Pay: was always a little better than you could do anywhere else; could make more money with service companies, but did not have job security; when rig counts go down, support industry dries up.

Environment: industry's view of environment got much better; land jobs use Frak tanks; with new regulations, new methods and equipment were created; companies have to contact the EPA within hours of flaring.

Workover rigs: because drilling rigs are so expensive, once they are done drilling, they move them out and move a workover rig in to complete it; workover rigs also used if there is a problem when producing the well.

Bust and drilling: didn't affect his job; Texaco's rig count did go down, but continued producing what they had; Texaco was okay because it was a vertically integrated company. Texaco slowly sold out drilling sector of their company; it was cheaper to contract that out. Companies consolidating several wells on one platform using directional drilling.

Retiring: retired in '99; Texaco offshore production decreasing, not enough volume to run Henry Gas Processing Plant; procurement not as tightly controlled and many of his functions were not needed. Had considered taking a job doing international freight forwarding before he retired, but decided against it; the position was eliminated before he retired; job stability was less toward the end. Offered an incentive package and took it; no regrets about his work; particularly liked the job because he got to meet a lot of people.

Impact on area: industry had a tremendous impact; in the '70s there was lots of jobs; in return, area offered the industry lots of loyal employees; symbiotic relationship. A lot of people moved there from out of state; lots of engineers from Indiana; spiciness of food was hard for them at first, but grew to like it and would take seasonings with them when they went home.

Politics: Texaco was politically strong in the area; incident with state trooper and mismarked barrels.

Valine Mullen

Patterson, LA

March 5, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA103

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Valine Mullen was referred to me by several people. She is an active member of Morgan City's Desk and Derrick Club and has worked for Perry Flying Service for 18 years. I met her when I went out to interview Ken Perry, and she agreed to an interview. We were scheduled to talk at the end of February, but one of the few female pilots working in the Gulf happened to be at the Center that day waiting for the weather to clear and I took that opportunity to interview her (see Sharon Moore). Val and I agreed to reschedule the interview after Mardi Gras. We sat in her office and talked for a couple of hours.

Val got her first job related to the offshore oil and gas industry in 1967 when she was still in high school. She worked for an answering service that had a contract with a company working offshore, and she would take calls from people needing to talk to someone offshore. At that time, the companies only had radios, and she would take the phone call, contact the recipient over the radio, and then alternate holding the radio receiver between the mouthpiece and earpiece so the two people could talk to each other. When she finished high school, Val married and moved to New York for a couple of years. She and her husband moved to Houston and then she moved back to Morgan City. She worked for several companies that provided services to the offshore oil and gas industry and ended up in 1985 at Perry Flying Center, where she was still working at the time of the interview. While working at Perry, Val became involved in the Desk and Derrick Club (see DA 014, DA100).

#### Summary:

Occupational history: Born and raised in Chauvin; graduated Morgan City High School, family moved from Chauvin to Amelia to Schriever to Chauvin; while still in high school worked at Triple A Answering Company, job was to handle the offshore calls; had separate mike and radio; heard all the conversations because had to listen to know when the key the mike; got married, moved to New York; worked on Air Force base at register in the PX cafeteria; moved to Houston, worked as apartment assistant manager while raising children; moved back to Morgan City about two years later; worked for air conditioning, refrigeration, electric repair company; lots of work for boats and offshore facilities; met people who worked on the boats and the port captains; Shell, Mobil had warehouses and would call for air conditioning work; then worked in office for tank cleaning company; things got slow, went to work for office supply company, did lots of business offshore; had to shut doors when business started slowing down; went to office placement company, sent to Perry Flying Center, still here; one-girl office

Perry Flying Center: Deal with a lot of offshore transportation people, biggest group is offshore workers; try to assist them with anything they need; got into Desk and Derrick; educate ourselves into what the companies are doing; have programs, speakers, seminars, field trips; have learned an amazing amount of things; lots of changes over the years, ups and downs; lose a lot of good people who have to go on to support a family

Answering Service: Would get calls when wife needed to speak with husband or boss with employee; had to rouse them on the marine radio; had to hold mike to the phone, key mike for them to talk, then hold receiver to the radio; worked after school for a few months; calls only in emergency; this was a special service provided by the answering service because they had a radio in the office; lots of people worked offshore, it was very common then

Family history: Uncles worked for Texaco, Shell, some relatives still do; father drove a crewboat; cousin was part owner in fuel dock for boats coming and going; female cousin worked offshore for years; would have been frowned upon for someone my age to do that because they were not set up for women; by the time she started equal rights had kicked in; still not common; have female engineers but not people who go out and work offshore; women who got into the oil industry had to fight for it; some kids in high school would go work on boats in the summer and make money, like shrimping and crawfishing when the season is right

Starting out: Women were just being encouraged to start going to college, most were getting married and getting a job locally; it was a good time, more freeing up of things women could do; a lot became teachers; was an interesting time; Viet Nam War put a kink in things; quite a few of classmates got drafted; first child was born at the West Point Academy; husband got out December 16, 1969, we moved back to Morgan City, then to Houston; we got divorced, I remarried and moved to Lake Charles and then to Morgan City; came to Perry Flying Center in August 1985, during slowdown, things never have gotten back to what they were when first came; aviation was one of the first things cut

Working in the oil industry: Do office work, invoicing payroll; in all jobs was in one or two person office; asked to take customers to lunch, make coffee while they were waiting; really enjoyed every job; mostly work with men; only one time there was another woman, at the office supply store; with workman's comp, had to keep track of what was done offshore, what done onshore, had different rates for each of them; all had to be separated on ledge sheets; first computer 1988-1989; learn as you go

Biggest changes: The way people are handling their companies; in the beginning lots of unnecessary spending and it turned around and bit them; had to yank the chain back; have had to learn to take on larger workloads and do with less money; seeing more females out there; not as quick to start drilling without looking at the long term; more concerned with the environment, preserving the energy resources we have; area now having a hard time finding skilled workers

Chauvin: Mom and Dad had the first malt shop, jukebox, all the kids hung out there when I was 7 or 8; mother had a dress shop; would see the shrimpboats and everything, see racks of drying shrimp; dad shrimped with uncles, all had their own shrimp boats; did crabbing, shrimping, oystering, fishing; we had 8 children; father knew how to drive a boat; went into the service,

served as an interpreter in France; Mom stayed here; he came back, worked at McDermott for years in the propeller shop; retired and worked at the fuel shop

Growing up: Used to think it was terrible to keep switching schools; was very shy; but helped broaden my scope; couldn't afford vacations; this is a friendly area; moving to Amelia the neighbor kids took me in and made me feel very comfortable; never felt shunned; friends' families mostly worked for service companies; we moved to Morgan City because Daddy had job at McDermott; lots of men were having to break away from shrimping because there was more money and it was year round; don't remember him taking welding classes, he learned as he went; I think they taught each other along the way

Perceptions of industry: At that time getting a job in oil and gas was a good thing, that's where the money was; they were offering insurance, people had never heard of that; as long as the oilfield was there, it was secure; without college, everything I learned I learned on my own; even with college degree, the career path for women was accounting, bookkeeping, office work; experience was enough for me because I worked for smaller companies; have been very lucky; Ken's dad encouraged me to join Desk and Derrick; I only had insurance at one other job; no retirement plan here, can't afford it; but have a nice salary; have the flexibility to take time off when I need it; at one time there was lots of extravagance, should have been curtailed sooner

Changes: Big cutbacks; in some circumstances all they could do was pull the plug, hard to change what had become a way of life; offshore jobs had come to dominate, little jobs got put back, clients found somebody else, a lot of companies had to fold; kids not going into petroleum engineering anymore; when I first joined Desk and Derrick that's what we gave scholarships for; don't know if working on the boats will continue to be a good job; don't see lots more women - a lot of times it is based on strength

Effect on the area: Helped the population for a long time but hurt the area in the downturn; grew to depend on the industries that are pulling out; first to Lafayette, now to Houston and away from south Louisiana; think it will always be here but not the way it was unless we develop our own reserves from the U.S. and not from overseas.

Doris Mullendore

Morgan City, LA

March 3, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA100

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Doris Mullendore was recommended by Steve and Jean Shirley and by Val Mullen. She is one of three founding members of the Morgan City Chapter of the Desk and Derrick Club. She is currently the bookkeeper for the First Baptist Church in Morgan City but worked for several companies associated with the oil and gas industry. When I asked her if she would be willing to be interviewed for the study, she agreed, and we met at her house.

Doris was born in Lafayette, Indiana and moved first to Oregon as a child and then to Amelia, Louisiana in 1946 as a young teenager. She graduated from Morgan City High School and took a job as a bookkeeper for a local Buick agency. When the owner bought a crew boat, she began what was to become a career in the offshore oil and gas industry. She left that company to work for a pipe and supply company, worked for a short time for a hardware store, and then in 1976 got into the diving business with a couple of friends. That company folded in 1986 during the downturn, and Doris worked for a few different companies until she got a job with Morgan City Rental, where she stayed until her retirement. In 1966, Doris helped found the Morgan City Desk and Derrick Club, an organization for women who worked in the offshore oil and gas industry (see Moye Boudreaux (DA014) and Debi Baiamonte (DA033)).

#### Summary:

Occupational history: Born in Lafayette, IN; came to Amelia from Oregon in 1946; dad died, mom kept rental house; graduated from high school at Morgan City High; first career job was as a bookkeeper for Buick agency; owner bought a boat, got into offshore business, moved it to Amelia; took job with pipe and supply company in Morgan City; then worked for hardware store; then got into diving business with a friend who had moved into rental house in Amelia; ended about 1986 with the downturn, had a few jobs; ended up at Morgan City Rental till retirement; took part-time job at the church

Desk and Derrick: Helped found club in 1966, with 43 members; goal to educate women about the oil and gas industry; companies were supportive; would have speakers, learn about how particular companies fit into the industry; had to let in men, but no great influx; have field trips; when president had 60 members; when money got tighter, bosses no longer paid for everything, some dropped out; having contacts with girls in other companies helpful; formed lasting friendships

Jobs: With boat company was unofficial port captain, would have to find relief captains; when guys wanted to come in they'd run the boat aground, call in with problems; with diving company

did accounting, billing; started with Martech Diving, left with others and formed S and H; sold to Sonat, sold to American Oilfield Divers, drove back and forth to Lafayette; Martech had been in business a couple of years when began; would go from about 180 to 250 divers; seasonal; knew nothing about diving business when started; learned, it was fun; as payroll clerk got lots of perks; divers came from all over

Boats: Worked for Paul's Boat Rentals; had crew boats with captain and deckhand; began about 1957-58; crew came from all over; lots were shrimpers; some resistance to oil and gas industry from oystermen and shrimpers; career has been challenging and fun; don't know what's going to happen each day

Community impacts: Things started yo-yoing about 1978; all kinds of people came in to the area; got to where people had to have an ID from the police station to work, had to have a background check; companies would bring people in; at one time about 8 major oil companies, then all the service companies; many mixed with the locals, the malcontents weed themselves out; a lot of trailer parks, the majority came in with house trailers; lots of divers from the west coast, Texas, Florida; they had diving schools there; they learned to live in Morgan City; lots of Coast Guard people come in, some come back to retire here

Early days in Amelia: When moved in Amelia was strictly an old Cajun community; everybody spoke French; at school everyone spoke English, but not in the summer; father had been in the service in WWI, contracted TB; moved to Portland for health; was a fire fighter with the Civil Service, he wanted someplace to hunt and fish; they sent him to New Orleans to Fish and Game Commission and from there to Amelia; never thought about leaving; Mom, Dad, Doris all only children so family ties there; had the opportunity to work for Mobil Oil out of school, but the application said had to be willing to move; been extremely fortunate all these years, ended up with good bosses, overall a good atmosphere

Working for diving company: Learn as you go; when you get in at the beginning you work a little harder and it all falls into place; divers had to call time in from offshore; never knew when the phone rang if someone had had an accident; never a dull moment; would send out divers according to the job, depended on depth of the water and type of job; would go to the boards and look for who was qualified for the job; would call till found a guy, or send someone out looking for him; hung out in barrooms; divers would work for whoever they could because they did not get paid unless they were offshore

Supply stores: Did inventory control and secretarial jobs; was more or less purchaser for seven stores; work mostly to supply the offshore rigs; had to know size and types of pipe

Schedules: For boat company 24 hours 7 days a week; same with bookkeeping and payroll for the diving companies; had to figure depth pay and mileage, no computers; at supply company had a 40-hour per week job, almost didn't know what to do with myself; working at the hardware store, the owner bought boats so ended up keeping seven sets of books; everyone thought they could make a killing in the boat business

Changing companies: Went from first boat company to supply company to get out of Amelia; then to hardware store, to diving company for more money; left Martech because didn't like the way they were doing things; there had been an S and H in 1957, but they shut down because the divers decided to go union, the oil companies would not have union people working offshore; S and H was still a corporation, so six core people started it up again; bought by Sonat; then by Stolt Comex; buyouts to try and eliminate competition; lots of companies went into business with the idea of selling out and retiring; when S and H was in business the first time there were probably 40 or 50 diving companies operating in the Gulf, in the mid- to late- 70s; about 6 or 7 were in Morgan City; liked the diving business best because it was nothing consistent; good people

Working with divers: Consequences of seeing divers hurt was heart wrenching; we were fortunate, lost only 3 divers in 20 years; often from lack of experience; not a happy time; for single guys would do their banking; lots of social events; during hurricanes it would be a mad rush; every company that has damages wants the crew out there now; there's a lull time before the hurricane hits to get the gear ready because you know it's going to come; turnover not too high if you had a good group of divers and tenders; Jack Smith was a boss everyone dearly loved; he started S and H, Smith and Hamacker

Reflections: Would not have changed; enjoy accounting; graduated in 1952, about 90 percent of the graduating class lives in Morgan City, Berwick, or Patterson; their parents were either shrimpers or something when the oil and gas industry started, and they just stayed

Biggest changes: Growth; have seen businesses come and businesses go; biggest effect of downturn was that young people graduating from college could not find jobs, did not come back; impact on companies depended on what phase the business was in when things went down; people with service companies either moved on or waited until things went back up again; executives ended up having to move; it would be nothing to see 25-30 families leave; diving industry was not as bad because you work the whole Gulf, Oceaneering and CalDive were growing at the time; "I consider myself real fortunate for the fact that I have always been able to hold a good job, got paid good money for it, had good people to work for and have been able to stay right here."

Don Murphy

Houston, TX

September 10, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA059

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I learned about Oran, Scott, and Don during my first visit with Mary Ann Galletti. All three dove for J&J Diving, and Mary Ann agreed to get them together to talk with me on my next visit to Houston. She had originally arranged to have them over to her house for dinner, but Scott decided he would have the dinner at his house. He is a bachelor and lives in a large two-story house in Houston. When Mary Ann and I arrived, the three guys and Mary, Mary Ann's oldest daughter, were already at the house. They were drinking wine, snacking, and talking about their experiences in the diving business. They continued to chat for quite some time before Don asked me to tell them more about what I was doing so they could decide if they wanted to talk with me. I explained the study, and they agreed to go into the living room and sit around the tape recorder in a group interview. Though there is a lot of banter back and forth among the divers and the interview is less formal than most, the divers were candid in their descriptions of both the attitudes and actions of the divers and provide a sense of the relationships that existed among divers.

Don Murphy got out of the Navy in the late 1960s and went into a civil service job. He became bored in that position and went to diving school in 1973. He worked for several companies across the Gulf of Mexico, including Ocean Systems and J&J Diving, and he is currently employed by Stolt.

#### Summary:

Interviewed with Oran Tarleton and Scott Naughton.

Oran diving history: went to diving school in 1977; wanted to be a diver since 4 years old, watched Sea Hunt; parents paid for diving school; worked for J&J; inland and offshore work; broke the record for the most hot shot dives in a day - 13; hot shot is when a diver goes down for a quick job, like getting a rope out of the wheel of a tugboat; get paid for a full 8-hour day; then most of the time to the bar; did lots of beer drinking in the early days; Scotty was supervisor on my first job offshore, setting four-legged jacket in 135 feet of water; divers close, did everything together

Jobs: set the jacket, stabbed it in on the first try; everybody watching; is a problem when things are not going well; did installation of Ocean Builder; inside burnoffs; all eight legs came off; if not, the diver whose leg did not come off takes the heat; everyone waiting for divers; instant gratification, either a hero or a schmuck; had no problem firing tenders and divers then, they would pick up another job; now impacting their livelihood; story of missing job because drunk

Scott history: started high school in 1968, took SCUBA diving class; started reading skin diver magazines; found ad for Coastal School of Diving; finished high school and started diving school in January 1972; graduated in April, started working in Morgan City in May; was working for J&J when CalDive bought company; still in the diving industry; will be 48 this month; in '73 went to California to prospect for gold, dive for abalone, sea urchins; back to Gulf Coast in 1974, to Houston in 1977; born in England to American parents; back to U.S. to Park Forest, Illinois at age 3; in Morgan City started with Petrolane Divers, had absorbed Packer Divers the year before; lore that diving was cool, but it was cold, dark, and hard

Don history: got out of the Navy; started working for the government, then graduated from college; worked in civil service 3 years; boring job; went to diving school in 1973; had been a scuba diver; got married; spent honeymoon preparing gear for dive job at a nuclear reactor; went on job; got helmet squeeze; eyeballs popped out; down to Morgan City and got job with Ocean Systems; used marine radios, broadcast conversations all over Gulf; newlywed wife

Work incidents: tender stuck knife in forehead; now don't let tenders have knives; now tenders get sent in, possible lawsuits; back then, thought if you got hurt you would lose your job; if got bent could take aspirin and walk it off; did not want people to think you were a wuss and had to go in the chamber; if got central nervous system (CNS) hit, would be fired; everything you did could make you wind up dead; you're only as good as your last dive; unforgiving business; everyone knew how well everyone else was doing; after job would smoke a joint; pot was all over on the boats offshore, not on the rigs, less on the barges; a '70s thing; discussion of hero jobs, like burn jobs; with J&J could go out all year and not do the same job twice

Diving for J&J: loved the inconsistency; inland jobs more varied, divers were a rarity at some of the locations; coming off a good dive as good as sex; completed dive on 18th birthday, had lied about age; cook brought me a piece of cake; impressed guys on the barge; discussion of best divers, those who never let you down; don't come up whining after bad dive, but don't go around laughing and telling jokes either

Divers: in the '70s had at least 50 percent who would come to try out diving and not last; tenders get impatient waiting to break out; every diver had a godfather who would give him advice, keep him in line; role as mentors; could tell when divers were not going to make it; had Chino divers who were good divers, but you didn't trust them in town; offshore you either could do the job or you couldn't; there was no respect for those who couldn't; whether or not you could do the job was all that mattered; Chino divers came in the mid-70s; background and color did not matter when offshore, left the problems on the beach; racial issues in the bars onshore; one woman diver; whole diving business very chauvinistic; divers having to undress before getting in the chamber; discussion of divers' antics, admiration for "Shadow" who recently died

Changes: used to work off barges, now more work done off boats; jobs separated among different companies; all tied into cost effectiveness; caravanning in the old days to save money, hauled their own gear; J&J as unique diving company in the 70s; used to get call to be in the shop at night, load the vehicles, go home and sleep a few hours, hit the road early in the morning; no more little companies

Roy Murray

Houston, TX

June 1, 2006

Interviewed by: Jason P. Theriot

University of Houston/History International

MMS078

### Ethnographic Preface:

Captain Roy Murray, Jr. began his maritime career with U.S. Merchant Marine before WWII. He sailed on cargo vessels during the war and became a captain at 25 years old. He came to the Port of Houston in 1947 and worked for Lykes Brothers as their Port Captain. In 1950 he joined the Houston Pilots where he retired more than 30 years later.

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Bob Nanz

Houston, TX

September 15, 1998

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

SOC020

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Bob Nanz got a B.S. in geology from Miami University and a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago. He joined Shell in 1947 as a researcher for the Houston research center. He worked in various positions until his appointment as Shell's Pacific Coast manager of exploration in 1966. In 1967 he became VP of Shell development company, and later named Vice President of Exploration and Production for Western Operations.

#### Summary:

Interview is fairly free. He mainly discussed his interpretation of the evolution of the E&P research division from 1947 to the present. Good information on the research lab and relationship between exploration and production. He spends considerable time speaking to the research culture of Shell. Additionally, he adds his reflections that research and technology make exploration cheaper.

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Donald Naquin

Bourg, LA

July 10, 2001, July 26, 2001

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier, Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

EB001, AG040p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Mr. Donald Naquin from calling Jerry Cunningham (Morgan City) upon first arriving in Louisiana. His father was a seasoned oil field hand. This helped him to keep his position even when the company was closing offices and laying off employees. Mr. Naquin had many pictures of disasters, too many it seemed! His office had many pictures proudly displayed. He said his wife made him take some of them down because there were just too many of them. He said he made a conscious effort to collect pictures when he was working on the rigs because he thought the oil industry was fascinating. Andrew Gardner went back to talk about the photos (AG040).

Donald Naquin began his oil career as a roughneck in 1955. He was only 19 when he began but figured that he was meant to be in the oil business since his father was as well. Donald Naquin began working at Wheless Drilling Co. In fact, he took over his dad's position when his dad was getting ready to retire. He went into the office one day to ask where he was going to be going that day, and his assignment was to go to his father's rig and relieve him. He worked for Wheless Drilling Co. his whole life. Donald retired from the oil industry in 2001. He took partial retirement at age 62 but stayed on as a consultant and then fully retired at age 65.

#### Summary of EB001:

Family History: Born in Montegut. Moved to Houma b/c his father was working for Texaco, worked for them for 25 years. He was a boat skipper and his boss was R.V. Pierce who was a driller for Texaco. His dad and R.V. became fast friends. R.V. became a foreman and decided that he wants to go to work for Wheless out of Shreveport. R.V. got his dad to leave Texaco to work for Wheless on offshore drilling barges and then worked for 25 years.

First Job/Day: Roughnecking. The first few weeks they were building a new barge, Barge Berson for rig #9, built it out back at Bayou LeCoup. About 2 weeks after they started they dropped an engine and had to shut everything down for a few days. His father was still working at Wheless when he was working there. He worked for him roughnecking for almost 8 years. Says he learned a lot. His daddy didn't have any relief time as tool pusher. While waiting for cement he'd have a chance to go home for a while.

Working years: In 1969 he started pushing tools. And started drilling in 1965 on rig #14 out of West Cote Blanche Bay. Working 12 on and 24 off at this time, was working in New Iberia. Some were working 8 on and 16 off with no days off. They would change the times of working depending on fog and time of year many times. 7 & 7 came later on, "the good days". Not ever

having a day off didn't seem to be that big of a deal to Donald. He was married by the time he started roughnecking. If you needed a day off, someone would double up to cover. The crew had been together for 5 or 6 years and would watch each others backs. When his driller quit, he made driller in 1965 and went to Caillou Island to work on rig #8. When he became a tool pusher he relieved his daddy. When he first started it was 12 & 4 then it became 10 & 5.

Tool pushers: One man had his own rig and someone would come and relieve him. He was fully responsible for that rig and treated it like his house. Around 72 - 74 they decided to start putting living quarters on rigs. Brought in rig 15 and raised the back end and made living quarters on it, that's when they went to 7 & 7.

Wheless: Local drilling company out of Shreveport. Wheless Sr. was a banker. The story goes that he and his wife were playing poker and a friend said something about going into the drilling business. Wheless Sr. got conned into the drilling business, but he was a banker and a real estate man by nature. Started off with land rigs until R.V. convinced him to go offshore.

Injury: In 1975 he got a back injury and he stayed off for several months. The injury goes back to when a large stack of cement fell over on him. In '77 he was called into the office to become drilling superintendent. Donald said it was exciting. A lot of problem solving but not much of a home life. You went to the office everyday. Roy Breaux was called in to relieve Donald and help him for many years until 1985. Elizabeth Taylor was their "right hand man" in the office.

The end: in 1985 they decided to shut everything down. That was the hardest part of his job, laying the boys off. Donald had to lay Roy off and he took it hard. They decided to sell all the drilling barges for scrap metal but they kept the machinery for a while. Donald then went to Shreveport to help them with the land rigs in Shreveport. He did that for 10 years. He began looking after production after 4 years of land drilling. He worked in the field on work over rigs and production. Nothing exists about Wheless anymore except 2 rigs which are operated under WWF, a sister company.

Loyalty to the Company: It was a family. We had people with 25 - 30 years, especially in the tool pushing business. Mr. Wheless Sr. would come on the rig and shake hands with you. R.V. became very good friends with Jr. after he got out of the service. (talking a lot about pictures on his wall. Many of the rigs burnt down and they had to rebuild them). Talking about a lot of his pictures and machine parts. Also talking about an article that he has. One is about an old barge that they rebuilt and put a drilling rig on.

Barges that Wheless built: put barges together to move things.

Crews Changing: says that crews didn't change very much over the time that he worked for Wheless. Says it was like one big family. You started when you had to work, that was the only job you had. Says that you can pick out the men who were good workers and those who were going to give you trouble. Contractors would shut down a rig if it wasn't making any money, they used to be able to leave rigs where they were and no one would mess with them. If you had a job coming up you wanted your best men. You didn't want to take new men and start up a rig,

which would be a disaster! Pay a little extra to keep them and then put them back onto the same rig.

Blacks and Women: "we didn't have no problems with them." They only had a couple of Blacks apply to work for Wheless and Donald said he never had any trouble with them. They never had any women apply to the company. He supposed that that was because Wheless was a smaller company.

Safety Regulations: Had safety regulations since 58' - 60'. Says they had a safety engineer. Also the time that they started with a hospitalization plan for their workers.

Started at \$1.36 an hour. Had 3 kids very young and would use most of the money to buy groceries. No slowing down on the rig. Old saying, "If somebody got hurt, kick them over the side and we'll hire another one."

Hiring: If you needed a roughneck, there was a blackboard with names. All you needed was a social security number. Hire a man right off the street basically. Didn't have to do that very often. If the rig were stacked you'd go to someone else's rig and get men off that. There was a group of roughnecks that followed the rigs around and just worked the rigs that had jobs for them. Everyone knew what everyone else was making. The roughnecks would go around and work for whoever was paying the most. Wheless wasn't the highest paying company but wasn't the lowest either. They did pay boat time, which was different.

Environmental Regulations: Made working on the rigs much harder. You'd get a lot of oil in there but they tried to get rid of it the best they could. Hope for a strong wind to blow away the oil. Difficult when you had so many rigs and barges in one area. Pollution was a big problem. Clean up was getting too expensive and that's why many of the smaller contact companies went under. Drinking water was very hard to keep up on a barge. Order water with fuel so they would run out around the same time. That was part of the tool pusher's job. If you had too much water or fuel you might sink in one of the canals. When you were going to place a derrick you had to look before hand what the terrain was like. If you took the derrick out onto the water it would flip around and try to flip the barge. Donald says that he had one crumble on him. A derrick always falls on the deadline side. Pictures of a rig after it caught on fire. The living quarters caught on fire. Brought it to Houma and put it back together.

Unions: They tried to unionize back in the 60's. He didn't know who would come out and talk to the men but he heard that a couple of men got killed due to union "stuff." Wheless never had any problems as far as he knew. Says that people didn't unionize b/c they didn't care for it. Says a roughneck is a very independent person and didn't want anybody telling them what to and how to do it. R.V. fought it a lot, didn't give a reason why. Says he was a great man, spent more time with him than his own father.

Family, Oil impact: has a son who went into the oil business. He went into refrigeration and electrician. His oldest son in law also got his start at Wheless. Went to work with Placid. They paid for him to take classes at Nicholls on his 7 days off. He got an engineering degree out of it. Oil, and especially Texaco, was "God Almighty" around here. Everyone used to work for

Texaco. Somewhere along the line someone you knew invariably worked for Texaco, called it the "Green T".

Summary of AG040p:

He explains that he inherited these old photographs from his father. His father started work on the Wheless steam rigs. The first photograph shows the shell shaker, mud pit, and the process by which the mud is cleaned for re-use. He explains the function of all the equipment in the photograph.

We look at a photograph of the drilling floor. Back then, the equipment was all manually powered - no hydraulic systems at that time. We look at another photograph of the drilling rig in action. He says that this photograph was taken in Paradis. He also describes how the hands at that time were located and hired through familial and social networks in Houma. We look at more photographs of steam rigs. He thinks that Wheless got rid of its last steam rig in '59. Then they moved to diesel rigs.

We look at a photograph of the mud pumps. Then we look at a photograph of the rig from the board road. They used board roads for getting equipment to and from rigs on the muddy lands of southern Louisiana. The men didn't sleep on these rigs at the time - they came and went, probably working eight hours on and sixteen off. They would rotate shifts every two weeks, too. At the shift, you got 36 hours off.

We talk more about steam rigs. He notes that you could guess the depth of the well by the number of steam boilers involved - four boilers got you to 10 or 12 thousand feet. With a four boiler rig, you ran three boilers, and the fourth was cleaned and maintained. That was the job of the fireman. The boilers were gas fired.

He talks about the process of rigging up. During set-up, shift work was abandoned, and everybody worked days. It took about six days to rig up a steam rig. He tells a story about getting the heavy equipment out to the rig over the board roads - the trucks always had to be careful not to stop or they would sink into the swamp. He notes that his father actually worked for Texaco in the early days, and then went over to Wheless in the 40's.

We look at the last of his father's pictures. It shows the driller at work - the rotary, the Kelly, the bushings, the tongs. He describes the entire process. Donald notes that the Wheless company started as the Saltana Drilling Company, and it went through several name changes. He talks about what happens to rigs when they're too old to use anymore - they try to find someone to buy them, but sometimes they're just sold for scrap.

We look at numerous photographs of the new rigs built under Donald's tenure at Wheless. They're much improved over the earlier rigs. There are photographs of the drilling floor, the bathrooms, quarters, underside, etc. There are several photographs of the rigs at various stages of construction.

We look at several photographs of submersible drilling rigs. They used the lower barge - the part that sinks beneath the water - to store mud and other materials. We then talk about mud and mud composition.

We look at photographs of various Wheless rigs that Donald worked on over the years. We look at the R. V. Pierce, on which Donald started roughnecking in '55. We look at a photograph of an old barge called the Ponderosa. They bought it from Texaco, and it could get under short bridges.

We look at a photograph of a seaplane approaching a Wheless rig. He notes that salesmen from the service companies would fly around from rig to rig. The guys on the rig always looked forward to these visits, as the salesmen would bring a newspaper out.

Wheless also bought the Douhan and Hebert barges from Texaco. We look at a photograph of Wheless' first drilling rig. Donald's father was a toolpusher on this rig for twenty years, and he knew the rig so well that he could hear the subtle changes in the machines when something was not right.

We look at another picture of the Saltana at work, on a job for Sun Oil. They made a good well that time. It was on Lake Pelto, Donald recalls.

We look at a variety of other photographs, and the conversation wanders.

Frank Naquin

Thibodaux, LA

July 23, 2001

Interviewed by: Ari Anand

University of Arizona

AA009

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Frank and Joyce Naquin are friends and associates of Lucy and "Dee" DeHart, at whose home I had a bed and breakfast accommodation. They also have a B&B arrangement in Thibodaux. I met them at the DeHarts' the day I moved in, and they expressed interest in being interviewed - Frank worked at McDermott Shipyard for many years. We set up an interview in Thibodaux. Frank ushered me in and showed me some good pictures of boats made by McDermott. Joyce fed me a fresh biscuit and some homemade preserves before we did the interview - their granddaughter and a boy visiting from France were eating breakfast in the dining room. During the interview, Joyce often prompted Frank to tell certain stories. After the interview, Frank sent a bag of pears for the DeHarts with me.

Francis Naquin was born in Thibodaux in January, 1939, and completed his secondary education at Thibodaux High School. After working as a carpenter and then at a baby clothes factory, he joined McDermott in Amelia as a shipfitter helper in 1961. Other than a brief stint with the National Guard during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1961-62, he remained at McDermott, becoming a leader, a shipfitter foreman, a superintendent, and finally a group superintendent in the 1980s. He retired from McDermott in 1994 to begin a four year stint as a consultant to Wertzle, a company in Annapolis, MD. In 1998, he also worked as a shipfitter consultant to Service Marine Inc. in Amelia.

#### Summary:

Early Life: Born near Thibodaux in 1939. Finished high school in 1958.

Work History: Worked a couple of jobs until he went to work for McDermott in 1961. Worked as helper for 3-4 months, then as tacker, then as ship fitter. In 1961, called in by National Guard for Cuban Missile Crisis. Describes different jobs of tacker, fitter, and welder. Went back to McDermott in 1962, working as ship fitter, then became ship fitter leader in 1963, supervising 20-30 people. Next worked as ship fitter foreman from 1965 until 1974. Then became ship fitter superintendent until he retired in 1994. Describes superintendent jobs. After retiring, went to work for Wertzle diesel company, which built power barges, for 2.5 years. Worked as consultant at Service Marine in 1998.

Early Oil Work: Describes how he got his job at McDermott. Describes first day of work at McDermott, including practicing tacking. Thought the work was hard, but became supervisor after only a couple of years. New barge construction not as bad.

Changes in Oil Industry: Everything has become computerized. In early years, ship fitters had to lay out all parts; later, everything cut by machine.

Work Schedule: Lots

T.R. and Elaine Naquin

Morgan City, LA

December 5, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA081

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to T.R. Naquin by Jerry Cunningham. Jerry had worked for T.R. at Tidex. T.R. at first believed he did not have much to offer because he had worked as an office manager and not on the rigs and platforms. I explained that we were interested in people in all aspects of the industry and that the information about his career was important. He agreed to do the interview but was clearly still hesitant. As we talked, though, he warmed up to the conversation and shared lots of information about his work and also his community. His wife, Elaine, came in after an hour or so. She stood and listened a bit and then T.R. told me that she had worked in the industry as well. She agreed to join us. T.R. finished his story and then Elaine told hers. They concluded the interview talking about living and raising children in Morgan City.

T.R. was born and raised in Morgan City. He finished high school in 1942 and was drafted into the Navy the following year. He spent three years in the Navy, returned to Morgan City for a month but found that many people he knew were gone. He had been granted 90 days to decide whether or not to return to the service, and he decided to do so. He returned to California and worked at a couple of jobs there. He returned to Louisiana in 1950 and worked in a night job for Kerr McGee for six months. He had a wife and young child at the time and left to return to the Bureau of Yards and Docks in California until 1957 when he returned to Louisiana because California had become too crowded. He worked as a clerk for Pure Oil until they sold to Union Oil of California in 1966. He left rather than have to commute to work or move his family. A friend got him a job at Tidex and he remained there for three years. He then went to work for Offshore Logistics, a new transportation company opening in the Gulf. He left them to help a friend start Briley Marine and stayed in the business until 1983 when things in the oilfield turned down. He went to work for his son-in-law at McClary Offshore Construction Company, a company with pipelaying barges throughout the Gulf, but he retired soon afterward.

Elaine grew up in Oregon and went to work for the Civil Service during her junior year in high school. She joined the Navy as soon as she was old enough and was sent to training at Hunter College in New York and then to Corpus Christi to pack parachutes at the base where they were training pilots. She was one of two women doing her job at the base. After the service, she returned to Oregon for six months. She met T.R. when he came into her parents' restaurant where she was working, and she moved to California about six months later. T.R. found her a job in the surplus department, and she worked there until he was transferred to San Diego. They had two children, and Elaine stayed out of work for 8 years. They moved to Morgan City, and she got a job with National Supply Company in 1959. She remained with them until she was asked to retire in 1982. By the time of her retirement, she had advanced to office manager, the highest position available to a woman.

## Summary:

Occupational history: moved to Louisiana in January 1957; had come back in 1950 and worked for Kerr McGee for six months in a night job but had a wife and child so returned to California to reclaim job with the Navy Department; worked for the Bureau of Yards and Docks; back to Louisiana in 1957 because California too crowded; worked as clerk for Pure Oil for 9 years; resigned to keep from being transferred, got job as personnel manager at Tidex; left after three years to join new transportation company - Offshore Logistics - for higher salary; after several years helped friend start Briley Marine; sold boats in 1983 when the oilfield closed down; worked for son-in-law at McClary Offshore Construction until retiring

Early history: born in this house, finished high school at Sacred Heart Academy in 1942 and worked in Morgan City building dry docks until drafted into the Navy in 1943; got out after three years, back to Morgan City for one month, and then returned to service at San Bernardino Army Base; transferred to Point McGoo Missile Test Center, then to San Francisco; met wife and both got jobs there; took a job with Crown Zellerbach, returned to San Diego worked for plumbing and heating contractor and then for lumber companies until 1957; in lumber business building tract houses; would calculate invoices from lumber sales

Pure Oil Company: kept production records on each well, produced annual report to the state and federal governments; sent daily reports in to main office in Chicago; sold to Union Oil of California and transferred to office in Houma; commute too long; about 80 people working for Pure Oil, all offshore, when began in 1957; two 7 & 7 shifts; about 12 in the office - 6 clerks; superintendents from different areas, but people working in the yards were mostly locals; work strictly offshore; supply based in Bayou Boeuf where pipe was received, office in Amelia; very little turnover, if you had a job you kept it; got the job from a friend from school who was head of the Chamber of Commerce; would have stayed if they had kept an office in Morgan City

Working for oil companies: at the time, Gulf, Chevron, Exxon, Pure, Shell, Mobil had offices in Morgan City; working for oil company was considered a good job; rented boats from locals; resigned when they went to Houma because youngest daughter was a cheerleader and didn't want to take her out of school; told friend at Tidex was looking for a job; could not believe would leave oil company after 9 years; "That don't mean nothing if you're family's not happy."

Tidex: got job at Tidex; operations office for entire fleet run out of Berwick; had to remember lots of names to crew the boats; wasn't hard to find employees; put ads in the paper, would tell the skipper needed deckhands and they would bring people; in those days skippers could handle boats, they cut their teeth on the steering wheel; Coast Guard began cracking down on licenses so helped some get their licenses; eventually most got them; did not have many classes, mostly home study; at the time had some boats in Nigeria, had to crew boats in Nigeria and California as well as Louisiana; like pulling hen's teeth to get people to leave; sent a boat to the North Sea; skippers had run boats all their lives; "You tell a conass he can't do something and he'll show you he can;" experienced captains would take younger ones under their wings

Offshore Logistics: started 1969 or 1970; started with boats, head honcho decided he wanted to compete with PHI, the only helicopter company at the time; some skippers came over from

Tidex; helicopter pilots out of the service in Viet Nam; few from the area; had about 50 boats; boat and helicopter companies separate; main office was in Lafayette, copter base was in Amelia; flying for McDermott; main base was at the airport in Patterson; rigs were getting so far out that helicopters were used to change crews; took too long; also some of the crewboats were not built for that kind of mileage; started making bigger boats; all helicopters built new for the company

Briley Marine: could get incentives and credit from the government; many guys eager to get into the boat business; GMAC and banks would finance them; everybody started building boats; when the bottom fell out lots were left sitting around; some sold them in Alaska, made fishing boats out of them; lots of crewboats were sold, many became diving boats, party boats; in 1983 they predicted it would take 3 years for the industry to come back; it never did; Briley CEO was good salesman; got GMAC loan and found people with money to invest; had 15-20 boats, sold jobs to whatever company would buy - Chevron, Shell, Exxon; making \$3000 - \$5000 a day for the boats; sold the boats in 1983; everything turned down in about 6 months

Pipelaying barge: went to work for son on barge that had a crew of about 20 people; it was a piece of cake finding workers at that time; barge superintendent knew who would work and their capabilities; prior to that in the early 80s workers were getting scarce; would send people for physicals and they couldn't pass the drug tests; Coast Guard stepped in and required everyone to have a license, except cooks;

Elaine early history: National Supply Company supplied oilfield equipment; went to work in office typing; would finish early and could go home; one guy resented it so asked to learn another job; worked on the card deck; ended up as office manager; got out of the service, got married, worked then had children; met T.R. in Oregon at family restaurant; had been with Civil Service, then to Corpus Christi with Navy; trained at Hunter College in New York, saw blimp crash; at airbase for training pilots in Corpus Christi; two women on the base in the parachute department; returned to Oregon when discharged; worked in surplus department in California until T.R. transferred to Fort Huaneme Missile Test Center; then to San Francisco and to San Diego; had two children and stayed out of work for 8 years

Move to Louisiana: had been to Morgan City on trips; liked small town, nice place for kids to grow up; 8 or 9 people in the company when started working; supplied equipment to oilfield rig; division of Armco Steel at first; after retired company merged with National Oilwell Supply; asked to retire; getting rid of the ones who cost them the most; trained personnel to do the card deck, use the computers, do invoicing; card deck had the list of all equipment; sold bolts, nuts, wrenches, whatever was needed; employees from all over; wanted to become assistant manager, but was not allowed; those jobs required going offshore, into the field

Living in Morgan City: both daughters graduated from college; preferred Morgan City to California; there it was a long distance to go anywhere; crime not prevalent in Morgan City, even during boom times; would chaperone children for football games, etc.; Morgan City had lumber mills, then shrimpers from Florida came, then oilfield took hold in the 50s; had lumber mill on Railroad Avenue; bars on Front Street opened in the late 30s, early 40s when the shrimpers were coming; they would go out until boat was full and then come back into town to drink and

gamble; had rum boats on the bayous linked to mafia in Chicago; lots of home brew; T.R.'s dad was superintendent for oystershell products company.

Scott Naughton

Houston, TX

September 10, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA059

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I learned about Oran, Scott, and Don during my first visit with Mary Ann Galletti. All three dove for J&J Diving, and Mary Ann agreed to get them together to talk with me on my next visit to Houston. She had originally arranged to have them over to her house for dinner, but Scott decided he would have the dinner at his house. He is a bachelor and lives in a large two-story house in Houston. When Mary Ann and I arrived, the three guys and Mary, Mary Ann's oldest daughter, were already at the house. They were drinking wine, snacking, and talking about their experiences in the diving business. They continued to chat for quite some time before Don asked me to tell them more about what I was doing so they could decide if they wanted to talk with me. I explained the study, and they agreed to go into the living room and sit around the tape recorder in a group interview. Though there is a lot of banter back and forth among the divers and the interview is less formal than most, the divers were candid in their descriptions of both the attitudes and actions of the divers and provide a sense of the relationships that existed among divers.

Scott Naughton got into diving through a SCUBA diving class he took in high school in 1968. He finished high school and entered the Coastal School of Diving in 1972. He went to Morgan City and got his first job in the oil and gas industry, but he left after a few months and returned to California to try gold prospecting and abalone diving. He returned to the Gulf in 1974 and began working for J&J Diving. He remained with the company until it was purchased by CalDive in the 1980s and has stayed with CalDive since that time.

#### Summary:

Interviewed with Oran Tarleton and Don Murphy.

Oran diving history: went to diving school in 1977; wanted to be a diver since 4 years old, watched Sea Hunt; parents paid for diving school; worked for J&J; inland and offshore work; broke the record for the most hot shot dives in a day - 13; hot shot is when a diver goes down for a quick job, like getting a rope out of the wheel of a tugboat; get paid for a full 8-hour day; then most of the time to the bar; did lots of beer drinking in the early days; Scotty was supervisor on my first job offshore, setting four-legged jacket in 135 feet of water; divers close, did everything together

Jobs: set the jacket, stabbed it in on the first try; everybody watching; is a problem when things are not going well; did installation of Ocean Builder; inside burnoffs; all eight legs came off; if not, the diver whose leg did not come off takes the heat; everyone waiting for divers; instant

gratification, either a hero or a schmuck; had no problem firing tenders and divers then, they would pick up another job; now impacting their livelihood; story of missing job because drunk

Scott history: started high school in 1968, took SCUBA diving class; started reading skin diver magazines; found ad for Coastal School of Diving; finished high school and started diving school in January 1972; graduated in April, started working in Morgan City in May; was working for J&J when CalDive bought company; still in the diving industry; will be 48 this month; in '73 went to California to prospect for gold, dive for abalone, sea urchins; back to Gulf Coast in 1974, to Houston in 1977; born in England to American parents; back to U.S. to Park Forest, Illinois at age 3; in Morgan City started with Petrolane Divers, had absorbed Packer Divers the year before; lore that diving was cool, but it was cold, dark, and hard

Don history: got out of the Navy; started working for the government, then graduated from college; worked in civil service 3 years; boring job; went to diving school in 1973; had been a scuba diver; got married; spent honeymoon preparing gear for dive job at a nuclear reactor; went on job; got helmet squeeze; eyeballs popped out; down to Morgan City and got job with Ocean Systems; used marine radios, broadcast conversations all over Gulf; newlywed wife

Work incidents: tender stuck knife in forehead; now don't let tenders have knives; now tenders get sent in, possible lawsuits; back then, thought if you got hurt you would lose your job; if got bent could take aspirin and walk it off; did not want people to think you were a wuss and had to go in the chamber; if got central nervous system (CNS) hit, would be fired; everything you did could make you wind up dead; you're only as good as your last dive; unforgiving business; everyone knew how well everyone else was doing; after job would smoke a joint; pot was all over on the boats offshore, not on the rigs, less on the barges; a '70s thing; discussion of hero jobs, like burn jobs; with J&J could go out all year and not do the same job twice

Diving for J&J: loved the inconsistency; inland jobs more varied, divers were a rarity at some of the locations; coming off a good dive as good as sex; completed dive on 18th birthday, had lied about age; cook brought me a piece of cake; impressed guys on the barge; discussion of best divers, those who never let you down; don't come up whining after bad dive, but don't go around laughing and telling jokes either

Divers: in the '70s had at least 50 percent who would come to try out diving and not last; tenders get impatient waiting to break out; every diver had a godfather who would give him advice, keep him in line; role as mentors; could tell when divers were not going to make it; had Chino divers who were good divers, but you didn't trust them in town; offshore you either could do the job or you couldn't; there was no respect for those who couldn't; whether or not you could do the job was all that mattered; Chino divers came in the mid-70s; background and color did not matter when offshore, left the problems on the beach; racial issues in the bars onshore; one woman diver; whole diving business very chauvinistic; divers having to undress before getting in the chamber; discussion of divers' antics, admiration for "Shadow" who recently died

Changes: used to work off barges, now more work done off boats; jobs separated among different companies; all tied into cost effectiveness; caravanning in the old days to save money, hauled their own gear; J&J as unique diving company in the 70s; used to get call to be in the

shop at night, load the vehicles, go home and sleep a few hours, hit the road early in the morning;  
no more little companies

Willy "Dub" Noble

Morgan City, LA

September 14, 2001, January 4, 2005

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier, Betsy Plumb, Rylan Higgins

University of Arizona

EB016, RH018

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Dub Noble, as all who know him refer to him, is a gentle but driven man. Ed Dilsaver referred me to him. Dub retired in 1963. He is enjoying retired life and is active on several committees. A self-described rock hound, he is looking forward to a time when he can cut and polish the stones he's collected from his travels all over the United States. Since arriving back in Morgan City in 1982, Dub became actively involved in the Morganza Spillway activities. He talked extensively about what they are planning to do with the Morganza Spillway land and how he is trying to raise money as well as awareness about how unique the land around there is. The second interview was conducted as part of the study of the links between WWII and the offshore industry.

Willy "Dub" Noble worked at Humble Oil (Exxon) for 31 years before retiring in 1978. He was born in Plaquemines, LA in 1926 but moved to Morgan City with his family in 1942. Dub has been involved in seismographic operations almost from the beginning. He served on a submarine during the war and wrote an article called, "The mighty mine dodgers: The saga of the sea dog in the Sea of Japan." The experience he gained in the war allowed him to move up to assistant surveyor in a matter of months. He made "party chief" in 1963 and held that position until his retirement.

#### Summary of EB016:

WWII: Mighty Mine Dodgers went into the Sea of Japan and dodged mines, articles written about it.

Early life: Born in 1926 in Arkansas. Father worked as a dragline operator for a construction company. Lost his job due to the depression. Got a watchman's job after moving to Plaquemines. In 1938 father had gotten job building the levee on the Morganza Spillway here around Morgan City. Describes spillway. No football in Arkansas b/c of war rations but Morgan City was going to have a football team so he moved to Morgan City in 1942 to finish high school.

Navy: Volunteered so he wouldn't go to army. Pay was good so he went submarines at \$118.00 a month. Spent 2 ½ years in the Navy. Group of 9 subs went through the minefields in Sea of Japan. He wrote an article about it. In 1945 out of the Navy, got married and had 2 children in 1947-1948.

Humble Oil: Had a friend who worked for Humble, suggested he go and apply. Wouldn't hire him until he was 21, which wasn't until 1947. Went to work for them before Exxon had offshore.

Hired in the exploration department as a laborer assigned to the engine room. 2 weeks later became assistant surveyor because of previous experience. Ran radar for geophysical operations offshore. Worked for 2 weeks at Grand Isle and found an oil and sulfur well. Sulfur was contracted out. Exxon owned the drilling rig.

Duties: Head surveyor: In charge of all surveying operations in Grand Isle and crew of 38 to 40 men. Did the entire mapping himself. In 1954, went into marsh operations on a quarter boat around Golden Meadow.

Changes: After 7 years in the surveying crews he wanted to learn something different. Worked with the operators who did the electronic recordings from the ground. In the beginning the info came out on a piece of paper 8 in. wide by 10 ft. long. Later they recorded the info on magnetic tape, which saved a ton of paper. The calculations were done in the New Orleans office. Dub worked in the office for about 6 months (1961).

Marsh Buggies: Used Marsh Buggies to get around starting in 1954. Began in Grand Isle and worked every stitch of land in the next 15 years.

Party Chiefs: Became a party chief in 1963. Party chiefs were supervisors of the operation area. Party 17, 1963. It was quite a promotion; he was responsible for everything in that operation. Sent to Mississippi in 1967 to take over a land crew. Picked up crew in Florida and then moved them to Mississippi, brought family with him. Covered operations all over the south. Social upheaval didn't bother him.

Improving equipment: geo-foams, old analog to digital, upgrading electronics. Made everything much more sophisticated. Had to go to schools all the time to keep up. Most schools were in Houston or New Orleans.

Back tracking- went offshore and worked 4 years between 1975 - 1980. Grand Isle to Corpus Christi, TX. Still doing exploration work.

Retirement: was looking after contract crews in 1978. Had to make sure that all the info was correct. Decided that he was ready to go and requested retirement after 33 or 34 years. 56 years old. Immediately took a 4-month trip all over the United States. Then moved to Florida for several years but decided to move back in 1982.

Retired life: traveled quite a bit. He does lapidary, and can't wait until he has time to cut and polish all his stones. Computers and writing keep him away from his rocks for now.

Environmental impact: Seismic crew accused of a lot of damage due to marsh buggies. They didn't realize that what they were doing was stirring up the marsh, which helped the marshes grow. No long range damage. Exxon was very conscious of environmental degradation, says that it was always like that. "well schooled in the fact that we didn't mess up anything." Made sure that contractors used also knew not to damage anything. "We would go way out of our way if we saw that we were going to hurt or damage something."

Marsh Buggies, Continued: Didn't always have them, you would walk or use boats to push. First ones, Cheramie Marsh Buggies out of Galliano, made first large buggies. Using them in 1954. Cheramie then came out with a track buggy. A frame 30 ft. long with a track about 2 inches wide. They were able to go over the marsh much faster and did much less visible damage. Didn't tear up the marsh at all. Went to exclusive use of track buggies. They were very small but strong. Made job much easier and faster. Safer than big buggies if you used precautions. Taught how to use it properly. Once a month safety meetings.

Changes in People: didn't change very much. Many stayed on crews for 8 - 12 years. Recruitment was often by friends or family recommendation. Almost all had previous experience, although not all. Never a dull moment.

Work schedule: Didn't like being away from home so much, on 9 off 5 days. Go to work on Wednesday and work until the next Thursday evening.

Quarter Boats: cream of the crop, well-painted and ventilated and best food in the world. Would bring wife out to the boat to have lunch, she really enjoyed the food.

Morganza Spillway: unique area 12 - 14 miles wide, 60 miles long, no other place like it in the world. Continuous running water. State and Federal government are getting ready to put over 15 billion dollars into the Spillway. Doesn't know what they are planning to do with it. Working to preserve the environment but also want to be able to enjoy it and take advantage of it.

Summary of RH018:

Early years: named Willy Zemery Noble after two uncles; born January 14, 1926 in Hamburg, Arkansas, three brothers; dad was dragline operator, worked on levee; tried gold mining in British Columbia

WWII: was 15 and working at service station when heard news of Pearl Harbor over the radio; older brother had been drafted; went to volunteer but too young; back on 18th birthday, enlisted in Navy, motor machinist school; assigned to Sea Dog, responsible for servicing submarine

Return home: went to Missouri, worked as surveyor doing levee construction, didn't like it; to Canada and back; went to work for Exxon Corporation as diesel engineer on sub chaser; no trouble adjusting; went to work January 1947, got married in February; Exxon had bought sub chaser and used it as a survey boat, we installed radar; was first person in Gulf of Mexico to design and build geophysical operations, covered the entire Gulf; out ten days, in four days; had learned all the diesel work in the Navy; spent 12 years working offshore doing seismic work; probably over half were veterans, mostly Navy

Jerry O'Brien

Conroe, TX

June 5, 2002

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS003

### Ethnographic Preface:

Jerry O'Brien was a petroleum geologist who spent his whole career with Shell Oil Company. Joined the company in 1953. Worked in the marine exploration group during the 1950s. Transferred to Midland, TX in 1966 and eventually worked in the North Sea and Michigan. Jerry is retired and living in Conroe, TX.

### Summary:

A good part of the interview focuses on the geologic work performed by Shell for the landmark 1962 lease sale in the Gulf of Mexico. Discussion of the relationship between geology and geophysics at Shell. Good information also on Shell management, the North Sea, the pinnacle reef play in Michigan, and tertiary recovery with CO<sub>2</sub>.

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Loyd Olin

Houma, LA

July 23, 2001

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB010

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I had heard about Loyd Olin since arriving in Louisiana because Corine Paulk is good friends with his wife, Sue. Sue is part Houma and Loyd is part Choctaw. Several connections have been made to Loyd both through his wife being related to F.J. Matherne (he's her uncle) and Loyd himself being the cousin of Barbara Davis in New Iberia. I had heard both from Barbara and Corine that Loyd was extremely sensitive about his time in the Vietnam War. He apparently suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder. When I first called Sue and Loyd it was to inquire about setting up an interview with Loyd. Loyd said he was not the right age (too young) but Sue suggested her uncle F.J. After several interviews I decided that Loyd was the perfect age and I wanted to get his perspective about the oil field. Ms. Corine decided to go with me to their house and visit with Sue while Loyd and I talked. They live in a huge white house that Loyd built. There were two cars in the drive way one being under a car cover as well as an R.V. Corine told me that Loyd was rebuilding the car and that they used to R.V. to follow powwows around the country. We were welcomed into their very comfortable home. Loyd and I went back to his office where he was sitting in front of a computer doing work. I knew he was retired and wondered what work he was doing.

Loyd Olin is part Choctaw, born in 1943. After going to Nicholls State University for two years, he joined the military, serving in Vietnam 1963-64. In 1968, someone he knew helped get him a job with Texaco at the Lake Barre Field. He preferred to work offshore, he liked the 7 days off. He was a compressor operator. In 1971, he was one of the first mechanics to work offshore for Texaco. He also felt his Choctaw ancestry didn't have that much effect on his oil field work.

#### Summary:

Loyd was born in 1943 in New Orleans. His father was a full-blooded Choctaw who quit working for the train companies to move to Houma and begin farming. Loyd said that farming was a hobby both to his father as well as himself. During his high school years he worked as an airplane mechanic for C.J. Christ at Houma airport. After graduating he went to Nicholls State for 2 years majoring in mechanical engineering. He was in Vietnam in '63 and '64. When he returned he went back to school but quit because, "It didn't seem like I was getting there."

He got a job at Lake Barre in 1968. He worked at Texaco because his father knew someone in the office. He wanted to work offshore so that he could have the 7 days off. He was a compressor operator and one of the first pumpers to work offshore at Block 11-8. When I asked whether he found it difficult to be of Indian descent in the oil field he said no, he didn't even really know what he was at that point. He didn't look like "an Indian" so he didn't have any problems. Loyd

did not embrace his heritage for most of his life; in fact it wasn't until the mid-90's that he became involved with Indian affairs in and around the Houma area. While he is not Houma, he says that he feels it is his duty to help the Houmas work through their differences.

In 1971 he became the first mechanic II to be hired offshore. This was because they were just beginning to use compressors. He said that his success in the oil field came not from his brain nor his brawn, but his problem solving abilities. In 1973 He received a raise to mechanic III because he put out a fire on a platform. He has a congratulatory letter from a higher up in Texaco, of which I have a copy.

Throughout his time in the oil field Loyd saw himself as a loner. He knew there was something wrong with him but didn't know what it was. Finally in 1989, a fellow employee made a snide comment to Loyd and he flipped out. He held the man down, threw a chair at him and threatened to kill him. He said his "culture was in the way. The oil company made me cut it off and it finally got to me." On September 28, 1989 he was asked to leave.

Since then Loyd has made a substantial amount of money in the stock market. He said everything he touches or gets involved with seems to turn to gold. It would seem that Loyd might have a lot of negative things to say about Texaco but he doesn't. He does talk about their faults more than the average worker but he does not appear to badmouth them. There is an interesting conversation about the employee stock option Texaco had as well as evaluation forms that Texaco put into place due to the bust in the 80's. According to Loyd they were trying to find reasons to fire people instead of having to offer them retirement.

Christian "Buster" Olivier

Houma, LA

October 7, 2002

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS001

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Christian "Buster" Olivier was recommended by Hartwell Lewis, a fellow Rotarian. He is retired, but formerly active in both local business and government. He is about 90 years old (according to another informant), still alert, active. His home is within walking distance of the municipal buildings and the Dupont department store, which he managed until 1978.

Christian Olivier was originally from New Orleans. He came to Houma in 1928 to work at a sugar mill. He also joined the Louisiana National Guard in 1928 and was a captain when his unit was activated for WWII service. He served in the European Theater for 15 months, was wounded and decorated. After his return to Houma, he worked at the sugar mill until shifting over in 1950 to manage the Dupont department store. He was elected as alderman at large for Houma, serving until 1970. One of his major efforts was to help manage the transfer of the blimp base to city-parish ownership and set up the Houma Terrebonne Airport as both airport and industrial park.

#### Summary:

**Personal History:** A native of New Orleans, Buster arrived in Houma in 1928, where he began working in a sugar mill, which eventually became part of the South Coast Corporation. He served in WWII from November 1940 - January 1946, where he was wounded and decorated. He worked at the cane mill until 1950, when he was hired as general manager of the A.M. and J.C. Dupont Department Store downtown. He retired from Dupont's in 1978.

**Pre-war Houma:** In 1928, Houma was not well developed. The streets were not paved. First they were covered with clam shells, later gravel. The sidewalks were mostly boards. The biggest industries were oyster and shrimp fishing, with two icehouses for food preservation. In the 1930's the WPA and PWA paved the major streets and highways with concrete. At the time his home was at the end of the street, next to wetlands. The current land to the east was built up from spoil banks from the Intracoastal Canal. In the 1940s, Mayor Gary was able to lobby legislators to finance infrastructure improvements. Sugar cane suffered from the mosaic disease into the 1920s. The owners of Southdown Plantation imported new varieties of cane. Eliot Jones brought in mosaic resistant cane and planted it at Southdown. Later it was sold to other farms in the area. The USDA sugar research station was later built on that site.

**Changes in Houma's Economy:** The community had beans and truck farms; Ellender grew Easter lilies. The truck farms went away when the oil industry came in. The workers' daily wage was so much higher with oil that the farmers couldn't compete. The oil industry started on land at first, then moved into the marshes, then offshore. The Houma oil industry was built around service

and tool development. The industry went down in the 1980s, now is strong again. Port Fourchon is a busy oil port, and is enlarging.

Changes in the Quality of Life: The quality of life in Houma has benefited from the oil industry - increased wages, increased population, encouraged the development of Nicholls University. The original oil workers came from Texas and Louisiana; they were a rough lot, those who couldn't make it in Texas or Louisiana. They often didn't pay their bills, until the Texas Company began docking the bills from their pay.

Diversification: Today Houma is trying to diversify its economy. The hospital is the center of development of a health industry. The cardiovascular unit is attracting people from all over the Americas.

Marcelle Ordogne

Morgan City, LA

February 26, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA093

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Marcelle Ordogne by Steve and Jean Shirley because she is a long-time resident of Morgan City. When I called her and told her about the study, Marcelle said she would be happy to participate. She is very busy, though, and we were having a hard time finding a time to get together. She asked if I could come right over, and I did. We talked for a couple of hours, turning the tape off to discuss personal issues and then back on to continue her story.

Marcelle was born in a small town in east Texas. In 1947, when she was 17 years old, she moved to New Orleans with her sister. She enrolled in business college and began looking for a job. She had applications in at several places, including the telephone company and oil companies. At that time she did not have a telephone, and she remembers getting a fax from Shell Oil Company telling her to report to Mr. Williams for an interview. She got a job with Shell doing clerical work such as pasting up drilling reports and typing. She stayed there for three years until she married and moved with her husband to Morgan City. Her husband was an only child, and he began working with his parents at the motel and restaurant they had established in Morgan City. The restaurant was open 7 days a week, 24 hours a day, and she and her husband worked there for many years. One of the highlights of her work at the motel was hosting Jimmy Stewart and the entire cast and crew while they were in Morgan City making the movie, Thunder Bay. Marcelle and her husband raised three children, two who still live in the Morgan City area. Marcelle also became involved in civic organizations such as the Entre Nous reading club, the PTA, the Garden Club, and the Morgan City Planning Commission. She was named Citizen of the Year in 1967.

#### Summary:

Personal history: From Texas, to New Orleans to attend school; got a job with Shell Oil Company in production department; typed drilling reports from Lake Verret; met husband on blind date, landed in Morgan City; had fascinating, wonderful life; changed religion, married to a Cajun; been educated about business, the oil industry

Work: Had a restaurant; one of the first in Morgan City; had motel also; Thunder Bay movie, with Jimmy Stewart, filmed in Morgan City; they stayed in our motel, used to soap the windows because the locals would come look at the stars; raised three children and six grandchildren here; men would come off the rigs and tell stories of what went on in the Gulf; it was an education, nothing like I learned in business school

Morgan City: Came in 1949; oyster shell roads, very few paved streets; little beer places for men to come when they came in from offshore, crab factories booming; was once the shrimp capital of the world; had factory where they would grind oyster shells for roads; had rooms over the restaurant, with little buzzers; they would buzz when they wanted breakfast and waitresses would take them breakfast; had slot machines before they were outlawed; during Thunder Bay met Jimmy Stewart, they took us in as their family; we'd have to go to New Orleans to buy special cuts of meat for them, they all ate in the restaurant; they were here several weeks; another movie made here about a hurricane; they put huge fans out on Front Street; exciting to watch the sea wall go up, now have a wharf; the shrimp boats used to line up; shell crusher was situated on Front Street, he used a wheelbarrow to push shells into the conveyor; hard times then

Restaurant: In-laws built the restaurant and motel; father-in-law worked at the shell crusher and opened the restaurant with the turkey he was given Thanksgiving Day; used to provide transportation for waitresses and cooks; mother-in-law had chef from Dallas come and teach the cooks; had the best food 7 days a week, 24 hours a day; closed only on Christmas; husband graduated from USL, was only child, went into business with his parents; son worked for company that provided oil for barges and boats; other son bought the motel and lives here to run it; daughter is dental hygienist

Early days in Morgan City: So different; husband's mother spoke only French; I got involved in the community, within six months president of the Professional Woman's Club; most related in some way to the oil industry, mostly clerical positions; had beauty contests, put on programs; was married four years and then had children; we welcomed the industry with open arms; was pretty steady for a while, had a big heliport here; had Brown & Root, Mobil, Kerr McGee; the people who came in were a different breed from those who lived here, left a gap when the companies pulled out; they all complained there was nothing to do here, developed oil-related clubs; not much recreation; we had a boat, the kids skied a lot; the downturn affected everyone, now the motel is strictly for working men who come in from a 7 & 7 schedule; some didn't bring their families because they lived in big cities and didn't want to live here; I cried a lot in the beginning

Employees: Most uneducated, had to compete with crab factories because they hired a lot of pickers; bought our catfish in Berwick; I picked up the fish, did payroll, everything; had about 12 employees at the restaurant and 7 at the motel; Chamber of Commerce man had classes to teach the waitresses and people working in stores around here

Clubs and Volunteer Work: Was involved in Entre Nous, a book club for ladies interested in reading books and discussing them; also on the Zoning and Planning Commission for 15 years, our main problem was trailers, people wanting to put them in their backyards for others to live in; Garden Club here 70 years; labor camps were a problem; were trying to get them in one area where they could be monitored; pogy plant had such a bad smell it was hard to get people there; a few people owned a lot of the land, were holding onto it so no development could take place; mayor wanted to put a bridge to Avoca Island, but stopped by politics; where they did put it took my house and a lot of the neighborhood; Lakeside Development in while I was on the zoning commission; Ellito Development was the first development, then Cypress Gardens and then Lakeside; we were desperate for homes; people coming in had no place to live; served on

Chamber of Commerce, AARP, PTA; oil executives did not associate with the people here, who were hard working and very humble.

Days with Shell: Started in 1947, typed drilling reports, took dictation; had a drafting department and filing department, only five men in drafting and the rest were women; did not interact with the guys in the field; had several floors; I loved it; when I moved to New Orleans I started looking for a job right away, they sent me a telegram to come talk to Mr. Williams; was 17 when I moved there.

Lloyd Otteman

Houston, TX

May 17, 2001

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

SOC030

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Lloyd Otteman began his career with Shell in 1954 after he graduated from the University of Washington with a B.S. in civil engineering. Throughout his career he worked in various capacities including mechanical engineer for the Technical Services Division, Bellaire Research Center, and New Orleans area, marine. He became manager of Mechanical Engineering Research in 1966 and moved to head office in 1968. He then served as Chief of Mechanical engineering for the Southwestern Region in 1969, and he became Division Production Manager for the Offshore Division in 1974. In 1980, he became the General Manager for the Offshore division, eastern operations, and in 1982 he became President for Shell Offshore Inc. Finally, he became General Manager for Health Safety and the Environment- E&P in 1987. He retired in 1990. During his career he worked on the problems of underwater soil movement and laying pipelines in deep water in addition to his service as an administrator for Shell.

#### Summary:

Interview contains discussion of Otteman's research efforts on laying pipelines in deep water, and the problems associated with underwater soil movement. Excellent information on some of the efforts to deal with regulators and the press regarding the safety and environmental record of the offshore industry. This segment had extensive anecdotes about visitors to offshore platforms, mainly Cognac.

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Patrick Ottinger

Lafayette, LA

August 12, 2003

Interviewed by: David DiTucci

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

DD010

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Patrick Ottinger was born in 1946 in Lake Charles and moved to Lafayette when he was 10 years old. His father was a land man/scout for Stanolind Oil and moved the family to Lafayette when the industry moved from Lake Charles to Lafayette because of Mr. Heymann's Oil Center. Since graduating LSU law school in 1973, he has practiced law in the interest of his clients, exploration and production companies. He also teaches oil and gas law and mineral rights to law students.

#### Summary:

Early life: born in Lake Charles in '46; moved to Lafayette when 10; father transferred to Lafayette upon building of Oil Center - at that time, industry kind of shifted from Lake Charles to Lafayette; father was a land man or oil scout.

Oil scouts: in '50s, oil scouts met regularly to exchange information - allowed companies to keep abreast of what one another were doing (bit of herd mentality); oil scouts not as predominant today because of legal and confidentiality issues.

Father: worked as land man for Stanolind; thinks he was drawn to practice oil and gas law because of his father's profession; his father involved in buying leases and other activities.

Cyclical nature: when he got into it in '73 it was during the energy crisis and business was booming; has ridden highs and lows of industry since; clients are exploration and production (E and P) companies.

Offshore vs onshore law: probably less legal work associated with the drilling in the Gulf than there is on land - fewer title issues offshore; gives examples.

Process to drilling: describes timeline leading up to drilling, from geologists surveying, engaging a land man, buying leases, deciding whether or not to drill a well, building an abstract, consulting a lawyer. Describes how he might prepare a lease contract, examine the title, and get involved in unitization and royalty distribution.

Mineral servitude: tracts of land may or may not be burdened with mineral servitudes; if not, landowner can grant leases; if servitude belongs to a third party, that third party has right to grant leases; it goes away unless it is used; system is unique to Louisiana.

Waning interest in oil and gas: not many new lawyers getting involved in the oil and gas practice - not seen as sexy or having a long-range future; in general, people don't seem to want to commit their career to an industry that appears cyclical and that could be gone in five to seven years; new technology and new well locations could keep things going.

Changes in industry: mergers and acquisitions; cost savings more important - move towards doing things in-house. Using 3-D seismic devices more; old school geologists disdain them; some companies won't drill a well unless the 3-D seismic instrument is used first. His clients have benefited from high overhead keeping major companies from producing a well.

Taxes: not sure where all the money from the taxes on oil and gas industry goes; change in way severance tax calculated - from fixed rate to percentage value.

Benefits to Lafayette: service industry directly benefited, but so did other business (e.g., dry cleaners, restaurants); in past 15 or 20 years, an environmental industry has risen as well that remediates or repairs land drilled or abandoned. Also had brought in people from outside Louisiana to create diversity, particularly in religion and politics - dehomogenization. Politicians know the industry is their bread and butter, but have to walk the line of being supportive of industry and protecting other concerns (e.g., environment).

Chris Oynes

Harahan, LA

July 8, 2003

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS043

### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Chris Oynes is the regional director of the Gulf OCS for the MMS. He attended Cal State Fullerton and George Washington Law School. Instead of going into practice he starting working for the Bureau of Land Management in 1975, and got involved with the OCS in 1978. He became branch chief in 1983 and now regional director.

### Summary:

The interview covered issues surrounding the OCS in the 1970's. He comments extensively on policy goals for the MMS. Covers LOI and tract nomination procedures. An excellent discussion of area wide leasing and deep water including comments on SPARS and natural gas. Good information on safety and hurricane preparedness as well.

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Sam Paine

Houston, TX

June 8, 1999

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

SOC032

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Sam Paine joined Shell in 1948 after graduating from Stanford with a B.S. in mechanical engineering. During his early career he worked in Long Beach, CA, Texas and Louisiana until Shell named him Gas Manager for the Midland E&P area in 1964. In 1968 he became Division Production Manager for the West, Southwestern E&P region, and then Production Manager. In 1971 he became Manager, Engineering for Head Office E&P, and in 1972 he became Manager, Economics. He served for an extended period of time beginning in 1973 as General Manager for the Southern E&P region. In 1980 Shell named him General Manager for the Onshore Division for Eastern E&P. He served in that capacity until his retirement in 1985.

#### Summary:

Interview is largely a timeline of his experiences with Shell. He does have interesting information on confidential well logs for the South Pass area. Reflection on Shell's success offshore. Discussion of his experience with Cognac. He reflects upon the Cox gas blowout and lessons learned. The interview ends with a commentary on Shell's culture and training.

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Roy Parr

Baldwin, LA

June 8, 2001, February 27, 2003

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner, Diane Austin

University of Arizona

AG030, DA095p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Roy Parr was referred to Andrew by Adam Welcome. Roy spent his entire career in the oil field and was eager to participate in the study to make sure we got the story straight. Andrew interviewed him in June 2001, and Diane returned in February 2003 to talk about a set of photos of old steam rigs that Cecil Broussard (DA079p) had donated to the project.

Roy Parr was born in 1931 on a plantation in southern Louisiana where his grandfather worked as a blacksmith. His father spent most of his life working in the oilfield, and Roy followed in his footsteps. He started work in 1952 for Humble Oil Company and worked his way up through the company. He retired as a production superintendent in 1983.

#### Summary of AG030:

Father: his father died two years ago, he had spent most of his life in the oilfield. Roy gives me an autobiographical essay written by a friend of his father.

His House: we go into his boy's room. His boy was killed in the oil field in an accident. With the seven and seven schedule, he was able to add on to his house. We look at pictures on the wall - one has all the Exxon superintendents that were active when he retired in '83. He talks about the sale of a barge from Exxon to MacWilliams - no money, but Exxon could use it when they needed it. We look at a photograph of the Exxon A/D Complex that was at 160 feet of water in 1968. That was pretty deep then.

Platforms: We look at more pictures of platforms. Everything offshore is a drilling rig. Platforms are artificial islands operated according to Coast Guard regulations. First you do seismic, then you do test drilling. Sometimes you use drillships, sometimes jackups. When you put a structure up, it used to be it would sit on the bottom. That's not always the case anymore, but that's the way it was. You'd slide them off the end of the barge. The legs were hollow and they would float. Sometimes they drove pilings down. He talks about the process of driving pilings.

More on Platforms: he talks about the last one he was involved in, set in 450 feet of water, and it was secured on the bottom. When the field is played out, they usually have to get rid of the platforms, but now they're interested in artificial reefs. He talks about a project exploring doing this process in deep water, using robots.

Production: you get saltwater, oil and gas. You have a separator that separates the water from the oil. He describes the separation process. If the pressure is enough, you can put the oil right in the

pipeline. He talks about LTX units. The more pressure coming in, the better it works. An LTX is a low temperature separator. He talks about the use of glycol.

Job Titles: at the end of his career, he was a production superintendent. He came out of the army in 1951. In 1952 he went to work for Humble.

Early Years: he was born on the Lynnwood plantation - his grandfather was a blacksmith on the plantation. It was all mules working the plantation when he was born, in 1931. They always had plenty to eat and a warm place to sleep. People in the rural areas had game to hunt and plenty to eat. His grandfather came down from Lockport in 1887. He talks about loading sugar into the railroad cars.

Father: his dad got a job on the drilling rig near Crowley in 1925 or 1926. Down here they were using rotary rigs, unlike over in Texas where they were using cable tool rigs. He's never seen one here. He remembers drilling through a cypress stump at 1700 feet - there's a lot of muck, and that's no good for cable tools. His father worked for a bunch of companies, including Texaco at Bateman Lake. His father worked his way up to toolpusher. They called him a toolpusher because in the early days they would pound out the tools on an anvil and sharpen them.

Texas: he remembers when they lived in Texas, and he remembers going out to the rigs and bringing his father supper. He also remembers sleeping in the car, and people wouldn't rent to oilfield trash sometimes. It was a deserved name for some, but not all. A few bad seeds would move out owing people money, and they gave them a bad name. When the rig moved, you moved, and you'd pull your kids out of school. His father thought it was bad for the kids, and he kept Roy and the family in Baldwin. His father would swap shifts so he could go home. His dad was never around. Mother had to do it all.

High School: he graduated in 1948. There wasn't a lot of work for a 16 year old. He worked seismic for a while cutting rights of way. Geophones weighed 20 pounds. He went up around Lake Charles and drove a water truck for a while, made up dynamite charges and whatnot. Things petered out over there, though. He worked on a dynamite boat off the Texas coast for a seismic contractor. They got kicked out for firing dynamite on the beach.

Summary of DA095p:

In this interview, Roy gave descriptions of photos that we received from J.C. Broussard.

Broussard, J1-1	Steam Rig with five boilers
Broussard, J1-2	Drill pipe standing in the derrick
Broussard, J1-3	Outer framework of rig, man with hand on mudbox
Broussard, J1-4	Weight indicator for lowering/raising pipes
Broussard, J1-5	Upper left hand corner of cat head
Broussard, J2-1	Man sitting on rig floor, old mud box hanging to his right, dry-bush rotary and dry-bush
Broussard, J2-2	Looking from derrick into kelley, mud hose coming up through kelley tied onto swivel

Broussard, J2-3	Looking down into the derricks into the draw works
Broussard, J2-4	Mud pit for conditioning mud to bring up cuttings
Broussard, J2-5	Looking straight up the derrick, drill pipes stacked against side
Broussard, J3-1	Pipe rack for holding different sizes of pipes needed for drilling
Broussard, J3-2	Swivel in the mousehole
Broussard, J3-3	Mud purge area, heads of the mud pumps
Broussard, J3-4	Steam motor to tighten tong up
Broussard, J3-5	Four field boilers, going to dig deep hole
Broussard, J4-1	Space behind the draw works
Broussard, J4-2	Part of mud system manifold
Broussard, J4-3	Mud pumps on land rig
Broussard, J4-4	Left side-rotary, dry bush, kelley; in middle-sand line to take samples
Broussard, J4-5	Dry bushing and drill pipes

Rene Louis and Violet Patout

New Iberia, LA

March 13 2002

Interviewed by: Carolyn Cummings

University of Arizona

CC001

#### Ethnographic Preface:

This was very much a "couples" interview. Mr. Rene Patout and his wife, Violet, are a wonderful source for exploring the oil industry and its effects on the family. The couple raised seven children, several of whom have been, or are currently employed in the industry. The fact that the Patouts were neighbors of mine put the interview on a personal level.

Mr. Patout is a native of New Iberia, Louisiana. His family owned the Frederick Hotel located on Main Street. Mr. Patout was born in 1927 and is one of eight children. After graduating from St. Peters College in 1946, Mr. Patout joined the Navy. At one point during World War II, Mr. Patout and four of his brothers were serving in different branches of the military. In 1948 Mr. Patout was attending USL (now ULL) as an agriculture-engineering student. He was also assisting his mother in running the Hotel. While on duty at the hotel he met Leland Millstead, a drilling superintendent for Shell Oil. Mr. Millstead hired Mr. Patout as a roustabout for the new rigs that were starting at Weeks Island, Louisiana. During the 39 years that Mr. Patout worked for Shell Oil, he was promoted from roustabout, to roughneck, then to derrick work, and ended his career as a drilling foreman. All of his job training and experience was acquired "on the job".

Mr. and Mrs. Patout share, from their individual perspectives, the challenges of raising seven children during his career. Often, Mr. Patout was gone for two to three weeks at a time leaving Mrs. Patout alone with their very young children.

#### Summary:

Occupational history: Started as a roustabout for Shell Oil in 1948. Worked mostly maintenance on steam rigs at Weeks Island, Louisiana. It was hard, dirty physical labor. Was promoted to roughneck to fill an opening. He learned most of his responsibilities from the driller he worked with. In 1951 he was promoted to derrick work, sometimes climbing 150 feet with no safety belt. Stayed for six hours, even eating meals up there. Required to have a work permit to travel through Cameron to New Orleans. In 1964 he took a position as a drilling foreman, also called "company man" because he was responsible for the crew.

Safety issues: If a worker got hurt, there were no reports filled out or lawsuits filed. The company saw to his medical needs and he went back to work as soon as possible. Confidence in the company promoted loyalty among workers.

Work Integrity: People knew how to work. Every one on the rig worked to get the job done. You helped where help was needed, worked as a team and "made the job work".

Work Training: You acquired your job skills on the job, learning from experienced workers on your crew.

Women on rigs: Most are cooks, but worked with one who was an engineer. She was very professional and was there to learn; convert book knowledge to practical knowledge.

Unions: Approached two or three times but never joined. Company already supplied all that the unions were offering workers.

Shawnee Patout

New Iberia, LA

April 5, 2003, April 6, 2003

Interviewed by: Debbie Bryant

University of Arizona

DB001

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Shawnee Patout's daughter, Debbie Bryant, interviewed her at her home in New Iberia. The interview is primarily about Shawnee's husband, George Patout, and his career in the oil and gas industry.

After serving in the Air Force during the Korean War, Shawnee Patout's husband, George, worked his way up in the oil field. He started as a roustabout with Shell in Houma, was transferred to Morgan City, and then Jeanerette, where he worked offshore for six years. A promotion took him to Lafayette and then to Lake Charles, where he finished his engineering degree. After 13 years with Shell, he left to accept a managerial position at Dresser Offshore in New Orleans. He passed away at the age of 37.

#### Summary:

Shawnee's husband George (GP)'s early history: Born in 1930, grew up in Jeanerette, finished school in New Iberia, entered the Air Force at 19, served two years and then was recalled during the Korean War, was a tailgunner and then stationed in Alaska, where GP and SP were married, received an honorable discharge and they moved back to Louisiana

GP's work history: Managed the Daily Iberian for a few months while waiting to get on with Shell; started as a roustabout, they moved to Houma, then Morgan City; then Jeanerette, where he went offshore, working seven and seven, which he did for 6 years; then he was promoted to an office job and the family moved to Lafayette, then Lake Charles; took correspondence classes from USL to finish his degree and got a job with Dresser, moving the family to New Orleans, eventually became assistant to the Vice President

GP's family background: his father was a banker, all the other children chose professional careers

Husband working offshore: SP felt lonely, worried an emergency would happen, but she didn't complain, and GP didn't either

Salary: offshore was good money, able to take care of the family, but SP doesn't know exact amounts because she never asked and GP never volunteered

Housing: rented until they built a house in Jeanerette, lived there for one year before GP was transferred to Lafayette

Jeanerette: Life was easy there, GP's family was around, SP had servants

Morgan City: SP didn't like it because it was a bigger city, there were lots of oilfield transients

Family life while husband working offshore: SP cooked more and better foods when GP was home; not many friends from work because they lived in other towns; She couldn't communicate with him while he was offshore but there was never an emergency in which she needed to; GP was always home for Christmas but never New Years and often missed birthdays and their anniversary; Moving: Except for the move to Jeanerette, SP was not happy about them at first, but she learned to like most of the towns; SP doesn't remember worrying about or hearing much about accidents or hurricanes; SP preferred to have GP home every night; Kids were always well provided for

Family history: GP's mother's family from Abbeville, father's family from Jeanerette and Lydia' SP's family from Northern Louisiana, near Shreveport; GP was one of 7 children, the only one who went into the oil field, discuss occupations of siblings

Construction of house: GP was offshore at the time, so they made decisions when he was home, SP chose the decorative touches

Offshore life: transportation: GP had his own truck, many other employees would carpool, SP always had her own car; Moving around was hard on the children, especially changing schools; When GP was at home, he was there, doing yardwork or in his workshop, spending time with SP and the kids, took time to get re-acquainted; SP didn't have any major problems with the kids while GP was offshore, she always had help at home

GP's career: Just kept moving steadily up, had income from sugarcane land and an oil well for a few years, but mainly just gained experience and the college degree in engineering

Transition from offshore to office job: Not much of an adjustment because it was a good one; Transition from Lafayette to Lake Charles was a promotion, but it was hard for SP and kids because they were leaving family and school friends

GP's career: takes correspondence course to finish college degree that he started at USL; gets job as assistant to the Vice President with Dresser Offshore, big decision to leave Shell after 13 years, family moves to New Orleans, big city social life; After a year in New Orleans, GP died at the age of thirty-seven; Talk about why he was successful, write-up about him that Dresser did; Workers not allowed to smoke on the rigs, many switched to chewing tobacco instead

Difficulties for the children in moving around so much

Richard Pattarozzi

Houston, TX

May 15, 2000

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

SOC021

### Ethnographic Preface:

Richard Pattarozzi graduated college in Illinois in 1966 with a degree in Civil Engineering. He joined Shell that same year and served as a facilities engineer in New Orleans. In 1969 he became a drilling engineer for offshore and stayed in that role for 6 1/2 years. In 1972, the company made him a senior engineer and transferred him to Midland. After a short tour, he was transferred to Michigan in 1976 and worked in that office until 1979 as a drilling superintendent. He finally came back to Offshore New Orleans as an operations manager in 1982, stayed there until 1985 when he moved again, this time to California. However, he quickly returned to New Orleans in 1989 and became involved in the deep water activities for Shell.

### Summary:

Interview mostly deals with Mr. Pattarozzi's experiences in deep water technological development. He spends a considerable portion of the interview discussing, Cognac, Bullwinkle, Auger, Mars and the transition of technology between each design. He also reflects upon the future of deep water drilling and the continuing role of new technology.

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Julian Pawley

Houston, TX

November 13, 2002

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS018

Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Julian Pawley grew up in Florida and graduated in 1940 with a degree in geophysics from the Colorado School of Mines. After college, he joined Standard Oil of Texas, a wholly owned subsidiary of Standard Oil of California (Chevron). He rose to become chief geophysicist at SOTEX before leaving in 1965. Joined Teledyne in 1967 and eventually became assistant to the vice president of exploration before retiring in 1983. Pawley preferred not to be taped. Interview was recorded by hand notes.

Summary:

Pawley got into the business just as geophysics was making its mark on the oil industry. He discussed some the early gravimeter work for SOTEX run out of Houston. General background on early marine work and extension of geological interest offshore from the Miocene to the Pliopleistocene in the late 1960s and 1970s. Mentions Shell's deep drilling tests under the Eureka program. Talks about the research program in geophysics within SOCAL and alluded to conflicts between research and operations. Describes the evolution of seismic processing from correlation profiling, to continuous profiling, to multi-path processing.

Charles Pearce

Morgan City, LA

July 6, 2004

Interviewed by: Jamie Christy

University of Houston/History International

MMS044

### Ethnographic Preface:

Charles Pearce was born in the Atchafalaya Basin and grew up on a houseboat. He is the son of a commercial fisherman who moved to Morgan City in the early 1940's to work in the oil field. His father roughnecked for Humble Oil and then transferred to production at Duck Lake. Mr. Pearce went to work at Chicago Bridge and Iron Works and learned to weld at age 16. He went to work for Sun Oil's seismograph department in the early 1950's. He was first part of a "water crew" that worked in south Louisiana and then he joined a "land crew" and went to Brownsville, Texas. He quit Sun Oil to stay in one location and went to work as a welder in Morgan City. Mr. Pearce mainly worked for LeBlanc Welders and for South Coast Welders. He did rig welding for Brown and Root, Kerr-McGee, Texaco, Shell, and other oil companies out of Morgan City.

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Jan Pedersen

Algiers, LA

January 24, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM027

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I first met Mr. Jan Pedersen at the Chevron retirees' lunch I attended on a previous trip to Gretna, where I was the guest of Bill DeCells. Mr. Pedersen was busy during that trip, but he agreed to talk with me on subsequent visits. The morning after the lunch, he dropped off a couple of articles at my motel, one of which was the text of the speech he gave to the 50th anniversary meeting of the International Oil Scouts Association, held in Houston in 1973. The bio gives some of his background. The day of the interview was his 80th birthday, and he was talking overseas to relatives when he let me into his condo, right off the levee at Algiers Point, a fairly exclusive place with a magnificent view of the Mississippi. He moved there from his home and 1-acre lot across the Lake about 8 years ago after his wife died. His friend, Harvey Dupuy, with whom he had worked in the Barataria area, was already living there.

Jan was born in New Orleans, of Norwegian parents. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from LSU in petroleum engineering in 1944. He spent 20 years with Standard Oil of California [a.k.a Cal Company, Chevron] where he retired as Staff Drilling Engineer on the Production V-P's staff. Then he joined Offshore Company. He was active with the American Petroleum Institute and the International Association of Drilling Contractors. While with Offshore, he and a partner started a joint venture to build a drillship, but the shipyard was behind and their contract broken. With that failure, he joined ODECO, from which he retired (again) in 1987.

#### Summary:

Career: just prior to getting his degree, his whole "enlisted reserves" at LSU got called up; he was quickly discharged for medical reasons, got his degree, and went to work for California company; 3 yrs in Venezuela, then marshes around Barataria, then to Natchez as division petroleum engineer; overseas assignments continued; retired from Chevron in 1965 as assistant to production V-P (a staff job as opposed to a line job) because he had hit a salary ceiling (which, at his urging, was eventually removed); 11 years as manager of engineering for Offshore Company; then with ODECO, in its post-Laborde days (Hugh Kelly was president).

Slimhole drilling: while in Natchez, studied this technology (reduces costs); presented technology to managers in San Francisco; then carried it to sites in Venezuela, Trinidad, Colorado, etc.

Duties as drilling manager: review proposals and present to management; survey prospects; Chevron contracted with Zapata to develop Caye Sal field in Bahamas, so "George [Bush] and I worked out the drilling program;"

IADC [International Association of Drilling Contractors]: was a director, chair of rotary drilling committee; association concerned with contracting problems, liabilities, equipment requirements.

Technology development: GOM stalled by not having equipment to work over 100 feet; North sea developments brought back to Gulf and got it going again; semisubs developed by drilling contractors for North Sea work; GOM had directional drilling but foreign companies (e.g., Shell) perfected horizontal drilling in North Sea; GOM workboats inadequate for North Sea conditions; motion-compensating devices developed there for risers and boats; steel: European and Japanese companies learned from U.S., then took over when U.S. steel plants didn't modernize.

Gas Rate hearings: he was industry member of "Trial Group" in hearings before Federal Power Commission [1962-1965]; price regulations were discouraging search for gas; hearings led to opening up of free market.

Safety: as V-P in charge of contracting in ODECO's London office, he attempted to change attitudes on safety, which was annoyance to operators; legal aspects were driving force - "lawyers would meet accident victims at the docks," take depositions, etc.; safety programs not cheap so he learned from construction industry the real costs of accidents (down time, retraining, etc.); ODECO was first U.S. company to win British government's "Wilkinson Sword," a safety award, in 1982; concerned now about deepwater drilling safety issues: what happens when buoyant columns break lose, come up through ship?

API (American Petroleum Institute): worked on standardization issues; problems was that pieces made by different companies wouldn't fit.

Lifetime achievement: "personal satisfaction." "I did what I wanted to do...even if I had to cross people".

Robert Peebler

Houston, TX

August 21, 2002

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS012

### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Robert Peebler is a graduate of the University of Kansas with a B.S. in electrical engineering. Before joining Landmark Graphics in 1989, he worked for more than 18 years with Schlumberger in executive positions. He became president and CEO of Landmark Graphics in 1992 and became vice president of e-Business Strategy and Ventures for Halliburton Company when it acquired Landmark. He is now president and CEO of Energy Virtual Partners, a consulting firm specializing in geophysical computer technology and e-business.

### Summary:

A short, mostly informational interview on the evolution of 3-D seismic technology and new directions in workstation computing. Peebler lays out a theory of technology adoption as developed by Geoffrey Moore in his book, *Inside the Tornado*. He talks about the change in strategy offered by the commercialization of 3-D, allowing new companies to come into the shelf area of the Gulf of Mexico to redevelop older fields. He discusses Landmark Graphics leadership in commercially developing workstations and client server computing for oil company geophysicists.

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Jim Perron

Lafayette, LA

September 29, 2001

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM020

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Jim Perron, part of the network of Chevron retirees, was referred to me by Bill DeCells. I called to set up an appointment, introducing myself as from the University of Arizona. He asked if I was calling to recruit him to come out to coach football. As it turned out, he wanted to be a football coach/high school teacher, but, after working summers out of Grand Isle while going through college, he discovered he couldn't take a cut in pay from oil work to pursue that career. We arranged to meet at the Hilton in Lafayette, then went to his house for the interview. In the car, we chatted about football: he mused that USL always schedules a big-time opponent to start off, but the kids get so beaten up that the team is ruined for the rest of the season. He and his wife live in a very attractive house in a small gated complex along the banks of the Vermillion River. The complex was built in the mid-1980s by Chevron for upper-level managers; with the downturn, the houses were put up for sale, and Jim purchased one with funds from his retirement package (he took the "lump sum" deal). At the end of the interview, he pulled out several packages of photos, some of himself and co-workers, some of early transport vessels, several of the fire on "C Structure" off Venice in 1970 - the last fire they could actually fight before MMS came in with requirements to drill relief wells. Jim's primary job was as a "safety engineer," which included many additional duties, one of which was to keep an eye on potential union organizing. He and his wife are both from Ville Platte, in Evangeline Parish, where his father had a farm; Jim still drives up there most mornings to look after it.

