

Transcription
Interview of Claudia Gagnard
By Katie Price
April 2, 2005

Katie: My name is Katie Price. The date is April 2nd, 2005. It is now 8:30 pm. I am interviewing Claudia Gagnard at T.J. Maxx in Mandeville. So, how long have you lived in Madisonville?

Ms. Gagnard: All my life, 54 years. [born about 1951]

Katie: And how is your family affiliated with the shipyards?

Ms. Gagnard: Well, my daddy worked at Jahncke Shipyard for 34 years before it closed, and I had 5 brothers who each worked at Equitable Shipyards before it turned to- before they sold to Trinity. So, somebody in the family, I had, you know, uncles and grandfathers that worked at the shipyards as far back as I can remember.

Katie: What kind of memories do you have of the shipyards?

Ms. Gagnard: [laughter] Ok, if we start with my grandpa on my father's side, his name was Louis Stein. He used to drive a dredge boat for Jahncke Shipyard for, I don't know how many years, I guess right at 27 or 28 years before he died of a heart attack. But he was one of the first in the area that was, that was involved with like digging the high bridge canal. He was one of the first that helped, you know, to dig the high bridge canal from Lake Pontchartrain—from the mouth of the [Tchefuncte] river in Madisonville actually out to Lake Pontchartrain on the other side towards Lake Maurepas. And he used to, we used to—. You know, when he would come in on the dredge boats and stuff like that, you know it was a big thing to us to ride down there in the back of the pickup truck—we had 9 kids—where all 9 kids would get in the back of the pickup truck when Pawpaw would come to town. And, yeah, he'd let us go on the dredge boats and stuff like that. You know he would cook us something and we thought we were hired deck hands. He would let us sweep the floor and all that kind of stuff and we thought we were so grown up and everything. That was fun.

And, I remember when, I remember when his boat sunk, and it was in the little inlet just before you go onto Lake Road in Madisonville. He was real proud of his little boat. It wasn't that big, but he was real proud of it. And he parked it up there one [day]—it was around the Christmas holidays I believe—and somebody burned it. You know, and I just remember he was really brokenhearted when that happened.

But, then with my daddy, my daddy was, he was 14 years old when he was hit by a truck. And they—not having hospitals or medical facilities in the area or anything—they set his arm the best that they could, but his right arm was paralyzed all of his life. It just, it was bent at the elbow and his fingers were curled in. But he was a welder for 31 years, or 35. 31 years, I believe it was. And you know everybody you talked to said he was one of the best welders in the area. He did a lot of odd jobs, and whatnot, but he was one of the welders down there. He didn't want to, I mean, he went as far as farming, but he didn't want to be—He didn't know how to separate himself from, you know, from the common welders—not the common welders—but I mean from the welders in management. He felt like he was always one of the men.

And, a lot of times when he worked at night we'd ride our bikes down to town—it was only about 4 miles away. We'd ride our bikes down to town and we'd bring him you know a plate lunch. Someone would have to balance on the handlebars [*laughter*] while the other one tried to keep the bike on the road to get the lunch to him in one piece, you know. And that was when highway 21 was, and 22 and 10-77 were still gravel. They weren't blacktop then, so that was, it was quite a trick.

Katie: Sounds like it.

Ms. Gagnard: Um, but we were fascinated when we did that because it was spooky! I mean it was really scary. Because you could see just, it wouldn't be you know—the shipyard wouldn't be going full blast at night and stuff like that, but it would be like one or two areas where the welders were working on projects. And you'd see rats, I mean like, to me they were giants, you know. Especially from the shadows, you would see, just this big black shadow that looked like it was about 3 foot long and you know, going up the side of the wall and when you turned around you knew it was behind you know, from where the light was coming, but you never could find it, you know. When you turned around and looked for it, you never could find it. And then riding home from the shipyard, it was scary as Hell, because [*laughter*], you know, you're riding home in the dark on a gravel road, and all you think about is those monster rats, you know. You're wondering if they're following you or not, you know. [*laughter*] But that was, that was a challenge [*laughter*]. Oh gosh.

