

## Transcription of Interview

**Interviewee: Donice Bulloch, Jr.**

**Interviewer: Robert J. Barrilleaux**

**Robert J. Barrilleaux:** My name is Robert Barrilleaux. I'm here in the home of Mr. Donice Bulloch, it is 8:50 [a.m.] on Wednesday, the 06 April 2005. And we are talking about powerboat racing in the community of St. Tammany Parish. How are you today Mr. Donice?

**Donice Bulloch, Jr.:** I'm fine.

**Barrilleaux:** Mr. Bulloch, I was wandering if you could tell me a little bit about your background, your family, and yourself growing up?

**Bulloch:** Yeah, I was born in Covington, Louisiana and I went to grammar school at Covington Grammar School and then Covington High School. I had two brothers and three sisters that all live[d] in Covington, and still live in the area. My father was a state trooper. He later retired from that and went to work for the sheriff's office. He was a deputy sheriff too. He was very interested in boats. [He] always had a family runabout (we called it), you could take the family out fishing or riding, or what have you. That's what got me interested in boats, because he was kind of a fanatic about making his boats run right and look right and everything. And I got very interested in that, which later came along to be competition. You know, running one family runabout against another one. You know, good friends and stuff.

By the time I was about a junior in High School I started really getting interested in it. And started working with these people who were racing in Mandeville and Madisonville and New Orleans, and more or less the local area. And I kind of developed a little boat of my own to run.

And as we started racing I was doing pretty good and a lot of the older people who had boats had to get drivers. They would pick me out of the drivers who would be good to run their boat. And I just moved on into that field, running other people's boats. You know, marine boat suppliers and stuff like that and various people who were interested in it [boat racing]. And I got to driving for several various people. That's more or less how I got started in this thing.

**Barrilleaux:** You said your father was really interested in boats. What kind of boats specifically?

**Bulloch:** His was more or less a family boat. You know, to take the family out fishing or riding or something like that. As I was growing up he had several boats. Get one that would satisfy him and he'd see something else he liked better and sell that one and buy another one and work on it. It was kind of a family project. I helped him and learned a lot from him too. Because he was a pretty good mechanic I would say. He could put things together and make them run right. Got a little start right there. And I still like boats. I have a yard full of them out there right now (fishing boats and what have you). I don't have any more racing boats. I have a bunch of them down there: canoes, pirogues, aluminum flats, fiberglass offshore fishing boats. You know, small category [of boats] to fish out in the lake and in the gulf, or the edge of the gulf. And all my kids are interested in them too [boats], and have them.

**Barrilleaux:** You said you raced for other people [and] for businesses. The individuals that got you to race for them. Why did they have you race their boats?

**Bulloch:** I was a young kid; very light. I probably weighed about 120 pounds or something like that. Most of these people were old and they couldn't handle, and run a boat as good as I could. Most of your drivers were young agile people that could really take a lick'in and keep on tick'in, you might say. And it didn't take them long to pick me up. And I started running from [for] several just local people that owned their own boats. And that developed into some of the businesses that sold boats and repaired motors, and all that kind of stuff. And they would get me to run theirs too. And that's how I expanded out, more or less, to run kind of all over the South really, where there was availability to run. That's basically how I got started. I really loved doing it you know. You didn't have to pay me or give me anything. I just loved to run them.

[clock chimes 9:00 in background]

**Barrilleaux:** Now you say you've been running [motor boats] from a very young age, and you work on your own motors, and it's a outboard motor boat that you've been running. How exactly do you run one of those boats?

**Bulloch:** Well, the boats are very small, that we raced you know. Basically they may be from ten to twelve feet long. And maybe, three and a half feet wide, and may weigh about a hundred and twenty pounds, or something like that. And so they're just like a feather on the water almost when you get them going. And I guess you just get the feel of them to where you know. I can feel a boat, still can, if it's running right. If you take me for a ride in your boat I can criticize it to death before we get home. Because I just know the feel and how they're supposed to run. The boat, its just like riding a horse. If you ride one long enough you learn how to ride one. Same way with a boat. In racing, a boat really is almost like an airplane. You want it out of the water. You don't want it laying down there in the water to run. You want it sitting up with air under it. That's where you get your speed. When you get that boat tip-toeing where you got a lot of air passing under it, it lifts it up and then (shwoo) it gets going. That's when they run. You'll never see a boat laying flat on the water and really running. They have to get up in the air. And that's when it gets tricky. That's when you have to have a little agile guy that can really handle it and bring it back down when it gets too high, and what have you. And keep on going. It was a lot of fun and I really enjoyed doing it all my life. And I still love to see boat races, but I don't run them anymore.