Jim graduated from Southern Louisiana University (now University of Louisiana - Lafayette) in English / History and went to work dockside at Chevron's Grand Isle operation in 1949. He began working offshore as a pumper/gauger when Chevron took over Gulf's leases. He was transferred to Leeville as a production clerk and then in 1962, to New Orleans as a safety engineer. His job responsibilities expanded to include environmental issues, and he stayed in New Orleans until his retirement.

#### Summary:

Early career: graduated from "SLI," which became USL (now UL-L) in English/History; went to work "dockside" at Chevron's Grand Isle operation in 1949 as "casual" employee, \$12/day; married his wife who started teaching school on G.I.; started as pumper gauger/relief pumper offshore when Chevron took over Gulf leases; transferred to Leeville as production clerk, then to New Orleans in 1960 as safety engineer.

Servicing drilling rigs/platforms: on LST's captain, mate, engineer were company people; big tugs would haul the motherless LSTs; then motors installed; then self-contained drilling rigs;

since mid-1960s, most crew transfers were by helicopter - safer since, before then, "we were doing boat transfers when we shouldn't have;" Chevron had no weather forecaster, so would contract with Humble's man.

Oil company mergers/acquisitions: in the 1980s, Chevron was poised to acquire Getty but Texaco got it; CEO said we'll acquire next company - Gulf; Gulf had an extensive training program, which Chevron kept up after acquisition.

Chevron Retirement Group: most active of any company; 100 chapters; he was president of Lafayette group; impressed that Ken Deer, company CEO, would meet with chapter presidents at their annual meeting in California; groups kept abreast of company activities as well as getting financial/retirement management advice; groups are being told to keep "hands off" Texaco retirees after recent merger, though Chevron did earlier incorporate Gulf's retirees; remarks on camaraderie within company when he worked for it - levels of management not separated; now no one expects to retire from a company.

Unions: as "safety engineer," he was in direct contact with most of the company's personnel, and was the company's "eyes and ears" regarding potential labor problems or union activity amongst the company's contractors (especially when unions courted drillers and caterers); unions were successful in organizing Chevron Chemical plant in Belle Chase (an area where shipyards already unionized) after Chevron's labor man from headquarters refused to work with Leander Perez to try to prevent the union there; Chevron's production segment furnished workers to the chemical plant during the strike.

Safety and environmental issues: when "environmental thing" got added to his list of duties, it was the hardest thing for him, required new book learning; would be sent to San Francisco for training; headquarters safety men would be sent out to sites to audit safety and environmental issues and would insist that we show them what we have, don't hide it, and they would work with us; he dug pits with "a heavy heart" (wasted a lot of company money) to dispose of "NORMs," naturally occurring radioactive materials.

Work after retirement: he took several overseas assignments, as Chevron got active (company had been in Saudi Arabia for years); "Cal-Tex" had operations in Asia and Europe; Gulf had all of the Africa stuff; Chevron's CEO Ken Deer got into Russia.

Ken Perry

Patterson, LA

January 8, 2003, July 23, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA088, DA110p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Ken Perry participated in the previous study and had talked then about the history of his business, the Perry Flying Center, and his involvement in the offshore oil and gas industry. When I called to ask if he would be willing to record an interview for the archives, he was very happy to participate. When I arrived at the Center, Ken was out fueling a helicopter. He came in shortly and we went into the office of his administrative assistant, Miss Val. He pulled the intercom speaker off the wall and shut the door so we would not be disturbed. We talked for a couple of hours and then Ken showed me a couple of the float and amphibious planes in the hangar. He told me that he had photos of the early days and would bring them in. Miss Val told me she is a friend of Debi Baiamonte's and agreed to talk about her involvement in the industry on my next visit; she has been with Ken almost since the beginning of the Center.

Ken began working on planes during high school when he would hang around the airport in Houma. His father was an educator and went into business selling textbooks, but he retained a love of airplanes that he had had since his days in the military. Ken began working toward his pilot's license before leaving school, and he got his first job as a salesman for a company selling chemicals in the oilfield. He worked as a flying salesman for several companies and then was hired as a company pilot, flying executives all around the country. He went through a couple of layoffs during the downturn of the 1980s. He and his father purchased land and a facility and developed Perry Flying Center in 1983. They adapted their services and diversified throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s. Ken bought the company from his father in 1998.

#### Summary of DA088:

Family history: Currently president and general manager of Perry Flying Center, a fixed base of operation in Patterson, LA; services the inshore and offshore oil industry; got into aviation in high school; father was an educator and textbook representative, grandfather worked as a wildcatter and roughneck in east Texas in the 1920s and 1930s, was an operator at the Continental Oil cracking plant in Iota, LA; Dad moved to Houma to become a teacher

Occupational history: Ken discovered planes in high school and wanted to learn to fly; at the time the primary mode of transportation was the seaplane; most production was inshore; with the move offshore the biggest changes were to the helicopter; first flying job was in 1976 as a salesman flying float planes; sold chemicals, drilling pipe, bits; that was the way to get into flying; had to become familiar with the oil and gas industry; switched in the 1980s to become a full time pilot; started with commercial pilot's license, no instrument license

First job: Westwego Airport; 100 float planes there, 100 in Houma, 100 in New Iberia; about 400 in Louisiana altogether; had no radio, used map and compass; stayed lost out there; during the oil shortage of the late 1970s it was wild in Louisiana; started on small planes, up to jet in a few years; 3 seaplane bases along the Intracoastal; used planes instead of helicopters because cheaper; channels about 40 feet wide, Cessna had 30 foot wingspan; barges and inshore rigs did not have heliports; second job flew for Frank's Casing, went to 10 rigs per day, 7 days a week; the company had three float planes, found guys with a license; worked offshore to pay for license; everything was owned by the service companies; the real boom was working for the companies that were working for the oil companies; most service companies owned float planes; at one time Baroid had 17 or 18 float planes

Pilots: Mostly from the area; a lot of WWII guys; Vietnam produced a lot of pilots, mostly helicopter and those who got training paid by the GI Bill; Ken was one of the few paying for own training; several flight schools in the area, Houma Aviation, Patterson, New Iberia, Lafayette, a couple in New Orleans; elimination of GI Bill in early 1980s started to kill a lot of flight schools; schools started focusing on foreign students, governments were subsidizing their training; jobs were abundant, not expensive to get into the airplane business; company could set up a pilot for \$700 a month with a plane, company car, and expense account; small companies could compete with the big companies

End of seaplanes: Boom started in late 1960s and tailed off around 1980; can't land a float plane offshore, waves too strong, most insurance limited to within 1 mile of shore; offshore the expenses of operating were higher but the returns were higher; offshore development coincided with development of the helicopter and trained pilots out of Vietnam; seaplane pilots did not necessarily become helicopter pilots; extraordinarily expensive to train helicopter pilots; easier to go from helicopter to plane; now only about 50 seaplanes left in southern Louisiana; the industry went overseas and out into deep water; lots of fields were sold off piecemeal; production companies now have 3-4 guys, go out in a boat

Sales calls: Platform had field foreman and his assistants and someone running compressor station; worked two crews 7 and 7; made cold calls; was laughed off of a couple of platforms, but knew some guys; would admit not knowing anything, ask them to show what they do; on some bigger fields there were days they'd see salesmen; on drilling rigs could pretty much go anytime; some places would not allow planes to fly on; example of Gulf at Timbalier Bay, would leave on boat at 3 am, drive down to be there for crew change; communication was tough; during this time Ken got the first pager in his apartment complex; guys would write reports and have the pilots bring them in for them; sometimes would fly a guy in to the office if he was in a bind, trying to make a sale; tail end of the cowboy days, pilots were pretty much on their own

Changes: Major changes took place in the 1980s with the consolidation of the oil companies; biggest change was communication, they didn't need the pilots as much, didn't need to have so much material on hand; at the beginning it was highly inefficient; wonder how they made money; didn't have infrastructure, communication; changes cost a lot of people their jobs; one thing that really hurt was that when things were down the television show Dallas came out, people thought everyone was like J.R.; things got bad in the Gulf, and national stories were being

done with glee; Congress didn't act quickly enough; don't think people understand how difficult it is to produce, refine, and deliver oil and gas and do it safely

Safety and Environmental Concerns: Have gotten better since Ken began in the oilfield; pipelines don't burst very often; shut offs every five miles; friend working overseas tells horror stories of what they're doing on those rigs; killing people, wrecking the environment; proud of what is done in the Gulf; not just a job, it's important to the country; not just an industry, a strategic asset

Growing up in Houma: Grew up in boom times but didn't know it; only two television channels; started hanging around the airport in 1969; float planes had been around 25 years; got good education; kids today are not as book smart as in past but are more sophisticated; didn't know how special it was to fly until in other parts of the country; when working sales, would have sales meeting, land salesmen drove in, pilots flew in, would pick up give-aways and learn where rigs would be

Work: With Frank's Casing, flew 7 days per week; would make first call when still dark; was approached to work for Coil Tubing, hired as salesman there about 1978; lasted about 90 days, split time between sales calls and operations; things got crazy the company was growing so fast; would change crews, bring parts to jobs, take mechanics out to work on something; 1978-1979 had fuel shortage; company had two float planes; needed aviation fuel and could not get it; traded for amphibious planes for more options about where to land to get fuel; had gotten instrument license

Planes: Avionics started to become more sophisticated; began with conventional gear planes, the Cessna 180 and 185; airplane dealers were like car dealers, order a plane like ordering a car; most planes didn't get too old because they'd get banged up pretty good; pilot would first circle the rig to see if any place to tie up; salesman usually alone; if someone was there to help, would land toward the rig; had to climb onto rig; passengers injured climbing off plane, would grab the propeller and the engine would fire; had to jump off the plane, off the rig; by the end of the day dirty and tired; planes designed in the 1950s, did not change much; real change was in avionics, navigation systems

Responding to problems: If a pilot did not show up, someone would go out looking for him; used the radio to shoot the breeze; if someone had problems they would get on the radio; don't remember anyone getting left overnight; at a manned facility someone could call the company; if saw someone in the wrong spot, would land and check, sometimes someone out with his girlfriend...; Ken's only accident was when working as flying salesman, with only one person onboard; then went to pilots flying and salesmen riding along; could make twice as many calls; still accident rates were high; not a lot of guys killed, but lots of planes wrecked; could sometimes recover the plane from fresh water, but usually torn up

Lafayette: Went to work for Coil Tubing, bought out, transferred to Lafayette in 1979; was like the center of the universe; wild and woolly, hard to find a place to live; company kept two rooms at the Holiday Inn by the airport; stuff went nuts, nobody worried about cost; was gone all the time, would leave Monday morning and show up ten days later; cost a fiancée; was fun, flew all

the time; lots of the work was about getting people and material to the location to solve a problem; getting the job was also about who could take the guy to dinner, etc.; would fly the guys on hunting trips, give them shot guns; last vestige of the wild, wooly oilfields of the 1930s, 40s, and 50s

Downturn: The bottom fell out fast; was one of the first to be let go; caught by surprise; company sold all its planes in one day; Hudson Marine needed a pilot on a Cessna; drove to New Orleans, interviewed at a bar in the hotel, got the job; drove back to Lafayette, moved everything to Houma, flew for a few weeks out of Patterson, laid off; worked a few more months on contract till Ken sold the plane for the owner; was in California, dad called about buying the flying center; mortgaged both houses, bought the center and reopened it in 1983; then the oilfield really died; like somebody pulled the plug or flipped a switch; things stabilized a bit in the next few years; then crashed; had about 100 aircraft January 1, 1986, only 12 left by the end of the year; were stuck with the place, nowhere else to go, had to make it work; turbo props were all sold or moved out; had nine charter planes serviced at the center, all were sold

Surviving: Saw small helicopters not being served; converted part of the hangar to apartments for the pilots; offered ground support, hangar, dispatching, secretarial work; added security cameras; big resistance from fixed wing pilots when first started accepting helicopters; business still tenuous; wish could diversify the economy; serviced planes that worked for the pogeey plant, but the company closed the one near Morgan City because they could not bring it up to environmental standards, consolidated, remaining plant is in Intracoastal City; they helped a lot during the dark days of the oilfield; closure of Marine Shale hurt because their jet was based at the center

Environmental impacts: When first started there used to be a lot more oil on the water; some deliberate destruction, would dredge to put up a rig; put chemicals in the waterways; about ten years ago started seeing alligators, bald eagles; boats not longer change the engine oil and pump it right into the water; used to sell "oil dispersant;" it wasn't a dispersant, would make a ball of the oil and sink to the bottom; now more sophisticated, about as clean as it can be and still make money at it; companies have environmental safety meetings, very rarely see spills

Regulations: Now have to talk on the radio, tell where going; use radar; developed with development of new flight equipment and drug interdiction; used to be significant aviation drug business in the Gulf; military started putting up AWACs, transponders; part of evolving technology and air traffic control system; in the past had only radios, and they either worked or they didn't; explosion in helicopters in the 1970s

Drug trafficking: Lots of changes driven by desire to stop drug traffic; mid-1970s, then late 1970s to 1980s had lots of drug trafficking; so many pilots with nothing to do, lots of planes sitting around, guys needed money; cocaine got to be a glamour drug and easy; California and Florida tightened up so more into Gulf; haven't seen a suspicious plane in 15 years

Helicopters: Most pilots still come out of the military, especially the army; most Vietnam pilots nearing retirement, some reserves being called up, getting to be a shortage; occasionally see

civilian-trained pilot, but expensive; don't know where the industry is going; discussion of need for energy self-sufficiency

Family: After went into business with dad, lived at the flying center until in 30s; met Anne Melancon and married in 1986; purchased business from dad in 1998; dad passed away 1999; mentor high school students

Reflections: Guess I would do it again; would like to see if could have cut it in the airline businesses; may not have put up with the foolishness of the union; thought about joining military but graduated in 1974 when they were throwing people out of the Army; has been a tough way to make a living; when young did not realize how up and down the aviation business is worldwide; had been insulated from the reality of the aviation business due to the oilfield; worry now about multistate banking; when started the company we borrowed money from a local bank, board knew we'd have to close if they tried to collect; we paid back every dime, no way we were going to declare bankruptcy, could not have shown our face.

Summary of DA110p:

This was a very short interview. Many of Ken's photos have been stored in an attic to protect them from flooding, and he only had a few available for the interview.

1: Cessna 185 amphibian plane with wheels as well as floats; Ken purchased plane when doing service work on nearshore platforms

2: Ken's Piper-Navajo, twin engine cabin class, carried 7 passengers and a pilot

Bill Petersen

Houston, TX

October 2, 1999

Interviewed by: Joe Pratt

University of Houston/History International

OEC029

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Bill Petersen graduated from California polytechnic in 1959 with a B.S. in mechanical engineering. He joined Shell that same year. He was assigned to the Marine Division in California and went to work developing tools to use in subsea production. He had input in the MO system, RUDAC and MTG systems.

#### Summary:

Short interview that discussed the evolution of undersea production technology. Comments on the MO system, the RUDAC system, MTG System and various other pieces of undersea technology.

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Luke Petrovich

New Orleans, LA

March 13, 2002, July 11, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA036, DA105

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Luke Petrovich by the receptionist at the Empire Motel in Empire, LA. When I told her about the study, she recommended Mr. Petrovich because of his long history of public service in Plaquemines Parish. I called Mr. Petrovich's office and was told that he was in court but would return my call. When he did, we arranged to meet in his office in downtown New Orleans. He was very friendly and spent several hours talking with me about Plaquemines Parish, the oil industry, and its impacts on southern Louisiana. I returned in July 2003 to say hello and get a consent form and photograph from Luke, and he spent another couple of hours helping me understand the various communities within Plaquemines Parish and their histories.

Luke Petrovich was born in New Orleans in 1929 to Croatian immigrants. His father was an oyster fisherman. He died when Luke was only five years old, and Luke's mother raised and sold oranges to make a living. Luke finished high school in Buras. While a youth, he worked as a packer and picker in the oyster and orange business, on pipelines and as a roughneck in the oilfield, and in the bull gang for Freeport Sulphur Company. He went to college at Northwestern Louisiana; taught school for a year, and then attended Tulane Law School from 1952-1955. He formed his own law practice and operated it from 1955 until Hurricane Betsy struck in 1965. He became a charter member of the first commission council in Plaquemines Parish in 1961, served as Commissioner of Public Safety from 1961-1983 and Commissioner of Law and Natural Resources from 1983-1986, was parish vice-president in 1963 under Chalin Perez, and was elected parish president in 1985 when he served a two-term, eight-year maximum until 1993. He then returned to practicing law full time and served as pro tempore judge from March to November 1999.

#### Summary DA036:

Personal history: born in New Orleans, father was an oyster fisherman who lived in Auger on the east bank of Plaquemines Parish about 75 miles from New Orleans, back in the estuaries and oyster-building grounds; the community is no longer there, it was pounded out of existence; born in 1929, community had about 400 families, school, oyster camps over stilts; father and mother immigrants from Austria, now Croatia; met and married in New Orleans; 2 older sisters, one married to retired mechanical engineer from Freeport; father died in 1934 from double pneumonia; had purchased orange farm in Triumph before death; mother build 2 bedroom house, stayed there raising oranges and selling them

Occupational history: finished high school in Buras; worked in oyster business and in orange business as packer and picker; started in oilfields at 14 doing pipeline, roughnecking; worked in

bull gang for Freeport; went to college at Northwestern Louisiana; taught school 1 year and on to law school at Tulane 1952-1955; back to Plaquemines in law practice, formed law practice 1955-1965 (till Betsy); became charter member of first commission council in Plaquemines Parish in 1961; other members were Judge Leander Perez, Joseph Hingle, Clarence Kendall, George Hess; fashioned after Galveston/Mobile to be centralized, consolidated government for quick response, efficiency, economy; Commissioner of Public Safety from 1961-1983; Commissioner of Law and Natural Resources from 1983-1986; elected parish president 1985, served 2-term, 8 year maximum beginning in 1986; went back to practicing law full time; served as pro tempore judge March - November 1999

Industries: brought up with growth of oyster, orange, and oil and gas and mineral production and exploration industries in lower Plaquemines Parish; in land area, bayous, swamps, marshes, and in offshore; tensions existed, but "I consider it healthy"

Early life experiences with oil industry: was 10 years old when oil industry started down here; mother had 2 bedroom house; we all piled in one bedroom and rented the other to an oilfield foreman and his wife/ girlfriend; they were from East Texas and the Lake Charles area; we did that again with another contract family; many folks would rent little rooms or build homes; then the companies built townsites - Gulf, Chevron, Freeport; that was complementary, created jobs for local people and supporting industry for local people; increased the influence of religion, had predominantly Catholics, but the folks who came were Methodist, etc.; today many churches, but still predominantly Catholic

More early changes: schools grew; native Croatian, French people living in Buras, Triumph, Venice, some German, European; then had Texans come in, people from Missouri (?); they became part of our parish, were a beneficial, contributing factor; there was tension between oysters and oil development, between oil development and the environment; the environment became a big factor within the last 20 years, 30 at most; switch in emphasis by pressure groups, civil rights of the 1960s moved into the environment; state wanted the oil and gas in, had water bottoms, the landowners wanted it; there were some conflicts, I represented oyster fishermen against oil and gas companies and oil and gas companies against oyster fishermen

More changes: at first development, transportation vastly difficult, mostly gravel roads; oil companies came down here on them, had to have a place to stay, brought their families with them; today have a lot of contract work, company engineers live in major metropolitan areas or hometowns; change has been in the ability to move; grumble from people who live down there, people get outside jobs, don't spend their money here; all we get is their beer cans; change began gradually in the 1960s, significant in the mid 1970s, 1980s, 1990s; early 1970s this area was booming with oil, gas, and mineral development - local and offshore; after that, a change in oil prices and oil companies moved out; there were considerable efforts by Judge Perez and myself to get them to stay down there, economic incentives, dealing with any problems they had with local people; it worked because they wanted it to work; industry wants to be accommodated; don't want a hostile environment; I've never seen it hurting anything, especially where I could go get a job when I was 14, could support my mother; early war years, they couldn't get the labor there, so I was fortunate in that respect

Port Sulphur: had big community, had to get trained people, technicians, engineers; they were first class people; could have moved anywhere and benefited and improved the community; they had class, stabilized our community; Plaquemines Parish had predominantly Europeans, a lot of blacks and Filipinos; schools segregated at the time; now integrated, that was a change; another change was hurricanes; devastating on lower end, caused movement of people up river; industry stayed, would take hurricane in stride

Hurricane response: first concern is movement of 5-10,000 employees from offshore, West Delta area, Breton Sound area, etc.; had to concern ourselves with evacuation of people through one highway; if they come in through Venice, have to tell the people at Port Sulphur, Buras stay where you are; let's get the people out of the lower end first; our communications with oil and gas industry were phenomenal, "I guess you sort of work like a family really," industry and even seafood industry; have to see that harbors are safe, then worry about vessels and orange groves; describes centralized communication system with New Orleans Weather Bureau and Miami and Florida stations; we go into an alert the minute the storm enters the Gulf; evacuating is extremely expensive - people moving, loss of work and labor, cost of gasoline, loss of workdays; local officials can mandate an evacuation; have done it several times; oil companies don't want their people hurt; lot of oil storage tanks swept off during Betsy, Camille, Flossie; in bays, crumpled like a piece of tinfoil; some busted open; in the aftermath we clean it up, the oil companies play a major role, cleaned with federal money; contractors come in and clean it up; you can't imagine the mess; first thing you do is clean out the highway, get access for travel, look for bodies, burn carcasses of animals, bury or put lime on them; 3-4 months after storm have to start killing wild dogs

Spills: biggest oil spill was WWII; tankers torpedoed off the coast; used to swim out of Scofield Bay and find big balls of oil like tar, would take some of the tar and chew it; only major oil spill in this area was pipeline spill in West Delta; always fearful, we've had other spills, but not like other areas; after Valdez incident in Alaska we got a Marine Spill response ship located at Fort Jackson; now with LOOP have tankers up the river and with LOOP;

Highway: used to bring injured merchant marines and others up the shell road to New Orleans; government wanted to build highway straight to Venice, but Perez did not want more federal and state political influence so it did not happen; push for highway has always come from the west bank; first highway to Buras about 1936; then Buras to Venice in the late 1950s; four lane highway in the mid-1960s, started from both ends; I was Commissioner from the lower end

Venice: has peaks and valleys with the oil industry, at low now, industry moving out, a lot going to Port Fourchon; nobody has the experience dealing with oil industry needs, pipeline, shipping, marine transportation, air transportation, emergency response as we do at the mouth of the river

Fishing: at time of early conflicts, went out with newspaper people catching fish around offshore platform; godfather said it wasn't like that before, he used to pull a net in the 1920s, attributed it to marine life development around oil platforms; unique area, catch freshwater and saltwater fish; Venice is now the largest fresh tuna port in the world; ports of Plaquemines Parish produce more fish than anywhere in the original U.S. other than 2 ports in Alaska

Relationships: company leaders used to live in the communities; you can meet a guy when he plays cards with you, became friends with Jim Easterling in 1960s and 70s; drink together, talk, look in a person's eyes, eat with them; example of Hurricane Camille cleanup and what can be accomplished over lunch; Perez had hunting camp, for 4 days after storm held meetings there, have early breakfast, go hunting or fishing, in about 9 or 10, have big breakfast and work until midnight

Oil development: oil companies involved in two areas, parish lands, governed by contracts between levee boards/ parish and the oil companies; state water bottoms or offshore; private lands; developed corruption with Perez administration; I broke with them at that time, detriment to the parish; were getting local people jobs, boat owners jobs; pipeline right-of-ways; general policy of the parish was to produce the oil; also the policy of the state and nation at that time

Itinerant workers: had ordinance; contract labor started 1962-1963, after Betsy; continued on till 1983; repealed ordinance in 1982-1983; there was an epidemic of burglaries, murders, rapes, robberies, general complaint that it was done by strangers, people looking for jobs; we developed a program nobody would be proud of today; for fingerprinting and mugging all persons who wanted to be itinerant workers in this area; we did not require the oil companies to hire them, but the interpretation of the policy was that if you want a job get an ID; we had cooperation of the FBI; we gave them a temporary card first and then ran a background check on them; after the ordinance was adopted, within 30 days there was an exodus of many drifters out of the parish; after about 25 years we had fingerprinted some 25,000 laborers; were threatened with lawsuits by ACLU and other groups in the 1960s and 1970s; a lot of laborers were glad, they could cash checks, etc. with their IDs; it was helpful, the oil companies stayed out of the fingerprinting business; if a man had personal problems, we'd work with law enforcement; we found out those who would not apply; we had a bad epidemic of crime, this stopped it cold; of course it had the power of Perez behind it; don't have that type of unification now

Relationships with companies: we had better relationships with the companies then; good with Freeport, Chevron, Getty; tough with Texaco, Texaco was a tough dealer; got money from companies to build the hospital; we were trying to build it with \$1 of parish funds and \$1 of industry funds; companies wanted something from parish, we told them we needed the money

Marine ordinance: Marine ordinance to upgrade safety of marine vessels; passed in mid-1960s working with Coast Guard and Port; had dispute with justice department on violation of trust and anti-labor practices; one local owner had monopoly and was price fixing; group of companies got together, allegation was that companies outside the parish were leaving out locals; ordinance passed, private group formed Venice Work Vessels for communication function; got together to gather information and give to oil companies to select from; accusation by "outside" boat companies that it was Perez power and racketeering; Perez left office 1967, died 1969; litigation settled around 1970, 71, 72; Justice Department had Grand Jury investigation down there, filed a lawsuit; criminal and civil and anti-trust lawsuit; Grand Jury never did anything; I testified, no indictments handed down; some of the oil companies as well as the boat owners were sued; safety ordinance was repealed, Port of Plaquemine Parish took it over; 1977 new legislation passed, marine safety on the river done by port authority and fire departments, that made part of

port ordinance, involves pollution as well as marine vessel safety; we have the first cooperative agreement in the U.S. between US Coast Guard and local port authority

Lawsuit against Perez: got over \$70 million back from Perez; February 1987 decision - Plaquemines Parish Commission Council vs. Delta Development Co. et al.

Offshore jobs: overwhelming number of people wanted those jobs; leadership of parish encouraged offshore oil development; history was conflict between state and federal boundary - Leander's meander; read that Truman was willing to compromise and give Perez the state's 35 percent, no matter where drilled as long as offshore, Perez turned it down because he was afraid the feds would take a percentage of Louisiana's oil

Hospitals: hospital built in 1959 at Port Sulphur, completed 1960-1961; Freemont had first company hospital but in 1950s decided they needed new hospital; not enough demand for hospital, now cooperative care center

Changes in regulations: OSHA, offshore regulations; have to always be cognizant of safety around industrial plants; during construction of Fort Jackson in 1862, 35 percent mortality rate, from accidents, yellow fever, dysentery, cholera; mostly convict labor, switched to slave labor, mortality dropped to 12 percent because of immunity to diseases; now with industrial pollution, people are concerned... imagine the hysteria if we lost even 1 percent by accident or death; industry had tended to develop safety commensurate with the hazards; nobody wanted to get anybody hurt, they lost manpower, jobs, money; the industry developed themselves; there's been a great amount of lawsuits in the oil industry; cost of insurance is prohibitive

First day on the job: I started as a hand for a contractor; as roustabout you do everything; what you learned - not now - you do not go walk to pick something up, you ran to pick it up, otherwise you've got somebody right behind you taking your job; humorous stories of pranks workers would play on newcomers - go get a can of vacuum, we need a pipe stretcher, etc.; in Breton Sound, coldest I've ever been except during Camille, they sent me up the monkey board to put a pipe in another pipe and clean it out

Desegregation: in oil and gas companies don't think we had too much trouble with that; oil companies adapted; when racial equality laws applied to public accommodation and employer practices it was just a matter of course; I was reactivated with Korean War, first experience I had was with the military, no problem with me, I was raised with them, played baseball with them in Catechism, not school; we had the white school, mulatto school, Black school; 1962 Our Lady of Good Harbor had colored school, Catholic school wanted to integrate, Buras went beserk, one year later somebody bombed the school; one of the landmark cases was State v. Duncan 1966; Black and white boy in a fight, charged the Black boy with battery; in the oyster industry, Blacks and whites worked together, families were separated, each with own social life, but the men would mix together, eat together; also in orange industry Black and white labor together; I worked with Blacks in farming, truck farming; Blacks were my neighbors; the main separation came as the children grew older

Vietnamese: they came together, Catholic mostly; Mekong Delta very comparable to here; they understood fishing, had idiosyncrasies, such as they'd eat seagull; of course, we eat snails and chicken foot soup; they'd tie seagulls on their roofs and fatten them up, ate dogs, too; first came in the 1970s, 1980s; things have settled down considerably; my people went through the same thing - Slavs moved in near Fort Jackson, local population called us Tackos, Croatian word for "like that"

#### Summary DA105:

Childhood: benefited from going to school with oil kids because they were better; worked picking Easter Lily bulbs and selling them; old shell road, had softball teams; military camps were at Burrwood, Port Eads, Coast Guard; Pilot Town at head of the passes for navigation, 11 miles from mouth at Port Eads, had big community there; Triumph at south end of communities on the west bank; Fort St. Philip across the river till WWI was military community; Dr. Pelletti was groceryman from Missouri, came and opened store; would do medical stuff, fixed my broken arm in 2nd grade; Ostrica on east bank, between Port Eads and Oysterville, Croatian community, had locks to serve vessels on the river; Gulf Oil Pipeline Townsite was in Triumph, started in early '30s; above that was Gulf Production Pipeline, I lived below it; worked in office as teletype operator giving the reports

Communities and towns: Gulf Oil built Tidewater camp in Venice, two in Triumph; all built by 1938 when government got West Bay Field, levee board acquired field from state, settled in 1941, parish got lots of money, Perez took it; Bohemia was on the east bank near Humble's Chackbay field; west bank had citrus groves, fishing community - Buras, Boothville, Venice; above Empire was citrus community, lots of truck farming; my family from Olga which ended in Camille in 1969 when the last few families moved out; Empire prolific oyster and cattle community; had three pogeey plants right after WWII; orange plantations above Empire; on east bank, Standard Oil, Humble townsite, had been big plantations till 1925; Orleans levee board appropriated lands for spillway, never built; then Port Sulphur with Freeport, sulfur discovered late '20s, early '30s; stayed townsite till 1960s, houses sold; then Home Place with fishermen and farmers, where the railroad stopped in the late 1800s, early 1900s

Perez: big political fight in the late 1920s and early '30s; some oil companies complained about being in foreign country, Perez's policies about having to use local people; Perez kept dynasty and corruption going over 50 years, died 1969

Canals: connected from bay to townsite on both east and west banks; Freeport Sulphur established transportation canal from mine, didn't build townsites in mine area; Scolla Canal to Grand Bayou/Foster's Canal, skilled labor there today

Plantation communities: City Price, Happy Jack was named after overseer of plantation; Cool Town not used today; major plantations on west bank were rice, sugar, right before Civil War ten millionaires in U.S., seven from Plaquemines; last townsite on east side is Bohemian, East Pointe a la Hache; on west side last townsite was Freeport

Oil companies: constant friction over hiring local labor instead of imported labor; people used to seasonal employment, companies wanted steady employment 24 hours a day; people made considerable money fishing and hunting; oil companies would tell Perez they couldn't operate a company like that; worked it out over the years

Family history: grandfather came over in the mid-1800s, formed the United Slovenian Benevolent Association to take care of wives and widows; now United Croatian Benevolent Association

Ted Pfister

Houston, TX

October 2, 2003

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS026

### Ethnographic Preface:

Ted Pfister graduated from Loyola with a bachelor's in 1955 and a law degree in 1962. He came to work for shell in 1964. During his tenure he worked in New Orleans, Houston, and Michigan. He was involved in some early Civil Rights cases for Shell, and was influential in lobbying and litigating Michigan's Pigeon River.

### Summary:

Interview has information on personal injury, including Artemis and Hurricane Camille. He talked about his experience with the Norco strike. Additionally, he had interesting comments on Shell's Civil Rights cases. Excellent discussion of Michigan and Pigeon River.

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Maurice Phillips

Grand Bayou, LA

February 25, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA092

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Myrtle Phillips learned about the history study during a festival in Plaquemines Parish and agreed to be contacted to participate. Grand Bayou can only be reached by boat, so when I called her we arranged to meet at the boat landing. The morning of our meeting, however, it was raining very hard. We decided to meet at the Bayou Kitchen Café to talk. We started out in the café but then moved into Myrtle's van so we could be with her aging poodle and also have some privacy. After a couple of hours of talking, the rain stopped, so we went in to have lunch and then decided to take the boat to see the community. We rode first to one end of the Grand Bayou community and then the other; at one point we watched dolphins jumping in the bayou. Then we went out into the marsh and canals behind the village. When we returned to the village, we stopped in to see Maurice Phillips, Myrtle's 80-year old uncle. Maurice agreed to be interviewed, and his interview continues on the same tape as Myrtle's.

Maurice was born in 1922 and has lived in Grand Bayou all his life. His family moved their home along the bayou at its intersection with Foster's Canal. There his daddy planted a garden and grew green beans, tomatoes, corn, and cabbage. They also would plant a garden in Grand Chenier and raise their cattle there. Maurice started working on trawl boats when he was 12 years old and worked as a deckhand and captain operating tugboats for several boat companies working in the oil and gas industry and also worked for Southern National across the Mississippi River.

#### Summary:

Myrtle Personal History: 41 years old; family the first in Grand Bayou, grandparents and parents lived here; community members are mostly commercial fishermen who fish for shrimp, crabs, oysters, and fish; oil and gas industry picked up when I was about 7

Impacts of Oil and Gas Industry: destroyed the land, wildlife; made living hard, no more trapping; leaks have gotten less, now about once every three years; salt water comes and erodes barges where oil is stored; people hit the capped wells with their boats; they leave the dead pipes out there; "They don't seem to care about what they do."

Canals: major companies came in and dug canals; they put in big rigs; employed outside people from Texas and Alabama; had living quarters on the rigs; to get compensation the landowner would have to get in touch with the company that owned the rig and hire a lawyer, would take 1 or 2 years; those with cameras would take pictures; when I was 8 or 9 years old a rig would pass at least twice a year; sometimes they would pass at night and hit the bigger boats in the bayou

Working in the Industry: They didn't hire people from the community; I had 6 brothers, my dad would take them and to see if the companies would hire them but they'd always say they had a full crew; when I was about 18 they started hiring a few guys; the others around here worked mostly in the seafood industry, not at Port Sulphur; Dad and the boys would go into the woods and camp during the winter months, but they stopped after I was born; it was not worth the trip because the price of fur was down; the older guys don't have an education because they would miss school from late September to February because they were out in the marsh trapping; then they got into shrimp and oysters

Community: The older ones are here, but the younger ones are moving out; education became important when I was starting school, they reopened the school on the bayou; there have been 5 different schools in different places on the bayou since I started; there are about 25 families on the bayou, all have been here for a long time; then we also have the "sports" who are here only on the weekends and holidays; they purchased land that went up for sale when people sold out and moved

Jobs: Eventually the crew boats and tug boats hired the younger boys from here; the transition from French to English happened when I was about 16; all my brothers work as boat captains and deckhands; that was all they would hire them for because it was all they knew how to do; two brothers started on the boats when they were 17 and 18 years old, the others started in the mid-1970s when they were 25; they worked 7 & 7 and continued fishing on the days they were not running the tugboats

Changes: Biggest change is that the land is washing away; am living in my own home across the bayou from where I grew up; people started talking about the erosion about 10 years ago; lots of people had bulkheads but didn't maintain them; the outboard motors create more wake and cause it to erode even faster; before I was born it was all freshwater with cypress trees on both sides of the bayou; the saltwater came in and killed them; the land is gone, the animals went further inland; my grandpa had peach, mulberry, cherry, and fig trees, had a garden every summer; now with new rules and regulations from Wildlife and Fisheries it is harder to survive; the regulations started about 1971 to 1972 and gradually there were more and more; they'd come in with big rigs on the barges, dig canals, did not fill the canals back in; now they don't pass down Grand Bayou because they come in from the Gulf; originally they all had to pass through Grand Bayou

Oysters: No more oyster beds in the bayous; Wildlife and Fisheries closed them down about 20 years ago, claimed they are polluted; we eat them but can't sell them; regulations on fishing, hunting, oystering; years ago local people had trapping land and would take people out hunting; now there are people all over

History of Grand Bayou: Louisiana Land and Exploration bought all the land, recently sold it to another company; people of Grand Bayou lived out on the chenier, swapped land with LL&E; they were supposed to put a levee around us; now we are on the outside; They built the big levee about 1961 or 1962, before that we didn't have a back levee, only the river levee; Grand Bayou is all outside the levee; other little communities about the size of Grand Bayou are outside the levee; recently have been trying to get the companies to talk about it; no more gardens because the water comes up too high and the land is sinking; now getting high tide in the winter

Husband and offshore work: Been together 22 years, he took dad's place when sister was born; started offshore 17 years ago; been boat captain 28 years; had retired but back out there after Tropical Storm Isidore to help in N. Black Bay field because numbers gone on wells, blueprints had been destroyed; he takes gaugers and pumpers out to different platforms; used to work 7&7, then home every night, now back to 7&7; they work different shifts throughout the night, cheaper to have them sleep out

Myrtle work: Used to run the gill nets when he was offshore; when they cut out the gill nets I caught oysters with my brothers; that ended, so in the past four years I drove the school boat until that ended; then worked one day a month at the drawbridge in Empire; that was too far, then have job at Woodland Plantation; Happy Jack Marina used to be a boat launch, they would buy the fish, shrimp, crabs, minnows, now closed; had processors in Myrtle Grove - closed before 1960 - and Fosters - closed about 1964-1965; most kids now go to school in Port Sulphur; pastor for the church now runs the boat

Father: Ran Grand Bayou; whatever he said they did; he got the school built, also the church and private cemetery; wanted to make sure everybody got an education because he knew what it was like to be a commercial fisherman; all brothers are now back to being commercial fishermen; now harder because they have to catch more and work harder at it, the cost of living is higher now; they have bigger boats and they are more expensive

Lifestyle: Had no electricity when little; got running water about 10 years ago, phone 8 years ago; family lived off the garden; went to the store for rice, sugar, things they couldn't grow; things started getting harder in the early 1980s; they used to go in the woods and make huge gardens on the higher land; would harvest everything and divide it among the people; no TV, entertained ourselves; kids today want cars, we wanted pirogues; uncle built them; dad was a carpenter; dad bought brother the first outboard motor on the bayou, they thought they were the coolest thing; all brothers still live and work in Plaquemine Parish; one sister in Houston, one in Tennessee, two in Grand Bayou; no interaction with people from outside; when little dad didn't allow anyone to come into the village; when they'd pass by we'd wave, help them if they broke down, but daddy said leave them alone

Maurice: Lived on Grand Bayou all my life; 80 years old; daddy made gardens alongside the bayou, in Grand Chenier, raised cattle, had rice fields across the bayou; then they came and cut the canals for the pipelines; family moved up front onto the bayou from Foster's Canal; now nothing but saltwater; we used to run tugboats, worked for Southern National across the river

Changes: Water; we used to have trees along Grand Bayou, they started dying when the saltwater started coming in; they brought drag lines and a lay barge to lay the pipe; we didn't know it was going to hurt us over here; our houses sank; about 25 families here, no oil families moved in; people ran tugboats, trapped, caught shrimp; worked for companies from Venice and Buras; hauled rigs, barges, whatever they needed on the rigs; worked 14 & 7 and then 7 & 7; back then didn't need a license, had been running boats since 12 years old

Working on the boats: Was a rough job, no radar; had to look at top of willow tree to see where were; dangerous; would stop and hear if another boat was on the river; if they needed a deckhand

we would pass the word around; when trapping got hard we looked for something else to do; trapping was a better job - trapping and trawling; neighbors trap and trawl, some work on the rigs

Living in Grand Bayou: Will not leave here, no place like home; as child daddy had a quarter boat and a Filipino used to come teach us in there, then they built the school; used to raise chickens, can't have animals any more, no place to put them during storms; during hurricane wind knocked down daddy's house, Perez in charge; took swamp buggies in marsh, got prisoners out of jail to clean the houses, clean out the tanks so we could have fresh water; sent big crewboat with groceries, candy for children; used to have morel all over, no more; Perez was good for us

Impacts of oil industry: They left tanks in the marsh, when hit by lightning they explode; old wells were not taken out; canals not marked anymore, they don't come and redo their signs; lots are under the surface of the water; Tiger Pass and Marsh Pass used to be land and grass when I worked at Venice, now only Gulf; they took all the oil out of the ground, all the sulfur; the land has got to go down; have lots of rules for fishermen to use nets, save the fish, yet oil companies come in and destroy the environment and nobody stops them.

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February 25, 2003

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DA092

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Myrtle was born in 1961 in Grand Bayou. Her family was the first to settle in Grand Bayou in the 1920s when her grandfather and several others went into a deal with Louisiana Land and Exploration Company to swap land on the chenier located behind the community with land along the bayou. At the time of the swap, the bayou was lined with cypress trees and the land supported vegetable gardens and orchards. When oil and gas were discovered in the area, the companies that came in to find and produce it dug canals to place rigs and then dredged pipeline canals in the marsh around the community. Residents believed that their community would be included within the levee that was constructed, but it was not. By the 1970s, saltwater intrusion had killed the trees, and the residents established oyster beds in the bayou. Erosion in the area continues, and most of the homes were flooded in October 2002 during Hurricane Lili. Myrtle's husband works offshore, and she is now working to find resources to raise the remaining homes in the village so they will not flood again.

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Ed Picou, Jr.

New Orleans, LA

July 8, 2003

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS045

### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Ed Picou graduated from LSU with a B.S. in 1955, and Shell hired him while he was attempting to complete his master's degree. He began working for Shell in 1957. He worked in paleontology during his entire career at various labs. He worked on the salt dome study leading up to the 1962 lease sale.

### Summary:

The interview covers various topics. He has interesting discussion on the salt dome study. Comments on the geology of the gulf coast basin. He also described Shell's exploration success. Covers various aspects of paleontology in exploration. Ends with comments on the Roosevelt Hotel and the Petroleum club.

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Elce Pinell

Montegut, LA

July 20, 2001

Interviewed by: Ari Anand

University of Arizona

AA007

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Mr. Elce Pinell by Mr. Ferrel Chauvin, with whom he'd worked on a rig for on the same crew for over a decade. He was a bit reserved throughout the interview, though he warmed up a little bit toward the end. We conducted the interview at their dining table.

Mr. Elce Pinell was born in 1928 and left school in 1943 when his father died. After odd jobs and two years in the army (1945-47), he entered the oilfield in 1947 with South Coast Corporation. He roughnecked on rigs for Crown and Gracie from 1949-51. Then he moved to Texaco to roughneck, owing to better working conditions and benefits. Mr. Pinell worked as a derrick man, a motorman and a driller, and was promoted to drilling foreman in 1972. In 1976 he was field foreman on a project for high-pressure gas drilling in Alabama. By 1982, he had 136 men and 5 rigs under him as a field foreman in Garden Island Bay. He retired in 1983.

#### Summary:

**Early Life:** Born in 1928 in Chauvin, son of a trapper, trawler, and farmer. From a family of 10 children. Lived on a small farm. Family supported by fishing and farming until 1938. Then moved onto plantation to work for a sugarcane company. Father worked in sugar mill from 1938 to 1943. Moved to Montegut in 1943 and has lived there ever since. When his father died in 1943, he left school and began working at the sugar mill general store. Drafted into Army in 1946 for two years. Then went to work in supply room at sugar mill in 1947 and worked there until 1949.

**Oilfield Work:** Stopped working in sugar mill because they cut lots of jobs in preparation to shut factory down. Started working in oilfield for Crown and Gracie in 1949. Worked on one rig from 1949 to 1951. Began working for Texaco in 1951, worked in Terrebonne Parish and Houma District. Switched to Texaco because of "working conditions" at Crown Gracie. Schedule at Crown Gracie was 10 days on, 2 days off. Texaco was 12 days on, 4 days off so had more time off and also got better benefits. Worked on Texaco workover rig as a roughneck from 1951 to 1956. Moved over to new rig in 1956 and promoted to derrick man. Worked 17 years on that rig. Also worked as driller and motorman on that rig. Offered better job with Texaco in Harvey District in 1972. Began as drilling crewmember then became drilling foreman three months later. In about 1976, he became drilling foreman on a high-pressure gas well in Mississippi. Also worked as field foreman in Alabama. Then moved back to Mississippi and stayed there until 1980. Then moved back to Harvey District and worked as field foreman. In early 1982, began working as field foreman overseeing 136 men on five rigs. Retired in 1983 when Texaco gave incentives for people to retire.

First Day of Oilfield Work: Wore Army clothes but they were not durable enough. Most men he worked with were local. Working 10 days on, 2 days off. Worked 16 hours per day on two days, so really working the equivalent of 12 days. Moved around a lot with Crown and Gracie. Schedule was part of why he switched over to Texaco.

Difficult/Dangerous Aspects of Work: Hardest thing was taking over as field foreman. In early days, everything was done by hand. Used lots of brine and 100-pound sack salt, also used bags of mud and 98-pound bags of cement - hard work. "Throwing the Chain" refers to wrapping a chain around pipes to move them. Now use automatic tongs to move pipe. Earlier methods were very dangerous, no guards around pipe. First rig he worked on used air-cooled motor to screen mud and was always throwing off flames. High-pressure pump on that rig was run off a 1937 Ford motor. Workers would not tolerate these conditions today.

Schedule: At Texaco, began as 12 days on, 4 days off. Then switched to 6 and 6 for a long time, working 12 hours each day. Then went to 7 and 7 schedule. Did shift work for 22 years. Then was always on call as field foreman. As field foreman, stayed out on rigs on 7 and 7 schedule.

Family Life: Married in 1951. Schedule was rough on his wife. Had to plan family activities around his schedule. Never got used to the schedule. Worked nights for 22 years because not as hot and paid more.

Pay: Got paid \$0.12 more per hour for working nights. Began as roughneck at \$0.88 per hour, then up to \$1.05 and continued up from there. Now people make about \$20-25 per hour.

Early Work Years and Education: Hard to be away from home so much on 10 and 2 schedule. Helped out his family a lot because four kids were still at home with his mom. Went to night school and finished school in 1959. Was passed over for promotions because did not have high school diploma. Then started getting drilling jobs and made \$0.95 per hour higher pay. Few Texaco employees had education. Retired as one of the highest paid foremen. Only out of work one day since starting work at age 15. Describes early cane cutting work and tools.

Oilfield Employees: One from Alabama, one from Texas, majority from Louisiana, mostly from Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes. Management was more varied. Also lots of workers from Iberia Parish. Most Texaco employees in his early work years were uneducated southern Louisiana locals. These local workers did not start getting job advancements until the late 1950s or early 1960s. Higher jobs had previously been taken by non-local people, mostly from Texas. Most workers satisfied with corporate-employee relations. When he started, there were always people who would take your job if you were not satisfied. Texaco treated employees fairly. Lazy workers did complain. Worked with another interviewee, Ferrel Chauvin. Texaco always allowed employees to change jobs if they were not satisfied. No opinion on why oil never became unionized. Oil companies all pretty much the same. Most people stayed with one company.

Changes in Oil Industry: Better tools, better equipment. Not as hard. Roustabouting used to require lots of manual labor, but now it is all mechanized. Laying boards for roads and rig bases onshore has become much easier. Lots of changes in drilling-used fishtail bits in 1937; bits have changed over time. Remained mostly local workers.

Work History: Stayed on one rig for 17 years. Drillers and roughnecks came and went, sometimes for promotions or to work onshore. Worked in the office a few times but really did not like it. Describes long hours of office work. Texaco made people work in the office for a few months to learn certain procedures. Retired from Garden Island Bay in 1983.

Environmental Regulations: Regulations got "pretty bad" towards the end. Used to overlook small oil spills, now have to contain every drop. Texaco used to burn waste oil in pits, but cannot do that anymore. The squeeze really began in the early 1970s. Open pits no longer allowed. In 1977, Mississippi required pits to be lined in plastic. But now have to put waste oil in tanks. Now have to school people in skimming oil. Workers knew regulations were coming.

Gas Collection: When he started oilfield work, companies were only interested in collecting oil so they just burnt off gas. Later realized that they should collect the gas too. Rigs were run on steam back then. Last steam rig in 1965. Some gas was collected, but most was wasted. No difference in drilling for gas and for oil, except more chance of a blowout when drilling for gas.

Impact of Oil Industry: Erosion mainly caused by oil industry, especially by cutting of canals. Oilfield did provide lots of jobs, but has caused irreparable damage. Most canals cut in 1950s and 1960s. Would encourage young people to enter oilfield work, but benefits are not as good as they used to and jobs are not as stable because companies are changing hands much more.

Retirement: Texaco offered incentives to get older workers to retire, including couple of years of pay and pension.

Chester "Blackie" Pipsair

Pierre Part, LA

January 22, 2005

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA136

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was introduced to Blackie Pipsair by Laurie Vining. When I asked Laurie if he knew of anyone who had pictures of early offshore vessels, he told me about Blackie. He called Blackie and arranged for the two of us to drive up to visit him at his home in Pierre Part. We spent several hours talking about the oilfield and looking at pictures.

Chester "Blackie" Pipsair worked for Transworld Drilling Company, a subsidiary of Kerr McGee, for 31 years until his retirement in 1991. He began as a crane operator and worked his way up to Marine Superintendent. He was responsible for moving rigs from one location to another. Though Blackie worked most of his career in the Gulf of Mexico, at least once a year he traveled overseas to deliver rigs. He found his work interesting and challenging because each job presented a new set of circumstances and problems to be overcome.

#### Summary:

Occupational history: employed by Transworld Drilling Company, subsidiary of Kerr McGee Corporation, worked 21 years, retired 1991; to move early rigs had to disconnect everything from the drilling platform, done by crews of roughnecks; when first started would take oil barge out, fill it, move it because no pipelines; Blackie was Marine Superintendent, called every time they needed to move a rig from one location to another; started 7 and 7 but then supposed to be five days a week but actually 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; gone all the time, flew to Nigeria, Amsterdam, anywhere; first overseas trip was in 1964 to Bombay, India, gone 8 weeks working on drilling tender; gone at least once a year from 1964 to 1983; really enjoyed the work; worked offshore from 1960 to 1984, crane operator, welder, marine supervisor

Before oil: first job was selling ice on the road when 13 years old; at 15 worked on fish dock, then at Gaudeaux Lumber Company, then at 17 for Jancke Dredging Company out of Mandeville, then into service in 1952, out in 1954, back to Jancke for two weeks, pay reduced, so went to Rowan Drilling Company in December; uncle was driving crew boat back of Plaquemines, begged me to come, stayed till 1959, then to Schaf, drilling slow, then to Kerr McGee because it was known as a good company; hurt in 1979 inspecting drilling tender, off five months, back in January 1980, stayed till Noble Drilling Company bought out all Kerr McGee's rigs

Discussion of photos:

- 01: Kerr McGee Rig 39, the Frank Phillips, a drilling tender in Ship Shoal Block 32, Navy YF Barge converted after WWII; living quarters far right; galley up near bow; storm anchor chain on far right
- 02: Kerr McGee Rig 44 or 45, submergibles, everything self-supported on the rig
- 03: Kerr McGee Rig 45
- 04: Kerr McGee Rig 45 almost capsizing in Breton Sound
- 05: Kerr McGee Rig 45 tilting
- 06: Pontoons on tilting Kerr McGee rig
- 07: Black and white photo showing pontoons on rig
- 08: Rig tipped in water
- 09: Coming along side the tipped rig with a derrick barge
- 10: Tipped rig from the low side
- 11: Tipped rig from the low side
- 12: Roustabout crew; Blackie Pipsair fifth from right; Mayon to right of Blackie
- 13: Blackie Pipsair taking a break on the rig
- 14: Crew in Scotland when Kerr McGee Rig 46 went overseas; manager is the big guy in the middle
- 15: Manager Jim Bawcom in a kilt; Blackie to his left; Kerr McGee crew in Scotland to repair rig
- 16: Rig mat at the surface for moving the rig; Kerr McGee Rig 63
- 17: Rig mat at the surface for moving the rig; Kerr McGee Rig 63
- 18: Kerr McGee Rig 63 loaded on a ship and being transported
- 19: Kerr McGee Rig 64 with open legs
- 20: Kerr McGee Rig 71; built overseas and stayed there till late 1980s
- 21: Kerr McGee Rig 72 with stabilizing pontoons on each column
- 22: Kerr McGee Rig?
- 23: Blackie Pipsair in Dubai
- 24: Blackie Pipsair on the beach on overseas job in Nigeria
- 25: Kerr McGee crew getting ready to go to Trinidad with Rig 54; (l to r) Jack Earley, Blackie Pipsair, Jack Neale
- 26: Blackie Pipsair on the rig at sea
- 27: Kerr McGee Rig 44; separated pontoon slab from barge, had to make coffer dam to get underwater so all would be dry and divers could go down and weld
- 28: Tank inside Rig 45 busted, about 12 foot of water inside
- 29: Tank inside Rig 45 busted, about 12 foot of water inside
- 30: Trying to retrieve caisson (top); damaged, cut around bottom on Kerr McGee Rig 54
- 31: Boat loading stabilizing column off Kerr McGee Rig 46; taken in Nigeria; tires to keep boats from bumping and to tie off boat
- 32: Personnel basket rigging up to Kerr McGee Rig 54 to go to Trinidad; 300 foot rig
- 33: American welders on Kerr McGee Rig 46 in Nigeria repairing cracks in pontoon; Blackie Pipsair on right inspecting welds
- 34: Crew in the galley
- 35: Rig crew
- 36: Kerr McGee rig crew with safety sign
- 37: Not Identified

38: Tidewater tug towing a rig

39: Kerr McGee rig that drilled the first well out of sight of land

Got nickname "Blackie" when first started working for Kerr McGee; Beverly Fournier gave the name

Amy Pitre

Cut Off, LA

July 28, 2003

Interviewed by: Jessica Piekielek

University of Arizona

JP012

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Amy Pitre through her neighbor, Joycelyn Renois. Diane had scheduled an interview with Joycelyn and had explained her interest in interviewing women, both workers and wives of workers. Joycelyn said that she thought we would be interested in talking with her neighbor across the street, as both a woman working offshore and as the wife of someone in the oil industry.

Amy Pitre was born in 1959 and raised in Buras. She received her B.A. in business, married Dean Pitre, and moved to Cut Off. In 1989 she began working offshore as an operator assistant on production platforms, first for a contractor and later for Chevron. When she first began offshore work, she was often the only woman on the platform. She currently works in aviation dispatch for Chevron.

#### Summary:

Personal: Born 1959 in Port Sulphur, raised in Buras, father built tug boats but didn't not think about connections to oil industry as a child; B.A. in business, met husband Dean, married, moved to Cut Off, where Dean's family is from; adopted son Brady at age of four.

Career: Worked at JC Penney's, had some secretarial experience working at church; few job opportunities in local area in late 80's; began work as operator assistant offshore on production platforms in 1989 with contractor, worked with contractor for year and half before applying for position as production operator with Chevron; supervisor and boss at Chevron encouraged her to apply; began 36 month training program for production operator, only woman; weighed 105 pounds and realized physical limitations could prevent her from performing job; as example, took her four times as long to thread pipe as rest of trainees, but they clapped for her when she finished; other trainees generally supportive; after month and half of training, decided to apply for operator assistant position within Chevron when job opened, office job better suited her personal goals as mother; continued work as operator assistant; requested land job when husband began traveling more for work and schedules conflicted; currently works in aviation dispatch, which she loves.

Women: At first was only woman on platforms, later sometimes would be one other woman; more women now in catering and bedroom crews; being a woman with a college degree was unusual; now seeing more women as electricians, geologists, engineers, many start as summer interns; would not recommend platform work to young women who are not self-assured or who are looking for attention, they will be treated "like a princess" but may not know how to handle

attention from men; would recommend job to older women whose children are grown; would recommend job to any young men who want good job with good pay.

Gender and work relationships: Took some time to figure out how to interact with men in friendly and fun way, initially unsure how to interact outside of strict professional boundaries; now sees co-workers as extended family, has deep and lasting friendships from work on platforms; people inevitably gossip about women working on platforms, was once rumored to be having affair with co-worker, upset by accusations, addressed issue during staff meeting with support from supervisor; rarely had opportunity to talk with other women in similar situation.

Scheduling: 7and7 can be difficult, but also has advantages, such as 21 day vacations; have managed to arrange schedule with husband to meet needs of child; when Brady first adopted, they both worked 7and7 and arranged schedule so that one was always home with Brady.

Free time: Free time on platform spent sometimes doing crafts; used to watch TV, but since switch to non-smoking platforms, TV rooms have become smoking rooms; health push in early 90s led to workout rooms, also joggers and walkers will use helicopter pad; one platform had religious service organized by co-worker.

Salary: Initial work for contractors was good as second income for couple, but would have been poverty level as only income; company job paid twice as well, with benefits; contractors didn't offer benefits when began working, unlike now.

Dean's career: Worked on drilling rig prior to Amy's entrance into oil industry, then moved into human resources, computers. Currently works 5and2.

Production vs. Drilling: Production platforms more likely to have women than drilling platforms; on drilling platforms more joking and teasing, rougher, more like "cowboys," work is more dangerous.

Company hiring: Chevron has had two major hirings since Amy started, in 1991 and 2001; in first hiring, people hired were not all college educated, hirees were more diverse group, experience counted; second hire in 2001 recruited from college campuses, degree important; thinks company is losing knowledge base by offering retirement packages to older employees and by focusing on importance of college degree over experience.

Changes: Buras changed since childhood, used to be nice small town with swimming pool, YMCA, bowling; destroyed by Betsy and Camille, now alcoholism and crime growing problems; Lafourche hasn't seen similar changes, because not as affected by hurricanes, growing because of sports fishing.

Loulan Pitre

Cut Off, LA

September 24, 2001

Interviewed by: Diane Austin, Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

DA008

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I have known Loulan Pitre and his wife, Emelia, since 1996 when Tom and I were first in southern Louisiana on the baseline study for the MMS. Loulan, Emelia, and I hit it off in our first meeting, and we have stayed in touch since then. Both are astute observers of local life as well as generally interesting characters. I try to visit when I am in Lafourche. Loulan is an avid reader and researcher in his own right. He has questioned oil and gas activity since it began in southern Louisiana and has extensive files and documents on many local events. He was one of the first locals, for example, to raise questions about the oilfield waste facility at Grand Bois, long before the 1994 event that coalesced in resident concern.

The Pitres have four sons, the oldest of which, Loulan, Jr., is the attorney for Port Fourchon and now a state legislator. Loulan is very open about the areas on which he and his son disagree. Another son, Glen, is the local movie producer who made "Belizaire the Cajun" and others. His recent movie about the German U-boats in the Gulf of Mexico during WWII was completed during the summer of 2001. They are waiting to release it, however, due to the economy and the September 11 attack.

Loulan Pitre served in the Marines and after World War II he went to work for Jerry McDermott building derricks and stayed 7 years. He also spent some time shrimping with his own boat and eventually got his ocean operator's license to run big boats offshore. He retired at age 65 in 1990. He and his wife Emelia have questioned oil and gas activity since it began in southern Louisiana and has extensive files and documents on many local events. They were some of the first locals, for example, to raise questions about the oilfield waste facility at Grand Bois, long before the 1994 event that coalesced resident concern.

#### Summary:

Coastal and marshland erosion: U.S. wants to improve coastline, but against law to use public money to improve private property; hunting in marshes restricted since Loulan a boy; Loulan been fighting blocking canals since WWII; Attorney General just declared it illegal; U.S. gave Louisiana marshlands, known as Overflow Lands.

Transfer to private ownership: 1901 trappers began getting flack; Standberg set up exclusive deal with trappers; continued through WWII; Louisiana Land and Trapping Company; 1932-33 Texaco started drilling in south Lafourche; brought in Texans, hired locals as roustabouts; Texaco inherited all water bottoms; some agreement between Texaco and State of Louisiana during Huey Long administration; copy of agreement between Louisiana Land and

Exploration/Texaco and State of Louisiana at State Land Office in Baton Rouge; before that, the state created levee boards to manage lands U.S. had ceded to the states; John Dresser and Edward Wisner from Ohio bought overflow lands from levee board; quit claim; Dresser a lumberman, went after cypress; sold all shares to Wisner about 1918; Wisner dies, left holdings to wife and daughter; taxes not being paid; lawyers paid the taxes and took most of the estate.

Early oil: oil discovered; started dragging seismographs through the marsh; started drilling Leeville and then Golden Meadow in 1933; Loulan oystering with father, shrimping in off season; did not go work for oil companies; then Gulf Oil came and seismographed in the Gulf; drilled once, hurricane knocked it out; by 1945 all marshes in Louisiana had been drilled.

First job in oil: after WWII went to work for Jerry McDermott building derricks; stayed 7 years; going to put steel platform in Gulf; got on LCI that had been in the Pacific; put structure south of Morgan City; built the first derrick for Kerr-McGee; crew not invited to Kerr-McGee's reunion for all people who had worked on the first offshore rig; took it hard; five on the crew plus a pusher; only two left alive Alan Gelchrist has Parkinson's; crew stayed together a long time; would assemble on the LST; then McDermott came out with big pre-fabricated structures, built mostly at Harvey; company grew fast.

First day: New Year's Day 1947; had never been near drilling rig; were in the union as rig builders; worked 8 hours per day; liked the union; first derrick 136 feet up, no safety belt, 12 inch scaffold; work, work, work; when first started Kerr-McGee owned little old trailer, tools, truck and pile driver; furnished all the tools; "It was really good work. When you're young and you're strong you don't mind."

Into shrimping: left to buy a shrimp boat; paid cash; first trip out caught \$4,000 worth of shrimp in four days; paid off boat by the end of the year; then price of shrimp dropped; got ocean operator's license to run big boats offshore.

Early practices: Teche Construction Co. formed by some of the guys from McDermott; would call crew when work was slow; some deals outside of McDermott; oil companies abusive, dumping oil over the side; people not about to say anything; ODECO tools getting stolen by toolpushers; nobody thought oil bad; then oystermen's lawsuit in Timbalier Bay; things changed when everybody found out they could have a lawyer.

WWII: was shrimping off Grand Isle with brother when Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor; worked for Yugoslavs in oyster beds; joined the Marines; got married; got veteran's pay of \$20 a week for 52 weeks; to McDermott when that ran out.

Getting out: retired at 65 in 1990; oil companies started drilling around him, taking oil even though his property was not leased to them; started getting a check; issues with being in units.

Other: more on Dresser and Wisner; people scared of Peltiers; schoolboard suits; don't know how levee board authorized to sell to Wisner; more on levee board.

R. D. Pitre

Morgan City, LA

June 29, 2004

Interviewed by: Jamie Christy

University of Houston/History International

MMS063

Ethnographic Preface:

R. D. Pitre was born in 1918 in Fletcher, Texas, near Beaumont. He graduated from Hull-Daisetta High School and went to work for his oldest brother, Leo, at Pitre Water Well Drilling Company. He attended Texas A&M in 1936 for six months and then went to work in 1938 roughnecking for Sun Oil Company at Chacahoula, Louisiana. Mr. Pitre worked in the seismograph department for Sun all over Texas in 1939. He got married in 1941 and moved nine different times with Sun. Mr. Pitre went to Beaumont to work on the pipeline, and was also in Liberty, Baton Rouge, Thibodeaux, and Morgan City in his 46 years with Sun Oil.

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Samuel C. Pizzolato

Boothville, LA

July 18, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM048

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Bud Latham suggested I talk with Mr. Sam Pizzolato, long-time resident of the Boothville/Venice area, and currently in his last few months of his second term as councilman for District 9. As a second-termer, he can't run again, but he plans to run for justice of the peace. He, like others, complained that insurance is putting boat people out of business. He had some interesting observations on contract work - it gives you more of an interest in the job you are doing, gives you more authority, you tend to be more efficient, and you make more money.

Sam Pizzolato moved to Boothville in 1957 as an "isolated switcher" from the Bayou Choctaw area near the town of Plaquemine. After graduating from college and working as a roustabout, he worked himself up to a field foreman and then to consultant. He bought a few boats - Breaux boats from outside of New Iberia.

#### Summary:

Camps and oil companies: Shell and Chevron try to do business with locals; Gulf transferred people in; Gulf, Getty, Chevron, Freeport, Tidewater had camps, with no running water until 60s; had to truck water in, used cisterns.

Parish business: Plaquemines Parish gets more oil royalties (\$20 million/yr) than any other parish, from wells on parish and school land; gets 25% of production; with only 27,000 population, has \$100 million budget between sheriff, council, and school board; money generated in south of parish, but spent in north, but he didn't think this unfair, since that is where the need is; water system has 2-way capacity (pump north or south) to adjust for seasonal salinity changes of river.

Millennium Port: set aside a couple of locations for barge transfer/container facility, but port remains an "idea;" Sea Point, out of New Orleans (ph. 523-0019) has put together a proposal, but hasn't come up with money (\$18 million); parish has promised \$92 million worth of bonds.

Social/economic changes in parish: in last 5-6 years, Venice "discovered" as recreational fishing port and had superseded Grand Isle in importance; but charter boats go out of Empire, because it is close to Grand Isle; recreational fishing has replaced oil as major sector; fishing guides and motels doing well, property values going up, but rest of economy not doing well; 500 people moved out in last 10 years; Croatians moving to Belle Chasse, but Vietnamese moving down; most of shrimp/fish buyers are Vietnamese.

Contacts: Mark Delesderniere is head of pilots' association, his brother Don is cattleman and alligator hunter; Tom Popich owns Popich Brothers Marine (brother Joe deceased) and Offshore Shipyard in Venice, but sold Marine to Tidewater; Madere Towing out of Buras has 4 tugs, now operated by sons Chad and Gene; Dan Buras came from across the river at Olga; Gail Adolf, with the Red Cross, working out of Sam's office, is from the Lugo family from Pilot Town; Lorie Myer works for assessors' office, and could provide tax data.

Hurby Plaisance

Golden Meadow, LA

July 23, 2001

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM007

#### Ethnographic Preface:

The interview, set up by Melvin Bernard, took place in Mr. Plaisance's home; he was tracking the stock prices on the TV while we talked. Some of the discussion was around the institution of well spacing regulations by the state. He also talked briefly about the deal Huey Long cut with Texaco to lease Louisiana Land & Exploration land, so as to stop Standard Oil of California from gaining a position in Louisiana. He had a few things to say on unions: since some parts of Texaco, such as the refineries, are union, the whole company gets similar pay scales, even when local sectors are not unionized. He contrasted this with contract workers, who may get more money per hour, but get no benefits. He talks a lot about how to control "kicks" while drilling.

After high school, in 1948, Hurby Plaisance started working on Rowan inland barges in Timbalier Bay. In 1952 he then became a Texaco employee on steam rigs on lake fields around Houma, Leeville, Golden Meadow, and elsewhere in southern Louisiana. By the time he retired from Texaco in 1987, he had risen to senior drilling supervisor, responsible for the company's offshore fields out of Morgan City.

#### Summary:

Early career: was working in oil fields around the house on weekends and on holidays while still in school; graduated in 1946 and went to work on a drilling rig that was in the neighborhood drilling shallow wells; a land job drilling 2600 feet wells; built all of these shallow wells in Golden Meadow; went to work for Rowan Drilling Company which had an inland barge drilling wells out on Timbalier Bay for Gulf Oil Company; went to work for Texaco in 1952, on steam rigs, drilling in the lakes around Houma.

Steam and diesel rigs: power rigs run by diesel engines, others were run by steam engines; really economical to have steam when there was no sale for the gas; once they started building pipelines and started putting in compressors and getting decent prices for the natural gas, steam wasn't used as much; could drill faster and deeper with the power rigs; Texaco got into a bind by signing a long term contract with Louisiana Power & Light, 25 years for \$0.25, then, gas got up to 7 or 8 dollars but we had to keep furnishing it for \$0.25; a few heads rolled for that.

Suez crisis: when we had to close the Suez Canal, we had really boosted up production in the area; probably hurt some of the big fields by doubling daily production. A lot of these sands, if you pull them too hard, they will go to water sooner than they would have.

Slowdown: we had the time during '85-'86 when everything slowed down a whole lot. The company didn't lay anybody off. They put 3 or 4 toolpushers on each rig and sweated it out; I retired in 1987; the company asked me to stay on as a consultant. I stayed on the same job working in the office in Morgan City. I worked another 14 months as a consultant.

State regulations: state is involved, especially on a higher gas/oil ratio wells. Unless you can pump the gas back into the sand, you are limited on the amount of fluid because of the high gas/oil ratio. They don't want you to waste that gas; in companies' own interest to keep that well going and get as much production as you can out of these sands that you are producing from. When I first started in the oilfield here in Golden Meadow, if it was 50 by 50, you could drill two wells on it, until they came out with the spacing in the 1940s, where you had to have so many acres per well. That is why we had so many wells over here. We had derricks one on top of the other.

Texaco/LL&E: What really started Texaco was the deal with Huey P. Long; Huey was set on stopping Standard Oil from developing in Louisiana and he cut a deal with Texaco; we were drilling on state property where Texaco had all the leases; also had a lot of leases with LL&E.

Supervising the fields: My main duty was to stay on call should they have a problem that they needed to discuss with somebody; every morning I would call every rig and take the last 24-hour report. We would go to the conference room with the engineers and the manager and different heads of different departments and discuss what was going on, go over each rig report. After that I would just try to keep ahead of what is coming up on each rig and be ready for them when they had to change orders.

Camps: Texaco had camps. We would go from the camps to the rigs in the different fields; camps could sleep 200-300 people, had all the living quarters and food there. The cooks would bring the food to the people on the rigs; were working 6 on and 6 off. You would go to the camp. From the camp, you would drive a boat to the rig, take about 5-10 minutes. Work 12 hours on the rig, back to camp 12 hours. Work 6 and 6, then 7 and 7.

Contracting: Texaco had a policy of trying to split up the work. There were a lot of contractors, a lot of the jobs were by footage, then it all went to so much a day. My nephew is a vice-president of Diamond Offshore and is in charge of the turnkey jobs. He bid on a job and you drill it at your own peril; you have a problem, it's yours. With day-rate rigs, the company is responsible for those.

Getting job with producers: After and during the war it wasn't that hard. A few years later they weren't hiring much; they wanted experienced people. I had seven years drilling, that is the reason I was able to get on. They like to hire somebody that somebody in the company knows. They didn't like to train somebody and have to lay them off. They wanted to be sure who they were hiring.

Russell Poiencot

Houma, LA

July, 24 2001, July 25, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG037, AG038

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Russell Poiencot through my presentation to the Morgan City/Houma group of the Shell Retirees' Group. He is the president of the group and was the host of the meeting. Afterwards, I made arrangements to meet him in Houma for an interview. He provides descriptions of his work, the regulatory environment in which he worked, the kind of laborers Shell employed, and so on. Like many of his generation, he perceived a change in company/labor relations near the end of his career, and he describes this well near the end of the interview. I returned to Russell's house the next day for an additional interview based on the photographs he loaned to the project.

Russell was born in 1928 and raised in Houma, spent some of his summers as a young man working for Texaco, and eventually found employment with GSI, a geographical surveying company with an office in Houma. To get this work, he utilized his training in the military. GSI was steady work, but the pay didn't compare to working for one of the majors, and he finally found his way to Shell Oil Company, where he finished his career. Most of his time was spent in surveying and seismic work, with a focus on surveying. He eventually became responsible for Shell's surveying activity in much of the Eastern US.

#### Summary of AG037:

Early history: Russell was born near Houma and grew up here as well. He describes the various bayous that comprise Houma, and the periodic floods. He was born in 1928 and was a young boy during the Depression. He talks about the hard times of the Depression. His father had no education, and did everything he could to get by - trapping, sharecropping, cane-cutting.

Schooling: Houma was a small town back then, about 5000 people. He lived outside of town, but came into town for high school. His family spoke French to him, but he spoke English back. He wasn't thinking about a career in the oil industry at all back then. He wanted to be a mechanical engineer. He graduated from high school in 1945, and then he went to work for Texaco during the summer. The toolpusher sent him to the office to be a radio operator. He took the test and got his license, but then Texaco said they didn't need radio operators.

Work: Russell went to work for GSI, a geographical exploration service, and he stuck with them for a while. They made use of his radio operators' service. Before that it was just flag waving and such, but once the radios came it was a big thing. In the 1945-46 winter he spent the entire time in the top of a lighthouse out near the beach, working the seismic crew - his job was to record each shot point through triangulation.

Summer job with Texaco: They were hiring anybody and everybody because the war was on. His first day on the job was on a slow moving tugboat. The tugboat loaded up supplies, ice and people to go out, whole sides of beef, everything. It took forever to get out - late in the afternoon they got to Dog Lake. He started working out in the galley. Most of the guys working at that time were local. There were so many qualified people here, but the only people who got the good jobs were from elsewhere. It might be because most people around here didn't have education.

Military: He got into the service just after the war. He was going into aerial photography. In the military, he got trained in processing the film, and then in aerial photography itself. He went to Japan after the war. He talks about this for a while.

College: When he got back from the war, he went to Nicholls State, and was in the first class there. He took some classes in architectural drawing. It was a two-year college at the time, and he went with his cohort to LSU. He stayed there two semesters and then left. He worked for seismic companies during the summer - he was "picking records" - finding the faults on the seismic reports and sending them to the analysts. This summer work was for GSI.

Surveying: He came back from LSU as a surveyor. He stayed with GSI for a while, and he began to get tired of working in the field with the offshore crew. He came back and worked in the Houma office. Then he went to work for Shell. At the time, GSI was still mostly working inshore. They started working offshore in '45, about when he started working for them. Deeper waters were where the companies wanted them to go. They were working for California Company, Shell, Texaco - that's where they wanted them to go. They weren't equipped for deep water, but they could do the shallow areas. They were limited by the line of sight to the towers on shore.

Shell: In 1956 he went to work for Shell. GSI was not a good paying company. His father worked for them too, and retired with no pension, no security. Shell was altogether different. Shell came to his office to interview him and sign him up. And all the companies weren't the same: Shell was well ahead of the others with the savings plans and retirement funds. We thank Shell for everything we have today. Texaco didn't have anything near this for their employees. He started in the New Orleans office, and working the East Bay field at Venice. He was an instrument man for two years, then he became the head of a crew. They were staking out locations for production, supervise the laying of pipelines, and so on. There were four fields that they were taking care of with the survey crew. He left Venice in '61 to go to deepwater. East Bay was 20 feet, and that was considered deep at the time, but in 1961 they moved out deep. They were using boats with lights, and this allowed them to get out further. They also used balloons. He was a senior surveyor at the time.

Radio and Satellite: They trained all their workers, and they were all good workers. By '65 and '66, they were working 30 miles out. Once they couldn't see, they had to go to RADIS, which were radio signals set up on the bank for triangulation. They would also do a visual check on platforms they could see. In 1963, the government released the satellite system for use too. He had a 110 foot boat, and they tested the satellite system for three years on that boat. Even though the satellite system was up and running, they were using three different coordination systems (RADIS, triangulation, satellites) to meet the requirements for working in federal waters.

Contracting: In 1970, they started contracting out all their surveying work. It was just easier that way - they had the crews and the equipment. He talks about some of the difficulties of getting platforms on location in deepwater. His job was to make sure the platforms went off the barge and onto the right spot. He talks about the Cognac platform, built in three sections, for 1000+ feet of water. It was built in Morgan City. They had to prepare for any kind of emergency when they were transporting the platform.

Fires and blowouts: He mentions some of the big fires and blowouts he worked on. It would take weeks to sort out these problems. They had to find the slicks and so on.

Away from the Gulf: He talks about the Atlantic and other places Shell was working. They released the East Coast for exploration, and Shell did what they have to see if there was oil out there. They had to watch out for telephone cables going to Europe. They also had to do archeological surveys - they couldn't drill within 500 feet of any anomaly - sunken ships and so on. They found all kinds of stuff down there.

Regulations: We talk about the change in the regulatory structure and how it affected his work. He talks more about the marine archeologists that were required. He tells a story of a diver that went down there and got scared - it must have been his first dive. The feds made them draw circles around anomalies, the states made them go look at what was down there.

Dumping: Back in the old days, anything you didn't want went overboard. There was trash everywhere, and everybody dumped everything overboard. Shell emerged as a leader, though - they mandated that the boats that worked for Shell had to be clean when they were working out there.

Loyalty: We talk about company loyalty. Shell did a good job of recognizing people for service. And even the departments within Shell would do stuff like this. The savings plans were also part of this. And the matching savings plan from Shell was much better than the other companies. They would redistribute 1% of the company profits, too. The job changed in the end, though. You weren't treated the same. Everything came down to the bottom dollar. Companies were merging. It just wasn't the same.

Reflections: The oil industry has been a big plus for the people of South Louisiana, but everything that's going on now, they say, is the fault of the oil industry. Yet everybody here benefited from the oil industry, and now they're suing.

One of his sons went into fabrication, one son is a contractor, and the last is an A/C contractor. One of his daughters owns a computer company in Austin, and there's one here in town, and a third in New Orleans.

Summary of AG038:

Poiencot, R01 Recording crew if seismograph team.

Poiencot, R02 Recording barge.

Poiencot, R03 Marsh buggy.

Poiencot, R04 Marsh buggy.  
Poiencot, R05 Marsh buggy towing recording barge.  
Poiencot, R06 Survey crew.  
Poiencot, R07 Survey crew.  
Poiencot, R08 Survey boat taking measurements.  
Poiencot, R09 Recording barge on mud flat.  
Poiencot, R10 Boat towing recorder barge.  
Poiencot, R11 Recording boat ties to house boat  
Poiencot, R12 Drilling barge.  
Poiencot, R13 Drilling barge.  
Poiencot, R14 Charges exploding.  
Poiencot, R15 Transit man.  
Poiencot, R16 Houseboat where crew lived.  
Poiencot, R17 Office in quarter boat.  
Poiencot, R18 Office in quarter boat.  
Poiencot, R19 Drafting table in quarter boat.  
Poiencot, R20 Bus for crew's commute.

Inez Poncio

Morgan City, LA

January 12, 2005

Interviewed by: Joanna Stone, Colleen O'Donnell, Lauren Penney

University of Arizona

JLS02

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Inez's husband, John Henry Poncio, was a POW in Japan and with the help of his niece wrote a book about his experiences (*Girocho: A GI's Story of Bataan and Beyond*). He died in 1998, but Inez is still recognized locally in Morgan City in part because of the success of this book and is often invited to the high school to talk with students. This interview mainly covered her experiences in the WAC during WWII and there is no direct connection to the oil industry.

Inez Pierron Poncio was born in Morgan City, Louisiana in 1919. She grew up in Morgan City with her mother, and older brother and sister, graduating high school as valedictorian at the age of 15. She had trouble finding a job, but eventually waited tables and then worked for the Ford Motor Company and Mr. Boudreaux (boat business serviced the oil industry) before enlisting with the Women's Army Corps where she served from April of 1943 to April of 1946. She worked in finance and was stationed at Camp Davis, North Carolina and Camp Shelby, Mississippi. She returned to Morgan City and resumed her job with Boudreaux after being discharged and married John Henry Poncio a few months later. He was still in the military, and she moved around with him before settling down in Morgan City. She currently volunteers through her church with the Good Samaritans.

#### Summary:

Personal history: Born Inez Pierron in Morgan City, Louisiana September 15, 1919; Grew up in Morgan City except for 3 years in Indiana; Father died 7 or 8 months before she was born from the flu epidemic following WWI; Her mother took whatever jobs she could get, housekeeping, cafeteria work; Her older brother also worked and she had an older sister; Her mother also adopted a girl from a family that had gotten her off the 'baby train' from New York City and this woman helped to raise Inez and her siblings; Inez graduated as class valedictorian at the age of 15, there were only 11 grades at the time; She played basketball and was in the history club

Work history: After graduation, Inez had trouble finding a job; Worked as a waitress for \$5 a week and then got on with Ford Motor Company in a clerical position, her boss was stingy with raises even though he owned half the properties in town, she was also expected to help a woman at the Dry Goods Store with typing for no pay; She got a job doing bookkeeping for Boudreaux's boat business through personal connections with a salary of \$11 a week

WWII: Many National Guard members from Morgan City were put on active duty

Enlisting in the WAC: Inez heard about the WAC through the newspaper, but no one knew anything about it; Every now and then recruiters would come to City Hall in Morgan City; She expressed interest to her mother, who didn't like the idea; Her boss said she wouldn't pass the physical anyway; One day she decided to sign up with her cousin; Her mother was proud afterward; Had to go to New Orleans for the physical

Service: Inez was sent to Arkansas for basic training in a Japanese POW camp in a very remote location, when the director of the WAC came to visit, all the girls had to wake up to chase the wild hogs out of the barracks even though many of them were still sick from the shots they had received; The camp was not built for them but was only temporary; Inez was one of the last to get her orders; She was sent to the Arkansas State Teachers College for summer courses in Army Administration; They were given only 2 hours of instruction in finance because none of them were supposed to work in it, of course that's what Inez was assigned to

Camp Davis, NC: She was sent to Camp Davis, North Carolina where she worked on payroll, she learned from the other employees, and took on more and more responsibility; Her boss was against recommending promotions for his staff so it took her a long time to make Buck Sergeant; Had to count the money at night; Social activities, a group of five guys and five girls would take small trips together

Camp Shelby, Mississippi: When she was transferred to Camp Shelby, Mississippi, she took the top position there; All the headquarters jobs were staffed by women; She called back some favors in order to be discharged at the same place as a friend to go visit her family in York, Pennsylvania; Group of WACs went to New York City for 3 days; Story of being on the K. Kaiser show; Story of traveling with a guy from Brooklyn to Camp Shelby

Life in the service: Had to do a lot of parades, for victories, important battles; German prisoners waited on them in the Mess Hall, which had better food than the WAC detachment dining area; German prisoners also did weeding and gardening, always surrounded by guards; She wrote to different guys; Many WACs were married, husbands were mostly supportive; some friendships with civilians who worked on the base, but overall not much contact with locals; Story about a lonesome boss that asked her to tell him stories for 15 minutes; Got orders to go to Guam, but she had been warned by friends who were there that it wasn't safe for women, and a doctor agreed to fail her for the physical; She hoped to go to Europe, but the orders never came

End of war and after: Inez stayed in WAC after the war ended, and hoped to work for another 6 months; Their workload decreased as soldiers were discharged; She moved back to Morgan City and resumed her job as a bookkeeper for Boudreaux; John wanted to marry her, but she made him wait until she had paid off the civilian clothes she had purchased; Stories about their wedding, his childhood, how the army helped people grow up; Describes how John's book was written by his niece; Stella worked on and off as they moved around for John's job with the military

WAC: People were more accepting of women in the military when she came home than when she left

Frank Poorman

Houston, TX

December 8, 1998

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest, Sam Morton  
University of Houston/History International  
SOC022

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Frank Poorman graduated in 1949 with his master's degree in Mechanical Engineering and began working for Shell full time that same year. His first assignment after training came in 1950 to the Tulsa area and later served in Texas and Louisiana. In 1958 he transferred to the Bellaire research lab and worked on various well completion tools for offshore. In 1968 he transferred back to New Orleans to work as division production manager for the Delta division. In 1974 he became Manager for Pipe Line operations in Houston, and in 1976 he became Manager for Purchasing in the Head Office. 1979 found him back in the Southern E&P region, this time as Division Production Manager for Onshore. He stayed there only a year before becoming Production Manager in the same capacity for the Eastern E&P. Finally, in 1981 he became General Manager, Mid-Continent for Western E&P. He stayed in that position until his retirement in 2000.

#### Summary:

Interview consists has a great deal of information on underwater wellhead completion systems and some of the early offshore. It also includes information on the reorganization of Shell at various times during his career. He discussed the importance of computers and the general evolution of technology for offshore. Extended commentary on the Cox Blowout and Bay Marchand accidents. Interesting insight into engineers and purchasing.

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Jack Proffitt

Sunset, LA

July 10, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz, David DiTucci

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW009

#### Ethnographic Preface:

[Note: Mr. Proffitt's wife also contributed to the interview, especially when talking about moving.]

Born in 1926 in Iowa, Jack Proffitt was the son of a machinist. He graduated high school in Ottumwa in 1943 and enlisted in the Navy (V-12 Program). While in the Navy he attended Iowa State College, where he received a degree in electrical engineering in 1946. He tried graduate school for a bit, but then decided to look for a job instead. He was hired by Geophysical Service (GSI) and spent several months in Texas before being transferred to Louisiana; he continued to move around a lot while working with the company (both within LA and out of state). He had his first experience doing offshore work as a supervisor outside of Houma in 1953. Later in his career he became manager of operations in the Gulf Coast Region and then manager of operations in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East. When he returned to the U.S. he ran the company's worldwide marine operations for several years. He retired from GSI in 1981 and began a consulting business which he ran for about 15 years. He consulted for companies that manufactured equipment for the geophysical industry; his longest term client was DigiCOURSE. During the interview they discuss the evolution of seismic practices, moving around, and Mr. Proffitt relates several anecdotes from his time doodlebugging.

#### Summary:

Early life: born ('22) and raised in Iowa; graduated high school in '43; enlisted in the Navy (V-12 Program) and received a degree in electrical engineering in '46 from Iowa State. At that time graduate engineers hard to come by so had many job opportunities. Father was a machinist in Ottumwa, IA. Interviewed with a geophysical company not knowing what it was and got excited about it; got a job with Geophysical Service (GSI) for 235 dollars a month.

GSI: in '47 started with them in Bowie, TX, but transferred to Napoleonville, LA, after a few months; then to Houma where married his wife in '49; transferred to Alberta, Canada. Was working on geophysical crews and it was common to move around quite a bit. At that time GSI was the largest geophysical contractor. Worked for them for 35 years (retired in '81).

Seismic work on land: cane fields in Napoleonville; drilled holes, put dynamite in hole, shot off dynamite, and recorded reflected information. Mostly working in uninhabited areas, but tried to stay away from buildings. Marshes around Morgan City; Higgins (broke down a lot) and Cheramie marsh buggies. In Atchafalaya Basin (late '40s) had to pack and carry equipment; when water got high used pirogues.

Offshore: around '46 Humble, Mobil, and the California Company were working off Grand Isle and had problems locating shot points, which was hairier offshore; tried different things such as using surplus World War Two barrage balloons. Offshore developed pretty fast with introduction of electronic surveying around '47; Offshore Navigation (ONI) started that. Had first real offshore experience in '53 as a crew supervisor out of Houma; later in Shreveport he interpreted offshore data.

Schedule: early on worked 10 and four, but this varied depending on how many days it took to get 100 hours in.

Career: after Shreveport transferred to California ('60s); then transferred back to Gulf region to be manager of Gulf Coast; moved to England to be manager of Europe, Africa, and Middle East; finished his career in the Dallas office.

Safety: never involved in an accident; a few other companies' ships blew up and killed people; it was a pretty dangerous/hairy operation.

Seismic work offshore: in the middle '60s had resurvey of Gulf of Mexico; crews busy; carried dynamite on "shooting boat"; used ammonium nitrate. At the time using "turkey bags" to float charges beneath surface; in Texas has a problem because currents would take bags and some washed up onshore. Before that time were throwing charges overboard to sink to bottom, but had lots of problems with that. In '67 GSI learned about an air gun that used compressed air charges to do testing; tried first in Corpus Christi Bay and it worked real good; this allowed them to shoot at night, plus it was cheaper and yielded as good if not better results; by '69 all their ships equipped with air guns; describes how it worked.

Houseboats: in the early days in the marshes, swamps, and shallow water they lived on houseboats. Anecdote from Krotz Springs when houseboat nearly got away.

Moving (1): some families moved like every six weeks; people with school-aged children seemed to do alright. A lot of times you moved with the crews, so it was like your family. Describe move to small Canadian town where there was a new big discovery. Describe decision to move back to Louisiana for retirement.

Consulting: began when he took early retirement in '81 and moved to Sunset, LA; consulted for companies manufacturing equipment for the geophysical industry. DigiCOURSE was his client for 14 years; developed small digital compass that solved problems with streamers.

Moving (2): never seriously considered leaving the industry because of the lifestyle; association with the people you worked with and loyalty to the company kept you with your company. If you wanted to stay in that line of work you had to move; didn't like moving, but didn't think anything of it. Today their two children think having to move was excellent for their growth; neither work in oil industry because they have different interests. Workers responsible for finding own housing; given a small moving allowance.

Effect of industry on towns: Canadian city was small, but the discovery brought in a lot of people; farming community so many people unemployed at different parts of the year; hired locals as helpers; the town prospered. Houma and Morgan City also grew from oil industry activity.

Outsiders: when he first came to Louisiana even though industry had been there for 20 years, oil industry outsiders were still called Texans.

Life on the quarter boats: in early days used old shrimp boats, but then used old World War Two wooden surplus vessels. If you didn't have good food you didn't have a crew for very long; describes how upset Cajun crew got after he requested the cook make potatoes rather than rice. Supposed to have conservation agents on the boats; it was a racket. Language differences weren't a serious problem. Had boureé games every night; describes how crew cheated an outsider using Cajun French; shut down games because people losing too much money on them.

Doodlebuggers: seismic workers called doodlebuggers, a name used for old well dowers.

Werlien Prosperie

Houma, LA

July 9, 2003

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS029

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Werlien Prosperie is a Cajun musician and oil field worker who now owns the Jolly Inn on Barrow Street in Houma, which is a deliberate revival of a Cajun bar and dancehall of the 1950s/60s. I knew he had been collecting oil field photos to put on the wall of his establishment (he borrowed one from Ed Henry, who asked me to remind him about it if I saw him). I was also aware of his music interests so I asked him about the photos and any music that celebrated oil work. We had several long, intense conversations about oil work and Cajun culture. I had been under the impression he was interviewed previously, so I hadn't brought in the tape recorder. When I found we had no interview from him on record, I did a formal taping on one of my last days in Houma. I wish I had taped the previous talks.

Werlien Prosperie is Cajun and proud of it. His family is from the Montegut area, but he grew up essentially on his own in Houma. He went to work for Delta Exploration and the Laughlin Brothers in summers while he attended high school, then on graduation in 1955, he started with the Texas Company. He started out as kitchen help, then roughneck and worked on the drilling rigs until 1969, when he shifted over to production to be able to be closer to his family. He worked the 6 and 6, later 7 and 7 schedules, which also allowed him to work for OK Fishing Tools on his time onshore. In 1978 he began working full time for OK as store manager. In 1998 OK Fishing Tools sold out to Quality Tubular services, which in turn was sold to Knight Oil Tools in 2003. He continues as a salesman and consultant for Knight today. At the same time, he has opened the Jolly Inn at the warehouse once used by Bethlehem Steel on Barrow Street. He is attempting to use the Jolly Inn as a venue to carry on the community music and cultural tradition of the Cajuns.

#### Summary:

Family in Oil: His father was a driller for Texaco, and his uncles also worked for the company, one as a roustabout and compressor operator, the other as a boat skipper. In fact, Texaco named a boat after his uncle, the Captain Elie. Four of his first cousins also worked for the company. Two of his sons work in the oil industry, one in electronics for Texaco and the other as a roughneck/mechanic for independent contractors. Many people from South Louisiana had relatives working in the oilfields. This work was important for family security and education.

