INTERVIEWEE NAME: Allen “Al” Danos, Jr.

COLLECTION: 4700.2088

IDENTIFICATION: Cut Off, Louisiana Native [b. 1947]; Holy Cross High School [New Orleans] graduate; owner of oil field contracting company [Danos and Curole Marine Contractors]; Catholic; board member of Nicholls State University Foundation; board member of Houma-Thibodaux Diocese;

INTERVIEWER: Erin Donovan and Christina Shelby

SERIES: Bayou Lafourche Oral History

INTERVIEW DATE: October 24, 2010

FOCUS DATES: 1970s [early career]; 1980-1990s [professional career]; 2001-present [retirement]

ABSTRACT:

Tape 3934
Danos speaks about his former company [Danos and Curole Marine Contractors], involved for thirty years; Danos’s father and father’s brother-in-law started company [1949] buying boats and then expanded into contract labor [working for the oil fields, providing welders and pumpers]; when dad died [cancer, c. 1971] Danos and brother [Hank] took over [French greetings in background] business; was very young [Al was 24 and Hank 21, recent LSU grad] and took a while to learn; Danos worked with father for a year before he died, “showed me the ropes”; first year running company solo “I was pretending he was still alive and I was doing what he wanted me to do”; a lot of responsibility for a young person; brothers expanded business, went further offshore; added offices [original in Larose], branch in Venice, LA [?], Intracoastal City, LA, Morgan City, LA; one time had 4-5 offices, each different levels of success; type of boats: small crew boats to transport to rigs; luggers for equipment; Danos expanded into lift boat business [service vessel]; overseas projects in Venezuela, Nigeria, and Angola; eventually sold off lift boats, Danos got out of business, brother and brother’s sons still in labor part of business; sequence of events leading to Danos’s retirement: decided to slow active management in 2000 but stayed on board of directors for several years; passion was boat side of business; sold boats in 2005; got out completely in 2006; Danos is now active in community; on board of Nicholls State University Foundation; involved in Catholic charities, on board of Houma-Thibodaux Diocese; working on beachfront development district in charge of promoting tourism on Fourchon Beach [South Lafourche Beachfront Development District, estab. 2007]; wife and Danos travel; four kids and five grandchildren to spend time with; owns hunting camp in St. Francisville, LA; Danos was raised Catholic; as far back as he can recall, both sides were Catholic; only a few non-
Catholics “around here”; baptized, confirmation; growing up he went to church every Sunday, active in church activities; went to Holy Cross High School [Catholic school in New Orleans]; married a Catholic, wife was “raised the same way I was”; Danos built his home thirty-three years ago; when he first got married he wanted to live on a farm like in childhood; brother and Danos were looking for a piece of property; bought 100 acres and built “like everyone else do” along the highway, closer to the bayou; he and brother individually got titles to homes, share farm behind homes; interviewer asks Danos about uniqueness of Bayou Lafourche; Danos cites Cajun heritage; French-speaking people, *joie de vivre*; play hard and work hard mentality; importance of families; people like to have a good time and get excited sometime; enjoy life and live to the fullest; Danos prays at weekly mass, though doesn’t recall specific professionally-oriented prayers [e.g. praying for business]; as an adult he has prayed for welfare of family and humanity; Danos enjoys inviting people over; is active in local politics, strategizing and encouraging people to run for office; has people over for lunch in big dining room; still has an office in Gray, LA [near Thibodaux]; once a week people come to office for lunch, meal prepared by cook; Danos prefers small group [6-8 people] for lunch; they talk about “whatever we want to talk about”; group of friends interested in history; meet every Monday [at McDonalds?] to “solve the world’s problems in French and that is fun”; visited Venezuela 4-5 times to start work, 2-3 times for follow up; very difficult to get project started; learned a lot about culture of Venezuela; meet with people, could never quite close the deal; start negotiations early and do lunch, supper; Venezuelans more interested in social part; Danos tried to follow up from home, could never reach them; very frustrating; learned patience; ended up sending some vessels and crews there; difficult environment to make money; Danos’s work in Nigeria was “some of the toughest” work he’d ever experienced; had to team up with Nigerian partners; so much different than the way [Americans] work and take care of business; difficult time with partners, never did get along; split up with them and got agents; lawsuits and problems for years; lesson learned: if you’re going to work in foreign country you can’t change them, you’ve got to understand that you’ll work their way instead; difficult because of ethics; Danos is real strong believer in ethical behavior; Danos’s trouble was with partners, not laborers; Danos’s father worked seven days on vessel, when he was off he was taking care of other things; many times Danos and brother were the first ones in the office in the morning, the last ones in the office at night; also salesman; Danos’s trouble was with partners, not laborers; Danos’s father was gone a lot; kids tell Danos that he was gone, too; had mind on business, Nigeria; reason he retired early [10 years ago, early 50s]: wore himself out; company was tremendous experience, learned a lot, “crown jewel of work experience”; brothers were
successful, made good money and “earned every dollar of it”; sold vessels but the boats are still working in Nigeria; captains and mates are still working there for the company that bought boats; new company is try to use practices of Danos; GM is former Danos employee; “so that worked out”; Danos available for further interviews; he and friends enjoyed the experience of being interviewed.

**TAPES:** 1 (T3934)  
**TOTAL PLAYING TIME:** 21 minutes

**# PAGES INDEX:** 3 pages

**OTHER MATERIALS:** Interviewer notes

**RESTRICTIONS:** None