**Barrilleaux:** I was reading in an article in Time magazine [in which] it was discussing how the courses for racing have changed over time. Do you think they've changed? [If so]. Do you think they're better for viewing [by spectators] now than they were back when you were racing?

**Bulloch:** Yeah, I would say they're better. I haven't attended many races here lately. But, back when we were running, you almost just had to find any little place that you could run. We used to run in ponds out in the country. You know, a dug pond. If a guy had a [pond],if it was big enough to get it up on top of the water, we'd let her eat. Madisonville, for instance, is a beautiful place to run because you've got a calm river and a good straight away. And plenty wide enough for your turns. Its ideal conditions, Madisonville was. Now, Mandeville was a good place to have them too [races], if it wasn't too rough. It got rough more often than it didn't (chuckles). A lot of times it was so rough we'd have to just call it off. I remember one time in particular we ran out there and I believe there was a bunch of them turning over. It was just too rough for those little boats. So we moved the whole race to Madisonville and finished it in Madisonville, the same day (chuckles). We would draw hundreds of people. Maybe a thousand out there watching it. Most of them loaded up and went to Madisonville right behind us [After the water became too rough in Mandeville]. But Madisonville was probably one of the best places around here to race. And False River. We used to run in False River in Baton Rouge. It was a beautiful place too.

**Barrilleaux:** I remember you telling me about, the other day, racing in the lake [Pontchartrain]—how the water is so turbulent at times. [Mr. Bulloch told me the story three days prior.] Do you remember any instances of people actually being injured by the boats turning over, or maybe [because of] an inexperienced driver?

**Bulloch:** Well, a lot of times there were minor injuries. We never did really have any really serious injuries, you know, where they would be hospitalized or something. [Not] While I was running anyway. But we did have, you know, some broken arms or stuff like that. Because particularly when you're running in the lake, it is rough. You got to really ride that thing. It's like a bucking bull or something (chuckles). You're lucky if you finish a race without turning over or getting swamped or running into each other, or something like that. It's really a tough place to run there. Sometimes you catch the lake pretty calm. A little light chop is not bad. It's even good. But, if it really gets rough where you have the ground swells, it really gets tricky. I've seen as high as six or eight in a day's racing turn over, you know, flip. Do everything. You know, minor injuries. I can't specifically say of any hospitalization of any of them. Any of them in our groups. Didn't hurt bad enough to go to the hospital. But I'm sure they did. But I never did.

**Barrilleaux:** You never were injured?

**Bulloch:** No. Scratched up, bruised, and stuff like that. But never hurt to where I had to have any attention done about it.

**Barrilleaux:** You talk about the amount of people you used to draw. Hundreds, maybe even a thousand or so people. That's huge crowds.

**Bulloch:** I would say Madisonville drew that many. Now Mandeville were more in the hundreds. I'd say three to five hundred people. Come out there, bring their family picnic, and watch the races. It was good ole days. We all enjoyed it. All of us participating in it. And you got to know a lot of people. Get a lot of offers to come run boats for other people. Which is fine if they're not too far away. I drove for a man in Covington, Mr. Alvin Ross, that had a really good little runabout. And he had a little television shop. He sold and repaired televisions. Very knowledgeable mechanic. He really could put two and two together and make it work. And he picked me up the first time he saw me running a boat. He was pretty old to be running a boat, so I ran his a good bit. And very successful with it too because it was a good little boat.

Met a lot of people. I ran for Speed and Spray outboard motor shop in Norco. I drove for them for several years. The owner of the Speed and Spray was running his own boat when he first started. He flipped out in New Orleans, I believe, and the boat cut a gash in the top of his head. He's still got a scar right down his forehead. And I believe that kind of slacked him off for a good while. But he hunted a driver and found me. And we did real good running with him. Got to be real good friends. And we won some races and lost some. And turned some over. We did it all, but we had a good time. He's still in the business, I believe, of selling outboard motors and boats and stuff in Norco. His name is Jimmy Powe (P o w e). And his business is Speed and Spray, in Norco, Louisiana.

**Barrilleaux:** You talked about how you would always work on all of your own boats. How much maintenance would one of those boats take? [Because] It seems that you were in pretty extreme conditions.