Texaco Spatial Organization: Houma, Harvey, New Iberia, and Offshore (Morgan City office) Districts. Prosperie spent most of his career in the Houma District. In the Houma District, Texaco had facilities at Lake Pelto, Lake Barre, Caillou Island, Dog Lake, and Bay Ste. Elaine.

Caillou was the biggest, and might have 20 drilling and workover rigs going at one time, the others might have 5 or 6.

Oil Field Development - Inshore to Offshore: It started with wood mats and board roads on the soft land. The move to the marshes and shallow water involved placing the wood mats on piles driven into the water. Barge drilling rigs were convenient to save building and tearing down but they were subject to movement by wind, tide, and wave, which could tear out the drill pipes and cause leaks. So the next step was a submersible/re-floatable barge, which was sunk on site, leaving the drilling equipment above the water level, yet providing a stable platform for drilling. When the drilling was done, the water was pumped out and the barge was re-floated so it could be moved to the next site. All of these were developed inshore --- inside the barrier islands. Moving into deeper water offshore led to more development. On a posted rig, the barge was sunk but the rig equipment was higher up on posts. This eventually evolved into the jack-up barge (lift boat), where the boat and equipment were jacked-up on long stilt-like legs for wireline work. Eventually the process has led to big rigs that float and can drill in deep water with compensating equipment to keep them stable. The progress was from simple to complicated, and the same process could be seen with mud, environmental controls, and aviation.

Boat Evolution: Started with ordinary wooden fishing boats (35-40 feet long), adapted by adding a deck of 3" by 12" wood boards over the fishing hold, to enable them to carry equipment and supplies. Along the way, they added a high bow to take the waves, with an elongated stem for cargo. As distances from shore became longer (3-4 trips), crew boats needed to be faster and last longer, so they were built of aluminum. Offshore supply boats had to be strong enough to carry materials offshore for an 8 hour trip, so they were built of steel. Now there are more specialized liquid mud barges and cement boats. These are the precursors of the boats used for oil work in the North Sea, or support for the exploration of the Titanic. In the early days (1940s-50s), people who made their boats available for oil work were guaranteed the boat would be needed every day of the year.

Early Oil Work: 1953 summer job when he was a sophomore - "doodlebuggin'," seismic work for Delta Exploration. 4 days/week, 16 hours per day, for \$.75 per hour. Summer 1954, worked for Laughlin Brothers, a drilling contractor. In 1955, after graduation from high school, he started working for Texaco as a "flunky" - kitchen helper. Texaco at the time had a policy that a person needed to be 21 before working on the rigs. He worked in the kitchens until he reached 21, then went to the rigs. In 1969 he shifted to production work because of a family illness, he needed to be more accessible to his family. He also took on a second job with OK Fishing Tools in 1969. For some time he worked nights for Texaco and days for OK Fishing.

OK Fishing Tools: He worked as sales manager for OK Fishing Tools until they were bought out by Quality Tubular Service in 1998. He continued working for QTS as a salesman. When it was bought out by Knight Oil Tools in 2002, he remained as a salesman, working on commission. OK was a small company with five operators with a good reputation, and was careful not to expand too quickly. They made sure tools were paid for without major debt. They shared ideas and had some real expertise in-house. Their client base was continental, working in both the Atlantic and Pacific.

Busts: The industry is cyclic. He has been through five busts. He didn't see any pattern about what causes the busts, sometimes the oil price is high, sometimes low. He thinks it might be a delayed reaction to prices of services. Eventually the oil companies reduce the activity to reduce prices. Since everybody has major capital investments, they need to keep working, even at a discount. Those people who didn't have a cushion to fall back on went under.

Oil and Cajuns: All the boat skippers had a lifetime experience on the water. Cajun work ethic and problem solving ability were advantages. His father was one of the first Cajuns promoted to driller, because of his work ethic. He started as a rig builder, then went to Texaco as a roughneck and worked up to driller. "At that time they weren't openin' up the promotions to many Cajuns in the early years." That was a source of pride.

Morris Pyle

Lafayette, LA

August 7, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz, David DiTucci

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW062

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Morris Pyle was born in east Texas in 1927. At the age of 24 his uncle got him a job on a seismic crew in southern Louisiana swamps and he moved to Lafayette; he worked for that company for about a year and a half. After that he went to work for another company, where he continued to generate maps from seismic data. He describes his early days on the seismic crews in the swamps, particularly noting what they were doing to generate maps and the importance of the local workers for moving about in the swamps.

#### Summary:

Early life: born east Texas in 1927; at 24, living with aunt and uncle in Houston when he got a job on seismic crew in south Louisiana.

Seismic crew: had no prior experience, learned on the job. Overweight guys had a hard time walking in the swamps; saw alligators down towards the Gulf area, but they didn't bother with crews. Used marsh buggies at first; in late '50s, early '60s someone in Bayou Lafourche developed the track buggy, which allowed them to get around faster and easier - revolutionized the seismic industry. Lived and worked off a large quarter boat; worked a 10 and five schedule.

Seismic work: drill holes, put in dynamite, string detectors, and shoot dynamite; used tapes from detectors to create maps. Before seismic techniques developed, had been using gravity systems, but that was a lot of guesswork. When he arrived in south LA, just starting to look for oil away from salt domes; faults would trap oil.

Local workers: hired a lot of them to work on seismic crews; best hands; knew how to walk in swamps - an art; could make more money in the oilfield than they could trapping, but some continued trapping too. Had to hire an interpreter, because half didn't speak English.

Danger: Petty Geophysical accident involving pre-made charges killed seven men in early '40s. Had a rule against making up charges before previous one had been shot; fired a few men for doing that.

Quarter boat: used them when working in inaccessible areas; two-stories, kitchen, cook, maintenance crew; would move the boat to new location every few weeks. Would move to drier areas for hurricanes. Were tricky to maneuver; boat skippers extremely important. Had living expenses paid for on quarter boats, which land crews did not get.

Changes: over the years, data would be sent into a central office from several crews and they would generate maps in the office rather than in the field; were able to move much faster and cover more area offshore than you could in the swamps.

Helicopters: thought they were great at first; sped up transportation in the marshes. Witnessed one accident involving a helicopter; stopped going into the field when found out how dangerous they were.

Family: wife from Breaux Bridge; three of four boys in the oil industry, as well as his son-in-law.

Locals: some couldn't read or write, and weren't aware that they were supposed to get paid extra for overtime; excellent workers. Hired a few black men once; all left after one day because not used to working in swamps.

Oil industry and Louisiana: oil industry put LA on the map, provided lots of jobs, and brought in money.

John Redmond

Houston, TX

November 12, 1999

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

SOC023

### Ethnographic Preface:

After graduating from Tulsa University with a Masters degree in Petroleum and Geological Engineering, John Redmond started at Shell as a Chemist in 1936. In 1941 he helped fully establish the Bellaire Research lab. He spent 1945-1948 he served in West Texas, Midland, and East Texas. He transferred to Houston as Chief Exploitation Engineer in 1947-1948. He served in that capacity until moving to New York as Chief Exploitation Engineer in 1954-1955. From 1961-1965 he served with Shell Canada, and in 1971 he became Shell Oil's Executive Vice President for Exploration and Production.

### Summary:

This interview begins with a discussion of the Bellaire Research Lab and some of the experiences at the Emoryville Lab. There is commentary on Shell Canada with asides on offshore Canada on both coasts. Great information on Cognac and the bidding associated with that project. Additional information on the financial side of the business including the evolution of present value budgeting in Shell.

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John Reilly

Houston, TX

October 30, 2002

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS013

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. John Reilly grew up in Iowa, enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Force in 1943, and served in the Pacific as a radar mechanic. He graduated from Iowa State in 1951 with a degree in geology and joined GSI as a "computer." After working as a seismologist on offshore seismic crews contracted to Union Producing, Reilly went to work for Union in 1957. In 1965, he became district geophysicist in Corpus Christi. After Pennzoil finished its acquisition of Union in 1968, Reilly moved to Houston and eventually became chief geophysicist for Pennzoil.

#### Summary:

Nice discussion of early offshore seismic crews working with GSI on a contract for Union Producing. Exciting time mapping large salt domes. Story about working the 1962 lease sale. Discussion of Pennzoil's acquisition of Union Producing and the special group organized to work the 1970 lease sale. Formation of special company, Pennzoil Offshore Gas Operators (POGO), to acquire leases in the sale. Details on Eugene Island 330, which Pennzoil developed into a major oil field. Key figures in POGO -- Scotty Holland and Bill Gipson. Some discussion of North Sea, evolution of geophysical technology.

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Emmett H.D. Renois

Cut Off, LA

July 17, 2001

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM001

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Interviewed with brother, Butch, Emmett, Jr. is one of two sons of Emmett Renois, Sr., from the Shreveport area. The father, born in 1902, died in 2000. His daughter-in-law, Joycelyn, wife of Butch and secretary to Windell Curole at the Lafourche Levee District, shot a home video of Emmett, Sr., in 1992, covering some of his recollections of working in the Leeville oil fields right after the Depression; Emmett started working on land rigs in north Louisiana at age 16 during summer vacation. He retired from Conoco, where he was a driller on Conoco's own rigs and on Rowan rigs.

Emmett, though retired, fills in for Edison Chouest Offshore on its "drug runs." The company purchases prescription drugs, painkillers, etc., from a local drugstore and delivers them to employees at several facilities

#### Summary:

Getting jobs: oil companies afraid that once they trained local boys, those would quit to go shrimping as season opened; most people came down from Oklahoma and Texas, because people down here were not oil people

Careers: Butch started as roustabout in Chevron's Bay Marchand field in 1961, in production; promoted to wireline operation in 1979; got transferred to transportation, supplying everyone; on platforms, lived in 6-man bunkhouse on corner of platform; Emmett started working on land rigs in north Louisiana at age 16 during summer vacation

Chevron: used to have own rigs and boats, but got out of that business in late 1960's; cheaper to rent rigs and boats, then release them when the job was finished; company's shore facility was in Leeville; after merger with Gulf, moved operations to the larger Gulf yard, right below Chevron's yard; Chevron owns its own helicopters, was at one time largest privately-owned air force in the world; Conoco used more contractors than Chevron

Bay Marchand field: from 1949 to 1986, produced over 500 million barrels of oil

MMS inspection: platforms are like "sitting on a big case of dynamite;" MMS witnesses your inspections of safety devices, if devices out of proper range, they will write up an "INC" - incident not comply; usually informed when inspectors coming out

Automation: Conoco automated, putting robots and sensors on valves; created new jobs - needed 2 or 3 people to take care of automated stuff; if storm got within 50 miles, could shut off platform from New Orleans

Mergers: Butch went through several - Chevron with Gulf, then Tenneco; good people, some with college degrees, got laid off; not many more got laid off with Tenneco merger, since Tenneco had mostly contract workers and wasn't very big

Joycelyn Renois

Cut Off, LA

July 28, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA117

#### Ethnographic Preface:

We met Joycelyn Renois during our initial baseline study of the offshore oil and gas industry in the Gulf of Mexico when she was working for Windell Curole at the South Lafourche Levee District. Tom McGuire interviewed Joycelyn's husband, Butch, and father-in-law, Emmett Jr. He asked Joycelyn if she would be willing to talk about the industry from a woman's perspective, and she agreed. I met her at her home in Galliano.

Joycelyn Badeau Renois was born and has lived all her life in Galliano, Louisiana. Her grandparents were farmers. During World War II, her father began working on boats and learned welding, and when he returned to Louisiana he got a job with Louisiana Bottle Works. In the 1960s he became part owner in a shipyard, where he spent the rest of his career. Joycelyn went to school in Larose, graduated from high school, and went to college at Nicholls in Thibodaux. She met her husband, Butch, when he was visiting his parents; his mother was from Golden Meadow and his father worked in the oil field and had been transferred to southern Louisiana. Butch got a job with Chevron Oil Company and worked there his entire career. When her son started first grade, Joycelyn went to work in a real estate office to help earn money so she and her husband could buy property. In 1978, she got a job at the South Lafourche Levee District, a position she held until her retirement in 2003.

#### Summary:

Family history: Father (Milton) was a farmer and later worked on boats; Father became an owner in the shipyard in the 1960's and built the dry dock, repairing all kinds of boats; Husband's father worked in the oil field; Husband went to high school in Northern Louisiana; Served in Navy; Worked at Chevron Oil for 35 years

College: JR went to Nicholls; School bus provided transportation to and from campus

Community: Close family networks; Not many outsiders; People choosing to stay in the area; Families living on one tract of land

Changes in Galliano: In the 1960's, subdivisions came in as population started to outgrow the land supply

Employment history: JR worked in real estate for 3 or 4 years; In 1978 got a job at the Levee District; Went to college because she wanted to

Husband working offshore: Fairly good salary; Worked 7 and 7, communicated through letters; JR had help from her mother and grandmother; Got used to having her own space so it was hard when husband came inshore and then retired; Benefits of the oil industry included financial stability, good retirement, health and life insurance; Initially, JR didn't know what it would be like to have him gone for 7 days at a time; Holidays; Just had to accept that he would be gone; Sometimes decisions would have to wait until he came back; She was disciplinarian

Women's work: JR's mother ran a grocery store connected to her house for a few years, JR helped her out, eventually closed when a competitor opened up; JR waited until her youngest child went to 1st grade to start working; JR's mother had worked in a shrimp shed as a young woman

Boat company: JR worked as personnel manager; Deck hands had high turnover; Affirmative action; Hard to find deck hands, low pay, no prior training required; Tug boats; Screening required physical and work history; JR decided to take this job instead of starting college

Personal connections in the oil industry: When a job becomes available, people alert those they know who are looking, family members, friends

Real estate: Never a big market, not a lot of transient people, although JR has seen a recent increase

Levee District: JR's boss in real estate talked to the manager; She was responsible for paperwork; Sense of pride and satisfaction that the levee is well-constructed and the community is protected; Political conflicts over the levee

Hurricanes: The levee has prevented flooding in certain areas; When JR's husband worked offshore and a hurricane came, she would wait for him to come in and then they would visit his parents in Northern Louisiana; Setting everything back up after the hurricane cost the oil companies time and money

Impact of the oil industry: Good for the local economy; Weakened Cajun character of the area; JR thinks the oil companies should have invested more, interacted more with the community

Company picnics: Held annually in City Park; Games and prizes; Also Christmas parties; Everything was free, food and rides for the kids; Might still be ongoing

Company housing: Camps in Grand Isle for Exxon employees; Gulftown, was leased property, eventually given back to owner, now it is all rentals, built in the 1950's, at least 20 houses; Chevron's housing was in Beeville across from their office, about 8 houses; Texaco had 6 or 7 houses in Beeville in the late 1920's

Environmental effects: Canals; JR thinks exploration can continue as long as the companies work with the environment; Overall, the effects on the environment were more bad than good, but the community had to make sacrifices to get the oil

Trips to the oil field: Company sponsored helicopter rides to Beeville, Grand Isle; Mostly for the wives, some went to see platforms

Safety: At the World's Fair demonstration in 1987 in New Orleans, JR realized how dangerous offshore work was, before then, she didn't know much about it; One time her husband hurt his leg, went to the hospital and back to work without telling her

Working offshore: The kids just got used to their father working 7 and 7; Her older son tried the oil industry but didn't like it

Women working offshore: Some wives didn't want their husbands to be in the same bunkhouse with other women; Built separate facilities; Most women started with paperwork, as Operator's Assistants, one or two for each area; JR wouldn't have wanted to do it for fear of resentment from the men and because you have to be tough to be an oil field person; Changes in handrail diameter for women; Changes in food

Chevron: Smaller company, didn't have giveaways for employees like others; Bigger companies had contract workers, but Chevron took care of its employees; Gulf and Exxon had more employees in the area

Labor force: Women and blacks starting in the mid to late 1970's; No major racial incidents

Theodore "Butch" Renois

Cut Off, LA

July 17, 2001

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM001

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Interviewed with brother, Emmett, Butch is one of two sons of Emmett Renois, Sr., from the Shreveport area. The father, born in 1902, died in 2000. His daughter-in-law, Joycelyn, wife of Butch and secretary to Windell Curole at the Lafourche Levee District, shot a home video of Emmett, Sr., in 1992, covering some of his recollections of working in the Leeville oil fields right after the Depression; Emmett started working on land rigs in north Louisiana at age 16 during summer vacation. He retired from Conoco, where he was a driller on Conoco's own rigs and on Rowan rigs.

Butch retired from Chevron, where he was first a production operator and then, with the merger of Chevron and Gulf, was transferred onshore to run the supply operation out of Leeville. Butch started as roustabout in Chevron's Bay Marchand field in 1961, in production; promoted to wireline operation in 1979; got transferred to transportation, supplying everyone; on platforms, lived in 6-man bunkhouse on corner of platform. Both are avid hunters, but not down here; they go up to the old family place of origin around Shreveport.

#### Summary:

Getting jobs: oil companies afraid that once they trained local boys, those would quit to go shrimping as season opened; most people came down from Oklahoma and Texas, because people down here were not oil people

Careers: Butch started as roustabout in Chevron's Bay Marchand field in 1961, in production; promoted to wireline operation in 1979; got transferred to transportation, supplying everyone; on platforms, lived in 6-man bunkhouse on corner of platform; Emmett started working on land rigs in north Louisiana at age 16 during summer vacation

Chevron: used to have own rigs and boats, but got out of that business in late 1960's; cheaper to rent rigs and boats, then release them when the job was finished; company's shore facility was in Leeville; after merger with Gulf, moved operations to the larger Gulf yard, right below Chevron's yard; Chevron owns its own helicopters, was at one time largest privately-owned air force in the world; Conoco used more contractors than Chevron

Bay Marchand field: from 1949 to 1986, produced over 500 million barrels of oil

MMS inspection: platforms are like "sitting on a big case of dynamite;" MMS witnesses your inspections of safety devices, if devices out of proper range, they will write up an "INC" - incident not comply; usually informed when inspectors coming out

Automation: Conoco automated, putting robots and sensors on valves; created new jobs - needed 2 or 3 people to take care of automated stuff; if storm got within 50 miles, could shut off platform from New Orleans

Mergers: Butch went through several - Chevron with Gulf, then Tenneco; good people, some with college degrees, got laid off; not many more got laid off with Tenneco merger, since Tenneco had mostly contract workers and wasn't very big

Dwight Reyes

Grand Bayou, LA

July 22, 2003

Interviewed by: Jessica Piekielek

University of Arizona

JP008

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Dwight Reyes (pronounced Reese) is Myrtle Phillips' older brother and also lives in Grand Bayou. Diane Austin and I had met Dwight the week before while visiting with Myrtle, and had asked if he would be willing to do an interview. He said that he would be, but that he was busy that afternoon doing some work outside. When I returned to Plaquemines Parish, I called Myrtle and she arranged a time to meet with Dwight Reyes. When we arrived, Dwight was outside making repairs to his boat. Myrtle stayed for the interview and Dwight's wife, Teresa, was also present. They kept the television on in the living room while we talked, although it was not distracting. They like to watch one of the cooking channels and sometimes try out the recipes. Teresa had been sick with cancer and may still be; I didn't ask about her current state of health.

Dwight Reyes was born in New Orleans in 1946 and moved to Grand Bayou at the age of five with his family. His father and later he and his brothers were trappers. He began working on boats as a deckhand at the age of eleven. In 1960, he began work for J&J Towing where he stayed for 14 years. Afterward, he worked seven years for Buster Hughes, which laid pipe for oil companies. At both J&J Towing and Buster Hughes, Dwight Reyes worked on boats. Intermittently, he worked as a trapper and trawler. When his children were old enough to walk, Dwight Reyes stopped work for the oil companies, except for occasional jobs, and began work as a full time fisherman.

#### Summary:

Personal: Born 1946 in New Orleans, moved to Grand Bayou at age 5, married, 3 sons, 2 sons work in oil

Career: family took out of school and began work at age 11, deckhand on boats; J&J Towing for 14 years; J&J sold out, so no longer worked with J&J; broke toes; brother saw advertisement in paper that Buster Hughes was hiring, started with company, then got D.R. job, 7 years for Buster Hughes, which laid pipe, made \$125/day when started working for Buster Hughes, once worked nine months straight without coming home for Buster Hughes because didn't have a replacement, generally worked 7-7, got along with people at Buster Hughes, good to work with, wife, Teresa, called while out on boat and told D.R. that last kid was walking so D.R. could quit; quit Buster Hughes and worked for self trawling, liked working for self better; would work again in oil and gas, but only as a younger man, wouldn't want to do so currently

Navigation: learned how to get different places from older guys, would call up on radio and ask them how to get places, eventually learned to get to a lot of places.

Licensing: Didn't need license when working with J&J, needed license with Buster Hughes, exams got more difficult, involved using a slide rule, until Dwight Reyes could no longer get a license because of his limited schooling, so quit work with Buster Hughes; college kids can pass exam and get license, but now there are more accidents in river than there used to be, because licensed doesn't mean they understand how to operate.

Father: was trawler and trapper; once had boat, but at one point for a few years didn't use or keep up (trawling was not profitable at this time? Sons busy with oil jobs?), wooden hulled boat rotted and bug-eaten and couldn't fix, regretted later letting boat fall apart.

Dangers and Accidents: work with Buster Hughes could be dangerous, if cut line accidentally could make a "hot tap," which would emit poisonous gases; once hit gas line with boat, blew hole in boat, man who gave okay for boat to pass lost his job; only knew of one death at Buster Hughes while he was working there.

Changes: High speed motor and air boats from sports fisherman are currently widening oil canals from strong wakes; land has dropped 5 feet in Grand Bayou.

Percy Rhodes

Houma, LA

January 24, 2003

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS007

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Percy Rhodes was recommended by Diana Edmonson of the Houma-Terrebonne Council on Aging. She contacted him directly and got his agreement ahead of time. On my visit, he and his wife, Ann, were both welcoming. By the end of the interview, his wife sat in and made some comments. He was very excited about the photo book and made some corrections.

Percy Rhodes started with Texaco in 1956 as a kitchen hand at the camp at Lake Pelto. In 1959, he was 21 and then allowed to work on the rigs as a roustabout. Later he worked in production. In 1969 he worked as an independent contractor as a tugboat captain. When oil work slowed in 1976, he lost his contract, and began working for Texaco on a boat crew. By 1986, he became a mechanic and worked in that capacity at Caillou Island until retirement in 1994.

#### Summary:

**Oil Family:** Percy's father was a fisherman and boat builder, who became a boat captain for Texaco, operating out of Montegut. He was a contractor, with stand-by, crew boats. His brother, Wilbert, worked for Union Oil. He has a son-in-law with Shell, and his son works for Gemeco oil service.

**Shift Work:** Work times at the camps were 11-12 hour days. As a tug boat captain, contractor, he was often working for more than 12 hour days. At first there were no communications between home and the camps, so his wife could never be sure when he was coming in. He was able to get time off when their first two children were born, but not the third.

Wilbert Rhodes

Bourg, LA

January 29, 2003

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS010

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Wilbert Rhodes is the brother of Percy Rhodes whom I had interviewed previously. Like Percy, Wilbert was contacted by Diana Edmonson of the Council on Aging. Wilbert and his wife, Geri, live in Bourg, not far from the field where he worked. Geri is a retired teacher. We spent a fair amount of time going through the photo book.

Wilbert Rhodes' father was a trapper, carpenter, and boat builder (he developed a V-bottom boat which was successful for inshore work) who worked as a contractor for the oil fields, mostly Texaco. He attended McNeese College for two years (1953-54), but went to work when he was married. He worked on one of his father's boats until 1958, when he went to work for Texaco as a galley hand. Then he worked as a production clerk for Texaco for 8 years. In 1966 he went to work for Unocal as production clerk. In 1972 he shifted to personnel and safety. In 1985, he was promoted to district industrial relations supervisor and manager of the Houma office. He retired in 1991.

#### Summary:

**Production Clerk:** Kept track of production records, payroll, royalty allocations. Union was the first to put production accounting on computer. At Texaco he worked at the fields, but for Union he worked out of Houma.

**Office and Safety Manager:** Was a wide-ranging job, involving day-to-day management, safety and liability issues, affirmative action, personnel, workman's compensation.

**Safety:** Was responsible for safety training. Had a fire training ground at Houma, at Coteau Field. Had to train personnel for safety, also watch contractors.

**Union Oil Work Areas:** Coteau Field was a major field. Boat base at Dulac. Union had land, inshore and offshore fields. Houma field was a gas field off Highway 660. Union had a field at Caillou Island next to the Texaco field.

**Work on Steam Powered Drilling Rigs:** Steam rig had two barges, one with drilling rig and one with boilers. Gas lines had to be laid to run the boilers. Drilling barges were sunk to stabilize them before drilling. Slip created to move in barge

Montegut: Texaco had a shore base - dry dock and supply base at Montegut. When Texaco shut down the base and the sugar mill stopped, most economic activity stopped, except for camps.

1980s Land Rig: Small rig on trucks set up on his property, with wood corduroy road.

E.J. Richardelle

Cut Off, LA

July 22, 2001

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA003

#### Ethnographic Preface:

E.J. Richardelle's wife, Katherine, became involved in the history project during the first meeting of the project action team established by the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program. We talked about the study design and goals, and Katherine became animated as she realized that her entire life had been affected by the oil and gas industry. I suggested that Katherine and her husband should be interviewed, and she invited me to their house. I arrived the morning after Katherine and E.J. had returned from visiting their son in Mississippi.

E.J. was born in February 1933 in Larose, Louisiana, and worked for Chevron from 1955-1990. He started working on boats and was transferred to platforms in 1971 when Chevron sold its marine fleet. He worked as an oiler, gauger, and safety man.

#### Summary:

Overview: employed by Chevron from 1955-1990; started on small push boat transporting water from Golden Meadow to Fourchon; had just come out of the service; stayed on boat three years; then on supply boats carrying supplies from Leeville Dock to offshore platforms and rigs; before service, worked for Coca-Cola from age 16-18, then as deckhand on boat where father was mate for a year, then for Bollinger; then drafted at age 20, home at age 22; worked on LST that Chevron had bought and converted to drilling tender; didn't like the job, but liked the people; worked 7-and-7 the whole time for Chevron; good living.

Work experiences: worked on LST for 21 years as oiler in engine room; not aware of effects of noise on hearing, now almost deaf; kept supplies and drilling water on the LST; companies like Schlumberger and Halliburton would come out and do their work from the LST; would have to purify diesel fuel; could stay in one spot for years; primary job was to run the generators for the ship; engineer would handle problems; had galley, cooks, TV room, laundry room; people on rigs had the real hard work.

Hurricanes: had to stay on vessels when hurricane hit; on LST at mouth of Mississippi River when Camille hit; storm put the ship on the banks; took three weeks to dredge around and get ship back into the water; then lost car that was parked in Venice; somebody took clothes; someone egged him while hitchhiking home; would mark calendars which weeks home, which gone; used helicopters in good weather, crewboats in bad; first hurricane (Hilda) hit when married 11 months, daughter born that night; Katherine had to manage two children and elderly grandfather.

Additional career moves and observations: Chevron sold marine department; went to Cameron in 1971 as radio operator on drilling barge for 3-4 years; then into production at Ship Shoal 107 in 1975, worked in the Morgan City area for about 15 years; began working as a safety man; installed and maintained safety equipment; safety meeting every month; period when working at Cameron hardest, had to leave at 2 am, drove to Cameron to pick up company car, rode to Cameron, returned late at night; co-workers from northern Mississippi, northern Arkansas, Alabama, Florida; got along great, everyone did their jobs; miss the people; top priority was safety; had to go to every platform in the field each month; worked as a gauger for a little while; very strict rules, vulnerable to lawsuits; more oilfield deaths from helicopter accidents than on platforms; first day worked as deckhand with captain Emile Cheramie and mate George St. Pierre; when home drove a truck and worked at service station, car lot, church; "The object of the game was to make a living."

Katherine: also worked, enjoyed the freedom when he was gone; everyone was making money, the economy was good; kids today are on tight budget, left the oilfield when the bottom fell out; "We lived in the best of times;" born after the Depression, no major recession, was with Chevron his entire career; son went into the oilfield but had repeated layoffs; we never thought about being laid off; steady work; retired when the company said he would have to go overseas or be demoted; total effect on community - put money in our pockets, gave people a better standard of living, made women more independent.

Katherine Richardelle

Cut Off, LA

July 22, 2001, January 21, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA003, DA026p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Katherine Richardelle became involved in the history project during the first meeting of the project action team established by the Barataria-Terrebonne National Estuary Program. We talked about the study design and goals, and Katherine became animated as she realized that her entire life had been affected by the oil and gas industry. I suggested that Katherine and her husband, E.J., should be interviewed, and she invited me to their house. I arrived the morning after Katherine and E.J. had returned from visiting their son in Mississippi. The first interview is a joint interview with the two of them. In the second interview, Katherine took me to meet with her mother, Bernice Curole, to look at photos from Golden Meadow in the 1930s.

Katherine worked onshore, in the local school and at the health unit, for more than twenty years. Her husband, E.J., worked for Chevron from 1955-1990, first on boats and later on platforms. He worked as an oiler, gauger, and safety man. At the time of the interview, Katherine was working part-time in the office of the South Lafourche Levee District, with Joycelyn Renois, wife of Butch Renois (see TM001).

#### Summary of DA003:

Overview: employed by Chevron from 1955-1990; started on small push boat transporting water from Golden Meadow to Fourchon; had just come out of the service; stayed on boat three years; then on supply boats carrying supplies from Leeville Dock to offshore platforms and rigs; before service, worked for Coca-Cola from age 16-18, then as deckhand on boat where father was mate for a year, then for Bollinger; then drafted at age 20, home at age 22; worked on LST that Chevron had bought and converted to drilling tender; didn't like the job, but liked the people; worked 7-and-7 the whole time for Chevron; good living.

Work experiences: worked on LST for 21 years as oiler in engine room; not aware of effects of noise on hearing, now almost deaf; kept supplies and drilling water on the LST; companies like Schlumberger and Halliburton would come out and do their work from the LST; would have to purify diesel fuel; could stay in one spot for years; primary job was to run the generators for the ship; engineer would handle problems; had galley, cooks, TV room, laundry room; people on rigs had the real hard work.

Hurricanes: had to stay on vessels when hurricane hit; on LST at mouth of Mississippi River when Camille hit; storm put the ship on the banks; took three weeks to dredge around and get ship back into the water; then lost car that was parked in Venice; somebody took clothes; someone egged him while hitchhiking home; would mark calendars which weeks home, which

gone; used helicopters in good weather, crewboats in bad; first hurricane (Hilda) hit when married 11 months, daughter born that night; Katherine had to manage two children and elderly grandfather.

Additional career moves and observations: Chevron sold marine department; went to Cameron in 1971 as radio operator on drilling barge for 3-4 years; then into production at Ship Shoal 107 in 1975, worked in the Morgan City area for about 15 years; began working as a safety man; installed and maintained safety equipment; safety meeting every month; period when working at Cameron hardest, had to leave at 2 am, drove to Cameron to pick up company car, rode to Cameron, returned late at night; co-workers from northern Mississippi, northern Arkansas, Alabama, Florida; got along great, everyone did their jobs; miss the people; top priority was safety; had to go to every platform in the field each month; worked as a gauger for a little while; very strict rules, vulnerable to lawsuits; more oilfield deaths from helicopter accidents than on platforms; first day worked as deckhand with captain Emile Cheramie and mate George St. Pierre; when home drove a truck and worked at service station, car lot, church; "The object of the game was to make a living."

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Summary of DA026p:

Early oil wells in Golden Meadow: they made two wells in the back and two in the front; they were almost on the houses; we had to move the house; remember having to bend down and have children scream to be heard because the pumps were so loud; father-in-law had property on the 308 side in Golden Meadow, south of Yankee Canal; we couldn't live there anymore after the wells were drilled, so father-in-law bought property here; they messed up the land; it was good for checks, paid for the land and to move our houses here

Blowout on Highway 1: 1939 or 1940; close to high school in Golden Meadow; had to leave because oil was everywhere; took the bus from Golden Meadow to Thibodaux and then a cab to relative's house; oil companies made no effort to compensate anyone; stayed in Thibodaux and then called Mark Picciola's store, kept calling until he said everything was okay; only about three phones in Golden Meadow then; Picciola would get calls and then come out with a megaphone; after the companies were done drilling, they moved out and left everything; all the grass died, houses messy from oil drizzle

Irvin Richoux

Grand Isle, LA

March 20, 2003

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM063

#### Ethnographic Preface:

On my trip in January, I paid a courtesy call to the mayor, David Camardelle, whom I had met on an earlier project. After chatting, he introduced me to the building inspector, Irvin Richoux. He would be out of town, but agreed to meet with me the next time I came down. I interviewed him in his office at the Town Hall, as it was being vacuumed at the close of the day.

Irvin Richoux is Grand Isle's building inspector and also port commissioner. He came from Golden Meadow at age 6, in 1944. His daddy was an iceman working out of Golden Meadow, then built a house on the island. Irvin thus grew up on Grand Isle, owned a gas station that was destroyed by Hurricane Betsy in 1965, moved back up the bayou for a few years, returned to Grand Isle as a minister, built a couple of shrimp boats, became the town's chief mechanic, then was asked to become building inspector. He was 63 when he moved inside to an office at Town Hall.

#### Summary:

Growing up and career: was small family community, more beach, but now tourism is needed; owned Exxon service station 1960 to 1965; Betsy took it, and 2 homes that he owned, so moved away; 1973 moved back and became pastor of church, then started evangelizing and built 2 shrimp boats, got sick (heart attack) and got rid of boats; Lord healed him, went to work for town as head mechanic, street commissioner, then building inspector

Changes: water line from Lafitte changed things; bumper stickers used to read "Land of Sand and Sin;" changed to "...Sun and Sand" after he became spiritual advisor to mayor; plans for economic development

Father: iceman; brought in priest to marry people living together, changed GI into family oriented community

Offshore ship port plan: at federal/state waterline; based on scheme to build landing strip in Pacific Ocean for Air Force; built in acre sections, cells joined together, platform anchored to ocean floor; water calm inside; ships tie up to outside, transfer cargo to barges; not permit requirements, doesn't effect environment; can save 2 week's time to ship; Millennium Port plans are not getting anywhere; we have private money interested in this; Corps already said new port should be 10-12 miles inside Barataria Bay, much easier to keep dredged than if on Mississippi River

Port Commission: Mayor Valence revived it, after it had no meetings

Port Commission/property: Wildlife and Fisheries to move to property at end of Ludwig Lane; plans for import/sales facility to attract off-season visitors, selling souvenirs; want to export bottled water back to Mexico; birding operation very popular; Wayne Keller developing butterfly area; port working with LSU (John Suppan) to develop oyster hatchery, getting wetlands permits from Corps; want to develop small hospital

FEMA codes: town adopted codes to get flood insurance; our job is to get everyone to comply with codes; lot of people trying to do things they aren't supposed to do; big violation is putting bathrooms on ground floor but reason doesn't make much sense since septic tanks are on ground anyway and are susceptible to flooding; construction before 1994 grandfathered so "in compliance" but any upgrades or repairs from damage you do are limited to 50% of appraised value of property; companies get permits, but state and federal agencies (e.g. Coast Guard) should come to us as "good neighbors"

Future: may have to address "high-rise" future to continue to develop; so much land on GI is "wetland"; 2 people contacted me about high-rise development; some people want it because it could be place to live with no maintenance; others say it would change nature of community; "I like the community as it was 50 years back, but my job is to see progress develop;"

Ice: father got up at midnight, make 3 trips to GI to storage, then deliver ice.

Aubin Clovis Rigaud

Grand Isle, LA

January 22, 2003, January 20, 2005

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire, Christina Leza

University of Arizona

TM057, CL002

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Harris Cheramie at the Port Fourchon Marina recommended Aubin Rigaud who was listed, erroneously, as Clovis Austin Rigaud in the phonebook. While interviewing Arthur Bellanger, the error was detected and I was put on the right trail. Since Harris' referrals have been extremely productive in the past, I was eager to meet Mr. Rigaud. I interviewed him at his home along Coulon Rigaud Lane, where his family has lived for many generations. The interview ranged widely over the Grand Isle economy of farming, shrimping, and fishing, marketing cucumbers in Chicago, some observations on the erosion of the beaches. He also recalled the punishment for speaking French in school: if he had kept all the yellow sheets of paper where he had to write down phrases, you could lay them down and walk from Grand Isle to Golden Meadow on them. The second interview was conducted as part of the study of the links between WWII and the offshore industry.

Aubin was 70 years old at the time of the 2003 interview, having recently stopped shrimping due to health problems. His father was also a shrimper, on seine boats. His grandmother was a midwife, long before Grand Isle had any doctors. Rigaud remembers a hard childhood of constant chores, a rather autocratic family structure, and a childhood nickname of "Patch," for the shape of the clothes he wore. When his father got arthritis, Aubin quit school and took over the family shrimp boat - a captain at age 13. After the Korean War, he went to work offshore, then learned welding and spent 18 years on the rigs, working for a welding company contracted out to Humble/Exxon.

#### Summary of TM057:

Background: raised on fat of the land; 20 years old before he saw electricity; daddy, grandpa were fishermen and raised cucumbers; sold to Chicago market for 32 years on handshake agreement; used shrimp brand from Chinese drying platforms for fertilizer; daddy worked on old wooden bridge in 1932; daddy shrimped; grandpa hauled wood, used horse/wagon like dumptruck; collected and sold driftwood to homes; had to do what every grownup told you to do, only thing different from him and a slave was his color; rough for kids; quit school at 13 when daddy got crippled with arthritis; became boat captain at 13; Exxon came in 1948; went on tugs at 17 as deckhand; drafted at 20 in 1952; got electricity then; went to work for Tideland Marine, a branch of Brown and Root; made me gangpusher in 1957

Union: Exxon afraid they would come in, so they laid us all off, then rehired us at different times

Work: became welder's helper; then welded 18 years offshore; skidding rigs, hooking up rigs; last 8 years was production welder; 1973 heart attack, bought little shrimp boat, then built steel-hulled shrimp boat; always big discrimination on wages, always very low; aneurism in 2000

Cattle and horses: lots running wild, then made stock law; fence it in

Danziger: big landowners, sold to Exxon; people without much education didn't keep up with taxes, so this family picked up land; they weren't locals

Houses: stacked bricks inside walls for weight; cut trap door in floor so water could come inside house so it wouldn't float away in storm

Chinamen: would sell trout to them, they would sun-dry it

Cucumbers: at one time average 250 boxes leaving GI every day for 2 weeks; plant in February to get to market before Florida market; local trucks bring it to railhead in New Orleans

Water: grandpa would sell water; Yanner Hotel had well, we'd buy it for 25 cents/barrel; sell it for \$1.00; too much iron in water; drinking water from rain, kept in wooden cistern; March-May usually didn't rain, then with first rain, cistern had to swell up

English: didn't teach kids French, we was wrong doing that; he lost lots of good jobs as welder because he didn't finish school and couldn't handle paperwork (e.g. blueprints)

Welding: was certified top welder, contracting for Barnes Welding Service for Humble/Exxon; skid rigs; one time he worked 84 hours straight, made big check that week

Hog killing day: in wintertime when real cold; made crackling, put it in the grease; would never kill beef, didn't know what to do with it; cattle taken up the bayou; he's going to do one pretty soon, as a give-away affair, hogheads cheese, blood sausage

Ice man: old man Herman Richoux, recently died; from Lockport; 300-pound blocks;

WWII: no sugar; had coupons; food hard to get in stores; Welfare would give out pork and beans; catch mullet; lot of birds but only kill what you needed; couldn't preserve them; eat diamondback turtles

Providing: every house would sun-dry own shrimp; raise chickens for eggs; cucumber farms all over, plant on little hills, pyramids; little square covers to put on plants in cold weather; Ludwig Store made turtle pen, would buy turtles, then ship them to Chicago

Rigauds: used to own all the island, had 50 slaves, would hire them out to people who needed them; exchange cattle for fur brought by Indians, ship fur to New Orleans, made big money

Shrimp: bottom trawlers started in 1932; he built steel-hulled boat 25 years ago, then built one for son, helped build boats for sons; was always in top 10 because he put in more hours; sold

shrimp to Cheramies because they helped out dad when he was sick, then to Wayne Estey; gave boat to son last year at bargain price; bycatch feeding a lot of species; porpoises are biggest scavengers

Beach changes: had big sand dunes, but tourists bought up land, wanted easy walk to beach; 1959, wooden jetties straight out, but no upkeep, weren't replaced; rocks now don't do any good, don't stop flow of current

Sport fishing: many people supported by it

Civilian Air Patrol: sub watch during war

Humble/Exxon: had mess hall, feed every worker and families; daddy would get slop from mess hall to feed his hogs

Summary of CL002:

Early years: Clovis was born in 1932 on Grand Isle. He went up to 7th grade before he stopped going to school due to his father getting a crippling arthritis. At 13 years old, he became the man of the house. He also took over his father's shrimp boat and became a captain.

WWII: After Pearl Harbor, the military came out to Grand Isle and established a base. The Coast Guard established a base as well. The Coast Guard and Air Force personnel patrolled the Gulf, looking for German U-boats. The arrival of the Air base created 700 jobs. Locals were hired as security for the planes to basically stop the 700 head of cattle from destroying the canvas planes. They were paid \$6 a day.

After the war: Between 1950-51, Clovis worked as a deckhand for Exxon.

Impact of WWII: Clovis remembers the rationing during WWII very well. He remembers eating lots of pork and beans. They weren't allowed any sugar, they were allowed to have one can of condensed milk and one pound of butter a month, and they were allowed only 10-12 gallons of gas a day for their shrimp boat. They had blackouts when no electricity was allowed to be used at night. Clovis also recalls when a oil rig was torpedoed by a German vessel. The oil polluted the water and animals for several years. Also, during this time, the people of Grand Isle were destitute. Some of the locals were caught delivering supplies, like fresh bread and produce and gallons of gasoline, to Germans offshore to earn extra money.

Local economy: The main economy of Grand Isle was farming cucumbers and green beans, raising cattle, fishing, oystering and shrimping. The economy improved slightly after the war when many dance halls were opened and lots of people would travel there because they could get away with anything. The arrival of the oil companies helped boost the economy too. At the same time, there was decrease in shrimping.

Safety: Clovis recalls handling nasty chemicals that the oil industry would use. Some were named "black magic" and would permanently deform and cripple whatever part of the body that

they touched; a lot of people were hurt by this. He remembers that the companies didn't care who got hurt as long as they were producing oil.

Changes after war: Clovis remembers some of the major changes that happened after the war: a huge increase in coastal erosion and changes in the currents. Oil companies stopped using Navy surplus vessels and began building their own. Those were bigger and could no longer be used in the shallow waters of Grand Isle, so the companies moved to Port Fourchon.

Al Rivet

New Iberia, LA

April 18, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG004

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Al Rivet was the president of the local chapter of the Shell retirees' club, and he was recommended to me by Jimmy Hebert, the vice-president of the same club. He's a jovial and outgoing guy. Al is a wealth of knowledge about the oilfield and offshore work. We were able to talk about a lot of interesting things in the course of our discussion, including the role of hands-on experience in forging an oilman, the hierarchy of positions on the rig, the attitude of the labor, the culture of rig life, the role of social networks in getting business and finding a job, the shift from Texan to Cajun drillers, the old way of putting together a crew, how the demands on the rig bring diverse peoples together, and how fishing boosted morale. Al Rivet is a veteran; after returning from service he started work for Shell as a galley hand in 1954. He ended his career as a toolpusher, still with Shell.

#### Summary:

**Personal work history:** He talks about his start offshore, what the early offshore rigs were called, what they were like, and continues with a description of Shell's offshore activities. Then he spends some time talking about what it was like working offshore.

**Experience:** In the old days, the guys in the office were experienced offshore, too. They knew what they were talking about. Things aren't like that anymore.

**Contractors and rigs:** We talk about contractors and contract rigs, the hierarchy of jobs on the rig. Al describes the duties of each position, and then talks about Shell's move away from contract rigs in 1961. Then we talk about the different rig types and some of the drilling techniques.

**Personal history:** Al goes over his own personal history, talks a little bit about labor's attitude and changes over the years. Then he talks fondly about how it was out on the rigs in the old days. There's more discussion of the offshore labor pool, and then some discussion about promotions and demotions.

**Social networks:** He talks about the impact of social networks in the industry for finding employment and advancing. Then we talk about different drilling techniques. There's some discussion of the freedom and responsibility of working in the industry, more discussion of social networks, and then some more information about his work history. He talks about contract rigs, and then about the process of putting together a crew.

Labor: He talks about the changes in the labor pool, his retirement, the changing quality of labor, the impact of having Blacks offshore, and cooperation on the rigs and its necessity.

Busts: We talk about the economic busts in the oil industry, and then he tells a story about when Mrs. King, a Senator's wife, came out for a visit to the rig. Then he talks about how they used to fish off the rig.

Weeks Island: He talks about growing up on Weeks Island, about the village manager.

Evaluation: He gives an evaluation of the industry and its future.

William Robb

Houston, TX

August 19, 2006

Interviewed by: Jason P. Theriot

University of Houston/History International

MMS079

### Ethnographic Preface:

Captain Bill Robb grew up near a seaport in Scotland. He went to sea as an apprentice at age 16. When World War II broke out, he was thrust into the Merchant Marine, transporting cargo from Europe to the Far East. He participated in the Allied Invasion of North Africa in November 1942; his ship was bombed by a German torpedo bomber and was never recovered. After the war, he became a captain continued to work at sea, until he came to the Port of Houston in 1949 as a superintendent for a stevedoring company. He retired as Vice President of Young & Company Stevedoring after 50 years in the business.

### Summary:

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Ira Robertson

Thibodaux, LA

September 17, 2001

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB017

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Ira Robertson is the ex-brother-in-law of Ms. Delores Henderson of Morgan City, wife of Caleb Henderson (RH011). Ms. Delores called me in August to tell me about Ira; she had already talked to him about the project. Even though he isn't married to Caleb's sister anymore, Ira and Ms. Delores still see each other once a week when he comes over to cut her lawn. He lives in a small gray house with sea foam green shutters in Thibodaux, LA. Ira is an easygoing man, quick with a smile and a laugh unless a topic he was particularly passionate about came up. He then became somewhat of a preacher, extolling the vices and virtues needed to keep one's soul from fire and damnation. He gives a wonderful perspective about what it was like to be Black and working in the late 60's and early 70's.

Ira was born near Shreveport and moved to Morgan City in 1960 where his brother-in-law got him a job with McDermott. He worked as a welder for McDermott until he had problems with one of the bosses and then moved on to Avondale in Bayou Black. He advanced from tacker to welder to welder foreman. He enjoyed his job very much, although he said the only way he made it was because he had 7 children to feed and he was willing to put up with a lot. He said that was the choice the Black man had, either do your best to ignore the name calling and the unfair policies or leave and go sit on your couch.

#### Summary:

Early life: born near Shreveport, dodging the draft because all his friends were coming back dead. He went in to the Navy instead in 1953. Came back and started going to night school, met his wife and got married. Moved to Morgan City because Caleb was her brother. Caleb got him a job at McDermott shipyard in December 1960. Went to work for Avondale in 1963 because he was laid off from McDermott due to a misunderstanding with his boss.

Caleb: got him the job, called him "yellow hat" because of his yellow hat. Fred Williams was a rigging super as was Caleb and both were Black. These were very high positions for a Black man in the 60's to have. Worked for Mr. Campbell who was willing to give him a chance. He died in the 70's and the rest of the bosses snowed Caleb. Mr. Fanguy and Mr. Snow became the bosses and they were against a Black man having a position. Mr. Moody was an inspector for Exxon and didn't have any favoritism. Mr. Moody hired Caleb and gave him the opportunity to make it at Exxon. He was a company man through and through. Didn't believe in favoritism. He fired his two brothers because it was the job he had to do at the time.

First day at work: Was a truck driver so he didn't know anything about the oil industry, he learned on the job. He got used to it being hot and raining a lot and wearing a hard hat. Did a lot of grinding because they did not allow a Black man to hold a torch.

Jobs the Blacks had: Quite a few Blacks in those days but the jobs they were allowed to handle had to do with water hauling and cleanup, grinding, and trash hauling and pick up. He was paid a \$1.10 at McDermott. If you want to be successful in this type of work you have to take a lot of shit (his words) and put up with a lot of name-calling but as long as you were a hard worker and remembered why you had to be there. He said he started at the bottom, thanks to Caleb for the job, and worked his way up.

Getting fired: a Black man could get fired for anything, what you wore, how you said something. No re-hiring of Blacks once you got fired. Most of the whites that worked there were hired because they were family members.

More on Caleb: Blacks didn't like Caleb because they wanted what he had. He would never pass you up. If he saw someone on the street he'd tell him or her to come down and he'd give them a job, but would tell them that they had to work. Realized that Caleb was sticking his neck out for others, often strangers. Some of the people he helped didn't appreciate it. He was mean at work, he said what he meant. He loved his work and was a company man. Caleb was glad when Ira left McDermott b/c he saw it as taking a step out on his own. Left a legacy for a lot of people. Didn't want appreciation only wanted you to work.

The September 11 attack: He is very shaken up by the attack on America and spoke extensively on how things needed to be and what was the matter with the world. In his opinion, we need to bring industry closer to home so that our people can benefit from it instead of sending money and manpower overseas. Pay attention to God who is saying that we need to come together. Calls it a tragedy of the Devil. Ira has been a deacon for 25 years.

1960's: Glad to get new job, had it a little bit better at Avondale. Says it's because of time passing. Worked for Ernest Dupont, who believed in equality as long as you did his work.

Jobs: Worked in the office, to tacker to welder to welder foreman. He was never laid off at Avondale and made good money. 7 days a week 11 - 12 hours a day. Keep up the pace because he had 7 kids to feed and he enjoyed it.

Retirement: Enjoys working at Nicholls State in the student union, even though it's a challenge, has been there about a year since retiring. He enjoys going and talking to the minority students. Tells them to stop being a statistic, be somebody instead of a nobody. Believes in getting an education for anything you do. Lots of preaching about how to change society, for example, getting women off welfare, helping single mothers by providing support for kids. "Keep your pants on and get yourself to school."

"Success:" Success was all of his kids having a high school education. I'll get you what you need and not what you want. Shooting for the moon is success now and then. Wanted to be a

superintendent but Ernest Dupont left the company and no else would support that decision. Adamant that you have to work for what you want.

Changes: Things are never going to be the same because so much work is going overseas. Rigs set up for 3 - 4,000 feet of water. No one wants to spend the money or resources to get the land. Says it's the politician's fault. 1987 & 1988, the bottom fell out. Shut Avondale Bayou Black yard down in 1988 and moved everyone to New Orleans. We have enough oil in Louisiana to last for decades but things are going overseas and our people are losing jobs because they're going to the Israelis. We have the resources, we just don't want to use it, don't want to spend the money.

Safety: Not a lot of safety when he worked there. People would drown sometimes. Says that if you got hurt you were to blame for it, you should have done this or done that, that policy was colorblind. Very difficult to defend yourself at the fabrication companies. Different from offshore because they are on Exxon's or Mobile's time and place.

Environment: When he first began there was no respirators or earplugs, they did have safety glasses. Ira has asbestos in his system from working on a ship that had asbestos in it. Has a letter that explains the problems he would have trying to get money from his asbestos claim. It would cost him more money to complete the claim than not to. 3,000 - 4,000 Avondale employees went to New Orleans to get tested for asbestos in their systems, the majority came out positive. When Isnic took over, they changed Avondale's environmental policies.

Unions: Avondale is now unionized. Says that back then unions wouldn't have done them any good, wouldn't pay overtime or double time. Lots of talk around '82 - '83, voted to bring one in or not. Didn't see the point of paying dues, that money could go somewhere else. If wives said don't vote for union, you don't vote for the union. Wives liked their husbands working so much because that was more money for them to spend. God provided for him and he is thankful that he was able to provide for his father.

Joseph Wilson Robin

Arnaudville, LA

July 1, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW007

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Joseph W. Robin was born in 1937 in Breaux Bridge, where his family had cotton and heifers. After graduating high school there in 1955, he went to study agriculture for three months at Southwestern Louisiana Institute (SLI, now ULL). He worked for Southern Pacific for three or four months before going to work for Phillips 66 in 1957 as a deckhand and replacement engineer, servicing the Eugene Island area. In 1962 he went to work for Sewart Sea Craft. Over a period of six months he was off work, during which time he was ill; then in 1963 he went to work for Tidewater as a deckhand engineer; two years later he became a boat captain. While working for Tidewater he got his 100-, 300-, 500-, and 1600-ton boat licenses and his ocean endorsement. In 1992, the company named a boat after him, the "Joe Tide". For the year and a half before he retired in 1999, he worked as a safety man and helped to certify the company with the American Bureau of Shipping (ABS).

#### Summary:

Early life: he was born ('37) and raised in Breaux Bridge and his wife is from Arnaudville (born '39); he studied agriculture for three months to SLI; both of their families were in farming. After graduating high school ('55), went to work for 3-4 months for Southern Pacific.

Phillips 66: hired on as a deckhand engineer in '57; started working 14 and seven, but workers didn't like that, adopted a union, got seven and seven. Started out on wooden boats (military surplus subchasers); these were the only boats they had to do work offshore at the time. Worked there five years.

Sewart Sea Craft: started in '62 as deckhand; deckhand would clean the boat, cook three meals a day, and handle the lines on the vessel; describes how they'd load oil onto the barge; made runs between Eugene Island and Houma; was considered far offshore at the time; at the time, only used helicopters for transportation when someone got hurt offshore.

Tidewater: started New Years '63 as deckhand engineer; after five or six years of seven and seven, it gets in your blood; in '68 was put on a standby boat - it was rough and had problems with the boat; preferred speedboat jobs because they were busy.

Licensing and captaining: got 100-ton license in '65; studied for licenses during time off. Captains were responsible for anything that happened. Each time he upgraded his license, he got a pay increase; had to go to New Orleans to get some of the licenses. In late '70s or early '80s,

Coast Guard grandfathered in people with 500-ton licenses and ocean endorsements to 1600-ton licenses; boats were getting bigger.

Family: Tidewater one of best companies to work for in Gulf of Mexico and one of biggest boat companies in world; put bread and butter on their table. Two daughters won scholarships from the company; son works for Laney Directional Drilling. Lived in Arnaudville and would commute to wherever his boat was; jobs he worked would last years; if you give the company good service, they will keep you on.

Stimulation boats: worked on first stimulation boat in the Gulf for BJ (Brian Jackson) Hughes; describes process by which they would get formation to open up more.

Union: Seafarer International brought in when working for Phillips 66; didn't like that union privileged seniority in union in distributing jobs; after they got seven and seven schedule (a year later, '59), voted the union out; didn't have a good working relationship between workers and union.

Schedules: Tidewater had people who liked working 14 and 14, 30 and 30, and long schedules like that because they lived out of state; company told him he could continue working seven and seven as long as he had a regular crew - and he did that.

Pay: pay was real good before he retired; had liked working speedboats, but cargo boats paid much more, so went to work on cargo boats; paid flat rate per day, but wondered about that because sometimes working 16-18 hours a day.

Safety: sometimes had to take nodoze to stay awake; when you first started, you had to do what you were told to do or you would lose your job, even if you knew it wasn't safe; as a captain, didn't have breaks - it was rough.

Why oil industry: liked running the boats and having seven days off; no other jobs around where could make as much money in that short of time period.

Changes: Mrs Robin said that 40 years ago companies weren't really concerned about safety; over his almost 50 year career saw lots of changes in the boats, technology, and safety.

Safety: took a few accidents to make companies more aware of safety. Safety 100% better today than in '56; when working for Phillips 66 heard head man on the radio say the cheapest thing in the oil patch today is a man's life. Some workers might complain about safety regulations, but they are for the workers benefit; British Petroleum was strict about safety (describes incident). CEOs get bonuses for good safety records; boats with lots of accidents on their records can't get hired for jobs and sometimes have to change their name.

Rig vs. boats: men on rigs weren't considerate of boats. Sometimes while pumping, cement would get on boat; in early days, would spray boat with diesel before getting to the rig so cement wouldn't stick.

Leaving Phillips 66: was laid off because company contracted work out to someone else; some of the workers went to work on platforms, but he went to work for Tidewater because they were a bigger company and offered steadier work.

Bust: describes being off the job for about 14 days in the '80s, before being called back to work; next job he got was with BJ on first stimulation boat in the Gulf and that lasted 9-10 years.

Changes in boats: stimulation boats used xylene; now standard procedure. Boats today no longer tie up at rigs; describes how crane operator used to help the boat maneuver around rigs; bow thrusters now greatly help captains navigate boats.

Wife and children: Mrs Robin was in charge of disciplining the children and everything else; he was working seven and seven when they started dating, so she knew what to expect; it was the way JR had to work to make a living, so the family adjusted.

Job security: never felt threatened in his job; a lot of the captains were scared that if they helped train somebody, they would lose their jobs.

Safety management system: Tidewater began implementing this during his last year and a half with the company; created new rules and regulations and taught it to all 130 Gulf vessel crews; had to document weekly safety meetings and fire drills; American Bureau of Shipping (ABS) went from boat to boat testing and certifying. He had had prostate cancer and didn't want to go back on the boats, so was made a safety man on this project.

Russell Robin

Lafayette, LA

June 13, 2002

Interviewed by: David DiTucci

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

DD003

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Russell Robin was born in 1931 in Breaux Bridge. At 17 he got a job on a dredging crew with McWilliams Company and five years later served in the Korean War for 2 years. He was discharged in 1954, came back home, got married, and resumed his work dredging. Less than half a year later, he got a job as a deckhand with Phillips Petroleum Company on a drilling rig off of Eugene Island (35 miles offshore) where he worked until he was laid off. In 1961, he went to work for Tidewater and over the course of a year was promoted from deckhand to engineer, from engineer to captain. He left Tidewater in 1971 to go to work for McDermott as a boat captain; he retired from McDermott in 1990. He also discusses unionization, the cultural impacts of the oil industry, and how he earned his pilot's license.

#### Summary:

Early life: born 1931 in Breaux Bridge, the oldest of 3 boys; father a farmer; family grew all types of crops.

Education: attended school through 6th grade, then took an examination and earned a diploma for 8th grade. Learned English in school; not punished for speaking French in school.

Early employment: Age 17, began working with McWilliams Co., where he operated a suction dredge and cleaned and dug canals. 1952 entered the military during the Korean War; he was 22 years old; discharged in 1954. Returned to working the dredges for a short time after getting married in 1955; then worked for Phillips Petroleum Company, drilling off of Eugene Islands near Morgan City; Phillips was drilling thirty-five miles offshore, the farthest offshore at the time; worked for Phillips until 1961, bringing supplies and personnel to rigs; dangerous when weather was unpredictable; company held safety meetings every week and everyone wore safety jackets on deck. Then worked at Tidewater, a drilling service company, for 9 years; left in 1971 to work for McDermott. Rapidly promoted; within one year went from deckhand to engineer, to captain; took a correspondence course to receive Captain's license; worked in diverse locations like California and South America; took a four-month trip around South America, trying to deliver a large barge; the barge was too large to pass through the Panama Canal. Retired in 1990.

Pay: entered industry because needed a good paying job as a newlywed with a family to support; made \$350/month for Phillips; as a deckhand for Tidewater made \$32/week.

Union: Phillips became unionized because a majority of people felt they weren't treated right by the company in terms of money; but many people took advantage of the union, which led to

more stringent work rules; the worst rule was that workers could only perform their particular specialty; resulted in an influx of people coming to the organization who refused work that deviated from their specific position; many veteran employees were used to multi-tasking, leading to a movement to remove the union; Phillips had great benefits including: a retirement plan, vacation, sick leave, health plan.

Cultural notes: Cajun people able to get along with their counterparts from other states.

Family life: wife took care of the homestead with his four children while he was gone; hard being away from home for such an extended period of time. Taught his kids the French language.

Reflections on oil industry: Decent income from oil industry jobs attracted many people. 1940s and 50s, the oil industry began to take off; 75% percent of young people worked for oil industry. When the oil companies shut down in 1980s, many people resorted to fishing, carpentry, and other means of work; the ones that made it through were the ones that saved their money. 1987 while working for McDermott, he was laid off for two months and returned; if he had the opportunity to do it all over he would and would not change a thing.

Pilot's license: barriers to getting certification for pilot's license; very hard to get; was discouraged from getting his license because he only had an eighth grade education; was told this job is for a man with a high school education; but after taking this two-day exam he passed with a perfect score.

Joe and Mildred Robinson

Houma, LA

January 16, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin, Tom McGuire, Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

DA023

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Tom Becnel referred us to Joe Robinson, a 94-year old who worked in the oil and gas industry and is a member of his church. He talked to Joe and told him we would be coming by, so we called to confirm the time. Tom and I met Joe and Mildred at their home. While we were there, Emily called and came over as well.

Joe Robinson has been involved in the oil industry his entire life. His father worked in the oil fields when Joe was young. For Joe the oil industry offered one of the only possibilities for finding work during the Depression. Joe started working January 8, 1937 and spent about five years working for Texaco. He went to welding school in New Orleans and returned to the company in the engineering department. He then went back to work on a workover rig doing maintenance and then onto a regular drilling rig where he worked his way up to toolpusher. He stayed in that job for 15 years and, at age 60, after 33 years on the water, he retired. Mildred was a schoolteacher and continued working until her retirement in 1974.

#### Summary:

**History:** Joe began in the oil industry in 1937. When he started. He originally had a 12 day on 4 day off schedule then it switched to 6 days on 6 days off. He began with Texaco as a roustabout. He then went to welding school and then went into Texaco's engineering department testing wells. He then went off shore onto the drilling rigs where he was a tool pusher for 15 years.

**Safety:** Texaco gave all of their employees training in first aid. Joe remembers several bad accidents; one was a guy who was adjusting a well and applied pressure causing it explodes. The damage blew off his legs and blew him over board. He did not survive. Another episode involved boiler blow, it launched into the air and landed on a man pushing him straight through the steel floor. More common accidents were an abundance of men who lost fingers.

**Changes in work:** The industry used to rely on all manual labor in transporting, lift, etc, but this was the major cause of many accidents and later shifted to more mechanical means such as the use of cranes and lifts.

**Impact on wife:** Since Joe was gone often, his wife Mildred joined church groups and the Texaco Wives Club.

Billy Rodgers

Lafayette, LA

April 4, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW046

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Billy Rodgers was born in 1926 in Northeast Texas, near oilfields, but they never found oil on his family's land. He didn't think he would attend college, but after serving in Korea, he attended school using the G.I. Bill, and majored in Engineering. He was hired by Humble Oil and Refining Company (later Exxon), and worked in Texas and Louisiana. He discusses life in Grand Isle and compares the past oil industry to the present-day's.

#### Summary:

Early life: born 1926, NW of Kilgore, TX; influenced by oil industry growing up when he noticed wildcat wells drilled on or near his parent's property; dad would always get his hopes up, but they never struck oil; worked on parent's farm, but didn't like the long, hard hours it required. Took easy way, earned barely passing grades, didn't plan on college; didn't think he was industrious enough to work through college, plus his family didn't have the money. One of his father's partners had a cotton buying business and he thought he'd work in this.

Education: drafted and served in Korea; after he thought he'd work in the dry goods store where he worked before, but was persuaded by a family friend to use the G.I. Bill and attend college; studied math and majored in Engineering; attended Tyler Junior College for two years and finished in 1953 at Texas A&M;

Employment: hired by Humble Oil and Refining Company (refers to them as Exxon in interview), a good company with lots of benefit plans for employees. Worked a variety of places, including East Texas, Houston (connected with offshore activities, barges, tugs, drilling tenders, build several cargo barges), New Orleans and Grand Isle, LA; was involved in the designing of floating platforms and cargo barges. Mostly stayed and worked inside, only went outside a handful of times. Discusses the components that make up offshore rigs and platforms. His typical work schedule included ordering pipe materials, preparing drawings, mooring buoys, and preparing cost estimates. Exxon reduced staff throughout the years; recently been eliminating more jobs; when he first started the industry was more stable. Exxon came up with several types of early retirement packages; he accepted one of these packages. Sometimes the company called back employees as consultants; Rodgers was called back by Phillips Petroleum for platform abandonment and donating platforms for artificial reefs and dismemberment. Retired in 1986.

Grand Isle: cheerfully reminisces of all the great times he had when he was living in Grand Isle; fishing particularly enjoyable off of Grand Isle; his favorite project here was the derrick barge, scheduling the work for it. It had a 250-ton lifting capacity on the frame; contrasts that with

today's barges with 8,000-ton lifting capacity; built offshore platforms to be floated out on barges, then launched into the water. Work schedule here was a regular five-day week schedule, but in beginning, he worked some weekends. Living arrangements divided by hierarchy and function; different sections reserved for managers, pilots, young workers; houses could be rented or bought. Few opportunities for entertainment so they would have to entertain themselves; had shrimp boils and played bridge. When they needed items not available on the island they went "up the bayou" or asked someone who was going there to buy them. Had a wife and two kids with him on Grand Isle; not enough room for his kids at the schools there, but Exxon provided transportation to Golden Meadow elementary up to South Lafourche High School in Galliano. A doctor made routine visits to the island every Thursday; eventually a doctor set up an office on the island. Rodgers spent a total of eighteen years on the island.

Comparison to today's oil industry: amazed by today's deep water (5,000 + feet) drilling techniques; they went with one big caisson 120 feet in diameter and about 700-800 feet long, loaded out to location then righted and anchored. He talks at length about how modern platforms are built using new technology. When he was working, felt like they were on the edge of technology, but modern caissons are far beyond anything he ever imagined. Seeing these deep-water platforms made him want to go back; anyone interested in construction or civil engineering would do well to get into the industry.

Elgin Rogers

Bayou Blue, LA

March 20, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB042

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Elgin Rogers is a friend of F.J. Matherne. I had called him when I was in town in September, but our interview was cancelled at the last minute. This time around F.J. called and set up the appointment for me.

Elgin was educated at the MacDonald Mission School because his parents were so poor. This was a local school for orphans and the poor of southern Louisiana. Before finishing high school he went to work for the oil industry. Elgin worked for contract firms his whole life. He began at a contract company and then went to work for Texaco for awhile. Even though he got days off with Texaco he didn't like it as much because he didn't make as much money as he had working for contract firms. After working for Texaco for a year he went back to working for various contract companies. He worked all areas of the oil field but mainly stayed in production and drilling. Although he never received any retirement, he was able to save money over the years and has made a comfortable life for himself. He moved his way up to a field foreman for one of the firms. When asked if he would have rather worked for a big company he said, "Well, no I don't think so. No matter where you work, them hard days come like bananas, in bunches."

#### Summary:

**Background:** Elgin Rogers was born in 1928 and educated at the MacDonald Mission School, K-8th grade. He did not complete high school, but went into the oil business instead.

**Contract Work:** Other than a short stint with Texaco during his career, Elgin worked for contract companies. Although they did not offer long term stability and benefits, they did tend to pay more. He worked for Sun Oil, Superior, Laughlin, Western Oceanic, J.C. Maines to name a few. He worked in all areas of the oil industry, but mainly stayed with production and drilling.

**Oil Field:** "The oil field is like the human body. Your heart pumps blood through the veins. If an artery gets blocked, your body "kicks". If an artery gets cut, sometimes you bleed and bleed. You have to watch what you put into your body so your "lines" don't get clogged."

L.A. Pete Rogers

Patterson, LA

January 16, 2002, January 16, 2002, January 5, 2005

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner, Betsy Plumb, Diane Austin

University of Arizona

AG052, AG053p, DA127

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Pete Rogers was recommended to me by Robert Shivers in Patterson. I came to discover that the social networks of retired oilmen in the region are very community-based; although I had talked to numerous Shell hands in Morgan City, none had mentioned Pete. Pete is 87 years old, and began work for Shell well before WWII. Prior to working on the survey crews in the area, he worked for timber companies, and he even drove the shrimp trucks up to New York City with Parker Conrad (see AG017). His experiences in WWII were formative, and he is an amateur historian for his division in the Air Force. The first interview was fairly brief, as his responses to my questions were fairly short. This is not to say, however, that there wasn't a lot of good information here. We talked quite a bit about the community of Patterson, and the impact of the oil industry upon the community and the others around it. He talks about some of his early offshore work, and the difficulties of working offshore when one is married. We also talk about comparisons between Shell and the other major oil companies. He also does a good job of describing the industries that were already in place when the oil industry arrived in the region. We also talk about unionization in the oilpatch. A photo interview expanded on the first interview and provided new information. The interview focused on Pete's work with the early exploration and seismograph crews. He worked with an instrument called the torsion balance - a German-designed machine that would soon become a relic in oilfield exploration. Many of the photographs detail the process involved in setting up the instrument, carrying it between locations, and so on. In addition to this, however, there is a variety of other detail and description included in the interview. The third interview was conducted as part of the study of the links between WWII and the offshore industry.

Pete Rogers was born in Patterson, Louisiana, and he was 87 years old at the time of the 2002 interview - born in 1914. "Pete" and "Frenchie" are his nicknames - he got the second one during WWII. He started work for Shell Oil in 1935 as part of an exploration crew, but they had a temporary layoff in 1940, and he decided to join the military for service. When he got back from the war in 1945, he joined the production department at Shell. He retired in 1976 after 35 years, and with the 10 percent matching savings plan, he got a good retirement.

#### Summary of AG052:

Patterson: We talk about Patterson during his teenage years. He talks about his parents' house, and the old veneer mill in Patterson. He went to work for the timber companies in 1933, but he learned a dying business. He also drove a seafood truck to NYC in the 30's - see the interview with Parker Conrad (AG017) for a description of this. The oil companies weren't exactly new in

the 30's - he remembers seeing them working around the swamp when he worked for the timber companies. He talks about how oil was loaded on wooden barges in the early days.

Work: He talks about his first day of work in the oilfield, for the torsion balance crew. They were paid two dollars a day. It was hard work. He was temporarily laid off, and by the time they called him back to work, he had signed up for military service. He describes the function of the torsion balance instrument. There was no charge involved in this process.

Service: In the military, he served in a bomber outfit. They saw service all over North Africa. He talks about the battle at Kasserine Pass. One of his friends from Shell spent two years in a German prison camp. Then they went up to Sicily. Then they got sent to India. They bombed Burma, China and Thailand. When he got back to Morgan City, he went right to work for Shell.

Work and retirement: He went back to West Lake Verret, and he retired in 1976. That was before Shell sold all their inland holdings. He started off at West Lake Verret working the gang, and then he got transferred offshore to Block 69. They were moving offshore by '49. He retired as a maintenance lead man. Working offshore wasn't too bad if you were single, but it was hard on the married men. He describes Block 69. He talks about his wife. They're divorced now, but they are still the best of friends. He says that offshore, there were as many guys from Mississippi, Alabama and Arkansas as anywhere else. He thinks the benefits from Shell were better than the other oil companies, but maybe not as good as Mobil. He talks about the problem working with contractors. He drove a hotshot for a while after he retired.

Unions: We talk about the attempts to unionize the oilfield. They never went for it. But he talks about his nephew who worked for Cameron Iron Works 25 years, and then was just laid off one day. He talks about the remarkable technological advances of the oil industry.

Summary of AG053p:

- 01: Pete Rogers, part of a torsion balance crew for Shell Oil exploration.
- 02: Bill Spasick and Pete Rogers wading through leeches and alligators in the marsh behind Lockport to set up the torsion balance instrument.
- 03: Seismology instruments set up in the marsh at Cocodrie - waiting for the results.
- 04: A Model A Ford, modified as a marsh buggy.
- 05: Carrying seismology equipment through the lake, following a survey line.
- 06: Renting a small boat to haul torsion equipment around the lakes.
- 07: Setting up the torsion balance meter on a pedestal in a tent.
- 08: Surveying around the torsion balance instrument to obtain an accurate reading.
- 09: Walking through the marshes to set up the torsion balance equipment.
- 10: Pirogue used to move around marshes and canals for surveying.
- 11: Driving a Shell Oil company Plymouth with surveying equipment on the back.
- 12: Pounding 2 X 2's into the marsh to get a solid, level foundation for the torsion balance equipment.
- 13: The torsion balance equipment with the protective tent behind it.
- 14: Using a pirogue to move about the marshes.
- 15: Setting up a firm base for the equipment using 2x2's.

- 16: Pete and a young friend on Six Mile Lake, since silted up.
- 17: A friend using Pete's 12 gauge automatic to hunt game.
- 18: A seismograph crew during the war years, working near Cleveland, TX.
- 19: Building cypress levees in 1933, working for a timber company.
- 20: The length and diameter of the cut logs were measured as the men got paid so much a board-foot.
- 21: The whole seismograph crew, most men were from Texas.
- 22: John Law, from Oklahoma City, was related to a Shell Oil Company official, waiting for help with the flat tire.

#### Summary of DA127:

Pete was one of a small group of people who had served in WWII and been involved in the early development of the offshore oil and gas industry in the Gulf of Mexico and was interviewed in a joint project of the University of Arizona, U.S. Minerals Management Service, and the National D-Day Museum. In this interview, Pete talks mostly about his experiences during WWII.

Early years: Pete was born in Patterson, LA in 1914. he had two sisters. He graduated from high school in 1933 at the age of 19. He then went to work for Shell in exploration, seismography, torch and balance and gravity meter. Before working for Shell, he was in the logging industry, but after the mill closed, he sought employment with Shell. In 1940, during the war scare, Shell laid off some of it employees, Pete being one of them.

Military years: Pete joined the military at age 26. He joined the Army Air Corps, 89th Reconnaissance Squadron. After basic training, he was trained as an airplane mechanic and then put in the 434th Bombing Squadron. From there, he left for Africa on "Sara the Sand Blower". Due to he long flight across the Atlantic, they had to outfit their B25's with extra gas tanks where the bombes where initials held. Once in Africa, they removed the tanks and re-installed the bombs. His first stop was in Egypt, where they did bombing raids. From Egypt, he went to Italy; the base was near Mt. Vesevius and when it erupted, it destroyed all of the planes. Another story he recalls was when they were ordered to bomb the Monastery Casino, as it turned out; the Germans never occupied it. This created a great deal of discord amongst the bombing and bombed parties. They were then ordered to northeast India to fight the advancing Japanese.

Coming home: In 1945, Pete came back to the states with a bad case of dysentery that took him six months to recover from. At this point, he had accumulated 145 points, all he needed was to have 85 to be discharged. Unfortunately, plain mechanics were in high demand and they were not about to let him out, but to reassign him. Pete blatantly said to court marshal him if necessary, but that he was not going back over. He was eventually discharged in September of 1945. Once back from the war, Pete went back to work for Shell in production. In 1976, he retired from Shell with 35 years with the company.

MacNeely Rome

Golden Meadow, LA

September 22, 2001

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM014

#### Ethnographic Preface:

MacNeely ("Mac") Rome was Texaco's production supervisor for the Golden Meadow and Leeville fields, going back to the 1950s. He reported to Bruce Pagliughi, who is Mac's neighbor in Golden Meadow. I interviewed Mac at his Golden Meadow home, but he lives mostly in a house in Galliano, with his wife. Mac is active in the lower Lafourche Texaco retirees' club, and we met him again when we attended their annual dinner in Larose in January, 2002. He agreed to organize a focus group of Texaco retirees on our next field visit.

Mac Rome's father was the iceman in Donaldsonville, and he moved his family to Golden Meadow in 1939. Mac graduated from high school in 1944, went into the Navy, worked for a Gulf distributorship until he was 21, old enough to get hired on at Texaco. Mac rose through the ranks from roustabout to supervisor.

#### Summary:

Career: His father was an iceman in Donaldsonville; the family moved to Golden Meadow in 1939. Mac graduated from high school 1944, volunteered for service in Navy; worked for Gulf distributorship until old enough (21) to work for Texaco. He started with Texaco in Leeville in 1948, as roustabout, pumper and meterman, moved up to field foreman/superintendent; then field foreman in Golden Meadow, then supervisor of both fields; started with land rigs on mats on soft mud; was lucky to get on in 48; 1950, started coming out with barges; pumpers would handle production, turn records in to Bruce Pagliughi; 350-400 wells in Leeville field over his lifetime; gravy train working 7/7 inshore; in those days, Texaco was Texaco, loyalty; son now works for Texaco, "he's no more than a number;" my wife died, so I married my childhood sweetheart

Water drives: below and above sands; if you wanted to get greedy, bring pressure down; the more you open it up, the more water you get; we'd pull the hell out of the wells

Grand Isle: Texaco drilled dry hole, so pulled back

Mergers: when 2 companies that do the same thing merge, don't know what's going to happen; Texaco pulled out of Morgan City, Harvey when I was working; Golden Meadow field belongs to Apache, [Innovas?] bought Leeville field

Contracting: only get what you pay for; contracting happened in last 10 years, bright idea to save money; if a good company hand saw something wrong with equipment, he would fix it; it's a different oil field now

Pension: I was taken care of real well when I retired; \$50K in annuity fund; I get interest; missed retiring at 40 years by 3 months; but gave me 2 years at half pay until Social Security kicked in; retired Jan 1987; Feb 1986 had open-heart surgery; offered incentives when they wanted to get rid of people

In the service: went in at the end of the war, I was very fortunate; boot camp in San Diego, sent me to Seattle; we handled Liberty ships; war ended - in Seattle harbor, troop ship would come in, at dock we would take only the compass off, because it had alcohol in it; they'd stolen the rest of the alcohol; we'd cut holes in boats and sink them; figured out why later: if all GM motors from boats got back in circulation, GM wouldn't make another engine for 10 years; cutting shoes in half to get rid of them

Current work force vs. past: after war, so many people looking for jobs, so lucky to get on with Texaco; now, trouble is so many people can't pass their piss test; companies are strict; so hire out contractors and let them worry about it

Texaco operations: decision to drill came out of New Orleans office; my Houma district would get surveys; we'd put rig on it and drill well; then Houma office would determine if it was a good enough location to put in casings; we'd perforate at their orders, we'd use Schlumberger to perforate; Saudi Arabia and offshore can pull wells wide open because they don't have any water drive; here if you get greedy, you get water and that gives you problems; you got to treat water, which doubled the cost; at one time everything went overboard

Burning: won't allow you to do it now on a spill; when it was live, had gas in it, so it would burn; if we had a Coonass on the Exxon Valdez, we could have taken care of the problem; we plugged and abandoned lots of wells because it was too costly to produce because of environmental regulations

Environmental regulations: talks of Grand Bois pits; "Got to leave well enough alone, you got me on tape;" got to be uneconomical, that's when we started abandoning wells; abandoned 2-3000 wells in Houma district; couldn't afford to meet standards; couldn't justify it at \$3/bbl

Abraham Griffin: good man, used second-hand stuff, working for O'Neill from New Orleans; we kid him at the Fed Pond: he goes trolling [trawling] but he doesn't tie the tail; if he ties it and catches something, he's got to clean it

Louisiana Land & Exploration: all this land belonged to the state, but through crooked politics, they sold it at \$.50/acre to LLE, they were leasing it for trapping rights, then they got oil; with erosion going on, state gets more and more property; water bottoms belong to the state; we stop maintaining the levees, the marsh dies, and it becomes state property; Burlington tried to sell property; Ogeron and Chouest bought a lot; can't hunt over a "fed pond"

Texans: Cajuns didn't know anything about oilfields; had to bring in Texians; anything above Intracoastal Waterway was Texian; was rough - they followed rigs; lots had Masonic ring, couldn't get job unless Masonic; don't have that anymore now

Burt Ross

Morgan City, LA

July 24, 2001

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB011

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Burt Ross is a member of the Old Salts Club, as they have dubbed themselves. I met him through Rylan Higgins in Morgan City one early morning at Shoney's. Rylan's contact to the group is Mr. Jimmy Jett. All members of the Old Salts Club worked for Magnolia (Mobil) in some capacity. Burt is a very soft-spoken man who has a wonderful memory about where he was and when. He stated that going through the process of remembering his past jobs was difficult due to how many jobs he'd held in the oilfield. Burt has a wonderful picture of an accident where a boat ran into a rig and ripped it out of the water. The boat should have sunk; instead it sailed back to port with the rig on top of it and the men still in the rig.

Burt Ross was born in 1928 in Morgan City, finished high school in 1947, and went to work for Magnolia as a galley hand in 1949. He was laid off after two months when the work slowed down and then rehired as a deckhand a month later. He was transferred to Texas in 1951 due to lack of work and then drafted into the army in 1952. When he returned to Morgan City after his discharge in 1954, Burt was immediately hired by Magnolia as a roustabout. He was advanced through several positions within the company (Magnolia/Mobil) and retired in the 1980s as a production supervisor IV.

#### Summary:

Early life and work: Mr. Ross was born in 1928 in Morgan City. He finished high school in 1947 and then went to work as a galley worker in 1949 for Magnolia. He was laid off 2 months later in December of 1949 because they didn't have the work for them. He said it is important to understand that the local boys, meaning Morgan City boys, were hired on as galley hands to give them work even if they didn't have any oil experience. They were hired on to give them work until something else came up. He was hired back on as a deckhand a month later. All of the barge work was considered part of the marine group.

Army: Transferred to Texas in 1951 because of lack of work again. He was drafted into the army in 1952 but didn't go to Korea. In 1954 he was discharged and came back to Morgan City and was immediately hired back on at Magnolia as a roustabout.

First day of work/terrible trips out to rigs: First day he was going out others were coming in due to hurricane. The area that changed the most in the oil field was the marine department. Tells vivid stories about how bad the conditions were going out to the rigs both from the waves and from the horrible smells. 5 hour trip out to Block 126, now the trip takes under 2 hours.

Training: No training in 1954. You went out on the job and foreman told you what to do. Called roustabouts the "do it all of the oil field." Made point that Mobil would not have made changes had they not been told they had to change them by the United States Geological Survey. The majority of changes began in the early 70's. Very few of the drilling crews for Magnolia were from Morgan City. Most of the drilling crews were from elsewhere in Louisiana or Texas.

Working with major oil companies: didn't visit other platforms or rigs of other companies unless you were a supervisor. Sold some of their platforms to ODECO in mid 70's. If there were problems with their production they'd have to get hold of ODECO to fix the problem. They would sell the same gas line to different gas companies in order to maximize profits. This meant that sometimes you would pick up other companies' oil.

Getting the oil out: You are paid for the quality of the oil you pump. A lot of oil goes through the same line and after going through production process companies are paid by the quality of their product.

Overtime/description of jobs: A lot of overtime to be had because a lot of work on the rigs. Pumper is the next step up, required more responsibility. Pumpers also called lease operators. Description of pumper jobs.

Texas oil: info about oil seeping out of the ground and some of the scandals that went on in the oil industry in Texas.

Louisiana oil: They had to work hard for their oil; it didn't just seep out of the ground.

Job descriptions: Lease operator description. In order to make more money they would cut the crews that would "bump" workers out of a job. Burt got bumped several times. One time he was bumped but was kept on the payroll in order to train the guy who bumped him. Foreman was Shorty Gibbons at this time. Burt would set up new camps for his foreman. Due to this work he was given a raise to assistant foreman in the 70's. From 1958 - 60' he got bumped around a lot. Burt enjoyed his jobs especially working with the wire line.

Description of jobs in 1960's: Wireline job, basically cleaning wells and resetting wire so that wells continue to produce at optimum performance. Production technician, only on the job training. Says that they didn't have any schools or formal training while he was in the oil field. Enjoyed the responsibility of the upper level jobs.

Jobs in the 1970's: Wife died in June of 1972. Transferred to Main Pass Block 6 and worked there until 1973. Then he went to the marine department with Ed Dilsaver. This transfer was because he was demoted to put an engineer in his position. Essentially he was demoted for no apparent reason. Says that the trouble was not caused by Mobil but by this one man who was his supervisor.

Personal life: After his wife died, he was left to raise his 2 stepdaughters and 1 daughter. Even though he was not happy about his demotion it brought him home to 5 days a week in an office.

Calls it a Godsend even though it didn't seem like it at the time. "It fit my situation perfect." His wife died of lung cancer.

Marine Department: Worked with Ed as a dispatcher until 1978. In 1978 he was offered the same job he was bumped off in 1973. He took the job and worked as a production supervisor for 2 years. In 1980 he was offered a raise as production supervisor II. He ended up a supervisor IV, which was just below production superintendent. Stated that he had a very successful oil career. Three of the Morgan City boys who started off in the galleys made it to production supervisor IV or higher.

Retirement: Retired early, laid off essentially, in 1986. Says he should have sued them because the way they did it was distasteful. He was paid through 1987 due to his retirement package.

Biggest change in oil industry: Environmental regulations, undoubtedly. USGS didn't know what they wanted in the beginning. Someone would say one thing while another would say another thing. Tells pertinent story about regulations being unclear along the hierarchical line. Importance of being an honest man in the oil industry and following the rules. Believed that the orders to change the safety rules saved so many lives. Oil industries would not comply with safety regulations unless they were forced to. Believed that USGS hired good men for the most part, even though some could be extremely strict. No problems with environmental regulations whatsoever. Important to hold each man responsible for his respective job. Most of the time inspections were done at random but sometimes an entire field would be checked.

Santo Rousso

Morgan City, LA

July 27, 2001, January 6, 2005

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner, Betsy Plumb, Rylan Higgins

University of Arizona

AG041, RH021

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Santo Rousso is a member of the Mobil Retirees' Old Salts Club. He worked most of his career for Magnolia (later Mobil) Oil Company. All in all he had a good time with them, but midway through his career he grew tired of the constant relocation and tried working for a couple years for a contractor in Morgan City. He spent most of his early career working the seismograph crews. This would eventually take him to all parts of the world, and for many years his family would relocate around the U.S. as the new jobs came up. After he quit, he came back to Mobil in the Marine department, which is under the production department. For the purposes of this study, the most valuable information here will probably concern impacts to the family, his description of Mobil's willingness to take him back after he quit, and his wife's description of her concerns about his job security. She has a fairly significant chunk of the first interview. The second interview was conducted as part of the study of the links between WWII and the offshore industry.

Santo Rousso was born in Morgan City in 1921. He worked in his father's grocery store as a young man and then joined the Air Force. He returned to Morgan City in 1945 after WWII ended. He opened a radio repair shop in town and then began working part-time for Magnolia Oil Company. They kept him so busy that he had to close his shop. He began developing seismograms, did seismic work, and became a geophysical helper. He moved throughout the United States, alternating time in Morgan City with assignments elsewhere. He retired in the late 1980s.

#### Summary of AG041:

Early life: Santo was born in Morgan City in 1921. He remembers the Depression - times were tough. His father was a groceryman and an amateur boxer. He worked in the grocery store for a while when he was a young man, and then went off to fight in the war. He wasn't really aware of the oil industry at the time. He joined the Air Force, and went to radio school. For much of the time, he was stationed in the US - his job was to dispatch fighters in case the enemy flew in to the East Coast. Then he went off to the South Pacific. His ship went all over the South Pacific, and he finally made it back home. He came back to Morgan City on a furlough, and then the war ended, so he was discharged.

Career: He was in Morgan City in 1945, fresh out of the Air Force, and looking for a job. He knew radios, so he opened up a radio repair shop. Business wasn't too good though. There was a fellow from Magnolia Oil Company that was always coming by - he was real interested in the radios. That guy suggested Santo try to get on with Magnolia. He started with them part time,

and he thought he would still be able to keep the business open, but it wasn't to be. They needed him all the time. He was developing seismograms for them, and there was a lot of work coming in. Then the seismograph work slowed down, so he started working in the near-shore waters doing the actual seismic work. He was a geophysical helper. Then they moved him into the darkroom, made junior observer, then senior observer. Once he got that position, he started moving all over the place for work: Texas, New Mexico, Nebraska, and onward. He was finally reassigned to a water crew, and then he could work 10 and 4, which meant he could get back to Morgan City. He and his wife had a house under the new bridge. Anyway, he was working offshore with the seismic crew, maybe a hundred miles offshore. They would sometimes share their data with other companies, too. He worked the Gulf Coast until 1959. Then they moved down to Florida and started working down there.

Mobility and family: They moved a lot - the families were like gypsies, but they were all close-knit. Magnolia was busy in Morgan City at the time - they were servicing rigs here and they had a seismic office. Anyway, Santo was in the seismic department for 23 years. Then they wouldn't let him move his family with him anymore. He got assigned to work up in Nova Scotia for a while, 24 on and 14 off. Then he got assigned as a company man to a surveying contractor up in Alaska. Then he went back to St. John. They were going to send him to Mississippi, and that's when he threw his hand in. He decided to leave Mobil and work for the Arthur Levy Boat Company in Morgan City. His wife didn't want him to leave Mobil. He had a family, though, and he didn't want to be gone so much. He was gone for a while, but then he finally went back to Mobil. They found a place for him in the marine department - that was part of production. It was a demotion, but he could work in Morgan City.

Retirement: We talked about the retirement plan. It was a good plan, and he describes it. After a while they were matching dollar for dollar in the savings plan. Santo retired in the late 1980's.

Union: He says that Mobil also had a union - a local union - but he wasn't part of it because he was a supervisor. It represented production and drilling. They could file grievances, but they couldn't strike.

Labor: the oilpatch lost a lot of good hands in the 80's with the bust. Also, Mobil moved to contract rigs. They're not going to hire as many permanent personnel as in the old days.

Summary of RH021:

Santo was one of a small group of people who had served in WWII and been involved in the early development of the offshore oil and gas industry in the Gulf of Mexico and was interviewed in a joint project of the University of Arizona, U.S. Minerals Management Service, and the National D-Day Museum. In this interview, Santo talks mostly about his experiences during WWII.

Early years: Santo was born in 1921 in Morgan City. He has one sister and four brothers. His father owned a grocery store where he worked as a clerk and delivery boy. He graduated high school in 1941 and began working full time for his dad.

Military service: In 1942, Santo enlisted in the Air Force. After basic training, he went to radio school where he learned how to do minor repairs, Morse Code and how to operate the equipment. He was then assigned to the 33rd Fighter Control Squadron. He departed to Milne Bay in Papua New Guinea. Once they arrived, his squadron established a bivouac, a clearing in the forest to set up their tents. There were 90 people in his squadron. The first shipment of equipment sank off the coast of New Hebride and they were postponed a month before the second shipment of equipment arrived. To pass the time, they made coconut wine, played dice, cards and volleyball. After the equipment arrived, they were boated to Biak Island then flown to Leyte in the Philippines on C-47's, then to Luzon.

Identifying planes: Santos job was to identify incoming planes within the bases air space. If the planes did not identify themselves, he would send out a fighter squadron. He worked on radio direction finding trucks. He recalls one night when Japanese planes made it through and destroyed some of the ground planes and two radio shacks. His work hours were eight hour on, eight hours off. He recalls the food not being too tasty; they ate mostly rations and would trade cigarettes with natives for fresh food. He also remembers not being allowed to salute the commanding officers nor where they allowed to wear their stripes because in the event of an attack the enemy would aim for those in charge. In 1945, Santo was granted a furlough. On his way back from furlough, when he had one year left to serve, the US had dropped the atomic bomb. At that point the war was basically over and Santo was sent to Seattle for discharge. Before they let him out, they fixed all of his teeth.