They used to have a big, a big um, shell pile, right at the end of the river front in Madisonville where Jahncke Shipyard [was], right across the fence. And I mean it was high, it was really, really high. And we used to go down there and climb the shell pile, and you know, slide down, we'd find cardboard boxes and put them on top and slide down and stuff like that, that was fun. And try to find clams that weren't broken yet so we could who could find the most clams and stuff like that. It was fun. They stunk; boy they stunk [*laughter*]. And you'd go home cut up, beat to heck, because, you know because they were so sharp.

Ah, let's see...I remember when Equitable built a big ship one time, I don't remember the name of it. But everybody in town showed up on the riverfront that day, we all had snowballs and fried chicken and you know it was a big family day in Madisonville to be on the river front anyway. But that day it was like a national holiday I guess, you know, because they were bringing the ship from Equitable around the curve of the [Tchefuncte] river to go out to the lake [Pontchartrain] and, I guess out to sea or wherever it was going. Um, but they weren't, there probably weren't 500 people in Madisonville at the time. And as the tugboats were bringing it around, you know, several times it looked like they had lost control of it and stuff like that it was going to hit the, hit the riverbank and stuff like that. Of course it never did, but it was, it was hours, hours before they got it, before they decided to go through the bridge because they decided it was too big to fit through the spindle where the bridge turns and opens for the boats. But, I mean, we all cried when the boat went through because it knocked out the bridge tender's house and the center span on the bridge. And, I mean that was just like a horror show for us. It was horrible because we didn't think we'd be able to get out of town, you know, now that the bridge was gone. Not that we left town very often anyway, but, we didn't think we'd be able to get out of town with the bridge gone. But a couple of months later, they did build a pontoon bridge further down in front of the, where the city hall is now and we had to go across that, which was scary, scary, scary because [*laughter*] if the water was up, or the water was low, the pontoons would be one height, and the decking would be another height. So you never knew if your car or your truck or your bikes or whatever you were going across was going to tip over. It was scary. Really scary. I had a scary childhood [*laughter*].

Katie: [*laughter*] Sounds like it.

Ms. Gagnard: Well we had to ride past two graveyards too to get there. And I mean there's no streetlights or anything. We had daddy's shinelight on my head, you know. [*laughter*] The headlight? The old headlight?

Katie: Uh huh, the hat.

Mrs. Gagnard: That's all we had! And, you know. And, of course, my older sister went with us, Sigrid. She told great scary stories, and by the time you got home, you know, you were petrified [laughter], you know. Woo...Because especially, like, if you passed the old graveyard in the curve in Madisonville—I mean, there are a lot of old soldiers buried there, and stuff—and, you know, she would say that, you know, they were Germans. And, you know, I mean to us when we were kids a German was a horrible thing, you know—and I'm German. [laughter] Um, but you know they were “Nazis” buried there and “communists” and all that kind of stuff, you know. So we didn't know if they were coming after us [laughter], or what. And we had, coming home too we had a, I'm getting off the subject here—

[Intercom announcement in background]

Ms Gagnard: Coming home, too, we had an old two story hospital where the library is now in Madisonville. And we had a drug store, and a doctor's office where—well it's all closed up now, it's all boarded up it's an old white building right next to the bank. But we used to say that the doctor there, Doctor Haller, he was an awesome doctor. I mean, for us he was because, you know, we'd trade chickens and eggs or whatever to get medicine for an earache. But, we used to say that—he only used like one room in the whole building, and it was a big old building—and we used to say that he had people locked up in the rest of it because when you passed [it] at night you could hear people screaming,

Katie: [whispers] Oh God.

Ms. Gagnard: [coughs] And so we used to say that you know, that's where he locked up the patients that were bad. That's what my grandma used to tell us; that that's where he locked up that patients that were bad. So when we passed at night coming home from the shipyard we always thought, you know, we heard people screaming to get out [laughter].