**Bulloch:** The motors were very durable. They were tough motors, I'll tell you. We ran mostly Mercurys and Champion outboards. They were the fastest. A Johnson or Evinrude or something like that was a very dependable motor, but they couldn't run the speed that these motors ran. So we all leaned towards them and they were very durable. There was very, very little actual maintenance on them. They really held up good. The most work you had on them was keeping them in time, timing them, and keeping plugs in them. Spark plugs. Because they would burn up the spark plugs pretty good, running that high rpm [revolutions per minute]. Turn up 5500, 6000 rpm's, stuff like that and that's really swinging it (laughter).

But the motors were very durable. They were tough little dudes. They took a lot of lick'in. Every once in a while you would turn one over. And if it happened to suck up a load of water when it went under it would blow the piston, crack the block, or something like that. Then you really had to go to work. You had to rebuild it; put a new block, crank case. And then break all of that in and get it back to where you were when you flipped this one. It was a challenge all the way through. Just about the time you thought you were the king of the road, here come another guy along that would out-run you.

**Barrilleaux:** I remember you telling me, [three days prior, during an unrecorded meeting], that somebody might have a faster boat, but the way you actually ran the course made a huge difference.

**Bulloch:** Oh yeah. Oh yes indeed. The drivers were very important. A lot of the boats were pretty well equal in speed but I think your drivers really, really made a difference. We had a young guy here named Billy Mays from Mandeville. And he was one of the forerunners. I don't know, but Billy might be a couple years older than me. He was one of the guys that we all looked up to when we started racing, and learned a lot from him. He was a good fellow. I guess he was the top driver in this country, I mean everywhere in the South. He ran all over Texas, Louisiana, Florida, Mississippi. Just everywhere they had them, they would haul him in and he would run them. And he could run them too.

I'll never forget though, we ran in the Greenville-Vicksburg Marathon, that's a marathon race one-hundred and five miles I think. Non stop. Coming down the Mississippi river from Greenville to Vicksburg. I was running a B-utility, that's a class of the motor. And Billy was running an A, which was a little smaller motor. But they were pretty close to the same speed. And he was the favorite. He had won this race before I think. And I was coming along there and it seemed like it take you all day to get down there. It was 105 miles so you were kneeling down in that boat for a couple of hours anyway. Doing about fifty miles per hour, forty-five or fifty coming down there. And that river gets as rough as Lake Pontchartrain in places. And your running along there at, say, forty or fifty miles per hour and you can see a spot up in front of you. They stagger the start by the fastest boats start last. Billy's class started right before mine. He was in A [class] and I was in B [class]. And I got, I know it must have been three-quarters of the way down the river and I saw a little white spot up there. And you kind of bear down on them because you know they're going the way you want to go. And that river is so wide, if you don't have something to bear on you might run ten miles further than anybody. You know, if you get over to this side by mistake. And I could see that little white spot up there. And when I came by Billy was sitting down in there shaking his empty gas can and had ran out of gas. I said that was a fine idea for the champion, who had won it the year before, to run out of gas before he gets to the finish line. But I couldn't, you know, you don't stop and help them. You just keep on going and wave to them. But he was a great driver.

**Barrilleaux:** There weren't any schools for this type of activity. You told me that you learned from your father. And you were just interested enough in it to kind of be self-taught in a lot of aspects. Is that how most people came into boat racing?

**Bulloch:** I would say everybody. And this is small stuff now. We didn't run these big hundred mile an hour hydroplanes with the big inboard. We were outboard. And everybody in it, they learned just the same way I did. Get a good buddy like Billy Mays. He taught me a lot himself just by giving me advice and guiding me in the right direction. And we all learned from each other; from mistakes and good points too. It was a lot of fun over the years, I tell you. I don't regret any of it. Met a lot of people.

**Barrilleaux:** The gatherings at the boat races, were those scheduled events or did they just happen?

**Bulloch:** No. They scheduled. Like Mandeville, they would advertise it for a month or so you know: Races Sunday, June the fifth or whatever day it is, starting at such and such a time. They had it over the local radio and in the local papers and stuff and everybody would know. And they would always draw a nice crowd down there. And they would have little stands set up to sell soft drinks and snow balls and what have you. They always drew a lot of people.

Madisonville, too. Everybody loved Madisonville because the water was so good to run in. You didn't have near the room for spectators in Madisonville that you did in Mandeville, because in Mandeville you had a beach about three miles long you know. And anywhere you could get on it, just about, you could see the boat races going. But Madisonville, you had about three blocks of street, you know. Have you ever been to Madisonville?