Return home: After discharge, Santo returned to Louisiana and got married to a longtime friend who was a sergeant in the Air Force. Once back, he went to radio repair school in New Orleans and started up his own business. He had trouble ordering parts and eventually his business went under. After this, a friend got him a job at Magnolia Petroleum Company. At first, he was developing seismograms, then he went in to the field out in the Gulf and worked on laying cables, preparing solutions for the seismogram and serving as relief for the lead observer. He would work ten days on, four days off. He did this for 15 years

Family: While in oil exploration, Santo moved his family around a lot and they never had a nice place to stay. They would rent out screen porches and garage apartments.

Stella Rousso

Morgan City, LA

January 12, 2005

Interviewed by: Joanna Stone, Colleen O'Donnell, Lauren Penney

University of Arizona

JLS01

#### Ethnographic Preface:

During Santo Rousso's interview for the D-Day Museum, he mentioned that his wife had served in the Women's Army Corps, so Diane and Joanna asked her if she would be willing to participate. The interview was set up for the next week, to be held in her home as she has trouble walking.

Stella Rousso was born Marie Stella Peltier in Baldwin, Louisiana in 1920. Her father was a bridge tender for the railroad, and the family moved to Bayou Boeuf, Morgan City and finally Jennings, where Stella finished high school. She worked in a department store for awhile before hearing about the Women's Auxiliary on the radio. She and a cousin decided to enlist, and Stella served for 3 years in the aircraft warning service and as a base operations specialist in Portland, Maine and at Westover Field, Massachusetts. Upon her return to Morgan City, she worked as a payroll clerk for Riverside, then moved with her husband and two daughters all over the south following his job with Mobil. When he finally got on offshore, Stella got a job with the city, from which she retired in 1983.

#### Summary:

Before taping started:

Moving around vs. Working offshore: Other families didn't like having husband gone for days at a time, but she preferred Santo working offshore to moving around

Retirement home in Morgan City: They were there for one year with about 14 other people before it closed down; Only people in Morgan City with money to stay there were retirees from the oil companies; Now it's all contract crews and most of the activity is at Fourchon, a hurricane could wipe it out and then it might come back to Morgan City

#### On tape:

Personal history: Born in Baldwin, Louisiana September 28, 1920; Father was a bridge tender, family moved to Bayou Boeuf for 9 years, then to Morgan City, where Stella started high school and finally Jennings, where she finished it in 1939; She has one sister, and her father remarried and three other children with his new wife; She worked at a department store after graduation, but the pay was low so she quit but had trouble finding another job

Joining the Women's Army Corps: Stella heard about what was then called the Auxiliaries over the radio; Nine months after she enlisted, she was sworn in to the Air Force (due to a change in WAC policy)

Service: Stella left Morgan City in October, 1942 for basic training in Des Moines and was assigned to the aircraft warning service in Portland, Maine; The WACs lived in a hotel, each room had 5 beds; They replaced men that had gone overseas; She went for more basic training at Camp Polk, Louisiana in an empty Japanese POW camp and then was assigned to Westover Field, Massachusetts as a 791-base operations specialist, she was in charge of typing up accident reports within 20 minutes so that the government could notify families before the news media reported accidents; They had to wash their clothes on a board and hang them to dry; She came back to visit years later but wasn't allowed inside; At Westover Field, the service people were not very popular with locals in Holyoke and Springfield

Coming home: Stella came back to Morgan City on Thanksgiving Day, 1945 and married Santo Rousso in July of the next year; She got a job as a payroll clerk for Riverside, her military experience helped in this because she had become a good typist; She used these skills later when she got a job for the city, from which she retired, adding her years of military service to her 20 years with the city, in 1983

GI Bill: Stella was eligible, and started a course to be a CPA; She had to quit because Mobil transferred Santo and the family had to move

Benefits from the military: Stella collected her 52-20 (payment of \$52 for twenty weeks) and used it to build a house for her mother

Moving around: The Mobil employees were like one big family; Her daughter liked the moving until she was in 6th grade and they had to leave Clearwater, Florida; They lived wherever they could find housing, many times the apartments had been destroyed by earlier workers; They didn't interact much with locals, sometimes were called 'oil trash', but you got used to it

Changes in Morgan City: More housing, population growth, utilities were stronger with all the people paying in to them; Then everyone left, there was a sign that said, 'last one out turn out the lights'

Discipline in the Army: Used to be very strict, now it seems to be more relaxed

William Rucks III

Lafayette, LA

January 19, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW033

#### Ethnographic Preface:

William Rucks III was born in Nashville, Tennessee but at an early age moved to Oklahoma City. He graduated from the University of Oklahoma in 1952 with a Business Administration degree. He became interested in scouting and found a job shortly after graduation with Phillips Petroleum in Lafayette. After 2 years, he was promoted to District Land Manager. He then became an independent contractor after 8 years of working for Phillips. He discusses his relationship with Heymann and the development of the Oil Center in Lafayette. As an outsider, moving to Lafayette took a little cultural adjustment, but overall, he enjoyed working in the oil industry.

#### Summary:

Early life: born Nashville, TN; moved early age to Oklahoma City, OK. Parents met while attending Vanderbilt University; father a physician who established medical clinic in Oklahoma City.

Education: attended boarding school in Kansas City, MO; graduated from University of Oklahoma with degree in Business Administration in 1952.

Early employment: during summer before graduating college, worked as roughneck for Sojourner drilling company in Aberdeen, TX; became interested in scouting. After college, anxious to find a job; drove a cement truck while waiting to hear from oil companies; got job with Phillips Petroleum in Lafayette, LA.

Phillips Petroleum: At first a scout - best job in industry; primary duty to watch what other companies were doing; on the road, researching wells, meeting clients; scout for two years, then promoted to district land manager; duty to coordinate land activities; worked with geologists, paleontologists, geophysicists to survey land prospects; conducted leases and worked with other companies to farm out leases in the area; also dealt with landowners directly and still does today.

Lease Broker: After eight years with Phillips became an independent lease-broker; employed by company to watch certain areas, put lease blocks together, check pipelines; once all leases were gathered, then an abstractor was needed; abstractor thoroughly researched all records; then an attorney reviewed it; then, a title opinion. Then opinion would be cured, which involved certain requirements. Typical leases lasted 3-5 years with rental fee paid each year; to lease an acre cost between \$5-10. Working as an independent contractor was not too bad once you made a

reputation for yourself; paid on a per-acre basis; very competitive work, sometimes requiring working 18 hours a day.

Lafayette culture: experienced culture shock upon arrival to Lafayette; everyone speaking French; remembers first crawfish boil. Few apartments; lived in Evangeline Hotel for 3 months, then moved into house with roommates; would go to baseball games for fun. At first, locals were not friendly, but soon warmed up; most people moved to LA from TX and OK at the same time; most were Protestant and Republican. As a Presbyterian, felt welcomed in predominantly Catholic community.

Relationship with Heymann: good friends with Heymann; played card games; was pallbearer at Heymann's funeral. Heymann a proud and generous man; donated land for municipal auditorium and hospital; also supported Southwestern Learning Institute (now University of Louisiana, Lafayette).

Oil Center: 4-5 people from Texaco and Pan American Oil Companies discussed idea of Oil Center with Heymann; with commitments of tenants, Heymann began construction within 6 months; hired Hayes Towne, a recognized architect to design the Oil Center - who also designed Ruck's house; Heymann not looking for recognition, just wanted to assist the area. Heymann's son Herbert carried on father's tradition after Heymann's death.

Petroleum Club: started 1956 with 175-200 members; membership very cyclical.

Successful market: depends on effective budgeting; best day of well is first day of production; after that production declines, machinery breaks; hard to forecast oil prices - too unstable.

Changes to Lafayette: tremendous amount; recalls days when South College Road was gravel, Judice Inn on Johnston Street was edge of town.

Final comments: No regrets about chosen profession; if still a young man, would return to oil industry.

Roussell Ruffin

Morgan City, LA

July 19, 2001

Interviewed by: Rylan Higgins

University of Arizona

RH010

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Roussell Ruffin's name was one of three that Raymond Morrison had given me. Raymond's name was one among several that Julie Delaune gave me when I asked her about Black men who worked for McDermott in the company's early years. Roussell worked in fabrication in the 1950s and 60s. He currently owns a couple of tractor-trailers that work primarily in the oil industry. His office is an old, well-worn mobile home at the southern most end of Federal. Inside, there are a couple desks, a couch and lots of coffee. He was friendly and enjoyed talking.

Roussell was born in Siracusaville in 1929. He talked at length about what it meant for him to grow up as a Black child. He graduated from Morgan City Colored High School in 1946. He was captain of the basketball team that year. After high school, Roussell worked in the cane fields and then as a crane operator in the local lumberyard. In 1961 he went to work as a crane operator for Brown and Root.

#### Summary:

**First jobs:** Out of high school, Roussell worked in the cane fields, where he made \$1.25 per day. He described some other jobs he had during this time.

**Lumberyard crane operator:** In 1959, Roussell went to work for local lumberyard as a crane operator.

**Brown and Root:** In 1961, Roussell went to work for Brown and Root as a crane operator. He said that few other Black men worked there, and that those that did were not given welder or crane operator jobs. They mowed grass, cleaned things and did various other low skill jobs. Roussell said that he was lucky, because he had gotten experience as a crane operator in the lumberyard, and that the company needed trained operators.

**Bought his first Kenwood:** Roussell talked about the problems he had when trying to buy his first tractor-trailer.

**Ed Kyle:** Roussell talks about Ed Kyle at a couple different points in the interview. Here, he discusses how Ed helped get him a job as a roustabout at a loading dock. When the yard changed hands, Roussell quit because the new company did not treat Blacks as fairly as Ed Kyle had.

McDermott: In 1961, Roussell went to work for McDermott. He said that he got the job through Caleb Henderson. He worked in the warehouse, but only stayed with the company for about 6 weeks, because he didn't feel like he had a chance to advance to better jobs.

Civil rights: Federal government made companies hire blacks in the 60s.

Marriage and family: Roussell got married in 1950 and had two daughters. 1963, sent his daughter to the integrated high school and what that was like; his son had problems when he went to elementary school, as well.

Oil industry good for Blacks: Much of Roussell's narrative centers around racial issues. Towards the end of the interview he talked about how he thought that, in general, the oil industry was good for Blacks. He said that some companies were not good to work for if you were Black, but that ninety percent were.

Burleigh and Molly Ruiz

Houma, LA

July 17, 2001

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB007

Ethnographic Preface:

I got Burleigh Ruiz's name from F.J. Matherne who has been a very good resource. The two worked together for 30 years both in drilling and production.

Burleigh Ruiz worked for Texaco for 39 years. His father was in the sugar business, but Burleigh wanted to make more money. He began as a radio operator in 1948 and then worked as a roughneck for two years. Burleigh was a gang pusher in 1962 out at Lake Barre. He didn't really like all of the responsibility and asked for a different assignment. He then became a gas lift specialist out at Caillou Island in 1972. That is the job he held until he retired in 1987. After retiring, he and his wife concentrated on their income tax business. Burleigh had taken an H&R Block course while he was still working for the oil company. He stated that the first Black man to work at Lake Barre was in 1966 - 1967. That is a bit earlier than other estimates I'd heard previously, but Burleigh and his wife Molly insisted that that was correct.

Summary:

Family history: Burleigh's family is from Belle Alliance, LA. They are originally from the Canary Islands, hence the name Ruiz. They had just received an article about the people of Spanish descent living in South Louisiana from their son in Boston. His father worked at a sugar refinery and then a plantation.

Early jobs: He worked as a water boy in the sugar plantation where his father worked. Gave water to German prisoners who worked the fields. Then worked as a bench chemist in the sugar refinery and finally as an "oiler" on a dragline before getting a job at Texaco in 1948.

Early oil field work / Korean War: Went into oil because of money. Didn't get paid that much compared to the service but did compared to sugar. He was drafted in 1951 but never went overseas. Molly went with him to El Paso. That is one of the only times he's left S. Louisiana. Back in 53' and went roustabouting.

Description of drilling: Christmas tree description and workover rig description. Very detailed.

Storms: Rode out several hurricanes on the rigs, often because the companies would wait too long to get the men off. Almost safer to stay out in the days before radar, only way to get in was with a compass.

1960's - 1970's: Was a gang pusher in 62'. In 72' was transferred to Caillou Island and worked as a gas lift specialist.

Description of gas recovery: Liked being a gas lift specialist, secondary recovery. Found it a challenge. Once again very descriptive.

Retirement: Took an H&R Block course, filed about 700 returns a year, even while working oil. Also volunteered at church and run voting booth for their district.

History of his name and family: Shows me an article about the late Burleigh Grimes, last of the spitball pitchers. Talks about where Ruiz came from, Burleigh knows a little bit of Spanish. Son sends them articles all the time about Louisiana food people and culture. He's a research scientist for Bayer Aspirin in Boston. Burleigh is  $\frac{1}{4}$  Spanish and  $\frac{3}{4}$  French. Molly is Cajun French.

Texaco operations: Barges had to take oil to refinery in Port Arthur, TX. The barges would unload their oil onto "Port Texaco", three ships put together for storage, to take back to Port Arthur. Had to shut wells in at times because the wells were producing so much and there weren't any storage facilities while the barges were out making their rounds. Installed Texas Pipeline in 1954.

Changes in industry and labor: Things used to be manual, now everything is mechanized. Used to like living at the camps, especially the food. Texaco paid for it. Used to charge them a dollar a day for food and lodging. Burleigh says that was due to legal reasoning. Texaco has a credit union but it's not FDIC approved. They paid good interest on loans and accounts. Texaco provided for savings, pension, hospitalization, and life insurance. Personnel changes. Used to be run by "old oil field men", those who began in the 20's and learned from experience. College grad is green, doesn't know anything except what he or she learned in school. In the summers engineers who wanted to work for Texaco would roustabout, pump, push gangs and motorman for the summer so they had an idea how things worked.

Environmental changes: Got to where they didn't want people to go to the bathroom overboard and to burn all toilet paper. Description of treater tanks, and gun barrels, devices to help keep oil out of the water. Used chemicals to keep pH at acceptable levels but eventually there was so many chemicals in the lakes that the fish were being driven off or dying. Leads into a discussion about the "stupid state laws" on fishing regulations.

Story to be told about the oil field: Changes the boating operators went through. Says that the boat operators are magicians.

Unions: The mafia runs unions. Unions make the cost of living go up. Most union officials are crooks and steal a good portion of the money. The people from New York want to change the poor ignorant people from the South. The Texaco refineries were unionized so any time the refineries would get a pay raise so would the production department. Exxon had a federation within the company, which would fight for raises and fair working conditions, but there were no dues. Liked the idea of the federation and believes that if it worked for Exxon it should have worked everywhere. Longevity counted with the unions no matter if you knew your job or not.

Blacks in the industry: Wasn't a problem for the people who grew up poor and white because the Blacks were in the same situation. Burleigh grew up working and playing with Blacks on the plantations so wasn't disturbed when they began working in the oil industry. Knew that many people didn't like for them to be around. Blacks would owe the plantation money because of having to take credit at the stores.

Women in the industry: Women would be engineers and office workers many, many years before coming onto the floor. Didn't see a woman roustabout until the 1980's. Wives didn't want their husbands to work and live with women out at the camps. Most on the camps were cooks, especially Black women.

Floating rigs: Used to have to build rigs from scratch until a Mr. Giliasso devised a way to sink a barge with a rig on it and then raise it again when finished. The first floating rig was named the Giliasso (1940's).

Corporate fellows: Not usually very nice. They'd come down to the camps and have fishing parties but not very talkative with the boys. There are some exceptions. Mr. Jimmy Gibbons was a local boy who made it to the head office. When he would come to the rigs he was always very nice.

James Ryan

Morgan City, LA

July 19, 2004

Interviewed by: Jamie Christy

University of Houston/History International

MMS064

Ethnographic Preface:

James "Rip" Ryan came to Texas from Mississippi, joined the Navy in 1943, and after his discharge, got a job with Shell Oil. Mr. Ryan began his career captaining a seismic experimentation lab boat in Houston, Texas. He married in the 1960s and moved to Morgan City, Louisiana. He continued to captain seismic ships for Shell Oil around the world until his retirement in 1985. Mr. Ryan worked off the coasts of Alaska, Belize, Nova Scotia and the Gulf of Mexico.

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John and Marguerite Ryan

Patterson, LA

May 8, 2001, January 11, 2002, March 3, 2003, January 6, 2005

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner, Diane Austin, Rylan Higgins, Betsy Plumb

University of Arizona

AG016, AG046p, DA099, RH022

#### Ethnographic Preface:

John Ryan was referred to me (Andrew) by Lou Trosclair. I met John at his house. He was happy to have me there, and we could have talked for another hour at least. He's an old Shell hand and is friends with many of the guys I interviewed in New Iberia. He's experienced in a wide variety of oilfield activities, and his initial work on the 'gravity crew' is, by my account, fairly unique. He notes that many of the difficulties started when they were forced to hire Blacks. There's also some discussion about the pollution caused by oilfield work back in the early days. He also talks about when they first tried to computerize the offshore platforms, and what a disaster it was. The first interview ends with a fairly lengthy discussion of loyalty to the company. Andrew returned for a photo interview and then Diane returned to talk with John and his wife, Marguerite. The final interview was conducted as part of the study of the links between WWII and the offshore industry.

John Ryan was born and raised in Alexandria. He left high school with some experience as a mechanic, but it wasn't long after he entered the service for WWII. He served in Europe. Upon his return he had a tough time finding work, but eventually he got on with a Shell gravity crew. John spent his entire career in the oilfield with Shell Oil. He began as a member of the gravity crew in the late 1940's and eventually made the switch to production. The gravity meter was one of a handful of instruments that the oil companies were using at the time to detect reservoirs of oil beneath the surface of the earth. John tired of the moving around and finally found a position at the production facilities at Weeks Island. He started as a roustabout, then gauged, then made gangpusher. Then he was an operations foreman. Eventually he moved into construction. He finally transferred to West Lake Verret as a maintenance foreman. He also worked at Cameron for a while. He later started work completing wells offshore for Shell, and in 1963 he worked at West Delta 30 when Shell was first experimenting with directional drilling. He got called back to Morgan City, though, because they were having problems with personnel.

#### Summary of AG016:

High school: Louisiana had started a part time diversified occupation; you work a half day and go to school a half day; take five years to finish; I was a mechanic in Alexandria

Service: drafted in 1943, came out in 1946; served in Europe; a lot of others went to the Pacific; it was rough; fortunate to go to Europe.

Gravity crew: part of Shell Oil Company; a gravity meter is similar to a Richter scale. It measures the gravity pull of the earth, and you combine those readings with elevation, and you

get a grid. The closer the lines the steeper it is. That's what you're looking for. Similar to seismic work, a shooting crew; worked on a shooting crew some, did some surveying. But there, that was deflections or reflections - they'd actually shoot a charge and send sound waves through, and then they'd pick them up; instrument belonged to Dr. LaCoste and Romberg out of Austin, Texas, University of Texas; it was super secret. We'd pull up to the back door and we'd take the instrument, and we'd check in to the hotel and they'd call you when it was ready. They wouldn't even let you in the place.; later on I became an operator.

Helicopters: Shell contracted a Bell, which was a twin engine helicopter; wouldn't use a single engine helicopter; Bell Aircraft out of Buffalo, New York, and Shell Oil Company contracted a number of helicopter and services from them; flew off Josie Harbor, right off of the Rockefeller game refuge; used triangulation, towers, and a lot of times the geese and ducks would get up between us, and you'd lose a helicopter and the rest of your day was shot.

Weeks Island: was living in Franklin, and went to Weeks Island, which is down below New Iberia, in September of 1951, in production, as a roustabout; stayed on a boat all the time, a quarterboat, and I wanted to get into production. I had been promoted to a junior surveyor, and I was on the staff payroll then; they didn't tell us that they were looking for production people. That's the way the oil companies worked sometimes; Shell had a division office at Franklin, and Mr. Jack Gordon was the manager; I worked every schedule in the world until they finally come up with 7 and 7. I worked 5 and 2, 6 and 3, 10 and 3, 10 and 5. I worked 5 and 2 and had to be back on the quarterboat whether it was at the mouth of the river or the other side of Lake Charles down there on the Gulf, on Monday, no Sunday night to go to work Monday morning. We didn't leave till Friday ...

Steam rigs: they ran on natural gas and water, and we'd have to get out there and lay lines to the regulator behind the rig; old Rig 7 had 5 boilers. It'd pull four joints of pipe; most of them pull three; the first gas that was sold at Weeks Island was sold to United Gas, and it was primarily used when the sugar mills cranked up for a nickel a thousand MCF; now it is nine dollars and people can't pay their gas bills; no telling how many jillion feet of gas we burned at Weeks Island to get the oil.

Construction: primarily, I was on construction, putting up tanks, separators, compressors. When the rigs would move off of location, we'd go out and repair the keyways, or if we had a contract crew to lay the flow line, or to hook it up and get it on, and then the man that was in charge of production would come and open the well and see that it was tested.

Bluewater One: Shell's first offshore rig, a big rig; they lost it down at the mouth of the river in a hurricane, it went into a platform. It tore into pieces in that deepwater down there.

West Delta 30: a partnership deal in 1963, part-Shell and part-Humble; we operated the 100 percent Shell part, which was a real good field. We had A, B, C platforms, and they had rig 11 down there, doing directional drilling;

Hiring minorities: Shell started hiring some minorities in 1965; Robert Warner was the first Black hiring them in New Orleans;

Shell engineers and loyalty: Shell most probably had more engineers work for them than most companies ever even thought about, and for some reason they'd get the experience that Shell had, which was good. Shell at one time had a two-year training program for their engineers; as soon as they got experience, they'd jump up and go to work for a contractor and get twice the money, and you can't blame them;

Summary of AG046p:

Aircraft: They fired that guy. He was from Texas, he stayed drunk all the time. I went by to get him one morning, he was laying on the floor of the bathroom and all he had on was his cowboy boots; that's the helicopter. Right. And it's cold. You can see we're all dressed in coats. Now this was taken at Weeks Island, that's where the barge ran over this well.

Weeks Island accident: the great Red Adair came out there after we did all the work and had a rope about from here to that big tree back there, and he'd pull on the rope and close the valve, and they paid him \$100,000; the canal coming into Weeks Island of the Intracoastal was crooked. And they had drilled these wells with these slips, and when the guy came in, Instead of turning with the canal, he ran right up in that slip. And there was nothing to stop him, and when he hit, he mashed the keyway, and that well was blowing; we built a platform under it, and we got it all tightened back up. We were lucky we were able to tighten it. But that mother was blowing. I mean that well had about 2000 lbs of tubing pressure, top pressure; it was nasty. We got it all tightened up.

Helicopter: they would land out in the marsh. This helicopter had pontoons, and the pilot would have to get out on the pontoon and hold that rotor blade, because if that rotor blade would flick one way or the other, it would be enough vibration to cause that instrument malfunction; we had extensions, light weight three-inch pipe, and we'd shove it down in the marsh until it was firm, and it had a template on top, and you'd set the meter on top. And we'd turn and read it. You had a scale and you'd read it.

Summary of DA099:

Oilfield work: On steam rig, in production; go out and log the well, perforate it; had five boilers on Rig 7, pulled four joints of pipe; problems if did not tie pipe on well; steam rigs burned lots of gas; drilled water well for each location; Laughlin Brothers would not use gas, had big air compressor

Eugene Island 175: pretty platform, had solar turbine generators and compressor; never saw so many people with titles; I came on in '77; low pressure gas, had to compress it

Weeks Island: first gas sold to United Gas for five cents per 1000; sugar mills burned it when they were grinding cane; flared natural gas, could see flare from Weeks Island in New Iberia; all kinds of LTX units, low temperature extraction; processing 300 million barrels a day

Inspectors: people from USGS, would come out every day, boss said to feed them; every day would have two helicopters fly in for lunch, one of the first pump-through platforms, Shell would get knuckleheads from Houston and bring them out

Working: really enjoyed my work; they came out with Maximum Efficient Rate, really killed the wells, EA Luke from Bayou Black quick, said he would not work like that; young engineers wanted to get ahead, would say anything to please to bosses; Jim Babin from Houma invented old Babin pump, bought 'em by the dozens in the oilfield; come in after working with creosote, hands burning up, wife would take baby cream and put it on, no air conditioning, didn't have gloves for you, if you didn't have gloves you used your hands; used board roads, later used mats; could rent the boards, after so many times you had more than paid for it; made in Schriever; used Kamatnu, a wide bulldozer, Caterpillar too narrow

Rigs: drilled well at Fausse point, shrimp flies would come out, used big old blowers or couldn't work; used hands to smear tar all over lower part of rig; when had boilers would steam the tree to clean it before moving it; most equipment from Cameron Iron Works; from Houston, had place in Patterson and Lafayette; most service people out of New Iberia; first underwater well put down in 1959, most research done at Cameron facility

Bluewater: was production foreman on Bluewater rig; under the supervision of Shell Development, all guys with PhDs; had place in Houston to lay with it in the water; well was on the bottom, had a jacket because of ships coming into the area; moved to Cameron in June 1959, Cameron all gas, selling gas to Tennessee Gas Transmission, then moved off Grand Isle; they wanted me to use natural gas, I begged for an air compressor; workers had to stay on platform without living quarters, slept in crates, we'd send meals to them;

Life at home (Marguerite): you did what you had to do; he was at Weeks Island when Hurricane Audrey hit, no communication; neighbor's husband also worked for Shell, we'd get together and wonder; married in August 1948; moved to Houma that year, a long way from Alexandria, moved into little garage-type apartment; he just dropped me off and went offshore; didn't know anyone, landlady took me under her arms and helped me adjust; started going to Baptist Church and met friends

Houma: oil business beginning to pick up in 1948; no way to meet people, Marguerite didn't know how to drive, didn't have car; walked to Main Street, about a half a mile away, to grocery store a few blocks away, used landlady's washing machine, John working 10 and 4, 6 and 3, 5 and 2; crew mostly from Louisiana then; some from Arizona, Texas, a couple of young couples; Marguerite was pregnant so only stayed a short while then home to Alexandria to have the baby; John showed up a couple of days later, didn't get word on time; moved back to Houma when baby six weeks old; good landlords; moved back to Berwick in 1961, working 6 and 2; from Houma to LaPlace, lived in rooms of plantation house on the levee; didn't even have a church there; John working on gravity crew; moved to Franklin, little apartment in a house; John working at Weeks Island, coming home at night; then to New Iberia, rented house; hard to find places to live, especially with children; then to Morgan City in 1958, boom had started, no place to live; in Cameron lived in one of the Phillips Petroleum houses; bought lot in Morgan City, thought there forever, then had to move again, then from Cameron back to Berwick in 1961;

once again neighbors were our salvation; stayed in the area because John working offshore, could correspond home, keep up with the boys

Berwick: very small community, friendly, kids in school, met a lot of people through school; Franklin not friendly

Changes: late 1970s, 1980 got a bunch of people running Shell from the west coast who didn't know anything about production, problems; coming from north Louisiana, were protestants, found Baptist churches in most places; was a shock moving into a Catholic area; lots of horses and buggies still around Lafayette, no longer speaking French in the schools; so many customs were foreign, but adapted; learned how to make a roux, protestants came in, churches began to multiply, John had gone to Catholic school as a boy; John got out of the Gulf before women started working offshore; first blacks out in 1964, some from New Orleans had problems, didn't stay; one brought old shotgun down, brought it on the helicopter, got us in trouble; another at Gibson, good hand;

Reflections: hear now that things have changed, all they're looking for now is payday, quitting time and retirement; in the old times there was a lot of loyalty; it was hard work, but you could take a lot, could stand a lot of heat, guy died of heart attack while still young, his wife was bitter; no slack; met some good people, been an interesting go; never wanted to go farther because did not want to move; if they made you a superintendent you had to move to New Orleans

Summary of RH022:

John was one of a small group of people who had served in WWII and been involved in the early development of the offshore oil and gas industry in the Gulf of Mexico and was interviewed in a joint project of the University of Arizona, U.S. Minerals Management Service, and the National D-Day Museum. In this interview, John talks mostly about his experiences during WWII.

Early history: born June 24, 1924 in Alexandria, LA, daddy was coffee salesman, worked for auto repair during high school in part-time diversified occupation program; was in Alexandria when Pearl Harbor attacked, working at hotel, was drafted in 1943

Military experience: Army infantry, basic training, assigned to combat engineer battalion, demolition work, assembled Bailey Bridges, locating mine fields, overseas from December 1944 until May 1946, unloaded in cargo nets, in France and Germany, used TNT to blow up bridges, near Siegfried line; sleeping in foxholes, under trucks, moved into houses in town; not much cooked food; discharged as Buck Sergeant; came under fire, responsible for keeping my troops together; describes weapons; stayed in Germany after war ended, they were wonderful, industrious; discharged in Mississippi, back to Alexandria

Back home: not any jobs, thinking about going back in the service, went to work for Shell Oil; wrote home during the war using V-mail; mother sent goodies, during service went to school in England at heavy equipment base; could not find a job when got back home; found job because Shell recruiter renting apartment from someone near parents' house; worked on a gravity crew, worked around Alexandria, then Odessa and other places in Texas, back to Louisiana, Dr.

LaCoste and Romberg had come up with underwater gravity meter, rigged up out of Houma and went offshore; did shallow work, then started going in deeper water, lived on quarter boat, better conditions than military

Forrest Sadler

Lafayette, LA

April 3, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW045

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Born in 1921, Forrest Sadler grew up in east Texas in the small town of Troup. His father worked in the oilfield firing boilers and would take Forrest to work with him when he was just a child. During high school, he worked summers in the oilfields. After he was discharged from the Navy in 1946, he went to work for Texaco in south Texas. Six years later, he went to work for a service company, Christianson Diamond Products Company, in Henderson, Texas. In 1958, he moved to Shreveport and was made district manager. Four years later he was transferred to Lafayette to get the district going. In 1969, he became sales coordinator for the Eastern Hemisphere and moved to London. After spending four years in that position, he was transferred to Singapore where he served as manager of Southeast Asia. He left Christianson in 1975, moved back to Lafayette, and then went to work as the Rocky Mountain manager for Hycalog in Casper, Wyoming; a year later, he was transferred to Singapore. Throughout the interview he remarks on how different the world is today than when he was growing up.

#### Summary:

Early life: grew up in oilfields in Troup, east Texas; other than farming, oilfield jobs pretty much only things available; as a youth, with many of his peers, he went to work in oilfield; area was very poor, but people didn't think of themselves that way.

Early oilfield: father started out as a roughneck; when he was a child, his father taught him how to fire boilers on old jack post rig (describes rig); saw a man get his finger mashed off but the man did not stop working because if he did, would lose his job.

Christianson Diamond Products Company - career: transferred from Shreveport (where district manager) to Lafayette in '62 to get district going; transferred to London in '69 as sales coordinator for Eastern Hemisphere; '72 transferred to Singapore. Company sold bits and equipment.

Bits: their diamond bits allowed for longer deep drilling; although expensive, in the right formations and at certain depths they made up for that on what they could save in rig time.

Family: marriage fell apart because of his work; workaholic because that's basically all he knew to do - no such thing as vacations where he grew up (oilfield people were like slave labor in east Texas).

Texaco: went to work for them in south Texas in '46 after he got out of the Navy; in drilling department and being moved around a lot; wanted to get two sons in school, so left after six years.

Later career: left Christianson in '75; worked for Hycalog five years overseas; retired; today works as home and involved in Shriners and Salvation Army.

Moving: you go where the work is; leave somebody in one place too long and they get complacent.

Safety: never got hurt because father socialized him to be safety-minded; Texaco safety meetings.

Transportation: tried boats in Lafayette district, but didn't work; used Cessnas; he split flying time between himself and his pilot; other oil companies using float planes the way they were. Describes work involved in flying the planes.

Education: in the past would be able to get a job if could do the job, today many people are looked over because they lack a college degree. He learned a lot about drilling as a child by observing; father told him to continue to educate himself.

Job security and loyalty: never worried about losing; should have moved to other companies but didn't; today people don't stay with one company for very long; back then people were pretty loyal to their companies because they were treated right; today companies focused on bottom line.

Lafayette in '60s: Four Corners was center of activity; describes where Christianson offices moved. Boss told him it was his job to demand the things he needed; was given authority to make a lot of decisions on his own (had to be right at least 51 percent of the time - a lot due to luck). Was a boomtown; was a boomtown wherever he was transferred.

Working overseas: hired people who knew the language and laws - you gotta have good people around you. Don't draw attention to yourself, stay out of trouble.

Lafayette in '60s: lived on the outside of town when moved; no utilities and street unpaved; traffic started getting bad late '60s and continues today.

Transfers: company paid for moving expenses; overseas company supported worker but didn't nursemaid them.

Oil industry and Lafayette: industry has been good for Lafayette; today have manufacturing in the city that exports all over the world.

'80s bust: people kept saying that business would come back, but downturn lasted; a shame to see what happened to some people.

Sons and child rearing: one of his two sons worked for Otis Engineer all over the world; roughneck education - had both roughnecked while they were in school (describes one of his

son's experiences). Told them that as long as they were in the right, he would support them; they were wrong, they would have to pay the price; proud of both his sons.

Skidding derricks: describes moving a derrick from one location to another in Texas.

Accidents: people get hurt by not paying attention; today have people hoping to get hurt enough for a lawsuit; in past, would feel ashamed if got hurt (indicates they had been careless); analogy to football. They would just go out there and work hard and play hard.

Norman "Pete" Salter

Lafayette, LA

February 4, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW036

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Norman Salter was born in 1912 in Many, Louisiana; he was raised in northern Louisiana. He left college (where he was studying to be a school teacher) when he was about 20 to go work in the oilfield first in north Louisiana and then in south Texas. A friend helped him to get a job as a derrick for Nicholas Drilling Company; they worked in the Tepetate Field near Basile, Louisiana, and a field near Ville Platte. He moved with his family to Lafayette from Eunice in 1956 so that his daughters could go to college at Southwestern Louisiana Institute (SLI); at that time he had an independent drilling company with a few partners. Not long after moving to Lafayette, he sold out his share in the company and went to work as a superintendent for MichPSC, as gas pipeline company. They were unsuccessful in the area and moved out; he then got into consulting.

#### Summary:

Early life and career: born 1912 in Many, LA. Quit college to go to work oilfield in Zwolle and then hitched a ride with a cattleman to look for work in south Texas. Came back to LA to work as derrick man/roughneck in newly discovered Tepetate Field for Nicolas Drilling Company; got the job with a help of a friend; many people didn't like working the derrick, but he thought it was easier and it paid more. Next worked Tate Coal Field for three years, which was unusual; have to move with the rig or you don't have a job.

Coming to Lafayette: came there from Eunice in 1956 when it was just beginning to go; wanted children to go to college there (three of four did). Sometimes wouldn't move the family with a new job, depended on if the well looked like it would last.

Oil Center: originally Heymann wanted to build it in Opelousas, but they didn't want the oilfield people there (Heymann told him that); oilfield people had a rough reputation.

Later career: came to Lafayette as independent driller, but sold out shortly after moving there; worked eight years for MichPSC as a superintendent; went into consulting after MichPSC got out of business. As a drilling consultant worked for a cousin, Atlantic Richfield, Tidewater, and some independents; never had to look for work.

Lafayette in '50s: first home on Myrtle Place ("Silk Stocking Street"); Eraste Landry and part of Pinhook was gravel at that time.

Downturns: lot of people lost their jobs, but he was always lucky; people would continue to live in Lafayette and maybe look for work offshore.

Outsiders: some resistance from locals towards outsiders (e.g., Oackbourne Country Club). Food was different than northern LA (rice instead of potatoes, more seasonings); he always liked the food.

Land vs offshore drilling: mostly did land work; today land drilling opportunities are limited.

Oil industry: if he were just starting out, he would not get into oil business - rough way to make a living; when he started in it, it was a lucrative business and there weren't many other avenues for making a living.

Accidents: got hurt a few times and had to take time off once after being burned; company did not pay expenses for injury then; today have lawyers advertising to take up injury claims; back then some workers would sue the company after an injury, but not getting settlements like today. Used to kill quite a few people on those rigs, but don't hear about that as frequently today.

Growth of Lafayette: spurred by oil industry and continues today (assisted by growth of hospitals, too).

Price of gas: used to get it for three cents a cubic foot to fire boilers on steam rigs; price of energy today.

Mary Samaha

Houma, LA

July 16, 2001, January 22, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB004, EB029

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mrs. Mary Samaha was born in 1930. She is active in many different organizations, clubs and groups. She approached Andrew Gardner at an oilfield workers meeting in New Orleans expressing interest in talking with someone about her experiences growing up in the oilfield with her step-father, Escoe "Joe" Benton. She lives in a newer part of Houma, LA. in a large modern house. Her husband, M.J., was present for most of the interview. He would add things that Mary wouldn't, such as reiterating time and again how important Mary was to Joe as well as how much work she did while working in the company. M.J. also worked in the oilfield. He worked at Shell in the exploration department for 36 years. Mary is a master gardener and does a lot of community outreach work, mainly in the field of community education concerning environmental issues

In the second interview, I asked Mary about the growth of Houma and how local businesses associated with the oilfield contributed to the transformation of Houma from a small fishing town into a thriving oil town. I acquired the names of five businesses that began in the 1950's and are still operating under the same name. Mary's stepfather, Jerry Benson, Sr., owned one of those businesses, Benton Casing. Mary had been one of the major shareholders in the company as well as head of the accounting department. She was pleased to talk about the company. She called her brother, Jerry's youngest son, who was still running his own business under the same name. Jerry Benton Jr. had only 20 minutes to sit and talk, but he agreed to be interviewed again later. Mary, Jerry, M.J. and I talked about how the business got started, how Jerry Sr. made contacts, and how he kept his business running even through the rough times.

#### Summary of EB004:

Early life: Mary's mother married Jerry when Mary was 9 years old in 1940. Living in Harvey in 1939. Her mother rented rooms to the oil people. People in the town called them "oil trash". They moved around with him for the next 9 years, sometimes only staying in one place for a few months.

Stepfather: Born in 1909. Worked in oil field since 1920 for Laughlin Brothers in the drilling department. Worked at Jennings and Lafayette with his crew. They would work 8-hour shifts with no time off. Says that the oil people were a rough bunch.

Moving around: Mother had 3 children when she married Jerry. Each child had a suitcase; mother would bring the cooking supplies and the ironing board. They would get to town and immediately find a place for them to live while Joe went to work. Would usually have a day or

two notice to pack up before leaving town. It was exciting for a young girl. As she grew older it became harder.

School: She talks about how difficult it was to build friendships. It was easy to fall behind in school. She said she got C's most of her life and was happy with that due to her situation most of her adolescent life. People looked down on you because you were lower class and weren't going to be there very long. Would repeat towns and schools sometimes. Dropping out wasn't an option because she always wanted an education. Graduated from Jennings High School.

Offshore: 1947 was the beginning of building a life of permanence. The men would go offshore but the women and the families could stay in one place. Moved to Houma in 1947. Couldn't find a place to live in Morgan City so they had to buy a trailer. Mary got married in 1948.

Memories: Close knit group of people who moved around. Says this way of life was a great education. Oilmen were not mean, they were fun loving but rowdy. Would drink and play cards a lot.

Relationships: Didn't get to know Jerry very well because of his schedule. Every 6 weeks they would change shifts. He didn't even know his own children that well. When they moved to Houma was the first time that they got to know him.

Contractors: all of the workers would change who they worked for quite a bit. Was working for Penrod Drilling Co. when they went offshore. He was 50 years old at this time and the life was taking its toll on his body.

Starting a business: Began a tong business because he'd made lots of contacts during his years in the oil field and had worked himself up to a tool pusher. She worked for Jerry almost the entirety of the life of the business. Had offices all over Texas, Mississippi, and Louisiana. He had several planes and made quite a name for himself. All he knew was oil but he couldn't do the hard work anymore. Only had a 4th grade education but knew every aspect of the oil industry. One of his friends went into the tong business and asked for help.

Raising a family: Mary didn't want her kids to move around like that so she set up a stable life in Houma. She and M.J. had 8 kids. M.J. got tired of the life because he knew that Mary was raising the kids by herself.

Description of different companies: all separate, drilling, exploration, land crews, etc. After awhile the large companies began merging the different departments.

Old steam rigs: Remembers seeing the wooden structures from the old derricks. Mary talks about going out on the rigs to bring her stepfather lunch or dinner. The noise still rings in her head. Remembers all the boards they laid to walk around the drilling rig, was afraid to fall when she was little.

Accidents: Says there were no safety measures in the 40's. Jerry lost a thumb, but that was the only accident he ever had. No benefits or compensation. Her brother was hurt and laid up for over a year, this was about 30 years ago.

Oil field slump: They sold the business to Frank's Casing business in 1992 because things had gotten hard and Jerry was really old at this point.

Life since the business: Jerry died in 1997. He was the oldest of 11 children and left home at age 13 to work. Got involved with the moonshiners and almost died. Went to Beaumont, TX. and began working for the oil industry when he was 16. His brother wrote a book, "Last of the Covered Wagons" by Phillip Benton.

Regulations/safety: There was a need but they went overboard. From one extreme to another with OSHA. It was impossible to follow every single little thing. Most ridiculous rule was wearing safety harnesses in the derrick that caused accidents because they were in the way. Hard to enforce rules when rules seemingly hampered jobs. Environmental regulations were horrendous. They had 18-wheelers and said it was impossible to keep every drop in. Biggest problem was getting rid of the oil. Constantly painting the machinery. Before regulations people were not that interested in environment. Mary, as office manager, would get the info but Jerry said it was crap. Insurance people just wanted to keep costs down. Thinks that many turned their heads because the most important thing was oil. Knows that the oil companies ravished the environment. Small companies not interested in the environment because it was too expensive to keep up. At first, OSHA told you what you couldn't do but not how to go about putting regulations into action.

Has oil field been good for South Louisiana? Yes, it provided industry and money for a group of people who didn't have anything else. LA should be getting money from oil companies to rebuild the coastlines. Says that politicians messed the environment up. Brought a lot of money into the state, which helped the growth of the state.

Summary of EB029:

Fathers work History: His father left home at the age of 13, and ran moonshine. He then did ranch work and because of his experience with horses, he began transporting rigs on land, during the depression, due to their methodology; dragging them with animals. During the depression, one was only allowed to work so many hours, but because of his experience, the company he worked for gave him two names to work twice the hours transporting rigs. He then went into the oil fields as a toolpusher. In his fifties, during the '50s, he began a small contract company, Benton Tong Services, which was able to adapt to the changing technology to avoid becoming obsolete. Later, Jerry, his son and nephew took over the business from his dad.

Joe and Susie Sanford

Morgan City, LA

October 5, 2002, October 8, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA063, DA064

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Several divers talked about Sanford Brothers and wanted to know if I had interviewed Joe. I mentioned this to Jean Shirley and learned that Joe's wife, Susie, teaches Sunday school with Jean. Jean agreed to tell her about the study so she could talk with Joe about it. She was a bit concerned about whether he could participate because he had a stroke a couple of years ago. I called the Sanfords and left a message that I would be in Morgan City. Then, Hurricane Lili hit. On Saturday, I called again, and Susie said that Joe was awake and that I should come on over. I arrived to find Joe on the back porch. He led me into a large kitchen and dining area where Susie was preparing a huge pot of chili for the weekly Sunday family dinner. She joined us, and we sat at the dining room table for the interview.

Joe was born and raised in South Carolina and got into the diving business after leaving the Marine Corps in 1954. He dove for a couple of years on the east coast until he received a call from a friend to come to the Gulf Coast to dive for Sea Engineering. After Joe had been at Sea Engineering for four years, the owner, Jack Tucker, had a heart attack and sold the company, and its insurance policy, to Joe and his brother. They formed Sanford Brothers and moved to Morgan City. They were able to obtain work because at that time they were the only diving company working in the area that had insurance, and the oil companies were starting to require their contractors to carry insurance. Within a few years, the company grew from Joe and his brother to a 45-50 person operation. In 1967, Westinghouse officers approached Joe to buy the company. After they made a couple of trips to Morgan City and Joe made a couple of trips to Pittsburgh, a deal was made. Joe stayed with Westinghouse for two years until Westinghouse sold the company to Santa Fe Drilling Company. After a few months, Westinghouse paid Joe off. Within a couple of years, Santa Fe had gone broke and was out of the diving business. Meanwhile, Joe and a former employee purchased Morgan City rentals, a company that rents equipment to petroleum and service companies. After Joe had his stroke, he sold the business to his son.

#### Summary of DA063:

Early history: I was born and raised on a cotton farm in Orangeburg County, South Carolina. I went into the Marine Corps two weeks after I graduated from high school in 1950. Two weeks before the Korean War broke out I was in boot camp. I was with the first helicopter squadron in the Marine Corps, HMR 161. From 1950-1953 I was in Korea. When I got out, I signed up for deep-sea diving school and attended the Sparling School of Deep Sea Diving. I was in the last class in Wilmington, California.

Getting in to diving: I was on maneuvers in Puerto Rico and did some skin diving there, and I loved it. I saw an article, an advertisement in the paper. I wrote to the school and got into the last class. There were 9 of us in the class. I went back to South Carolina, then to Virginia. One day I got a call from a friend, Pete Skinner, who was working for Sea Engineering and Salvage. I went down and fell in love with this part of the country and with wife. Sea Engineering had the first insurance offshore. They sent me here to Morgan City. My brother, Tom, who is seven years younger than I am, came with me as my tender. We became a pair and started hiring people. We looked around and we were the largest company we knew of. We had diving jobs in Morgan City, England, Norway, and Egypt. The owner, Jack Tucker, had a heart attack so we bought the company and started Sanford Diving.

Jobs: We did construction jobs. We were in Cameron, Louisiana right after Audrey. We arrived about a week after Audrey. We were salvaging boats and doing clean up for about 6 to 8 weeks. We married in 1959. We came here because we heard there was a need for insurance in the oil field. No one had insurance. It was unheard of. We bought the company for \$2,700. I went around and visited the oil companies and told them what we had. They said send us the insurance papers. We got on the approved list for 3 or 4 oil companies. Mobile became our biggest customer. When things fell overboard, we went and recovered them. We did underwater burning. We went down inside 30-inch conductor pipes and burn them and then they would pull the piling off. We were doing that mostly for McDermott. In about 3 years we had 45-50 divers.

Finding divers and getting work: The first diver we hired was out of the Navy. Then other people heard about us and came down. They kept flooding in and we kept hiring them because we could put them to work. We ended up salvaging barges. We built one of them into a big derrick barge. McDermott did not like that. They cut us off. Brown and Root wouldn't touch us. We ended up with two derrick barges, two tug boats, and two crew boats.

Selling to Westinghouse: Then one day a guy shows up from Westinghouse Electric and wanted to buy the company. They were in such a hurry. Later I found out that their Board of Directors had given them an ultimatum to use this big chamber that they had spent all this money on. We got a five-year contract to work for them. My brother decided he wanted to go into car racing, so he quit in six months. About one and a half years after that, the man who had put this thing together for them died of a heart attack. The new vice president wasn't interested in the diving business.

Selling to Santa Fe Drilling Company: Santa Fe bought the company and moved it from here to Houma. Tom Angel who had worked for me was one of the head guys. They asked me to move over to Houma with them, but I did not go. Westinghouse wanted me to move to California, but I would not go. They bought me out of my contract. Before Westinghouse bought us out we had 8 companies, the diving company, the derrick barge, the boat. Oceanonics had instruments for locating pipelines underwater electronically. When I went to Westinghouse, I sold the diving industry and had to get rid of all the rest of it. Santa Fe lasted a few years and they finally folded up.

Safety: Sanford never had any accidents. Oceaneering lost a man. Right after we sold off to Westinghouse we had several accidents. Three guys got killed out of Norway, and another guy

was killed here. The three divers that were killed in Norway, they never did find out what happened to them. They passed out in the diving bell and when they brought them up they were all dead. They did autopsies and never did find out what was wrong. They impounded the gas and couldn't find anything. They never let them use that bell again. Sanford would only hire Navy divers or divers we trained ourselves. By then, the divers were making lots of money. Lots of young men came out looking for jobs who didn't realize the seriousness of diving.

Competition: Sanford was the largest company; if we sent a man out he knew the job. We built a large tank in the back of the shop and put divers down in the water and taught them to burn and weld. We used local suppliers.

Morgan City in the 1960s: It was nice and quiet.

Hurricanes: In '62 and '63 we had hurricanes. It was bad. It blew down platforms offshore. We worked out there for months. We put our first barge and tug to work during that period. The hurricanes blew the platforms down in the Gulf. The gas would be coming out of the wells. We had to go down and cap them off. Some would blow stuff off the platform.

Air and gas: We used air down to 210 - 220 feet. Then we switched over to using oxygen and helium. I never used anything but air. 210 feet was the deepest I went.

After Westinghouse: One of our first divers, Vernon Fox, decided he wanted to go into the rental business. I decided to go in with him. We bought a company, Morgan City Rentals. They're still flying high today. I sold it to my son. He bought out his sisters and brothers. The company rents air compressors, pumps, generators. Whatever they called for we would get for them. Vernon Fox was only in business for a year. Then he sold out. My brother, Tom, bought him out. Tom stayed with us 10 to 15 years in the rental business. Then he decided he wanted out. We bought him out.

Surviving: I really don't know how I survived. I became saved. I became a Christian during one of those slow times. A few weeks later my business picked back up. It's never been down since then.

Son in oil business: I'm glad he stayed in the business. He graduated from LSU and was going back to take up English, of all things. I had a stroke and went to New Orleans for one of those treatments for 11 months. I could not think like I used to. I gave the business to my son. He made a deal to buy me out. He's done a great job. He is getting along fine.

Biggest changes in Morgan City: (Susie) I grew up when work was hard and jobs were few. We never had a vacation. I never left the city until I met him. It was a frightening thing to me to meet all these people who were more learned than me, more experienced than me. I got over the fear. Joe moved his family out here. This father and brother-in-law worked in the chair factory that had shut down. They started working for him. Lots of my dad's people spoke only French. Joe thought they didn't like him, but that wasn't true. He thought my family didn't like him because they didn't speak to him in English. I told him they couldn't speak English. I had other people tell

me - Tom Angel and his wife - that they went through culture shock when they moved here. She told me people were not friendly to them.

The Bust: Lots of people went under in the '80s. We were fortunate. They just lived way beyond their means. Joe was right - we had to put it in the company to survive. Others didn't. It was hard to watch, especially those people who were close to retirement. They lost everything. Most people stayed around. Some left, if they didn't have family around here. We could do with a lot less. It's different with the young ones now and their expectations.

Susie's parents: My dad worked till he was 90. He was a crane operator for over 50 years. He was upset when they instituted mandatory retirement at age 65. He was 80 years old. He did not want to retire. Every November he'd stop working and go in the marsh and trap. All my dad's people lived in Belle River. My mom would not stay out there. She wanted all of us to go to school. When her first child started school, there were five of us, she moved to Morgan City and would not go back to the swamps. Every November to February they would let him off work and he'd go trap. All my mom's kids graduated from high school, and two went to college. Support for education was not widespread. There were still a lot of illiterates here. There still are. I have cousins who never finished high school or grammar school. Their children, too. My mom was originally from Franklin. Her mom and dad were living here. This was the only place for school other than the occasional school where the boat would pick them up if there was no high water or if they were not trapping. They didn't always have a real teacher in those schools.

Back to diving: Roy Smith is a diver who worked with Joe at Sea Engineering and Salvage and then went to work for Taylor Diving until he was paralyzed in an accident. His wife was the sole survivor of the Rault Building fire in New Orleans. She jumped from a tenth story window and lived. The decision to sell was the best one I ever made. Westinghouse kept everybody. I was still in charge of everything.

Summary of DA064:

Getting started: contacted by Pete with Sea Engineering, salvage job, Joe left South Carolina to go work, called brother Tom to join him; experience of being saved while diving; offer to set up diving company

Social life: met Susie at party, hardly went out because dates would be cancelled when jobs came up; almost missed wedding because out on a job, got helicopter in the day of the wedding

Working: Company grew quickly, started working overseas, insurance rates kept going up even with no accidents; then bought out by Westinghouse

Carl and Georgia Santiny

Grand Isle, LA

March 20, 2003

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM064

Ethnographic Preface:

Carl Santiny was recommended by Jean Landry. I had tried to catch him several times, finally sitting down with him and his wife for several hours. The interview ranged widely over topics, including a discussion by both the Santinys of local healing practices before the advent of doctors on the island. Carl is very complimentary about his company, Freeport Sulphur, but less so when Jim Bob Moffert took over.

Carl Santiny, now 72 years old, is a native of Grand Isle. Georgia, his wife, is from Monroe, LA. They met when she came down to Grand Isle for a vacation. Carl's dad was a shrimper. Carl has lots of relatives in New Orleans, where they went to work in the plants during the war. He was councilman and justice of the peace. He retired from Freeport in 1994 where he was base superintendent. Their daughter works offshore, doing computer work.

Summary:

Politics: very nasty on the island, councilman from 1964 to 1988

Exxon: came in 1947-8 as Humble; brought prefab houses; Exxon didn't take to natives, especially Slim Waffer, looked down at us; we made it hard for them, beat the heck out of them at barrooms; bussed kids to Golden Meadow; eased up when Slim left; Ace replaced him, was from Louisiana; they bought good bit of island; started moving people out in 1980s, sold houses; Rotar Aid was behind community center, did all of Humble's flying; sold lot of property to Otto Candies on beach side; Ted Danziger sold property to Humble; had bought land for lapsed taxes, was from Gretna

Birth certificates: Buras woman worked at Vital Statistics, she didn't like Grand Isle, registered kids as blacks; had to go to court 30 years ago to get it fixed

Cajuns: don't have any here; our ancestors from France, Spain, Italy, not Nova Scotia

Economy: sugar mill used to be on Grand Terre; poor people farmed; always had first cukes, green beans, trucked to French Market in New Orleans; Mr. Rigaud had lots of cows; cows liked to lie on clamshell roads; kids collected cow poop, sell sack for 5 cents, buy ice cream on Sundays; Old Man Richoux was ice man; shrimp shed had ice brought in by boat

Chinamen: Dad worked for Chinamen on boat Hong Kong; small shrimp dried; Chinese lived on platforms in bay; salted fish

Blacks: only one family lived down here, Old Man Jim; blacks scared to death of water, so they stay away

Vietnamese: don't live on island; island trawlers were at war with them at one time

Politics: always fighting with Corps of Engineers; we weren't getting fair share from Jefferson Parish, even though oil coming out of here; I made motion to get into Plaquemines Parish because they had plenty of money, old people objected

Outsiders: Georgia from Monroe, still considered outsider; school principal's mother from New Orleans, so he's considered outsider

Contracting: harder and harder to get on with major companies; contracting always happened, but now more and more frequent

Career: Freeport is best company in world; bought this house, I paid it back at no interest; got tougher when Jim Bob Moffert came; McMoRan had the oil and we had the money; big happy family when it was Freeport Sulphur; gave me little job after I retired overseeing property; we had camp for entertaining; slept at office when working 7/7

Betsy: afterward, everybody modernized, built new houses, got air conditioning; barrooms rebuilt, didn't have same atmosphere

WWII: Coast Guard patrolled with dogs

Health care: Dr. Englebach was pharmacist; Carl and Aubin's mothers were midwives; no real doctors

Aubin Rigaud: not much education, but has answer for everything; wife is Margie, from Mississippi, 20 years younger than Aubin

Casinos: during and after war; poker and dice in barrooms; kept going until Betsy; big money would come down here; I guess it was legal; after service, Carl used to work cards

Judge Adam: justice of peace, had pull; drove car full blast; if she didn't like you, she would register you as black; I baptized the first jail

Service: 21/2 years overseas in Korean War

Work: started with Brown and Root; roughneck, fell off, bounced into drawworks, broke arms, in hospital 2 ½ months; they bought my lawyer out, I didn't get anything, couldn't get my job back contracting for Exxon; started with Freeport as kitchen's helper, then cook, operator, then in charge of base; pumped sulphur in line inside super-heated pipe, we'd put it in heated barge, cool water and send it back to platform; "safety first" but see how much it counts if you aren't producing;

Turtles: in 1930s, shipping then to New York, sold for \$6

Future of GI: strangers taking over; will be nothing but camp owners; oil companies leave island because of storm problems, go where computers and papers will be safe; politicians not doing anything to help island or to keep oil companies.

Sidney and Mildred Santiny

Grand Isle, LA

January 21, 2003

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM055

Ethnographic Preface:

Jean Landry introduced me to Sidney and Mildred Santiny at the seniors' daily dinner at the Grand Isle community center. They willingly agreed to talk, so I interviewed them at their home. The interview was rather brief.

Sidney worked for 30 years as roustabout for Tidewater Marine, a division of Brown and Root; and retired at age 65. He has been married twice, each to a Mildred. The present Mildred and Sidney have been together now for 18 years. Mildred said most elderly couples now are "companions" rather than married couples, on account of Social Security and tax penalties for married folks.

Summary:

Family background: Sidney born and raised on Grand Isle, father was fisherman with seine, trammel net, catching shrimp, dried shrimp; Chinaman had platform for drying shrimp, pick them up in evening, put them out next day; Sidney never went to school, can't read or write

Grand Isle: before bridge, paddlewheel boats went back and forth to New Orleans twice a week; farms all over island; back side of island eroding outside levee; last house on Ludwig Lane used to be store, post office, pay light and water bills there.

Work: hard getting job with companies.

2002 storms: 20 inches of rain, evacuated to Lockport.

Earl P. Savoie

Dulac, LA

July 15, 2003

Interviewed by: Jessica Piekielek, Scott Kennedy

University of Arizona

JP002

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Scott and I met Earl P. Savoie at the senior lunch in Grand Caillou and struck up a conversation with him and another couple, the Duplantis, who had been his long time neighbors. He agreed to talk with us that day, so after lunch we followed him to his house. Earl lives alone, although he has family living close by. After the end of the interview, two of his great grandchildren who live next door stopped by to visit. Earl talked a lot about his house, which he built himself, and how he had to move once when they widened Grand Caillou Road. On his days off, he did electrical work and carpentry, at his own home and for others as a second job. Earl's wife, Cecil, died in January of this year, after a sickness of 9 years. He was still in the process of cleaning up and sorting through things which his wife was in charge of organizing, so he wasn't able to locate any old photos.

Earl P. Savoie was born in 1922, grew up on Bayou Blue and graduated from Terrebonne High School in 1940. He met his wife, Cecil Bourg Savoie, from Dulac, and they married in 1942. After three years in the service, Earl P. Savoie began work for Texaco in 1947, starting as a galleyhand and ending as a head cook. He worked for Texaco for 36 years and retired in 1984 at the age of 59.

#### Summary:

Personal: Earl P. Savoie was born in 1922, grew up on Bayou Blue and graduated from Terrebonne High School in 1940. He met his wife, Cecil Bourg Savoie, from Dulac, and they married in 1942. Had three daughters. Wife raised children, worked on and off at a little grocery store connected to a shrimp factory, later went to work for the church in 1980, also did ceramics at home. Has always been fascinated with electrical work, air conditioning, etc. Mostly self-taught "If you want to learn something, you've got to do it."

Career History: Spent three years in the service, didn't meet his first daughter until she was two and half years old. Began work for Texaco in 1947, starting as a galleyhand and ending as a head cook. Worked 7 and 7, was well paid. Chose to work for oil company because was a secure job. Loved his job, feels he was treated well, received good benefits and would do it again. Worked at a camp in Lafitte, LA, in Jefferson Parish, where they fed 75-140 people at any meal. Also worked for two years on a rig. He worked for Texaco for 36 years and retired in 1984 at the age of 59.

Job responsibilities: Head cooks made their own menus, had to have meat, dry beans, vegetable, salad, rice, bread, plus an extra side dish. They made all their own baked goods, pies, cakes, etc.

and in the early years they even hand cranked their own ice cream for the workers. On days when men were scheduled to go home, they made hamburgers, so the workers could run, grab lunch, and eat on their way out. A few men complained about food, especially if they repeated two meals in the same week. Still enjoys cooking.

Unions: Didn't have unions at that time because the oil companies were paying the same wages as what the refineries were paying to union members.

Accidents and hazards: Hurricanes would sometimes bring men in from field, for example, Betsy in 1965. It would take 4 to 5 months to get a camp fixed up and completely back together after a hurricane. Some time around 1953-1955, when working on rig behind Morgan City, they hit a gas pocket and for 12 hours the rig was in emergency conditions. The rig started to shake and they had to bring in Halliburton. Earl and others set to work hauling mud bags to stop the problem

Work shifts: Worked 7 and 7 and liked schedule; liked to have 7 days of his own, worked odd jobs in carpentry and electrical work; he, wife and kids liked to go places and were able to on days off; had a vacation home in Mississippi.

Women: Women did not work cooking for oil camps, not because they couldn't, but because none applied. Now women do work for the catering businesses which feed oil workers.

Catering: Texaco asked him to retire because they wanted to switch to catering. Catering was cheaper for the company because they could just pay a set price for meals and didn't have to worry about paying for employees or their benefits.

Economy: Oil jobs were best paying jobs in area when started; before oil, shrimping, crabbing and fishing was major industry with 6 processing plants; women worked in the shrimp processing plants peeling shrimp; also knew other people in the area who worked for Texaco.

Changes: Few people moved into Dulac because of oil industry, only homesteaders lived in Dulac; major change is disappearance of walkable marsh lands, for example, behind his house; last ten years has brought changes in area, after Hurricanes Juan and Andrew people have moved out of Dulac to places like Ashland North and South and Houma when they got insurance money to move; before 1980's, children stayed in area; only new people moving to the area are recreationists.

Family: Father was a plumber, he learned plumbing from him; father-in-law was a machinist and trapper, although trapping was only good between about 1942-1946, before the influx of nutria.

Joyce Savoie

Boutte, LA

July 23, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA052

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Joyce is the widow of Joe Savoie, a diver who developed his own line of diving helmets. Several of the divers asked me if I had interviewed Joyce, so I called her and she said she would be very happy to do an interview because she is very proud of her husband. I met her at her house and we visited for about six hours. She told me about being married to Joe, his work as a diver and inventor, and the life they had together. She showed me Joe's first helmet, which is the one he wore. We also went out and looked at his workshops in the backyard. Most of the equipment he used is still in the yard and the shops.

Joyce and Joe were married 38 years. Joe was ten years older than Joyce when they married. They met when Joe walked into the telephone answering service for which Joyce was working and Joyce decided she was going to get him. Joyce was born in Lafayette and moved with her family to the west bank, which is where she was living when she met Joe. Joe was born in 1929 in Point a la Hache, then lived in Houma and Westwego before moving to Boutte with Joyce. They were married on January 30, 1965. Joe was in the Air Force for 15 years but left after he hit a lieutenant, broke his hand, and saw his rating go down. His brother, Blue, was diving when Joe came home, and Joe began working for him as a tender. He began making his diving helmets in 1963 when he was working for Dick Evans Divers and wanted something that would be safer for the divers. He worked until he became ill in 1998; he died on March 10, 1999, the day of the diver's reunion.

#### Summary:

Life together: married 38 years, both married before, had 4 kids, two of his and two of hers; two grandchildren and one great granddaughter who was born 8-9 months after Joe died; had a wonderful life with him "at times"; he was never really difficult with me and the kids, but he was with his business and with diving; would come back in from jobs where he had walked off because he thought they wanted him to dive under unsafe conditions

Early history: was in Air Force 15 years, hit a lieutenant, broke his hand, his rating was put down so he left; returned to Louisiana and began working as a tender for his brother, Blue, a diver; met Joyce at the answering service where Joyce worked when he came in to get his two-way radio; lived together a year before marrying; Joyce's first contact with divers was through Joe; he was working for Dick Evans Divers; he learned to burn on the job, tied a rope around a pipe to burn straight

Experience as diver's wife: very different; he'd go out on a job, might be gone for a night, a few hours, or weeks; if Joe had kids punished for some reason, Joyce had to follow through when he was gone; after midnight they generally called home from the platform; Joyce could call the office and they would get hold of him; one time the car burned up, called brother-in-law and he came and put out the fire; Joyce born in Lafayette, living on west bank when she met Joe; moved to Boutte when his family did; Joe and Blue were divers, other brothers, Pat and Gary, were tenders and then went on to other occupations

Helmets: 1963-1964 built one helmet; worked on it offshore, inshore, on the living room floor, on the kitchen table; was working on the Houma tunnel wearing Scott masks; diver stepped on his face and pulled off his mask; Joe said there had to be a safer way, at the time only hard hats and Scott mask; took awhile for him to figure it out; everything was done by hand, he made the holes in the stainless steel with a drill; tested his first helmet in the Harvey Canal; whole family was out there and it didn't leak; some divers wanted one, others made fun of him; he went into manufacturing 12 more; couldn't make a living off of the helmets so took dive jobs also; Carl Holden was the first to get a Savoie helmet after Joe; Carl's wife said it sat on the front seat of his pickup truck; another diver took it to bed with him; one wife said she saw her husband standing in front of the mirror with nothing on except his diving helmet; helmet had a flip up face plate; story of Joe smoking a cigarette and jumping in without putting down the faceplate; Joe said he never came up so fast

Relationships among divers: they played jokes on each other out there; story of Dick Evans putting a dead shark at the top of the ladder and Joe going back down several times before they moved it so he would come up

Joseph Schouest

Covington, LA

March 16, 2002, July 11, 2002, July 15, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA041, DA045, DA047p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Joe Schouest at the divers' reunion on March 10, 2002. Several people told me I would have to meet and talk with Joe, and a couple told me the story of the diving accident in which he lost most of his right hand, before I actually got the chance to talk with him. He wore a blue leather glove on his right hand but did not say anything about his injury. He told me that he had saved over ten years' worth of diving logs from the 1970's and 1980's and that I was welcome to take them and read them. I told him I would certainly like to do so, and he gave me his phone number to contact him. I called a couple of days later and set up the meeting at his house. When I arrived, he met me at the door and invited me in to sit at the kitchen table. He had a stack of photos, magazines, and company materials on the table and began by talking about them. His wife and another woman, whom he later introduced as the wife of another diver who had passed away a couple of years earlier, were moving around in the background

Joe Schouest was born in 1929 in New Orleans, started working for Taylor Diving in 1960 and dove for Taylor for 28 years, the longest of any employee at the time he retired. He began work as a seaman in the Merchant Marine in 1946 and worked at sea for 10 years. He also worked at the Michoud plant assembling tank engines for the Korean War. He began diving in the Mississippi River in 1957, moved to the Gulf of Mexico in 1960 with Taylor Diving, and then did his first job in the North Sea in 1967. In 1968, he was sent back to the North Sea where he remained until 1980. He married an English woman in 1970 and had two children. He returned to the Gulf in 1980 and worked there until his retirement in 1987.

#### Summary of DA041:

Taylor Diving: worked for Taylor most of his career; Alan Anderson was a diver killed in a fire in Mexico while working in the Gulf of Mexico; Taylor created an award named after him; Taylor had a 1,000 foot club for divers;

Diving bell: Taylor had a particular configuration where the diving bell was lowered off an A frame; the divers would be out of the bell working for 4 hours then back in; they would rotate around the clock on 8 hour bell runs; the chamber remained on the deck; divers working at 400' would be pressurized to 350' so they could make a 50' excursion and to allow for wave action; the bell would not be on the bottom; maintain at least a 25' height so the diver would not get crushed getting in and out of the bell; when finished have 4-5 days decompression; bell comes back up to the A frame, attaches to flange and is bolted, pressure between the bell and chamber is equalized and divers exchange positions; had medical lock through which food and medicines

would pass; had phones to talk to people in the Dog House (where instrument techs work) or off the ship; 6 divers and 1 tender in the sat unit

Personal history: born September 24, 1929 in New Orleans; worked for Taylor 1960-1987; got started in diving in 1957 through a friend who owned Graffinini Marine Diving Co.; doing most of the river work in the Mississippi River; with Taylor dove all over the world; got into diving from the Merchant Marine; was a seaman and looking for a job; had seen a program on Jacques Cousteau, thought it was interesting, saw Graffinini was in the business; they had gone to boarding school together at Holy Cross College, Joe called him up and the next day was hired on the spot; started tending and he broke Joe out; work got slow so moved to Taylor

Type of work: insurance jobs, sunken barges, underwater burning, salvage; did a lot of river work; for Taylor was construction diver, did everything from setting down drilling rigs, removing them, removing jackets; to remove jacket from production platform had to go down inside pipe, burn it off about 30' below mud level

Burning off legs: they want you to go as deep as possible inside the pipe to save pipe and save money; hair raising job; describes being inside pipe, no room to stand up; pipes vertical, diver is lowered down to burn the pipe in two and be lifted out; very dangerous burning below mud level; use a lot of oxygen for burning torch, a lot doesn't burn up, forms oxygen pocket; can have problems if have to make a second pass with the torch, get explosion; story of explosion, getting pulled up, hung on ladder; a scary moment, "but in diving you get a lot of 'em"; problems especially in first months of the year when everybody is green; divers had decided among themselves if you make the cut and the pipe doesn't come out you have to do it again; they didn't think I had it cut, so I took a second pass; it was cut

First day offshore: working in the Mississippi River you lose visibility a couple of inches below the surface, have to do everything by feel, develop a second sense; first job offshore was off Grand Isle; setting a riser and putting on riser clamps; "I jumped in that water and I could read a newspaper down there;" as years went by the bottom of the Gulf of Mexico became kind of milky for about ten feet above the bottom; lots of jew fish - groupers; they'd head down to the milky layer and all we'd see are their eyeballs; the North Sea was different; could see right down to the bottom

Work in the North Sea: worked in the Gulf from 1960-1967; then in 1967 Mark Banjavitch got in touch, I was a barge diver, worked derrick, lay, dredge barges; Mark called me to send me to North Sea to work on a flange; I went and did the job, had lots of experience with that; the next year Mark was going to send me back, I didn't want to go because it was too dark and gray; he said I didn't have a choice; went there and stayed until the 1980's; North Sea is so different after diving in the Gulf; water is cold, have wetsuits; work at 140' with 40 minutes bottom time, half of that you are freezing; North Sea has rougher seas, current; work every 6 hours when the water becomes slack, can make 2 40' dives then have to wait another 6 hours; takes a long time to get flange together; moved to North Sea, rented house, would come back if closed up for the year, but had it worked out so they worked year round over there; barges, tug boats, supply boats much bigger

Diving conditions in North Sea: danger in rough seas is at the surface when try to get on and up the ladder and in the current; come up and are so cold you can't feel the line, if it slips away the current sends you straight to the surface; use all your decompression time trying to get back on the ship into the chamber; barges carried 2 to 12 divers, worked all shifts, round the clock to get maximum bottom time

Schedule: worked until job was finished; could go in when they were moving barges; we got about a week until they were ready for us again; in the early days when they brought barges from the Gulf the divers could go in when the weather was rough and they pulled the barge into a protected area; barges got bigger and that stopped, they did not go in; if too bad would look for nearest port; have been out in 70' seas; the barge was cracking up and they had welders following the crack to repair it as it formed

Relationships among divers: Taylor Divers were from all over the U.S.; no English divers doing oilfield work in the early days; by late 1970s and early 1980s we started breaking in some English divers; they began as tenders and then began to work as divers; we all went home; returned to work in the Gulf until the crunch came in 1987

Retirement: had retirement savings; we put in 10 percent of our wages and the company would match it; had a good chunk because of all the years; only a few years when with Brown & Root did they lose money

Transfer to Brown & Root: Taylor was an independent diving company owned by Mark Banjavitch, John Values, and David Levy; as years went by and diving started to get deeper and deeper switched to gases, company started getting bigger; Brown and Root needed a diving company; first Mark held a controlling percent, later they forced him to sell the remaining percent; then Halliburton came along and bought up all of us; no major changes with purchase; office personnel stayed the same and ran the company as they had when Banjavitch had it

Transfer to Halliburton: company got another president when Mark sold out; Ken Wallace took over; had worked as a supervisor; Brown and Root sent Beau Smit, then Norman Chambers; after that they went by the wayside, with the oil crisis they started folding up; today Brown and Root is out of the marine business, so is McDermott; Taylor did most of the work in the North Sea, had an equal amount with McDermott in the Gulf

Return to the Gulf: lived in New Orleans, when they needed you they wanted you right then and there; if you weren't home when they called, you lost that job; had to keep in touch, make a lot of calls to the office; telephone company came up with pager; that meant a lot; quite expensive at the time, but worth it, if you got one job from that beeper it would pay for itself; divers who had been with the company from the beginning had priority; 3-4 barges, carried 2-3 divers each; could use your priority to stay out longer or go in; generally if you had seniority and you'd been out a couple of weeks you'd go in, "no wrinkles in your belly," give somebody else a chance to make some money

Do it again? no problem (laughs); don't think you're going to see it again; we traveled all over the world; I love diving, I'd dive for nothing, sometimes I've done it; like the challenge; couldn't do the North Sea again, "that's a young man's game"

Equipment: in the beginning owned own, had little compressor, could put 125 pounds in the reserve tank, getting too deep; could get out there and compressor not work or radio not start; Mark had been a Navy diver, started getting the big compressors; his motto was to keep 100 pounds of pressure over bottom pressure; at first would pay us for our equipment, then when we didn't need them anymore he bought our equipment; I bought my equipment when I worked for Graffinini; every diver would like to have his own; throw your equipment in the back of a truck, go search the bars for your tender; if couldn't find him, go to the bars in the French Quarter, call out, "Anybody want to tend me?"

Getting work: phone would ring, keep in touch regularly; I'd call every hour on the hour; had to stay in touch that way if you wanted the job; if get on as a barge diver, you had a job for the season, from March/April till November; as time went on, seniority increased, stayed on that barge and could throw the phones away; got to know the barge captain and foreman; they would request you, call you at home; when out and wanted to come in, call the company and they'd send me a relief; divers not established as barge divers were freelancing, would go from company to company wherever the work was; it takes 10 years to be able to do whatever they want you to do and be able to do the job; a lot of young divers get nervous, hard for them to sleep because they are worried about being able to do the job

Learning the work: learn by doing; have to be mechanically inclined to take care of your compressors, keep them running; learn underwater welding by doing; I learned in the Mississippi River where it was completely dark; keep doing that and can tell by feel, can tell by the sound of the welding machine; most divers and tenders become like a family, close friends and stick together; "We'll do anything for any one of them and help them out."

Developing relationships: live in close quarters on barges, doing same things others are doing; hold back on some tricks you learn, that's why they want you out there; if give all your trade secrets it will knock you down; in some things I took chances in the way I went about it; that's what made me; example of putting together flanges, hooking up davits

Changes: biggest changes in equipment; dependability of equipment, like compressors, diving radios, decompression tables; we worked out tables ourselves; Taylor Diving has our own tables we worked out; oil companies said we are paying these people too much money for the amount of work they're doing so companies started working out their own tables, guinea pigged us while we were on the job; found out breathing pure oxygen while decompressing would help with nitrogen; equipment and things engineers came up with for our safety, the whole thing in general has improved a lot

Safety: used to do a lot of experimental diving for the Navy, checking out different equipment, showing them how it can work; Navy divers wouldn't do some things, so we'd do it; at Taylor Diving the Navy master divers would come out and see what we're doing, shake their heads, "No way we'd do this in the Navy"; that's what you had to do to get the job done; some innovations,

like frying pan shaped O ring to use in flange groove and help keep divers from losing fingers; new wrenches; was concerned about safety, but in commercial diving if you are going to think about safety you are not going to get anything done; offshore, everything around you is dangerous; you've got to take your chances there; "I think we put more safety into the diving equipment and all than we put into the job"

Incidents: lost tip of finger when setting a dredge; crane operator aboard drunk with only a few hours of sleep; beginning of season, people are off, takes them awhile to get back into the swing; the rest of the people are new; first 3 months you are going to have close calls; sand bag dropped on me, sprained both ankles

Attitude toward work: whole time I was diving I loved it; why I was good at it; always followed the job, would jump overboard if they needed help; I'd tell my tenders, if you see you can help these people, do it; don't wait for them to ask you

Relationship with engineers: got along alright; came up with habitat for hyperbaric welding; then would weld the pipe instead of putting on a flange; we'd make suggestions to the engineers; they'd listen and come up with some ideas of their own to help the divers; inside burnoff, dangerous; standing inside; first time I did it I went head first, tied my hose to my feet, my body was in one section in case the pipe shifted; was very uncomfortable; engineers made donut shape with explosives; would cut the pipe like a saw; big safety device for the diver; got the same pay putting the donut in as burning off the pipe; happened late 1970's, early 1980's; some divers had specialties, became known across Gulf; we learned from accidents; example of diver who burned himself up in the chamber; don't look for safety or you are not going to get anything done

After retirement: never went back out; a lot of times I think I could go back and help but never did.

Summary of DA047p:

01: Diver Alan Anderson, in Antiqua, West Indies with a langoosta he caught.

02: Alan Anderson, his wife Heather, Joe's wife Janie on Mark Banjavitch's boat "Estella" in New Orleans.

03: The Desco mask.

04: Closeup of the manifold where two or three divers could hook up to the same air compressor supply.

05: The diving manifold air supply.

06: Closeup of the Desco mask.

07: Joe Schouest in the North Sea to remove a jacket and move a platform.

08: Preparing to remove a jacket leg from a platform skeleton.

09: A tug approaching an offshore platform in the Gulf of Mexico, with a supply boat at the platform for a shift change.

10: The jacket on which the platform is built, in the Gulf of Mexico. Those in the North Atlantic are much bigger.

11: Barge owned by Brown & Root.

- 12: View of the davits and tables used to weld pipe and lower it to the Gulf sea bed on a Brown & Root lay barge.
- 13: Large winches hold the anchors that the tugboats run out in front to hold the pipe-laying barge steady.
- 14: Joe Schouest sitting in the cab of a crane used for dredging.
- 15: Another view of the skeleton platform with the jacket legs off the German coast.
- 16: Diving off a ship, the Global Adventure in 120 ft of water, using a Jacob's ladder to climb out of the water.
- 17: Diving compressor with air hoses running off of it, run at 250 lbs of pressure.
- 18: Two Spanish cooks on the barge in the North Sea.
- 19: Diver getting ready to go in the water wearing a Desco mask with a hood.
- 20: Jerry Wilson after a dive with grease all over him. They have 3 minutes to clean the grease off as oxygen in the decompression chamber and grease are dangerously explosive.
- 21: Jerry Wilson and tender.
- 22: Diver getting ready to go in the water wearing a desco mask with a hood.
- 23: A Jacob's ladder.
- 24: Cargo net on a crane used to lower divers into the water.
- 25: Diver just out of the water wearing a desco mask.
- 26: Two divers in hot water suits diving on gas, with emergency air bottle on their back.
- 27: Dressing out a diver ready to work on a platform, wearing a KMB, Kirby Morgan Band mask.
- 28: Replacing a section of pipe in the Persian Gulf.
- 29: Loading oil from the beach onto a ship through elevated hoses.
- 30: The oil runs to the buoy, through the elevated hoses to hoses that float on the surface to the ship.
- 31: Tensioning the chain from the ship to the buoy.
- 32: Chains hold the buoy like a spider web radiating out 200 ft anchored to the sea bed.
- 33: Tensioning the buoy chain, 1965 Muscat, Saudi Arabia.
- 34: Installing the ball on the buoy chain, Muscat, Saudi Arabia.
- 35: View of the buoy anchored off Muscat, Saudi Arabia.
- 36: View of the pipeline laying barge they were working off of.
- 37: Unhooking and unflanging the hose to the buoy.
- 38: Repairing the dredge, with the cables or "bridles".
- 39: The jets with 1,000 lbs PSI that hold the pipe steady as it's laid on the sea floor.
- 40: The cable is holding the dredge, with the jet nozzles on, just idling.
- 41: The dredge with jet nozzles raised up hanging over the back of the barge.
- 42: The rollers provide pressure readings letting topside know if the pipe is laying straight or crooked.
- 43: The dredge lowered into the water, dredging.
- 44: The pipelaying harness on pontoons.
- 45: View of the dredge off the back of the barge.
- 46: Closeup of the jet nozzles that hold the pipe in a water cushion as its being laid.
- 47: The dredge sucks the water out of the ditch and spits it out the two pipes.
- 48: The dredging system is held up by cables and this A-frame.
- 49: The ditch-making dredge at work.
- 50: Picture showing the scale of the dredging machine.

51: Dredge coming on deck to secure for tow.  
52: Dredge coming on deck to secure for tow.  
53: Dredge backing up to platform to get on pipeline and start dredging  
54: Flat plates are the suction; see rope that's been picked up; driver starts at suction and swims back to check how much ditch they are making  
55: A closeup of the jet nozzles that hold the pipe steady as it is lowered to the sea floor. Bottom of suction, can suck up a bus tire.  
56: Dredge with new system with flexible hoses to machine; hoses around a spool  
57: Closeup of the suction part of the dredge, hoses hanging down; water through hoses to give pressure, others for suction  
58: Diver on a pontoon; pipeline lays between pontoons; "blowing the pontoon"  
59: Guy working on the dredge  
60: Platform in the North Sea  
61: Close up of legs on platform in the North Sea  
62: Diver wearing Kirby Morgan KMB mask; holding down line; tied of to where diver will be working  
63: Diver fitting out, wearing a Desco mask; weight belt with probably 40-50 lbs  
64: Diver getting ready to dress out  
65: Ed Rivet - English diver, putting on Desco mask, used to be Joe Schouest's tender; became a Taylor diver  
66: Ed with Ike Light; divers carried it  
67: Ed getting ready to jump  
68: Ed coming up ladder, has light with him  
69: Diver taking off weight belt  
70: Repairing pipeline, buckle; cut it off at the bottom, weld on flange; welders built stage on the side of the barge to get to the pipeline to work on it  
71: Welders had welded the pipe; they are doping the pipe  
72: Setting a riser.  
73: Clamp on left side, pipelining to set in it  
74: Getting ready to set a riser on a length of pipe before laying it on the sea floor. Laying the pipe in 5-6 ft seas.  
75: Diver jumping over, swim to bottom of pipe at new brace to line it up and set it in all the clamps  
76: Riser that will swing over with crane holding it up.  
77: Platform with pilings angled; barge can't get up close; transfer back and forth with cargo net.  
78: Barge working topside  
79: Crane with chain, chain hooked to the first davit  
80: Pipeline being laid, when get to the bottom will weld riser  
81: Riser; end will be welded to end of pipe.  
82: Getting read to swing riser down to meet pipeline, hanging off barge  
83: End of riser, will be welded onto pipeline  
84: Pipeline laying on deck  
85: On deck, helicopter landing  
86: Close-up of riser with flange  
87: Close-up of nuts with coffee cup; about 20 inch line  
88: Flange; divers have to line flanges up so holes match so they can get bolts through

89: Davits with pipeline underwater; not sea has just enough swells to cause pipeline to move  
90: Platform with guard running around it to protect it  
91: Jewfish speared by Joe Schouest and other divers  
92: Two young guys with reef shark  
93: One guy cutting the jawbone out (were going to dump overboard)  
94: Phone diving superintendent used to talk to divers  
95: Inside of saturation chamber  
96: Joe Schouest in control house, doghouse, where all gauges and valves were  
97: Tracks inside big house, track decompression chamber and bell  
98: Other half of doghouse; valves and reading and scrubber to tell percent of atmosphere going to divers; radio on shelf in front  
99: Bell off lower right edge; chamber at upper right edge; divers crawl out of chamber through tunnel to diving bell  
100: Joe Schouest and Jim Trotter  
101: Joe at diver station with two AM radios  
102: Joe talking to divers in the chamber  
103: Just finished sat dive; lad tender crawling into chamber to clean; English tender in blue sweater; Joe showing him how to buckle chamber down; turnbuckle in lower right corner  
104: Joe at diver station with three radios  
105: Joe at top of bell, lifting cables in middle  
106: Joe coming out of chamber with stilson wrench (posed picture, don't need stilson wrench for anything in chamber)  
107: Joe with oral nasal mask, one for each person in case chamber loses gas  
108: Nolte Theriot's boat; bringing the anchor in  
109: Ball with tug; when rough deckhand has to grab hold of ball up top  
110: Boat getting to the buoy  
111: Trying to hook cable so crane can pull the buoy out of the water and set it up on the deck  
112: Nolte Theriot's tugboat with air compressor on it  
113: Guys fishing from platform  
114: Nolte Theriot's tugs; rough seas; probably out picking up buoys  
115: Anchored tugboat; has brought it in with the buoy; anchor cable snapped while picking it up, trying to clear it  
116: Boat being towed in on rough seas  
117: On dive boat in Saudi Arabia; hose taped and tied with string every foot; every tender had a roll of duct tape in his suitcase  
118: Off coast of Sicily; supply boat, mail boat, personnel carrier  
119: Jumping  
120: Nolte Theriot tug rolling the other way, to starboard side; dogged down for sea; sometimes sea comes over bow and blows out windows  
121: postcard; Hercules dredge barge  
122: Mess hall, cafeteria style set up  
123: Workers standing around, riser on deck, basket with guy in it; used to load tools they needed on the platform  
124: Barge up next to platform in North Sea  
125: Up alongside platform against riser; diving ladder going down into water  
126: Drilling platform; every vertical pipe is a well where they're drilling

127: Tugboat; barge picked up buoy and anchor; tugboat getting ready to run it out  
128: Two Nolte Theriot tugboats; current strong; laying pipe on other side o barge; get both tugs pushing barge so they won't make a buckle  
129: Things quit, tugboat goes back to buoy, hooks on while crew eats or sleeps  
130: Diving hose after Joe Schouest's accident; cut in half in three different spots  
131: Diving hose after Joe Schouest's accident; cut in half in three different spots  
132: Diving hose after Joe Schouest's accident; cut in half in three different spots  
133: Diving hose after Joe Schouest's accident; cut in half in three different spots  
134: Diving hose after Joe Schouest's accident; cut in half in three different spots  
135: Joe Schouest shortly after accident that took his right hand and surgery to stitch it together  
136: Diving in North Sea, suiting up  
137: Diving in North Sea, suiting up  
138: Diving in North Sea, suiting up  
139: Diving in North Sea, suiting up  
140: Diver entering water, North Sea  
141: Diver entering water, North Sea  
142: Diver entering water, North Sea  
143: Diver entering water, North Sea  
144: Diver covered with grease  
145: Diver washing off grease  
146: Diver covered with grease  
147: Inspectors talking about sandbags; had to get it the way they wanted because you had inspection divers coming behind to check  
148: Back of Nolte Theriot's tugboat  
149: Inspection diver, wearing bottles, not a working dive  
150: Inspection diver; bottles painted, has wrist compass  
151: Inspection diver jumping in  
152: Joe Schouest with hood, used to wear wool watch cap; French wetsuit they sent to the divers in the North Sea  
153: Joe Schouest with hood, used to wear wool watch cap; French wetsuit they sent to the divers in the North Sea  
154: Joe Schouest with hood, used to wear wool watch cap; French wetsuit they sent to the divers in the North Sea  
155: Joe jumping in with French wetsuit  
156: Joe jumping in in the North Sea; glued neckpiece and gloves to wetsuit; tender filled in hood so when Desco mask put on it seated, air would blow he hood off his ears, keep him warm  
157: Joe at the surface  
158: Joe with aviation jacket he bought in a surplus store in England; like pilots used  
159: Jim Sellers on back of Nolte tugboat; doing exercises; divers did lots of exercises to stay in shape, went to doctors every year for physical exam  
160: Carl, guy with glasses, barge superintendent  
161: Buckle in pipeline; see concrete on outside and chicken wire on inside; break up both and knock off dope all the way around so can put welding rod against it and repair it  
162: Buckle in pipeline; see concrete on outside and chicken wire on inside; break up both and knock off dope all the way around so can put welding rod against it and repair it  
163: Burned pipe in two to hook up on it and bring it back on deck

164: On barge, trimming up pipe, burning it in two  
165: On barge, trimming up pipe, burning it in two, put wasp machine on to bevel the pipe before putting on the flange  
166: Arabian supply boat  
167: One of the guys had a heart attack, they sent helicopter out to get him but no landing; Barge 265, lowered the doctor down  
168: One of the guys had a heart attack, they sent helicopter out to get him but no landing; Barge 265, lowered the doctor down  
169: One of the guys had a heart attack, they sent helicopter out to get him but no landing; Barge 265, lowered the doctor down  
170: One of the guys had a heart attack, they sent helicopter out to get him but no landing; Barge 265, lowered the doctor down  
171: Going on the stretcher, hauling the guy out  
172: Guy down on the deck ready to be picked up  
173: Called helicopter back in, going to pick up the guy on the stretcher  
174: Picking up the guy on the stretcher  
175: Picking up the doctor - in the North Sea, off the coast of England  
176: Persian Gulf repairing lines  
177: Persian Gulf - water 50-60 feet deep, 15-20 foot seas; tanker went up, down, hit pipeline, buckled it  
178: Persian Gulf - sent over to repair the buckle  
179: Barge had no housing, slept in trailers on top of a framework they put together  
180: Crew on deck  
181: Willie slept out on deck, too hot in the rooms  
182: Compressor with shelter overhead to get out of the sun  
183: Compressor with shelter overhead to get out of the sun  
184: Tender looking at his watch; Joe Schouest in the water  
185: Ed Rivet, Joe's tender  
186: North Sea, supply boat bringing pipes out to barge  
187: Tugboat towing in a boat in trouble  
188: Nolte Theriot tugs  
189: Nolte Theriot tugs  
190: Small boat to bring divers back and forth to work  
191: Small boat to bring divers back and forth to work  
192: Small boat to bring divers back and forth to work  
193: Small boat to bring divers back and forth to work  
194: Amphibious deck, were using it as personnel barge  
195: Dredging from the beach; half the machine out of the water  
196: Dredging from the beach; half the machine out of the water  
197: Deck decompression chambers  
198: Deck decompression chambers  
199: Deck decompression chambers  
200: Deck decompression chambers  
201: Light inside the chamber was supposed to have a glass dome and cage that screws over it to protect the light; diver had his wet clothes, hung his nylon shirt up by the light, shirt touched the hot bulb, caught fire, flash burn; guy was black as charcoal

202: New dive locker; before this divers used to change out on the deck, no privacy  
203: New dive locker; before this divers used to change out on the deck, no privacy  
204: Pigeon, had tag on his leg, racing pigeon, wind would blow them onto the barge  
205: Pigeon in sink, had tag on his leg, racing pigeon, wind would blow them onto the barge  
206: Barge superintendent practicing his golf; Roly Peret; balls were going overboard  
207: Barge superintendent practicing his golf; would ask divers to go overboard to get his golf balls  
208: Everyone out in the sun for the 10 minutes it was out  
209: Chief cook was a Spaniard, photo shows steam table  
210: Chief cook was a Spaniard, photo shows steam table  
211: Chief cook grilling steaks

Ben Schrick

Lafayette, LA

February 26, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW043

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Ben Schrick was born in 1941 in Iowa. He earned his Airframe and Power Plant Certificate from Amarelle Aeronautic Institute in Florida. He was hired by PHI in 1964. In 1965 he received his commercial pilot license, and since then worked as a helicopter mechanic and pilot, working abroad and in Louisiana. He also discusses the importance of helicopters' in the oil industry and his perceptions of Lafayette.

#### Summary:

Early life: born March 17, 1941 in Sibly, IA; grew up on farm outside of George, IA.

Education: attended Iowa State College in Ames for 2 years, majoring in pre-engineering; then attended Amarelle Aeronautic Institute in Miami, FL, where received Airframe and Power Plant certificate, and his Private Power license.