We also had Baham's shipyard across the river in Holtonville, what was then Holtonville. It was at the end of where Fairview State Park is now. That was more of a family-run shipyard, they did a lot of boat building there but it was more smaller boats. I think it was more in the line of um, tugboats, and fishing boats, and things like that. But, I mean, I just remember that some of their boats up until, I guess 10 or 15 years ago, you know, were still in use. And they went out of business when I was, when I was young. Probably, probably before I was a teenager, and I'm in my early twenties now so [laughter]...You're finally catching on?

Katie: I caught that.

Ms. Gagnard: [laughter] Wake up Katie! Let's see, I remember stories that my brothers used to tell us coming home from the shipyards and stuff. That how hot it was, and how you could fry an egg on the steel and all that kind of stuff, you know. Or, you didn't have to heat your lunch up; you just set it outside for a few minutes and stuff like that. But I remember that they used to tell us that they would throw all their scraps to the alligators right there. And I didn't really believe them but, you know, eventually, eventually we went into the shipyard and, sure enough, there was a pretty big alligator there, about a 7, 8 foot long alligator, you know.

But I guess I can tell about losing my brother?

Katie: If you want to.

Ms. Gagnard: Um, this wasn't in Madisonville, this was in Slidell at Southern Shipbuilding. And this has been about twelve years ago now. [Interview in 2005, so places it around 1993] He was married and had two children. He had been at the shipyard for about six years and he quit because of the safety conditions and stuff and he said he had too much to live for, you know. But with the economy in the area and stuff like that he tried several different jobs, and it just, just wasn't enough to support the family. So after about two years he went back to Southern Shipbuilding in Slidell and ironically he lost his life. He was on—when they build the barges, there's a gas that builds up down inside the barge from welding. And normally, when they take the hatch off, they blow it out, you know, with big tremendous fans and stuff like that before anybody goes down. Well, he was on one barge, and he could see some guys going down the hole of another barge, and he knew it hadn't been blown out. So he was hollering at them to stop and everything. And they didn't hear him with all the commotion. So he dropped what he was doing and he went over to the barge, you know. And they tried stop him but he went down in the hole. And one by one, he pulled three of them out, I believe. And when they found him—him and the fourth guy—they were, he had the fourth guy over his shoulders at the bottom of the ladder. So, that was kind of rough. That was pretty rough. Because like I say, he was married and had four kids. And he—I'm sorry two kids. The other two weren't acknowledged [joking]. No I'm joking, don't put that in there. [laughs] But, you know, he was a good guy. He was only 34 at the time, I believe.

Ah let's see [sighs]... A lot of the businesses in town depended on the shipyard to stay in business, and we only had two grocery stores. Stein's grocery, and, when I was young, we had an old grocery store called Wascom's. But then the Pennington family bought it, bought [it] out and opened up Pennington's grocery, which is now, I think, Piggly Wiggly. But it was common practice that you know, the men that worked at the shipyards, at both shipyards, all three shipyards actually, their families would charge their meals, I mean, charge their food all week long if they needed something. And then on Friday, when the shipyard workers got their checks, they cashed them at the grocery store and paid their bill. And the store owners would always give them either a half gallon of ice cream or a bag of cookies or something like that, you know, lagniappe, just in thanks for doing business with them and stuff like that. So that really helped the families a lot, because, I mean there was no benefits— no insurance, no anything like that, you know, so.

Let's see what else, I'm coming to a lull here [laughter]. Like with the dredge boats, they had a—I don't know what they call them, it was like the cabin—like a cabin boat that would go out with the dredges and stuff like that to dredge shells. And when they came in I mean it was men from all over, just all over, not just Louisiana, but everywhere that came to town to just, like if they came in due to bad weather, or if they were waiting for fuel or supplies or something like that to go back out. There was an old two story bar and hotel in Madisonville. There was a family hotel in Madisonville run by the Bigner family that some people stayed at. And there was another one on the riverfront in Madisonville, and I don't know the name of it; I keep wanting to say it was the Four Roses, but I'm not sure if that was it. But it had—I mean I remember passing there at night sometimes. We'd get in trouble if we passed there because we weren't supposed to be in that neighborhood. But, you know, we were curious kids; we had to find out. [laughter] But it was supposedly a "house of ill repute" I'll say, but you would always hear loud music. And they had a big balcony upstairs where you'd see ladies dressed, or not dressed [laughter], and you know the men hugging on them and all that kind of stuff, and they were drinking and everything. And I mean we didn't know, we didn't know anything about all that then. But we just knew we weren't supposed to go by there, so we had to find out why not [laughter]. And I think I had an uncle that lived there! I'm not sure! [laughter] I don't know if he was just in, you know, from the lake or whatever, from the dredge, or if he actually lived there because every time we passed he was there, you know, so [laughter].