**Barrilleaux:** Yes, sir.

**Bulloch:** Well, the water front, right there by the bridge. From the bridge as far out as you could see that way. We'd set the buoy down in front of the shipyard down there [Mr. Bulloch is describing the course of the race]. You'd turn, and one turn would be right there in front of the bridge and the other one would be down by the shipyard. And you'd make about three laps.

**Barrilleaux:** Do you think a lot of people used to bet on the races, like horse racing today?

**Bulloch:** I don't think. I really don't. You know, just friendly deals. Like, if I knew one of my best friends we were running against, we might bet ten bucks or something. But that was big money in those days. We might have bet five or four. But no, it was not really a gambling deal (chuckling).

**Barrilleaux:** So it was a real community oriented event. A lot of families, kids, [etc.]?

**Bulloch:** Yeah, a lot of people really enjoyed it. I did. I know, before I started racing, I used to never miss one. I would be down there sitting on the bank, and I was probably twelve or thirteen years old. I started running them in, I believe, about 1981, or something like that; '82. I know I ran in '82. I still have the old trophies laying around from '82. [When later questioned about the validity of the date, Mr. Bulloch stated that it was actually 1952 and not 1982]. And I know I started before then. And then most of the time I was running other peoples equipment, so they kept the trophies and all, which I didn't really want them anyway. But I was proud to get them and to get my picture taken with them. That was all I needed. If you were running for money, some of them had pretty nice purses. If we were running for money the owner and I would kind of share the money. He would give me a percentage of it, and keep the rest. But he was spending all the money. I was just having fun running.

**Barrilleaux:** So it couldn't be considered a career for a driver?

**Bulloch:** No. This is all amateurs, more or less. I would say Billy Mays, the boy I told you about earlier, was probably the only guy in there that you could consider [a professional]. That's just about all he did, besides go to school. He was in demand, so he could run just about any time he wanted to. He got well known and he was a very good driver. He was small, about this tall [gestures with his hand]. About 5'6", something like that. I was 6'2" and I think a little smaller guy is a bit more agile, riding those boats, than a tall guy like me. Because you can get down in there and can't even see him down in there. They was good days. I enjoyed it, I tell you that.

**Barrilleaux:** Why did you finally get out of boat racing?

**Bulloch:** I went in the service; the Navy. And that was the end of it. I was living in Norco at the time and I was driving for the Speed and Spray shop over there. And the Navy was drafting. It was one of the few times that the Navy ever drafted, that I know of. And I volunteered for the draft, because I wanted to go into the Navy—stay with the water. I volunteered for the draft because I knew I was going to come up in another six to eight months or a year anyway, on account of my age. So I volunteered for the draft and they drafted me into the Navy. I volunteered to be drafted into the Navy, let's put it that way. And they drafted me into the Navy. And I spent a couple of years in there. Drove P.T. boats and stuff (laughs). We were in Hawaii and we would take one of the P.T. boats out on liberty to go around to a beach and go swimming. And when we'd get over there we would make surf boards out of the floor boards and we'd go surfing.

**Barrilleaux:** Do you think that affected the sport of boat racing much, when the draft came?

**Bulloch:** I really don't know. I'm pretty sure that Billy Mays was in the Coast Guard, which were stationed in New Orleans. He made meetings, I think, in the Coast Guard. So that kept him out of the draft. And I don't know about the rest of the guys. Had another good little driver from Amite by the name of Bobby Bell, and he was right up there with the top drivers. He was very small too. He was about the size of Billy Mays. And they could both really run a boat. And when you got a kid like that that can drive, a lot of times the family gets behind them. And they buy and build boats and buy motors for them. And Bobby Bell's family really stuck with him. Everywhere you saw him they had ten or twelve Bells standing out there cheering for him. And forking up money to help him buy a new motor. He was a good little driver though. Good fellow. Most of those guys were good fellows.

**Barrilleaux:** Over the years, from when you started racing, from when people racing before you, until now; how could you tell me that racing has changed? [For instance]The equipment, the courses, the crowds they'd draw [etc.].