Employment at PHI: February 1964, hired by Petroleum Helicopters Inc. as an Airframe and Power Plant mechanic; 1965 received commercial pilot license, 1966 hired by PHI as a mechanic/pilot; worked offshore as a pilot but took care of own aircraft; 11-12 hour workday, typically between noon and midnight; worked ten days on, five days off. Usually didn't fly at night unless he was operating one of the larger helicopters, because they had instrumentation to fly at night that the smaller ones lacked; official policy of PHI is to stop flying at sunset; this allowed time for helicopter maintenance.

Work Abroad: 1967 went to Saudi Arabia for 6 months as a pilot-mechanic with Remco - a great learning experience because he was flying a new helicopter. 1970 he moved to Angola, Africa for Gulf Oil (now Chevron) for two years; while in Africa, he worked fourteen and seven.

Return to Louisiana: 1976 promoted to base manager in Morgan City. Moved to Lafayette in 1990 to become Vice President of Maintenance; later promoted to a General Manager. In the 1960s pay was \$600-650 a month; today, it is around \$3,000 a month.

Pilot's License: not too expensive to get a commercial pilot's license but very expensive to get a commercial helicopter rating because it required 60 hours of helicopter flight time; extremely expensive to operate a helicopter; his training was paid for by PHI; felt he was a minority as far as pilots were concerned; most pilots at that time had a military background. Trained in a variety of helicopters over a ten-year period; most helicopter systems very similar, although there are differences in avionics.

Division: industry more divided today as far as pilots and mechanics than when he was working in it; large number of pilot/mechanics in the industry but more people who are either pilots or mechanics than those with the combined skills.

Helicopter demand: main reason for demand of helicopters in the oil field industry is cost. Companies can save, on average, seven hours of overtime each person if they transport their employees via helicopters instead of crew boats or marsh buggies; operating boats is also more expensive than helicopters.

Helicopter description: old Bell helicopters would only hold two passengers; would rarely fill up the gas tank because it contributed too much to weight of the aircraft. Today a Bell 407 (seven seater) helicopter costs over a million dollars; replacement parts are quite expensive.

PHI: At peak in the early 1980s, PHI had 450 helicopters in its fleet; when he left, PHI had around 250 helicopters; PHI had to adapt and diversify its business in order to survive the bust years of the oil industry; had to sell off some of its helicopters, lay off employees and market themselves to other industries like the medical industry to survive.

Good working relationship with roughnecks: played cards, watched television, fished, and played ping-pong.

Evaluating the oil industry: Lafayette benefited a great deal from oil industry, but was also devastated especially with the 1980s downturn; today, Lafayette has learned lesson by diversifying its industries; not many oil companies here as in the past. Industry today is much more regulated than it was when he began his career; primarily because of insurance companies and government regulatory agencies.

Final thoughts: no regrets about his chosen career path; enjoyed it immensely and would do it all over again.

Frank Schwab

New Iberia, LA

August 13, 2002

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW021

### Ethnographic Preface:

Frank Schwab started in the oil industry in 1953 as a cook's helper for Stanolin Oil and Gas Company. Shortly thereafter, he asked for a position on a seismographic crew and worked his way through several types of positions with the same company. He spent a total of 33.5 years with the company, 22 of which were offshore. He also discusses the dangers involved in his work and some of the cultural changes he noticed over the years.

### Summary:

Employment: went to Korean War, returned in 1952. 1953 got a job as a cook's helper on Padre Island for Stanolin Oil and Gas Company, now British Petroleum. He was responsible for maintenance and cleaning of living quarters; after six months was able to transfer to a field job; worked on a seismograph crew 1954-1966; worked whole coast of LA, in areas from the Intracoastal Canal to the Gulf, Sabine Pass to Morgan City, the Atchafalaya Swamp, and Donaldsonville; job duties included placing explosives in the ground and recording the seismic activity; on last seismic crew that the company had before they subcontracted this service out. After a few years, transferred to Marksville; working on a portable barge, too far to return home at night; work schedule was four ten-hour days; worked offshore for about fifteen years. In 1966, he was given the opportunity to work production offshore in Leesville, LA (near Grand Isle). Began as platform helper, responsible for monitoring oil flow, troubleshooting platforms. While offshore in Vermillion, attended trade school in electronics so he could service equipment; promoted from operator assistant to automation foreman, a salaried position. Spent a total of 20 years offshore; 33.5 years total with company, retired at age 57, company offered him an early retirement package.

Dangers: many instances of production and drilling taking place on the same well; a few instances in which a platform caught fire; platforms were working under tremendous pressure and could be quite dangerous; the equipment on the rig had approximately 1200-1300 pounds of pressure per square inch.

Natural Gas: company had a 20-year contract to supply natural gas to Florida Power and Light - 23,000 cubic feet a day for 23 cents/cubic foot - extremely low price because natural gas wasn't worth much at the time (1960s).

Cultural changes: 1969 Stanolin Oil hired their first African-American man as a platform operator, a math teacher from Lafayette. As years went on, more African-Americans and women

started to appear offshore; no one he knew had a problem with African-Americans or women, only had problems with people who didn't do their job.

Micromanagement: In later years there was too much micro-management of offshore daily duties; he and many other people felt it was too much trouble just to do your job. Quotes one of his co-workers, "work was not fun anymore;" he and many others took early retirement. Despite worsening work place in later years, Mr. Schwab says that the pay and the benefits were good.

Family life: Married 1956; three kids and wife missed him when he stayed on the barge, but always excited when he came back home.

Christine Scott

Morgan City, LA

July 30, 2004

Interviewed by: Jamie Christy

University of Houston/History International

MMS065

### Ethnographic Preface:

Christine Scott is the wife of Harvey Scott, and oil field worker. She gives important perspectives on the reputation of oil field workers and their families, what she actually found, and what it meant to be married to someone in the petroleum business. Mrs. Scott describes friendships with drilling rig crew families and the difficulty of moving so frequently to different job sites. Over the years, she and her family moved from West Texas to Mansfield to Bozier City to New Iberia to Morgan City, Louisiana. Mrs. Scott worked as a church secretary and also as an administrative assistant at Dauterive Hospital.

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Emmet Sellers

Morgan City, LA

July 20, 2004

Interviewed by: Jamie Christy

University of Houston/History International

MMS046

Ethnographic Preface:

Emmet Sellers was born in Abbeville, Louisiana on July 27, 1927. He was drafted by the U. S. army in 1947 but was later transferred to the Air Force as part of the 55, 000 troops "to pay back the Air Force" for troops "borrowed" during World War II. He attended Southern Louisiana Institute (now ULL) in Lafayette and then went to work as a basic engineer for the US Coast and Geological Survey. His father worked many years and retired from a Texaco gas processing plant in Erath. Emmet went to work for Texaco in June of 1950 as a deckhand. Several months later, Mr. Sellers was roustabouting and also worked as a pumper. He later became a production supervisor for Texaco. Most of his career was spent around Horseshoe Bayou and Morgan City, Louisiana. He retired from Texaco in 1986.

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Rene Seneca

Berwick, LA, Morgan City, LA

May 9, 2001, July 21, 2004

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner, Jamie Christy

University of Arizona, University of Houston/History International

AG014, MMS061

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Rene Seneca was referred by Lou Trosclair. He was interviewed by Andrew Gardner in 2001 and then again by Jamie Christy in 2004.

Rene Seneca was born in Bayou Chene, Louisiana in 1922. His parents were fishermen and moss-pickers, but his father also cut cypress timber in south Louisiana. He spent time in the oil fields as a boy, bringing water to roughnecks. Mr. Seneca completed eighth grade and his family moved to Loreauville, Louisiana in 1937. He fought in the Army in World War II and went to Panama and the Pacific. He went to work for Texaco in 1947, driving crews out to the rigs. He remembers steam rigs and school board leases obtained by Texaco. Mr. Seneca drove a boat for Texaco and also "pumped" at Bateman Lake for 30 years. He went to Horseshoe Bayou as a roustabout in 1950 and moved to Berwick in 1954. Mr. Seneca retired from Texaco in 1983.

#### Summary of AG014:

Personal history: His parents were both French; Father born in 1881, in St. Mary Parish; His grandfather fought in the Civil War; His great-grandfather worked in sugarcane fields and cutting timber

Flooding: High waters came around 1890; Then again in 1927, flooding washed away houses; People moved back, but they had to completely rebuild; Again in 1973; RS predicts flooding will come again because Atchafalaya basin is full

Personal history: RS was born in 1922; Went to school at age 7; Spoke English at home, although his parents spoke French; Changes in school system; Stories from the Depression; Had polio in 1932; His father got a government contract job involving the digging of canals; Did not graduate high school; At the end of the 1930's, his father started fishing; In 1942, at age 20, he was drafted into the Army, trained in Panama and then served in the Pacific; Stories from World War II

Employment history: As a boy, RS spent time in the oil fields, bringing water to the roughnecks; Texaco had a lease in Fausse Point; After RS got out of the service, he got a job at Texaco because he was a veteran; Total of 37 years working at Texaco, started as a boat driver in 1947, then worked as a roustabout, then as a pumper

Oil industry, prior to WWII: Didn't have chemicals in the mud, used mud for pressure; Workers from North Louisiana or East Texas were toolpushers and drillers, many from Kilgore;

Eventually Cajuns learned how to be toolpushers and drillers; Drove pilings and had steam rigs and drilling barges; 12-13,000 feet was about as deep as they could get

Safety: RS didn't want to be a roughneck or to work on the rigs, because he thought it was dangerous; Five men working on the rigs: a derrickman, a driller, a fireman and two deckhands

Laborers: Texaco hired a lot of ex-GIs; Texaco toolpushers had a bad name for being 'wild', being greedy

Texaco: RS has a good impression of Texaco, because he never missed a paycheck; Company started in 1902, they contacted him recently about doing an interview for their centennial; Texaco was a tight company, but they didn't cheat their laborers

Employment history: Worked as a roustabout on an offshore platform, six men on the crew; Worked 9 and 3, eight-hour shifts, but pumpers worked 6 and 6 twelve-hour shifts; Was a pumper from 1954 until 1984; Companies pulling out of area, some transferring to Houston; Was able to come home almost every night throughout his career; Texaco paid for his family to move

Technological changes: In the 1960s the change from steam rigs to diesel-electric rigs was completed; Drilling barges substantially speeded up drilling; Chemicals; Dual wells (two wells on one platform); Buggies to carry mud; Compressors to save gas (instead of "flowing" well for two or three days) increased volume from each well

Safety: Starting in the 1950s, Texaco had safety and first aid classes; In the 1960s and 1970s they provided hard hats, now they provide all safety equipment; RS earned an award for safety at his retirement party in 1983

Retirement: For anyone over 59, Texaco offered an incentive to retire; Most employees took the lump sum; RS continued to receive paychecks until he was 65

Environmental awareness: Until the 1960s, nobody worried about it too much; In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the government started to do inspections; The regulations cost Texaco money; Story about a clean-up

Labor force: Mostly good workers; RS doesn't see a change in quality or attitude of younger generations

Impact of oil industry: RS thinks the oil industry was great for the Cajun people and for Louisiana, especially in terms of economic growth; Current decline in shrimping, fishing and other industries; RS has shares from Texaco and watches the stock market

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John Shaw

Lafayette, LA

February 13, 2003

Interviewed by: Robert Carriker

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

RC004

#### Ethnographic Preface:

John Shaw is from Stanton, Illinois. He graduated from University of Illinois in 1949 and had a series of jobs in different parts of the country before moving to Louisiana in early 70s. He worked with a variety of companies, including Shell Oil, Exxon-Mobil, and Superior Oil. He also discusses Lafayette, changes in the oil industry, and the Lafayette oil industry in the 1980s.

#### Summary:

Early life: Originally from Stanton, Illinois, known for coal mining industry.

Education: graduated from University of Illinois in 1949.

Employment: after college, moved to CA; worked for geophysical company for 1 year. Served in military for 2 years; then worked for Shell Oil in Tulsa, OK; transferred to Billings, MT for 7 years. Then hired by Carter (now Mobil) as exploration geologist, later a production geologist; job to work in production fields, planning and developing fields. Mobil merged with Exxon; 1972 transferred to Lafayette. 1978 left Exxon, joined Superior Oil; worked both on and offshore; 1985 Superior bought by Mobil; worked until retirement in 1987.

Employee treatment: as geologist, only spent a few days offshore looking for logging point; transported to offshore rigs by crew boat or helicopter; conditions offshore comfortable; food excellent, recreational activities to keep up morale.

Changes in industry: most dramatic change - how wells kept getting further offshore. Other changes noted: workdays for offshore workers increased from 7/7; technological changes, such as methods of how things were reported - before fax machines, transmit information by phone, then by a cylinder connected to a phone.

Lafayette: grew quite a bit since he moved there; supposedly a diversification of economy, but still heavily dependent on oil industry; perfectly suited for oil industry due to location near Gulf; good transportation like helicopters; facilities perfect for oil industry; enjoyed living in Lafayette - prefers it over a larger metropolitan area; always felt accepted, people very cordial.

1980s: boom years - larger oil companies moving away from Oil Center and smaller independents taking the larger companies' old offices; after bust in 1985, most companies downsized, consolidated operations, merged with other companies; many people lost their jobs; he was already ready to retire though.

Jerry Shea

New Iberia, LA

May 31, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG022

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Jerry Shea's company, Bayou Pipe Coating, is one of the biggest employers in the region, and the Sheas have been around since the 30's. He lives on the family property in a beautiful, large house on the bayou. His wife, Harriet, arrived halfway through the interview but did not participate. Jerry is retired now, but he still plays a semi-active role in the business. Our conversation jumped all over the place. The interview notes below include more detail about the other businesses that came and went. There are lots of valuable sections here, including a description of the changing labor pool, the impact of environmental regulations upon business, the difficulties incurred by hiring Blacks, and the importance of safety in getting contracts.

Jerry's grandfather moved from Texas to the region (via northern Louisiana) as part of his employment from Texaco. His grandfather ended up being in charge of the entire district for Texaco and is well known by the Texaco employees I interviewed. Jerry's father and uncle broke away from Texaco and started a variety of different businesses, the most successful of which was Bayou Pipe Coating.

#### Summary:

Family and business: Grandfather started working for Texaco in 1908, family moved from Texas to northern Louisiana to southern Louisiana. Jerry talks about the report that's somewhere in his office about a blowout in Vermillion Bay. Back then they were working with shrimpboats and wooden barges ... he remembers going down to look at the blowout as a boy. Back then when a well came in, they'd just let it blow. Photograph of RC Stewart, his dad's boss at Texaco. Jerry talks about the history of his dad, who left Texaco to form welding company, built a big business. Jerry had a college education, he had an offer for work from Chevron at \$300 a month, Texaco offered \$275. His dad said he should work for the family company, but Jerry and his wife didn't want to move all over the place, and if you don't move you don't get promoted. So they stayed. Photo of the New Iberia toolpushers that his grandfather brought down from northern Louisiana, East Texas, Arkansas. They ended up staying. They're all dead now.

Two districts: Houma and New Iberia. Describes districts. His uncle graduated from LSU in 1936, he was superintendent in Houma, and then he moved to the corporate office in New Orleans. He died at an early age. Up north, you didn't have productive wells like you had down here. Jerry moved here as a senior in high school. Went to college, went into the service in 46, then back to college after four years. Wanted to be a pilot, but ended up being a gunner because of a heart murmur.

Jerry's companies: When he got back from the service, oil was in full swing. It started pretty good in the 40's and 50's. There were lulls ... his business history. Started building tanks, then got into welding. Started as a shack under the oak tree across the street. They kept expanding, but they kept the original office. They went into a new business at the port, putting concrete on pipe. They brought the old office down there. Bayou pipe was a later venture. Didn't start that until 72. Before that, they started building tanks, then they formed Bayou Welding, then they got bulldozers and laying pipelines. Had 150 people by the 50's. Then they got into swabbing. Description of swabbing. Also had steamers to melt the paraffin in flow lines. Then they started laying natural gas line on a contract with St. Martin Parish. They sold out that gas company because the regulations were too much. They also started a geophysical supply company ... they just closed last week. Also went into the quarterboat business, they would rent quarterboats to geophysical crews in the 50s.

Bayou Pipe: They started a business building tank battery barges. Barges with tanks on them. Moved to the port in the 1972 when they went into the pipecoating business. Laying pipelines in the water, and they got up to 250 employees. Business grew fast. Then they started selling the other businesses.

Keys to entrepreneurship: Hard work. You have to have connections as well. You gotta know what you're doing. Last couple of years have been rough. Tried it all. Jerry served on a bank board for years. Finance is one of the most important aspects. It was hard as a Texan in the early days. They didn't care for oilfield trash back when his grandfather was here. People got over that when the oilmen started employing everybody. Oil business kept south Louisiana up. Trapping and sugarcane wouldn't have done it.

Environment: Oil industry gets a bad rap. They clean it up. Fishing has never been better, and we have thousands of wells. Talks about environment and pollution. Used to be when we'd swab them, they'd throw it overboard. The environment is fine. Only bad thing was when they dredged the canals, the waves and stuff, lost land. Environmental regulations became a problem in the 1980's. The state got rougher with regulations. It wasn't that they were polluting on purpose. OSHA man was so weighed down with gear, too ridiculous. People get hurt once in a while in the oilfield. Some of the rules are ridiculous.

Labor: The labor pool around here was pretty good, but in recent years, the quality declined. The Blacks they get today are not hard workers. It used to be better. You want somebody who can think. They have one guy in a safety office, and two guys who do nothing but patrol the yard. If your safety record isn't good, you won't get to bid on contracts. They shut the plant down to have safety meetings. Used to hire employees, but started using contractors recently. Talks about the ways that contractors save the company money. Started in the eighties. Lots of advantages to contract labor. And if there are good ones, they keep them on permanently. You find out who likes to work. Employment office doesn't have the same quality labor as the contractors. Some of them are just looking for a back injury. With litigation, it used to be you would just settle, but now everybody is looking for the big score. Now they try to move injured people to light duty work. Dealing with employee injuries.

Unions: Didn't hear much about it until recent years. Cajuns just don't care for the idea. They're hard workers. And they were happy. But their plant in Baton Rouge is union. It causes some problems ... the crap you gotta put up with. Then we talk about loyalty... key is treating them right. They're like family. More like that in the past. Things are different now. They didn't work as much with the Blacks in the old days either. Talk about the history of Black employment. They've got one plant that's all run by Blacks. Story about a cruise and a Black employee that comes along.

O.J. Shirley

Houston, TX

June 8, 1999

Interviewed by: Tom Stewart

University of Houston/History International

SOC026

### Ethnographic Preface:

After serving in World War II as a B17 pilot, Mr. O.J. Shirley attended the University of Oklahoma and graduated in 1948. He joined Shell that same year. After training he worked in various capacities from Texas to Wyoming. Eventually, he became a district engineer in the Houston division. He worked in New Orleans as an area coordinator and production superintendent. Later they made him operating manager for the delta division. Finally he served as a liaison between Shell, the government and environmental groups.

### Summary:

This interview dealt mainly with Mr. Shirley's experiences dealing with environmental issues for Shell. He explains Shell's attitude toward environmental issues over time. Included is a discussion of Bay Marchand and Cox Well. He also describes some of the resistance to the oil industry. Additionally, he offers insight into Shell's success in educating environmental groups and the government. The interview ends with his reflections.

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Robert Shivers

Patterson, LA

January 12, 2002, January 12, 2002

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG047p, AG048

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Robert Shivers contacted John Ryan, a previous participant, and asked about getting in touch with me. I called him when I arrived in Morgan City, and after a brief discussion, we made arrangements to meet at his office in Patterson the next day. Robert is a transplanted Texan. He was talkative, informative, and had numerous photographs. Robert got started in the oilfield in Texas. He was born in Hull in 1929. His father built derricks for several oil companies. Robert began working in the oilfield in 1944 digging trenches for pipes. He moved to Louisiana in 1957 and got involved in home construction and real estate. As a result, the information directly concerning the oilfield is limited to his work in Texas. The remainder of the interview is of value for its perspective on Morgan City as a community, the history of its growth, the impact of the economic contractions upon the flow of labor and, ultimately, upon the real estate market.

Robert Shivers was born in Hull, Texas in 1929. His father built derricks for the Gulf Oil Company and later worked for the Sun Oil Company and for the Rio Bravo Oil Company. Robert stayed in Hull through the 11th grade of high school, and graduated in 1946. Then he went to the University of Texas, and finished in 1950. He began working in the oilfield in 1944 in Monroe City, Texas. Then in '52 he entered the Army. He got out in '54, and the oilfield was cutting back then. He built an office for a doctor and got into the home-building business. He moved to Morgan City, LA in 1957, and it was a boomtown then. They could use anybody with any kind of skill here. They'd send buses to Arkansas and other places just to find people to work. They needed houses by the dozen around here, so that's how he got into the business.

#### Summary of AG048:

Family history: Robert was born in Hull, Texas in 1929. It was an oil town at the time, mostly shallow wells, but part of the oil boom in Texas. They drilled all around the salt dome. His grandfather worked in the sawmill there, as did his dad. But the money was a lot better in the oilfield, and when the chance came, they moved to the oilfield. His father built derricks for the Gulf Oil Company. His father later worked for the Sun Oil Company and for the Rio Bravo Oil Company. He talks about his childhood memories of growing up in the oilfield. Even during the Depression, there was a lot of action in the oilfield in Texas. A lot of the oil companies built houses for their employees at the time. He stayed in Hull through the 11th grade of high school, and graduated in 1946. Then he went to the University of Texas, and finished in 1950.

Robert's career: He began working in the oilfield in 1944. He talked about the field in Monroe City, Texas, where he started work. He was digging trenches for the pipes. The ground was hard clay. But he was paid five dollars a day. You could feed a family on that, and he was just a kid.

He worked for a company that made water cans. After college, he worked for the Corps of Engineers as an inspector. Then in '52 he entered the Army. He got out in '54, and the oilfield was cutting back then. He built an office for a doctor. Then he got into the home-building business.

Moving to Louisiana: He talks about moving to Louisiana. He says that he never had any conflict with them. Sometimes they didn't speak English too well, but other than that, no problems. He moved to Morgan City in '57, and it was a boomtown then. They could use anybody with any kind of skill here. They'd send buses to Arkansas and other places just to find people to work. They needed houses by the dozen around here, so that's how he got into the business.

Slumps/booms in industry: It was hard to find personnel during the boom - he had a carpenter working for him that was 58 years old. There was a slump in '57, however. It wasn't as bad as '82, though. St. Mary's Parish had the highest unemployment in the nation for a while. He talks about the Arabs and the embargo. The whole bust caught a lot of people off guard. One bank just went out of business. People left town to go to Atlanta and other places where there was work. He talks about his losses in real estate.

He talks about the boom in Morgan City again. A lot of undesirable people drifted down to Morgan City. People were sleeping in cars, and so on. They'd sleep under bridges even. He barely hung on through the bust, though. Other real estate businesses went under. He also notes that people didn't want to live in Morgan City - they preferred Houma and Franklin. That attitude started in the late 70's. And then businesses started to relocate to Lafayette. He still thinks Morgan City is a fine place to live, though.

Morgan City: He notes that a lot of the big landowners around here won't let go of the land for development. They're holding development back. And now they're losing population. There are not enough jobs. The Vietnamese showed up in the 70's, and they took over a lot of the shrimping industry. He talks about the industries that carried the region: timber, shell crushing, shrimping, oil. When the shrimpers first got here, the catches were unbelievable. He talks briefly about Chicago Bridge and Iron. He talks about the impact of the changing price of oil. He thinks that Morgan City needs to get back into fabrication - there are a lot of good welders here.

Summary of AG047p:

- 01: Ranger, Texas building an oak rig as part of a museum exhibit, "oil derrick circa 1918".
- 02: The completed wood rig, Robert (64) and his brother (79) built the museum exhibit in four days.
- 03: Standard rig with 12 ft band wheel used to run a rope pulley.
- 04: The wife of Henry Burden, with the deck of the production platform taken apart, on the Rio Bravo field. (missing photo?)
- 05: Robert worked as a roustabout.
- 06: View of a pump station for the American Republic.
- 07: View of the derricks.
- 08: Roustabout crew Robert Shivers and Mr. Huffier to left, working for Gulf Oil.
- 09: The American Republic oil field with 120 ft derricks in the background, Mr. Davis on the

right. (missing photo?)

10: Robert 's grandfather, William Gilbert Shivers, "Pa", to the right, with a crew cutting wood to build a derrick.

11: In Saratoga, William G., Robert Shivers' grandfather, sitting in the derrick.

12: Course Hill, Texas, main street, where Robert was born.

13: Front end of a pumping unit, Robert Shivers, left.

14: St David valley, long range view from Atlantic Company derrick, showing Sinclair Co. field, Orange Texas field.

15: Derrick built in Florida, for Sinclair Company.

16: Robert Shivers built this rig suitable to drill on the coast, but not for drilling in rock.

17: Robert Shivers, grandfather, William G. Shivers, main street of Saratoga, Texas.

18: In a cemetery on a gravel lease, fattening up cattle.

19: Robert Shivers operating a water rig.

20: Robert Shivers was part owner of this company with three workboats.

21: Small house built for Joe Hendricks and his wife, who worked for the Shivers'.

22: Robert Shivers oldest son, with a PhD in mechanical engineering, standing in front of a Texaco platform he was repairing, Rangers, Texas.

23: A wooden derrick Robert Shivers made when he was 67 years old.

24: View from the water tower Robert Shivers' dad had a contract to build, in Sarah Lee, Texas.

25: Main street in Ranger, Texas with the Home State Bank building.

26: Group portrait of a roustabout gang with Robert Shivers dad, front center with his legs crossed and wearing high top boots.

27: The Brin brothers, Primrose Petroleum Co. brought in a gusher in Gladewater, Texas.

28: Robert Shivers, the great grandfather of Robert, who fought in the Civil War 1861-1865, then came back to Texas.

29: Robert Shivers' parents.

30: Robert Shivers' dad in World War I.

31: Goose Creek oil field, renamed Baytown, Texas.

W.G. Shivers

Patterson, LA

November 19, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA076

#### Ethnographic Preface:

William Gilbert (W.G.) Shivers became involved in the history study after he learned about it from his younger brother, Robert Shivers (see AG047p, AG048). Robert was interviewed for the study and told his brother about it. W.G. called the university and tracked down our research team. He lives in Hull, Texas, but he and his son drove to Patterson for the interview. The interview is rich with details about the early fields, the process of rig building, and the conditions under which rig builders worked.

W.G. was born in 1922 in Beaumont, Texas. His grandfather had moved to the oilfield in Saratoga, Texas in 1909. He was a timber contactor and flathead, but then his brother-in-law went to the oilfield there and told him he could make \$3 a day. He went to work for Gulf Oil as a member of a pipeline gang and in 1918 went into partnership with another man as a rig builder. He moved to Hull, Texas. W.G.'s father came home from the service in 1917 and got into rig building. When the company he worked for decided to move from Hull, he bought them out and remained. While he was still in school, W.G. began going out to help his father. After school he went into the Army. He returned home in 1945 and went into rig building in 1946. He stayed in the business for 11 years until the portable rigs put rig builders out of business. At that time he bought his first drilling rig, created Shivers Well Service, and began drilling fields in Texas. He continued buying and operating rigs until he had a fleet of nine rigs.

#### Summary:

Family history: Born March 8, 1922 in Beaumont, Texas; grandfather Shivers to oilfield in 1909 in Saratoga, Texas; was timber contractor and flathead; his brother-in-law had gone to oilfield and said he could make \$3 a day so he moved to Saratoga and went to work for Gulf Oil Company in a pipeline gang; in 1918 he and another fella went into a partnership for rig building; father went off to the Army in 1917, got the flu and was discharged and sent back to Saratoga to set up pressing shop; mother went to Saratoga to work in hardware store; parents married; father bought new boiler and went to Orangefield to set up shop; guys wanted him as a rig building foreman so he went to work as a foreman for Herter Brothers; in 1925 Herter Brothers moved to Hull, Texas; oil was discovered there in 1917

Oil in Hull: John Lee Oil Company thought oil would be found up against salt domes, drilled flank dome on edge of well; hit oil half way down on second pipe; John did not bring it in but proved his theory, was the first flank well in Texas; in 1927 the field at Humble opened up and Hester Brothers decided to move; father bought their tools and stayed in Hull; did most of his work for Americal Oilfield Company

More family: Father stayed in Hull and died in 1979; most people followed the boom, but father did not want to go; mother's father moved to Beaumont in 1887 and was a horse tender; leased a boiler and water pump to Patella Higgins when he was drilling at Spindletop in 1886; stayed in Beaumont and died in 1920; mother was born in 1895; family went back to Beaumont; Spindletop came in in 1901, Beaumont turned upside down; grandmother graduated from high school in Beaumont, went to business school, and became a bookkeeper

Rig building: Specialized trade; used saws, ropes, pulleys, hand tools for working wood; did nothing but build the rigs; by the 1920s people had broken out with different trades; rig builders and tank builders were the highest paid; piece work; when W.G. started it had gone to 8 hours a day pay, regardless of how long it took; crews tended to cull the people who didn't want to work; description of process; went out as a kid working on walkways and patching rigs; grandfather Shivers was a rig building contractor, had derricks 64 feet high with an 8 foot base and an opening in the top; would move the derricks from one location to another; description of moving rigs; would go out and help grandfather in the summertime when in high school; to move long distances would have to tear down the rig; they finally got to where they could move them about a half mile without dismantling them

Getting into rig building: Came out of the Army in 1945; was married and had child; moved back to Hull and went to rig building; deeper wells required bigger rigs, up to 120 feet; after well was drilled, they would move the big, expensive rig and father would build a service derrick over the well; used wooden derricks up until about 1930; then transition to big, heavy derricks made out of steel; by 1950 began transition from old standard derrick to portable jackknife which you can lay down under its own power; by 1970s had all portable equipment; went to work for father in 1946; generally worked in a 50-mile radius from Hull; father did a lot of work for John Mecham; father ran business fair and square but oilfield corruption was terrible; superintendent of field had final say on everything; contractors would take guys hunting, fishing, drinking, whatever they wanted to influence who got the job; brother got degree in civil engineering, went to work for Humble Oil Company; at that time Humble had its own construction company

Company and contract crew: After 4-5 years Humble decided to get rid of company crews and began hiring contractors because they could do the work for less; brother was sent back to the field office, got job as head purchaser; ended up in Houston during the boom; companies went to contractors mostly after WWII; Gulf also had own rig building crews, traveled all over the country; crews would bring their tools in a wooden box, catch the train down; more expensive because the crews were paid top wages and retirements, contractors did not pay retirement; people who work for the companies tend to get lazy; discussion of crew that worked for City Services, laid off; in 1920, 20,000 people lived in Hull; nothing left now; Hull was home mostly to transients, they did not build permanent structures

Work: Lots of competition for jobs in the 1930s especially when employment was good down; if dad worked 10-15 days a month he made good money; to be a rig builder, a fella only needed an old car; if he was working for a poor boy he didn't need to have insurance; some didn't pay social security; story of guy killed building steel structure; examples of different companies; rig builders union out of Houston would come out; they were working for major companies; not much work over water at that time; built wooden derricks at Tabbs Bay about 1920; Gulf had

most of the wells there; had to barge equipment out to them; built the derricks there about 1950; went out a few years ago and the land had subsided 9 feet; major companies did not fool with wooden derricks after about 1935; description of process of rig building; when got into steel derricks started using catheads, bolted them onto the wheel of your car; car could carry a six-man crew and be used to operate the cathead; when started building 160 foot derricks bought myself a trailer and carried the scaffold boards

Safety: Would test scaffold boards every time by jumping up and down; if boss was climbing the derrick there were different safety practices than if not; story of boy killed on rig; differences between wooden and steel derricks; nothing up there for protection; did not use harness, it would just be in the way; never even crossed my mind to use one; not many people killed; story of father falling and breaking collarbone and ribs, partner breaking both legs; lots of people would not rig build; ordinary hands could not keep up with rig builders

Derricks: Slot derricks, full slot derricks, Racehorse made slot and hole derrick; most derricks used a standard bolt, all galvanized; each rig builder would take spud wrench, cut about 3-4 inches off of it and resharpen it on the bottom; would lighten it and could work it as fast as a ratchet; wore overalls; had 12 sections in a 94 foot derrick, girts about 7 feet apart; worked about 11 years after getting out of the Army, then business went down because of the portable equipment

Shivers Well Service: Bought sky top rig and started Shivers Well Service; ordered a rig on January 1, 1957, they got it ready in March, took the wife and kids to Wichita Falls to pick it up and drive it back to Hull; within about two weeks had a job for L.M. Josey; worked about 40-70 hours per week; had the only rig on South Liberty Field, stayed pretty busy; got second rig in March 1958; went to Highland, soon had more work than could do; that rig was faster, pulled pipe in without laying it down; bought radios and put them on the rigs; bought another sky top rig in 1960, a Cooper rig in 1962; bought first rig based on home improvement loan; finally ended up with 9 rigs; no regulatory agencies to deal with, only insurance and payroll taxes; still today no official regulations; some of the majors ran their own workover crews until the 1970s; companies still had their own steel derricks in Texas into the 1980s; still ran barges out to Tabbs Bay Field into the late 1980s; the field got in bad shape, so they just cut down the derricks and hauled them out for scrap iron; it was no longer economical, too salted

Downturn: Started about 1982, got worse in 1985; about 1979 rigs had gone from \$87,000 to \$200,000; was still getting the same price for the \$87,000 rig when others were using the new ones; Hull was rig headquarters, had about 75 rigs working, when the bust came it went to half that

Reflections: Would do it again; it's been good to me; didn't sell out my reputation for the work; discussion of corruption

Insurance: Started about 1930, about the time Roosevelt got in; required to have workmen's comp; didn't have to have unless you dealt in interstate commerce; father first got it in the 1930s because oil was transported across state lines; got it through a mutual, hard to buy; then it got worse; could work for an independent without it because they didn't ask; it didn't make a

difference until something happened; had liability insurance during the boom; story of guy who was killed, family willing to settle for the limits of the insurance; the only liability claim the company ever had

Changes: Operated early machines with a boiler; used cable tool rigger, took a long time to drill; at Spindletop had unconsolidated sands, can't use cable tool; cementing wells was specialized business; whole oilfield has been a series of improvements, one after the other; biggest trouble in the oilfield, if you leave roughnecks alone they'll figure out the easiest and fastest way to do it; from start to finish the oilfield has been a progression like that; moving over water, started out taking things piece by piece, then somebody started using barge, then dug canals to bring in barges, then started working off pilings in the shallow water in the Gulf; they built up places with shell; as rigs got further out they put the equipment out there and service companies would send crews out there; after the war, steam was too expensive, used too much gas for the boilers so went to power.

Bobby Simon

Lafayette, LA

February 18, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW041

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Bobby Simon was born in Abbeyville, LA, and moved to Lafayette in 1959 to attend University of Southwestern Louisiana. Began work as a medical technician Charity Hospital and by 1976 he and a couple colleagues opened their own occupational medicine business. Then he developed an interest in occupational drug testing and worked a lot with testing in the oil industry. He discusses the evolution of drug testing in the workplace and drug testing technology. He also talks about changes he's seen in Lafayette over the years and the importance of the University.

#### Summary:

Early life: born Abbeyville, LA; moved to Lafayette 1959.

Education: 1965 graduated from USL with B.S. in Biology, bacteriology; worked nights as a medical technician for physician at Charity Hospital.

Employment: after graduation, worked as a medical technician for seven years; then worked for same company in sales. 1976 he a couple other people started an occupational medical, or industrial medicine, business; involved back x-rays, pulmonary function, EKGs and other testing for people working in oilfield; oil industry demanded certain standards for backs - had to withstand 12 hours of work. Today, back x-rays not used as much - other tests that more accurately measure back strength.

DOT Drug Testing: Currently works in drug and alcohol screening for oil industry. 1989 Department of Transportation (DOT) issued LA standards of drug testing for truckers, pipeline workers, offshore production platform workers, the FAA, the Coast Guard; resulting from these new requirements, workers compensation now requires post-accident drug and alcohol tests; most companies with workers comp policies require these stringent standards; if a person fails requirements he/she is often terminated. Everyone follows uniform testing standards; results 95% reliable. 2001 DOT revised drug testing standards; if someone fails drug test but then attends rehabilitation program, he/she can return to work, especially if working in a "safety sensitive or covered position." Standards will become more stringent; many people try to find a way around drug and alcohol testing; two new drug testing methods test hair and/or saliva. DOT thinking about on-site hair and saliva testing; collectors ready to go, 24/7, to any location, land or sea. Before urinalysis, dope dogs were used extensively; dope dogs are now coming back, especially offshore.

Technology and standards: drug testing methods improved over the years; a much higher quality of instrumentation, testing methodology, trained individuals; DOT has excellent standards and many others mimic their practices; different companies each have unique guidelines; sometimes his company assists in creating those guidelines.

Drug problem: more potential violations existing today than in past because of different types of substances; places origins of drug problems back in 1960s; started to creep into the workforce. By 1980s, DOT started to look into the work force; 1988, the Drug Free Work Place Act signed into law by President Ronald Reagan; DOT followed by implementing new standards in 1989. Simon became aware of drug testing around 1989; probably existed before then but not much; drug testing become much more widespread since.

Employee testing: many people are trained to detect certain red flags at places of work - look for reasonable cause; term used to describe possible drug use by an individual; some warning signs are red shot eyes, sleeping on the job, late for work; will test this person and if results are positive, the person must meet with the medical review officer (MRO); MRO interviews that person, who is given opportunity to defend himself; if a legitimate reason exists for consuming these substances then person will be cleared; if not, the person may be subject to termination. Failsafe mechanism - if individual does not believe accuracy of test results, the individual may request a retest of sample; if tests return negative, person is cleared. The fact that a person is chosen for drug testing indicates something needs to be addressed in his/her personal life. According to DOT standards, if person tests positive or refuses to take drug test, this is kept on record for 2 years; after 2 years, that person can reapply for a job and past results will not show.

Lafayette: many changes since he moved to Lafayette; tremendous amount of growth; economy more diversified due to cyclical nature of oil industry; banking, hospitals, tourism, medical centers, restaurants are newly developed industries that have prospered. This has insulated Lafayette from major downturn in oil industry. University has also brought a lot to the city - "the beacon here in town."

Final thoughts: no regrets about his career path; feels guided by a greater power; would not change a thing; very grateful for opportunities that have come his way.

Larry Smith

Lafayette, LA

September 19, 2002

Interviewed by: David DiTucci and Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

DD011

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Larry Smith was born in 1932 in Crowley, but was raised in New Iberia. His father was a drilling production superintendent for Texaco. He graduated high school in 1951 and went to Southwestern Louisiana Institute (SLI) where he was pre-medicine; he worked in the oilfields as a flunkey on his summer breaks. He decided he wanted to fly and so applied and was accepted into the Air Force cadet training school in 1954; because of problems with his eye sight, he was not allowed to fly and was instead put into the special weapons group of the Strategic Air Command. After leaving the Air Force in 1956, he roughnecked for Texaco for three years before taking advantage of the GI Bill to go back to SLI and major in electrical engineering. After graduating with his degree he accepted a job with Cathodic Protection Service (CPS) in Lafayette. He worked for CPS for four years, then consulted for a general contractor for two, before opening his own company, Corrosion Control, in 1968; he continues to do this work, mainly on a consultancy basis. Throughout the interview he discusses changes in the oil industry, particularly in who is making the decisions, approaches to work, and relationships between companies and employees. He also describes cathodic protection and how this has evolved over the years.

#### Summary:

Early life: born in Crowley; raised in New Iberia. Graduated from Saint Peter's College High School in '51; went to SLI as pre-med (at that time you became a doctor, attorney, or worked in the oilfield). Mom was a registered nurse and dad worked in oilfields (Texaco). Worked as flunkey in summers; decided wanted to fly and not be a doctor and went to Air Force cadet training school in '54.

Post Air Force period: discharged in '56 and went back to New Iberia where roughnecked for three years for Texaco. GI Bill eligibility going to run out, so went back to SLI and got electrical engineering degree in '62.

Cathodic Protection Service (CPS): although had wanted to stay out of oil patch, ended up taking a job with CPS; opened company office in Lafayette.

Transportation: in '60s using old LSTs, shrimp boats, luggers, and all manners of crafts to get to offshore fields; converted LSTs; moved slowly. Texaco used to use big red seaplanes to get to water locations.

Running the show: biggest difference between '60s and today's oilfield is that then the toolpusher/production foreman/superintendent called the shots; today paper pushers probably make decisions. Men in charge used to have lots of experience, not so today; oil industry would not be where it is today if it were not for these old people that built it; people used to come up through school of hard knocks (describes dad's early work).

Safety: in early days safety was a way of life, it wasn't mandated by management; today companies preach more about safety than they practice it.

Corrosion Control: made a gentleman's agreement with CPS not to be a competitor with them for two years following leaving the company; opened Corrosion Control in '68. At its height, had over 50 people working for him. Never had a reportable accident; every morning has to have safety meetings where workers fill out job safety analysis (JSA) for insurance purposes; lawsuits have been a problem in the industry (personal injury lawyers).

Mega mergers: end of '70s into early '80s saw shift to bean counters calling the shots, corresponded with mega mergers. Today, small independents becoming a thing of the past; major companies won't let them compete anymore.

Labor relations: CEOs and presidents used to visit the fields and interact with workers, that doesn't happen anymore (it used to be that the employee was the company); CEOs/presidents interested in making money on paper and then moving on to another job; today labor has no loyalty to the company.

Price of oil: controlled by major companies; hurricanes; subject to whims of Wall Street.

Cathodic protection: protect buried and/or submerged metals from electrolysis (describes); in early '60s hung blocks of magnesium anodes, but then aluminum anodes developed that were better; when developed 10-year lifespan on them started using divers; over the years they improved and had much longer lifespans.

Bottom line: office people are focused on the bottom line, not best practices; this attitude affects everything (including moral in field) and is not always most efficient use of funds. Today workers change jobs in a snap; job security is less today. He tries to steer young engineers away from the oil industry - there's no future in it.

Down turn: thought that the industry would pick back up after slowing down in mid '80s; wanted to hold onto his employees, but eventually had to get ready to close up; he stayed in business with his son only after a customer guaranteed him jobs.

Oil industry: ended up going into oil industry after didn't want to because saw best opportunity for owning his own business. Could stabilize the price of oil if you took it off the stock market; Enron.

LeTourneau Shipyard: did work on early LeTourneau Rigs (jack-ups) in early '60s; LeTourneau shut shipyard down an hour each day to give people time to reflect/pray. LeTourneau motors.

Roy Smith

New Orleans, LA

October 10, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA066

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Joe Sanford referred me to Roy Smith. Roy's wife, Natalie, was out at the mailbox when I pulled up to the house, and she told me to go on in through the kitchen door. Roy was sitting at the kitchen table, so we decided to do the interview there. Before we started, Natalie took me into the hallway to the bedrooms and showed me the photos she has hanging there. She has copied and laminated hundreds of photos, blown up to 8.5 x 11, and created a collage on the walls. An entire section is devoted to Roy's diving. Natalie had errands to run and was gone during most of the interview, but she did come back a couple of times during the day to get out photographs and then to join in the discussion. During the interview, I stopped the tape at several points where Roy wanted to tell me about problems that he felt were caused by companies or individuals but did not want to have that information recorded. After the interview, Roy and I selected and scanned a number of his photographs, and we did the photo interview later in the afternoon.

Roy is from New Orleans. He served in the U.S. Coast Guard during WWII and returned home to work with his father in New Orleans as a construction contractor. He began working for the offshore oil and gas industry in the early 1950's when Humble Oil built its first platform offshore. At the time, construction work in New Orleans was slow, so Roy and a friend went down to Grand Isle to work for Humble Oil. He soon got his operator's license and began driving a boat for Humble and then suggested to them that they could use his services as a diver. He dove for a contract company until Humble opened its marine division and then remained with Humble until 1952 when a diving accident left him paralyzed and unable to dive again.

#### Summary:

Early history: born and raised in New Orleans; in the early 50s, when work was slow, went to Grand Isle with a friend; Humble had drilled the first well offshore there and was putting up the first platform; worked there a month or two; noticed all the boats; had been in the U.S. Coast Guard diving during the war; went and got operator's license to start working on boats; became interested in diving; got mask and hose and dove from boat; heard about SCUBA diving in Florida and went with friend to see it; Rowland's Sporting and Army Goods Store in New Orleans had ordered aqualung; called me to show them how to use it; bought it from them, put it with surplus compressor

Getting into diving: about 8 or 9 New Orleans divers; they did not want to dive in the Gulf, worked mostly in the river; I started talking with Humble about how I could help them out, got a contract; no marine division; worked for contractor until Humble realized this would be a permanent need and started marine division; dove and operated the boat for 4 or 5 years; men

wanted to start salvage company - Sea Exploration and Salvage Company; asked me to work for them; salvaged things all around the coast; did survey of docks in Gulfport; photos and discussion of jobs, Halliburton boat, sunken docks

Training: Dad was a contractor in construction work; worked for him in the summers and when not in school; when started working underwater, they would send you overboard with a bucket of tools, dirty water; you had to do it all yourself; went to Coast Guard when 16 by changing birth certificate; got out in 1945; worked as independent contractor; Humble had built one small platform, we were building the second one; boats were all war surplus, wooden; steel boats came later; Dad had gone to SeaBees during war; came home and started construction company, became chief building inspector for New Orleans; I worked for him until work got so slow

Salvage jobs: Salem Maritime - a ship - blew up loading kerosene out of Lake Charles; we brought up the ship; debris affected two barges a block away; we bought the barges and salvaged them; I got tired of things with that company and quit; Joe Sanford and his brother worked for that company; then worked as freelance contractor; helped get SCUBA into the offshore industry; important when it is not practical to dive with a hose; would tie a gallon paint can over my shoulder to show where I was, tell the boat to follow the can

Teaching: I started a SCUBA class at the YMCA but couldn't keep up with it because I was always offshore; then I got bent;

Difficulties in the Gulf: they called us out for Brown & Root, a big rig they were building; 185 foot of water, a hurricane came up; 30 inch pilings were all bent over; things always changing because of the Mississippi River; tricky to dive because of strong riptides and crosstides; peer pressure gets people hurt; story of friend who died in Persian Gulf; went down with another diver to do cutting job, stress of the tide broke cutting line; country boys pulled me up fast, put me in the chamber, first chamber on a job; no one knew how to operate the chamber or to use the treatment tables; was in the chamber for an hour, happened in 1962

Early diving conditions: in the early days, diver brought his own compressor, hose, wetsuits, etc.; stayed on the barge or boat until the job was finished; usually had bunks, but on pipeline jobs had to sleep on deck; could only communicate in an emergency; "If you're going to marry a diver, you're going to marry diving;" liked to freelance because made more money; companies would pay for diver and tender; would call because they knew me; injuries would happen when at end of time underwater and almost finished with job, others would ask diver to stay just a few more minutes so everyone could go home; one time nothing would happen, next time diver would get bent; often only one diver, 12 hour run to get out to the job; or get out and the current is so bad and the company didn't want to pay the diving company if nobody worked; never thought of suing

Photos:

01: A salvaged leg from an oil Rig platform.

02: Main salvage boat for Seas Engineering, a surplus Navy boat.

03: Seas Engineering contracted salvage work with Humble, Roy Smith was the dive master.

- 04: Seas Engineering ship that exploded, being salvaged.
- 05: Another view of the damage to the ship.
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Claude Sonnier

Lafayette, LA

July 23, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW061

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Claude Sonnier was born in 1918 in Scott, Louisiana, into a farming family. He attended Southwestern Louisiana Institute (SLI) from 1937-40, earning a degree in electrical engineering. After graduating, he got a surveying job with S and W Construction, but was soon drafted into the Army during World War Two, where he stayed for five years. Upon leaving the military in December 1945, he was immediately hired by Humble Oil Company (now Exxon) and soon made operator. Three years later he was put in charge of his first crew. During his career he worked in many different locations including Florida, Houston, west Texas, east Africa, and the North Sea. In 1978 he retired from Humble after working for them for 32 and a half years. He describes working on a seismic crew in the late '40s, working in the Florida marshes, new technologies (e.g., 3-D instruments), and the various animals he encountered in the field.

#### Summary:

Early life: born in 1918 in Scott, LA. Family farmed. Attended SLI from '37 to '40 and received a degree in electrical engineering; had no plans to become a farmer and had a few cousins with degrees in that field. After graduating went to work for S and W Construction and helped to build Camp Livingston; caught in the second draft and went back to Camp Livingston as a draftee in the Army. Initially drafted for only a year, but then war was declared and stayed (based in U.S.) until December '45.

Early career: hired by Humble Oil in Houston; companies needed engineers and he soon made operator; familiar with the instruments ("wiggly trace records") from past work on a seismic crew. He was looking for any sort of job because he did not want to go back on the farm.

Seismic crew: offshore they worked a nine and five schedule; only allowed to shoot during daylight hours. Companies had to pay to have state conservation appointee on crew to oversee surveying. Used nitroglycerine, which was kind of dangerous; gave headaches; incident with bear(s). Geologists did interpretations. Precautions around charges.

Life in swamps and marshes: had to protect instruments from animals in swamp; hauled 50 pound battery back and forth from site daily to recharge. Hired locals who knew how to work and move. Slept on quarter boats; played cards and fooled around during off hours.

Job security: because of the position he was in, he never worried about losing his job. In '58 Humble shut down all their offshore crews and began using contract crews; did not have to pay those workers benefits and hired them only when needed.

Equipment: no percentage is high enough to describe how equipment improved over the years. Seismic equipment evolution: galvanometer, geophone, analog, digital. Exxon helped develop the 3-D seismic technology. Sent to Houston for training on new equipment.

Other jobs with Humble/Exxon: in Houston was charged with checking field records from crews. Land in Florida marshes firmer than in Louisiana; describes silt build up from Mississippi River; Florida had alligators and snakes.

Bird dogged in the North Sea and east Africa; difficulties doing seismic work because of cliffs and sharks, respectively.

Politics: government moved to waive company taxes on expenses associated with dry holes; small companies cropped up, but did not last; major oil companies prospered from this.

George St. Pierre

Cut Off, LA

September 26, 2001

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA010

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to George St. Pierre by Katherine Richardelle. George and his wife, Helen, were present throughout the interview. George was very forthright about his lack of education and how it prevented him from taking promotions and moving up within the company. Despite his lack of formal education, George was a keen observer, both of what was happening around him and of the social dynamics in the offshore work environment. He talked about relationships among engineers and platform workers, interactions between company men and contractors, and the relative position of the cooks in the industry hierarchy. He talked also about problems supervising roustabouts who were making very low wages and who were brought onto the platforms merely to fill a quota so someone could get paid for having supplied them. In one instance, for example, a supervisor had rounded up a number of drunk men from New Orleans and brought them out to the platform unconscious. When they woke up, they did not know where they were or why they were there, and George had to try to get them to work. Helen made a couple of comments when we were talking about the effects of the work on families, but otherwise she sat knitting. She is a painter, and her paintings decorate the house.

George St. Pierre was born in 1926 in Golden Meadow. He worked as a shrimper and oysterman for 20 years before going into the oil and gas industry because things were rough and he could not make a living fishing. He started on vessels and then moved to offshore platforms when Chevron sold its tugs in 1956. He retired in 1985.

#### Summary:

Early occupational history: fisherman; drafted 1944, served until 1946; shrimping got rough; took odd jobs on tug boats; companies were drilling in Golden Meadow; wooden derricks; worked for 75 cents an hour, roustabouts were making 50 cents an hour; got job running crew boats from Leeville for \$300 a month; Chevron hired on tugboats for \$275 a month; Chevron sold tugboats, sent offshore to work on platform; knew nothing about gas; no one on structure knew much; learned later could have caused explosion; sent to bigger platform in charge of maintenance, cooking; had to refuse some better jobs for lack of education

Description of work: had to shut in gas wells; went from well to well on boat; always seasick; problems with birds; went from 115,000 billion barrels of oil a day to 15,000 and 95 percent water; engineers said more oil under salt dome, but couldn't penetrate the salt dome; lost drilling pipes and had to abandon well; would leave pipes, dynamite and cement the well, and cut off pipes below the level of vessels

Working on vessels: in those days cooks had to find their own way offshore by hitching a ride when others were going out; story about having to go out even in rough seas; another incident with superintendent's refusal to bring cooks in; another time ordered to go out when rough even though tools not needed right away

Working on rigs: two year recession during 1980s; company quit drilling altogether; kept his crew on the rigs to keep everything in shape; put in charge of maintenance crews; came close to quitting because could not get people to work; had old compressors that leaked; never got over being seasick, boss said don't have to go, but "That's my job."

Getting on with Chevron: had friend in boat department; less money but major company; moved from speed boats (crew boats) to tugs; soon after, around 1960, the company started using helicopters and got rid of speedboats; best helicopter was army Sikorski, smelled diesel, trembled, but never fell; stories involving pilots; stories of pranks and Boz Chermie; ship that got lost in the field and almost hit the platform

Running boats: didn't need a license; accidents started to happen when they started hiring people with no experience as captains; Chevron hired a ship captain who couldn't dock the boat

First platform: just gas; they didn't want the oil; tank batteries only set up for gas; had to mix chemicals to get rid of the water; didn't know what pollution was in those days; later, if oil went overboard had to report to Leeville; could get citation from Coast Guard; first day was terrible experience, didn't know what he was doing; two people worked on the platform, had trailer house with two beds, a kitchen and a bathroom; Danos & Curole were contractors and would send roustabouts when we needed help; they lived in separate quarters on another structure

Tango: had six people; in charge of all the structures in the field; 45 wells in the field; worked there 20 years; used gas to produce the oil; pumped oil to tank battery in Bayou Fourchon; story of tank that came in half filled with sand and wood; oil wouldn't come out of the tank; sent it to Leeville to get cleaned; new laws required safety hat and no smoking; story of engineer who came out with no safety hat and smoking; company had new kitchen and sleeping quarters built, used wrong crane and dropped it into the Gulf during transfer to the platform; took three months to redo the building; redone with McDermott barge.

Attitudes toward work: did not go overseas; had family to raise; liked to work; didn't like to see others laying around; company hired college boys who didn't think they had to work; change in attitudes happened in the 1980's when guys didn't think it was necessary to work; knew they were making only \$6 an hour so didn't expect too much; stories of fishing from platforms; started working when 12 because daddy needed help; went to school August to October then out for oystering and trapping, back two months, and out mid-May to July trawling

Early days in Golden Meadow: born in 1926; rigs started in the 1930s; wooden derricks; blow out in Golden Meadow; houses all full of oil; just cleaned them up and let it go; had 8 horses, oil fell on them and killed them; blowout lasted a couple of weeks; marsh died; oil made a lake behind house; 2 or 3 big millionaires on the bayou bought the oil rights at 25 cents a barrel; worked on the onshore rigs between shrimping seasons when 23 and 24 years old

Working in Golden Meadow fields: people from Baton Rouge leased all the property; hired locals to work for them; all dead now; O'Neill left a big mess recently cleaned up by the government; story of rig falling over; split driller's head, had to take him to Dr. Chatlin in Cut Off, had to hold him down so the doctor could sew him; no anesthesia; story of another rig that fell over; worked 12 hours a day, 7 days a week; only worked nights when they were moving a well, then worked around the clock; accident where hand got caught in the pulley; back on the job in a couple of days because the companies did not carry any insurance

Reflections on the work: Helen commented that he was never home whenever anything happened with the kids; he did get off for children's graduation; when trawled he worked 14-15 days on the lake, come home Friday, clean Saturday, go to church and clean on Sunday, and then go back out; just after marriage was trawling back of Timbalier and could see church steeple but could not come back in for two weeks; Helen commented that even with him working offshore they brought up three good kids; son started on the boats at 18; boats in Golden Meadow would hire students the day school ended; kids would use the money and go to college; almost got a divorce after retired because not used to him being home; now it's great

Went through photos: Pappa Structure; Chevron tug boats; gas tanks; stored groceries around outside of the gas tanks where they would ice up; would fish and watch TV at night; only two on the platform; field foreman would come by boat once a day to tell what was needed; years later learned how dangerous it was to work with those tanks; would not do it again; in those days could not say it was too rough to work; do the job or go home; now guys don't work so hard; offered early retirement or lay off; took retirement

Joe Standridge

St. Martinville, LA

April 30, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG006

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Joe Standridge was referred by Jimmy Hebert. Joe grew up in the oilfields in Arkansas. His family spent time in the Smackover field in Arkansas. His father helped invent some of the early equipment they used there, including a mud conveyor belt.

Joe began working for Shell in the late 1940's and spent his entire career with the company. Once in Louisiana, he started working at Weeks Island. He spent quite a bit of his time with Shell working in construction, and he had quite a bit of experience dealing with oilfield waste and the regulations that surround it. He ended his career with a long stay as a construction supervisor charged with various environmental site cleanups.

#### Summary:

**Childhood:** Joe comes from Arkansas, and from an oil family. He got started in the oilpatch working with his dad, and remembers some of those early oilfields.

**Early work history:** He got his first real job in the oilfield with Shell at Weeks Island. Everything was steam operated then. He talks more about coming from an oil family. His father invented a mud conveyor, and he also talks about some of the first underwater completions they pioneered at Weeks Island.

**Oilfield family:** He talks about coming from an oilfield family. They moved down here for the work, and he graduated from High School in New Iberia. The oilfield, he notes, used to be about muscle.

**Career with Shell:** Later in his career, he worked as a construction supervisor. He talks about the responsibilities of this position. He built a lot of reserve pits. We talk about environmental issues, the EPA, and the changing perception of the environment.

**Lifetime with Shell:** He talks about a lifetime with one company, the impact of working offshore upon the family, and the importance of education.

**Political economy:** Joe discusses the global political economy of oil, how the bust came about, the attempts to unionize the oilfield, and he gives a description of the gas recycling process.

**Contract labor:** Joe talks about the importance of contract labor in Shell's operation and its evolution over the years.

Labor: He talks about the changing quality of incoming labor, the safety of contract crews, their lack of efficiency, and the relationship between safety and increased costs of drilling.

Environment: He talks about his work in environmental cleanup, the politics behind environmental cleanup, and some of the legal battles that ensued over this issue. He discusses Shell's environmental awareness, the impact of drilling upon Weeks Island, and the fact that companies come and go - finding someone to blame for pollution can be hard.

Weeks Island: Joe talks about Weeks Island, how they used to color code the rigs, and the difficulty of drilling through salt.

Community impact: He talks about the effect of the oil industry upon the communities around here, the things people did with the money they made in the oilfield - sending kids to college and so on. Then he talks about when Shell started sending college kids out on the rigs.

Busts and labor: He talks about other historical busts, the strategic reserve, and some of the new sources of labor. He talks about Mexicans and women in the oilpatch. Then he talks about Blacks and the federal hiring quotas.

Safety: He talks about safety in the old days, how they used to work with injuries.

Steam to diesel: He talks about the move from steam rigs to diesel rigs, he describes steam rigs, and mentions that he has an uncle with a photo album. He talks about the oilfield in Louisiana - it meant working on wet ground.

Blowouts: He describes some of the strategies used for dealing with blowouts, and about the difficulties of constructing roads at some of the inland sites. Then he talks about the restoration of land once the drilling is over.

Family and oilfield history: He has some sons in the oilfield. Then he talks about the oil industry before WWII, and some of the new technology, like directional drilling. He describes the Paul Bunyan tool, talks about entrepreneurship in the oilpatch, and then about education.

Barbara Stansbury

Morgan City, LA

July 25, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA112

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Barbara Stansbury by her neighbor, Jerry Cunningham. Barbara's first husband died after they were married only five years. Both he and her second husband worked for the oil and gas industry, and Barbara spent her life managing a large household within the constraints of her husbands' work schedules and needs.

Barbara Ross Stansbury was born in Berwick and moved to Morgan City when she was about seven years old. Barbara married Merlin Boudreaux in 1948, and they had two children. Merlin began working offshore for Mobil Oil in the mid-1940s and stayed in that job until he was killed in an automobile accident with his sister in 1953. Barbara married her brother-in-law, and together they raised five children. Her second husband was a surveyor for Humble Oil Company. Barbara raised her children and took charge of household responsibilities during the decades when the offshore oil industry was flourishing in southern Louisiana.

#### Summary:

Personal history: Family from Berwick, moved to Morgan City at age 7; First husband worked for Mobil Oil offshore as a deckhand and motorman; He worked 7 and 7; They communicated through letters

Labor market after World War II: Not many jobs but many men looking

Socializing: Offshore workers and wives all socialized together, went fishing, went to shows in New Orleans; On her husband's crew, most workers were from the area although some were from Texas

Family in the industry: BS had two brothers in the oil industry, one was a roustabout and the other was occasionally a tool pusher

Changes in Morgan City: Development, new subdivisions such as Lakeside, Auburn, Cypress Gardens

First husband working offshore: It was hard being by herself, especially when the kids got sick; BS never had to call her husband when he was offshore, except in the case of deaths; She had to take over the bill paying and budgeting; Her husband made about \$125 every two weeks; It wasn't rare to have a husband working offshore; Women didn't do much visiting because they

didn't have cars, had to walk everywhere; Her husband worked for Mobil until he was killed in an automobile accident in 1953

Second husband: Worked for Humble Oil as a surveyor and did some engineering work; Worked 5 and 2, then 10 and 4, then 9 and 5; Sometimes he worked for 21 days; Communicated through letters and sometimes phone calls; Worked all over Louisiana; 8 or 10 workers stayed on a boat called the Yacht Katie when they were offshore

Moving: The family moved to Alabama in 1959, stayed there only six weeks and then BS's husband was transferred to Gulfport, Mississippi; They had 2 weeks' notice that they were moving; The company moved them the first time, sending movers who put the clothes in bins; The second time, the company just paid for the truck; Meeting people in the new towns; Difficulty of finding housing with five children; Pregnancy with complications and move to Crowley; Move back to Morgan City when husband was transferred to a quarter boat

Forced retirement: BS's second husband was officially retired in 1968; No package deal, just retirement every month; The company retired everyone over 51; Her husband went to work for Gulf Coast Telephone Company as a watchman, then Byron and Jackson as a Dispatcher

Changes in Morgan City: Growth; Population growth was mainly from oil field workers

Kids: Never very many activities for kids in Morgan City, only school dances, football, basketball; None of her children work in the oil industry; They were able to weather the recession in the 1980's pretty well

Richard Steinhorst

Lafayette, LA

February 13, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW039

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Richard Steinhorst was born in Oklahoma and graduated with a degree in Petroleum Engineering from Oklahoma State University in 1937. He worked for Texas Company in Oklahoma, Illinois, and Kansas. Then he switched to British-American Oil Producing Company, working in Colorado for 2 years before ending up in Lafayette in 1957. Eventually he became an independent contractor in 1962. Steinhorst discusses changes in Lafayette over the years, and also his role in the oil industry.

#### Summary:

Early life: born in OK, then family moved to KS, and Long Island, NY. Father involved in land oil industry.

Education: attended Oklahoma State University; began in Chemical Engineering, switched to Petroleum Engineering.

Employment: originally wanted to get into the oil refining business, but would have to go to graduate school; after undergraduate studies in 1937, began work at Texas Company (now Texaco) in OK, in drilling production; company divided into 3 parts - production, refining, and sales and distribution. Transferred to KS, became district engineer; returned to OK for 4 years; then sent to Illinois, where there were large operations. Quit Texas Company in 1952; hired by British American Oil Producing Company (American subsidiary of British Petroleum in Canada) as assistant general superintendent. Sent to Colorado for almost 2 years; 1957 transferred to Lafayette. British-American purchased properties and wells from independent producer in LA, and sent Steinhorst to work there; had team of geologists and engineers. Quit British American in 1962 - did not get along with the Division Superintendent. Became an independent contractor, resulting in a salary increase of 6x as much; retired in 1982.

British-American deal: After 4 months of working for British American, was sold to Gulf Oil Company for Gulf's property in Canada. Deal stated that Gulf couldn't take over British-American for 10 years.

Texaco and Saudi Arabia: Texas Company conducting operations in Saudi Arabia during WWII; essential for allies to win war

Boom years: 1960s and 70s the biggest boom years for oil industry in Louisiana and the nation. In 1960s, Louisiana was producing 11 million barrels a year in contrast to today's production of just 1 million barrels.

Oil Center: when he moved to Lafayette, Oil Center was being built; his company later moved into an office in the Oil Center.

Lafayette: when he moved to Lafayette, it was a small sleepy little country town with a population around 35,000; after 8 p.m., no restaurants were open; today very different - changed drastically with the times. Lafayette back when he started working was not, as most people believe, that dependent on the oil industry; the amount of dependence on the industry was about the same as it is today.

Overall experience in oil industry: drove 30,000-40,000 miles/year all over the country; spent most of his time in field working long hours. Many people could not work extreme hours and working conditions that industry demanded; a good engineer quit because he could not attend church Sundays. Operations consisted of on-shore operations, not offshore; closest he came to offshore was a well located on the mouth of the river. Does not feel up to date on current trends of industry; has no regrets about working in oil industry; had a lot of fun; made many friends; he and other engineers had to prove they had a place in oil industry.

Don Stemmans

Lafayette, LA

August 5, 2002

Interviewed by: David DiTucci and Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

DD007

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Don Stemmans was born in 1936 near Carencro. He spent 16 years in the oilfields for Superior Oil Company, then quit to shoe horses and work at the racetrack. The oil industry treated him well, they paid well, and had excellent benefits. He discusses various experiences from his days in the oilfields and on the rigs.

#### Summary:

Early life: born 1936, lived in Carencro area; father a horseshoe blacksmith. Always had horses, took care of them.

Employment: 1954 worked on a wire line unit; 1955 hired as a roughneck for Superior Oil Company and worked on inshore oil wells and barges; stayed with the same company until he retired from the industry in 1966. Weren't many high paying jobs in the area at that time and they were paying \$1.96 an hour or \$2.11 for derrick man; workers were expendable - if company officials didn't like you or your work performance they'd fire you at a moment's notice. Worked twelve-hour shifts; switched times every week; Monday - Sunday with no days off at first. Few years later worked on an inland barge in Lake Arthur; took two hours to get to inshore rig; company paid \$1/hour for transportation time; worked six days a week. After Hurricane Audrey he worked on a huge steam rig that was damaged; hurricane dislodged the derricks but the barges around it had moved and he helped them sort out the mess. 1966 he retired from industry, making \$11.00 an hour with four weeks paid vacation. Left to spend more time at home and also to get into horse business.

Benefits: company created loyalty by treating their employees well; the benefits included overtime, great food, good living conditions, health benefits. In his spare time, he played cards, watched television, and fished. Life offshore was not overly dangerous, but it depended upon the alertness of the individual.

Family life: married while working offshore; not too much of a problem; no kids until 1966, after retired from oil industry. Brought back recipes from company cooks to his wife.

W.M. Keck: Once worked on the W.M. Keck - the biggest drilling well in the world at that time. Californian company, Keck, owned Superior Oil.

Unions: in 1960s, the unions tried to make an attempt to organize in this area, but union organizers weren't welcome; not many people responded.

Offshore rig was easier to maintain than inshore rigs: clean-up easier; didn't "dump" anything into Gulf, but during clean-up could sweep stuff off into Gulf; before environmentalists came.

Final remarks: South Louisiana supplied the oil industry with many hard working, intelligent workers; no women or blacks working on the rigs when he was in industry. No regrets about working in the oil industry.

Ray Stephens

Lafayette, LA

June 19, 2002

Interviewed by: David DiTucci

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

DD005

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Ray Stephens was born in Oklahoma on an Indian Reservation in 1939. He earned a degree in Physical Education at Texas Tech, but went into oil industry for higher salary. He worked for Kerr McGee, Transworld, and Ottoco. He also spent some time working in Africa and South America; he talks about how these long assignments away from home put stress on personal relationships. He also discusses living conditions on and off-shore, and also compares oil work now as compared to the early 60s when he began working.

#### Summary:

Early life: born in Oklahoma on Indian Reservation in 1939; father a tool pusher for Parker Drilling Company in Houston.

Education: graduated high school, attended Texas Tech, majored in Physical Education.

Employment: became involved in oil industry for higher pay; father helped him get job with Parker Drilling Company in Odessa, Texas; life was rough on the onshore rig; worked 8 to 12 hours a day; little down time; many short fights on rig over petty things. 1960 worked as derrick hand on an offshore rig for Kerr McGee; left in 1962 for Transworld; transferred to South Louisiana; stayed there for 3 years; worked in Angola, West Africa as a driller - crew didn't speak English and his company had to teach them how to operate the rig. Worked 14-hour days for 7 days, with 7 days off; contract for 6 months. Then sent to South America in 1974 with Ottoco Oil Company; quit in 1976. Began work as consultant, which continues today - advises on matters of drilling and workovers.

Living conditions offshore: working conditions offshore with Kerr McGee basically the same, but living conditions were compact; not a big adjustment, but he took a cut in pay to work offshore because of work schedule. Everybody slept in one small room - now two people to a room; company hired catering companies to take care of meals; in spare time he slept, played cards and fished.

Family life: when first transferred to Louisiana in 1962, his wife at the time couldn't live there; they moved back to Texas, while he worked in LA, took a whole day to drive from TX to LA. Working conditions negatively affected his family life. Long separations from family caused many divorces and drug and alcohol problems - caused two divorces for his family.

Change in industry: whole industry has evolved; areas that have improved are safety, engineering, living conditions and technology. When he started there were never safety meetings - now these meetings are standard everyday before work. Living conditions are better - newer rigs have two beds to a room, including catering and maid service. In early days, the motorman took care of laundry. Drill bits - early drill bits very primitive; have changed significantly. Today blue water drilling is common - this technology did not exist in the past. More uneducated people now working offshore. Liked working in the oil industry because pay was good; high turnover rate in the industry today compared to low turnover rate when he started. Helicopters were used as transports - at first, only company officials used helicopters; now, just about everyone uses helicopters. Most pilots were Vietnam veterans.

Economic changes: Living standards have improved in the area; more income going to purchasing modern conveniences like vehicles, boats, houses and college educations. Before the oil industry, only kids on scholarships or the very wealthy could attend college.

Final remarks: as an outsider, he always got along with the native people of Louisiana. He has no regrets about getting involved in the oil industry.

Leighton Steward

Houston, TX

May 11, 2004

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS080

### Ethnographic Preface:

Leighton Steward was a geologist for Shell Oil in the Gulf of Mexico for many years. He grew up in Fairfield, Texas. He attended SMU and received a bachelor's and master's degree (1960) in geology. Mr. Steward was in the Air Force for three years and was then hired by Shell in November of 1962. He worked in the Houston division for a couple of years and was transferred to Shell's research lab in Bellaire and then to New Orleans. He was a party chief on the Eureka Coring Program. Mr. Steward was responsible for locating good tracts for bids and was one of the pioneers of the use of bright spots. He worked in New Orleans at Shell One for many years and in fields like Eugene Island, Cognac, and J Field. He also briefly worked for an independent and is on the board of Burlington Resources.

### Summary:

This interview covered Deep Water and Eureka. A great deal of information on bright spots including the lease sale of 1970. Commented on Cognac and LL&E. He also had an extensive discussion of Shell's success and management style.

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Wilma Subra

New Iberia, LA

July 24, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA111

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I first met Wilma Subra in 1998 when I was conducting interviews for the study of oilfield waste issues that we conducted for the Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs. When I told her about the oral history study, she was enthusiastic about the study and the opportunity to document the impacts of the offshore industry on southern Louisiana. When I called to set up an interview, she invited me to meet her at her office in New Iberia.

Wilma Subra grew up in Morgan City, Louisiana. When she was in the seventh grade, she began working during the summers in her father's office and lab. That experience initiated her lifelong interest in chemistry. She attended college at the University of Southwestern Louisiana and graduated with degrees in chemistry and microbiology. She then continued graduate studies in microbiology, chemistry, and computer science. After graduation, Wilma got a job at the newly created Gulf South Research Institute. She and her husband had two children. After 14 years with GSRI, Wilma decided to open Subra, Inc. to provide technical assistance and information to communities. She still operates the business and was awarded the MacArthur Fellowship for her community work.

#### Summary:

Education: WS worked in her father's office every summer starting in 7th grade; It was expected that all the girls in her family were going to college; A family friend helped her to register for college; WS got an undergraduate degree in microbiology and chemistry and her masters thesis integrated microbiology, chemistry and computer science

Gulf South Research Institute: Louisiana legislature set up research institutes in old Army or Navy bases to stop the brain drain; WS got a job at the New Iberia branch where she worked for 14 years; They did toxicology research and training, cancer research, water monitoring, environmental impact assessments (many for the Army Corps of Engineers), and quick response projects for the EPA; As a result of the restrictions on these projects, WS decided to open her own company to provide technical information to communities experiencing environmental and health problems

Hazardous waste: Petrochemical industry dumped large amounts of waste in a few locations; Drilling and production dumped smaller amounts in more locations; EPA labeled drilling and production waste non-hazardous, so the same label was applied to offshore waste; Agricultural fields were ruined where waste was dumped, but farmers were receiving money for leases, so many were not concerned about the long-term effects on the land

History of community organization: Vermillion was the first community to start organizing; Political connections; Dumping of waste into unlined fish ponds; Media coverage helped communities to network; Some success with tightening of local regulations, but no changes at the federal level

Response of industry: Stricter regulations will shut the whole industry down; Some companies would sell well sites to paper corporations just before productivity stopped; New owners didn't have enough money to do necessary clean-up

Timeline: People started to notice in the late 1970's, early 1980's; There are still waste sites in 2003, example of New Park transfer facility near African American community in Morgan City; Starting trucking waste to Vermillion in the mid to late-1970's; Before that, onshore waste was dumped wherever it was produced and separated

Pits: There were commercial pits in the late 1970's at Grand Bois, Bateman Island, Big Diamond in Cameron, Mermentau; Pits were outlawed, and most of these sites were changed over to land farms

Land farms: In Jennings at Campbell Wells, Bateman Island and Grand Bois; Problems: odor, contamination of surface and ground water, volatiles in the air, health problems for residents

Incinerator: Jack Kent started one in 1985; Got a license to process oil field waste and took in hazardous waste as well

Injection wells: "Lost circulation zones"; Offshore waste barged in to a facility near Port Arthur, offloaded to trucks, driven to injection wells south of Houston; Injection wells in Louisiana are only for produce water; Started in old wells in Northern Louisiana in the 1950's, then Southern Louisiana in the 1960's and 1970's; Then the Office of Conservation banned discharge of salt water into fresh water streams (didn't ban its discharge into coastal marshes until 1989-1990); Commercial facilities, "mom and pop"-type operations would inject into fields without pressuring testing, failed to maintain hoses and pipes, so produce water would migrate to the subsurface; Not much regulation

Agricultural community: Never organized itself, although some people were concerned

New regulations: In response to pressure in the late 1970's/early 1980's, some incremental changes were made in regulations: pits had to be lined and have enough free board, but these regulations are rarely enforced

Gulf South Research Institute: Set up but not well-funded by the state government; New Iberia branch had Monkey Colony, USL, ULL, rat and mouse cancer studies and about 300 employees (now only the Monkey Colony, run by ULL remains); Baton Rouge did soft science, such as interviews in communities, with about 150 employees; New Orleans branch did metallurgy, mass spec, and heavy metal work with about 150 employees (sold in the late 1970's to a private lab); All branches worked together to produce reports such as EIS's, mostly for the Corps of Engineers, all over the country

Offshore testing: Gulf University Research Consortium included universities from Florida to Texas, each providing different resources; Discovered the "dead zone"; Project conducted from 1971-1973

Water contamination: People assumed the water could assimilate all the waste being dumped into it beginning in the 1920's and accelerating in the 1940's with the war effort; Bioaccumulation

Community organization: Usually an incident (such as a pit overflowing or someone in the community getting sick) prompted people to call WS to do a presentation for the community on their environmental situation; The information was generally well-received, although sometimes people who worked in the oil industry would accuse her of using scare tactics; Communities took action, such as going to their legislators, Parish Council, Baton Rouge, trying to get more funding for regulatory agencies, working with oil companies; Eventually the companies started doing some clean-up on a voluntary basis

Economic downturn in the 1980's: Recession hurt the companies' ability to fund clean-ups and to follow regulations; Service industries were hit hard as well; Turnaround when Roemer was elected governor and appointed new head of Environmental Quality, provided inspectors, visited communities, engaged the industries; Communities were able to push for changes despite the recession because of the credibility they had gained through earlier organizing

Drilling and production sites in fields: Whether or not oil was discovered, waste was dumped around the site; Production pits overflowed during rains and carry the waste into the ground and surface streams; DEQ knows where the glycol dehydration units are; Vermillion Parish Police Jury contracted WS to map the pipelines and waste pits in Vermillion; Individual companies should know where their pipelines are, but the buying and selling of companies results in a loss of records sometimes; Infrastructure on the pipelines is bad, leaks can go on for years before they are discovered; More maintenance on larger lines

Flaring: People put up with it because of the money; Must be reported to the local Emergency Planning Commission; Supposed to be an emergency measure, but some companies were using it as a cheap disposal method for off-spec products; EPA issued an advisory, but they don't regulate the drilling and production sites, states do

Regulations: No federal regulations for drilling and production waste and operations; There are federal regulations on injection wells regarding the number of layers of protection and requiring integrity tests; Injection wells have been operating since the 1930's, first integrity tests conducted in the mid-1980's, most of the wells failed; Offshore is federally regulated but companies bring it onshore where disposal is regulated by the state or use closed loop systems to minimize waste

Changes in Morgan City: Used to be a small, close-knit community; Oil industry brought in outsiders; Degraded the social fabric

Erosion: Change in salinity in the marsh from pipeline canals combined with the leveeing of the Mississippi diminishing the silt load contributed significantly to erosion; WS makes maps of the

waste sites and injection wells in the Parish and overlays them with projections of where the coastline will be in 2033; With each hurricane, more of the waste sites become open water

Mercury: Gas metering stations used to use mercury monometers; Once a week a pumper would go to check the readings and dump the mercury, into marsh, agricultural fields; In these sites the metallic mercury content is still high; Contributed to the bioaccumulation of mercury in seafood; Advisories, but people still consume a lot of fish; Effects of environmental degradation on health can be hard to prove

Impact of oil industry: Development destroyed infrastructure such as roads; Flooding; Permits are granted for development because of pressure to keep production going offshore

Future of Morgan City: Need to diversify and bring in other types of industries but be sure they don't damage the environment and human health; Sustainable agriculture; Wealth needs to be more evenly distributed

Morgan City: WS is glad she stayed because Morgan City is a good place to raise a family; People are friendly and helpful

Companies leaving: Big oil companies developed onshore fields, then went offshore and eventually overseas, selling the sites or transferring leases to independents who didn't have adequate resources for clean up;

Leasing: Controversies and lawsuits now because original leases from the 1920's and 1930's state that land must be returned to its original condition; People expected royalties to keep coming in

Seismic lines: Every 200 ft or so they drilled holes or dynamited them, but didn't have to plug them; Now farmers who are unaware of the history of the land spray pesticide and the holes serve as direct conduits to individual water wells; Companies are supposed to register maps of their seismic lines in the courthouse; There had been plans to put landfills near some of the seismic lines

Vinson "Bill" Sullivan

Houma, LA

July 28, 2001

Interviewed by: Ari Anand

University of Arizona

AA015

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Vinson "Bill" Sullivan was born in rural Mississippi in 1934. He went to the university, the military, and Junior College, and joined Otis Engineering in Hattiesburg, Mississippi when he graduated in 1959. Bill worked for Otis as a slickline workman, then a wireline operator, and eventually did various tasks related to surface and subsurface safety valves. He set up a subsurface safety valve repair facility in Houma in 1973 and retired as shop manager in 1991.

#### Summary:

**Early life:** Born in 1934 in Mississippi. Graduated high school; went to University of Mississippi for two years on a football scholarship. Then went into military for two years; then went back to school at University of Southern Mississippi, graduated in 1959.

**Oilfield work:** Offered job with a manufacturing and service company, Otis Engineering Corporation, which was a subsidiary of Halliburton, two weeks before graduation. Stayed with Otis until retirement. First worked as wireline helper for two years; describes changes in wireline technology; became wireline operator in 1961; became "commodity man" in 1971. Worked in Southern Louisiana 1963-1965. Worked offshore; moved around a lot. Also worked in Alabama in 1971. In 1973, moved to Houma to work on subsurface safety valves; had previously worked on surface safety valves. Describes surface vs. subsurface safety valves. Repaired subsurface safety valves for the entire Gulf Coast until 1991.

**Schedule:** Worked on call until moved to Houma in 1973; working offshore; usually spent about a week offshore each time. Put lots of responsibility on wife. Big adjustment once he was home every night.

**Company-worker relations:** Treated fairly by Otis. Thought about leaving several times, but management problems would have been the same everywhere. Personal clashes with managers. Good relations with corporate offices.

**Unionization and working conditions:** Attempted unionization in Dallas plant, but no known attempt in field offices. Not sure why unionization never happened. Working conditions sometimes bad, but same for employees in all companies. Mental abuse as most common "bad" work condition.

**Changes in oil industry:** Biggest change was that people in early years could be fired quickly and easily; later, could take years to fire a bad employee. Interviewing process changed over time.

Lots more attention given to safety. Environmental regulations created his job in Houma repairing subsurface safety valves. In early years, could just bleed off wells into water; now have to put everything in containers.

Most difficult/dangerous job: Hired to do wireline for hydrogen sulfide well in Alabama; not much known about hydrogen sulfide so it was mostly trial-and-error.

Safety valve regulations: Describes changes in and formulation of MMS safety valve regulations. Lots of guidelines for "field repairs." Helped create some safety valve guidelines. Had to test valves. Describes process of setting standards. Requirements for offshore surface control valves began in 1973. MMS requires quality certifications for safety valves; various companies made valves, but he repaired only Otis valves. Worked as manager of subsurface safety valve repair shop until retirement in 1991. Describes safety valve types.

Future of the oilfield: Technical data has increased, but no big changes in the types of problems that arise.

Labor: When he started work in Mississippi, most workers were local except for one guy from Alabama. When began working in Houma, workers came from all over. Hard to find workers while in Alabama. When began working, most management in Otis was non-local; lots of Texans.

Personal relations: When worked with one other person, getting along was not essential but was helpful. Not good idea to socialize with workers under you, but sometimes did it anyway if working with only one other person. Socialized outside of work.

Schedule: Schedule was really irregular; might go out for a week or might go out for only a few hours.

Cliff Swanlund

Houston, TX

September 17, 1999

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

SOC027

### Ethnographic Preface:

After graduating Purdue with a degree in Civil Engineering in 1953, Cliff Swanlund began his career with Shell. He served in the Army soon after his assignment with Shell forcing him to come back to the company in 1956. He first worked in the Delta division in New Orleans but later spent time working in New Orleans Marine Division, offshore. During that time he was Project Engineer for Eugene Island 188, and block 100. He also served as Division Drilling Engineer. In 1960 he moved to the design group and worked developing various offshore structures. In 1966 he began work for Esso Production and Research and stayed there until his retirement in 1995.

### Summary:

This short interview discusses various designs of offshore technology. Some discussion of the Shell training program, including training as a diver. Significant discussion of his "Report: Economics of Deep water Hydropressure Exploration and Development Drilling." Some discussion of the research structures of Esso and Shell.

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Gilbert and Russell Talbot

Montegut, LA

March 19, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB040

Ethnographic Preface:

Gilbert Talbot's name was on the contact list for many months. Diane had gone to his barber shop to talk with him for a bit but ran out of time. She told him that she'd give him a call in March and passed Gilbert's name on to me (Emily). I drove down to Montegut to see if I could catch him at his barber shop, but a sign on the door said closed due to surgery. I looked him up and called him to find out what his health situation was. He was very chipper on the phone and excited to meet with me. He said that he had several names for me and that he would give them to me when I came to talk with him. He lives a couple of blocks from his barber shop down in Montegut. His brother, Russell, was there. As I had no idea that his brother was going to be there, I felt over-whelmed at once. They both began talking about all the people they knew in the industry, Gilbert handed me a piece of paper with 4 or 5 names and addresses on it, and Russell began pulling out pictures, all before I had time to sit and put my bags down. I eventually got the recorder turned on and listened to them talk, often at the same time.

While Gilbert Talbot was never in the oil field, his four brothers were. He has been a barber for over 50 years, which has afforded him the luxury of getting to know most of the people down the bayou. Gilbert is also involved with several committees, one of which is the levee board. Their father worked in a box factory for Texaco in 1917. It was difficult for the family when he was laid off in 1932. Russell Talbot had to drop out of high school to work. He operated a drag line after dropping out of high school. His two older brothers were already in the oil industry and suggested he start working for the industry as well. In 1947, Russell and his brothers were all working for the same contract firm, Crown and Gracie, for 3 years. He was then drafted for a few years but as soon as he was out he began working for Texaco in 1952. The most interesting thing about Russell is that he never moved up beyond roughnecking. He knew that he didn't want the responsibility. He was moved around because of his expertise over the years, but he never moved officially up to anything else. He retired in 1983 after 36 years in the oil industry and 31 with Texaco.

Summary:

Russell: Got involved with oil field in 1947, then was drafted and then to Texaco in 1952. Operated dragline.

Gib: Talks about maps: Wants us to have a better understanding of where the fields that we are talking about are located in relation to Houma. Has a map from the 1930's that shows where all the fields were.

Oran Tarleton, Scott Naughton and Don Murphy

Houston, TX

September 10, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA059

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I learned about Oran, Scott, and Don during my first visit with Mary Ann Galletti. All three dove for J&J Diving, and Mary Ann agreed to get them together to talk with me on my next visit to Houston. She had originally arranged to have them over to her house for dinner, but Scott decided he would have the dinner at his house. He is a bachelor and lives in a large two-story house in Houston. When Mary Ann and I arrived, the three guys and Mary, Mary Ann's oldest daughter, were already at the house. They were drinking wine, snacking, and talking about their experiences in the diving business. They continued to chat for quite some time before Don asked me to tell them more about what I was doing so they could decide if they wanted to talk with me. I explained the study, and they agreed to go into the living room and sit around the tape recorder in a group interview. Though there is a lot of banter back and forth among the divers and the interview is less formal than most, the divers were candid in their descriptions of both the attitudes and actions of the divers and provide a sense of the relationships that existed among divers.

Oran Tarleton decided he wanted to be a diver when he was four years old and watched Sea Hunt on television. He went straight into diving school after leaving high school in 1977 and found his way to the Gulf of Mexico working for J&J Diving Services out of Pasadena, Texas. He performed both inland and offshore work and remained with J&J until it was bought by CalDive in the 1980s.

#### Summary:

Oran diving history: went to diving school in 1977; wanted to be a diver since 4 years old, watched Sea Hunt; parents paid for diving school; worked for J&J; inland and offshore work; broke the record for the most hot shot dives in a day - 13; hot shot is when a diver goes down for a quick job, like getting a rope out of the wheel of a tugboat; get paid for a full 8-hour day; then most of the time to the bar; did lots of beer drinking in the early days; Scotty was supervisor on my first job offshore, setting four-legged jacket in 135 feet of water; divers close, did everything together

Jobs: set the jacket, stabbed it in on the first try; everybody watching; is a problem when things are not going well; did installation of Ocean Builder; inside burnoffs; all eight legs came off; if not, the diver whose leg did not come off takes the heat; everyone waiting for divers; instant gratification, either a hero or a schmuck; had no problem firing tenders and divers then, they would pick up another job; now impacting their livelihood; story of missing job because drunk

Scott history: started high school in 1968, took SCUBA diving class; started reading skin diver magazines; found ad for Coastal School of Diving; finished high school and started diving school in January 1972; graduated in April, started working in Morgan City in May; was working for J&J when CalDive bought company; still in the diving industry; will be 48 this month; in '73 went to California to prospect for gold, dive for abalone, sea urchins; back to Gulf Coast in 1974, to Houston in 1977; born in England to American parents; back to U.S. to Park Forest, Illinois at age 3; in Morgan City started with Petrolane Divers, had absorbed Packer Divers the year before; lore that diving was cool, but it was cold, dark, and hard

Don history: got out of the Navy; started working for the government, then graduated from college; worked in civil service 3 years; boring job; went to diving school in 1973; had been a scuba diver; got married; spent honeymoon preparing gear for dive job at a nuclear reactor; went on job; got helmet squeeze; eyeballs popped out; down to Morgan City and got job with Ocean Systems; used marine radios, broadcast conversations all over Gulf; newlywed wife

Work incidents: tender stuck knife in forehead; now don't let tenders have knives; now tenders get sent in, possible lawsuits; back then, thought if you got hurt you would lose your job; if got bent could take aspirin and walk it off; did not want people to think you were a wuss and had to go in the chamber; if got central nervous system (CNS) hit, would be fired; everything you did could make you wind up dead; you're only as good as your last dive; unforgiving business; everyone knew how well everyone else was doing; after job would smoke a joint; pot was all over on the boats offshore, not on the rigs, less on the barges; a '70s thing; discussion of hero jobs, like burn jobs; with J&J could go out all year and not do the same job twice

Diving for J&J: loved the inconsistency; inland jobs more varied, divers were a rarity at some of the locations; coming off a good dive as good as sex; completed dive on 18th birthday, had lied about age; cook brought me a piece of cake; impressed guys on the barge; discussion of best divers, those who never let you down; don't come up whining after bad dive, but don't go around laughing and telling jokes either

Divers: in the '70s had at least 50 percent who would come to try out diving and not last; tenders get impatient waiting to break out; every diver had a godfather who would give him advice, keep him in line; role as mentors; could tell when divers were not going to make it; had Chino prison divers who were good divers, but you didn't trust them in town; offshore you either could do the job or you couldn't; there was no respect for those who couldn't; whether or not you could do the job was all that mattered; Chino divers came in the mid-70s; background and color did not matter when offshore, left the problems on the beach; racial issues in the bars onshore; one woman diver; whole diving business very chauvinistic; divers having to undress before getting in the chamber; discussion of divers' antics, admiration for "Shadow" who recently died

Changes: used to work off barges, now more work done off boats; jobs separated among different companies; all tied into cost effectiveness; caravanning in the old days to save money, hauled their own gear; J&J as unique diving company in the 70s; used to get call to be in the shop at night, load the vehicles, go home and sleep a few hours, hit the road early in the morning; no more little companies

C.E. Joe Taylor

New Iberia, LA

May 14, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG020

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Joe Taylor was recommended to me by Hubert Chesson. Both worked for Texaco, and Hubert said that Joe was one of the oldest hands still around. I went to Joe's house a couple days later - his place was across the bayou, just a couple blocks up from the apartment I had rented. Joe was at home watching TV, and although he was a little gruff at the get-go, once he warmed up to the interview we had a long and interesting talk. He provided some vivid descriptions about the conditions he was born into - the lack of opportunities in rural Texas, combined with the Great Depression, really put the squeeze on a lot of people. Also, he talks about how strange it was to move into French country, and how many of the men he started working with didn't speak much English. We talked about the old steam rigs that he worked on, and some of the differences between drilling in Texas and Louisiana.

Joe Taylor was born in Texas, began working for the Texas Company as a young man in 1935, and finished his career in Louisiana with the same company (which had by then become Texaco). Joe started out as a roughneck in Texas, and by the end of his career, he was a drilling and production foreman for the rest of his career. He's 88 years old, so he's seen quite a bit of change in the industry. There are some interesting comments about the difference in the foreman's responsibility with Texaco as compared to Exxon and other companies, and we also talk about how he was able to work with inexperienced or difficult hands once he was in a supervisory position.