Let's see what else...my husband and I actually had a business in Madisonville before the shipyard closed, before Jahncke shipyard closed. We had a bar and grill where we'd serve plate lunches. That was from '82 to '85, I believe. And I mean in a matter of, like, 35-45 minutes, you know, we'd serve probably 100-200 people. And again, you know, they would charge it, and go back to work, and come pay us on Friday.

Katie: You got a lot of business from the shipyard?

Ms. Gagnard: A lot of business, a lot of business. Or they were supposed to come back and pay it on Friday, a lot of times they didn't. But that was when a lot of the construction started in this area too. Port St. Louis and Marina Del Ray and stuff like that, so, a lot of people were leaving the shipyard to go to construction, up 'til then everything around there was, I mean Port St. Louis was rice fields, and Marina Del Ray was just swamp, so all of that was just filled in for construction, and for residences.

Let's see, I'm kind of at a loss here Katie. We probably had 100 dogs when we were growing up because [laughter], because every week daddy was bringing home a stray dog from the shipyard [laughter]. But they were the smartest dogs. I'm not kidding you. They were ugly, ugly, ugly but they were smart [laughter]. I'd play smart too if I was hungry [laughter]. We had one dog Daddy brought home from the shipyard; we thought he was retarded or something, I don't know what he was. And he must have been, because he was hit by a car 4 times. And, you know, we'd pick him up off the street, and I mean the cars didn't go 45 miles an hour but he was hit by a car 4 times, you know. And we'd pick him up and bring him inside and put him in the shed and Mom and Daddy would stitch him up. And a couple weeks later he'd go out in the road and get hit again. [laughter]

Katie: I thought you said your dogs were smart [laughter]

Ms. Gagnard: Well, I don't know what happened to this one [laughter]. But he was a good old dog. We had 4 and a half acres where we grew up at home, and what was really pretty about it was—. In the part of the shipyard where they kept the extra scrap iron and metal and stuff like that or old machinery that they didn't use anymore and stuff like that, cedar trees grew wild. And daddy would watch the cedar trees and stuff. And when they were big enough to transplant, he would always dig up one or two—wouldn't be more than a foot or two high or something like that—but he would dig them up and bring them home. And actually, every time there was a new birth in the family, Dad would bring a cedar tree home and name it after the child. [laughter] But the ironic part about that is—and we did, we had 9 cedar trees across the front and coming up the side of the property. And the odd part about this—and you're not going to believe this, this is weird—the year my brother died, so did his cedar tree. [Pause] I mean I know that's stupid, but that's the only one; the other 8 trees are still there. And I mean that's really, I know it's stupid.

Katie: It's not stupid.

Ms. Gagnard: But we used to, when we were little and Mom and Daddy worked, you know, we had a lot of chores to do and stuff. And having so many younger kids, we'd pull straws to see who was responsible for the younger kids during the day. And whoever had the kitchen had the easiest kid [laughter]; whoever had the living room had the worst kid, you know, usually. But every evening when Daddy came home, we never had a car or anything; Daddy had to catch a ride to work with Mr. Jack Williams. And I think Mr. Jack died about 2 years ago of cancer. But every day, when Mr. Jack dropped him off, you know, we'd all run out there to meet Daddy after work, and he always had a pack of Juicy Fruit gum. He really did! But that pack of Juicy Fruit gum, he had enough for all 9 of us to have some, you know. Instead of like nowadays, you know, kids wouldn't dare be grateful for a half of a stick of gum or less.