**Bulloch:** Yeah, well, the motors have improved. I would say, basically, they're all a lot faster than they were then. And the boats too, I'm sure that they've improved the boats. I know they've improved the bigger boats. But the smaller boats like we ran, they've improved them a lot too. Like I say, I haven't been involved in it in so long, I really couldn't give you any real points about that. I feel sure that they have. You know, back when I was running, a B-utility would run about fifty miles an hour, fifty-five. And now they're probably doing seventy, I mean just my guess. Because I know they are just flying. Everything else; the boats they're building them lighter.

Basically, when I was running, your boat had to be a certain width and a certain length, maximum. And the weight didn't matter. It could weigh two pounds or two-hundred pounds. That had nothing to do with the width. You couldn't run a little narrow deal or very short. It had to meet the spec.'s. And today they can build a boat so light till the only thing that weighs anything are the motor and the driver. And back in those days most of those boats were built out of plywood. And they didn't have any fiberglass or anything like that back then. Not racing boats anyway. And so our boats were pretty heavy. You couldn't just put a sheet of quarter inch plywood on the bottom. It had to be really reinforced because it'd take such a beating. And you can't have the bottom breathe at all. It had to be just as stiff as a piece of steel. Because every little cup you develop under there slows you down three miles an hour. So if the bottom was breathing and all, you could go fishing with that boat. They had to be tough little dudes.

**Barrilleaux:** Do you think the influx of people into Madisonville, the more people that have been moving there from the city, do you think that that has affected the racing?

**Bulloch:** I, I really don't know. I would say this: you know I'm not involved in racing anymore and I don't even know whether they have races. I haven't been to one in so long around Madisonville. I think they maybe have one in Madisonville every year. But I think that the influx of people moving over into this area and all that would just make even it more powerful. Everybody loves to see boat races. Especially with the kind that we ran. You know everybody doesn't like to go to New Orleans and watch those big power boats out there running at a hundred miles an hour. You can't hardly see them out there. But you put fifteen little boats out there about eight foot long with a man in them and start running, and people love that. It's a real competition. So I think that with the amount of people who have moved over here from New Orleans and everywhere else into St. Tammany Parish, you wouldn't have enough room to put them in Madisonville if you had those races like we had. They couldn't hold them all. You couldn't see the race. You'd be ten deep. That's the way I feel about it anyway. Because, you know, you're limited to space to watch the races is probably two blocks. And the amount of people you fit in that, that's about it. Other than maybe some would anchor their boat or tie along the bank on the other side to watch them. But you would pack them in, I guarantee it; today. If you had those little outboard racers. And I don't know whether they have them. I hadn't been involved in it in a good while. I started racing horses (laughter). Matter of fact, that picture right there [gestures to bookcase], that's my first race ever. I know you're not interested in horse racing but I'm [Mr. Bulloch's microphone falls off as he gets up to retrieve the picture of the horserace]. This is the first horse race I ever ran in my life. But that's my horse out front. Won it. Quarter horses you know.

**Barrilleaux:** So you've been racing horses for a while. [Mr. Bulloch began racing quarter-horses in 1960].

**Bulloch:** Yeah. Got speed built in my blood, you know.

**Barrilleaux:** So horse racing as well as boat racing, you're saying it's something that's in you or it's not.

**Bulloch:** I would say so. Successful horse racing and all. It's got to be in you and you've got to have a little knowledge of what you're trying to do, you know. You can't just go grab a horse and throw a saddle on him and expect him to run. You've got to breed right. You've got to train right. You've got to condition right. Basically like boat racing. Same thing.

**Barrilleaux:** None of your brothers or sisters got into the sport?

**Bulloch:** No. My brothers all love boats and they all have boats. Fishing boats or riding boats. But none of them ever, ever even thought about it. And none of my kids. They all got boats. My kids, I have two boys and a girl, and every one of them have a boat at their house. But no racing or nothing like that. They go fishing and riding. I was the only wild man in the family I guess.

**Barrilleaux:** Yeah, I can't imagine holding on at fifty miles an hour through the lake.

**Bulloch:** Yeah. Up in the air. Sometimes there was nothing in the water; not even the propeller. That thing would hit those waves and (whaaoo) [gestures]. And you got to really be careful because you want to come down straight into them. But it was fun. We all had fun though; every one of us. I wish I could remember the names of a lot of those guys. But my memory is getting so bad that I can remember the key people that I was close to, but there are several other drivers from down in Mandeville in places like that that I should know.

**Barrilleaux:** I think your memory is actually a little better than mine. A couple of things: when you were talking about the actual technique of boat racing and the different things you would do. A couple of terms I'm unfamiliar with. Trimming the engine, what exactly does that involve?