#### Summary:

Early years: born in Pittsburg, Texas, which wasn't in the oilfield. Went to work for Texaco in Texas in 1935. Those were hard times, and the job was a great opportunity. Ended up working for Texaco his entire career. We talk a little bit about the first Texaco wells at Fausse Point and Lake Dauterive.

Texans in Louisiana: Says that moving to Louisiana was like moving to a foreign country. People thought oilfield workers were trash.

Fausse Point: drilling on pilings. It was the first time he saw sack mud. Drilled a successful well, but it was never much of a producer. Kind of a problem well. Drilling in Louisiana was a lot different than in Texas - there they drilled more holes, and they were a lot shallower. Worked on the steam rigs mostly.

Career summary: roughnecked for a long time, then moved up to driller, then to drilling and production foreman. He did a little consulting after he retired.

Drilling rigs: we talk about some of the early rigs that were on the water, the Giliasso and others. He worked on one called the Kelly. Barges and steam rigs were the equipment they used. We talk about the labor on those early rigs, and he remembers one of his first jobs where only a few men on the rig could speak English - they were all French speakers. He worked offshore for a while, and he describes that.

Scheduling: Seven and seven is the best schedule. In the early days, they lived in camps. He lists some of the Texaco camps. During the war they had to turn out all the lights on the rig.

Oyster shell barriers: Joe mentions that the oyster shell barriers were a natural protective barrier for the coast, and they tore them up. That's why the coast is eroding. In the old days, they used the shells for a pad to set the rig on.

More scheduling: When the war broke out, they shifted their scheduling to 12 hour shifts, and they only had two crews on each rig instead of three.

Texaco compared to other companies: Texaco only had one man in charge on the rig. Shell and Exxon would have two men on the rig, one for days and one for nights. Those other companies had assistants and everything that would go out with the supervisors, he notes.

Labor: it used to be that Joe could choose his crews, but later it changed, and that made things difficult. You had people out there who had never done anything but pick moss, he notes. One time he ran a crew in which four of the six men had never been on a rig before. He ended up keeping three of those boys, though.

Retirement: he retired in 76, right in the middle of the boom. He's 88 years old now.

Safety: We talk about safety. You had to watch yourself back in those days. They'd penalize you if you had accidents. If someone got hurt, they'd review it in the office and decide if they were going to penalize you. There's a great quote here about having to work in all weather.

Environment: There were always some regulations, but it wasn't enforced as much back in the old days. They got real strict by the 70's, though. He also describes how salt water can end up contaminating fresh water. Long discussion about disposing of salt water.

Unionization: They never did come down here. The refineries had unions, but there was never any talk about it elsewhere.

Evaluation of a career in the oil industry: Worked 30 years, worked 5 to 150 men, never had to fire one. He describes how he would talk to the ones that were trouble. Then we talk about the Boy Scouts. His son worked in the oilfield for a while, but then the bottom fell out. No guarantees anymore in the oilfield.

Depression: Back then you were happy just to have a job. Great quotes here. Working for the CCC. Would be a lot different if it happened again. It would be anarchy. He talks about the first time he saw a television.

George Taylor

Irving, TX

July 29, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA058

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met George Taylor at the 2002 Divers' Reunion. He became very interested in the study and told me that he had wanted to put together a history of the diving industry. We talked for quite some time and agreed that I would come to Irving at some point to interview him. I drove to Louisiana for the July field session so that I could stop at several places in Texas on the way back. I called George, and he arranged a room at the Irving Public Library where we could meet. He brought along his friend, Pete Petrisky, a former Marine Corps diver and photographer.

George Taylor began diving inadvertently in the Navy when he was sent underwater to pull three bodies out of the U.S.S. Morris after the Battle of Okinawa. After returning to the states, he enrolled in the Navy's Deep Sea Diving School and spent the next 14 years as a Navy diver. Upon retirement from the Navy he headed to the Gulf coast to find a job in the oilfield. He started with Taylor Diving in 1960 but never could adjust to the vast differences in safety consciousness between the Navy and the Gulf of Mexico oilfield. He did freelance diving for many years, tried to start an organization of divers, and became co-chairman of the safety committee of the Marine Technology Society. He faced significant resistance and even hostility in the Gulf and eventually moved to southern California, where he joined the Pile Drivers Union and worked for companies operating out of there until his retirement from diving in the 1970s.

#### Summary:

Early history: was a Navy diver for 14-15 years; a commercial diver for another 15 or so years afterward; on first dive in the Navy was not a qualified diver, was called to get dead bodies out of the USS Morris after the Battle of Okinawa on April 6, 1945; was so ignorant of diving, did not know how to equalize pressure; brought 3 bodies up, including black friend; all the blood looked the same; had to turn ship over to repair hull; repaired enough to return to states, was there when war ended.

Deep sea diving: got bored after war, decided to become Navy diver; graduated from Naval Deep Sea Diving School in 1946, worked as diver till retired from Navy in 1960; went into explosive ordnance disposal work; last five years at Guam was blowing up ordnance left after WWII; after leaving Navy got bored, not adapted to most civilian occupations; went to New Orleans, encountered Taylor Diving and Salvage; at beginning few Navy divers on Gulf, most divers working there were not trained.

Reaction to oilfield diving: Navy was using Mark V gear, had to use lightweight gear to work around rigs; first thing I realized was how dangerous it was; they had no chambers, you had to

supply your gear and tender, if you had a diving accident, "shame on you;" I ran into trouble with every company down there over the safety thing; started Professional Diving Association International; idea was to gather information and exchange it to keep young, inexperienced divers from getting killed; started not getting calls, they were afraid of unions; drew me to the west coast; PDAI folded; any divers associated with me were not getting jobs.

First contact: thought about working for offshore oil companies; they don't want to deal directly with divers because of insurance and liability; went to yellow pages, hit on Taylor first; Mark Banjavich helped me gear up; had a bunk room in company headquarters; 3 big offshore companies - Brown & Root, McDermott, later came Ingram; Brown & Root big and powerful, friends in powerful places, including the president of the US; Mark Banjavich made contact with LE Minor of Brown & Root; developed relationship; lots going on inside Taylor; Jean Valz was known as the company pimp; still in many ways admired Mark; Hempy Taylor was loony tunes, shot holes in a crewboat; Mark grounded him; bunkhouse could hold 3, 4, 5 guys at a time; enabled Mark to bring guys in and get them going when they were short on money; I stayed there one month.

Safety: hairy compared to Navy diving; psychologically difficult; friends wouldn't come because too dangerous; 2 or 3 artists in the French Quarter got gear and started diving; relief to get to west coast where decompression tables and chambers were the norm; horrible tradeoff - what commercial diver would do as routine Navy would say you're out of your mind; like live boating; James Dean specialized in this, worked with him on inspection diving; diving at night; I came up with a safer way to do it; put day and night flare on my belt; had to make inside cutoffs, gas builds up and causes explosion; happened to Wayne Willet, his head swelled up to the size of a basketball; divers used to compete for how fast they could do it; devised a method of cutting and angling down so gas would bleed off; divers always eager to share and help another diver if it had to do with personal safety.

Work history: I specialized in inspection diving, not having to compete in construction and safety; gravitated to James Dean because of safety; never left Taylor, decided I could make a better living freelance; company divers would get priority; would go when there was a chamber on the job; one case when I was on as an inspection diver the company doing the job had a diver down at 180 feet, a neophyte; had a chamber on deck but no one knew how to use it; guy got stuck, no one in the company willing to go to the guy's rescue; I tried, guy died; I had to go into chamber, no one knew how to use it; got to where I couldn't make a living or would have to compromise things I wasn't willing to compromise; 100 percent of the divers wanted to change, but I was the only one willing to make waves.

Relationship with Navy: oilfield walked around Navy, Navy sent people down, trying to play catch up; Murray Black with DiveCon was leading the pack in deep diving there; he and Woody Treen had International Divers when I went to the west coast; Murray broke off and started DiveCon; got contract off north coast of Africa; record of 320 feet on compressed air still stands; only had compressed air; was having problems with decompression and helium-oxygen, couldn't get information out of the Navy; joined Marine Technology Society, ended up chairman of committee on safety; Dr. Benkhe was co-chair, had done pioneering work in early years in helium-oxygen diving; Murray got tables through Benkhe; used sodasorb; Murray asked me to

run diving operations, in middle of divorce, said no; biggest mistake of my life; Mark Banjavich on hunting trip with LBJ, got all the information; ended up with experimental unit in New Orleans with Dr. Workman running it.

Gear: on Gulf Coast used mostly Jack Brown mask and wetsuit; Jack Brown freeflow requires big compressor, can't go deep; ended up with Scott mask; demand mask, requires smaller compressor; Jack Brown demand mask worthless; Mark V gear weighs 185 pounds! abalone divers on west coast came up with browngagger's belt, did away with shoes; evolved to Kirby Morgan lightweight head gear.

Move to west coast: beautiful terms; before diving had to join Pile Divers Union; required chambers, etc.; decent pay; jobs had to do with inspection, not much construction or pipelines; worked in Alaska, north coast of Africa.

Working overseas: while still on Gulf coast worked in Persian Gulf; they didn't like you; couldn't get work done, throwing gear over the side; during Ramadan could not drink, etc.

Barge captains: most very good, but could not see what diver was doing; had to do what divers said to do, didn't like it; John Landers hated divers, kept divers down even if nothing to do, said you're being paid to dive, so dive; life was cheap out there; woke me up one night to go get body of guy who fell in off catwalk; he was working out there at night with no lights, no nothing; gave the guy mouth to mouth.

Ups and downs: seasonal, dynamic; depends on whether there's drilling or not; during hurricanes could not get enough divers; especially on Gulf Coast where there's no union; no insurance; companies had themselves protected but too bad for diver's family; one guy died, company sold his equipment.

Hurricanes: usually damage to pipelines and risers; have to go find pipeline; best way is to put diver in the water and have him walk the bottom; oil companies go to every diving company out there to find divers; engineer once came to my house; get a reputation and then they call when things get tough, otherwise why pay top dollar; oil companies have no control or they would also get liability; maintenance goes on all year, some salvage work, some explosive demolition.

Changes: evolution of the equipment; sat diving; greater interest now, not so much an odd ball profession; increased Coast Guard regulations, improvement in safety.

Andrea Doria: worked on job on east coast to get safes; Life magazine hired divers and photographers; guys had no experience; saved their lives.

Do it again: hell yes, but a hell of a lot smarter; wish I could have stayed and pushed for a diver's union, taken Murray Black up on his offer; diving defines who you are; can't describe the feeling.

William Terrell

Lafayette, LA

June 27, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW059

#### Ethnographic Preface:

William Terrell was born in 1943, in Kilgore, Texas, and is a third generation oilfield worker. His father worked as a motorman for Gulf Oil and moved the family around southern Louisiana when Mr. Terrell was an adolescent. After graduating high school in Kilgore; he went on to several colleges studying geology and was attending graduate school at Texas Christian University (TCU) when he joined a seismic crew for National Geophysical. Soon after in 1966 he hired on with Gulf in New Orleans as a geologist; he spend most of the next 15 years working in western Africa (Angola, Gabon, Zaire, Nigeria). Back in the States, he worked out of Houston and soon got into domestic exploration work; however, five years later, when Chevron bought out Gulf (1985) he was sent to a new job in London. In 1990 he requested a transfer and moved to Lafayette where he worked until he retired in 1998; he continues to work now and then for friends on a consultancy basis. During the interview he discusses the distinction between geophysicists and geologists, describes Gulf's work in Angola in the late 1960s and the other African countries, discusses moving with his family overseas, and talks about independent geologists.

#### Summary:

Early life: father started out digging ditches for Gulf Oil in Kilgore, TX, and made his way up to motorman; grandfather was a drilling supervisor. Family moved to Krotz Springs, LA, in '54; moving was part of the oil business; attended most of high school in Opelousas; graduated high school in Kilgore. Went to several colleges; was going to graduate school in geology at TCU when got a summer job on a seismic crew. Left school and hired on with National Geophysical; applied for work at several companies and hired on with Gulf in New Orleans in '66.

Jobs: industry downturn in early '60s led to one of first oil company layoffs; before that was perception that you hired on with a company for life. If company wanted to transfer you, you either went or found a new job.

Geoscientists: includes geologists and geophysicists; latter interpret seismic lines and do more technical work.

Gulf Oil: had many different offices throughout New Orleans (for each of the districts and the exploration dept.). A year after hiring on, went to work in Angola where company had five rigs; was going through a divorce at the time; country undergoing civil war; got married by proxy; stayed five and a half years. Transferred to Gabon; two years later got into motorcycle accident and had a warrant for his arrest, so company kept him in London for awhile and then sent back to

New Orleans. Year later took a job as chief geologist in Zaire; lived in a compound and felt unsafe. Sent to Nigeria where living conditions were poor; asked for a transfer after two years. Given a lateral transfer to New Orleans, but decrease in grade; went to work in Houston.

Chevron: bought out Gulf in '85; given an option to stay on in a job in London (North Sea); really enjoyed living and working there.

Family: had two girls while in Zaire; began school in Houston, though schools available overseas. Wife upset about leaving places she liked. Wanted daughters to go to one high school for all four years (he had to change high schools his senior year); requested transfer to States in '89 and given a job in Lafayette.

Retirement: retired in '98 (age 54) when daughters out of the house, job no longer enjoyable, and financially stable. Wife decided wanted to stay in Lafayette; shock of not having work; doing consulting work part time.

Regrets: none for him, but don't ask his wife. Liked being able to travel all over the world.

Independent geologists: many in Lafayette area because got training with a major company and quit, or refused a transfer; you only hear about the ones that are successful. He liked working for a major because of the security of a paycheck. Describes two geologists hired on at the same time as him.

Norman Theriot

Larose, LA

September 30, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM051

#### Ethnographic Preface:

On an earlier research, project, I had paid a visit to Windell Curole director of the South Lafourche Levee District. In his office at the time, poring over maps and engineering drawings, was Leon Theriot, then head of the Levee District Board. Leon Theriot, recently passed away, was an impressive man, and had a succinct response upon hearing the description of that research project. The oil industry had a tremendous economic legacy for south Lafourche, and a sad environmental one. When I returned to Windell for additional suggestions for this project, he suggested Norman Theriot, a partner in Leon's insurance firm in Golden Meadow. After several unsuccessful attempts on successive trips, I met up with Norman as he prepared to go on a hunting trip to Texas. The interview was relatively brief, as Norman had to break it off to get his hair cut by one of his granddaughters, in preparation for his hunting trip. He did, however, provide interesting, if short, accounts of entrepreneurship along Bayou Lafourche - the proliferation of grocery stores, the creation of local banks, and the economic difficulties of the 1980s and earlier.

Norman Theriot, born in 1931, is the son of Henry Theriot and the oldest of 11 children. Norman's grandfather was Leon Theriot, a shrimper and captain of the Petit Corporal, the small lugger that has been restored and is on display along Bayou Drive (Hwy 1) in Golden Meadow. Norman's father went into the grocery business, several other uncles stayed in shrimping and shrimp processing, and one uncle, Leon, started an insurance business. Norman, after returning from service in Korea, joined the uncle in the insurance business, where the majority of their clients were boat owners.

#### Summary:

Stores: daddy had one, names off 4-5 others; we got out of business when daddy died of cancer in 1946; me and brother tended store on alternate days, go to high school on day off; lot of credit, one guy owed over \$30,000; Adams Supermarket built on spot; no self-service in those days; daddy showed me how to add in my mind; kids today can't add 5 and 10

Teachers and schools: some from outside, some from here; elementary school opened 1932, built high school in 1936; culture died because we couldn't speak French; I taught my kids French; first high school principal was from outside, tough but we needed that because we were tough

Oil field: 1939 Texaco came in, brought in people from Texas, taught local people how to do it; good thing for our community

Fishing: continues to prosper; pull seine by hand on beach in old days

Insurance: I started in 1953; we sold general insurance; majority of our business was marine; we made a lot of money; a few trawl boats had insurance, if they had a mortgage on it; crew and tugboats had to have it

Property where he lives: he, his partners and others, including Web Callais, bought former sugar cane lands north of ICW on Hwy 308 side; subdivided it; his daughters live in nearby houses; "Nanna Drive" named after his wife Anna, what grandson called Anna; in old days, each family had their own little neighborhood, now it is different, kids move away, hard to find a job down here

Oil workers: mostly came from Texas

Net making: was skillful art, good business to get into, Web Callais and a Mr. Terrebonne in Cut Off did it; very articulate deal for a guy that wasn't educated; looks like it was factory-made

Nolte Theriot: my first cousin, son of Felice Theriot; Felice was seafood dealer; son Nolte worked in there for awhile; Nolte's daddy had trawl boat, Nolte got wild idea to convert in into a tug boat for oil industry; 'guys from south Lafourche are best boat captains in the world'; we had good clients as insurance agents

Financing: locally-owned banks, e.g. State, Community; big banks started buying local ones 15 years ago; Leo, my uncle, started State Bank in 1951, still locally owned; Hibernia maybe had so much money, could buy out smaller banks that were making money; local shareholders made money on buyouts by larger banks

1980s slowdown: affected boat business, so insurance, fuel distributors, groceries; got bad in 1957/8, then got great after that, then early 1980s got bad again; guys who bought boats lost them.

Howard Thibodaux

Donner, LA

July 7, 2001

Interviewed by: Rylan Higgins

University of Arizona

RH008

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Garver Watkins (RH006) and Howard Thibodaux worked together at McDermott for over 20 years. When I talked with Garver, he told me that I had to interview Howard. Howard's family used to own some of the land where McDermott now sits. Garver called Howard the next day and then called me to let me know that Howard was interested. Howard and his wife live in Donner. They have a newer, small home near the highway. In the living room, there are various plaques recognizing Howard's years of service with McDermott and a few pictures of structures he helped build. Howard, his wife and I sat at the table and started the interview. Early in the interview, Howard's wife got up to serve us coffee and then returned to the table. I told Howard and her about the project and then turned on the recorder. It was interesting to have her participate in interview. Though she spoke only occasionally, when she did, it was often to correct Howard or to remind him to include some detail. She also communicated similar things without speaking; it appeared that her gestures occasionally affected what Howard said.

Howard was born in 1929 and grew up in Amelia. When he attended grammar school, first, second and third grades all met in the same classroom. He got his first job when he was still in high school. He worked as deckhand on a tugboat for Great Lakes Dredging Company during at least one of his high school summers. After finishing high school, he went to work on a dredge barge but did not like it, so he quit and went to work running a grocery store in town. By 1949, he was back working for the same dredging company, but this time on a dredge barge itself. He joined the Air Force for 4 years. During those 4 years, he spent a lot of time in Biloxi learning radio technology and teaching it. During his military years, he also got married and spent one year in Korea. Three months after getting out of the Air Force, Howard went to work for McDermott.

#### Summary:

First job: Howard got his first job when he was still in high school. He worked as deck hand on a tugboat for Great Lakes Dredging Company during at least one of his high school summers. After finishing high school, he went to work on a dredge barge but did not like it, so he quit and went to work running a grocery store in town. By 1949, he was back working for the same dredging company, but this time on a dredge barge itself.

Korean War: Howard talked about how he was too young to fight in World War II, but that he was "ripe" for the Korean War, and at the time, he knew it. So, instead of risking getting sent into the Army for 2 years, he joined the Air Force for 4 years. During those 4 years, he spent a

lot of time in Biloxi learning radio technology and teaching it. During his military years, he also got married and spent one year in Korea.

McDermott: Three months after getting out of the Air Force, Howard went to work for McDermott. He said that McDermott and Raymond Concrete were in a joint venture building platforms out of concrete. The work was taking place so close to his home that Howard joked about how McDermott started in his back yard. He went to work building concrete structures for 14 months.

From concrete to steel structures: According to Howard, after his first year in fabrication, building structures out of concrete was determined a bad idea. When these operations shut down, Bill Bailey asked Howard not look elsewhere for a job because he would put Howard to work building steel structures.

Material supply: Howard talked about how it was difficult in the early days to purchase, especially in a timely manner, the material needed to build structures. Eventually, this problem led McDermott to develop its own pipe mills and to roll its own pipe. He also talked about the increase in the diameter of the pipe needed as structures got larger.

Bill Bailey: Howard talked at length about Bill Bailey, who was one of the head engineers and supervisors during the early years of McDermott's history. Howard talked about the lack of computers and the use of a slide rule. Despite not having the advantages of modern technology, Howard claimed that Bailey was impressive in his ability to gauge how long a project would take. Bailey always delivered on time. Part of Bailey's success also hinged on workers in the yard working lots of overtime near project due dates.

Labor issues: Howard talked at length about what it was like working for McDermott in the early years. He claimed that, even though McDermott did not pay the highest in the industry, they did not layoff people as regularly as other companies. It was also hard to find workers early in McDermott's history.

Unions: When talking about labor issues, Howard mentioned that those were the times before labor unions were established in the area. He said Bailey was very adamant about keeping unions out of McDermott, out of southern Louisiana. Even during slow times, McDermott would try to keep everyone on the payroll, so there was no need for unions. Howard discussed the union vote in 1958 and said that the union was badly defeated.

Loading technology: When structures started to reach certain sizes, loading them on to barges to be hauled several miles into the Gulf of Mexico became an important part of yard technological development. Howard mentioned that Caleb Henderson, a Black supervisor in the yard, had been instrumental in developing these strategies at critical junctures.

Land issues: According to Howard, there was a point in the 1970's when Avondale had planned to expand its operations in the area. They hoped to purchase additional property and develop it. Apparently, McDermott bought the land so Avondale's expansion could not take place.

Ethnic groups: Howard talked for several minutes about some of the different ethnic groups in the yard. He mentioned that there were a lot of Black workers in the fabrication yard. Though he did not discuss any tensions between Black and white workers, he did say that there were initially some problems between Vietnamese workers and other people in the fabrication yard. He also claimed that Vietnamese workers turned out to be some of the hardest working, most dedicated workers at McDermott.

Terge "Ted" Thorjussen

Clear Lake, TX

August 1, 2006

Interviewed by: Jason P. Theriot

University of Houston/History International

MMS081

### Ethnographic Preface:

Ted Thorjussen is a native of Oslo, Norway. He started in the ship-broker business, then came to the U.S. for work, and later joined the U.S. Navy. He moved to Houston in 1970 and worked for a ship-broker, Uiterwyk Company. He went to work for West Gulf Maritime Association in the '80s and eventually became president. He retired after 20 years with the association, but still remains active in the maritime industry.

### Summary:

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Billy Joe Tillery

Houma, LA

January 18, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM023

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Billy Tillery was referred to me by Professor Tom Becnel. I interviewed him at his office - he now does "tax preparation for individuals or businesses." He dabbled in this while working for Texaco, helping his company friends with their tax forms. He is now head of the Houma Texaco Retirees' group, with over 200 members, some of whom live in New Orleans but attend Houma functions because that is where their former co-workers are. His father was a driller, and Billy worked all his life for Texaco, in a number of capacities on the production side: field clerk, relief pumper, relief production foreman, barge foreman, then "specialist," essentially an on-call troubleshooter, where he worked for Joe Robinson. The interview ranged over a number of subjects, including some discussion of the Huey Long - Louisiana Land & Exploration Company - Texaco relationship, well allowables, safety programs run by Chevron out of Lafayette, Texaco's property management, Texaco's retirement packages, and activities during the Tidelands dispute.

#### Summary:

Early history: father started drilling in 1920, moving from Oklahoma to Arkansas to Texas; working for Texaco, was offered job in Houma in 1933; people in this area didn't want to work on rigs; uncle working off rigs near Montegut (Lake Barre), got 4 days off/month

Work arrangements: contracting: started after WW II as servicemen returned; if hired on by company, always had a job until you retired; this changed in 1980s

Arrangements with Saudi Arabia: in 1980s, country initially claimed 1/8, then 1/4, then 1/2 of what foreign companies produced, then said you have to buy my half to get your half, or we'll nationalize fields

Conservation laws: old days on land, could step from one rig to the next; you had to get your oil out first or the other guy would get it; started changing in 1930s; got better in 40s; changed laws to meet crisis, double or triple quotas during Suez Crisis; allowables still in effect in Louisiana; ask for special dispensation to get bigger allowable; bigger allowable for deeper wells; but the more/cheaper you produced the better you looked; supervisors got promoted based on this; drillers would study offset wells

Safety representative: nature of oil field work to get things done quickly; Chevron safety complex in Lafayette started in 1990s; companies buy safety program for \$5000

Property management: Texaco selling fields they don't want any more; liability to keep them; have wells they never pulled equipment from; program recently to clean up most of these old wells; cleaned up their act quite a bit; didn't think oil in lakes hurt the environment because lakes were so big

1980s: cheaper to get oil overseas; here takes you 6 months to get permit, while you can drill a well in Saudi Arabia in a few days; don't put tubing, just casing in some wells over there; Texaco merged with Getty; Texaco used to be a Texas company but moved to NY; Pennzoil agreed to take \$3.5 million for damage; Getty was very expensive company to operate; Texaco had so much inshore so weren't heavy into offshore

Tidelands: quit drilling in disputed area, but kept producing; Texaco wasn't in this area at the time; Chevron/California Company started those fields in Bay Marchand; Texaco kept up onshore work, didn't hold back until 1980s; "never did hold back"

Retirement group: Texaco buys 1 meal/year; we get good price at Holiday Inn; people call me for retirement things - insurance, who to call, etc.; Texaco friend in Bellaire informs me of things; over 200 members in club; Chevron wants to come into club, but not a big enough place to meet; club meet every 3 months; insurance plans vary by company

Retirement packages and bonuses: get so much a month on annuity plan or withdraw saving; the more you made, the more you got; one friend who stayed with company till 2000 got \$1 million; on savings plan you put in 3%, they put in 6%; now have safety plan for workers so get bonuses if you don't get hurt; get bonuses if you invent something or do something to save company money - this started about 10 years ago; companies would move you; would fire you but you had to want to get fired

Giliasso barges: Texaco bought rights to barge design, built 12 to 18 of them; had 6-8 workover rigs; sold rigs to Bay Drilling Co. in 1980s

Oyster vs. shrimp boats: oyster boats work inland waters; with flat bow, can't work in bays unless bay has "pretty water;" in 1920s, Texaco hired shrimp boat Example from Golden Meadow for \$3-4/day; owner became millionaire; shrimp boat designed to cut through water.

Charles Tisdale

New Iberia, LA

May 3, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG009

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Charles Tisdale was referred by Al Rivet. I met Charles and his wife at their house in New Iberia. It's a small house, and they were sitting around the living room near the air conditioner. During the day they sit in the living room and close all the other doors to save on cooling costs. Mrs. Tisdale is a firebrand, and she participated throughout the interview. She has a lot to say, and she says it with moxie. They were great company.

Charles Tisdale is an old oilfield hand. His friends call him "Tis". He and his wife were born in West Texas, and he had some early experience working in the oil industry there. They were able to paint a vivid picture of the wandering lifestyle of early oilfield hands in the 30's - at one point, she pulled out a list she had written on the back of an old Reader's Digest that included every place they'd ever lived. Charles seems to write a lot of stuff down, too. He had a little pocket notebook in which he'd write down stuff about the weather and whatnot. Anyway, they eventually made their way to Louisiana, and Charles spent his career working for Laughlin Brothers, one of the largest drilling contractors of the time. Charles never advanced beyond motorman - he said he was happy with that.

#### Summary:

Early years: He talks about working in the oilfield in Texas in 1938, and the switch from cable drilling to rotary in 1945. They moved around so much. They talk about the type of people working in the 1930's in the oil industry. It was the middle of the Depression.

Move to Louisiana: They moved to Louisiana because Charles wanted more time off ... he was working every day all the time. When they got there, he started working 10 and 5, and that was the best thing he'd ever had. He went offshore in 1956.

Safety: We talk about safety back in the old days. He talks about the changes in the ability to communicate with family onshore.

Texans: We talk about what it was like moving from Texas to Louisiana.

Litigation: They talk about people suing the oil companies, and how out of control litigation is these days.

Career history: He was a motorman for the rest of his life. He never wanted to move up. It was only men on the rigs back then. He then talks about how Laughlin Brothers was ruined by the engineers.

Company loyalty and environment: He talks about loyalty to Laughlin Brothers, and they comment on the environment and regulations, and then Charles talks about dumping the mud.

Motorman: He talks about his duties as motorman, he explains directional drilling. He also talks a little bit about President Bush.

Offshore: Tis talks about how he dreams about the oilfield at night. He talks about the old steam rigs, offshore life and the great food offshore.

Rig life: He talks about running the motors, and then he talks about how there was no fighting allowed offshore.

Race: They talk about race relations in oil. They have a much different attitude than most southerners of their generation ... they tell a story about this.

Impact upon community: They talk about the impact of the oil money on these small communities, and how many people couldn't handle all the money they were making. Then they talk more about race relations.

Early days in Texas: They talk about oil in Texas back in the Depression, how they used to live in a little trailer they'd haul around between oil fields, and then they tell me the key to a long marriage.

P.J. Trahan

Gretna, LA

March 20, 2002

Interviewed by: Emily Bernier

University of Arizona

EB041

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I received P.J. Trahan's name from R.J. Cheramie in July of 2001. P.J. had been his driller for a long time and R.J. said that P.J. would make a wonderful interview since he had been in the oil field for many years. I enlisted the help from R. J. in January to help me get in touch with P.J., and he finally tracked him down in Gretna.

P.J. Trahan worked for Exxon his entire career. He began in 1943 when he was a senior in high school. He worked as a groundskeeper and carpenter for 3 months until he was sent to the Navy. By 1950, he was a derrick man, and 3 years later he made toolpusher, all before his 30th birthday. He made superintendent of his field before he was 34. He stayed on as a toolpusher for the remaining 30 years of his oil career.

#### Summary:

**Background:** P.J. Trahan was born in Franklin in 1924. His daddy was a trapper. He finished high school in 1943 and began his work with Exxon that same year. He only worked for 3 months as a groundskeeper and carpenter with Exxon before he was drafted into the Navy.

**Service:** Began his service in the Navy in 1943. He was in Iwo Jima, saw lots of fighting there until 1945, went right back to Exxon as a carpenter's helper after he got out.

**Oil field Work:** Exxon had 1 steam rig, P.J. worked power rigs his whole career. He was promoted to derrick man by 1950 - very hot and heavy work. He then worked as a driller for 2 years before he was promoted to toolpusher, all before he turned 30. In 1957, he was promoted again to Operations Superintendent - in charge of all of the drilling rigs - and remained in that position until his retirement from Exxon in 1986.

**Exxon Fields:** Located in Avery Island, Grand Isle, Laurel, MS, north Crowley, Paradis, Port Sulphur, S. Florida, Gas Plant - Opelousas, LA. Women basically worked in the office - were not really a presence on the rigs.

**Technology:** Helicopters changed the business of rig work; they made a big impact - mechanization trend known as the "iron roughnecks".

Lou Trosclair

Bayou Vista, LA

May 8, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG013

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Lou Trosclair worked for Shell his entire career, and he's the chair of the Morgan City Branch of the retirees club. His father worked on the riverboats, and Lou started with Shell in the West Lake Verret field in 1952, after finishing college in Lafayette. He was to become a schoolteacher, but he wanted to go where he could make some money. He started off as a roustabout and worked his way up. He worked as a drilling foreman for much of the latter part of his career. He retired in 1985.

#### Summary:

Background: He grew up in Berwick about 1940, shrimpers moved in to the area from Florida; local folks doing crabbing and catfishing - a very close-knit, fishermen-oriented community, until Kerr-McGee drilled a well out on the Atchafalaya in 1947

Older generation of oil workers: they were tough, most didn't have good education; most of the bosses from out of state, but had probably worked up in the oil fields of north Louisiana, moved down to south Louisiana when oil fields opened up there, got the pusher jobs.

Local workers: it was a domino effect - people had boats and oil companies needed boats, so local people created transportation industry for the oil fields;

Job ladder: he went into the Army, 1952-1954; came back, sent to Gibson as a roustabout, promoted to relief gauger, working night shifts for older gaugers who would take vacations; then sent a gauger to Turtle Bayou gas fields, which was totally different from oil wells - way more pressure; sent out to Eugene Island Block 18 as full-time gauger, working 7 and 7; stayed there (offshore) for 31 years; was maintenance foreman on Block 100; sent to drilling school in 1964 when federal government said if you don't drill on lease, you will lose it, and thus Shell needed more drillers; became a drilling foreman

Gas: Block 18 was mainly oil, no transmission lines for gas so they didn't want it, flared it; about 1960, companies built gas transmission lines so they started gathering it.

Shell: back then when you went to work for Shell, you had a job for life if you kept your hands clean and didn't do something bad; that all changed in 1985; loyalty between workers and company from about 1952 to 1980; early 1980's, everything started to fall apart

Regulations: late 1970's, OSHA started to make us do all sorts of crazy things, cost us all kinds of money; "If a guy threw a cigarette overboard, we were supposed to run him off;" regulations were one of the things (beside bad knees) that made him quit

Unions: when our refineries went on strike, we eventually got what they got

Lucius Trosclair

Morgan City, LA

July 2, 2004

Interviewed by: Jamie Christy

University of Houston/History International

MMS058

Ethnographic Preface:

Lucius Trosclair was born in Berwick, Louisiana and graduated high school from Morgan City in 1948. He attended Southern Louisiana Institute in Lafayette and received a degree in education in 1952. After college graduation, Mr. Trosclair went to work for Shell Oil Company in June of 1952 as a roustabout. In January 1953 Mr. Trosclair was drafted into the Army and spent one year in England until his discharge in December 1954. He returned to Shell and moved to Gibson as a roustabout and then moved up to gauger. He remained at Turtle Bayou as a gauger until 1956 when Shell opened its first offshore platform at Block 18. Mr. Trosclair went to work at Block 18 as a gauger and was promoted to a maintenance foreman there. He was then promoted to production foreman and moved out to Block 100. Mr. Trosclair also went to Eugene Island Block 188 after its discovery and became a tool pusher or drilling foreman in 1963 to represent Shell on their drilling contracts on federal leases.

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Robert "Bob" Truxell

Lafayette, LA

June 25, 2003

Interviewed by: Steven Wiltz

University of Louisiana at Lafayette

SW057

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Bob Truxell was born in 1924 in Illinois but moved to Nebraska when he was 6. He joined the Navy after high school, and then earned a Master's in Geology at the University of Nebraska. He was hired by Chevron in 1951, after interning with them during summers in college. He moved to Louisiana in 1962. He discusses his work in the oil survey industry, evaluation tools, and changes in Lafayette since moving there.

#### Summary:

Early life: born 1924 in Illinois; moved to Nebraska when 6 years old; father was an artist and house painter, but also managed hotel and restaurant for awhile; mother a nurse who worked in a hospital. Joined Navy in 1942, served 4 years - 3 years as radio operator in Rhode Island with a group experimenting with different kinds of submarine warfare.

Education: Attended University of Nebraska on GI Bill; earned a Master's in Geology. Interned with Chevron in Denver during summers.

Employment: Hired by Chevron Oil Company 1951; transferred to New Orleans until 1962. Describes electrical survey and the tools that aided in the discovery of oil and gas; evolution of evaluation tools; these devices measured density, sonic response and dip meters. A geologist would monitor the logging operations; Truxell was in production department and evaluated wells and recommended further drilling wells; was also responsible for wildcat and production wells; worked with the seismic crews to help determine the viability of wells. Only went out a few times offshore to deal with problems like a tight well; he tried to keep logs to himself for security reasons. Subcontractors would often come to do the work and he did not want them, for example Schlumberger (one of the biggest evaluation companies) to see sensitive lease information. Drilling contractors (support companies) often provided more jobs than the oil companies.

1950s moratorium: against offshore drilling because of a dispute between the state and federal governments.

Lafayette: changes since 1962, like increased traffic on the streets and the loss of forested areas; not too difficult to find a house, houses available and the going rate was \$12 a square foot.

Adjustment to LA: Always felt welcomed in the area; he and his wife adapted quite well to the food; coffee was stronger than he was used to; would not want to go back and eat Nebraskan food.

Cultural changes: first African-American geologist he knew was hired back in the mid-late 1970s; were only two or three African-American geologists when he worked. A few women geologists were hired by Chevron in 1980s.

Family life: got married year before coming to Louisiana; met wife in Nebraska; have 5 children.

Final remarks: no regrets about becoming a geologist and working in the oil industry; always something different in his job.

Larry Tucker

Pearl River, LA

March 2, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA098

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Larry Tucker when I visited Hunt Oil Company's Eugene Island 63 platform. I flew out to the platform with Sharon Moore, a helicopter pilot for TexAir. I was given a tour of the platform and visited with the four operators and Larry who were working that shift. Larry had a break between lunch and dinner and said he would be willing to do an interview for the study.

Larry Tucker came to Louisiana from Texas. During WWII and at the age of 16, he joined the Merchant Marine and learned to cook. He remained there for 12 years until the maritime shipping industry got so bad that he could not make a living. Over the next fourteen years he went in and out of the merchant marine and other jobs. In 1970, after several large passenger ships were taken out of service and jobs became even more scarce, a friend of his decided to get a job offshore, and Larry went along for one hitch. He spent the next three months working one week offshore and hanging around the union hall during his week onshore. Getting no maritime work during that period, he decided to stay with the oil and gas industry, where he has remained as a cook for 33 years. He worked on a Shell platform for 20 years and on Hunt Oil's Eugene Island 63 for 10 years.

#### Summary:

Personal history: Originally from Texas, now in Pearl River; was in Merchant Marine during WWII, learned to cook; maritime shipping got bad, merchant ships went under foreign flags; went offshore for one two week hitch to get a paycheck, hung around the union hall; still no jobs, back out for two weeks; still working offshore 33 years later

Work History: First day offshore was different in that a platform is not moving like a ship, but it was the same old routine; people from different parts of the country have different eating habits; offshore is a mixture of people from the southern states, so home cooking was the thing to do; started with Boatel in 1970, then Oceanic Butler bought out Boatel; Shram bought out Oceanic Butler; Eurest bought out Shram in 1988; still with the same company, stayed on one Shell platform for 20 years, have been on Eugene Island 63 for ten years; the other three years were spent on different platforms; in the 1970s jobs were plentiful and a lot of the workers were transient, staying only 1, 2, or 3 hitches; it was easy to go to a different platform if someone was unhappy about something; I was used to the Merchant Marine and staying in one place for 14 months, two weeks was nothing

Starting Career: I was 16 and the war was going on; the Army and Navy wouldn't take me but the Merchant Marine would; everybody was patriotic then; stayed in it for 12 years, would quit

and go back; was in boot camp at Catalina Island, then to Seattle, San Francisco, Texas; started offshore doing 7 and 7; there were 50 people on the first platform, including a day cook, a night cook, and four utility hands; would find out about work through word of mouth; hired by the steward; at one point I worked as the assistant personnel manager in the office, 5 and 2, but I didn't like it and went back offshore; the marriage lasts longer this way, though not all couples can handle it; I've been married 5 times, the last one for 30 years; during time off, I fix things, mow the lawn, take care of household things that deteriorate, go to Texas to see children; I have a vacation every other week

Life on the Platforms: They don't do pranks like they used to, especially because of safety; on my first platform guys would carry waste rags in their hip pockets and people would come along behind them and light the rags; it's a lot safer now than it used to be; now we have a lot better foods; we used to have to take whatever we could get; safety has definitely improved, a lot of people were hurt back in the early days; galleys are different from platform to platform; food is inspected more, back then the USDA regulations were not enforced like they are now

Working in the Galley: Start with basic grocery supplies and reorder as they are used up; day cook does lunch and supper, night cook has midnight and breakfast; day cook is the boss; night cook does most of the baking; the oil companies will run off a bad cook, has the final say as to the catering company they want; the contract is simply a form to follow but does not guarantee you a job; you cook whatever the people like; have two entrees, three or four vegetables, and three desserts to try and satisfy everyone; now I try to keep the calories down and buy everything we can get in low calories; in the past we did not think about weight loss or healthy eating; about 12 years ago the catering companies started on the Healthy Choice topic; they had seminars, young cooks would go to cooking schools and seminars

Women: All the women hired by the oil companies did just what they were hired to do, including the cooks; they are treated like queens; on this platform they took the room that had been for the cook and galley hand and used it for females; if they did not have room, the production foreman would ask guys to go from two bunk to four bunk rooms

Hurricanes: Was caught out one time when we were caught in high seas; the winds got up to 85 mph but we had no problems; they always try to get you in; hurricane protection is better now than it used to be; better prediction; we used to have more boats to bring out lots of equipment, once the platform is established then we need less equipment

Perception of Job: Would do it again; best part is seven days off; it's all the same, breakfast, lunch, and dinner; used to catch fish and cook them, but people would get sick from bad shrimp or oysters so it is not allowed anymore; was lucky during downturns because they always kept the cook on; I was in the right place at the right time

Merchant Marine: I was in the National Maritime Union, with the stewards; at the end of the 1960s Continental and America passenger ships were taken out of service; 3,000 merchant mariners were out of work in New York and New Orleans; people from New York came down looking for work; for two months I went to the union hall every day; no jobs were on the boards; a friend said he was going offshore, and I went along and got a job; for three months I went back

to the union hall during my weeks off; I never got a job and finally stopped trying; the Merchant Marine went down because the unions demanded too much; ships started flying foreign flags; U.S. seamen could sail with the foreign flag, but then they'd get kicked out of the union; my father had worked for Gulf Oil as a wildcatter; we lived all over Texas; went with a buddy and joined the Merchant Marine in Dallas; men with the U.S. Maritime Service did not qualify for the GI Bill until 1987; I worked for Texas Western Railroad in the machine shop while waiting to go into the Merchant Marine.

Bertram "Bert" Turlich

Port Sulphur, LA

March 11, 2002

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM030

#### Ethnographic Preface:

We had been introduced to Bert Turlich, a long-time Freeport Sulphur employee, by Kerry St. Pé of the Barataria-Terrebonne Estuary Program. Kerry, a native of Port Sulphur, had nominated Bert as our "ambassador" to Plaquemine Parish. The interview covered a number of areas, including descriptions of Freeport's company townsite at Port Sulphur, evacuation and shut-down procedures for the sulphur mines during storms, and the apprentice-craftsman system at Freeport. Pat, Bert's wife entered the discussion when it turned to school integration.

Bert Turlich was born in Empire in 1937. His daddy was a fisherman who then got on with Freeport Sulphur in 1933 when they started up the Grand Ecaille mine. Bert graduated from Buras High and started with Freeport Sulphur in 1955. He then went into the service, came back and married his wife, Pat, who is from Gretna. They had three girls, all of whom have gone to college. Bert retired from Freeport in 1991. He had a number of jobs with the sulphur company, and remembers it as a "family," until the merger with McMoRan (which rapidly depressed the stock Bert had in the company).

#### Summary:

Area: Gulf Oil had big refinery; Phillips, Texaco, Freeport down here; most people were fishermen; Perez tried to control revenues

Oysters: now everything leased; in 1940s/50s, could go anywhere for oysters

Father: did security for Freeport during war; sulphur in big demand for munitions, concerned about German subs

Sulphur and mergers: McMoRan bought us; lot of us lost stock and got hurt; sulphur became byproduct of oil industry so we mothballed platform that we built in 1990, was supposed to last for 40 years; shut down Grand Ecaille in 1980s and then Garden Island; 299 was opening up so crews sent down there, then shut down around 2000

Freeport: do own fabrication; had all the craftsmen we needed; serve 4-year apprenticeship for each "craft;" could do "dual crafts;" always non-union so you could do several crafts; Main Pass Block 299 cost almost 1 billion; subcontracted fabrication out for this one; had tanks for 100,000 tons of liquid; had to keep reserve of sulphur for government use

Workers: could always get quantity, then had to weed them out

Betsy: water picked house up, moved it 300 feet; had just bought house from Freeport in 1964; big water moccasin curled up on bed; cattle dead all over the road, belly up; houses went over back levee into marsh; government brought trailers in; company gave us living allowance

PS: 350 families living in company townsite; 3 bachelor's quarters; houses rented for \$20/paycheck; it was like a big family then; started selling off houses in early 1960s; lodge still there

Perez: didn't mind blacks being here, but wanted to keep them in their place

Vietnamese: smart kids, mostly in Buras/Empire, because of fishing activity

Gulftown: below Buras, in 1940s and 1950s.

Glenn Usie

Houma, LA

January 23, 2003

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS006

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Glenn Usie was recommended by several business leaders, including the head of the Chamber of Commerce. He owns his own machine shop, Glenco, and is active in the community. We met at his office in his shop, where he could be accessible to his workers. The interview was interrupted periodically by people checking on work-related topics.

Glen Usie is a machinist. After learning the machinist trade in 1964, he went to work for Smatco Machine Shop in Houma. After two years in the Navy, he returned to Plaquemines Parish in 1968 to work for Freeport Sulphur before returning to Houma in 1970. In 1972 he started his own machine shop and has been running it ever since. The machine shop is a general machine shop catering to the oil industry. He developed and builds a wireline maintenance system that is easier to work with than the typical wirelines. This product is shipped around the United States, South America, and Scotland.

#### Summary:

Family in the Oil Field: His father moved from plantation work to oil field maintenance (painting foreman), working a 6 and 6, then 7 and 7 schedule. He didn't like not having his father away half the time, and resolved to have a job where he could be home every night. At present he has three of four children involved in oil work, with one son and a son-in-law working at his machine shop and a son-in-law at Gulf Island Fabrication. "In later years I realized I only saw my father half my life." "I've seen my children raised on a daily basis."

Oil and Community: The oil industry brought higher wages, which was much better compared to plantation and fishing work. The global market for oil and gas makes for a better way of life. More people have been brought in. The major negative consequence has been coastal erosion..."from all the drillin' activity that's takin' place."

Wireline Maintenance: His system, used to maintain downhole electrical wireline cable, is much more compact than the usual ones. Because the cable had to be tensioned, they used to need to stretch it out over large spaces outdoors, but his allows working inside a building.

Quality of People: "I think that Houma has probably had more ...training as far as offshore drilling than anywhere else in the world. Some of the people that probably are not very well versed in reading and writing have a lot of hard knocks training that has brought 'em all over the world only because of what they know in their minds will and will not work. South Louisiana people are more hands-on people, I think, than the highly educated Northeast such as we know

the industrialized part of the world. But they are very good craftsmen and once they learn something they're good at what they do."

**The Future:** He wants to promote more education in the trades. Modern technology puts a limit on the amount of low educated workers who can work in oil work. They need a trade to succeed.

**Job Satisfaction:** Each day has something different, the variety of work is such that it's not boring. It also provides personal satisfaction by fixing something that is broken or "dreamin' up something new." His place is a "job shop," working on individual cases rather than mass production.

**Worker Loyalty:** His workers tend to stay long term, although they had a "rocky" time in the 80s. He has one person who has been with him for 18 years. Finding qualified workers is difficult because of competition from other shops. Most people working for him are local people.

Merrill Utley, Sr. and Merrill Utley, Jr.

Thibodaux, LA

January 24, 2005

Interviewed by: Joanna Stone

University of Arizona

JLS06

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Jim Fields grew up with "Little Merrill" Utley and often heard stories about his father's ("Big Merrill") role in the offshore industry in Southern Louisiana. He helped us to set up the interview and participated toward the end. Little Merrill sat in to help jog his father's memory as Big Merrill has been suffering from Alzheimer's for two years. After the interview, Little Merrill told me that his father used to tell him stories that he seems to have since forgotten. I have inserted information from Little Merrill that contradicts what his father said during the interview in brackets.

Merrill Utley, Sr. grew up in Mississippi and joined the Navy after graduating from high school there. He trained as an electronic technician and served on the homefront, mostly in the northeast, during WWII. After the war ended, he studied electrical engineering on the GI Bill first at the University of Mississippi and then at Tulane. Upon graduation, he came to southern Louisiana and started working for Chevron as a radio technician. Throughout his fifteen years with them he gradually started to do more offshore repairs and was instrumental in the designing of the "boat truck" which could back up to rigs to load and unload supplies. He eventually quit Chevron and bought the Delta Well Logging Service, now called Drill Labs/Mud Logging, a company his son Merrill now runs.

#### Summary:

**Personal history:** Merrill Utley was born in Jackson, Mississippi in 1925; He graduated high school in Clinton, Mississippi and joined the Navy

**Military service:** Merrill was trained as an electronic technician and served on the homefront during WWII, in Chicago, St. Louis, and New York

**Education:** He was discharged at the end of the war and went to college on the GI Bill, first at the University of Mississippi and then at Tulane, where he studied electrical engineering

**Work history:** After graduation, Merrill went to southern Louisiana to work in the offshore industry because it was the only way to make a living; He first went offshore to fix the radios used to communicate between offshore vessels and the mainland; He was employed by Chevron at the time; To improve reception over greater distances, he installed a 200 foot tower; He said it wasn't hard to find a job in those days

Leeville: Merrill moved with his wife to Leeville, where there were about 8 Chevron families; His wife had been an interior designer in New Orleans; They stayed in Leeville until 1964; Leeville was just swamp then, and Grand Isle was not developed much more; The Chevron camp was in Leeville instead of Grand Isle because there was less danger of things being damaged from hurricanes [Little Merrill informed me that his father used to tell a story about a fight that occurred in the early days between Chevron employees and locals on Grand Isle, resulting in an injunction from a judge on Grand Isle that Chevron people were not welcome there]

Grand Isle: Humble and Chevron had little camps as well as some other smaller company camps; The water line used to be so close to the houses that if you had a running start you could jump from the second story right out into it

Early work history: From radios, Merrill gradually started to repair other things offshore; Back then they had floating barges that they would sink; Chevron had pilings on both sides of the river and also inland rigs, he did work on all of them, he just "got handy" at repairing things; They had vessels to take supplies and pipe offshore; Chevron put a pipeline along the bottom of the river

Boats: Sometimes it would be very foggy, they would blow a horn, and it would echo off the surrounding vegetation [Little Merrill said his father used to talk about a man that brought his dog with him, and the echoes from its barks would help him navigate]; The contractors ran their boats out of Leeville; There were 40 or 50 foot boats that were built to do offshore work; Everybody and his brother was building boats at the time; They also had bigger boats, crew boats; Merrill was in charge of moving rigs and boats; He remembers the Cheramie Brothers; Those were wild times

WWII surplus: The boats from WWII weren't really fit for offshore work; They had 80 footers that they modified, put the controls on the back part of the boat; They would back the boats up to the rig, where they could lower a net to load or unload supplies; They also had 40 to 50 foot landing craft from the Navy; The Higgins boats were around, but they didn't use them very much in offshore work

Boats: There were a bunch of people who had boats at Barataria; The boat captains all eventually started working offshore; The weather was bad and lots of people would get seasick; Merrill would make suggestions when they were redesigning or modifying boats; Boats were built in Barataria, Bayou Lafourche wasn't deep enough at that time; [Little Merrill tried to get his father to tell the story of drawing up designs for a boat on a napkin at a bar in Golden Meadow with the Cheramie brothers, but Big Merrill didn't remember that]; Babe [Chachara?] built boats and would ask Merrill for advice; The "boat truck" was built at Leeville

Early offshore: They would put a pipeline together and then pull it to the structure; Merrill was a foreman; He got tired of the electronics end of it and of being in Leeville altogether, there wasn't much to do, and you can only drink so much

Bay Marchand: Was a big field for Chevron; McDermott put structures out there

Working offshore: Merrill would be gone sometimes for 2 weeks at a time, as a foreman, he didn't have a regular schedule; The crew would gather in Leeville to go offshore [Little Merrill said he had a dog that would hang out around the crew waiting for treats from the candy machine]; They had to swing on a rope to get onto the rig, but Merrill doesn't remember any injuries

Workers: Most were from Mississippi and Louisiana, not many from Texas; The boat captains were all local and many had been shrimpers before; It was steady work for them; The Cajuns modified the boats; Cajuns built the boat truck from the ground up, it was designed to carry cargo and kick pipe overboard to the platform, they used a rope to pull the pipe off; Crew on a boat truck was usually 4 men; Spoke both French and English usually

Innovation: You did what you had to do; Very little innovation came out of Golden Meadow; The first time they wanted to run pipes a mile or so offshore, they'd screw them together and then pull the connected pipe out on a barge

Flying: Merrill is a pilot; Just bought a plane and learned how to fly [Little Merrill said his father stole a helicopter one time, other people that remember the incident still approach him about it]; Chevron used Bell helicopters at first, later switched to Sikorskis; Nobody in their right mind would get on one of those

Later work history: Merrill left Chevron and bought Delta Well Logging Service

Locals: Just give a Cajun a few ideas, and he'll go to town; Many were shrimpers before, but they caught on quick; The local people were always nice to them

Mud logging: They wanted samples, so we'd gather them and send them in to New Orleans; Delta had been in business since 1952

Towing rigs: Merrill towed Mr. Charlie once; They would tie a harness to the front and just pull it [Little Merrill told me that his father had figured out a way to tow the rigs using a tug on each leg and radio communication to coordinate the pulling]

Hurricanes: Came in from offshore and hunkered down; Lived through one in Leeville

Changes in community: Better roads; Good restaurants; Cajuns just swallowed the oil field

His father: Worked for Standard Oil, was transferred to Kentucky, was Vice President of Business Affairs

Keith Van Meter

New Orleans, LA

May 6, 2005

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA140

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Dr. Keith Van Meter has been treating commercial oilfield divers since 1978 and was mentioned by many divers as an excellent source of information on the diving industry and on injuries and their treatment. I contacted Dr. Van Meter and was able to arrange an interview with him on a Friday evening at Charity Hospital in New Orleans. Despite his busy schedule, he graciously spent two hours with me talking about his career, his work with commercial divers, and the advance of hyperbaric medicine. After our interview, he took me down to the basement of the hospital to see the new hyperbaric treatment facility that is scheduled to open in June 2005.

Dr. Keith Van Meter was first exposed to commercial diving in 1978 when he was working in the emergency department at Charity Hospital in New Orleans and was called to go help a diver who was in saturation. He went into the chamber and was kept locked down for five days with the diver. After discovering the experience was not too bad and becoming interested in diving medicine, Dr. Van Meter took specialized courses on the subject. He continued to study and treat divers and began to develop a research program on hyperbaric medicine. Despite numerous challenges gaining financial and institutional support, he persevered in his efforts and has become one of the leading physicians in the field.

#### Summary:

Working for divers: Physicians that work for plaintiffs get blacklisted, divers are seamen; the idea is to take no retainer from any company, just be available; sometimes sit on staircase and talk case out on a cell phone; diving tables made and tested on the divers; see divers recover after exposed to oxygen in decompression, led to new discoveries in hyperbaric medicine

Occupational history: in emergency medicine in New Orleans since 1978; first call to work with diver, diver was in saturation, problem between diver and physician, physician walked out; being in emergency department especially well suited for the situation, went into chamber at 300 feet on helium; treated diver; this seemed interesting; went to training in North Sea for two weeks, NOAA course in US for physicians; discusses several interesting cases

Changes: now have two to three cases a year, less and less, maybe because companies have increased safety plan; in early days more cases, very hectic; probably more expeditiously treated today; lower threshold for treating divers after dive; divers in past tried to hold out, see if decompression sickness would go away; now have diver medics on board; companies are getting kinder medically

Hyperbaric medicine: tried to get facility in hospital in 1983, worked for a decade trying to get interest; not in full acceptance by mainstream medicine in 1980s; 1993 to 2003 group provide chamber, it sat outside and weathered due to bureaucratic issues; got the okay to put it in in 2003, didn't have the money; planned to open July 1, 2005; diver upstream from Mississippi River bridge, tugboat sunk, suction from mud, diver took air lift to inject air down, he got sucked up in it, stopped at helmet; treated him with hyperbaric, he did well, we got idea to pursue experimentation

Problems: most exhausting thing is dealing with hospital administration; get research done in the corners; come in after 12 hour shift; started experiments at 4am, talented crew; another challenge has been residency training program, had to take it over, demoralized staff, worked hard to get collegial group

Family impacts: have four children; wife very supportive, she'd come hold up kids to chamber when in decompression for days; practice would cover my shifts;

Working in industry: companies have their own psychodynamics; some small companies on northeast coast run by women, hard but gentle, pressures for owner to estimate costs for job and make profit; most accidents are just that, due to nature of the environment, pressure to push and make use of the time; work round the clock; probably a miracle more does not go wrong; spouses often grow weary, husband comes back injured, wives sometimes enjoin husband to overstate injury; women are the shadow of the hardworking diver

Insurance: tried to truss itself up against potential litigation from Jones Act; problem not having normal workmen's compensation to encourage protocols for recovery; shift from the macho diver already happening in the 1970s; legal counsel varies from those concerned about divers to those hooked to the money; lawyer becomes workmen's compensation

Divers role in hyperbaric medicine: see divers becoming part, option for those in their 40s; get hyperbaric units, need people to operate them; diving companies have not been too helpful for research but have provided old worn out chambers at low cost, some have donated equipment; Association for Diving Contractors wants proven treatment for their divers; in other areas do a lot by telecommunication; usually get to see divers from the Gulf because they come through New Orleans

Working in the chamber: had never been under pressure before, lots of peer pressure; emergency department good training ground; when had to stay several days, talked a lot, took articles to read; divers are very well read, have lots of time on their hands; very interesting; been a good career, am extremely lucky; offshore work helped me work in cramped environments; teamwork; would do it again, but not get into management; want to get into stroke and diver rehab that salvages diver maximally and makes accident less stressful; working on project now to provide medical support to NASA

Marie Verdin

Grand Bois, LA

March 4, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA102

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Marie Verdin when I was working with her daughter, Clarice, to document community perspectives regarding the Campbell Wells and U.S. Liquids oilfield waste disposal facility in Grand Bois. Marie and I became friends, and I would visit her whenever I was passing through Grand Bois. I told her that I was trying to interview more women about their perspectives on the impacts of the oil and gas industry in southern Louisiana, and she agreed to talk about Grand Bois. She lives with her mother, an 85-year old woman who speaks only French.

Marie was born in 1939 as the oldest of ten children and has lived all her life in Grand Bois. Her family was one of the first Native American families to settle in Grand Bois; her daddy's family came to the community in 1915 after a major hurricane in Golden Meadow. Her granddaddy and daddy were farmers, trappers, and fishermen; her daddy also opened a bar in the community in 1950. Her mama's family came from Pointe-aux-Chenes where her grandmother raised 7 children alone by taking care of cattle, fishing, gathering moss, trapping, and raising vegetables in her garden. Both her parents are part Indian, so their educational opportunities were severely limited. Marie left school after the second grade and began working in the fields and her daddy's bar. She also trapped, shrimped, hunted alligators, and farmed. In 1990 she and her son planted oranges, and she has been selling them in Houma for 8 years. All of her brothers became welders, working for shipyards and fabrication yards at various points in their lives. Marie notes that the biggest impact of the oil and gas industry on Grand Bois was the establishment of an oilfield waste facility in the community. A 1994 shipment of highly toxic waste from a cleanup at an Exxon facility in Alabama led to unsuccessful efforts to have the waste regulated and the facility shut down.

#### Summary:

Personal history: Born in 1939 and raised in Grand Bois; oldest of ten children; daddy and granddaddy were farmers; planted potatoes, beans, field peas, corn; had chickens, cattle, horses, mules and a donkey; sold vegetables at the depot in Houma; beans were shipped to canneries; buyers would come to the farm and buy potatoes as soon as they were dug; corn was fed to the animals; planted soybeans with the corn; planted peas with the corn; later daddy and his brother planted acres and acres of okra to take to the French Market in New Orleans; started working in the field with my daddy when 9 years old; only vacation was to go to the French Market with daddy; would go every other day when on vacation from school; would leave at daybreak, mama would make egg sandwiches, sometimes smothered potatoes; daddy opened barroom in 1950

Families of Grand Bois: About three families of Mathernes; daddy and his brother were Verdins; mama's four bachelor uncles and one sister who never married; great grandma died around 1946; Billiot; Crapel and Fob; maybe two more families; everybody was farmers or trappers; daddy was three years old, living in Golden Meadow; moved to Grand Bois in 1915 after a bad hurricane; no road or St. Louis Bridge; everyone pitched in to build the bridge; Mama's grandma brought over here from Pointe-aux-Chenes; mama came here to visit and met my daddy; Mama's daddy from Grand Bois but married and moved to Pointe-aux-Chenes; Grandma had seven children; mama the youngest; her daddy died when she was 7 months old; grandma raised the children by herself, would milk cows for other people in exchange for milk for the children; trapped, had a vegetable garden; would catch fish to sell and feed the children; would catch oysters in the bay; would throw a cast net to catch shrimp and then boil, dry, and sell them; when no money in she'd buy on credit at the grocery store; would sell her furs after trapping season to pay off the bills at the store

Pointe-aux-Chenes: Grandma lived at Pointe-aux-Chenes; trapped mostly muskrat; very few minks and raccoons; would pick moss, soaked it in the bayou, let it dry on the barbed wire fence; sold for people to use to make mattresses; also fed to the cattle and used to make nests for chickens; mama was 19 when she married daddy; came to Grand Bois by pirogue through St. Louis Canal; Point Aux Chenes Canal joins St. Louis Canal; used to haul logs through St. Louis Canal; they were logging round Grand Bois before Marie was born

Grand Bois: At first mama did not like Grand Bois; Grandma was the last to live at that end of Pointe-aux-Chenes; everyone moved away when they were not able to make a living like they had; came to upper Pointe-aux-Chenes to work for other people when the fishing industry went down; they'd still always go back and trap; Grandma left there about 1962 or 1963; she got sick and her daughter took her to Larose where she died April 27, 1963; Mama will be 85 on April 5, 2003; Grand Bois was everybody's paradise; always had clean, fresh air, had cistern water, everybody was farming but not getting much money for vegetables so they started doing other things; some went into oystering, others to shrimping, etc.

Indians: Anyone with any Indian blood had a hard time getting a job anywhere; once the white man gave up oystering and started working in the oilfields, then the Indian could go on the oyster boat because the white man didn't want it no more; years later the colored man began working on the oyster boats and shrimp boats; white people walked all over Indian people and black people; years later if Indians had school they were able to go work on a rig, but it was hard for them to go to school; they were not allowed in Terrebonne Parish schools; they had one Indian school in Golden Meadow, one in Montegut, one in Pointe-aux-Chenes, and one in Houma; they'd teach them to a certain grade and after that they couldn't go anymore; they had to go away to finish high school; mama's side was French, Indian and Italian, Daddy's side was French and Indian; went to school in Larose to 7th grade; no problems there; they called us Sabine; decided to quit school and worked for my daddy in the field and in the bar; three brothers, all are welders; oldest one went in the Army and worked on tugboats and the farm; he died in 1966; sisters work in restaurant in Houma, at Terrebonne Association for Retarded Citizens, another worked in the bar with me, another is a housewife; men started working on the tugboats when the white man didn't want to work on the tugboat no more; brother was deckhand when he started, became a mate

before he went into the service; worked hauling clam shells from Lake Salvador, then worked for Bayou Marine and then worked for Bollinger

Trapping: I started trapping in 1978; would skin my own nutrias and my husband's; could do 100 nutria per day; had very few muskrat, minks; had a camp where we'd trap and stay on the houseboat from December 1 through the end of February, would come home to get food, check on the children and go back; the oldest children would take care of the youngest one; made a good living, especially in 1982, which was a good year for everything; not too many trappers then; stopped farming after I got married, started hunting alligators in 1979; then ran the bar the rest of the year; man from Bayou Black bought the alligators and nutria from us; we quit trapping when Bob Barker started putting artificial blood on white fur coats, nutrias fell to \$1 a pelt; around 1985

Welding: Brothers got into welding when oldest brother went to welding school in Houma and became a certified welder, and the rest followed him; he worked at Avondale Shipyard and around Morgan City; youngest brother worked in Larose shipyards and Acadian Shipyard in Grand Bois; was Pate's Lumberyard until 1966 when Pate moved to Bourg; then it became Acadian Shipyard; quite a few people from Grand Bois worked in the shipyard until they would get laid off and have to find jobs somewhere else; brother is now 56 years old, has never had trouble finding work because he is a certified welder; he went to work at a very young age; both sons can weld, but they would rather trawl than weld; they learned from their uncle and from me and their daddy

Trawling and Hunting: I started trawling again in 1986, not done for last three years because growing and selling oranges; we quit hunting alligators after Hurricane Andrew when the price went down; we had a lease with Louisiana Land and Exploration Company from 1978 to 1992; after Andrew they wanted us to clean all the ditches in less than two weeks, so we quit; in 1978 it was easy to get a lease; my brother-in-law knew Douglas Ritchey, the man who had owned the land before LL&E came in; he and his brother, Frank, were working for LL&E; we would trawl in the May season and the August season; on the lease we would trap in the winter, and hunt alligators; planted oranges in 1990, this is my 8th season selling oranges

Occupations of Grand Bois Residents: Welders, son went back to trapping this year; some work in the shipyards, some still work on the oyster boats; some are house builders, some are boat builders

Biggest Change: 1994 when they brought the poison stuff from Atmore, AL; the whole community was sick; some of them are still sick and their health never has been the same; still feel like I have bronchitis, some have headaches that never let go; memory problems; when the waste facility first came in some were saying it was no good; two brothers were working there, but they had to quit, had to change; they were running the dozers; they quit before 1994; a lot of people from the community worked there before it got bad; they didn't know it was dangerous; the facility just appeared; we didn't know where the stuff came from; you couldn't see it, but you could smell it; one time I was running the bar and I got so sick from the smell that I had to leave the bar; it was like a drunk and hangover at the same time

Effect of the Waste Facility on the Community: Everybody is hurt by it; don't know when we are going to lose the next community member because of it; we didn't want to move because we were here first; when you are born and raised in a place, you don't want to move, especially a place that was your paradise; now afraid to eat anything out of the Intracoastal Canal

Bringing Cousins: Story of finding cousins living in small tarpaper shack at Pointe-aux-Chenes with nothing to eat, their daddy sick; daddy brought them to Grand Bois where they lived in a garage until their daddy was strong enough to get a job on an okra farm; daddy helped him out with food and he helped around the house whenever he could

Changes: Montegut changed a lot from the hurricanes; the area my inlaws lived is now under water; people moved back to higher ground; water came in because a lot of the levees broke; Grand Bois has high ground, and people can still farm; the Mathernes made a subdivision out of what they used to farm and that brought people to Grand Bois; almost everybody's related; my daddy and uncle worked on an oyster boat because they couldn't get no white man to work any more; in the late 1940s and 1950s, the white man went to the oilfield but the Indian wasn't allowed to; on the oyster boats they worked 27 days on and 3 days off; they worked for the Vinets in Galliano; when I started skinning nutria my brother-in-law was making \$10 a day on the oyster boats; I was making more money skinning nutria, but it only lasted 3 months; it was hard for Indians to get any kind of job

Education: The generation that came after me was able to get an education and it started to change; the whites could go to whatever school they wanted; when the Indians started going to their schools some of the white parents got mad and moved away; my mother was not allowed to go to school because she lived too far and they did not want Indians in school; in Terrebonne Parish the blacks went to school before the Indians did; they pushed the Indians to lower areas because they wanted the best places, but then they seen the Indians making money on the water and they wanted that too; when we worked on the farm, mama did all the cooking for us and everybody working in the field; between St. Louis Canal and the Intracoastal used to be high ground where daddy used to raise hogs, but now it is all swamp

Knowledge of What was Happening: No. "We wasn't eagles."

Kirby Verret

Dulac, LA

July 22, 2003

Interviewed by: Scott Kennedy

University of Arizona

JP001, SK001

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met with Mr. Kirby Verret at his house which is raised on stilts, and it is necessary to climb several stairs to get to the front door. Kirby Verret is originally from Bayou Dularge, Louisiana, and has lived in Dulac in Terrebonne Parish most of his life. He is Houma Indian and worked his way through college as an employee of Delta Iron Works. He learned all types of work in the oil field, and after college he transferred to Delta Mud and Chemicals. He worked offshore in platform fabrications, specializing in drilling fluids. Later, he became an insurance agent, and in 1979 became involved in Indian Education. Today, he still works with kids through the Indian Education program, is the pastor for the Methodist Church in Dulac, and is the Dulac representative on the United Houma Nation Tribal Council. Kirby considers himself an activist on behalf of the Houma and the poor, and says that sometimes there just needs to be someone to hold open the door so that others may pass through and experience greater opportunities.

#### Summary:

Personal history: KV grew up on the west bank of Bayou Dularge; Houma Indian; Spoke Cajun French as a child and started to learn English at age 8; Attended a private high school in Houma as there were no high schools for Native Americans at the time; Completed college at Nicholls State while working fulltime at Delta Ironworks; Transferred to Delta Mud and Chemicals, working offshore in fabrication; Sold life insurance

Discrimination: Had trouble advancing in the insurance company; Tried to innovate and write policies for poor clients, fishermen and shrimpers, but he faced opposition; Eventually got tired of fighting 'the establishment'

Indian Education: Started working in Indian Education in 1979-80; Has seen progress in improving educational outcomes for Native American students

Changes in community: Oil and gas industry provided jobs; People signing away rights to their land; Displacement

Indians in the labor force: Lack of education relative to the rest of the population resulted in mostly labor-intensive jobs; Few Indian supervisors over time; Mostly worked for sub contractors; EOE helped minorities find better jobs; Rare for an Indian to work his way up through the ranks of local companies

Personal history: KV's father wanted to lend him money for college, but he insisted on paying for it himself; Worked over 40 hours per week during college; After graduating with a business degree, he expected to advance within the company, but when he was in the same spot after two years, he decided to leave and started selling insurance

Indians in the labor force: High school helped Indians get more opportunities in the oil and gas industry, but it is still hard for them to get executive jobs, even with college degrees; Some Houma making their way into the police force

Economic history: The oil and gas industry brought a lot of money to the area, at first there was always a shortage of labor; Delta Iron Works was bought by Chromaloy Natural Resources from Chicago but the president decided it should be a local company; Eventually unemployment rose to 20% and then Delta laid off 1400 employees; The school system and Terrebonne General kept the area from going into a depression; Many families moved away; Others took their retirement money and built big shrimp boats, using skills they had learned in the oil field; There was a market for shrimp in 1987 that brought money into the area; Investigation of Delta's bookkeeping and people were compensated for their retirement; Many formed businesses with the money; Others got different jobs; Overall, KV thinks the oil and gas industry was good for the area

Environmental issues: Leaks from pipelines, spills, canals; People had to demand accountability before anything was done; In 1982, a waste company wanted to dump drilling fluids from the offshore rigs (including baroid, gel rock, CLS, caustic soda, and freshwater) in mud pits in the bayou; FEMA put an end to the dumping; People are concerned about pollution because of seafood

Current job market: KV thinks there are still jobs in the oil and gas industry for kids graduating high school because of retirement turnover; He tries to stress to kids that there are more opportunities for those with a college degree

Future: KV is optimistic about growth in population and industry in Dulac because of the new levee system and because companies want to be close to the gulf; If economic growth comes, he thinks a new wave of residents will move into the area

Indians: The Houma have not been successful cooperating as a group; Education is very important; Wants the tribe to help younger generation into higher career positions; Racism needs to be eliminated

Unell Verret

New Iberia, LA

May 4, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG011

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Unell Verret was one of the oilfield men I met at the Shell retiree's dinner. Unell was a lifelong Shell employee, hired by Shell in 1953. He was born on Avery Island, and went to work on Weeks Island.

#### Summary:

**Early history.** We talk about his family history for a while. He talks about his perceptions of the oil industry as a teenager.

**Early work history:** he describes his first day of work, and his move from roustabout to gauger. We talk about shift work for a while. He talks more about Weeks Island, gauging, and loading barges, which is something he did for many years.

**Technology:** he talks about the changes in his job that occurred over the years. They tried to introduce computers at some point, but it didn't work out too well. He talks more about Weeks Island and the layout of the island.

**Drilling:** He talks about barge-based drilling, some of the environmental issues that go with the oilfield. He tells a story about dumping crude oil into the bayou, and the role of regulation upon environmental practices.

**Booms and busts:** he talks about booms and busts, loyalty, a career with Shell, and the changing nature of the oil industry.

**Loyalty:** He talks about loyalty to the company and to the industry, scheduling, the attitude of incoming labor, the introduction of college trainees to the oilfield workforce, and politics.

**Safety:** we talk about safety practices, the history of contract labor. He talks about his son for a while.

**Project Description:** I spend a while describing the project to him.

**Popcorn:** we look at some photographs and he describes how they tried to stop evaporation by putting popcorn on top of the oil. What a bad idea!

Kenneth Viator

Erath, LA

April 30, 2001, July 20, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG005, AG037p

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I sat with Kenneth Viator and his wife for over an hour. We had met at the Shell Pensioner's club meeting, where Jimmy Hebert made sure I had everyone's phone number. Kenny was happy to meet with me - I could tell he was excited the minute I came in. We had a great time. Kenneth was able to vividly describe his memories of the oilfield. He was also a very friendly man. His wife participated in the interview as well, offering comments here and there on the recording. He had a small collection of photographs, and I returned for a second interview later in the summer.

Kenneth Viator entered the industry in 1958 or so. He grew up in Delcambre. It was a different place back then. He talks about all the traditional livelihoods in the region - shrimping, salt mines, some oil industry, and a lot of mom and pop stores around. He talks about his perceptions of the oil industry as a young man, the crew boats, and the strike at the salt mine. He began working on the crew boats for a contractor, and was eventually able to get on a contractor roustabout crew. Later he got on with Shell, and he worked some drilling but eventually shifted to production in 1967. He worked mostly as an operator, but just before retirement in the 90's he advanced to maintenance leader.

#### Summary of AG005:

College and Army: He got a football scholarship to college, and then joined the Army. Once he got on with the oil industry, he was working 7 and 7 in Venice, working in East Bay in the 1950's for Shell.

Contractors: He talks about contract rigs, and the security of having a job with one of the big oil companies. We talk about the quality of labor offshore, and he recalls a crew from Mississippi. We talk about some of the Shell rigs for a while.

Technology: He talks about the changing technology in the oilfield, some of the drilling rigs he worked on, and then he talks about mud.

Production: he talks about his move to production, how they were trying to use a lot of computers, about how he got the production job, and the advantage of being home every night. He also notes that, after a while, education became more important for oilfield employment, and they started sending college kids out to the rigs and platforms.

Loyalty and Shell: he talks about loyalty to Shell, and then about safety, and about the relationship between safety practices and the job hierarchy at Shell.

Safety: We talk about danger in the oilfield, and he tells a story about a mud explosion.

Weeks Island: we talk about the history of Weeks Island, the strategic reserve leak, more about the history of the island, and then he gives me some phone numbers of other people to call.

Cajun history: he talks about the salt companies around those parts, about raising an oilfield family, about learning English, and about some of the old Cajuns around. He talks about his childhood on the farm, picking cotton, and raising children in the oilfield.

Labor: he talks about the attitude change in labor, the impact of the bust. Then we look at some photographs for a while.

Throwing chain: in looking at the photographs, he talks about roughnecking, throwing chain, and some of the gas production at Weeks Island.

Summary of AG037p:

02: Shell Rig 4 included living accommodations.

03: Taking the Kelly off to trip the pipe, Kenneth Viator to the left, with Pappy Dupre, center, and George Caisson, the motorman.

04: Pulling pipe out the V-door, racking them back.

05: Looking up at the derrick, pulling three lengths of pipe up to the top, disconnect them and rack them back.

06: Drilling.

07: The same rig, drilling with the Kelly on.

08: Blowout preventers are specialized equipment. Kenneth Viator left, Louis Dupre, right.

09: Leewood Mesh, the derrickman, tightening up the packing on the mud pumps.

10: Looking up the derrick along a monkeyboard full of pipe.

11: Kenneth on the lead tongs fixing to break the joint of pipe to keep tripping it so it can be racked on this side of the photo.

12: A driller who worked with Kenneth at Shell, drilling.

13: The driller tripping the pipe, Kenneth waiting to get to the next stand to break off, with the motorman.

14: A jackknife rig on a floating barge, for Louisiana Delta Offshore, drilling for Shell.

15: On the left, unhooking the tongs to get ready to make a pipe connection.

16: Throwing chain, Kenneth Viator, right, and Jerry Salters.

17: Just made a connection with two pieces of pipe, pulling the slips by hand that hold the pipe in place.

18: Crew boat the Viator family had built in 1963 for offshore work.

19: The same boat in the water.

20: The Louisiana Delta rig, tripping the pipe in the derrick coming out of the hole.

21: On the Louisiana Delta rig holding the manual slips.

22: Throwing the chain as the pipe goes in the hole, on the Louisiana Delta rig.

23: The Louisiana Delta, a jackknife Rig, showing living quarters, helicopter pad and pontoon legs.

Alden Vining

Morgan City, LA

March 16, 2004

Interviewed by: Jamie Christy

University of Houston/History International

MMS029

Ethnographic Preface:

Alden Vining worked in the oil field for Kerr McGee, Phillips Oil and Shell Oil companies. He was born in 1936 and attended high school in Morgan City, Louisiana. Alden worked on boats, towing rigs and barges, and as a general hand during his high school years when he was off for the summers. He witnessed the conversion of LST's and shrimps boats to service the oil companies and also saw great changes in his home town of Morgan City. After high school, Alden's guidance counselor placed him with a company building concrete pilings. He then took a job as a roughneck for Phillips 66. In 1957, Alden was hired by Shell Oil. He worked as a roustabout, gauger, gang pusher, and supervisor of production maintenance at Eugene Island (Block 18).

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Laurie Vining

Morgan City, LA

January 21, 2005, January 22, 2005

Interviewed by: Christina Leza, Colleen O'Donnell, Diane Austin

University of Arizona

CL004, DA137

#### Ethnographic Preface:

We were referred to Laurie J. Vining by Fannie Hobbs who had been interviewed for the offshore history project. Fannie showed us a collection of local World War II veterans' biographies that she had been working on. Laurie was one of Fannie's friends and interviewees who participated in her project. She told us that after working in the Landing Craft Division during the War, Laurie had returned to the area to do work in the oil industry, which made him a perfect interviewee for our research. The first interview was conducted as part of the study of the links between WWII and the offshore industry. Diane then returned the following day to talk at greater length about Laurie's work in the oil field.

Laurie J. Vining Sr. was born March 1, 1924 in Morgan City, Louisiana. He started school in Amelia, but moved around a lot growing up since his father was a trapper and moved where he could find work. As a result, it took Laurie a long time to get through school and he quit after the 7th grade. He worked in shrimping and ironworks before he was drafted into the Navy in 1943. Started working for Kerr-McGee after the War in 1949 and worked for the company for thirty-three and a half years. Laurie started working as a deckhand and worked up to boat captain. He worked his last couple of years with Kerr-McGee in the office and retired in 1982. Laurie has two brothers and two sisters, and he appeared in the film Thunder Bay.

#### Summary of CL004:

Laurie was one of a small group of people who had served in WWII and been involved in the early development of the offshore oil and gas industry in the Gulf of Mexico and was interviewed in a joint project of the University of Arizona, U.S. Minerals Management Service, and the National D-Day Museum. In this interview, Laurie talks mostly about his experiences during WWII.

Military Service in World War II: Was working shrimp boat in Cameron when he heard about Pearl Harbor; Was drafted into the Navy in 1943 at age nineteen. Boot training in San Diego. 6 weeks boot training, 6 weeks landing craft training; trained on LCVP's, Higgins boats; taught how to establish a beach head, or basically how to run a boat. Starting rank was Petty Officer Second Class. After San Diego, went to Pearl Harbor on an LST in Fall of '43; did work around there like building housing, then sent to South Pacific an unloaded supplies in Gilbert Islands. They were supposed to be sent back to Pearl Harbor, but ended up staying in tents on beach; stayed for eight months; not much to do while there and had a lot of time on their hands. Biggest job on the island was tide watch, measuring the height of tide. First night pulled into the island had a GQ; biggest scare of life because assigned to first magazine; but a bomb never dropped in

their area that he knew of. Went into service with another guy from Morgan City; trained together, served together, and discharged together. Location at Gilbert Islands was stepping stone to the bombing at Marshall Island. Was able to send and receive mail, but it was censored. Stayed about eight months on island. Went back to Pearl Harbor, stayed short time, and was sent to another landing craft division. Picked up ships in convoy to the Philippines. Transferred to Samar; was there when War ended in '45. Shortly after, sent to San Francisco; received 48 hour leave while they worked on paperwork to send them home. After leave, went back to Algiers for a while and was discharged from there.

Jobs after the war: Worked with dad for awhile; did a little bit of everything including more shrimping, making shrimp nets. Started working offshore in February '49 for Kerr-McGee as deckhand on Tug Kerr-Mac, a surplus tug. Military surplus items used by Kerr-McGee included two tug boats, a bunch of aircraft rescue boats, LCT's used as supply boats, and Navy YF barges used as drilling tenders and living quarters; "everything was surplus"; Senator Kerr had connections, so was able to get all the surplus items needed. Not too many memories from first day of work but remembers job involved positioning anchors for tenders. Starting working on Tug Kerr-Mac, then worked on Tug Senator; In the fifties, when Tideland dispute was happening, put on old supply boat and worked as engineer for short time, then sent to Corpus Christie.

Work Schedule: 4 weeks on 1 week off. During time off, he would work building houses.

Family Life: Married in '45; had family when started working offshore. When first started was working in Morgan City, and wasn't too bad, but tough when started moving to different locations; little communication. Present for first child's birth. The second was born when in Cameron, the third when in Corpus Christie, and the fourth while in Mississippi; can't remember where he was with some of the other children; missed half of his children's births. Helped out in the house, but always had work projects going on.

Worker relations: Mostly local workers; Cousin was captain on first tug he worked for. Overall, a good relationship with other workers; When working in Corpus Christie worked eight hours shifts, didn't stay on rig; wasn't much time for anything except for rest. Also, had his family in Corpus Christie for a while. During the seventies when the oil field was booming, had people from all over. Not aware of any problems between locals and non-locals; worked on five-man crew most of the time. Did not notice any problems when non-white workers began to join the oil industry, but hard to hire blacks. There was sometimes trouble between women on the boats.

Safety: Never had any serious injuries while in the field; Safety was a primary goal for the company; regular safety meetings and also started safety award program to encourage safety among workers, program somewhere around the sixties.

Changes: When first started were operating on a "shoestring", working conditions not too great and the work was tough; now facilities out there are like luxury hotels.

Effects of the Oil Industry: Was good for the area economically.

Military experience compared to offshore work: Was raised on a boat. Lived on houseboat and grew up around boats, so training in Navy was not too new. It was definitely different, but caught on quick; pretty familiar with boats so did not seem too different. Can't think of anything either technical or otherwise that helped with his later work offshore.

#### Summary of DA137:

Laurie was born in Morgan City, LA. His dad did a variety of jobs to make money. He worked in a garage, as a carpenter, fishing, trapping, floating timber and, at one point, as a justice of the peace in Stephenville. Laurie spent a lot of time with his dad, especially out trapping and floating timber. He also helped collect moss with his grandparents who would use it for furniture and mattress stuffing. He had two brothers and 2 sisters. He started school in Amelia, but due to his dad's jobs, he moved around a lot, which put him behind in school. When he finally got through the 7th grade, he quit going to school and began working on tug boats and shrimp boats in the late 1930's. He then went to work for Chicago Bridge and Iron working as a tacker doing ship fitting and building dry docks. During this time, he got married. This continued until 1943 when he went in to the service and became a coxman on landing aircrafts. After the service he went back into the shrimp business, and he and his brother opened up a business making trolls for Riverside Packing Company. At one point, their shop burnt down and they rented out another one in Morgan City. After this, Laurie got a job at another shipyard welding, doing carpentry and general repairs. In 1949, he got tired of working in shipyards and went to work for Kerr McGee and got a job as a deckhand working on his cousin's tug boat. He then got a job on another boat in a higher position as a mate. During this time, the boats that Kerr McGee were using were surplus navy vessels. In 1950, there was the Tideland dispute that halted offshore production and in effect halted tug boat demand. He then got a job on LCT as an engineer on a supply vessel. In 1951, Kerr McGee sent their rigs to Corpus Christi and he got a job back on a tug boat. He lived there until '52. While there, he got a job as an extra in the movie Thunder Bay. Next, he went to Britain Sound where he got a position running a crew boat. He would work two weeks on and one week off. In 1957, he went to Cavern and began working for Continental Oil on a supply boat where he was basically working around the clock. When he went to quite, he was offered another position working on a boat in Corpus Christi. Later, he attained a captain's position working on Workboat 3 in the early 1960's. While he was out for eight weeks due to an appendectomy, his boat had sunk. Since he was without a boat, they put him to work moving rigs, doing carpentry, etc. In 1964, he was given captainship on KerMac 4, which was to go to the Persian Gulf. He did not want to go so he traded boats with the captain of KerMac workboat 2. He later was captain of KerMac workboat 5. Then, he was given an office position as Assistant Superintendent Marine Maintenance for Domestic Offshore operations until he retired.

Boat changes: Laurie remember that the major changes in the boats being used where that they stopped using navy surplus vessels and began to build their own, they got bigger, more sophisticated technology like radar, and had heating and air-conditioning.

Eric Vizier

Houma, LA

July 24, 2001

Interviewed by: Ari Anand

University of Arizona

AA012

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Mark Cheramie and Eric Vizier at Penny and Ray Adams' home, where they seemed to have dropped in for a conversation and some food. Diane and I were there to talk to Ricky Cheramie, but often the conversation was general, and it turned out that Mark and Eric (who are cousins) had both recently lost their jobs for trying to organize their workplaces. They were both very outgoing and worked up about labor issues and local politics, and when I asked if they would be interested in being interviewed, they agreed. I contacted them some days later, and we set up a meeting. We conducted the interview outside the union offices, by the parking lot at a wooden picnic table, next to a swing-seat in the lawn. During the interview, every now and then a couple of people would come out, maybe to have a smoke, and go back in, one of whom was Michael Creivash (sp?), a local organizer who was described by Mark and Eric as an encyclopedia on unions and legal issues.

Eric Vizier was born in December 1970. He was a deckhand at 15 and a Relief Captain at 17. In 1995 he worked with Moran in Miami, which was organized by the Seafarers International Union (SIU). In 1996 he moved to Crowley and from there he came to Guidry. He, too, was fired for organizing at Guidry Brothers.

Both Mark's and Eric's cases against Guidry Brothers were up before the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) at the time of the interview.

#### Summary:

Work Histories: MC was offshore tugboat captain for 17 years; in oil industry for 22 years; lots of family involved in oil industry. MC fired from Guidry Brothers after 8½ years; captain for 6½ years. Until 1983 oil crunch, people making good money on boats and got lots of respect; but no job security. Now captains do not get much respect because big companies have taken over "mom and pop" businesses. EV is fourth generation captain; has uncles in oilfield; boat owner in late 1990s; illegally fired from Guidry Brothers for supporting union.

Reasons for MC firing: MC fired after discussing unionization with his boss and supposedly having a union meeting on his boat, which he did not; supported union because concerned about job security. MC discusses conversations with company owners about unions and his participation. Guidry Brothers badmouthed MC after firing him, claiming he was a bad employee. Feels he should be compensated for all the time he had to spend away from his family; also wants respect. EV also thinks captains deserve respect; he has been working for Crowley Marine Services since being fired from Guidry Brothers.

Worker Complaints: MC says boat owners can make workers do whatever they want because could fire you at will; workers typically work for several companies, but have same complaints about all companies. Typical worker complaints: being forced to go out during hurricanes; forcing captains to work with illegal crews; "green" workers; old or broken parts/equipment; job security. If workers complain too much, they will be fired. MC and EV repeatedly emphasize that captains are very skilled and deserve respect.

Union Efforts at Guidry Brothers: MC and EV spearheaded union discussions among Guidry Brothers workers; 60-80% of workers supported unionization. Workers most concerned about job security and pay. Companies threatened to sell out, close down, or fire workers who supported union; workers got scared and withdrew support for union. Most workers do not believe that their rights are protected by law. Labor Board in discussions for settlement with Guidry Brothers, but the company does not want settlement with union.

Continuing Union Efforts: Logistics difficult in MC's and EV's continuing union efforts, partly because difficult to access many workers; people working longer hours to make extra money or because they do not have relief; also cannot go down to docks. Workers scared to voice support for union. MC got involved in union when EV came onto his boat and showed MC his union contract from Crawley. EV worked for Crawley before Guidry Brothers; Crawley had 100% medical coverage. Benefits like 401K are relatively recent in most companies. MC realized captains have been badly treated by companies.

Worker Involvement in Union Efforts: Workers not previously interested in unionization because thought they could stand together to influence company policy; workers would send petitions to supervisors but usually nothing happened in response. Employees would come to MC and ask him to take up issues with the company. MC is very vehement about the ways in which Guidry Brothers repeatedly put him at risk. Coast Guard regulations allow captains to refuse to do certain tasks, but employers can fire the workers anyway. MC wants to prove that companies cannot "get away with it"; he works as union organizer for Offshore Mariners United.

Union Organizational Challenges: Hard to convince organizers that they need to get the community on their side. Tried to tell organizers about police corruption and similar obstacles but union people did not believe him at first. MC emphasizes that Southern Louisiana is different from any locations where unions have previously operated. After trying to talk with workers at docks, police started preventing access to docks and other areas. Describes interactions with and harassment by police.

Work Histories: MC born in 1963 in New Orleans. Working in oilfield on tugboats since age 15. Started working full time on tugs during senior year; graduated high school in 1981. Worked as licensed deckhand for Nolte J. Theriot for 3½ years; then went to work for Doucet Adams as mate and worked his way up to captain. Began working for Guidry brothers in 1991; began as mate, worked up to captain. MC fired in December 2000 for participation in union activities. EV fired in January 2001 for supposedly attending a union meeting on MC's boat; Labor Board has determined that he was illegally fired. MC and EV did meet with union organizers but not on a Guidry Brothers boat. MC put in applications at various companies that were hiring but would not hire him; rumors that Guidry Brothers sent out a fax warning companies not to hire him.

Certification Program: By February 2002, everyone must be certified to work offshore; this just allows standardization of training, which MC thinks is a good idea. Gulf Coast Mariners Association (GCMA) got federal grant to provide training, but some companies will not allow their employees to get trained at GCMA because it is union-affiliated.

Impacts of Union Involvement: Both MC and EV and their families have been harassed for their union involvement. Neither could get non-union job after being fired from Guidry Brothers; could only get work with union companies. EV did get work with Crawley Marine Services because he had previously worked there, but they will not hire MC.

EV Work History: Born in 1970; living in Lafourche Parish. Working in oil industry for 15 years. Worked as captain for Tidewater Marine Service in 1995. First worked on grandfather's tug when he was 13 or 14 years old. Began working fulltime at age 16 for his grandfather's company, Robbie Vizier Incorporated. After age 18, went to work for Tidewater Marine; worked there for six years and worked his way up to captain. Worked for Moran in Miami for a few months in 1996; did some union organizing there. Later entered marine towing business but could not compete with big companies so sold his boat. Went to work for Crawley Marine Services in 1996 and joined union. Left when he got his own boat in 1998; left union at this point. Then sold boat and went back to Crawley for a while. Started working at Guidry Brothers where he worked with MC. Union experience in Miami so much easier that he was surprised at all the difficulties in Southern Louisiana.