[Coughing] Let's see, what else. Oh! We had an old grocery store right at the fork of the road in Madisonville but it was on highway 10-77, it was called Baham's grocery. And they had a big old tree out front with a bench underneath it where we'd—not we—well, we would sit because we had to walk down there to catch the school bus and stuff. I'll never forget that a lot of times, like that's where a lot of the men, like there was the whole Baham family that lived there. And a lot of the Baham's worked at the shipyard too, and they would all gather right there and when the truck pulled up—. Let's see there was the Baham's, the Alexa's, and I'm not sure, there was a couple other names, Badoine's. No, the Badoine's lived further into the Madisonville. But they all, I mean they all worked together. There was no, there was no color then or anything. I mean even though the kids had to go to separate schools, we didn't realize that there was a difference, you know, because our daddies all worked together, our momma's all worked together. When we had the Easter egg hunts or, you know, everybody had gardens. Daddy would bring greens to work and trade them with somebody else for tomatoes or something like that because everybody was always growing something. It was a lot of fun.

Let me think. Most of my brothers are out of the shipyard, have been for a couple years now. It's a good thing because Jahncke's closed. We were shocked when that happened, we were just shocked. I mean the history in that place was just unbelievable. You know, if walls could talk [*laughter*].

We used to have, we— [*coughing*]. It was funny too I think half the men in Madisonville had catfish lines going across the river from the shipyard. We'd all fight to get up in the morning to go with Daddy to check the catfish lines. And that was scary too! [*laughter*] Because you didn't know where the alligator was. You didn't know if you were going to step on a rat, you know. It was dark on the river, and the only thing you had was the head light. [*laughter*] So, and that's what Twilight Zone usually had on, with the scary movies. But it was funny because I mean you just felt so important, because here you are going up there with your daddy and he'd always give you a baseball cap or a helmet or something to wear to make you feel like you were doing something really big. But when you got down there, even if you were 5 or 6 years old, you acted like you were as big and tough as anybody else, because, you know, ten feet over Mr. Jack was going to check his catfish lines with his sons, and you had to be just as big and bad as everybody else. Even though you were scared to death. So, that was good. That was a lot of fun. That's pretty much where we learned how to fish and stuff.

I think just about every Sunday afternoon after church, every man in town was in the bar room, at, I think it was called Marvin's or something like that at the time, and all the women and kids were in the river swimming. You know, the kids were swimming. The mothers were usually having a chance to visit on the river front or something like that. Or the mothers had things to do at home, the older kids were watching the younger kids. A least in our family. But every Sunday, the kids would go to church, and Momma would stay home and fix fried chicken, potato salad, beets, you know corn, cornbread, the whole thing. And then when we came in, she would, you know, have a picnic basket ready for us and everything to go down to the river front and swim. That's, I mean that's where we all learned to swim. A lot of times the younger ones didn't know how to swim, until you know we begged enough you know, and daddy would let us jump in and stuff like that. But that was before we had the ladders to get up and all that kind of stuff, you know. It was dirt; you had to kind of climb up. And then we had races to swim across the river and stuff like that. I'll never forget though, the oil slick, when I think of it now, on that river from the shipyard. We thought it was nothing then, it was just part of life. But Lord, if they had that now the environmentalists would—

Katie: Freak out.

Ms. Gagnard: Freak out is not even close. Behind where the library is now, on Main Street in Madisonville—when it was a hospital—a lot of times on Sunday afternoons, the men from the shipyard would have baseball teams. And we'd, you know, a lot of the families would, um, everybody would bring something to eat. Naturally, we all shared everything. And the kids would play and everything while the wives sat up in the stands and the men played baseball. And I think it just kind of gave them a chance to, you know, cut loose and to have some fun and stuff like that. It was, when I saw Field of Dreams that's kind of what it reminded me of. Because it was just a bunch of old welders, all burnt up and, you know....