**Bulloch:** All the outboard engines "trim". Just like a fishing boat, they've got an electronic tilt. When you put the motor on the boat it's hanging straight down. And when you start running down the river, you trim it up. You press a button and the motor starts going out like this [gestures with his hand at a 45 degree angle]. What that does, when it goes out, it lifts the front of your boat. The motor just don't come up. What it does, when the propeller starts putting pressure upward, it lifts the front of your boat. Which will automatically give you air underneath your boat, which is what you want. You want to run mostly on air. You want to be like an airplane flying down there. If you could run down that course and make the turn and come back without touching the water, other than your propeller, then you would be the champion. Then you'd be flying. That's what you want to do, is fly on the water. Because the water slows you down. That's what slows you down more than anything. If you run in a dead calm, you won't run near as fast as you will with a little chop where that air will get under there. You see the water tends to suck you. It sucks the boat down. And if you can get it up there just a chopping, a little bit, then the air will pass through and it can't suck. It's got air. You're running on air and that's what you want to do. To make them go. That's why all your boats now come with trim tabs. A trimming-motor. I don't care if it's a little fishing skiff or what; most of them, you can trim them up. And that's what it's for; to lift the front out of the water, and let that air get under there. You'll go faster.

**Barrilleaux:** So they're actually built more user-friendly now than they were when you were racing boats.

**Bulloch:** Well, yeah. I would say boat racing has improved the development of motors; outboard-motors. That made them what they are today. Because every motor you buy today is fast. And they've all got power trim on them. They never had that before. You had to pull them out and stick a pin in. And if you wanted to go a little higher you'd pull it out and stick another pin in, and go try it. And it might be too high to where you can't get on plane. So you got to go back down. But now you just press a button and it would just come up until you get that boat trimmed out to where it's just quivering up on top of the water; with air going under it. And that's when you're running. That's when you're running.

**Barrilleaux:** Wow. I had never realized that boat racing had that much of an effect.

**Bulloch:** Basically, the little outboards like we ran and these big inboard hydroplanes, they was basically the same. You actually want to fly in the air. You don't want to run on the water. You want to fly in the air without turning over or anything. If you can get it completely in the air, with the exception of your propeller, you'll go much faster. And that's basically what you do. You get it tapping like that and that air is just going all under there. And it's not sticking. If it sticks down, you slow down ten miles an hour right off the bat. See, you got to have that air under there. That's one of the most important things there is.

**Barrilleaux:** I remember you telling me that you had pretty much corporate sponsorship on a lot of those [races]. You were running boats for different companies. Do you think that the races in and around St. Tammany Parish brought different companies, possibly, to the Northshore.

**Bulloch:** Not really. I don't think.

**Barrilleaux:** Or, were they existing already?

**Bulloch:** Like I say, I haven't been involved in it for a good while, so I don't know if any of them on the Northshore participate in boat racing anymore. I really don't know. Because I don't fool with it anymore. Back when I was racing, the people that sold the motors and stuff got enthused about us racing. And they got involved, which made their business better; sell more motors in boats, and what have you. But basically, when I started, most of the outboard motor places and all just sold motors to go fishing. We converted them. Because you can buy, we used to run, a twenty cubic inch Mercury. And that was like a super ten. Back in the old days that was called a super ten Mercury. And they was twenty cubic-inch engine. Well, they're still twenty cubic-inch engines. But from the experience of racing, and all, that twenty cubic-inch engine will now push a boat three times as fast as it would back when they made the motors back in, say, 1980, '75. [ 1950, '45]. That's what made those motors run. Those old guys out there pounding those waves with them. You know, learned all those tricks to get that thing airborne. You want to be like an airplane flying over the water is what you want. If you could get it to sit up about four inches off the water, and make the whole race, you could win. Because you'd be that much faster.

**Barrilleaux:** Man. It is 9:39 and I am stopping the recorder.

[ The recorder was stopped at 41 minutes, 56 seconds for a brief recess]

**Barrilleaux:** It is 9:43 [A.M.]. Mr. Bulloch, I remember when we were talking about some of the different regulations for the boats when you were running—the fuel, and otherwise.

