

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Harold Adams and Reynold "Ray" Adams

COLLECTION: 4700.2103

IDENTIFICATION: Harold is a Golden Meadow, Louisiana, native and resident [b. 1946?]; alumnus of Golden Meadow School; Alumnus of Nicholls University; retired educator [teacher, assistant principal, principal]; Catholic
Ray is a native and resident of Golden Meadow, Louisiana [b. 1944]; retired police chief; former ice plant employee; Catholic;
Harold and Ray are brothers

INTERVIEWER: Melissa Smith

SERIES: Bayou Lafourche Oral History Project

INTERVIEW DATE: October 9, 2010

FOCUS DATES: 1950-1960s [childhood and college]; 2010

ABSTRACT:

Tape 3949

[note: voices of interviewees are indistinguishable at times; speaker noted when possible]; Interview with brothers Harold and Ray Adams, conducted on October 9, 2010 in Golden Meadow/Galliano [Golden Meadow city limits are two blocks away], Louisiana; brothers were born and reared in Golden Meadow; interview for Coastal Sustainability Study at LSU; [interviewer explains her grandmother was Cajun, from Kaplan area]; home was down Bobs Lane, five hundred feet from bayou; some people used to live in what was called "camp boats" or floating houses; most entertainment and recreation boats belong to companies [floating houses are different]; might move home depending on the season, go to different locations for trapping or trawling; not necessarily poor; "the wealthiest person is not the one who has the most but the one who needs the least"; family's needs were simple, and land provided them with everything; Ray is 1.5 years older than Harold; they have sister [1.5 years younger than Harold] and brother [3 years younger than Harold]; some family planning as each sibling was 1.5 years apart; interviewer asks about religion; one says it really doesn't matter what part of the country you're from; at a young age [religious upbringing] is required; father was very devout about Mass, momma wasn't; on Sundays she was preparing the meals [no microwave, so cooking began at five in morning and continued until right before noon]; when things got slow later in life, mom would attend church; daddy was always at church, kids with him [or "momma would have beat the hell out of us"]; no questioning mom; mother was disciplinarian; daddy worked seven days a

week in shift work [sometimes it was days, then 5 pm to 1 am, or 1 am to 9 am]; four kids so you didn't dare cause problems [for mom]; [interviewer talks about father's family, grandfather was shrimper]; one says they didn't do without what they needed; there was plenty that they wanted, but they got what they needed; father one time could have whipped him [after he pulled out three plants from garden]; daddy worked all day so don't give him problems; if you got into fight at neighbor's house the neighbor's parent would take care of it; "it takes a village to raise a child"; the Adams lived on one side of the street [family property], Collins family on other; by the time he got home momma knew about it [something wrong]; even with no telephones neighborhood took care you; always in shouting distance, no excuses; mother had time-clock in head; always knew what yelling distance was and how long it would take for you to get home; all the parents were along the same lines [of upbringing]; all raised together, made living together; the brothers miss that today: family unit and trust in people around them; one brother will never forget when mom went to see teacher and told teacher to "do what you need to do" [okayed corporal punishment]; now grandkids can't walk up and down street because they don't know the neighbors; serious problem because you don't know who's there, hard to build trust; could only guess at brother's neighbors; happens when someone in family sold house to strangers; Collins family has some rental property; none of the original [Collins] are still there; growing up renting home seldom happened; in 1980s when economy up north went bust, paired with oil boom, all people came down; a lot of work for welders; entire economy is based on oil and seafood, that hasn't changed: price for seafood, price of oil and gas have changed; instability in economy means job are still there, but might not have any work; boats are more efficient because prices have dropped; poundage is the same but number of boats is much lower; influx of imported seafood; price of fuel goes up and price of catch goes down; now people prefer to go to offshore [stable and good pay]; one says that even as bad as oil spill was, it was godsend for economy here; BP spent a lot of money here, put a lot of people to work; tugs and shrimp were not working at the time; doesn't know how long will it continue but clean-up will eventually end; tremendous [positive] impact on economy but negative side of spill will be here a lot longer; flexibility in their lives, in community; Harold says he was not the norm in this area: 64-year-old, worked through college, never spent a day on oil rig or trawler; Harold attended Nicholls, which was commuter college; took bus that would drive at 6:15 each morning, end of the day drive back; if it wouldn't have been for that there was no way he'd have gone to college; Harold says the reason he went to college is he "was basically lazy"; worked summers at Summerscale [?] shrimp, fish, processing and ice house; Ray was his boss; Ray had been there "years" and was full time; gave Harold dirtiest job because "if I make it hard enough for him he'll want to go back to school"; the end of the school year Harold thought, "I'm not going back [to school]; I hate it"; commuter life meant he had no college experience, took hour-and-a-half bus ride each way to Thibodaux; "luxury of library," either used it during the day, or if he used it after class he'd have to hitchhike home; during summers doing dirtiest jobs gave Harold incentive to return to school; motivation was a combination of "who's the boss," go back to school, and didn't want to play favorites; "worked out well"; Ray says Cajun people always learned to adapt; adapt or be extinct [after being expelled from Nova Scotia]; they adapted; didn't make any difference what you were doing in France; the true Cajun person will learn to adapt; Harold says one thing he admires about the area is that at one time there were more uneducated millionaires [zero days in school because they had to help dad on ships from age eight or nine]; shrimp boat when the oil boom started created most of the major boat companies got started; founders were uneducated, only

two or three years of schooling, but they had knowledge of the area, marshes and sea and a good financial sense; educated themselves in ways of world; amazed him, no education but hard work and motivation, taking advantage of the opportunity; most were in fishing industry and adapted to get supply and materials to rigs; grew one boat to a fleet; they knew basic industry.

TAPES: 1 (T3949)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 28 minutes

PAGES INDEX: 3 pages

OTHER MATERIALS: Interviewee biographical information; Interviewer information;
Interviewer questionnaire

RESTRICTIONS: None

NOTE: See collections 4700.2351 and 4700.2352 for additional materials and related content