I know daddy used to come home with, he'd say his eyes were burning. And we never did understand why because he was usually inside welding, or I guess he was on a barge I don't know, but I didn't realize the flashback from the weld would burn his eyes and stuff like that and he couldn't see. Or his chest and arms would be burned and blistered. And his clothes would have holes in them from burns and stuff like that. But as I grew older and got a little more familiar with welding, you know, I realized that he went through a lot of pain trying to support his family and stuff. I guess that's why he was such a jerk. [*laughter*] Let's see...

Katie: Did they have any festivals or anything like that? Did they have the Wooden Boat Festival back then?

Ms. Gagnard: No, we didn't have any festivals...Well, yeah. Actually we had a three-story Catholic school then, where St. Anselm's Church is now. It was called St. Catherine's. And every year we'd have the May Fair with the May pole and cakewalks and bingo and you would fish for grab bags and it was really a lot of fun, we had two churches, we had the black church and the white church, the black was St. Frances I believe, and the white church was St. Catherine's. And then the black school and the white school, and there was just a fence separating us, I mean we played volleyball and everything else across it. I mean like I say, you know, at the end of the day we walked home together, and you know, if it was squirrel hunting or fishing or whatever it was everybody did it together, it was no—we didn't realize there was such a thing as segregation. It was like the May Fairs, the Bingos, the church held a Bingo I think every week. But that's the only festival I remember. I mean, naturally, both the black church and ours had a Christmas program on the third floor of the school every year, um. But they had theirs at a separate time from us; we didn't have ours the same time as they did. And I don't think we had black nuns and white nuns, I think they were all white. I don't remember but I think, I think they were all—not that it really matters, they were all mean. *[laughter]*

Katie: Yes, they are. Oh, I know. *[laughter]*

Ms. Gagnard: Sorry Pope. —Oh I'm sorry! Oh God, I'm so sorry! [Pope John Paul had died that day, 4-2-05, which is the reason for her latter comments]

Katie: *[laughter]* I didn't know if you knew that because we've been here all day. [Both work at TJ Maxx]

Ms. Gagnard: *[laughter]* You know I'm joking.

Katie: We're joking. Anyway. *[laughter]*

Ms. Gagnard: Like I said, the only business in town was basically, we had 2 grocery stores, you know, 2 gas stations, a dry goods store, 2 restaurants, probably 4 bars, or 5.

Katie: The most important obviously.

Ms. Gagnard: The most important obviously, yeah. Well, the bars probably did better than anybody else because of the shipyards. But I forgot where I was going with that thought. *[laughter]*

Katie: They brought in a lot of people from other shipyards?

Ms. Gagnard: Yeah, yeah. Especially the dredge boats. Most of the people that worked at the shipyards were the local men, but if they had big projects, big projects going, like if they had—like I'm sure like during the war they had quotas like on building ships, you know, because they took part in—I think Jahncke was more of a repair shipyard, and Equitable was more of a builder shipyard. And Baham's, like I say, I think they were more like with wooden boats, and wooden hulls, and stuff like that, whereas the other two were iron, and metal, or whatever. Steel.

I remember when the first woman went to work at Jahncke. Talk about a scandal!

Katie: Go for it.

Ms. Gagnard: *[laughter]* I don't remember what her name was, but I think she was from Ponchatoula.

And most of the men didn't mind. *[laughter]* Well, they didn't mind while they were working with her, but behind her back, I mean—you know when other women were pregnant, other men they had to sound all...manly. *[laughter]* You know, and say how it was terrible and all that kind of stuff. But, from what I understand, she could hit a, you know, she could hit a good bead. She welded. She did a good job. I don't know how many women actually worked there. I think at one time they had like seven women working there. But I really, I mean, I don't know how a woman could do that either. I don't know, I guess you do what you have to do to feed your family, but I do remember that that was, that was a scandal.

So, let's see what else. I think the shipyard donated the property where the ballfield is now. I'm not real sure about that, it may have been donated by the Kepp family. But when I was younger and they built the ball field, I mean we only had one ballfield. We had what we called the wading pool, it was probably 12 inches deep, but it didn't matter how old you were, you went down there and got in it. And they had a slide to go in it so everybody in town went down the slide. But we didn't have the tennis courts or anything like that, that was playground equipment on that side. And most of the men from the shipyard got together and built that.