Why Involved in Union: EV is "fed up with the dictatorship." Working on boat in Southern Louisiana is not respected; people consider workers "boat trash." In contrast, captains are highly respected in other parts of the country. Big companies are making massive profits while they screw over their workers. Need to educate people. MC believes in the concept of the welfare state and thinks he needs to fight against complacency.

Prospects for Eventual Unionization: Unionization will occur when employees realize that they have the right to unionize and when they do not fear losing their jobs. Also need national publicity and support. Five major maritime unions now working together with 8 major steelworker unions; transportation unions also supporting efforts. Need to get "unions to unionize" and support each other worldwide. MC and EV talk about economic globalization and its negative impacts. Both support globalized labor movement.

Social Issues: Lots of racial discrimination in oilfield in times when workers are abundant; racism is less obvious now because there are worker shortages. Louisiana is right-to-work state so non-union employees can be fired at any time.

Response to Objections to Unionization: Some older workers think the union would never work in the oilfield, because jobs are too diversified. But in reality, union contracts would be tailored to local working situations. Many people were just socialized that unions were evil. Workers on rigs can do various jobs, but still might need specific workers, like electricians, in case something major malfunctions; so required union specialization could be beneficial. Companies have already responded to union presence; benefits have risen since unions became active in the area.

Ernie Voisin

Houma, LA

September 26, 2001

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM018

#### Ethnographic Preface:

After several attempts, I got in to see Mike Voisin of Motivait Seafoods to chat with him about his role with the Louisiana Oyster Task Force and other matters. He then introduced me to his father, Ernie Voisin, and he talked about the oysters. While the interview ranged over a number of issues, Mr. Ernie was most animated in discussing the unique pressure-processing techniques they had invented. The washing process is designed to combat vibrio disease; oyster people in other states are constantly attempting to get Louisiana oysters quarantined, and thus out of their own markets, so the processing equipment, though expensive, is an effort to save Motivait's standing in the California market.

Ernie Voisin is a Houma native who grew up working for his dad on oyster boats. In 1947, at age 19, he moved to California and worked in the aircraft industry for 17 years. He returned to Louisiana in 1971 and started Motivait Seafoods, processing and distributing oysters. His ancestor, Jean Voisin, came from France and married a Cajun girl in 1700s. Ernie's son, Mike, is a 7th generation native, active in oyster politics in the state.

#### Summary:

Leasing: goes back 100 yrs; we apply, state surveys it, \$2/acre/year; shell bottom; reefs not being built up anymore, due to fishing; salinity between 5-15 ppt; oysters die if below this, if above, die because of predators; MSX and Dermo diseases will kill oysters; in fresh water, problem is pollution - state monitors it for fecal coliform; draw line on map; lines change 4 different periods during year; they do a pretty good job of it; leases mostly west of river; wild reefs open in Sept.; we fish those areas; rest of year we fish our own leases; set aside years ago as seed grounds; now most of people fish marketable oysters; we do some planting; becoming less common because costs (labor, fuel, upkeep of boats) are high; "We still do it once in a while:" it's a gamble; mark leases with plastic poles; doesn't protect them - advertises them; we lose oysters to poachers; game wardens patrol areas; will have leases in various areas, sometimes one area of natural reef will get good spat catch and grow well; combination of leases in various areas plus the wild reefs east of river and Sister Lake, Hackberry Bay, Lake Barataria; reef management done by actual fishing - when boats get down to 35 sacks/day, move to another area because they get paid by the sack; work reefs to clean debris after storms; if too much silt, in few years, currents will remove it; need several thousand acres of leases to keep 2 boats working, because not all of that is reef; rest is protection around reef; now in areas of diversion, get lease for fewer years; we buy some from other leases

Markets and supplies: we ship to California; we have distribution plant out there; have been booms/busts - late 80s, prices high, then started getting bad publicity on bacteria, sales in middle 90s down, gradually coming back up; this year we have abundance; for last 2-3 years, no bad storms, 2 or 3 diversion projects have helped a lot; Davis Pond will really spoil a lot of good reefs; those people are being compensated; all good areas pretty much leased out; costs a lot to start a new hard bottom; diversions might help some areas that used to be productive

Technology: hasn't changed much in 30 years, boats and engines better, hand-tonging common up to 50 years ago; 3-man crew usually; they like to come in every day; go for week to wild reefs; used to go out 27 days, planting or moving oysters, load up a freight boat every night if fishing, come in for 3 days; can't find anyone to do that anymore; boat would bring them into Houma; we have docks strategically located where we can send trucks; conveyor brings sacks into trucks

Processing: run through washer, graded, some shucked, some for half-shell, some frozen half-shell, others further high-pressure processed, kills vibrio, separates muscle from shell so easier to shuck; son Steve runs operation in California; only fish what you can sell, know 2-3 days ahead what you can sell; shelf life of 3 weeks in cooler in winter, less in summer because oysters weaker; 50 people working here, another 50 on boats

Oil industry: Coexist with oil/gas; years ago, done damage to marsh by canals, leaving old equipment out there to rust; will compensate at fair market value if damage done to reefs; a manner of negotiation

Pollution: is a big concern; still areas that are closed year-round; vibrio is biggest concern for marketing; bad publicity, sales go down; answer is high-pressure -- equipment is very expensive; some doing heat pasteurizing, freezing also kills bacteria; 3 years ago we came up with pressure technology.

Mildred Voisin

Dulac, LA

July 18, 2003

Interviewed by: Jessica Piekielek, Scott Kennedy

University of Arizona

JP006

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mary Voisin, the receptionist at the Dulac community center, mentioned the Harry Bourg Corporation to us when we first arrived in Dulac. She suggested that we get in touch with her sister-in-law, Lydia Voisin, because she might be able to tell us some of the history of the corporation. I called Lydia, and she said that the corporation probably had some old articles or other materials describing the history of the organization. She also said that her mother, Mildred Voisin, had been president of the corporation and might be willing to talk to us. I called Mildred Voisin, and she said she had a few written materials that we could come over and take a look at. She said she was trying to put a book together for her kids, so they would have the history of her father, Harry Bourg. Mildred Voisin lives in a brick home on Grand Caillou Drive. Her kitchen looked like it was the latest and best when it was built in 1965, and she told us that after it was made for her, everyone else started getting cabinets like she had. Mildred Voisin was clearly proud of her father, Harry Bourg, and was most interested in telling us his stories, rather than any of her own. She still seemed upset and angry about the 1999 lawsuit and family infighting in the Harry Bourg Corporation, but told us the story without our prompting.

Mildred Voisin was born in 1919 in Dulac, where she has lived almost all of her life. Her father was Harry Bourg, a man who began his career as a trawler and trapper and was later a prominent landowner in the area. In 1938, oil was found on property owned by Harry Bourg, resulting in the deepest producing well in the world at that time. Inventor and entrepreneur, Harry Bourg was the first millionaire in Dulac. Mildred Voisin witnessed many changes in Dulac over her lifetime and was vice-president of the Harry Bourg Corporation from 1982 to 1999.

#### Summary:

Family: Father, Harry Bourg, began work on a shrimp boat at 8 years old, no pay, just received clothes and food as compensation; in those days the boats didn't have motors, they rowed; when Harry's father bought a motor for his boat, he and brother couldn't get it started, Harry sneaked on board after adults left, muffled the motor and got it to start, he was so worried that he would get a whipping for sneaking on the boat that he ran and hid out in the woods, meanwhile his father was chasing after him because he wanted to know how he had started the boat.

Family Business: Father, Harry, was first to come up with idea of using motor for trawling, by dropping propeller deep into water and mud to stir up shrimp; other people caught onto the idea and improved it; invented other things as well; Harry was first man to have a shrimp platform; first to have an automobile; had the most property- 15,000 acres, which was rich in muskrat and

other fur animals; also had orange and pecan trees; Harry gave shrimp business to oldest son Albert.

Oil: July 10, 1938 struck oil on Bourg land, resulting in deepest producing oil well in world at that time, well is still producing today.

Oil and Community: Oil fields (and father) brought money to local families, put people to work, helped them to get bigger and better homes; shrimp factories owned by father also gave people work; her father would advance money to anyone who needed it, some people are still indebted to Mildred Voisin and to the corporation; father also helped local nuns and priests, gave money for chapel and property, gave property for cemetery, also gave to church (Catholic) the property which is currently baseball field across road from Methodist church, where Indian School used to be.

Dulac: 1940 electricity came to Dulac; Mildred Voisin had first television in Dulac, once had 40 people at her house to watch a wrestling match, often had people over to watch TV. Mildred was born and raised in Dulac, graduated from high school in 1934 or 1936, then went with brothers to work in father's camps, 22 camps in all; large storm destroyed muskrat population shortly after; married Russel Voisin in 1935 at 19 years old; husband had shrimp drying and later shrimp canning plant; they spent 4 years, 1958-1962, in Brownsville, Texas; husband died young; gave up shrimp factory in late 1960s. Mildred Voisin's sister owned Dulac Beach, Mildred's husband would help out there on Sundays, had boiled crabs, dancing, band, swimming.

Company: Mildred Voisin's mother died in 1980; Albert Bourg died in 1982; board of corporation elected Mildred to be president; before this she had been vice-president; in 1999 was ousted, lawsuit within family, with Mildred's two sisters, who are both now dead, against Mildred, law suit involved venture into fish farming and accusations of mismanagement of the corporation, whole affair made Mildred Voisin stressed and sick; business was going well in mid 1980s, continues to go well.

Shrimping: Shrimping business in area now on decline, people didn't pass on shrimp businesses to their children, many factories have closed.

We borrowed a book with a short biography of Harry Bourg from Mildred Voisin. When I returned, Mildred Voisin gave me a list of the most recent oil companies from which she had received royalty checks, through her share in the Harry Bourg Corporation. I had asked her which oil companies they worked with earlier in the interview. The list she gave me was: Denbury Energy Services, Inc.; KCS Medallion Resources; and Brymore Energy.

Magnus and Elvira "Blackie" Voisin

Dulac, LA

July 24, 2003

Interviewed by: Jessica Piekielek

University of Arizona

JP011

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Magnus and Elvira Voisin at the Knights of Columbus senior bingo the week before completing this interview. Magnus said that he had worked for Dixie Drilling and several other companies in the oil fields, until he quit to work full time as a fisherman. He and his wife "Blackie" agreed to meet with me later at their house. Blackie's sister also lives with them, and she came in and out during the interview a couple times. They live on Shrimpers Row, in Dulac, in a house that they have raised on piles. Magnus is retired, but Blackie still works at the shrimp factory, where she started about ten years ago.

Magnus Voisin was born in 1931 and raised in Dulac, where he has lived his whole life. Elvira "Blackie" Voisin was born in 1936 in Houma and moved to Dulac when she married Magnus in 1953. They have 3 children. Magnus and Blackie are "jacks of all trades," having worked a variety of jobs throughout their lifetimes. Magnus Voisin worked in the oil industry during the 1950s, both on and offshore. He then returned to working for himself full time as a shrimper, a job which he preferred.

#### Summary:

Personal: Magnus Voisin was born in 1931 and raised in Dulac, where he has lived his whole life. Elvira "Blackie" Voisin was born in 1936, raised in Houma and moved to Dulac when she married Magnus in 1953. They have 3 children.

Magnus's Career: Magnus started working in oil industry when 23 or 24; got started through connections through father-in-law; worked for Gulf, Laughlin Brothers; mostly land jobs, some offshore; brought supplies on barges to rigs, hauled mud bags, motorman, relief drilling, chainman, casing, worked as derrickman occasionally when needed while in field, but didn't tell Blackie because she didn't want him to work derricks, she knew from brother that it was a dangerous job; Magnus sometimes worked double shifts due to shortage of laborers or to cover someone's shift when they needed off; worked at pogie plant; 7 years at Dixie Drilling; worked for Gulf drilling on rig near New Orleans, quit because cost of commuting to job was not worth pay; in 1960's Magnus went to work for self fishing; preferred working for self because could set own schedule and had more time off.

Local economy: Mostly local people worked boats rather than on rigs; lots of oil companies came in early 50s, before that only industry was shrimp factories; pay was not that much when first started, \$1.25 or 75 cents an hour, but cost of living was low.

Accidents and injuries: Magnus was injured while on job, hit by tong in ear; derrick work very dangerous because of height; when first started working fell off monkey board, pulled off by pipe, soon learned how not to fall; Blackie's father sustained neck injury while on job, smashed so that one disk disappeared, later developed neck cancer; dangerous on rigs, but new workers were trained; costly accident was to drop a tool down the hole, couldn't fish out so would have to "whipstock" hole - drill around it.

Seasonal work: Magnus fished primarily, then he would work oil on off-season; always liked to work and stay busy; oil was shorthanded so no problem finding job when experienced; companies would hire him right back after the fishing season; when Magnus wanted job, he would go to local cafe where people would go to hire when they needed men, could get a job in five minutes.

Magnus' family: father was fisherman and trapper; would take kids trawling; father spoke only French, mother spoke both, Blackie learned French in order to communicate with father-in-law;

Blackie's family: father worked on derricks & rigs, previously worked as carpenter and cistern maker; didn't work shifts although would sometimes work a graveyard shift; brother also worked for Dixie Drilling.

Trawling: 60's and 70's prices for shrimp very good, now not so; trapping and trawling was "the good life"; Blackie would trawl with Magnus sometimes, when kids were little, would leave them with her parents, because her father worried about the kids on the boat, kids would get mad because they wanted to go.

Entertainment: Dulac had movie theater in 50's, with bus that would pick people up to take them to the movies; also had Dulac Beach; Dulac was "quiet" when Blackie first moved there from Houma, but she liked it.

Flooding: was less of a problem earlier.

Final part of interview on recent events, B&Bs, French tourists.

Jack Voss

Houma, LA

July 8, 2003

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS027

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Jack Voss was recommended by John Monteiro, as a long-term oil service industry manager. Jack was contacted directly by John and agreed to be interviewed. We had some trouble finding a time to meet, but he eventually came over to the motel and we interviewed on site.

Jack Voss has been in the oil industry since he started working for Texaco in 1946. In 1947, he shifted to Coastal Oil Company, then to National Supply Company. By 1950, he was manager of the Houma store for National Supply. In 1957 he began work for Southwest Oil Field Products as a "pilot-salesman," making calls directly to the rigs. By 1960 he was partner in Houma Well Service, a workover contractor. In 1967 he was employed by Latex Gulf Drilling Company. In 1994 Latex was sold to Falcon and Blake, which in turn sold out to Tetra Oil and Gas Technology in 1998. Tetra is a contractor which does workover, plug and abandon work, fluid recovery, and decommissioning offshore platforms, in short, whatever needs to be done. Through his work, Mr. Voss has logged about 9000 hours of flying time.

#### Summary:

Historical Change: Texaco started in Montegut. By the 1980's, Delta Ironworks and Texaco were the main employers in Houma. Now rapid oil depletion means that the inshore oil and gas industry is on the downhill. Drilling contractors have stacked most rigs and barges in the area. The only drilling barges built in the last two years were done by Axis Drilling in Lafayette/New Iberia.

Regulatory Environment: This went from dumping anything over the side to zero discharge, with everything stored on board and barged in to waste disposal sites. Barge design had to accommodate that shift, specialization and double-hull design for environmental protection.

Southern Louisiana as training ground: Many companies demand work experience before going offshore. Tosco, Nabors, and Frank's Casing all have training rigs in the area. Tetra is feeling the effects of that. The major oil companies won't allow a short service employee on the rigs, even contractors like Tetra. Safety records say most accidents come with short service employees. Also a serious problem is keeping experienced workers. New people are usually assigned to mentors, who work directly with them.

Tetra: Completion fluid is the major part of the operation, followed by plugging and abandonment, then by workover and drilling. Tetra is the largest manufacturer of clear brown fluids in the industry - used in well completion work by displacing the drilling mud.

Barge Building: His work was design and building barge rigs. He has built ten barges himself, workover and drilling barges.

Inshore vs Offshore Work: Big oil companies have gone to the continental shelf from inshore. Now they seem to be going to deep water and are pulling out of the shelf. Big oil is not likely to come inshore again. The majors can make more money on the deep water projects because there is no limit on allowables, not as much royalty. 3-D seismic has not found much left inshore. Majors are pulling back to Houston. Chevron and Shell are the only ones left in New Orleans. Changes: Regulation as the biggest change, much more stringent, it must be zero discharge, not even rainwater is allowed to run off. The rapid depletion of oil in the area has made a change, "It'll dry up." The industry is on a downhill curve.

Independents: The majors have been selling property to independents. Some independents are doing workovers to develop the old fields and try to sell them to other independents. The last company to hold the well has the P and A (plug and abandonment) requirement. State is concerned about orphan wells.

Survivor Qualities: Good management and experienced people. Good geologists who can come up with locations that make money - "that's the main man."

Aviation: He has 9000 hours flying time, single, multi-engine. At one time there were about 50 seaplanes working out of Houma. He avoided areas with whitecaps. Floatplanes couldn't get "on a step" to take off before hitting a swell and being slowed too much to be able to take off. Landing on water required careful survey for obstacles, planning of route.

Toolpushers: When he was in sales he had to fly out to the rigs, talk directly to drilling superintendents, toolpushers. The toolpusher had carte blanche, and to make a toolpusher took years of experience. Today they make people toolpusher after one year, so they lack experience. Old toolpushers also kept their crews together.

Texaco Loyalty: His brother worked for Texaco for 35 years. He stayed as driller, refused to be a toolpusher because of the extra responsibility. "Nowadays you're nuthin' but a number with these major oil companies." Even in the "old days," the oil companies tended to treat people as replaceable.

Business/Legal Atmosphere: Many deals in the 50's were personal agreements, contracts were often simple. Now there is no set contract that any company will agree to. The companies are all trying to find or plug loopholes. "Actually, we're at the mercy of the lawyers."

Houma and Oil: "When Texaco left Houma they thought they couldn't survive, and they found out they could. The biggest employer here in Houma is the hospital." About 70% of the employment in Houma is still oil related. In the 50's oil was the main work in Houma. "If you didn't go to work for Texaco, you couldn't survive."

Captain Pete Vujnovich

New Orleans, LA

July 27, 2001

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM009

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Captain Pete Vujnovich (pronounced "vianovich") operates Capt. Pete's Oysters on Rampart Street, bordering the French Quarter. Kerry St. Pé had mentioned that Capt. Pete was getting frail and needed to be interviewed. Capt. Pete's son Pete in on the BTNEP Management Conference although the name I dropped in setting up the interview was Wilbert Collins from Golden Meadow. Our conversation ranged broadly over oyster farming, lawsuits against oil companies, saltwater intrusion, his efforts to get legislation passed (lost by 5 votes) to allow limited gillnetting of black drum, a predator on oysters, and his family history. Capt. Pete was somewhat frustrated in not being able to give some specifics to some of my questions, and offered to go into his attic and look for materials.

Capt. Pete Vujnovich came to Port Sulphur from Croatia at age 8. He and Buddy Pausina, owner of Barataria Restaurant on Harrison Street, are the two "oldtimers" left in the oyster industry. The "shed" (begun in 1951) is modest: a few reefer trucks, an oyster-shucking table with about 4 positions and 3 workers there shucking oysters. Capt. Pete works with his wife and his son Tony, washing shucked oysters and putting them in plastic containers. The operation is too small to go into the French Quarter restaurant trade. To do that, he would have to buy oysters from others, without knowing for sure where they're coming from. Capt. Pete was once offered a million dollars to built a boat and work for oil companies, but his eyes were bad, so he wouldn't have been able to run night and day. Anyway, he just wanted to stay in the oyster business.

#### Summary:

Background: Born in Croatia, now age 81/2; 1931 came to country; raised at father's camp at Lake Washington/Grand Ecaille; Humble one of first down there; worked out of Lafitte; found sulphur dome; sulphur company had 3 bunkhouse, then built canal to river and built town; sold houses to individual people; canal was 100 feet wide, now 5-600 feet due to erosion; 1940s, land started to disappear; Father was here in 1915 hurricane; Croatians came before Civil War

Land loss: blame saltwater intrusion and oil companies; permits came later; beginning, just digging anyplace

Oil companies: had 5 billion in escrow to repair damages; Bennett Johnson friend of his; Harry Shafer head of Wildlife; we got 3 million to plant shells on state ground where it was damaged; one oyster company built tow boats and worked for Freeport for 20 years, before Freeport built their own boats

Oyster harvesting: Today very little cultivation; most oysters come from state grounds; black drum invasion - my number one enemy; need net, smell, noisemaker; son planted load of oysters right where camp was, next day not 25 sacks left; lost vote on having nets to fight black drum; legislation wasn't introduced the right way - it was for everyone, not just to protect oyster reefs; has high blood pressure, doctor said "Capt' Pete, you're heart is more oyster than heart; don't go to these meetings"; state grounds: seems like black drum not on this side of the river; state ground so big that if they do eat them, not noticeable; last year, son planted 4 loads on little lease on Bay Baptiste, drum didn't touch them, then ruined all other plantings; after a disaster, state loaned oystermen to replant; wants to be able to plant oysters in summer: black drum disappears, goes into gulf; go across the river to get seed; Jurisich started planting; Luka was "father" of cultivation; leases I have go back 100 years; salty oysters in Barataria; have to be resident to get license for state grounds; DNR getting into management; won't be good for us

Damages: Involved only in one lawsuit, was huge, we compromised with the oil companies at 1 percent; "Myself, I've collected quite a bit of money from the oil companies. But I never had a problem. They wanted to put a rig on one of my leases. Man comes down, he said, "Pete, what you want for this? I said, '15 thousand.' He shook his head. We got to pass a little pipeline here, we got to put in the lines. He said, 'how about 22 thousand?' He said, you shocked me, because if it had been someone else, they would have asked for half a million." I'll take it, what the heck. Then they would be careful, they wouldn't damage you. And I still have the lease, right? What the heck, you had all the water you wanted, so you just move over, plant your oysters on the same kind of bottom. The other people... plenty people got big money. Look, I made my living with the oyster business. God bless it. The money that I got from the oil companies, I'd give the check to my wife to save it. That's why today I can take an easy. In those days, if you got a check for 15 thousand dollars, with interest of 12, 13 percent, every 5 years it was doubled. You accumulated some money;" I couldn't sell my oysters, so that's why I joined the lawsuit. But believe it or not, the oyster would taste oily and everything, and if you left them alone, they wouldn't die. 'Bout 2, 3 months after, you could eat them. They purified their own selves.

Freshwater diversion suit: "Good thing they didn't call me on the witness stand. The leases that they took... When I was a youngster, all the oysters were on the outside, Black Bay and Breton Sound and all that. And then with the salt water intrusion, with the land disappearing, further in they got a little better. Then they started leasing, then the freshwater diversion was started, and they came back strong. For me, it saved the Louisiana oyster industry, because now we have real good oysters that we work for sacks on the outside. They restored the oyster ground to the way it was before."

His leases: on west side of Barataria Bay, Hackberry Bay, Little Lake, Grand Bayou, mostly seed oyster and we move them, but lately selling directly from there because of saltwater intrusion we can't move them, but with rain it killed all those leases

Barataria waterway dredging: when they dug it, I sued them; got them to build island with dredge material; should be called "Captain Pete's Island."

Warren Waguespack

Houma, LA

February 6, 2003

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS015

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Warren Waguespack was one of the people contacted by Diana Edmonson of the Council on Aging. Warren started working with Texaco on a gravity meter crew in 1954. Because of the low pay and rough working conditions, he went to work with Halliburton the next year. In 1958 he was laid off by Halliburton, but immediately got a job with Union Oil, "which was the best thing that ever happened." That year he began working in production at Caillou Island, where Union Oil had a small part of the field, only 17 wells. In 1978 he shifted to offshore construction, transferring to office work in 1984 because of health problems. He retired in 1986.

#### Summary:

**Survey Crew:** Took gravity meters around swamps. Mostly did this on foot in the water, also used Cheramie Marsh Buggies, later by boat. Worried about snakes in the water.

**Halliburton:** Ran electric logs, cores, and dip meters. Used marsh buggies to get around. Electric log "takes a picture of the formation" in a continuous roll.

**Working for Union Oil:** 7 and 7 schedule at Caillou Island. He was able to fish every night. At first went by boat from Cocodrie, later flew back and forth. The Union Caillou platform started in 1951-52.

**Production Work:** Check the tubing, casing, pressure. Test the well and check the chokes that regulate the flow. He knew the characteristics of all the wells, and was able to regulate the flow and troubleshoot. Heater treater tank was used to separate the oil, gas, and water. Had two compressors for the gas, the first would compress to 500 psi, then the next would take it to 2000 psi so it could go into the pipeline. Went to each well by boat to check flows and mixture. At first they loaded the oil onto barges, later they pumped it into the Texaco pipeline.

**Tank Battery:** Had a manifold that controlled the flow from all the wells, separated into low pressure, high pressure, and test lines.

**Offshore Construction:** His work went as deep as 185 feet. They used a barge that was sunk as a base that was then connected to pilings. Divers were used to connect the risers. Lay barge lays a big spool of pipe and has a straightening vane to straighten pipe as it comes off the spool.

**Blowouts:** Two at Caillou Island (Little Pass). Blew as the drillers were bringing the pipe out, something went wrong with the high drill. At first the blowout spewed gas, oil, sand, water. A

McDermott barge brought in to salvage pipe set off a spark and it blew up. The blowout built a crater and created a suction that drew in at least one person and killed him. This blowout shut itself off, so they were able to go in later and plug it. He rescued some badly burned people and did first aid. Also picked up two bodies of victims. Another blowout required them to bring in Boots and Coots. First they had to get the drilling barge out, used a McDermott barge to tow off. It took twenty days to plug that blowout.

Camps: Union had a small camp at Caillou, separate from the Texaco camp. At first they cooked their own food, which cost \$7 per week, although later Union provided food. Warren cooked for the crew, because he stayed on the platform all day. He traded back and forth with the Texaco camp and barge captains.

Family Relations: His wife didn't have direct contact with him. They only had a radio, which wasn't private. If she had an emergency, she would call the office and they would bring him in. When he was offshore, his daughter was murdered. The personnel who picked him up didn't want to tell him as they brought him in. His daughter's husband was offshore at the time and she usually spent that time with her mother, but had a doctor's appointment that week and stayed home.

Charles Wallace

Larose, LA

July 16, 2001, January 20, 2005

Interviewed by: Diane Austin, Colleen O'Donnell, Christina Leza

University of Arizona

DA001, CL001

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Charlie Wallace learned of the history study when he visited Carol Mathias at the Ellender Archives at Nicholls State University to give her a copy of the book he created about his experiences in WWII. She learned that he had worked in the oil and gas industry and asked if he would be interested in sharing his story. He agreed and was my first interviewee. When I arrived at his house, he was at the kitchen table with a spiral notebook in which he had listed various topics he wanted to discuss. We spent over five hours talking about the industry and his experiences working. The second interview was conducted as part of the study of the links between WWII and the offshore industry.

Charlie was born and raised in Kinder, LA and began working for Pure Oil Company in 1947. He attended McNeese Junior College and LSU but had to drop out for lack of money. Though he never earned a college degree, he combined his knowledge, skill, and experience to develop a successful and colorful career. He left Pure Oil to work for Shell Oil Company and then worked for Chevron. Of his many inventions and modifications, Charlie patented one, the mud scale. His sale of that patent made it possible for him to buy the land on which his house and a housing development that he built himself now sit. Charlie was never one to do things in a conventional fashion, and he discusses his projects and adventures.

#### Summary of DA001:

Early history: born and raised in Kinder, LA; started working for the railroads; graduated from Kinder High School in June 1942; WWII was going on, Blue Army on maneuvers in LA in Fall of 1941, using building for headquarters; volunteered for the service - aviation cadets; went to Europe flying B-26; 2 ½ years in the service; got back, went to McNeese Junior College; looking for degree in mechanical engineering with option in aeronautics; moved to LSU after third semester; before graduating had to go to work because no money; went to work for survey company working on pipelines as preliminary surveyor

Getting into oil industry: brother graduated from LSU as petroleum engineer; took me to Morgan City on one of his trips down here; I met superintendent for Pure Oil Company at dinner; George Highland and P.G. Williams were bosses; he asked me to go work for him in oilfield; said I didn't know anything about oilfield; he told me he thought he had a job for me out there; they had a platform Block 32 Eugene Island; I went back to Arkansas, brother called me; I caught the train and came down and worked for Pure Oil Company, '47 or '48

Pure Oil: built the first offshore platform - Alcorn's Folly; I.W. Alcorn was head engineer in Houston, nobody thought that would work; it was built before WWII; German submarines out in Gulf, didn't want it torpedoed; shut them in and abandoned the platforms till after the war; went back out and started producing it; offshore from Creole in Cameron Parish; had tank battery on shore; built on wooden pilings; so close together that looked like solid chunk when you looked at it from the bank; had never done it in the Gulf, didn't want it to sink or collapse; joint Pure and Superior venture; Pure had done offshore seismograph work; had to dredge the channel first to get out there in the Gulf; I never got aboard that platform; went to work as laborer on similar platform a couple of miles behind Eugene Island lighthouse; this was the second they built, probably second in the Gulf

Eugene Island platform: water out there about 12-15 feet deep; lighthouse was active; platform was built on wooden pilings, more than 100 feet long; brought down on three flatcars from Oregon; Pure Oil Company had a landing, made a spur just this side of Calumet Cut to take pilings, unload to barges, take out and put them in the ground; we worked off LST they had bought from the Navy, converted to construction ship; manned by regular Naval crew - captain, mate, engineers, swabbies, catering service, steward to make bedrooms, do cooking and ordering; all hired by Pure; ship manned with its own propellers; everyone worked 7 and 7; at times had to work 10 and 5 working for other people; had huge crane, everything we needed there or brought on barges from Morgan City; operated out of Berwick; office just above Highway 90 bridge in Berwick

Building platform: big electric crane picked up pilings, held them in place where supposed to go, would let it go down and sink; did not drive the pilings; set tank on top to see how much weight it would hold, whether it would support the drilling rig; had tanks specially made; details about constructing platform; after built that one we moved over to save the OCS lease to Block 33 and did the same thing; drilling and producing on both of them; I was in charge of all aspects

Communication: had radio to talk to Berwick, but not powerful; to talk to Schlumberger or Halliburton had to get on marine radio; Berwick was only office anyone could operate offshore oil fields out of at the time; Superior's office was in Lake Arthur

First day of work: George Holland not authorized to hire anything but laborers; I was to be roustabout A - lowest was laborer, then roustabout B, then A, then supervisor; gaugers had roustabout A classification; went out as laborer; P.G. Williams showed up about noon, told me to meet him in his office; his office and living quarters in fan tail; I worked mostly for him

Arrangement of platform: platform did not have living quarters; was a land rig with mud tanks and everything, self-contained; had to add on to put another platform about 100 feet away with tank battery to produce oil and hold the lease; catwalk between the two; everyone lived on the ship; ship anchored; got to ship via gangplank; details of entire set up; ships all named for Pure Oil managers; story of finding anchor chains, marking them with buoys; put them about two or three days ahead of schedule; everything they had to do that no one else could do, Charlie Wallace could do it

Pure Oil: worked for Pure Oil about 11 years; production superintendent out of Morgan City; they wanted me to move to Sweetlake, south of Lake Charles; Charlie Brown tried to get me to move into Houston office, but I didn't like Houston or office work, stayed in the field; Sweetlake field was drilled in the '20s; they had produced oil there at a nickel a barrel; everything was falling in the lake, had not been repaired; I was asked to go there and fix it; they wanted to do more drilling there; Williams used to tell me about when he was in Sweetlake because he had been superintendent there; they transferred me in about 1952; after I had been there 4 or 5 years, married with 4 or 5 kids; living in company house on lease, one bedroom; shotgun house; asked to move to Lake Charles, Charlie Brown said no; we'll build a house there for you; I applied for jobs with other companies all over the Gulf coast; got a job with Shell Oil Company

Sweetlake: built our own platforms; no Brown and Root, no McDermott, no oilfield contractors then; we built it ourselves; had our own wooden barges, wooden tugboats; got there and they had started building another platform; I just watched; it took them a month; I was in charge of production and construction; people there had been there a long time; they used drilling crews and roustabouts to build the platforms; had 15 or 20 platforms in the lake; our own boiler barge; got time to build the next one, I took over. the youngest one out there, went and showed them how to do it; all lived around there, told them people were starting to organize work crews like Danos & Curole; told them what it would be like to work for contractor; details of how to get job done faster; years later ran into crew working for contractor; rig builders would come build rig out of wood; story of blowout when rig collapsed in hole

WWII: has book of his experiences in the service; gave me a copy

Fire: first offshore fire happened on Block 32; have story about it from Time magazine, couldn't find it; Myron Kinley, Red Adair, who wound up to be his son-in-law, and Bruce Hanson put it out; were producing gas by then, had laid a pipeline out there

First offshore pipeline: they laid the first offshore pipeline while I was at Sweetwater; from Rollover field to the bank to tie into Tennessee Gas; Tennessee Gas Pipeline Company - government built big inch and little inch pipeline along coast and to New York to send fuel to the east coast to send to Europe during the war; government not supposed to own a business, sold the Big Inch and Little Inch to Tennessee Gas; two separate pipelines, one 36 inch, laid during the war; formed Marine Gatherers to lay first pipeline, wholly owned subsidiary of Tennessee Gas; until then no gas because no pipelines to bring it in

Producing oil before pipelines: Eugene Island had gas and oil sands; produced them in oil at first to hold the lease; later had the pipeline going out there and produced gas; pipeline on shore at Bayou Sale; had 4 90-barrel tanks at Eugene Island; when full would call Louisiana Five - tugboat company; they'd come pick up 180 barrels while the wells were flowing in the other two tanks; tugboats come with small barge; don't know where it went; weren't flowing the wells wide open, just enough to hold the lease; pipeline built in early '50s; took out water, mixed distillate and gas, sent to New Orleans; put conate water overboard; discussion of valves, flow, shutting well in; used LTX - low temperature extractor

Cutting paraffin: all oil paraffin based; if went through cold zone would make paraffin stick to wall of tubing, have to run tool down to scrape it off and keep from stopping up the hole; companies would do that - Otis; at first Otis would not come offshore, believe it had something to do with insurance; we had to run our own storm chokes, cut our own paraffin; had to have our own catering service; anything we needed out there we had to do ourselves

Shell: worked for a couple of years, right next door to where I was at Pure; had applied for job in production; Continental, CATC, called me up to go work for them in drilling; paid me twice as much so went; making about \$400 a month for Pure and Shell; they would pay \$800 a month; I explained I did not have drilling experience; doing same work for Shell as for Pure; worked next block inside from 32

CATC: consortium; outfit owned by Continental, Atlantic, Tidewater and City Services; late '50s, right after Hurricane Audrey; Conoco had two drilling tenders - JC Craig, named after head honcho; next one was Carl Sharp; he was head of Atlantic; next was Ernie Miller, he was head for Tidewater; Jack Cleverly, head for City Services; they just had the first two when I went to work for them; I worked on Carl Sharp; when got for - Reading and Bates Drilling Company had been drilling in Canada, wanted to get in oil business - Continental gave them a contract; other companies owned rigs; Laughlin Brothers owned the rig for Pure and on Jack Cleverly for Conoco; on Carl Sharp contractor was Rowan Drilling Company out of Fort Worth

Patents: invented and modified several things; got patent for mud scale; sold it and bought land; built housing development

#### Summary of CL001:

Charles was one of a small group of people who had served in WWII and been involved in the early development of the offshore oil and gas industry in the Gulf of Mexico and was interviewed in a joint project of the University of Arizona, U.S. Minerals Management Service, and the National D-Day Museum. In this interview, Charles talks mostly about his experiences during WWII.

Early years: Charles was born In Kinder, LA in 1924. His father worked for that Missouri-Pacific railroad company and died when he was eleven and his mother was a schoolteacher. He graduated high school in 1942 and then went to LSU. He dropped out shortly afterwards and got a job in Lake Charles as an ironworker.

Military years: Charles joined the Army Air Force and became a bomber pilot stationed in Dijon, France. He was discharged in 1945.

Oil Field Experience: Charles worked for Pure Oil Company, Shell Oil Company and Continental Oil Company. Most of his positions were as a Supervisor.

Al Warriner

Slidell, LA

March 14, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA038

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was introduced to Al Warriner by Walt Daspit. Walt arranged for us to go to Al's shop and talk with him. We found him in his office in Slidell. Al was very receptive to the interview and talked almost nonstop for three hours. He had an active career and continues to work with his son. He lamented the fact that he was not allowed to renew his pilot's license this year because of his age (85).

Al was born November 25, 1917. He started flying at age 18 and went to Tulane in mechanical engineering. His dreams of a career in aeronautical engineering were disrupted by the Depression, and he went to work in construction to finance his flying. In the fall of 1938 he was working in West Vermillion Bay for Superior Oil Company constructing the first well offshore in water open to Gulf. With that job, Al began his career in diving. He worked for railroad companies, repaired cargo piers, and worked in shipyards. He enlisted in the Army Air Corps during WWII and returned to diving and the Gulf of Mexico in 1944. He started his own company, Underwater Services, in 1957 and went broke in 1964 when the oil industry went into a slump and he had a string of bad luck.

#### Summary:

First offshore job: between 1952 and 1954 was working on the Harvey Canal tunnel under the Intracoastal Canal; Bob Richie was the field supervisor with McDermott and they were just beginning to get things going offshore; he talked me into getting my stuff together and meeting an airplane, got there in the dark on Saturday night; it was their first deepwater operation, the structure had 8 columns, they removed the superstructure and dropped explosives into the legs; in 98' of water it was too big for a derrick barge to handle; they laid it over on its side; we couldn't extract the pilings; if you blast them off they splay out; the job was too big for the equipment at the time, and at that time there were few accomplished divers; another diver and I going to burn off the legs to extract the piling; I was laying on top trying to burn off the legs, then got inside and did the burning.

First company: got out of WWII, had been a pilot, didn't want to get back to flying, only knew construction work; W. Horace Construction Company, before J. Ray McDermott; was the first to use light weight diving equipment with commercial equipment; had a Scott mask, make a two-way intercom set with it.

Underwater burning: two methods; old one uses gas, oxygen and air tank; about 100 years old, almost have to have some degree of visibility; does not work well with ordinary material;

another method, electric arc oxygen methods uses a heat source; 300-400 amp welding machine up on the surface and oxygen through the hose; drag rod across the work area, squeeze the oxygen valve, it gets hot and starts burning; on first job, got inside and started burning the stuff away in 12-14 minutes; finished 3 rods before the other guy was finished with one; got me a lot of points with these people, got legs cleaned and pulled piling out, by Monday evening was ready to go in; did not know how to charge my time; was paid from when I got on the helicopter; made \$3,000 over the weekend; got my attention, had been making \$600 a week on the tunnel job.

Underwater Services: formed in 1957; until that time worked half way around the world; probably not more than 100 divers in the country at that time; all knew one another or knew of one another; at peak of operations, 106 divers, worked in the Persian Gulf, Cape Canaveral, Venezuela, Mexico; "It was a pain in the ass" (Walt Dasplit comment, "Putting up with divers is not fun"); most good divers are very much individualists; old time divers went out on the job alone, had to be totally independent; nobody to show you how to do things.

Personal history: born November 25, 1917; started flying when 18, went to Tulane in mechanical engineering; wanted in aeronautical engineering, but only 4 colleges in the country offered it, all four were postgraduate schools, required BS degree to go; got through Tulane, May 1938, depression caught up with everything; went to work in construction to finance my flying, father was civil engineer; Fall 1938 was in West Vermillion Bay for Superior Oil Company; first well out in offshore water open to Gulf; they build a wooden pile platform  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile out from the beach; wooden bridge rolling out to it; steam compression barge sank; first time I got in the water and was paid for it

Horace Williams Construction Company: early 1939; largest general heavy construction outfit in the area; did a lot of work for railroad companies; got job to repair cargo pier in Pensacola; cold, rainy Sunday in Model A Ford; 3 freight piers on wood pilings; had to inspect several thousand pilings in the three piers; four people, I was the only one who had been underwater before; one-piece helmets, suits, hand pumps, hand signals; maximum depth 36', all could do with hand pump; inspected and noted condition of all; did lots of repair work in 1939; highest paid was \$1.75 an hour; company union carpenters on the job didn't like us coming in and making more money than they were; worked in little scows, hand pumps on top of the pier; Marsh Diving Equipment Catalog the only things we had to go by, otherwise self-taught; that job finished, went to Dominican Republic for job in huge bauxite deposit; work fascinated me because it wasn't ordinary; no two jobs were the same, constant challenge; more jobs.

Parver and Baker Engineering: were looking for a diver with engineering experience; finished work Saturday afternoon, riding Harley Davidson motorcycle; rode to job site with resume, told to come Monday and try it out; got permission from my boss, they suited me up, I went down and did what they wanted me to, performed external inspection of tunnel; pay raised to \$500 per week, got me going; early 1940 back down to Surinam, then company starting to build Delta Shipyard in New Orleans to build liberty ships for England during WWII; ship building people hungry for people who could do anything, needed thousands, only had 100; shipyard hired me to teach blueprint reading, ship fitting in 1941; built first Liberty Ship at Delta Shipyards.

WWII: had essential defense job, but wanted to fly and get paid for it; enlisted in army air corps; some miserable things, a lot scary as hell, a lot fun; was too old for combat; into predelivery test flying; ended in Alaska in 1944, out and back to diving; doing freelance diving anywhere for several years; working on job in Gulfport in 1951 when company hired to build the Harvey Canal got hold of me; oil and gas industry starting to move offshore, past 12-15'.

Working offshore: after first job derrick captain wanted me back; I hired 2 or 3 more guys, company started to grow till grossing \$3 million a year; made some bad mistakes; all closed in; closed down in 1970, owed people a lot of money; came to Slidell in 1972 and bought this place in 1974; don't do much diving now, unless you do a whole lot you can't afford the insurance.

First decompression chamber: had been on job in New York; chambers built for sand hogs, not divers; divers don't get hurt going too deep, only when coming up nitrogen tries to expand inside divers, causes the bends; practically every diver knew how not to get hurt; but if do something wrong or have to come up in a hurry, need to get back; Harvey Canal deepest part 78', would go between 10 and 70 feet and never bothered me; one time down where bottom had been excavated, on way home hip started hurting; called on Pat O'Day, he came out and helped me, did everything wrong; next morning still hurting a bit, but gone as soon as I was down 12-14'; 3-4 days later was at measured depth of 70' but pressure depth of 115'; took water samples; weighed 11 lbs/gal instead of 8 lbs/gal; decided I was going to build a chamber if I was going to keep in this business for long; companies started working past 50', they had to pay me to take the chamber out, it weighed about 4000 lbs.

First chamber job: 190' cut off job; four legged structure; I was first to go down inside pile from top; burn off at bottom, extract piling from top; 4 divers and myself on job; weather nasty and cold; Dick Alber and I had started when derrick captain insisted had to come up; finished, came up and got into chamber, freezing cold; decided to get out, started hurting, got blankets and went back inside; now for job that used to do with diver and helper have 4 divers, superintendent, medical attendant; "It's a wonder so many of us survived;" story of Roy who brought up too soon, in wheelchair the rest of his life; wife in a fire and crippled too; today diving companies go after engineers and make divers out of them; they were taking iron workers and trying to make them divers

Donald Boone - his own worst enemy, so reckless; got into diving working with me; hired him as crane operator; a lot of those guys were really rowdy; good ones stood out

Good diver: gets the job done; can teach an animal to go under water; what you do when you get there is what counts; diving schools don't teach that; I learned how to do everything I knew before I got underwater; stories of people who could not get job done; incident in Puget Sound where had to salvage canned salmon; discussion of diving tables; Tim Whittier "Whit" would never get bent; died from overdrinking

Walt Daspit: working at Grand Isle, lost it all, opened a bar; wife got job at LSU Medical, came into bar and asked when he was going to go to work; called Al and got job; mostly oilfield work; worked for Sam Carline in shallow water; Clyde Hurley; was either gone making money or home dead broke; riding in the Cadillac or walking

How went broke: 1963-64 oilfield started to go down; took job with city of Houston water department, under low bid and lost all; Venezuelan government nationalized oil industry and all American companies had to get out; Hurricane Hilda, John Mecham - owner of the Saints and Mecham Oil Company; were moving Bluewater One from one of its first locations; someone pushed a wrong button and it rolled over; had a \$6 million deductible; wanted to blow the deductible and have the insurance pay if off; get it floated but not righted; going to take it out and scuttle it, but John Mecham bought it; contracted to burn off stuff underwater; was 84 percent complete, hurricane came through, knocked out of work, all equipment out there, afterward nothing left; largest piece ran into uncompleted Shell company platform (Walt: worked salvage on that Shell platform); Mecham wouldn't pay; then hired by Shell to id the piece that hit the Shell platform; put me crossways with Mecham; called by U.S. Salvage Association surveyors because two people missing off dredge boat; thought I could raise the thing; got backing on salvage contract; failed

Changes in diving companies: no longer operated by small businesses; Taylor Divers bought by Brown & Root and then Halliburton; McDermott wanted to buy me and form own diving division; Dick Evans working for me, undermining me; surviving diving companies had to get real big or go home; then CalDive in from West Coast; Gary Savoie, was with EPN, with Specialty Divers; don't go for much offshore work, mostly power plant work, etc.

Hurricanes: worked on Donaldsonville/Sunshine bridge after Betsy drove a small cargo ship into the downstream corner of the new pier; Hurricane Camille sank several barges off the coast, had contract with Army Corps of Engineers to remove the wreckage of an old paddle wheel; went to work with Sony to keep eating; moral: Don't give up.

Garver Watkins

Morgan City, LA

July 3, 2001

Interviewed by: Rylan Higgins

University of Arizona

RH006

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Garver Watkins was born in 1933 in Patterson, Louisiana. He grew up in Berwick and attended high school in Morgan City. During the summers he worked in boat businesses that supported the oil industry, first with his father and then his uncle. He spent some time at the University of Southwestern and was drafted into the Army, serving two years in Korea. When his father's health declined, Garver took over the family boat business but the small enterprise was unable to keep up with costly regulations and eventually sold out. He got a job at McDermott in 1956 through personal connections and worked there for 38 years, starting out as a helper and working his way up to foreman and superintendent.

#### Summary:

Personal history: Born in Patterson in 1933; Went to school in Berwick where the family lived, then high school in Morgan City; Completed one semester at the University of Southwestern; Worked summers with his father and uncle in the family boat business; Served two years with the army in Korea; Upon his return, started at Southwestern again but dropped out when his father's health declined to take over boat business; New regulations required costly changes to the boats that the company couldn't afford, so they sold out

Employment with McDermott: Applied for a job in 1956; McDermott had just gotten into the fabrication business, employing about 150-200 people; There were many applications for every job, and he was turned down; Finally, he got a job at McDermott through his wife's uncle's connection to a yard supervisor; He was a helper on the rack, where they built the braces for the structures

Expansion of industry: When he was first hired, it was mostly shallow water and the braces were small; Over time, they expanded deeper into the Gulf and the braces got bigger; McDermott bought some ships to turn into barges to transport jackets offshore; Eventually brought in barges manufactured in Japan; Size of barges kept increasing; Built very large barge for Shell called Cognac in three pieces

The yard: Needed special high-strength plates for the deep water, heated and rolled in the west yard; Raw material was barged in from the steel mills in the North; When Garver first started at McDermott, they were not in the fabrication business, they had a dredging company and were laying pipeline; He was the 60th person hired in the yard, but eventually they had 150 people; Size of yard grew as they leased more land; Prior to the 1980s, they used the old mill to make whatever was needed, then they built a new building to do structure fab with new technology for

burning plants borrowed from German company; Capacity for rolling pipe grew as well, eventually bought out Dupont's mill

Unions: The first time one tried to come in was 1957-58; Threatening people; Garver had three incidents with the unions; Doesn't have very high opinion of them now, although previously because of a specific boss, he was in favor of them

Expansion overseas: Started in the mid to late 1960s; Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Africa; But didn't really change things for him in the yard

Scarcity of jobs in the late 1950s: There weren't many jobs to be had, just small local yards

Relationship with father; Decision to leave college; Failed business venture

Employees: Garver's first day on the job; Moving workers around wherever they were needed; Training on the job; In the early days, they tried to keep workers on, even when production slowed down; With people from overseas replacing locals in management positions, layoffs became more common; Early benefits included paid vacation and paid holidays, good insurance benefits, sick pay; Contracting started in the late 1970s; At first most workers were white, but the percentage of blacks increased over time; Not much racial tension; Garver supervised the first Vietnamese and female workers

Annie Weaver

Houma, LA

January 25, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA032

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Annie Weaver was referred to me by Tom Becnel. He knew that her husband had worked in the oil and gas industry and recommended Annie as a good source of information on Houma and how it was impacted by the industry. Annie is 92 years old and moved to Houma with her husband and three children in 1939. They were planning to stay 2 years and then leave, but they were adopted by their French neighbors and decided to make their home there; they were the fourth family in their company to come to Houma from Shreveport and the only ones to stay. Annie's husband worked for service companies until he was injured falling on a boat while working for Pioneer fishing tool company. Annie became involved in many community service projects, such as helping get breakfast at the local school. She was active in the Literary Club, the PTA, and her church.

#### Summary:

Personal history: born in 1909, husband was fishing tool operator, worked in Shreveport for 2 years and then sent to Houma; prior to that spent 8 years in Arkansas and the rest of the time in Texas; husband born and raised in Saratoga, Texas; moved to Houma when oldest was in 2nd grade, others 2 and 3 years old; husband worked for Home Coal out of Houston; met Grandma Bergeron with her old maid daughter around the corner; was not well, was in bed during the first new year's holiday; Grandma came with a bowl of black-eyed peas and cabbage; company said had to move, children did not want to, so he quit and found another job

Early Houma: husband came first from Shreveport, couldn't find place to live; was staying in sleeping quarters at the company warehouse; found rental; coal oil stoves for cooking; finally got gas, neighbor put pipe in ground but officials made him stop; shell roads; boats on bayou would blow whistles; three theaters; shrimp drying platform; nice churches; made friends over the years; at one time was oyster capital of Louisiana; had sugarcane refinery; good schools, good teachers, mostly locals; girls went to Lafayette on weekends to get certified

Influx of people: few in early days; wildcatters in and gave oil people a bad name; we were looked down on at first, eventually accepted; more people came as more drilling out in the Gulf; "you can't make an oilfield operator out of a Frenchman;" many women wanted to leave; half Sunday school class stayed one year or less; met people through Literary Club; tired to develop PTA; many mothers and fathers could not read or write; many oil men came without their families at first, or with wives and no children; I did not have time to play bridge, go shopping with them until my children were grown; not many activities in the schools; one swimming pool in town; recreational room at the park; modern teachers came and started other activities for

young people; had good library; many home-owned stores; golf course, tennis courts, bowling alley

Boom: late 70s was mad, people bought bigger cars, bigger houses, would only shop in New Orleans; lost everything; friend's father in Chauvin never cashed royalty checks, kept them in his sock drawer

Husband work: 24 hour call; couldn't depend on him for anything; only stayed home when children had tonsils out; Dr. Collins helped me raise my children; mother would visit, couldn't wait to leave; built camp on Grand Isle; bread bought in by boat twice a week; Texas Company built houses for people to live; had sugarcane and turtle pens before storms washed it away; could turn kids loose there; would go floundering at night; husband got 2 weeks vacation a year

Raising children: wouldn't have been able to do it without grandma/neighbor and Dr. Collins; when first came hospital was white frame building; always had plenty of good dentists; had a riding stable when daughter in high school; good YMCA; when first came if anything new proposed it would be vetoed right away; probably weren't 100 women in Terrebonne Parish who drove a car; changed when oil women came because couldn't wait for papa; we believed in shots for our children, getting tonsils out; lots of others here believed in home remedies; lost a lot of kids here for a long time; PTA worked on getting breakfast for children, soap and toilet paper in bathrooms; I sat on the Sugar Board during WWII, gave out ration books

Downturn: could have bought a home anywhere; people left homes with food in ice box; churches had food banks, clothing drives; a lot of people went out of business; my husband was gone by then, was living on his social security; children are professionals, not hurt much; people planted gardens, raised food

Husband's death: worked in fishing tools until injured falling on stanchion on boat, died five years later; while working he made me promise not to go anywhere at night; worked for Home Coal and then Wilson and then TriState, went to New Iberia for 18 months and then back to Houma; then went to Pioneer, working for Pioneer when hurt

Worry: why I had a stroke at 42 years; doctor said not natural, no high blood pressure or anything; worried about him on the helicopters, etc.; could communicate once in a while via radio and telephone; he called one time and I said I was lonesome, made him mad because it was broadcast across the Gulf; a lot of times when he was caught out he would have me and the kids meet him on Grand Isle; we were the fourth couple to come to Houma and the only ones who stayed

Hurricanes: one time they didn't get his crew off on time; none of the women slept that night; he was home for Betsy

Living in Houma: would not live anywhere else; had lived in Arkansas and Texas as child, mother wanted to toughen us up; very little communication with offshore; one time husband had been out 40 days, called to say he didn't know when he'd come in; by 1960s lots of women here, we'd call around and stay in touch; Pioneer had 5 fishing tool men plus warehouse men, hotshot

drivers; we were a unit; friend befriended alligator; lots of birds, but now they keep building and there's no place for animals to go; now the Gulf is encroaching on Terrebonne Parish; trying to get help

Changes: before oil got big older people said you could do without phone and all that; fishermen around Golden Meadow buried their money in syrup buckets; friend of mine did not have a checkbook; men didn't want their wives to work; nowadays if both don't work they can't make it, they want everything right now; oil women would do work and not wait till papa came home; other women would laugh; some of the locals started to change; we had all nationalities down here; Indians stay to themselves; lots of them married among themselves; was sawmill at the end of Morgan Street; big ships would come in and load lumber; they denuded the cypress; had shell plant behind our house during the war; got their labor from here in Houma; we changed a lot of our eating habits; sugar boilers made good money, most went to Cuba in the wintertime; even made sugar here for Coca-Cola

Children: husband got son a job cleaning tools at the warehouse one summer so he would want to go back to college; went into military; daughter a schoolteacher, now living with me

Robert Webbon

Clear Lake, TX

August 6, 2006

Interviewed by: Jason P. Theriot

University of Houston/History International

MMS082

### Ethnographic Preface:

Captain Bob Webbon is a Houston Pilot. He was raised in Port Arthur and became interested in maritime activities through his father, who was chief engineer on vessels. Captain Webbon attended Texas A&M Merchant Marine Academy began working for EXXON Shipping in 1985. He spent twelve years transporting crude via ship on the West Coast from Alaska to Panama. He has been a pilot for 9 years and lives in Clear Lake, Texas with his wife. He is also on the board of directors for the future Houston Maritime Museum.

### Summary:

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Adam Welcome

New Iberia, LA

May 14, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG019

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Adam Welcome was referred by Susan Lissard. I met with Adam at his home outside New Iberia. Adam is the first black oilfield worker I interviewed, and he provided a glimpse of the race relations implicit in the industrial labor force in the South. At the same time, his work for the Exxon Employee Federation helped illuminate some of the strategies the energy companies sought to avoid outright unionization. This was an interesting, albeit short, interview all around.

Adam Welcome grew up in New Iberia and worked as a schoolteacher in the 1960's. He started working for Texaco in 1970 and later served as a representative of the Exxon Employee Federation, an organization that worked to gain pay increases and extend benefits for employees.

#### Summary:

Exxon: went offshore in the Grand Isle area.

Early years: Adam grew up in New Iberia, the oil industry was segregated, started hiring light-complected blacks in 1967, he left his schoolteaching job a couple years after that, first day of work, someone looking out for him, all companies opened up at the same time, cooks first. Blacks already working in refineries and other parts of the state.

Work: Roustabout, Gas plant, 23 years, employee federation representative. Federation worked on pay increases, medical, other benefits, matching savings, minutes published, threat of unionization, Exxon would promote activists to quiet them.

Loyalty: Story of getting rid of crutches, worked long hours, no change in attitude over the years, Exxon is the greatest, during downturns vendors stopped telling jokes, Exxon pinched expenditures, combined work tasks.

Changes: Shifted out of contract labor, environment, old platforms look like a junkyard below, safety, Exxon very safe.

Career ladder: Started at Garden City, moved to Lafayette office, scheduling, fishing, Exxon stacked rigs in 1965.

Impact on black community: Brought money to some in black community, collections. Oil industry is here to stay, costs a lot of money to drill.

J. Robinson West

Washington, D.C.

November 18, 2002

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS014

### Ethnographic Preface:

Robin West received his B.A. from University of North Carolina and his J.D. from Temple University. He served in the Ford Administration on the White House staff (1974-76) and as the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Economic Affairs (1976-77). During 1977-1980, he was a first vice president of Blyth, Eastman, Dillon & Co., Inc., an investment banking firm. He then served in the Reagan Administration as Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Policy, Budget, and Administration (1981-1983). He played a major role in conceiving of and implementing the new five-year leasing plan for federal OCS areas and in the shift to area-wide leasing in the Gulf of Mexico. He also spearheaded the organizational reform of the OCS program, consolidating functions in a single Minerals Management Service. In 1984, he founded The Petroleum Finance Company, which has become a very influential consulting firm for the international oil and gas industry.

### Summary:

A fascinating and insightful discussion of the reform of federal offshore leasing policy under Secretary of Interior James Watt in the early 1980s. Talks about how the old leasing policy was creating mounting dissatisfaction in that it created unnatural and unnecessary scarcity by limiting the number of blocks up for lease. Discusses the unfair and inaccurate public perception of the oil industry and its safety and environmental record offshore, as well as the extremist views of the "sagebrush rebels" who wanted to open up every coastline to leasing. Covers the internal battles over area-wide leasing. Mentions problems for federal leasing caused by coastal zone management regulations. Interesting discussion of assumption of risk by coastal communities for offshore development and lack of appropriate compensation. Some information on James Watt, Donald Hodel, specific environmental groups and oil industry executives involved in debates over reforming the OCS program.

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Dean Whitaker

Lafayette, LA

July 31, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA120

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Dean Whitaker by Maryann Galletti. Dean worked for J&J Diving in the 1960s. I tracked Dean down in Lafayette and met him at Charlie G's restaurant there. We began the interview in the restaurant and then went over to his office to continue talking.

Dean Whitaker is from New Orleans. His parents were migrant farmworkers and would travel from place to place picking crops. Dean left home when he was 14 years old and found a job unloading produce trucks and living under the docks in New York. He stayed there two years and then went to Los Angeles doing similar work until he turned 17 and joined the U.S. army. He was inducted in December 1949 and was sent to Korea from 1950 to 1952. He had spent several years sailing around the world and motorcycle racing when he came across a commercial diving school. He enrolled in the school and began working right away. He worked salvage and construction jobs around Los Angeles for several years and then returned to the Gulf of Mexico. Dean worked for J & J Diving, Dick Evans Divers, and Dive Con, where he ended up in the North Sea. He left Dive Con shortly after the company was bought by Oceaneering and worked as a pilot. In 1990 he bought a project management company and continues to work off and on in the Gulf.

#### Summary:

**Early years:** Dean was born in 1932. He and his family were migrant farm workers, moving from state to state working others crops. At 14, he left his family and went to New York because of the famed land of opportunity. He got a job as a dishwasher and unloading produce from trucks. After two years, he left New York and went to Los Angeles and got another job unloading produce from trucks.

**Military service:** In 1949, at seventeen, Dean joined the army and became a ranger and went to the Korea for the Korean War. While there, he was out into an English Commando unit, which later gave him connections for a master's degree.

**Home:** Once out of the service, Dean came back to California and began working again. He tried going to UCLA, but flunked out. He then got a boat and sailed around the world until a storm sunk his vessel off the coast of Australia in 1954. He came back to the states and begun motorcycle racing.

**Diving:** Dean saw an advertisement for commercial sea diving and decided to go to the school. He became the 52nd certified commercial sea diver in the United States. He then went to the

Gulf because of the opportunities for divers in the oil industry. He got his first job working for J & J salvaging ships. Dean then changed companies and began to work all over the world. While working for Dick Evans, he was stationed up in the North Sea. He contacted his old War buddy and he was able to get him a Master's degree in International trade, an 18-month crash program between 1963-1964.

Flying: During this time, Dean also learned how to fly. He then went to the Congo where he flew for several years before returning to the states. Air America had developed by then and he flew for them for 23 years.

Return to the oilfield: In 1990, Dean returned to the states and bought a small company, Power Performance, transporting and building rigs and platforms. After building his reputation up, he sold the business and got another job doing project management.

The rest of the interview, Dean talks in great length about what it was like working on dive crews, what the outlaw diver image was and how it began to change when the Navy Seals began to come on to the barges and threaten the outlaw divers position due to their greater level of conformity. He discusses the conflict that ensued between the old generation divers and new generation divers.

Carl Wickizer

Houston, TX

November 21, 1997

Interviewed by: Bruce Beauboeuf

University of Houston/History International

SOC029

### Ethnographic Preface:

Carl Wickizer went to work for Shell in 1954 after graduating from Oklahoma State University in 1954. After training, his first assignment was to New Orleans as a production engineer in 1957. He worked in various capacities until 1971 when he first worked with the offshore Gulf of Mexico. In 1973 he became Project manager for the pilot subsea system and he spend the rest of his career developing deep water technology in various management positions. He retired in 1993 after 39 1/2 years of service.

### Summary:

This interview begins with a discussion of the exploration process including seismic mapping and exploratory drilling. He continues to talk at length about production structures including fixed structures, subsea, and TLPs. Also in this discussion is commentary on the economics behind choosing which technology to implement. It also offers considerable remarks on the move to deep water, large fields in the gulf, hurricanes, and joint ventures. The interview ends with his reflections on the future of the Gulf of Mexico.

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Wayne Willet

Belle Chasse, LA

July 24, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA054

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Wayne Willet was referred to me by William Brown. Wayne was one of a small group of divers who had come down from Canada in the 1960s. He was born in Quebec in 1930. He got into diving when doing construction work in Canada and followed his boss, Max Rieher, to the Gulf in 1964. Wayne worked for Deep Sea Divers for two years and then went to work for Dick Evans. He stayed with Dick Evans and then McDermott for 26 years. Wayne worked in the Gulf of Mexico and many other places around the world. He and his wife had an agreement that he would never stay gone more than 3 months. They were married shortly after he began diving and stayed married 40 years, until her death in 1996.

#### Summary:

Getting into diving: was born in Quebec; got into diving in Canada in 1954, doing construction diving; broke in by two Germans, Max Rieher and Rudy Paletta; Gunter Kindeman, one of the divers, moved to the US to work for Al Warriner; Gunter talked Max into moving into the US and getting into deepwater in the US in the early 1960's; Max went, came back and talked me into moving to Louisiana; I arrived in Belle Chasse in May 1964; Gulf had had big fire in Block 117 West Delta at 240 feet; Deep Sea Divers, Inc. hired me to come down; got the job doing helium diving, one of the first jobs with helium, my first with helium.

Helium diving: learned from books; you're clear headed but nearly freeze to death; could not talk to anyone; stayed on the job 3-4 weeks, could get 2 hours bottom time with helium; Willie Brown from J&J Divers had the air work on the job, doing the shallower stuff; we were working off a barge.

Deep Sea Divers: Gunter, Don Pitts and Ken started Deep Sea Divers about 1963; had worked for Al Warriner and Taylor Diving before; I stayed about 2 years.

Dick Evans Divers: hired me to come work with them; went because the company was bigger, had more work; Deep Sea owners starting to spat.

Lifestyle: was not hard for a good diver to find work; sometimes went a few months without work, got wife upset; started diving in 1954, got married in 1956; stayed married 40 years till wife died; no schedule, kept suitcase packed; had agreement with wife that for overseas work 3 months was maximum; wife never went overseas; "If they get your family over there they have you by the short hairs. The only way I would go is with a return ticket in my pocket."

Moving to Louisiana: an experience; we liked it, didn't care to see snow again; had 2 children; wife made friends easily, knew everyone; visited Canada every year.

McDermott: stayed 26 years with McDermott (bought out Dick Evans); McDermott had more money, built sat systems; then started hiring people from the Navy who knew helium diving; we taught them and they taught us what they knew; they were generally received well, though a few hard noses did not want them; would have killed ourselves.

Changes: away from hard hat, more mobile; then sat, then hot water suit; life saver, you could turn valves on or off; first hot water suits 1967 or 1968; first sat dives by Walt Daspit and Carl Holder in 1966; we didn't have sat until 1968; could work longer, safer, more comfortable; United States Coast Guard came out that 300 foot was maximum depth for diving on air.

Saturation diving: my first sat dive they slammed the bell against the side of the barge, didn't even get in the water; still took 3 days decompression; I would read so I was never bored or lonesome; my longest sat dive was 18 days, but I've run divers for 52 days.

Turnover: lots in the younger divers; we had 72 divers on the roster at one time; had one of the best diving crews in the world; had Chino prison guys for a few years, most would weed themselves out with dope and stuff, some still around; came in in 1972 or 1973; Kirby Morgan put a class on in Chino to try and rehabilitate these young guys; McDermott sent out Skinny Brown and Bob McGwire, they saw the guys were trained pretty well and decided to try it; made the younger guys jealous because they had had to pay for training and find their own job.

Working overseas: Suez had the cleanest water ever seen; worked in every country around the Persian Gulf; in Egypt; 3 years in West Africa; Trinidad, Bahamas, Jamaica, Mexico, California; 3 months at a time; went ashore a couple of days coming and going but most of the time ready to come home; before the war closed the office in Beirut, that was our main office; then they moved the office to Brussels; some divers from England, Australia worked for our overseas division.

Families: a few of the wives played cards together, but not as a rule; my wife had another Canadian diver's wife down here; three families we knew well - Bob Kennedy from Nova Scotia, Jim Oneill from Ontario, Buddy Waring from Ontario; most Canadian divers were with Taylor.

Finding jobs: our dispatcher used to hang out at the old Pelican Motel, that's where you'd find out about the latest diving jobs; would not turn down anything; if not offshore not making a nickel; best job was on a lay barge.

Regulations: Coast Guard and OSHA dealt mostly with the office; nobody had any respect for OSHA when they first came in; every fatality offshore you knew it was getting closer; Coast Guard already had regulations on air tanks, helium tanks; lots of fatalities in the 60s; 30 something people killed in 1966 after Betsy; was in Persian Gulf when Betsy hit; lots of wreckage; salvaging drilling rigs; when divers killed mostly diver's fault, but there was not way to do what the diver was trying to do.

Changes: standby divers; using bailout bottles.

Working: when no work did not take other jobs and never put in for unemployment; I felt I was making a living; would definitely do it again; didn't have much formal education, tried to pick a trade I could make a living; did a lot of reading; some like poker, later had four movies a day on the barges and workout rooms; had about 200 people on a lay barge, 120-130 on a derrick barge; try to help the young guys break out if they're willing to work; always got along with people I worked for.

Best companies: we all thought we were the best; people at Taylor had it better than others for awhile because had government contracts, more money to fool around with; Brown & Root always got lots of government money.

Early companies: S&H Divers from Morgan City; Daspit Brothers; Pelican Divers - Charlie Chandler; Packers - 2 Green Bay Packers had company in Morgan City; Sanford Brothers one of the bigger ones in Morgan City; J&J out of Pasadena, Texas; Jimmy Dean was a Canadian here since before WWII; mostly small companies till Taylor and McDermott; American Oilfield Divers and CalDive came along, did mostly dive boat work, had sat units on dive boats; Ocean Engineering got a lot of work around drill rigs.

Medicals and safety: took five months to get original visa; paid \$500 for medicals, etc.; had to take medical every year and before and after every overseas contract so you couldn't claim anything on the company later; overseas they wouldn't be able to find witnesses; had one little accident in 1966 where I ruptured eardrums and sinuses, was out 2 months; was doing inside burnoff in a piling, explosion inside the piling I was burning off; got gas build up from the torch; without an experienced man like Buddy Waring I would not have made it; he pulled me straight up in the chamber; could blow smoke out both ears; don't think about accidents, always have close calls; did not lose anyone when I was supervisor; now more educated people; earlier ones were construction workers.

Starting in Canada: was curing pipe for water intake; company had English guys using scuba, they couldn't do the job; I said if you let me do it I'll do it in 30 minutes, got the bulkhead on; Max broke me in hardhat diving; he dove on salvage after WWII in Navy, came to Canada as a displaced person; there were 3 Germans, 2 Englishmen and myself at the beginning.

Last day: January 1, 1992; things changed; regulations got tougher; started checking for alcohol; oil companies started doing urinalysis at heliport in 1988.

Andrew "Pep" and Bertha Williams

Galliano, LA

September 21, 2001

Interviewed by: Tom McGuire

University of Arizona

TM013

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Mr. Andrew "Pep" Williams, an "oldtimer," was referred to me by Harrison Cheramie. When I arrived for the interview, Pep and his wife, Bertha, were sitting around their back patio, and he was doing some watering. Their well-kept house has many visible patriotic displays, and Bertha dwelled on the "war" and the hardships it would pose for south Louisiana boys who might be called upon to fight in mountainous terrain.

Pep Williams, now 88, started with Texaco in 1945; his wife, 84, who dominated much of the conversation, was a "parade queen" two years ago. Pep started as a roughneck, worked up to a driller, then spent the last of his 33 years with the company as a "driller and production foreman," essentially the company man supervising operations on several fields around south Louisiana. He worked another year as a consultant for \$300/day. As a company, Texaco was "like a family." Unlike other companies that had their own rigs and brought them, with their own crews, to south Louisiana (Texaco only had four rigs so much of their drilling was done by contractors), Texaco hired locally. Pep and his wife were both originally from Golden Meadow. She was raised in a house that had washed up in a storm from Leeville and was purchased and rebuilt by her father on the site of the present fire station in Golden Meadow.

#### Summary:

Early days in Golden Meadow: locals would rent rooms to outsider oil people, since there wasn't any hotel yet; outsiders who could find places to live would bring their families with them, placing burden on schools; this burden induced three local "educated" women to lobby house-to-house for incorporation, as a means to get more resources from the state for schools and services; Golden Meadow celebrated its 50th anniversary as a "corporation" last year.

Entry into industry: Pep's family were trappers and trawlers; he quit school after 8th grade because of difficulty in getting up to high school in Cut Off/Larose; applied for job with Texaco in 1945, and was lucky to get one, since locals "didn't know anything about the oil field" but there were positions opening up when outsiders couldn't find housing and had to leave

Early rigs: used three crews, working 12 days on, 4 days off; one of the crews was a relief crew that would rotate among rigs; schedules evolved to 6/6, then 7/7 (for "land jobs"), then 14/14 for offshore work (their son is an electrician for Chevron, working 14/14 now but had spent the last few years working 28/28 in Angola). When wells are producing, only one man, the "pumper," needed to check gauges on a number of wells; early on Texaco would collect oil in barges and transport it to refineries in Texas

Texaco: started in the bays and, because it was "tight with money," waited for others to develop offshore technology before they got in; while he was working, he didn't notice booms/busts, since oil was "always \$4/barrel." During the 1980s, bust hurt boat owners, but had little other impact; "those that worked, stayed working," stores didn't close, and everyone else survived.

Wife's background: Bertha's father was a fisherman, and "we was raised good, with a lot of food." He would take shrimp by boat up to Westwego, then by truck to the French Market in New Orleans where he would sell and/or trade it for vegetables, and would share shrimp with neighbors; their house was near Levi Collins', who, as deputy sheriff, was "the boss" and a "rough one" but nonetheless a good person.

Environmental change: She discussed saltwater intrusion problems and the widening of the bayou down by Leeville as result of "more currents" caused by suction action of big boats and barges; both agreed that it was a losing cause to try to rebuild island to the west, and that their real threat in storms is the "pressure water from the marsh [to the west] that's coming in." When they evacuate, they go above the Intracoastal Waterway and stay with a granddaughter, stay at the Lockport High School, or rent a hotel room in Thibodaux.

Bill Williams

Bayou Vista, LA

June 6, 2001, June 7, 2001

Interviewed by: Andrew Gardner

University of Arizona

AG025, AG027

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Bill Williams was recommended to me by John Ryan. I had a hard time finding him - there were several Bill Williams in the phone book - but I was finally able to track him down. He was the oldest person I interviewed, and we got along fine. He makes hootch as a hobby, and we had some after the interview. Bill lives alone; his wife passed away several years ago, and although he talks slowly, all his faculties are intact. I returned for a second interview (AG027) several days later. In the second interview, we cover some additional topics we missed the first time around. He reiterates that the reason he didn't go offshore was because he didn't want to be away from his family, and at the time, the schedules were a lot more difficult. We talk about Morgan City and some of the changes that occurred as a result of the oil industry, and then he talks about the death of his son in the oilpatch. He had a bad accident of his own in which he almost lost his arm, and he tells the story of that as well. There are good discussions of safety and pollution here as well - he's very clear that the practices have changed significantly over the years.

There are good discussions of the relationship between family and industry, the incompetence of inexperienced engineers, the operation of gas plants, and a story about a doctor that would fail prospective employees if they weren't from Houma. Also, he talks about the sale of hot oil to the Germans during the war, and problems with too many familial relations in the Texaco crews in Houma.

Bill was born in 1910 in Mansfield, Louisiana. He worked for Shell for two years in the 1930's, and then he spent the rest of his career with Texaco. He started in drilling, but in that position the company wanted him to move around all the time, so he ended up finding a position in production. There are several sections of the interview in which Bill is very specific about the reasons for this decision. He ended up working at the cryogenic plant near Morgan City.

#### Summary of AG025:

Early years: Born in 1910 in Mansfield, in northern Louisiana. Worked for Shell two years before getting on with Texaco. Started at age 21 for Shell below Houston at Danbury. He started as a roughneck, and everything was manual. Two men worked the slips. When he started for Shell, they had a double-deck rotary, and you could make up pipe with the rotary. He describes this process.

More Early Employment: He went to work for a driller from Mansfield. They ran him off, and Bill doesn't know why. They had to work a month and a half before the paychecks arrived. Story about his boss breaking up with his wife. Middle of depression, you couldn't buy a job. That's

when Roosevelt started the forty-hour week. They were hard times. He made a job for himself for a while fixing wooden frames of cars. Never accepted a handout.

Drilling: They sent down a new driller to Texas when he was working for Shell. The boss wanted them to use a chain and cathead to put the pipe together because it was safer. He describes the way the drilling worked back then. They brought down some big rigs from Oklahoma, five and six boilers. He decided to quit Shell and he went back home.

More Early Employment: He went to work in a garage back in Mansfield, but finally went down to South Louisiana to look for a better job. He went to the Texaco office in Houma, Gus Trotter was the big shot there. Old man Shea was his boss in the main office in Shreveport. Trotter said he could have a job, said get a medical examination and go to Cocodrie. Doctor failed him. Doctor was from Houma and only passed local boys. Long story.

Drilling in Opelousas: He went back home, and he found a Texaco rig in Opelousas and started working there. A great uncle was running the rig. He tells the story of how he got that job. Doctor there didn't give him any trouble. Worked as the fireman, then he got the derrick job. You've got to work derrick before you get a rig running job. They were drilling on land. They were trying to hold a couple leases with one junkpile rig.

Schedules: They wanted him to go offshore at Vermillion bay working 12 and 4. He didn't want to go - too long, and half the time your relief doesn't show up. He was about to quit, but old man Shea talked him into staying. He didn't want to work offshore because of school. He knew old man Shea from up north - as a boy he'd see him riding around on a big black horse. Got a job as a pumper.

Hot Oil: There was a lot of hot oil going to Germany ... even Texaco was sending oil out. He knew because he could see the production sheets. So he went out with the conservation man to try to catch the culprit. Anyway, he told Mr. Shea that he didn't want to move anymore, and he didn't want his derrick job back. No good chance for promotion in production, but he didn't care - he wanted his kids to go to one school.

Kin: There was a problem in Houma with Texaco because it was all kin working with kin ... jealousy, people getting mad at kin giving kin promotions. Description of the problem. He turned down more drilling jobs, and got on at Morgan City. They offered a job at Horseshoe Bayou, but his wife didn't want to have to use the ferry.

Morgan City: Shrimp trucks were all over the street, and it stunk. But it was last chance. So they settled in Morgan City. They bumped a good friend to give him the job. He worked just down the river.

Production Plant: He worked at a recycling plant, where they pulled liquid out of gas. This was during the war, and the company talked the government into building a plant for them, then bought it back from them on the cheap later. Texaco held back on production to make the government want to sell it. He moved up to shift foreman eventually. There was a rule you

couldn't get a promotion in production unless you worked as an inspector or helped get plants running. Bill went up to Erath. There were a bunch of bad valves, and it took a long time.

Union: Erath was union. The managers were scared of the union, and Bill was between a rock and a hard place - the company wouldn't back him up. If he joined, it would be the last promotion he'd ever get, and he had seniority over everybody. He made assistant plant foreman. This was after the war a bit.

Cryogenic Plant and engineers: The engineers building it didn't know anything about the cryogenic plant. All hell broke loose. They were going by the book and the book wouldn't work, so Texaco ran them all off and told the experienced boys to get at it and figure it out. He figured it out. His boss was injured off the job. After a while, they sent some engineers back to replace him so they could learn something about the plant, which didn't make Bill happy.

Gas Plant: The gas was coming from offshore. They'd run the gas through a hot plant first, then they'd run it through the cryogenic plant. He retired from there in 74. Some man from New Orleans kept trying to talk him out of it, but they were killing him, keeping him out there at all hours.

Evaluation: More than happy with his career. He had no education, but he went a long way. He knew the plant. It wasn't easy raising a family, though. Back in the old days, the families lived in tents near the rigs.

Summary of AG027:

Decision not to work offshore: Mostly it had to do with family, but also he notes that your replacements don't show up and you end up staying out there 30 days. Back then it was 12 and 4, too. The schedules weren't as good as today. He wanted to settle down so the kids could go to school.

Morgan City vs. New Iberia: Back then, Morgan City was just a mudhole, nothing like New Iberia. He describes New Iberia. Morgan City has really grown too. Bayou Vista is a suburb of Morgan City, but it's not incorporated. There are a couple of Parish policemen in Bayou Vista ... they've come out when he accidentally tripped the alarm. He talks about when his house burned down. Long story.

Safety: There were no regulations at all back in the early days. He talks about having to move rigs around to keep leases, and they had to do it so often that the boilers didn't have time to cool down. Ladder rungs were broken or loose, everything was oily. No safety equipment, no safety hats. He tells the story of getting his arm caught in a cat line. He almost lost his arm - everything was muddy and wet. It was a long way to get help too. And then another friend of his got pulled through the crown block on a Texaco rig. He lost his arm. Bill was back to work in 90 days. All this happened in 1934.

Death: Bill lost his son in the oilpatch. He starts to tell the story, then talks a little bit about his dad, and then about the early history of Texaco. Then he gets back to the story. His son was

working in production, and they were fixing up a platform. The engineers had put too many ells in a line - Bill always heard 11 ells is equal to a valve. His son was trying to tell them that, and it blew, and a big chunk of pipe blew out and cut the top of his head off. The boy who put in the faulty safety head about went crazy in the time after that. His wife accepted the first offer they made -- \$180,000. It didn't change his attitude about the company, though.

Environment and regulations: He talks about drilling near Jeanerette, and how they used to just dump the saltwater into the creek. It killed everything, and he saw it recently, and it's all dead now. The companies didn't stop on their own, he thinks - it was when the government told them to. They never paid attention to the noise, either ... He talks about when they started having to go to safety programs.

Blacks in the oilpatch: He tells the story of hiring Pierre Jackson, the shoeshiner, to work out on the rig (see interview AG029). We talk about finding Perry. He finally remembers his name.

The bust: It was really bad. They lost a lot of church members because people had to go elsewhere for work. He talks about some of the changes that went on during the bust. He talks about a video tape about the oil industry. Things were okay last year, but now there's been some laying off again.

Texaco: He says it was about the same as the other companies. Shell and Texaco merged a bunch of stuff together. Now it's just a couple big companies. He doesn't like it at all. But they're not stopping them from merging in Washington. They'll freeze all the little companies out. It's just like WalMart, putting everybody out of business.

Building Houses: He talks about building houses. A visitor comes to the house. I talk to him about writing an article.

Evaluation of Career: He was happy with it. He never thought he'd be old enough to get a good job. It's still a good industry - there's a lot of oil out in that Gulf. They're out in deep, deep water now.

Eldridge "Tot" Williams

Morgan City, LA

March 23, 2004

Interviewed by: Jamie Christy

University of Houston/History International

MMS028

Ethnographic Preface:

Eldridge "Tot" Williams was born in Morgan City, Louisiana in 1927. His father, George Williams, was a shrimper/trapper turned crew boat owner who grew up on Bateman Island (across the Bayou Shaffer from Morgan City). His father had a second-grade education and became one of Morgan City's wealthiest citizens because of the oil fields. Eldridge worked as a deckhand on his father's crew boats and then went into the family business as a crew boat captain. He also took out seismograph crews and invested in tug boats and moving rigs. He worked for large companies like Shell, Texaco, Mobil, and Exxon, but also for smaller companies like Mallard and General Geophysical. Eldridge remembers gas explosions in the bayous and while he admits that the oil companies did some damage, he says that they did not pollute and / or harm the environment as much as people think they did.

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Lisa Topham Williams

Amelia, LA

January 14, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA090

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Lisa Williams is the director of public relations for McDermott and participated in the previous study. Though she is only in her 30s, she was recommended to us because she is one of two third-generation employees working for McDermott. When I called to tell her about the history study, she was happy to participate to share information about the company and her own family history. Because of her position in public relations as well as family's long involvement in fabrication, her interview provides perspectives on the role of McDermott in the community as well as the impact of offshore-related work on families.

Lisa began working at McDermott in 1989 through the company's program to hire employees children. Her grandfather, Oliver Topham, worked for McDermott from the 1950s to 1983; her father, Gerald Topham, worked for the company from 1961 to 1998. Lisa grew up in Morgan City with little knowledge of what her father did. The community experienced the ups and downs of the oil industry, and for Lisa that translated most clearly into how her parents managed the family budget; their conservative practices kept the family from experiencing the dramatic swings that many of their friends and acquaintances did. One major impact of the 1980s downturn was that Lisa's parents pushed all their children to go to college and broaden their opportunities. Lisa studied communications and ended up bringing her knowledge and skills to McDermott in the Public Relations Department.

#### Summary:

Work history: Began with McDermott in 1989 through the company's program to employ employees' children; is a third-generation McDermott employee; grandfather Oliver Topham worked for McDermott from the 1950s to 1983; father Gerald Topham worked for McDermott from 1961 to 1998; is the only daughter, studied communications and now handles Public Relations for the Western Hemisphere group

McDermott history: The McDermott yard opened April 1, 1956 but not under the McDermott name; at that time McDermott was more involved in marine operations and installation; decided to go into manufacturing and opened Bayou Boeuf Fabricators, which was renamed after one and a half years; in the initial stage the company owners did not want to tarnish the company's name if fabrication did not work out; the McDermott yard in Amelia is the prototype for its other facilities; it is unique with two large buildings where employees can work under cover in bad weather; these were planned in the late 1960s and build in 1971 and 1972; physically the company now has locations in three parishes with the main fabrication yard in Assumption Parish; the west yard was a pipe mill, Dupont Fabricators, until McDermott bought it in the

1960s or 1970s; they still roll pipe there and truck it to the Amelia yard; the Marine Operations division is in Terrebonne Parish about four miles down the road; the company has a long history of firsts, for spar topsides, compliant towers, etc.

Origins: The company started in 1923 in east Texas with a contract to build wooden derricks; it moved to south Louisiana in the early 1940s and gravitated offshore with the oil and gas industry; in 1947 it installed the first structure off the coast, but within sight of land; in 1947-1956 the company was mostly involved in marine operations; in 1956 the fabrication side of the business began; over the years, the company has gone up and down depending on the price of oil and gas; in the late 1960s the company needed employees but the housing shortage created a huge problem, so it built Lakeside Housing Development; the company worked with the technical schools to train employees and draw them to Morgan City; in the 1980s lots of people moved out of the community, and the 1990s saw many ups and downs; the company has to compete with shipyards for labor; Morgan City became an offshore construction town

Family: Always in southern Louisiana; grandfather was a merchant marine and left that to work for Dupont Fabricators; was a welder by trade; Dad followed in his footsteps, graduated high school, went to work; that's how things were done at the time; now everyone pushes their children to go to college, but then welding was a dignified job; father put four kids through college as a welder, oldest brother is a welding inspector in Illinois; see shortage of labor ahead; lots of families have several members who work at McDermott; grandfather, his brother, dad, and uncle all worked for the company

Working at McDermott: Strong policy of promoting within the company; encourage education; have GED program; have to have high school diploma to become a leaderman or foreman; participation in the GED program dwindled off until the company required it for promotion; emphasis on education increased when the company realized that the labor pool was diminishing; in the mid-1980s lost so many people as people moved out of the community; McDermott became involved in Tech Prep in the 1990s; biggest pool of employees comes from St. Mary and Assumption parishes; graduated 1988 and never heard of vocational or technical school because all the emphasis was on college; grew up with this attitude and got greater respect for what dad and granddad did when saw structures built from scratch

Growing up: When dad and granddad were working the technology was not as advanced; parents pushed all kids to college; mother stayed home and didn't work; was not aware of what dad did until coming to work for McDermott; "now I realize why he was so exhausted when he came in;" dad didn't talk about work or the safety issues; at first college was not a big deal, but then in the 1980s everyone was going to college; dad went through the 1980s and was one of those who survived in 1984 when McDermott got down to less than 300 people; brothers all worked at McDermott in the summers, but dad said it was too dangerous for a girl; now the company has open houses for family members to see what goes on; Mom grew up in Berwick, Dad in Morgan City, married in 1961; with the ups and downs of the oil and gas industry, there were times when money was tight; wanted to be in with the in crowd but had to work, parents taught a good work ethic; Mom used to taking care of things because dad was working

Father's schedule: He was out by 5:30 every morning, drove on old Highway 90, two land bridge, took 45 minutes to get between Amelia and Bayou Vista; four lane enabled McDermott to attract employees from New Iberia and Jeanerette; some on outskirts of New Orleans; in the past, when there was a wreck on the bridge the company would bring a ferry to bring people back and forth to work; Dad worked mostly Monday through Saturday when things were busy; for 24 years he coached Little League Baseball; worked 6am to 5pm; employees knock off in shifts to minimize traffic delays; a lot of times people would hire on to the company as a helper and work their way up, there were also vo-tech schools where people could get training; dad got into it because of his dad; dad graduated from high school in 1958, went into the National Guard, and then came to McDermott in 1960; participated in McDermott's Thrift Savings Plan, always lived within their means; were able to survive when things got bad; did not move to the new subdivision when it was build; Dad learned from his dad, "If you can't pay cash for it, you don't need it."

Morgan City: It was a rich community with lots of money, lots of old money; when the industry was going good lots of people would spend, spend, spend, and then when it was bad they would struggle, struggle, struggle; grew up middle income; Lisa and her husband, a teacher/coach, made a conscious decision not to both work in the oil and gas industry; at school were oblivious of what was going on; some friends moved away during the downturn, a lot moved to Texas; when things were really good a lot of friends moved to Lafayette; all friends' moms worked; when the bust hit dad decided all his kids would go to college; hard for dad to understand that husband is not the sole support of the family or that brother wanted to go somewhere else

Company policies: Dad worked for McDermott for 38 years; that generation had such loyalty; see it in the service awards; more than 150 people with the company more than 30 years, at least one-quarter of the workforce; tried to reduce work hours instead of laying off during the 1990s; ended up laying off a few years ago, 95 percent back after 3 months; from 1969-1995 owned a shipyard across the bayou but sold it to Bollingers; facility in Veracruz, Mexico does ship repair but got out of the boat building business; used to build tugs; Bollingers was planning to build another shipyard, McDermott anticipated increased competition for labor; company offered various packages to try to keep employees; in the 1980s health insurance was free; one of the big draws was the insurance; company has Thrift Savings Plan; at one time the company matched with money, now with stock; company pays all retirement; people who work overseas get 2 for 1 time with the company for retirement

Working overseas: McDermott went overseas in the 1970s; Dad had opportunity to go to Scotland but kids were young; parents are very family oriented; decided not to go because it was too new; now sees missed opportunity; society has changed in terms of parenting, raising kids; discussion of values toward saving, parenting.

Bill Wilson

Morgan City, LA

January 3, 2003, March 30, 2004

Interviewed by: Diane Austin, Jamie Christy

University of Arizona, University of Houston/History International

DA085, MMS047

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Bill Wilson by Harry LeBoeuf. Bill and Harry are among the few supervisors and managers employed by Texaco's Morgan City office who have remained in the community. When I called Bill, he said that he had talked with Andrew and agreed to do an interview but never heard again and therefore thought he had missed his opportunity. He was very pleased to have me come over. His wife, Jewell, answered the door; Bill was outside finishing up with the serviceman who had come to repair his windshield. Bill and I sat in his den, which he has decorated almost completely with LSU memorabilia. I did not see Jewell again until I stopped in the dining room to tell her goodbye. As we stood there talking, she told me that her uncle, who raised her, had worked for Texaco and that both her daughters had worked for oil companies. I told her that we were looking for women's perspectives, and she agreed to be interviewed on my next trip out.

Bill was born into an oilfield family in north Louisiana; his father migrated from east Texas to Magnolia, Arkansas and worked for the Interstate Oil Pipeline Company. After spending a couple of years in college, Bill joined the Air Force. He spent four years in Korea. He returned to Shreveport after the war and went back to school at Centenary College in Shreveport for a business degree. His first job out of the service was branch manager for Bozier Bank and Trust. He got married and decided to get into the service station business. That venture was short-lived but taught him many important lessons and left him in debt. He was fortunate to get a job with Texaco in 1957, despite the recession at the time, and spent two years doing whatever jobs were needed until he landed a permanent position as a roughneck. He advanced through several positions and then ended up as yard foreman for the company's Morgan City shore base of its new offshore district. He continued to advance through the position of District Materials Manager and finally into the company's New Orleans Division Office, working in a position generally reserved for people with advanced college degrees. He occupied that position during the company's downsizing and retired as purchasing manager in 1992, after which he continued to do consulting for a small company in Morgan City

#### Summary of DA084:

Personal history: Born in Caddo Parish in Ida, Louisiana during the Rodessa oil boom; family migrated from east Texas to Magnolia, Arkansas; went to Ida High School, enjoyed the small town life; dad worked for Interstate Oil Pipeline Company, division of what is now Exxon Pipeline; during senior year family transferred to Sunset, Louisiana north of Lafayette, graduated Sunset High School; enrolled in Louisiana Technical University after high school; dad insisted Bill study petroleum engineering, but Bill wanted to be a coach; several friends decided to join

the service, joined the Air Force, returned to Barksdale Air Force Base in Shreveport after the Korean War; met wife whom he had known as a youngster; married, finished Air Force service, went to work for Bossier Bank and Trust, taking classes at Centenary College at night; worked two jobs, went to school, wife pregnant

Service Station: Was managing service station on the opposite nights was in college classes; kept books for friends on the side; could see the money they were making, went into business; after six months a short-term recession caused a serious setback; eventually found a buyer and sold out at tremendous loss; lost home, car, was deep in debt; wife had been raised in New Iberia, said let's go home and look for work; put in many applications and heard "You don't have any experience."