**Bulloch:** Well, the associations required us to run within certain limitations. You know, fuel and all that. And we mostly ran what we call stock. Which, we did not increase the cubic inch. We didn't bore them [the motors] out and put a bigger piston in it to make them go faster, which they would. We ran strictly stock engines and gasoline. We ran on gasoline. The gasoline, you could have no additives in it either. Nitro [Nitrous Oxide], or whatever they race these racecars on. That stuff would make our boats go faster too, but the rules were stock motors. Stock cubic-inch and stock fuel and stuff. So we all had to run the same thing. If you just turned it loose and said everything goes, the rich guys would win it all. Just gave the little poor guy a chance to get in there and compete because he had the same engine and went down to the service station and bought the same gasoline; which made it fair. And we all got to compete in that respect; pretty even. But they had real good mechanics, and all, that could get a little bit more out of theirs because they were better than the other ones. Knew all the tricks of the trade.

**Barrilleaux:** They just, from being around it, [they were] mechanically-minded people.

**Bulloch:** They would come to the top. The cream would come to the top, you might say. But they made it as fair as they could. And, I told you earlier, when you pull up at a race course to race, say a stock B engine which is mostly what I ran, the official would come down. And you had to take your spark plugs out of your engine, and he would measure the depth and the width of the cylinder wall to make sure that I was running a twenty cubic-inch engine. Because it would be so simple for me to come home and bore it out to say, thirty or forty inch. And nobody could see it because it's inside the engine. And I'd go out there and out-run everybody [hypothetically speaking]. But they kept you honest. They had a little tool made, stick in there and it would measure the cubic-inch of the engine. So everybody had to run. And then, the same way with the gasoline. They had a way of testing the gasoline so to make sure that you weren't running Nitro or something like these hot-rods use on the hot-rod track. They burn everything that they can get their hands on. We couldn't do that. We had to burn stock gasoline. It was purchased at the gas station. We could use super, super shell (Mr. Bulloch laughs). But it was a pretty honest deal. It just took the guy with the best driver and the boat that ran the best. That basically was the difference.

**Barrilleaux:** What would the mechanics do? I mean, what were some of the things they could do to the engine to make it a little better? Because, I remember you saying they had some really good mechanics there, who could alter the engines a little bit.

**Bulloch:** Let's see if I can think of anything that they used to do. Well, the timing and all was very key. You had special instruments. You know how you check a spark plug with a little fila gauge, to see how big the gap is in the spark plug? Well, that was the old method. And along about the time I was racing they came out with a digital measurements. That helped a lot. Like setting your points for the engine, used to, you'd use a fila gauge: (boop), twenty thousandths; that's it. After that came along, you could set the points at anything you wanted. That wasn't hopping it up or anything. But they had instruments that would tell you exactly what your clearance is. And it would tell you exactly when the points were breaking, which was very important. When the engine runs it makes a spark. It goes in and explodes the gas. Well, you want that explosion to come out at a key time, to where that piston is at top dead center. When it's up, that's when you want it to explode and blow it back down. And these guys developed instruments that could, you could fine tune that spark to where it was firing at exactly the right millimeter of a second. And that really boosted them up to where the old guy under a shade tree with a fila gauge trying to set his; he was out of the ballgame.

**Barrilleaux:** So that's what you mean by timing?

**Bulloch:** Yeah. Timing is very important. Especially in a stock engine, you know. Well, in any engine it is. But in a stock engine, where you can't cheat, you can't burn Nitro, and do all this other cheating stuff, you had to run stock. Like you bought it. So that was the trick. To tune it as best you could to get everything out of it you could, legally. Now all that came along and was developed during my day. They threw the fila gauges away before I graduated. Everybody had the little instruments to time them with, and stuff like that. It was a fun trip, I tell you, I really enjoyed racing.

**Barrilleaux:** You said your sons were both really into boating and fishing and that sort of thing. They never got into racing?

**Bulloch:** Not one bit. No. Both of them have about a twenty-eight or thirty foot fishing boat. They like to go offshore fishing and speckled trout fishing. Stuff like that down at Grand Isle. In fact, my two boys have a camp in Grand Isle. They go down there; they fish, and they go offshore, and they dive too. Scuba-dive, you know, and spear fish. They even talked me into taking the diving lessons. But I was too old. So I took the diving lessons, but I learned how to dive. But I said no, I'm too old for that. So I quit.

**Barrilleaux:** Well, it's been a pleasure talking with you sir. It really has.

**Bulloch:** Thank you. And I enjoyed it too. I hoped I helped y'all out a little.

**Barrilleaux:** I think it will help us a great deal, sir; Mr. Donice Bulloch.