I think everybody in town, if they weren't related, they'd known each other from birth. So, like if there was like a, you know, a tragedy in the family, or if somebody was building a home, or something like that, I mean, everybody from the shipyard pitched in and got it done. You know, several people in the area had lumber yards or, not lumber yards, but they were loggers and, you know, they would they would dry logs themselves and all that kind of stuff. I mean, everybody brought something. Everybody. You know, and while it was going on it was just like Little House on the Prairie. Everybody, all the families would bring, you know, cakes and pies and food and the kids played. And, I mean, after you were about 10 or 12, you weren't a kid anymore, you were expected to do your work. It didn't matter if they were building a house or clearing away debris from a burnt house or somebody had car trouble or you had to push the car. *[laughter]* You know, you didn't wait until you were big enough to push. You were 10 or 12, you had to push. You know, you had to do it.

Katie: So how early did the people of the community start working at the shipyards, like, what age?

Ms. Gagnard: Most of them were, I would say, 16 or 17. A lot of them lied. I think you had to be 17 to work there or something like that. But I think a lot of them lied to get on early, because there was nothing else. There was no construction or, nothing. I don't know. I'm sure before my time they probably started when they were 15 or so. I don't know. But, I mean, somebody always got you on and if you didn't do a good job, that person would tan your hide for you. You know, you didn't stay long because you weren't going to embarrass somebody. If my dad recommended somebody and they didn't do his [their] job, I mean they didn't do their job properly, he would ask to have them fired because he wasn't going to ruin his reputation for, ah, for somebody else. It just wasn't going to happen. People took too much pride in what they did in those days.

Let's see, I really hope sometime in the future, (I guess I should have saved this to last, but...), I really hope sometime in the future, like when they—you know, I wish I could be here if they ever do an archaeological dig in that area [Jahncke Shipyard]. Because there's just no telling what they'll find. I don't think Equitable was as old as Jahncke Shipyard, I think Equitable or Trinity whichever, is pretty new compared to Jahncke. I'm not sure what the history of it was. It looked newer. *[laughter]* They had a lot more people from out of town, you know. I think at Jahncke everybody had been with the company for so long it was like they were all family. You know, they were just all family. I know it really hurt a lot of families when they closed because there was just nowhere else for them to go. You know, other than construction. And a lot of people transferred to Avondale or Sorrento, I believe, or somewhere in that area. They had some similar work, and a lot of people went to Southern [shipyard], but I think Southern eventually closed too in Slidell.

I remember walking home in the evenings from school. The shipyard would get out about the same time we did from school. And of course this was probably when I was in 7th or 8th grade, something like that. It just seemed like a sea of cars coming out of the shipyard, just I mean just, you know, just a sea of cars. But I mean people came from Bogalusa and Franklinton, and Hammond and Ponchatoula, and Southern Mississippi, and North of Bogalusa around Columbia and Tylertown and Hattiesburg. And I often wondered how in the world did they drive that far? I mean that's miles. That's miles and miles to go to work. And they had to do it every day, you know. And then work out in the sun all day like that, and then drive home. I don't know how they did it. I remember Daddy used to bring pipes home from the shipyard, not new pipes, old trash pipes that were, they used to have a man come to haul off the, ah, I don't know what they call it. There was a name for it—scrap. Scrap metal and stuff. But, daddy brought some pipes home one time and made us a clothesline; a big "T" on each side. Well, we had nine kids, we had to do laundry, let me tell you. [laughter] But it was the full length of the back yard, which is an acre wide [laughter]. Yes. Almost the full length of the backyard. And it had four strands of barb wire on it. I mean not barb wire. [laughter] That's what he had around the table to keep us away [laughter]. Four strands of wire on it though to hang clothes, because we didn't have a washing machine either. We finally got one. We finally got a ringer washer. So. Let's see.

*This is the end of the interview. It ends so abruptly because I planned on having a follow up interview, but was unable to schedule one.