Getting on with Texaco: Texaco was not hiring; Bill had financial training from the service and correspondence courses from Pennsylvania; was given a chance in 1957; hired by drilling superintendent but on probation; spent first day at Ivanhoe Landing as welder's helper; handed the welder his rods, chipped flak after he made the welds; was put on the "xtry board" for anyone who was shorthanded; no days off, told maybe someday he would become a permanent employee; a few days later was put on a drilling rig as a roughneck; spent two years floating from one crew to another - pile driving, rig building, roustabout, flunky; worked 6 and 6; told the drilling superintendent was in debt and wanted as much overtime as possible; kept going out of necessity; sports and an autocratic daddy taught never to give up; was raised in hard times; that became a part of our way of life, you did whatever it took to achieve the goals you set out to achieve; finally got a job as a permanent roughneck

Career with Texaco: Worked as roughneck, derrickman, hurt back in accident and was put in production; made a gauger/pumper; spent five years in West Cote Blanche bay in New Iberia District; offshore district began to kick off; ended up in Morgan City; along with Harry LeBoeuf got shot at production foreman; started setting up shore base for drilling operations, was asked to come in and set up shore base; came in; got used to being home with family; long hours and hard work, loading boats, handling logistics, was a new challenge and enjoyed being home with wife and children every night; stayed as yard foreman; warehoused pipe; in the old days Texaco had warehouses and a dock; offshore vessels came in to be loaded with supplies and materials; at the shore base handled procurements, loading, logistics of boat and helicopter transportation; contracted out for all the equipment; 8 or 9 years later consolidated and created the Materials/Logistics Department; went from yard foreman to assistant district supervisor of materials; left and went to Africa to set up materials handling off coast of Ghana, was assistant supervisor of materials over there; had to demonstrate could do the job even without college degree; went for three months to set up operations to drill three wells off coast of Ghana; got promoted to District Materials Supervisor after returning to Morgan City

Move to New Orleans: Former District Materials Supervisor had been transferred to New York, then to New Iberia as vice president over Eastern Region over Texaco; he invited Bill to Division Office in New Orleans; did not have the formal education, they wanted a master's degree in business; he got that waived and Bill moved into the executive level; quite an experience; started downsizing, consolidated New Iberia, Morgan City, Harvey, and Houma offices into the Morgan City offices; the company had a human side to it; people worked hard, long hours, but were fair;

some of the finest people ever met, were family; saddened that the company went in the direction it did

Importance of college degree: Texaco spent a lot of money on training, schooling, continuing education; brought in people for short courses; contracted companies; regretted that I did not have a degree; college does a tremendous job of preparing a person to learn; but also does a disservice to people who come out and believe they can conquer the world; is only just a beginning; people in New York set the Texaco company policy; at one time everyone went to the field whether they had gone to college or not; got real learning in the field; they got away from that years later, to their detriment; Dad was right, he said in 1952 that engineers would own the oilfield; in 1952 engineers were tolerated but seldom listened to, referred to as "Damn Engineers;" old timers did not want the engineers out there; they asked too many questions; Dad could see down the road 20 years and was right

Texaco career: Ended up in a win-win situation in my career; worked hard every day I worked for Texaco, never ran the company down, never bought gas from any other company; then when flying in Texaco planes saw them stop and refuel with gas that was not Texaco; change occurred when the technology age started coming in; had to have more technical employees, no loyalty either way; can't plan on a career with Texaco any more; retired when at the top of career and did not like the direction the company was moving; management people were raised in a house of plenty, brought a lot of good things and a philosophy detrimental to the longevity of the company; they built up the company to sell it off; in the past Texaco had an austerity program, employees had to turn in used pencil to get a new one; the philosophy was if you take care of the pennies the dollars will take care of themselves

Overseeing purchasing: Lots of extravagance going on in service companies, but not for me; lived in a glass house; guy who hired me was a reorganizer, could take a poor organization and make it efficient; lots of waste in entertainment, some in Texaco; boss centralized procurement to take a lot of that out, took buying out of the field; knew he could trust me

Business operations: Texaco would put technical and nontechnical person side-by-side on the same job, until about 1990; started going more with the technology, probably a wrong thing to do; when in the field, at night, we'd go out and try to figure out how to get better lift on the wells, how to produce less water; engineer and operator worked together to come up with solution; would experiment to see if we could get them to produce more; engineer motivated by certain desire to want to achieve the impossible; I've always had the philosophy everything can be improved on; had excellent high school teachers; no one failed, teachers made you get it; also learned a lot in sports

Morgan City: Industry affected Morgan City; departed in last few years, hopefully will get channel deepened and some will return; very diverse small community; a lot of people with a lot of knowledge about a lot of things; people make up a community; have a lot of problems but a lot of good here; during boom years did not have the foresight for development to keep people here as a result of growth; lack of space, poor planning, poor vision of what could be; with collapse, oil companies moved away; now trying to get people back and create infrastructure palatable to people raising families; years ago the goal was to make a fast buck and move out

when the money was made; was not a very good place to raise a family because priorities were to make a quick buck; did have community spirit of rallying behind certain things, not too small

Raising children: Raised three children, two in grammar school and one in preschool when arrived; Morgan City was wide open, anything goes, typical boomtown; had the good points and bad points; was a 24-hour operation; prayed a lot when kids were teenagers; probably had to be more conservative with kids than parents in other areas, know where your kids were all the time; Morgan City was not as community-minded as it is now; after the boom was over it changed for the better; there was a core group even then but they did not have the influence they have now; biggest changes were in greater opportunities for young people; have lost a lot of young people who went off to college and have nothing to do unless working in the oil and gas industry; worked 6 and 6 and then 5 and 2; would rather have a few hours every day with family than a week off; am a church person, like to be in church with family

Religious services offshore: Served on committee of Southern Baptists, worked with representatives of state convention to try to set something up, but liability prevented it; ministry was thinking of renting a helicopter but could not resolve economic issues; decided to try to use video; ended up letting it be on volunteer basis; was involved in study in the mid- to late-1970s; local church tried to work with peoples' schedules to arrange meetings when people inshore; harder for city activities because people work for different companies on different schedules; guys who worked opposite schedules would team up to do volunteer work

Surviving difficult times: Almost missed the birth of third child, weather sometimes prevented flying; missed lots of things that normally would have done with family; did not have communication with family back home; wife was not expected to disturb her husband unless it was an extreme emergency - death or near death; wife had to take a stronger role in raising the family; survived by the Grace of God; "You just did what you had to do;" my situation complicated by severe business loss; didn't want to declare bankruptcy; people trusted me to pay it back, that was my upbringing; that was the mindset of everybody in the area I was raised, not just me

Reflections: Absolutely would do it again; the experience and the knowledge gained from those experiences could never have been learned anywhere else; no regrets; it was a learning experience the whole time.

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Dewey Wilson

Morgan City, LA

September 28, 2001, January 4, 2005

Interviewed by: Diane Austin, Betsy Plumb, Rylan Higgins

University of Arizona

DA012, RH019

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Dewey Wilson by Captain Carl Moore at the Young Memorial Campus of the Louisiana Technical College. Dewey retired from the technical college in the summer of 2001 and was very well liked and respected by the marine instructors there. As he and I talked, I came to realize that my early impression that Dewey had a long history with Young Memorial was wrong; he only began at Young in April 1999 when the school was expanding its marine operations program. However, what also became clear was that Dewey was among the first, if not the first, maritime educators working among the mariners of southern Louisiana when they began facing new Coast Guard requirements for licenses. The second interview was conducted as part of the study of the links between WWII and the offshore industry.

Dewey is a very humble man, but his pride and pleasure in his work shines through when he talks about his life and those with whom he has worked. His father was a merchant marine, and Dewey wanted to follow in his father's footsteps. At one point, he and his father were the only two in southern Louisiana with ocean licenses. When Dewey graduated from Patterson High School in 1944, he went to the South Pacific on a cargo ship. His ship was hit, and he ended up transporting corpses for the Graves Registration department until two months after the war ended. After returning home, Dewey went back to school and sailed on steamships for a couple of years. The shipping business was slow, so he and his brother bought a shrimp boat. When his father died in 1959, he looked for something that would allow him to stay home and be near his mother. At the time, the Gulf Area Vocational School of Abbeville was trying to organize a school in Morgan City. Dewey got involved with the school in 1960. He was contacted by people from South Lafourche and began teaching in Golden Meadow on weekends. In 1964, the State of Louisiana ran into financial problems and cut back the marine program, so Dewey went to work for Tidewater as a boat captain. He also found himself teaching classes for Tidewater. After an incident overseas while he was doing classified work for the Navy, he left Tidewater. After a series of mergers, he found himself back working for Tidewater.

#### Summary of DA012:

Early occupational history: went to South Pacific; ship damaged; transferred to Graves Registration; home to Louisiana after war ended and back to school; sailed on steamships; shipping slow, went into shrimping; took job with Gulf Area Vocational School; helped organize maritime education program in Morgan City; lots of community support; classes ran from 1960-1964; started teaching in South Lafourche; WWII landing craft had not required licenses; new supply vessels being built for the oil and gas industry required licensed personnel; first meeting in Golden Meadow at high school; saw all cars and thought it was a football game; 95 people

showed up for class; radio station would announce that he was driving into town; good people; warned the boat companies that the day was coming that they would not be able to operate because they did not have enough licensed personnel; offering the courses through the vocational school for big vessel companies; Louisiana had financial problems; cut down vocational program; Dewey to Tidewater

Working with Tidewater: hired as captain, also started teaching immediately; worked offshore supply in North Sea, England, Germany, Holland, West Africa, Angola, Nigeria, Persian Gulf, etc.; out up to 28 days at a time; stories of specific trips; taught classes between deliveries to upgrade mariners; discovered problems while doing classified work for the Navy; left Tidewater and went to Seahorse; base manager for drilling operation on east coast; Seahorse merged with Tidewater; back to delivering cargo and teaching; Tidewater having trouble with new hires with rapid expansion of business from late 1970s to early 1980s, started new hire training program; had just about hired all the shrimpers; people coming from all over the U.S.; Tidewater had training facility

Evolution: biggest changes were in licensing and celestial navigation; people overseas did not need licenses, companies would fly them over, not too fussy about lack of licenses elsewhere; in the early days they were trying to get the oil industry started and did not know what they needed; created Oil and Minerals license; took it away; now bringing it back; for ship's license they go more in depth; went along to help some of the guys take their Coast Guard exams; oral exams; some grandfathered in; whenever new Coast Guard commander in New Orleans, there would be changes; found that if you went with a legitimate problem they would listen; only disadvantage of O&M license was that they could not go to another industry; could not use fishing and inland vessel licenses offshore; lots of ex-Navy, Coast Guard, and mariners from the Great Lakes came into the industry; fishermen from east coast got their licenses and came in; difficult at first because they did not have the boat handling experience to back up to the rig; had knowledge to pass the test but needed indoctrination; one time group of 25 came down at once, maybe a half dozen left

Training: retired with Tidewater around 1990 after a little over 20 years, went back twice; now Tidewater's training is done under a contract agreement with Houston Marine in New Orleans; when first started with Gulf Area Vocational School had to have a teacher's certificate; made up the curriculum on the training ship; only one in Louisiana; at that time there was one high school training program in the U.S., on the Liberty Ship in New York; tailored the course to what was needed; today have to be approved by the Coast Guard; Tidewater started laying off; Dewey retired on a Friday and started at Young Memorial in 1999 when Young was expanding its program

High school program: first in the state; would get list of boys whose fathers worked in the industry, would go talk to them; could get a lot of surplus property by going to companies and asking for it; program lasted a little over 4 years till state sold the training vessel when it ran out of funds; they brought the program back 2 to 3 years ago, but it fizzled out; when times are good, people don't go to training

More on training and technology changes: most companies did not have their own training program; early classes offered a little bit of everything; classes changed with technology; navigational systems biggest change; self-taught; licensing and size of vessels other big changes; in early days friction between seismic people and shrimpers; movie Thunder Bay had many inaccuracies; Butch Felterman's boat in the movie

Early companies: Pan Marine started as shrimping company Twenty Grand; then Tidewater; Doc Laborde designed first boat specifically for offshore work, boat to back up to rig

Training materials: made them up, got daughter to mimeograph them; came up with study guide by debriefing guys who had just taken the test; didn't have time to teach theory; guys wanted their licenses; hard, but could do it because from the area

Engineering problems: contributed to redesign of vessels for North Sea; other problems in Alaska

Summary of RH019:

Dewey was one of a small group of people who had served in WWII and been involved in the early development of the offshore oil and gas industry in the Gulf of Mexico and was interviewed in a joint project of the University of Arizona, U.S. Minerals Management Service, and the National D-Day Museum. In this interview, Dewey talks mostly about his experiences during WWII.

Early history: childhood in Patterson, father in Merchant Marine, out on island when Pearl Harbor happened; graduated in May 1944, went into the Merchant Marine at age 16

Wartime experience: basic training, to the Pacific, before that U-boat scares in the Gulf, was working on shrimp boats in the Gulf at the time; had Navy uniforms with no collar stripes; experience in the Pacific, discharge, sent money home, worked for Graves Registration

Jewell (Judy) Wilson

Morgan City, LA

March 4, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA101

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I met Judy Wilson when I was at her house to interview her husband, Bill. After I had talked with Bill, Judy and I talked a bit and I learned that she had been raised by an uncle who worked for Texaco, that Bill had worked for Texaco, and that her daughters had worked for oil companies. I told her I was interested in getting the perspectives of women, and she agreed to be interviewed. I called her on my next trip to Morgan City and met her at her house.

Judy was born in northern Louisiana near the Arkansas border. Because of circumstances at home, she lived most of the time with her aunt and uncle and visited her mother and brother on holidays and summer vacations. Her uncle had worked in the oilfields in Texas, northern Louisiana, and elsewhere prior to moving to southern Louisiana with the Texas Company. Jewell finished high school in New Iberia and returned to northern Louisiana after graduation. There she and Bill Wilson (see DA085) married and remained until they returned to New Iberia where he took a job with Texaco. Jewell worked for insurance companies when she first got out of high school and then again after her third child started school.

#### Summary:

Personal history: Family from north Louisiana; raised by aunt and uncle in south Louisiana where he worked for the Texas Company; lived in Houma, Montegut, moved to New Iberia in 1938, graduated from high school there; moved back to north Louisiana to work after graduation, got reacquainted with Bill Wilson and married; he got out of the service (see DA085) and went into the service station business; did not do well in that; moved back to south Louisiana where Bill went to work for Texaco; stayed in New Iberia 10 years until Bill offered land job from Morgan City; lived in Morgan City from 1967 to 1983, transferred to New Orleans and stayed there until July 1989; back to Morgan City

Uncle's career: Began as roustabout, roughneck, then pumper and gauger; started in the Texas oilfields before I was born; worked in north Louisiana, Illinois, migrated to south Louisiana because that was where all the activity was; retired at 65, running his boat up and down the bayous to do the gauging; never saw where he was working, they didn't do that back then; didn't think anything of it when husband went to work for Texaco

Occupational history: After last child was born went back to work for insurance agency; underwriter would not insure people when they found out they worked in the oilfield; it was an eye opener for me, never thought of myself as oilfield trash; was never faced with that growing

up; in relation to other jobs when I was growing up the pay was pretty good and we didn't want for anything

Growing up in New Iberia: Movie theaters, city park, church activities; one Baptist Church; the oil industry brought people from different areas; New Iberia more French than Morgan City; friends spoke French at home; Bill worked offshore and they would speak French; got along well with the natives; lived in rental houses in New Iberia; aunt and uncle bought a house in 1945-46

North Louisiana: Moved up there after high school; went to work for the telephone company as an operator; stayed at the Business Girls Inn in Shreveport; stayed about two years but the hours were atrocious; went to work for Fulton Loan Service; it was awful, so quit and went to work for insurance company in the claim department, stayed four years; got married toward the end of that time; knew Bill from spending summers with mother and brother and grandparents in northern Louisiana; Dad worked for Texaco in southern Louisiana, drowned when I was 16 years old

More New Iberia: Lots of oil people, Texaco had such a presence in the area; also a fishing and hunting town; the economy was pretty steady; the biggest upset was during the war when things were rationed; the oil patch was stable, as long as you worked you got your paycheck; you had to really mess up in order to be let go; it was a family type company; Bill worked a lot of overtime to pay back debts; he was hired to work on the water, was gone a lot; worked 6 and 6 and then 7 and 7 or 14 and 7 offshore; no means of communication except in dire emergency by radio; had the first child a year after married; Bill was still in the service; moved to New Iberia when oldest child was about a year old; had two more children; you just handled it when he was gone; other women in the same boat; I was fortunate to have family that lived there; he missed some birthdays and holidays; didn't grieve over it because trying to do what was right and pay back debts; this was just a sacrifice we would have to make

Bill's injury: Was pregnant with second child when Bill fell and sustained a back injury; money got real bad, he begged them to let him go back to work to get back on the payroll; they did; we ate a lot of beans; when youngest child got older I went back to work; mother watched son when he was in kindergarten; stayed there 3 or 5 years, then moved to Morgan City; when Bill had gotten the job with Texaco there was a lot of relief; he was happy he had the job, I was happy

Lifestyle: We had bought a house in New Iberia, near school, family nearby; Bill got opportunity to get in on the ground floor in a new position, was not happy working offshore and being gone from home; moved to Bayou Vista, lived in rented house, shell roads; it was rough on the kids, when he was gone I was in charge and when he was home he was in charge; always took the first and last day in transition; only about 4 days of normalcy; when he was gone I made decisions; that caused problems between us sometimes; back then the husband made all the decisions; I'd mark his schedule on the calendar; when he pulled a double he would be gone 12 days; I am not a worrier; uncle and Bill were protective, did not talk about what was going on out there

Morgan City: Got settled in Bayou Vista; worked as bookkeeper and hated it; insurance company was looking for someone and I went to work there as an adjustor; company was bought out by company from Texas and I stayed; was personal lines adjuster; left to go with boss when he

opened an agency of his own; went with boss after another split; left when we moved to New Orleans and have not worked since.

Paul Woodhall

Houston, TX

August 1, 2003

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA121

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Several people told me that I needed to interview Paul Woodhall because of his longtime involvement in the oilfield diving industry and in the efforts to organize divers in the 1970s. I reached Paul in Baton Rouge and he agreed to be interviewed, but we had a hard time coordinating our schedules. In 2002, Paul took a job with BP and relocated from Louisiana to Houston. I finally caught up with him in Houston during the summer of 2003.

Paul Woodhall began diving in 1961 when he was serving in the U.S. military in Japan. He began scuba diving as a sport and ended up teaching classes while still in Japan. After his discharge from the service, he remained in Japan training divers. When he returned to the United States, he opted to go to a diving school rather than go back to college. Upon finishing diving school in California, Paul learned that companies working in the Gulf of Mexico offshore oilfields were hiring divers, so he packed his belongings and headed east. He arrived in Louisiana in 1964 and went right to work repairing damage from Hurricane Betsy. He worked as a freelance diver for several years and then took a job at J. Ray McDermott in 1967. He remained with the company until 1974. When his tender was killed in an accident offshore in 1969, Paul became involved in organizations that were working to increase safety in the diving industry. He helped organize a union for the Gulf of Mexico divers and was elected president. He stayed in that position several years until the union became inactive. He then worked as a consultant overseas for 6 and a half years. He returned to the U.S. and got involved in a couple of business ventures and consulting contracts before going to work for BP in 2002.

#### Summary:

Diving history: Paul had always been interested in diving, since 1960. It wasn't until he was in the service and stationed in Japan where he suffered from a bad football injury that he took up diving as an alternative sport. Shortly afterward he began diving seriously in Japan, he began teaching. Later, after he was discharged and returned to the states, though the G.I. Bill would have paid for an education or a trade school, he chose to go to diving school. Near the end of his training, Louisiana diving contractors began soliciting the top of the class, and Paul and many other moved to Louisiana for jobs in diving. He freelanced for a while and then went on with J. Ray McDermott from 1967-1974.

Safety: Paul had a number of friends who died or got hurt in the oilfield diving industry. He mainly attributes this to the fact that the industry was growing very fast and the industry "never stops," no matter what. As a result, basic safety regulations were often ignored and the standard decompression tables were pushed to allow divers to exceed the limits of depth and time at each

depth. As he moved up the ranks to a Journeyman dive status, Paul approached the contractors more and more about safety regulations, but they ignored his concerns. This, and the many people he saw get hurt, caused him to join the International Association for Professional Divers, of which he eventually became a member of the Board of Directors. He tried using the IAPD to as a forum to approach the Association for Diving Contractors about safety issues, but was unsuccessful.

Unionization: At great length, Paul discusses how the lack of diver safety catalyzed him to join the IAPD, and further seek the protection of unionization. A union was eventually created under the Marine Engineers Beneficial Association. Paul then became, after much deliberation and with much resistance and hesitation, the first president of the divers' labor organization. Once the labor organization was officially formed, membership went up from 87-500 in three months. Anticipating a problem, the big companies began discriminately firing union sympathizers. This led to several court hearings, all of which were lost. The divers' actions did push safety issues to the forefront and eventually resulted in greater safety standards. Divers who had been associated with the union were blacklisted and most went overseas where they generally found companies accepting the safety standards that were being denied in the Gulf of Mexico.

Continuing career: Paul went to Scotland on a 90-day contract and ended up staying six and a half years. He became a consultant to the industry. He then returned to the United States and got involved in a flexible pipe manufacturing enterprise. He then returned to the consulting business and opened a company, Wet Solutions, with Dale Fackler. He sold his part in the company to Dale and went back to consulting. He was doing consulting work for BP to improve their safety program when he was hired on as a company employee.

Dave Work

Houston, TX

June 4, 2002

Interviewed by: Tyler Priest

University of Houston/History International

MMS004

### Ethnographic Preface:

Dave Work was a top exploration manager for Amoco for many years and then with BP-Amoco after the merger. Received his M.S. in geology from UC-Santa Cruz and hired on as a geologist with Amoco in 1970. He retired from BP-Amoco in 2000 as regional president responsible for the Gulf Coast, Southwest, and Rocky Mountain states. His direct influence over activities in the Gulf started in the late 1980s.

### Summary:

Insightful discussion of exploration and exploration technology in the 1970s and 1980s. Touches on many topics, including bright spots, risk management, bidding strategies, turbidite reservoirs and the move to deepwater, and 3-D seismic.

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John Henry "Dickie" Written

Morgan City, LA

July 26, 2004

Interviewed by: Jamie Christy

University of Houston/History International

MMS048

Ethnographic Preface:

John Henry "Dickie" Written was born in Morgan City, Louisiana in 1937 but was raised in Texas. His father worked for Shell Oil on an exploration team and as a consequence Mr. Written moved around a great deal. He moved in with his aunt and uncle in Morgan City to finish high school and graduated from Morgan City High School in 1955. Mr. Written began to work for Shell Oil in June 1955 and continued to work part-time in Baton Rouge, Louisiana while he went to Louisiana State University. Mr. Written was drafted in to the Army in 1956 and spent 13 months in Korea. After returning from Korea, he returned to work for Shell and went to East Bay, West Lake Verret, Gibson, and New Orleans. Mr. Written began working for Shell as a roustabout then moved up to lease operator, operations foreman, production foreman, and then maintenance foreman for the entire East Coast and Gulf of Mexico. Mr. Written spent 30 years working for Shell Oil before his retirement.

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Kermit and Peggy Wurzlow

Houma, LA

March 27, 2003

Interviewed by: James Sell

University of Arizona

JS019

#### Ethnographic Preface:

The Wurzlow family is well known in Terrebonne Parish, for their general community involvement and because Wurzlow Abstract was a major player in land leasing operations for the oil fields. "Toody" White, at the Parish Assessor's Office, connected me with Peggy, Kermit's wife, who made arrangements for me to meet Kermit at the Abstract Office, since Kermit is semi-retired (he is 87) and doesn't spend much time at the office. Peggy was also there for the interview, because Kermit is hard of hearing, and she also added information. I can see why they have such a great reputation, these people are Hospitable with a capital H. After the interview, they took Penny and I to lunch, then Peggy drove us around the area, talking about the land ownership patterns and landscape.

Kermit Wurzlow is 87 years of age at present. His father, Frank, started Wurzlow Abstract Company in the 1920s, as the pioneer oil field lease broker. Kermit began working with his father in 1928, took over the company when his father died in 1947, and has continued to work for it to the present. His wife, Peggy, has also been deeply involved in the business throughout their marriage.

#### Summary:

**Early Oil Drilling:** Frank Wurzlow organized the first oil company in Terrebonne in 1913, the Wurzberger Oil Company. They drilled one dry hole and went broke.

**Wurzlow Abstract Company:** Started by Frank Wurzlow, Sr., as a lease broker. Wurzlow Abstract was also used as a middle man for assembly of tracts of land for the oil companies. Since the oil companies did not want competing companies to know when they were interested in a parcel of land, they would have people assemble oil leases in their own name, and later turn those leases over to the companies when field development began. The people who "fronted" for the oil companies had to be trusted, so reputation was very important. At times, Wurzlow Abstract would have several of these projects going. Many deals were made on a handshake, and the property owners too had to trust the lease broker. Kermit proudly stated, "My daddy saved many of 'ems' land for 'em."

**Land Ownership Patterns:** Were complicated because the original Spanish, "four by forty arpent (an arpent is an old Spanish land measure, slightly under 100 feet)" land grants were on a metes and bounds survey pattern, well defined in their frontage on the bayous, but less defined in the back areas in the marshes. This pattern is complicated by the inheritance divisions and Louisiana

state law (e.g., the state owns the water bottoms, but much of the "land" area is marsh). So the oil companies depended on local people to work through these issues.

**Abstracting:** The abstracts are records of land ownership. Because of the legal complications of ownership it is necessary to be able to trace the ownership history of a parcel of land, so that the lessees could be sure there would be no question of title infringement, liens, or other complications. The abstracts are outline documents of historical ownership, usually traced back to the original grants. Wurzlow Abstract has a valuable collection of these, started by Frank Wurzlow, and supplemented by Kermit.

**Overrides:** oil companies often offered to pay lease brokers either in cash or in overrides; override a kind of royalty - if the lease developed a producing field, owner of the override could be paid royalties for certain share of production. For example, a 48th override was payment for 1/48 barrel of production. Kermit still owns some of these royalty shares and still has hopes of some oil strikes.

**Neon:** The first neon light in town was at Bethlehem Steel, on Barrow St.

Peggy Wurzlów

Houma, LA

July 16, 2003

Interviewed by: Jessica Piekielek

University of Arizona

JP004

#### Ethnographic Preface:

Jim Sell had interviewed Peggy's husband, Kermit Wurzlów, on a previous trip to Houma. He suggested that I get in touch with her to see if she might be willing to help me get in touch with wives or women who worked in the oil industry. Peggy still works at the office, Wurzlów Abstracts. In fact, she seemed to be the only one in the office when I arrived at 10:30am. She was wearing what looked like perfect summer attire, an embroidered white peasant blouse, white pants and sandals. She was very friendly and helpful, and offered to help if we needed her advice on research we were doing for Jim at the courthouse.

Peggy Wurzlów, at the age of nine, moved to live at her grandfather's home on Bayou Black Drive in Houma in 1938. She studied at the Soulet Business College in New Orleans and returned to Houma to work at the Clerk of Courts. In 1950, she began to work for Wurzlów Abstracts, where she was involved in land leasing operations for oil companies. She has continued to work for Wurzlów Abstracts to the present.

#### Summary:

Personal: Peggy (Toups) Wurzlów, at the age of nine, moved to live at her grandfather's plantation home on Bayou Black Drive in Houma in 1938; married first husband and had children; divorced after ten years; Kermit Wurzlów is second husband.

Career: Peggy studied a three month course at the Soulet Business College in New Orleans; returned to Houma worked at the Clerk of Courts beginning in 1945 when the clerk was overwhelmed with processing soldiers' discharge papers. Herbert Wurzlów recommended that she apply at the courthouse. Stayed for several years. Was paid \$100 a month to start; saved \$25, gave some to her mother, bought clothes for herself and cigarettes and beer for her grandfather with the rest.

Oil Leasing: Began work for Wurzlów Abstracts in late 1950 or early 1951, after children were born. At that time, only Herbert and a niece were working for the company, and they were overwhelmed with work, because everyone was anxious to lease their lands to oil companies. They were so busy, they were typing leases right there on their cars when they went out to meet with landowners. Peggy remembered that at one point, landowners from Isle de Jean Charles traveled up to Dulac in boats to meet with them and sign the leases. Oil companies, too, were eager to arrange leases, and so once Peggy remembered going to someone's trapping camp to complete paperwork. Most often they went to people's homes. Peggy learned a few French

phrases for work, "Touch the pen," for example, to use when asking people to sign the lease. In some cases, she said people were not literate and could not sign their names.

**Landmen and Wives:** Peggy and Kermit had a lot of contact with the landmen from the oil companies. No landmen were local ("other than Kermit"). Landmen became good friends with Kermit. If they didn't have small children, wives would travel with landmen and help them with their work, such as typing. Also, part of being a landman meant "entertaining," taking someone out to dinner or for drinks. When Kermit's father was working, he and his wife would entertain people at their home, as there were no restaurants they could take people to. Peggy thinks that the oil business has lost some of its "personal touch"; in town, wives of oil workers were active in things like PTA, Peggy thought that a few oil wives helped start the arts council.

**Housing Oil Workers:** Because the family needed a supplemental income and temporary housing in the area was short, Peggy's grandfather rented trailer space to oil workers for three dollars a week. People could park their trailers, "Silver Bullets," which had hook-ups for electricity and water. Trailers did not have bathrooms, so workers and their families would use the second bathroom at the house. Her grandfather also converted a few rooms to apartments. This was Peggy's first contact with people connected to the oil fields. Often workers and their families would move, either to another oil field, or eventually back to their home states, but a few stayed and Peggy and her family remained friends with a few families. One couple staying at her grandfather's place took her to her first Super Bowl game in New Orleans. Most of the workers came from Texas and Oklahoma and worked as roughnecks and drillers.

**Impacts and Changes:** The growth of the oil industry brought several improvements to Houma: increased the Presbyterian Church congregation, helped school system grow, people were able to buy bigger and better homes, brought private schools, brought more variety and better quality of restaurants, and more hotels. In the 1930's, Houma had only one hotel, the Thatcher. Oil also brought Houma a hospital in the late 1930's. At first, people arriving from other areas to work in oil did not like locals, they looked down on them for having less education. There was some early resentment.

Joe Young

Morgan City, LA

March 22, 2004

Interviewed by: Jamie Christy

University of Houston/History International

MMS049

Ethnographic Preface:

Joe Young attended Centenary College in Shreveport, Louisiana and received a degree in Geology. He went to work on a seismic crew in 1951 and then went to as an analyst for a mud logging unit called Consolidated Well Logging in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas. Later, Mr. Young went to work for Dowell as a service engineer in Kilgore and Tyler. He then came to south Louisiana and worked offshore from 1956 to 1959. He went to Maracaibo, Venezuela and then came back to operate production leases in the Gulf of Mexico. In 1975, he went to work for Lease Service as a salesman. At the time of this interview, Mr. Young was retired and living in Morgan City.

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Ed and Mary Zamadics

Lafayette, LA

January 23, 2002

Interviewed by: Diane Austin

University of Arizona

DA028

#### Ethnographic Preface:

I was referred to Ed and Mary Zamadics by Mary's brother, Tom May. Tom is the business manager of the Society for Applied Anthropology, and when he learned about the history study he recommended I set up a meeting with Ed. When I called and explained the project, Ed was happy to participate. I met him and Mary at their home in Lafayette.

Ed Zamadics became involved in the oil and gas industry in 1953 upon graduating from Penn State University. He began work with Atlanta Refining Company and onshore worked in South Texas, Mississippi, and, by 1957, Louisiana. He left the field crew to go to the Lafayette office and stayed with the company until the downturn of 1960 when he was laid off. He went to work for Sinclair in Houston from 1960-1965 as a senior geophysicist. In 1965 he began work as an independent consultant, primarily for Atlanta Refining. He then started working offshore for a consortium that included Atlanta Refining, City Service, Getty, and Continental. After two years, his friends talked him into going back to Atlanta Refining, and he stayed there until his retirement in 1985.

#### Summary:

Occupational history: from Penn State to Dallas for Atlanta Refining, then to George West, Texas in 1953; recruiter came to Penn State; looked at a government job, but was offered this first and took it; the old people stuck with a job once they took it so he stayed with the job even though he was offered the government job the following day; was part of the field crew in south Texas and Mississippi for 3.5 years; in the early 50s the field crew shot the data; there were no computers, the work was done by hand in the office and finalized in the field office; the crews moved around a lot from one little town to another

Family life: married and moved from George West to Beeville; sometimes moved every 6 weeks, companies had spies to follow the crews to know where to drill next, so they told you the night before; had three days during which the company would pay for motel rooms until we could find a place to stay; there was tight bonding in the crew, we were a community; 15 people on the crew; longest hitch was 9 months in Tyler, shortest was 6 weeks

Crews: company crews stayed pretty much together; contract crews kept only a few and would go and hire local people; if you wanted to keep your job you had to move; called doodlebugging; with our crew we would have at least three professional people in the office; we went to explore; kept things secret, even the wildcatters would check where the majors were looking for oil;

burned all documents we didn't use, all maps were destroyed; managers would buy bootleg files, but when started work there was a sense of company loyalty, you trusted the company

Layoff: after laid off in 1960 lost some of the loyalty, did not feel companies were infallible; found out you've got to take care of yourself; geologists and geophysicists were the first to be laid off; went to work for Al Rich in 1965, in 1970 they bought Sinclair; that was going on in this business all the time and people would lose their jobs

Mary: was an RN living in Beeville, Texas, stayed in for 9 months until began moving and following the coast; things were different then, people did not expect much out of life, didn't have big goals; family moved around a lot; towns liked seismic crews coming in, brought in money; when first came to Lafayette a lot of people didn't speak English; oil and gas made an impact on their culture, they hired English schoolteachers, the kids were punished for speaking French in school, a whole generation lost the French; when first moved in some of the neighbors did not mix, but eventually all amalgamated; worked in Lafayette till 1960 when moved back to Houston; Mary went to work while Ed laid off, nurses can always get a job; seismic crews would come in, 3-4 had college degrees, came into town and brought diversity, education, new people

Coming to Lafayette: came right after Christmas in 1956, left June 1960; got off the crew to come to the office, had to take a cut in salary, Party Chief resisted, chiefs hated to lose their crew; had a friend already in Lafayette, quickly made friends in the office; about 25,000 people in the city at the time; interacted with people from other companies through the Geophysical and Geological Society; Herbert Heinan started the Oil Center in 1953-1954, before that company office was in Lake Charles; when came back to Lafayette in 1971 had trouble finding the Oil Center; had grown from mostly two lane streets; not many houses in Lafayette, had 9 children by then.

Going offshore: in 1965 was hired as consultants to work offshore; 1968 Atlantic absorbed Richfield; went back to work for them; worked from New Orleans east to Florida, used to be 4 lease sales, Ed was the only person left handling all that area; biggest change was that onshore the work was not as hurried and there was not that much data; offshore over the wide open water they generated tons and tons of data; lease sales were a hectic time, had to have all the data interpreted, always affected vacation to the beach in August; BLM would call for nominations, see which areas you were interested in, company would send areas in to the BLM to have them nominated and BLM would publish them; when moved to Lafayette, ARCO decided to go out on its own, I thought it was a disaster; offshore is very expensive, we could not bid on as many blocks as we would like to.

Lease sales: companies would nominate their blocks and the BLM would put them up; then would prepare for the lease sale by getting more data and deciding how much money to put up; could relax for a month or so right after the lease sale; biggest change was that digital computers could handle so much data; kept improving and improving; office in Plano to which everything that was shot was sent; they'd print it out and send your printouts; when I retired they started getting 3-D stuff, different kind of geophysics [describes tasks of geophysicist]; kind of a skill, so much knowledge and a little artistry, now more scientific and not much of your personal knowledge in.

Working in the field: everyone was assigned to a field crew to begin, even those from college; worked with surveyor, shooter, etc.; looking back it seems like time could have put to better use, but we were all veterans from WWII and people put up with more then; first offshore well for ARCO was on field in 800 feet of water, leased in 1972, drilled in 1974-1975; did not announce it because it would run up the price on the block; kept well tight and the government would not let out information for 3 years to give the company a chance to nominate and lease a block.

Switching companies: Sinclair was poor paying company, salary not adequate so went into consulting; no days off; thought that was not good either; friend wanted me back to ARCO; in the 1970s oil business was really booming, oil crisis in the Middle East upped oil prices, people thought everybody in the oil business was getting rich, thought about moving to another company until the oil embargo and then decided I had more time in with ARCO; the attitude in the companies has changed, you can work on Saturday, but they're not going to remember; in 1960 when they laid off people they laid off all the people at the bottom that were doing all the work; since retirement young boys from the office call and ask Ed; after retirement did some consulting with small companies with stuff in close where big oil companies are not interested.

Children: 9 of them, none in the oilfield, discouraged them; daughter wanted to go into geology, but I said no; in the 70s the girls started coming in as geophysicists, one with a master's; when things went down, nothing was transferable; I told my girls not to go into a narrow zone; in 1985, they retired the engineers too; did a clean sweep, companies were downsizing and getting rid of everybody over 45.

ARCO: began on the North Slope after buying Richfield because Richfield had the acreage; ARCO was chinsky, no bonus, finally got a bonus in 1980 when the embargo was on and it was hard to keep people; geophysicists were pretty stable, did not move from one company to another; company was a philanthropist, would match donations to colleges, etc.

Other companies: Texaco was always real tight knit; Superior in the late 50s paid well and gave people cars; so did Texaco; there was not much interaction, just at the geophysicist meetings.

Women: Petroleum Club had a rule, no women were supposed to be there at noon because the wives would come and there would not be seats; became a problem when had women employees, there was a lawsuit and they built on an addition; most of the women went somewhere else in 1985.

## 2. LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

<b>Interviewee(s)</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Interviewer(s)</b>	<b>Interview Number(s)</b>	<b>Researcher Affiliation</b>
Aalund, Niels	August 9, 2006	Houston, TX	Jason P. Theriot	MMS066	UH/HI
Acosta, Robert	February 7, 2003	Houma, LA	James Sell	JS016	UA
Adams, B.A. "Red"	January 17, 2002, July 14, 2004	Amelia, LA; Morgan City, LA	Andrew Gardner, Jamie Christy	AG055, MMS032	UA, UH/HI
Adkins, Gerald	January 14, 2002	Houma, LA	Tom McGuire	TM021	UA
Ainger, Ralph	November 22, 2002	Herndon, VA	Tyler Priest	MMS015	UH/HI
Albert, Vernon	November 7, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW027	ULL
Andrus, Nedra	June 11, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW055	ULL
Angel, Tom	November 11, 2002, November 21, 2002	Houma, LA	Diane Austin	DA067, DA078p	UA
Applebaum, Bruce S	November 12, 2002	Houston	Tyler Priest	MMS005	UH/HI
Arcenaux, Cleejus "Click" and Betty	March 26, 2002	Bourg, LA.	Emily Bernier	EB048	UA
Armstrong, Earl	July 19, 2002	Boothville, LA	Tom McGuire	TM050	UA
Arnold, Ken E.	May 10, 2004	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS030	UH/HI
Aucoin, Leonard	June 2, 2004	Morgan City, La.	Jamie Christy	MMS033	UH/HI
Ayers, Buddy	March 2, 2002, July 27, 2003	New Orleans, LA	Diane Austin	DA034, DA114	UA
Babin, Eddie and Marie	January 21, 2002, January 28, 2002	Houma, LA	Emily Bernier	EB026, EB034p	UA
Babin, Martial	July 18, 2001	Galliano, LA	Tom McGuire	TM002	UA
Backus, Milo M.	June 12, 2002	Dallas, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS001	UH/HI
Bacque, Oden "Donnie"	February 18, 2003	Lafayette, LA	David DiTucci	DD012	ULL
Bailey, Bill	June 26, 2001	New Orleans, LA	Rylan Higgins	RH001	UA
Bailey, P.T.	September 27, 2001	Morgan City, LA	Emily Bernier	EB021	UA

<b>Interviewee(s)</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Interviewer(s)</b>	<b>Interview Number(s)</b>	<b>Researcher Affiliation</b>
Baker, Jim	June 6, 2006	Houston, TX	Jason P. Theriot	MMS067	UH/HI
Bankston, Gene	December 3, 1999	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	SOC001	UH/HI
Barrett, Herb	January 22, 2002, January 28, 2002	Houma, LA	Emily Bernier	EB028, EB055p	UA
Barrilleaux, Julie	July 29, 2003	Amelia, LA	Diane Austin	DA118	UA
Barrow, Thomas D.	October 30, 2001, November 7, 2001	Houston, TX	Joe Pratt	OEC006, OEC007	UH/HI
Barry, Arthur	June 19, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz and David DiTucci	SW001	ULL
Bassett, Aubrey	January 16, 2003	Metairie, LA	Tyler Priest	MMS022	UH/HI
Belanger, Roland	November 20, 2002	Montegut, LA	James Sell	JS003	UA
Bellanger, Arthur	January 21, 2003	Grand Isle, LA	Tom McGuire	TM056	UA
Benton, Jerry	April 8, 2002	Houma, LA	Emily Bernier	EB052	UA
Bergeron, Robert "Bobby"	January 24, 2003	Houma, LA	James Sell	JS008	UA
Bernard, Lewis	July 30, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW013	ULL
Bernard, Melvin	July 22, 2001, July 21, 2003	Golden Meadow, LA	Tom McGuire, Diane Austin	TM006, DA107	UA
Besson, Frank "Peco"	March 19, 2003	Grand Isle, LA	Tom McGuire	TM061	UA
Bibee, James	May 27, 2003	Weimar, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS034	UH/HI
Billiot, Wenceslaus "Win"	January 19, 2005	Dulac, LA	Scott Kennedy	JLS03	UA
Billiot, Wilbert	July 24, 2003	Dulac, LA	Betsy Plumb and Joanna Stone	SK003	UA
Billodeau, Luke	June 17, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz and David DiTucci	SW002	ULL
Blackburn, Charlie	September 23, 1999	Dallas, TX	Tyler Priest	SOC002	UH/HI
Blanchard, Acklin	February 3, 2003	Houma, LA	James Sell	JS012	UA

<b>Interviewee(s)</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Interviewer(s)</b>	<b>Interview Number(s)</b>	<b>Researcher Affiliation</b>
Blanchard, Melvin	March 25, 2002	Houma, LA	Emily Bernier	EB046	UA
Blum, Rosalie	March 1, 2003	Morgan City, LA	Diane Austin	DA097	UA
Bollinger, Charlotte	July 28, 2003	Lockport, LA	Diane Austin	DA116	UA
Bonnette, Adrian	January 29, 2003	Houma, LA	James Sell	JS009	UA
Bookout, John	July 16, 1998, September 24 and October 1, 1998, December 18, 1998	Houston, TX	Tom Stewart	SOC003, SOC004, SOC005	UH/HI
Boudreaux, Moye	October 2, 2001, January 13, 2002, January 15, 2002	Houma, LA	Diane Austin	DA014, DA023, AG050p	UA
Bougeois, Bob	August 9, 2002	Lafayette, LA	David DiTucci and Steven Wiltz	DD009	ULL
Bourg, George	February 5, 2003	Montegut, LA	James Sell	JS014	UA
Boykin, Ray	June 28, 2001	Bayou Vista, LA	Rylan Higgins	RH003	UA
Bradshaw, Jim	May 7, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW050	ULL
Brasted, Lee	December 19, 1997	Houston, TX	Bruce Beauboeuf and Joseph Pratt	SOC006	UH/HI
Breaux, Minos	April 12, 2001	New Iberia, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG001	UA
Breaux, Numa	October 3, 2001, July 21, 2003	Larose, LA	Diane Austin	DA016, DA108p	UA
Broman, Bill	December 15, 1999	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	SOC008	UH/HI
Brooks, Ron	April 2, 2003	Houma, LA	James Sell	JS021	UA
Broussard, James "Cecil"	October 2002, December 12, 2002	New Iberia, LA	Norma Cormier, Diane Austin	NC001, DA079p	UA
Broussard, Sammy	November 15, 2002	New Iberia, LA	Diane Austin	DA072	UA

<b>Interviewee(s)</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Interviewer(s)</b>	<b>Interview Number(s)</b>	<b>Researcher Affiliation</b>
Brown, William	July 25, 2002	Lake Charles, LA	Diane Austin	DA055	UA
Bundy, Billy	July 23, 2001	Houma, LA	Ari Anand	AA011	UA
Burcalow, Leon	January 21, 2005	Thibodaux, LA	Christina Leza and Colleen O'Donnell	CL003	UA
Burgess, Jim	July 27, 2003	River Ridge, LA	Diane Austin	DA115	UA
Burgess, Leroy	September 19, 2001	Bayou Vista, LA	Emily Bernier	EB019	UA
Burton, Harold	March 22, 2003	Houma, LA	James Sell	JS018	UA
Byler, Pat	May 7, 2001	New Iberia, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG012	UA
Cake, Ed	March 29, 2003	Ocean Springs, MS	Tom McGuire	TM067	UA
Callais, Ronald	June 6, 2002	Golden Meadow, LA	Tom McGuire	TM036	UA
Callais, Weber	June 4, 2002	Golden Meadow, LA	Tom McGuire	TM034	UA
Camp, Ruth	July 11, 2003	Houma, LA	James Sell	JS030p	UA
Cantrelle, A.J.	July 17, 2001	Larose, LA	Ari Anand	AA006	UA
Cantrelle, Buddy	July 13, 2001	Cut Off, LA	Ari Anand	AA004	UA
Carline, Richard	January 6, 2003	Amelia, LA	Diane Austin	DA086	UA
Carline, Wallace	January 9, 2003	Amelia, LA	Diane Austin	DA089	UA
Chabert, Elvis "Al"	September 20, 2001	Galliano, LA	Tom McGuire	TM012	UA
Champagne, Roy	September 20, 2001	Galliano, LA	Tom McGuire	TM012	UA
Chargois, J.C.	May 2, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW049	ULL
Charpentier, Lloyd	January 14, 2003	Amelia, LA	Diane Austin	DA091	UA
Charpentier, Steven	July 12, 2002	Galliano, LA	Tom McGuire	TM044	UA
Chauvin, D.J. and Lucy	July 9, 2001	Chauvin, LA	Ari Anand	AA001	UA
Chauvin, Ferrel and Grace	July 13, 2001, July 18, 2001	Chauvin, LA	Ari Anand	AA003a&b	UA
Chauvin, Kerry	February 4, 2003	Houma, LA	James Sell	JS013	UA

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Cheremie, "MJ" and Tony	September 19, 2001	Galliano, LA	Tom McGuire	TM010	UA
Cheremie, Chester	March 4, 2002	Golden Meadow, LA	Diane Austin	TM028	UA
Cheremie, Linwood "Boz"	October 3, 2001	Cut Off, LA	Tom McGuire	DA015	UA
Cheremie, Mark	July 24, 2001	Houma, LA	Ari Anand	AA012	UA
Cheremie, R.J.	July 19, 2001, September 26, 2001	Cut Off, LA	Emily Bernier	EB008, EB020	UA
Chesson, Hubert	May 11, 2001	New Iberia, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG018	UA
Christ, Charles	March 18, 2003, January 19, 2005	Houma, LA	James Sell, Diane Austin	JS020, DA132p	UA
Clark, Joe	July 23, 2003	Boothville, LA	Jessica Piekielek	JP010	UA
Clark, Robey	June 25, 2003	Amarillo, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS035	UH/HI
Cochennic, Jay	March 18, 2002	Cut Off, LA	Emily Bernier	EB039	UA
Cockerham, Frances and Justillien, Buddy	July 29, 2003 and July 30, 2003	Berwick, LA	Diane Austin	DA119	UA
Cockerham, Joyce,	July 29, 2003 and July 30, 2003	Berwick, LA	Diane Austin	DA119	UA
Cockerham, Robert "Bob"	December 13, 2000	Morgan City, LA	Diane Austin	DA000	UA
Collins, Ed	April 8, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Robert Carriker	RC006	ULL
Collins, Wilbert	July 18, 2001	Golden Meadow, LA	Tom McGuire	TM003	UA
Collipp, Bruce	September 21, 1999	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	SOC012	UH/HI
Comeaux, Johnny	February 11, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Robert Carriker	RC002	ULL
Comeaux, Leon	August 15, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW024	ULL
Comeaux, Lorimer	March 22, 2002	Larose, LA.	Emily Bernier	EB043	UA
Conrad, Parker	May 10, 2001	Morgan City, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG017p	UA

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Constant, Nelson	July 23, 2001, July 18, 2002, January 13, 2005	Thibodaux, LA	Diane Austin, Diane Austin and Betsy Plumb	DA004, DA050p, DA131	UA
Couvillon, John	July 9, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW008	ULL
Coyle, Billy	April 8, 2002	Houma, LA	Emily Bernier	EB051	UA
Craig, William	July 24, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz and David DiTucci	SW011	ULL
Cramer, Neal	August 20, 2002	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS006	UH/HI
Creel, Evelyn	January 20, 2005	Cut Off, LA	Joanna Stone	JLS05	UA
Creswell, Tim	August 5, 2002; August 8, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz and David DiTucci; David DiTucci	SW016; DD008	ULL
Crochet, James "Peanut"	July 20, 2001, July 25, 2001	Houma, LA	Emily Bernier, Andrew Gardner	EB009, AG039p	UA
Crosby, Percy	January 22, 2003	Grand Isle, LA	Tom McGuire	TM058	UA
Culligan, Leland	July 7, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Robert Carriker	RC007	ULL
Cunningham, Jerry	June 8, 2001, January 11, 2002, January 14, 2002	Morgan City, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG028, AG045, AG049p	UA
Curole, Bernice	January 21, 2002	Larose, LA	Diane Austin	DA026p	UA
Curole, Windell	June 5, 2002	Galliano, LA	Tom McGuire	TM035	UA
Dagenhardt, Lloyd "Highpockets"	June 26, 2003	Houma, LA	James Sell	JS023	UA
Daigle, Irving "Sammy"	January 21, 2002	Houma, LA	Tom McGuire	TM025	UA
Daniels, Walt	November 21, 2002	Morgan City, LA	Diane Austin	DA077	UA
Danos, Allen	July 10, 2002	Larose, LA	Tom McGuire	TM041	UA
Dardar, Michael and Daisy	July 10, 2003	Boothville, LA	Jessica Piekielek and Diane Austin	DA104	UA

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Dardar, Thomas, Jr. and Noreen	July 26, 2001	Houma, LA	Ari Anand and Nicole Crosby	AA014	UA
Dardar, Thomas, Sr. and Beverly	July 26, 2001	Houma, LA	Ari Anand and Nicole Crosby	AA014	UA
Dardar, Whitney	July 14, 2002	Golden Meadow, LA	Diane Austin and Tom McGuire	DA046	UA
Darsey, Elton	October 1, 2002	Houma, LA	Tom McGuire	TM052	UA
Daspit, Walt	March 14, 2002, July 10, 2002, July 16, 2002	Mandeville, LA	Diane Austin	DA039, DA044p, DA048	UA
Davis, Haggai	July 8, 2004	Morgan City, LA	Jamie Christy	MMS060	UH/HI
Davis, J. Frank	May 10, 2004	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS030	UH/HI
DeFelice, Raymond	January 24, 2002	Lockport, LA	Emily Bernier	EB031	UA
DeHart, Esmiel "Dee"	July 26, 2001	Houma, LA	Ari Anand	AA013	UA
Delcambre, Clifton	May 1, 2001	Delcambre, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG008	UA
DeMartini, David	July 9, 2004	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS036	UH/HI
Denet, Edward Richard	July 22, 2003	Boothville, LA	Jessica Piekielek	JP007	UA
Deshotels, Ronald	January 19, 2003	Lafayette, LA	David DiTucci	DD004	ULL
Dias, Lee	June 7, 2002	Lafayette, LA	David DiTucci	DD001	ULL
Dickie, George	January 27, 2003	Thibodaux, LA	Debbie Z. Toups	DT002	UA
Dilsaver, Ed and Tess	July 24, 2001, January 5, 2005	Morgan City, LA	Emily Bernier, Rylan Higgins	EB012, RH020	UA
Dilsaver, John and Catherine	April 6, 2002, July 25, 2003	Morgan City, LA	Emily Bernier, Diane Austin	EB050, DA113	UA
Dion, Howard	July 16, 2001	Bourg, LA	Emily Bernier and Ari Anand	EB005	UA
Domingue, A.G.	December 22, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW031	ULL
Domingue, Eddie	June 19, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW003	ULL

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Dominique, Doughty	January 17, 2002, January 21, 2002	Houma, LA	Emily Bernier	EB023, EB027p	UA
Doss, Arles "AJ"	June 28, 2003, January 10, 2005	Houma, LA	James Sell, Lauren Penney and Colleen O'Donnell	JS025, LP001	UA
Doucet, Keith	September 25, 2001	Larose, LA	Tom McGuire	TM016	UA
Doucet, Manson	June 4, 2001	New Iberia, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG024	UA
Downey, Marlan	September 24, 1999	Dallas, TX	Tyler Priest	SOC013	UH/HI
Dugas, Harold	May 3, 2001	New Iberia, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG010	UA
Duncan, Flora	July 23, 2003	Boothville, LA	Jessica Piekielek	JP009	UA
Dunn, Patt	July 1, 1996	Columbus, TX	Joseph Pratt and Bruce Beauboeuf	SOC033	UH/HI
Duplantis, Clarence	May 16, 2001	Morgan City, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG021	UA
Duplantis, Elmer	February 5, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW038	ULL
Duplantis, Irvin and Drusella	July 16, 2003	Dulac, LA	Jessica Piekielek	JP005	UA
Dupont, Edward	July 02, 2001	Bayou Vista, LA	Rylan Higgins	RH004	UA
Dupre, Dennis D.	September 28, 2001	Houma, LA	Emily Bernier	EB022	UA
Dupre, Raymond	July 11, 2001	Point-Aux-Chenes, LA	Emily Bernier	EB002	UA
Durocher, Freddie	January 24, 2002	Chackbay, LA.	Emily Bernier	EB030	UA
Dyerson, Clyde	July 19, 2001	New Orleans, LA	Rylan Higgins	RH012	UA
Edmonds, Jim	August 11, 2006	Houston, TX	Jason P. Theriot	MMS068	UH/HI
Edwards, C.E. "Chuck"	April 30, 2003	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS023	UH/HI
Elliot, Russell	January 25, 2002	Houma, LA	Diane Austin	DA030	UA
Ellzey, E.J.	July 19, 2002	Venice, LA	Tom McGuire	TM049	UA

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Eshete, Daryl and Liz	March 23, 2002	Houma	Emily Bernier	EB044	UA
Estevens, Bill	August 6, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz and David DiTucci	SW018	ULL
Evans, Orde	February 25, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW042	ULL
Evans, Sam L.	April 9, 2002	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS002	UH/HI
Fackler, Dale	November 18, 2002, December 4, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Diane Austin	DA074, DA080p	UA
Falgout, Ted	March 14, 2002	Galliano, LA	Tom McGuire	TM033	UA
Fanguy, Floyd J.	July 16, 2001	Houma, LA	Ari Anand	AA005	UA
Fanguy, Phillip	March 25, 2002, April 10, 2002	Houma, LA	Emily Bernier	EB045, EB054p	UA
Farmer, Warren R. "Dick"	February 12, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Robert Carriker	RC003	ULL
Felتمان, F.C. "Butch"	October 3, 2000, January 17, 2002	Morgan City, LA	Andrew Gardner Rylan Higgins	RH016, AG054	UA
Ferris, R.L.	December 17, 1998	Lakeaway, TX	Tyler Priest	SOC014	UH/HI
Fields, Aubrey	July 30, 2001	Morgan City, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG042	UA
Fitzgerald, Clyde	August 14, 2006	Galveston, TX	Jason P. Theriot	MMS069	UH/HI
Florstedt, Jim	June 5, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW053	ULL
Flowers, Bill	June 18, 1999	Tyler, TX	Tyler Priest	SOC031	UH/HI
Folse, L.J.	March 17, 2003	Houma, LA	James Sell	JS017	UA
Forrest, Mike	June 29, 1999	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	SOC015	UH/HI
Foster, Joe B.	April 22, 2002	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest and Joseph Pratt	MMS003	UH/HI
Fournet, Robert	June 11, 2002	Lafayette, LA	David DiTucci	DD002	ULL
Francis, Antoine "Tee"	July 23, 2003, January 19, 2005	Dulac, LA	Joanna Stone Scott Kennedy, Betsy Plumb	SK002, JLS03	UA

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Frazell, W.D.	July 31, 2002	Lafayette, LA	David DiTucci and Steven Wiltz	SW015	ULL
Frederick, Larry	February 17, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW040	ULL
Fromenthal, Logan	July 6, 2004	Morgan City, LA	Jamie Christy	MMS037	UH/HI
Fryou, Lester	July 6, 2001	Morgan City, LA	Rylan Higgins	RH007	UA
Fullerton, Bill	March 19, 2002	New Iberia, LA	Diane Austin	DA042	UA
Galerie, André	December 17, 2001	Scottsdale, AZ	Diane Austin	DA021	UA
Galletti, Mary Ann	July 26-28, 2002	Houston, TX	Diane Austin	DA057	UA
Galvan, Lionel	June 3, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW052	ULL
Galvin, Ray	January 29, 2003	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS021	UH/HI
Garacci, Ben	November 21, 2002	New Iberia, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW029	ULL
Gardner, Charles "Pete"	July 5, 2001	Franklin, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG033	UA
Gaudet, Lloyd	July 10, 2001	Houma, LA	Ari Anand	AA002	UA
Gautreaux, Arthur "Tuts"	September 25, 2001	Larose, LA	Tom McGuire	TM016	UA
Gautreaux, Murphy, Doucet	September 25, 2001	Larose, LA	Tom McGuire	TM016	UA
Geer, Ron	December 12, 1997	Houston, TX	Bruce and Joe Pratt Beauboeuf	SOC016	UH/HI
Geist, Lloyd	June 28, 2003, January 10, 2005	Gray, LA	James Sell, Lauren Penney and Colleen O'Donnell	JS024, LP002	UA
George, Al	August 13, 2002; February 4, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW022; SW037	ULL
George, Beverly Cowart	July 23, 2002	Metairie, LA	Diane Austin	DA053	UA
George, Philip and Eleanor	September 25, 2001, January 21, 2002	Larose, LA	Diane Austin	DA009, DA024p	UA

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Gibbens, Jimmy	July 16, 2001	Metairie, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG035	UA
Giblin, Jim	June 30, 2006	Houston, TX	Jason P. Theriot	MMS070	UH/HI
Gilmore, Selwyn "Sebby"	July 8, 2003, January 11, 2005	Bourg, LA and Houma, LA	James Sell, Lauren Penney and Betsy Plumb	JS028, LP003	UA
Gipson, William E.	May 9, 2003	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS024	UH/HI
Giroir, Jake	May 8, 2001, July 31, 2001, January 7, 2005	Morgan City, LA	Andrew Gardner, Colleen O'Donnell and Diane Austin	AG015, AG044p, DA128	UA
Gisclair, Maxie	June 3, 2001	New Iberia, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG023	UA
Glynn, Andrew M. "Boom Boom"	September 18, 2001	Houma, LA	Emily Bernier	EB018	UA
Goodroe, Richard	January 18, 2002	Houma, LA.	Emily Bernier	EB024	UA
Graebner, Robert J.	June 13, 2002	Dallas, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS007	UH/HI
Gravelle, Charles de	July 26, 2002; December 2, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz and David DiTucci; David DiTucci	SW012; SW030	ULL
Gray, Karen	July 18, 2002	Thibodaux, LA	Diane Austin	DA051	UA
Green, B.T.	July 31, 2001	Metairie, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG043	UA
Gremillion, Ed	May 20, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW051	ULL
Grice, Billye	February 11, 2004	Morgan City, LA	Diane Austin	DA122	UA
Griffin, Abraham	July 23, 2001	Golden Meadow, LA	Tom McGuire	TM008	UA
Grow, Ira and Cecile	October 5, 2000, July 18, 2003	Morgan City, LA	Rylan Higgins, Diane Austin	RH017, DA106	UA
Grubbs, C.E. "Whitey"	March 20, 2002, September 30, 2002	Baton Rouge, LA	Diane Austin	DA043, DA061p	UA

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Guidry, Anna Belle "Rusty"	July 16, 2002	Bush, LA	Diane Austin	DA048	UA
Guidry, John Allen	March 26, 2002	Larose, LA	Emily Bernier	EB047	UA
Guidry, Richard "Dick"	October 4, 2001	Galliano, LA	Diane Austin	DA018	UA
Guzzetta, Vince	July 1, 2004	Morgan City, LA	Jamie Christy	MMS038	UH/HI
Hahn, Clyde	July 2, 2001	Franklin, LA	Emily Bernier and Andrew Gardner	AG031	UA
Hammonds, Charles	December 6, 2002	Houma, LA	James Sell	JS004	UA
Harris, Michael	March 18, 2003	Grand Isle, LA	Tom McGuire	TM060	UA
Harrison, Henry	August 8, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz and David DiTucci	SW019	ULL
Hartgen, Carol	November 22, 2002	Reston, VA	Tyler Priest	MMS016	UH/HI
Hasenpflug, Harry	August 22, 2002	Sugarland, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS008	UH/HI
Hebert, Betty Roth	March 4, 2002	Thibodaux, LA	Diane Austin	DA035	UA
Hebert, Earl	December 5, 2002	Morgan City, LA	Diane Austin	DA082	UA
Hebert, James "Jimmy"	April 17, 2001	New Iberia, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG003	UA
Henderson, Dolores	July 16, 2001, March 7, 2003	Morgan City, LA	Diane Austin Rylan Higgins	RH011, DA104	UA
Henry, Ed	November 18, 2002, January 24, 2005	Houma, LA	Diane Austin James Sell	JS002, DA138	UA
Henry, Merian and Ed	July 15, 2003	Houma, LA	Jessica Piekielek	JP003	UA
Hernandez, Cliff	May 1, 2001	New Iberia, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG007	UA
Hingle, Paul	March 12, 2002	Port Sulphur, LA	Tom McGuire	TM031	UA
Hirsch, Robert	November 26, 2003	Navasota, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS039	UH/HI
Hobbs, Fannie	July 23, 2003	Bayou Vista, LA	Diane Austin	DA109	UA

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Holdridge, Herb	August 4, 2006	Houston, TX	Jason P. Theriot	MMS071	UH/HI
Holland, D. Scott	February 3, 2003	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS025	UH/HI
Howard, Bob	May 18, 2000	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	SOC033	UH/HI
Hughson, B.B.	June 26, 2002	New Orleans, LA	Tyler Priest	MMS009	UH/HI
Huttman, Steve	August 23, 2006	Galveston, TX	Jason P. Theriot	MMS072	UH/HI
Hynson, Tom	October 9, 2002	Schriever, LA	Diane Austin	DA065	UA
Jackson, H.L.	January 30, 2002	Houma, LA	Emily Bernier	EB037	UA
Jackson, Pierre	June 8, 2001	Berwick, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG029	UA
Jacques, Jesse des	October 8, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW025	ULL
Jefferson, David	January 7, 2003	New Iberia, LA	Diane Austin	DA087	UA
Jett, Jimmy	July 3, 2001	Morgan City, LA	Rylan Higgins	RH005	UA
Johnson, John	January 11, 2005	New Orleans, LA	Diane Austin	DA129	UA
Johnston, Clyde	July 24, 2004	Morgan City, LA	Jamie Christy	MMS040	UH/HI
Joseph, Rose and Warren "Chuck"	November 14, 2002	New Iberia, LA	Lois Boutte Diane Austin	DA071	UA
Kaigler, Kenneth	June 25, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW005	ULL
Kennedy, Altha Lee	May 1, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW048	ULL
King, Craig	August 7, 2006	Houston, TX	Jason P. Theriot	MMS073	UH/HI
King, Earl	September 28, 2001	Morgan City, LA	Diane Austin	DA013	UA
Kleinpeter, Huey	August 6, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW017	ULL
Kleinpeter, Lee	January 24, 2002	New Iberia, LA	Diane Austin	DA029	UA
Kleinpeter, Lee and Tommy	November 14, 2002	New Iberia, LA	Steven Wiltz, Diane Austin and David DiTucci	SW028	ULL

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Knox, Gloria	November 6, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW026	ULL
Kyle, Ed	September 23, 2001, September 27, 2001	New Iberia, LA	Diane Austin	DA007	UA
Laborde, Alden J. "Doc"	January 13, 2005	New Orleans, LA	Betsy Plumb Diane Austin	DA130	UA
Laborde, John P.	June 26, 2002	New Orleans, LA	Tyler Priest	MMS010	UH/HI
Lambson, Alfred	August 15, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW023	ULL
Lampton, Jim	July 2, 2003	Cold Spring, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS041	UH/HI
Landry, Patrick	January 23, 2003	Grand Isle, LA	Tom McGuire	TM059	UA
Landry, Sylvia Jean	January 21, 2005	Thibodaux, LA	Diane Austin	DA135	UA
Larner, Ken	September 24, 2002	Golden, CO	Tyler Priest	MMS011	UH/HI
Lastrapes, William Dudley	February 25, 2003	Lafayette, LA	David DiTucci	DD013	ULL
Latham, Bud	July 16, 2002	Madisonville, LA	Tom McGuire	TM047	UA
Laws, Verdie	November 18, 2002	Patterson, LA	Diane Austin	DA075	UA
LeBlanc, Herman	January 27, 2002, January 29, 2002	Cocodrie, LA	Emily Bernier	EB032, EB036	UA
LeBlanc, Joseph	August 8, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW020	ULL
LeBoeuf, Harry and Gladys	January 2, 2003, July 21, 2004	Morgan City, LA	Diane Austin, Jamie Christy	DA083, MMS062	UA, UH/HI
Lee, Arthur	November 13, 2002, January 11, 2005	Houma, LA	Diane Austin, Lauren Penney	DA069, LP004	UA
Lee, Griff	June 26, 2001	New Orleans, LA	Rylan Higgins	RH001	UA
Lefort, Pershing and Ophelia	March 5, 2002	Larose, LA	Tom McGuire	TM029	UA
LeJeune, Houston	March 22, 2004	Morgan City, LA	Jamie Christy	MMS027	UH/HI

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Lewis, Hartwell	October 4, 2002	Houma, LA	Tom McGuire	TM053	UA
Lirette, Eugis "Shorty"	July 17, 2001	Theriot, LA	Emily Bernier	EB006	UA
Lirette, Melvin	July 27, 2001, September 11, 2001, January 15, 2002	Houma, LA	Emily Bernier, Andrew Gardner	EB013, EB015, AG051p	UA
Lirette, W.F. "Bill"	July 27, 2001, September 11, 2001	Houma, LA	Emily Bernier	EB013, EB015	UA
Lirette, Wayne	July 27, 2001	Houma, LA	Emily Bernier	EB013	UA
Little, Gary Don	December 12, 2002	Houma, LA	James Sell	JS005	UA
Loftin, Lillie	March 29, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Emily Bernier	EB049	UA
Long, Bob	June 7, 2001	Morgan City, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG026	UA
Long, Miner	July, 16, 2003	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS050	UH/HI
Looper, Robert "Bob"	February 22, 2003	Golden Meadow, LA	Debbie Z. Toups	DT003	UA
Lowry, Rufin	February 27, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW044	ULL
Lucas, Ed and Juliet	June 26, 2003	New Iberia, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW058	ULL
Macnab, Alistair	July 24, 2006	Houston, TX	Jason P. Theriot	MMS074	UH/HI
Manzilillo, Jim	June 23, 2006	Houston, TX	Jason P. Theriot	MMS075	UH/HI
Marin, Rufus	August 1, 2002	New Iberia, LA	David DiTucci and Steven Wiltz	DD006	ULL
Marmande, R.H.	April 9, 2002	Theriot, LA.	Emily Bernier	EB053p	UA
Marquardt, Earl	June 26, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW006	ULL
Martin, Jimmie	June 7, 2002	Galliano, LA	Tom McGuire	TM037	UA
Masters, Roy	January 29, 2002	Houma, LA	Emily Bernier	EB035	UA
Matherne, F.J.	July 11, 2001, September 11, 2001	Bourg, LA	Emily Bernier	EB003, EB014	UA
Mattei, Larry	January 31, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW035	ULL
Mayon, Terry	March 3, 2004	Morgan City, LA	Jamie Christy	MMS042	UH/HI

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McCord, Jack	January 8, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW032	ULL
McCord, Patsy	January 30, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Robert Carriker	RC001	ULL
McCully, Jack	January 18, 2002, January 19, 2002	Des Allemands, LA	Andrew Gardner, Emily Bernier	AG056, EB025p	UA
McQuaid, L.D. "Mac"	July 11, 2002	Larose, LA	Tom McGuire	TM042	UA
Melancon, Murphy	July 21, 2001	Point-Aux-Chenes, LA	Ari Anand	AA008	UA
Mellington, Lyle	June 19, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW056	ULL
Merriman, Bob	November 15, 2002	New Iberia, LA	Diane Austin	DA073	UA
Michel, Drew	July 26, 2002	Houston, TX	Diane Austin	DA056	UA
Michel, Peggy	March 21, 2005	Houston, TX	Diane Austin	DA139	UA
Mickleberry, Mick	July 16, 2002	New Orleans, LA	Tom McGuire	TM046	UA
Middleton, Howard	July 16, 2006	Houston, TX	Jason P. Theriot	MMS076	UH/HI
Miguez, Ronnie	January 14, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW034	ULL
Miller, Charles	August 11, 2004	Houma, LA	Diane Austin	DA126	UA
Miller, Jim	June 20, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW004	ULL
Miller, Lillian	August 10, 2004, August 11, 2004	Lafayette, LA, Houma, LA	Diane Austin	DA124, DA125	UA
Miller, Lynda	June 28, 2006, June 29, 2006	Houma, LA	Diane Austin	DA141	UA
Mills, Charles	June 27, 2006	Pearland, TX	Jason P. Theriot	MMS077	UH/HI
Mitchell, Roland	March 13, 2002	Houma, LA	Emily Bernier	EB038	UA
Molaison, Richard	January 31, 2003	Houma, LA	James Sell	JS011	UA
Monteiro, John D.	July 5, 2003	Houma, LA	James Sell	JS026	UA
Montgomery, Roy	February 27, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Robert Carriker	RC005	ULL
Moore, Sharon	February 27, 2003	Patterson, LA	Diane Austin	DA094	UA

<b>Interviewee(s)</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Interviewer(s)</b>	<b>Interview Number(s)</b>	<b>Researcher Affiliation</b>
Mouton, William Hugh	July 31, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz and David DiTucci	SW014	ULL
Moville, James	June 27, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW060	ULL
Mullen, Valine	March 5, 2003	Patterson, LA	Diane Austin	DA103	UA
Mullendore, Doris	March 3, 2003	Morgan City, LA	Diane Austin	DA100	UA
Murphy, Don	September 10, 2002	Houston, TX	Diane Austin	DA059	UA
Murray, Roy	June 1, 2006	Houston, TX	Jason P. Theriot	MMS078	UH/HI
Nanz, Bob	September 15, 1998	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	SOC020	UH/HI
Naquin, Donald	July 10, 2001, July 26, 2001	Bourg, LA	Emily Bernier, Andrew Gardner	EB001, AG040p	UA
Naquin, Frank	July 23, 2001	Thibodaux, LA	Ari Anand	AA009	UA
Naquin, T.R. and Elaine	December 5, 2002	Morgan City, LA	Diane Austin	DA081	UA
Naughton, Scott	September 10, 2002	Houston, TX	Diane Austin	DA059	UA
Noble, Willy "Dub"	September 14, 2001, January 4, 2005	Morgan City, LA	Emily Bernier, Rylan Higgins and Betsy Plumb	EB016, RH018	UA
O'Brien, Jerry	June 5, 2002	Conroe, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS003	UH/HI
Olin, Loyd	July 23, 2001	Houma, LA	Emily Bernier	EB010	UA
Olivier, Christian "Buster"	October 7, 2002	Houma, LA	James Sell	JS001	UA
Ordogne, Marcelle	February 26, 2003	Morgan City, LA	Diane Austin	DA093	UA
Otteman, Lloyd	May 17, 2001	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	SOC030	UH/HI
Ottinger, Patrick	August 12, 2003	Lafayette, LA	David DiTucci	DD010	ULL
Oynes, Chris	July 8, 2003	Harahan, LA	Tyler Priest	MMS043	UH/HI
Paine, Sam	June 8, 1999	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	SOC032	UH/HI
Parr, Roy	June 8, 2001, February 27, 2003	Baldwin, LA	Andrew Gardner, Diane Austin	AG030, DA095p	UA
Patout, Rene Louis and Violet	March 13 2002	New Iberia, LA	Carolyn Cummings	CC001	UA

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Patout, Shawnee	April 5, 2003 and April 6, 2003	New Iberia, LA	Debbie Bryant	DB001	UA
Pattarozzi, Richard	May 15, 2000	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	SOC021	UH/HI
Pawley, Julian	November 13, 2002	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS018	UH/HI
Pearce, Charles	July 6, 2004	Morgan City, LA	Jamie Christy	MMS044	UH/HI
Pedersen, Jan	January 24, 2002	Algiers, LA	Tom McGuire	TM027	UA
Peebler, Robert	August 21, 2002	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS012	UH/HI
Perron, Jim	September 29, 2001	Lafayette, LA	Tom McGuire	TM020	UA
Perry, Ken	January 8, 2003, July 23, 2003	Patterson, LA	Diane Austin	DA088, DA110p	UA
Petersen, Bill	October 2, 1999	Houston, TX	Joe Pratt	OEC029	UH/HI
Petrovich, Luke	March 13, 2002, July 11, 2003	New Orleans, LA	Diane Austin	DA036, DA105	UA
Pfister, Ted	October 2, 2003	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS026	UH/HI
Phillips, Maurice	February 25, 2003	Grand Bayou, LA	Diane Austin	DA092	UA
Phillips, Myrtle	February 25, 2003	Grand Bayou, LA	Diane Austin	DA092	UA
Picou, Ed Jr.	July 8, 2003	New Orleans, LA	Tyler Priest	MMS045	UH/HI
Pinell, Elce	July 20, 2001	Montegut, LA	Ari Anand	AA007	UA
Pipsair, Chester "Blackie"	January 22, 2005	Pierre Part, LA	Diane Austin	DA136	UA
Pitre, Amy	July 28, 2003	Cut Off, LA	Jessica Piekielek	JP012	UA
Pitre, Loulan	September 24, 2001	Cut Off, LA	Diane Austin and Tom McGuire	DA008	UA
Pitre, R. D.	June 29, 2004	Morgan City, LA	Jamie Christy	MMS063	UH/HI
Pizzolato, Samuel C.	July 18, 2002	Boothville, LA	Tom McGuire	TM048	UA

<b>Interviewee(s)</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Interviewer(s)</b>	<b>Interview Number(s)</b>	<b>Researcher Affiliation</b>
Plaisance, Hurby	July 23, 2001	Golden Meadow, LA	Tom McGuire	TM007	UA
Poiencot, Russell	July, 24 2001, July 25, 2001	Houma, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG037, AG038	UA
Poncio, Inez	January 12, 2005	Morgan City, LA	Lauren Penney, Joanna Stone, and Colleen O'Donnell	JLS02	UA
Poorman, Frank	December 8, 1998	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest and Sam Morton	SOC022	UH/HI
Proffitt, Jack	July 10, 2002	Sunset, LA	Steven Wiltz and David DiTucci	SW009	ULL
Prosperie, Werlien	July 9, 2003	Houma, LA	James Sell	JS029	UA
Pyle, Morris	August 7, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz and David DiTucci	SW062	ULL
Redmond, John	November 12, 1999	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	SOC023	UH/HI
Reilly, John	October 30, 2002	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS013	UH/HI
Renois, Emmett H.D.	July 17, 2001	Cut Off, LA	Tom McGuire	TM001	UA
Renois, Joycelyn	July 28, 2003	Cut Off, LA	Diane Austin	DA117	UA
Renois, Theodore "Butch"	July 17, 2001	Cut Off, LA	Tom McGuire	TM001	UA
Reyes, Dwight	July 22, 2003	Grand Bayou, LA	Jessica Piekielek	JP008	UA
Rhodes, Percy	January 24, 2003	Houma, LA	James Sell	JS007	UA
Rhodes, Wilbert	January 29, 2003	Bourg, LA	James Sell	JS010	UA
Richardelle, E.J.	July 22, 2001	Cut Off, LA	Diane Austin	DA003	UA
Richardelle, Katherine	July 22, 2001, January 21, 2002	Cut Off, LA	Diane Austin	DA003, DA026p	UA
Richoux, Irvin	March 20, 2003	Grand Isle, LA	Tom McGuire	TM063	UA

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Rigaud, Aubin Clovis	January 22, 2003, January 20, 2005	Grand Isle, LA	Tom McGuire, Christina Leza	TM057, CL002	UA
Rivet, Al	April 18, 2001	New Iberia, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG004	UA
Robb, William	August 19, 2006	Houston, TX	Jason P. Theriot	MMS079	UH/HI
Robertson, Ira	September 17, 2001	Thibodaux, LA	Emily Bernier	EB017	UA
Robin, Joseph Wilson	July 1, 2002	Arnaudville, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW007	ULL
Robin, Russell	June 13, 2002	Lafayette, LA	David DiTucci	DD003	ULL
Robinson, Joe and Mildred	January 16, 2002	Houma, LA	Tom McGuire, Diane Austin, and Emily Bernier	DA023	UA
Rodgers, Billy	April 4, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW046	ULL
Rogers, Elgin	March 20, 2002	Bayou Blue, LA	Emily Bernier	EB042	UA
Rogers, L.A. Pete	January 16, 2002, January 5, 2005	Patterson, LA	Andrew Gardner, Diane Austin and Betsy Plumb	AG052, AG053p, DA127	UA
Rome, MacNeely	September 22, 2001	Golden Meadow, LA	Tom McGuire	TM014	UA
Ross, Burt	July 24, 2001	Morgan City, LA	Emily Bernier	EB011	UA
Rousso, Santo	July 27, 2001, January 6, 2005	Morgan City, LA	Andrew Gardner, Rylan Higgins and Betsy Plumb	AG041, RH021	UA
Rousso, Stella	January 12, 2005	Morgan City, LA	Lauren Penney, Joanna Stone and Colleen O'Donnell	JLS01	UA
Rucks, William	January 19, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW033	ULL
Ruffin, Roussell	July 19, 2001	Morgan City, LA	Rylan Higgins	RH010	UA
Ruiz, Burleigh and Molly	July 17, 2001	Houma, LA	Emily Bernier	EB007	UA

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Ryan, James	July 19, 2004	Morgan City, LA	Jamie Christy	MMS064	UH/HI
Ryan, John and Marguerite	May 8, 2001, January 11, 2002, March 3, 2003, January 6, 2005	Patterson, LA	Andrew Gardner, Diane Austin, Rylan Higgins and Betsy Plumb	AG016, AG046p, DA099, RH022	UA
Sadler, Forrest	April 3, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW045	ULL
Salter, Norman "Pete"	February 4, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW036	ULL
Samaha, Mary	July 16, 2001, January 22, 2002	Houma, LA	Emily Bernier	EB004, EB029	UA
Sanford, Joe and Susie	October 5, 2002, October 8, 2002	Morgan City, LA	Diane Austin	DA063, DA064	UA
Santiny, Carl and Georgia	March 20, 2003	Grand Isle, LA	Tom McGuire	TM064	UA
Santiny, Sidney and Mildred	January 21, 2003	Grand Isle, LA	Tom McGuire	TM055	UA
Savoie, Earl P.	July 15, 2003	Dulac, LA	Jessica Piekielek and Scott Kennedy	JP002	UA
Savoie, Joyce	July 23, 2002	Boutte, LA	Diane Austin	DA052	UA
Schouest, Joseph	March 16, 2002, July 11, 2002, July 15, 2002	Covington, LA	Diane Austin	DA041, DA045, DA047p	UA
Schrack, Ben	February 26, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW043	ULL
Schwab, Frank	August 13, 2002	New Iberia, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW021	ULL
Scott, Christine	July 30, 2004	Morgan City, LA	Jamie Christy	MMS065	UH/HI
Sellers, Emmet	July 20, 2004	Morgan City, LA	Jamie Christy	MMS046	UH/HI
Seneca, Rene	May 9, 2001, July 21, 2004	Berwick, LA; Morgan City, LA	Andrew Gardner and Jamie Christy	AG014, MMS061	UA, UH/HI
Shaw, John	February 13, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Robert Carriker	RC004	ULL
Shea, Jerry	May 31, 2001	New Iberia, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG022	UA

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Shirley, O.J.	June 8, 1999	Houston, TX	Tom Stewart	SOC026	UH/HI
Shivers, Robert	January 12, 2002, January 12, 2002	Patterson, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG047p, AG048	UA
Shivers, W.G.	November 19, 2002	Patterson, LA	Diane Austin	DA076	UA
Simon, Bobby	February 18, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW041	ULL
Smith, Larry	September 19, 2002	Lafayette, LA	David DiTucci and Steven Wiltz	DD011	ULL
Smith, Roy	October 10, 2002	New Orleans, LA	Diane Austin	DA066	UA
Sonnier, Claude	July 23, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW061	ULL
St.Pierre, George	September 26, 2001	Cut Off, LA	Diane Austin	DA010	UA
Standridge, Joe	April 30, 2001	St. Martinville, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG006	UA
Stansbury, Barbara	July 25, 2003	Morgan City, LA	Diane Austin	DA112	UA
Steinhorst, Richard	February 13, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW039	ULL
Stemmans, Don	August 5, 2002	Lafayette, LA	David DiTucci and Steven Wiltz	DD007	ULL
Stephens, Ray	June 19, 2002	Lafayette, LA	David DiTucci	DD005	ULL
Steward, Leighton	May 11, 2004	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS080	UH/HI
Subra, Wilma	July 24, 2003	New Iberia, LA	Diane Austin	DA111	UA
Sullivan, Vinson "Bill"	July 28, 2001	Houma, LA	Ari Anand	AA015	UA
Swanlund, Cliff	September 17, 1999	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	SOC027	UH/HI
Talbot, Gilbert and Russell	March 19, 2002	Montegut, LA	Emily Bernier	EB040	UA
Tarleton, Oran	September 10, 2002	Houston, TX	Diane Austin	DA059	UA
Taylor, C.E. Joe	May 14, 2001	New Iberia, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG020	UA
Taylor, George	July 29, 2002	Irving, TX	Diane Austin	DA058	UA
Terrell, William	June 27, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW059	ULL

<b>Interviewee(s)</b>	<b>Date(s)</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Interviewer(s)</b>	<b>Interview Number(s)</b>	<b>Researcher Affiliation</b>
Theriot, Norman	September 30, 2002	Larose, LA	Tom McGuire	TM051	UA
Thibodaux, Howard	July 7, 2001	Donner, LA	Rylan Higgins	RH008	UA
Thorjussen, Terge "Ted"	August 1, 2006	Clear Lake, TX	Jason P. Theriot	MMS081	UH/HI
Tillery, Billy Joe	January 18, 2002	Houma, LA	Tom McGuire	TM023	UA
Tisdale, Charles	May 3, 2001	New Iberia, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG009	UA
Trahan, P.J.	March 20, 2002	Gretna, LA	Emily Bernier	EB041	UA
Trosclair, Lou	May 8, 2001	Bayou Vista, LA	Jamie Christy	AG013	UA
Trosclair, Lucius	July 2, 2004	Morgan City, LA	Andrew Gardner	MMS058	UH/HI
Truxell, Robert "Bob"	June 25, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Steven Wiltz	SW057	ULL
Tucker, Larry	March 2, 2003	Pearl River, LA	Diane Austin	DA098	UA
Turlich, Burt	March 11, 2002	Port Sulphur, LA	Tom McGuire	TM030	UA
Usie, Glenn	January 23, 2003	Houma, LA	James Sell	JS006	UA
Utley, Merrill "Big Merrill" and Utley, Merrill "Little Merrill"	January 24, 2005	Thibodaux, LA	Joanna Stone	JLS06	UA
Van Meter, Keith	May 6, 2005	New Orleans, LA	Diane Austin	DA140	UA
Verdin, Marie	March 4, 2003	Grand Bois, LA	Diane Austin	DA102	UA
Verret, Kirby	July 22, 2003	Dulac, LA	Scott Kennedy	JP001, SK001	UA
Verret, Unell	May 4, 2001	New Iberia, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG011	UA
Viator, Kenneth	April 30, 2001, July 20, 2001	Erath, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG005, AG037p	UA
Vining, Alden	March 16, 2004	Morgan City, LA	Jamie Christy	MMS029	UH/HI

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Vining, Laurie	January 21, 2005, January 22, 2005	Morgan City, LA	Colleen O'Donnell and Christina Leza, Diane Austin	CL004, DA137	UA
Vizier, Eric	July 24, 2001	Houma, LA	Ari Anand	AA012	UA
Voisin, Ernie	September 26, 2001	Houma, LA	Tom McGuire	TM018	UA
Voisin, Magnus and Elvira "Blackie"	July 24, 2003	Dulac, LA	Jessica Piekielek and Scott Kennedy	JP011	UA
Voisin, Mildred	July 18, 2003	Dulac, LA	Jessica Piekielek	JP006	UA
Voss, Jack	July 8, 2003	Houma, LA	James Sell	JS027	UA
Vujnovich, Capt. Pete	July 27, 2001	New Orleans, LA	Tom McGuire	TM009	UA
Waguespack, Warren	February 6, 2003	Houma, LA	James Sell	JS015	UA
Wallace, Charles	July 16, 2001, January 20, 2005	Larose, LA	Diane Austin, Christina Leza and Colleen O'Donnell	DA001, CL001	UA
Warriner, Al	March 14, 2002	Slidell, LA	Diane Austin	DA038	UA
Watkins, Garver	July 3, 2001	Morgan City, LA	Rylan Higgins	RH006	UA
Weaver, Annie	January 25, 2002	Houma, LA	Diane Austin	DA032	UA
Webbon, Robert	August 6, 2006	Clear Lake, TX	Jason P. Theriot	MMS082	UH/HI
Welcome, Adam	May 14, 2001	New Iberia, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG019	UA
West, J. Robinson	November 18, 2002	Washington, D.C.	Tyler Priest	MMS014	UH/HI
Whitaker, Dean	July 31, 2003	Lafayette, LA	Diane Austin	DA120	UA
Wickizer, Carl	November 21, 1997	Houston, TX	Bruce Beauboeuf	SOC029	UH/HI
Willet, Wayne	July 24, 2002	Belle Chasse, LA	Diane Austin	DA054	UA
Williams, Andrew "Pep" and Bertha	September 21, 2001	Galliano, LA	Tom McGuire	TM013	UA
Williams, Bill	June 6, 2001, June 7, 2001	Bayou Vista, LA	Andrew Gardner	AG025, AG027	UA

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Williams, Eldridge "Tot"	March 23, 2004	Morgan City, LA	Jamie Christy	MMS028	UH/HI
Williams, Lisa Topham	January 14, 2003	Amelia, LA	Diane Austin	DA090	UA
Wilson, Bill	January 3, 2003, March 30, 2004	Morgan City, LA	Diane Austin, Jamie Christy	DA085, MMS047	UA, UH/HI
Wilson, Dewey	September 28, 2001, January 4, 2005	Morgan City, LA	Diane Austin, Rylan Higgins and Betsy Plumb	DA012, RH019	UA
Wilson, Jewell "Judy"	March 4, 2003	Morgan City, LA	Diane Austin	DA101	UA
Woodhall, Paul	August 1, 2003	Houston, TX	Diane Austin	DA121	UA
Work, Dave	June 4, 2002	Houston, TX	Tyler Priest	MMS004	UH/HI
Written, John Henry "Dickie"	July 26, 2004	Morgan City, LA	Jamie Christy	MMS048	UH/HI
Wurzlow, Kermit	March 27, 2003	Houma, LA	James Sell	JS019	UA
Wurzlow, Peggy	March 27, 2003, July 16, 2003	Houma, LA	Jim Sell, Jessica Piekielek	JS019, JP004	UA
Young, Joe	March 22, 2004	Morgan City, LA	Jamie Christy	MMS049	UH/HI
Zamadics, Ed and Mary	January 23, 2002	Lafayette, LA	Diane Austin	DA028	UA

### **3. LOCATION OF MATERIALS PRODUCED IN THE OFFSHORE OIL AND GAS HISTORY PROJECT**

The materials from the Offshore Oil and Gas History Project are archived in Texas and Louisiana at the following locations.

#### **1. University of Houston**

The University of Houston is the principal archive for project materials. It has the six volumes produced in the study, digital copies of all audio files, transcripts, and photographs, and digital copies of all consent forms

Contact:

#### **2. Louisiana State University**

The Center for Energy Studies at the Louisiana State University has the six volumes produced in the study, digital copies of all audio files, transcripts, and photographs, and digital copies of all consent forms.

Contact: Allan Pulsipher

#### **3. University of Louisiana at Lafayette**

The Archives at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette has the six volumes produced in the study, digital copies of all audio files, transcripts, and photographs, and digital copies of all consent forms.

Contact: Bruce Turner

#### **4. Nicholls State University**

The Archives at Nicholls State University has the six volumes produced in the study, digital copies of all audio files, transcripts, and photographs, and digital copies of all consent forms.

Contact: Clifton Theriot

#### **5. Morgan City Archives**

The Morgan City Archives has the six volumes produced in the study, digital copies of all audio files, transcripts, and photographs, and digital copies of all consent forms.

Contact: Lisa Mayon

#### **6. Lafourche Parish Public Library**

The South Lafourche Public Library has the six volumes produced in the study, digital copies of all audio files, transcripts, and photographs, and digital copies of all consent forms.

Contact: Beverly Arabie or Paul Chiquet



### The Department of the Interior Mission

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has responsibility for most of our nationally owned public lands and natural resources. This includes fostering sound use of our land and water resources; protecting our fish, wildlife, and biological diversity; preserving the environmental and cultural values of our national parks and historical places; and providing for the enjoyment of life through outdoor recreation. The Department assesses our energy and mineral resources and works to ensure that their development is in the best interests of all our people by encouraging stewardship and citizen participation in their care. The Department also has a major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U.S. administration.



### The Minerals Management Service Mission

As a bureau of the Department of the Interior, the Minerals Management Service's (MMS) primary responsibilities are to manage the mineral resources located on the Nation's Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), collect revenue from the Federal OCS and onshore Federal and Indian lands, and distribute those revenues.

Moreover, in working to meet its responsibilities, the **Offshore Minerals Management Program** administers the OCS competitive leasing program and oversees the safe and environmentally sound exploration and production of our Nation's offshore natural gas, oil and other mineral resources. The MMS **Minerals Revenue Management** meets its responsibilities by ensuring the efficient, timely and accurate collection and disbursement of revenue from mineral leasing and production due to Indian tribes and allottees, States and the U.S. Treasury.

The MMS strives to fulfill its responsibilities through the general guiding principles of: (1) being responsive to the public's concerns and interests by maintaining a dialogue with all potentially affected parties and (2) carrying out its programs with an emphasis on working to enhance the quality of life for all Americans by lending MMS assistance and expertise to economic development and environmental protection.