

**JANICE RICHARDS**  
**Shucker, Thirteen Mile Oyster House – Near Apalachicola, FL**

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Date: March 23, 2006  
Location: Thirteen Mile, Tommy Ward's office– Near Apalachicola, FL  
Interviewer: Amy Evans  
Length: 1 hour, 5 minutes  
Project: Florida's Forgotten Coast

**[Begin Janice Richards]**

0:00:00.0

**Amy Evans:** This is Amy Evans for the Southern Foodways Alliance on Thursday, March 23rd 2006. And I'm out at Thirteen Mile Oyster House west of Apalachicola, Florida. And I'm with Janice Richards, who's a shucker here at Thirteen Mile. Mrs. Richards, would you say your name and your birth date for the record, please?

0:00:21.6

**Janice Richards:** Janice Richards and September the 18<sup>th</sup>, 1945.

0:00:26.3

**AE:** All right. And where were you born—in this area?

0:00:28.5

**JR:** Eastpoint [Florida].

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**AE:** Okay. How—how far back does your family go in Eastpoint?

0:00:34.5

**JR:** They go pretty ways back. Let's see—they used to live in Overstreet [Florida]. They was all coming from Georgia down to Overstreet and then they went to Eastpoint, worked, and eventually we ended up in White City, and that's where I went to school. I went to school in St. Joe [Florida], and then I had—Mama had to move to Apalach after my daddy died because there was five of us children still living. She had fifteen children. And then there was five of us left—still at home after daddy died, and so she went to Two Mile [two miles west of Apalachicola, Florida] and shucked oysters for a living to help finish raising us kids until I was married. And then I think I married before my other brother, Edward, and—in 1959 when me and Johnny [Richards] married and I—I started out shucking oysters then and I did—we've been married forty-six years; that's how long I've been shucking, forty-six years. And I enjoy it; I mean, I really do enjoy shucking. It's like your own pace and your own time, you know. You ain't got nobody over you; you know you can be your own boss if—if you can stay home and have somebody shuck for you but—but my family back in Eastpoint though, I always remember it's just being there about six or seven years old when they moved to White City; and so I don't know too much, how far—how long Buddy lived there. But mostly we lived on Overstreet—I mean East Bay—East Bay.

0:02:24.2

**AE:** Did you go to school in St.—Port St. Joe?

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**JR:** Uh-hm, yeah; until the seventh grade and then I came down and finished up the year down here in—in Apalach[icola] before I married. I married at fourteen. [*Laughs*]

0:02:39.8

**AE:** How did you meet your husband?

0:02:42.4

**JR:** I met him in Eastpoint when I was twelve years old; he was fourteen. And my brother was real good friends with Johnny, and the first time I seen him, I knew he was it, you know. Just like we told his grandmother—he said, “That girl is—Janice over there—at [this] house—that's going to be my wife one day.” And his grandmother said, “Oh!” But when we got married, he denied all that. The question come up about it and he said, “No, that's not true; I didn't say that.” And his daddy said, “Oh yes, you did.” He said, “I heard you say it.” So I don't know if he had all that many girlfriends or anything but he was my—my only boyfriend—the first one and I married him. [*Laughs*] But I don't have no regrets and he says he don't. But we had two children; Denise is forty-two and my baby boy is thirty-two.

0:03:40.3

**AE:** What's his name?

0:03:43.2

**JR:** John Richards and he's on the School Board in Carrabelle. And Denise is an oysterwoman and a shucker; whatever you want to put her at, she'll do it.

0:03:52.8

**AE:** She oysters?

0:03:54.4

**JR:** She's out oystering with her husband right now and—

0:03:55.4

**AE:** Okay.

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**JR:** —shucks occasionally. But she was at one time employed at Papa’s Pizza down in Eastpoint with—and my sister—I mean my daughter-in-law and her mother owns that place. So it [short pause] but I’m—I’m getting tired though now lately of everything.

0:04:20.2

**AE:** I imagine it takes its toll physically, standing up like that.

0:04:23.8

**JR:** Uh-hmm, it does—you’re old—you get old in a hurry. All of my youthful years I’ve—I’ve had it like that, you know flashed and I said, “Oh, my God,” you know. “Lord, it’s done gone!” You know. But—

0:04:41.8

**AE:** You said your foot has been bothering you.

0:04:42.8

**JR:** Yeah.

0:04:43.0

**AE:** Is that just from standing or—?

0:04:43.8

**JR:** Yeah, my leg hurts. My leg—I got some kind of ulcer—they call it this big name. And I have to take my water pill every day for that leg. And they told me to sit down and I have to elevate it every now and then. But I want to get through and go home and elevate it in the recliner. *[Laughs]* That's the best way.

0:05:04.6

**AE:** So you say your mother was shucking out at Two Mile. What did your father do?

0:05:08.2

**JR:** Mama shucked in Eastpoint most—when—when I was little but then whenever—before I married my husband, yes, she moved—she shucked oysters at Two Mile at Eddie Amison's. Eddie Amison was running the place, and they had what they called shotgun houses and we moved in one of them old sheds and houses, and that's where we lived. She put an old woodstove in there and she'd go to work every morning and shuck oysters and—and I didn't stay single long when I got married, but then she moved back to White City because her home was still there;

that was like a camping place, and—but she had a home, a pretty good home in White City and—.

0:05:57.4

**AE:** Was she shucking the oysters that your father would go out and get?

0:06:01.8

**JR:** No; daddy died when I was just—I was about eleven or twelve—something—when he died then.

0:06:07.3

**AE:** Oh, okay.

0:06:08.8

**JR:** See that's when she had to go to Apalach at Two Mile and go to work because she—all of us kids was left—still left home. And she done all right, you know. You know, I don't know if y'all—you younger kids understand when there's a house full of kids and that—their kids—got it around fourteen or fifteen years old, if they—if it was a girl she ended up helping Mama take care of kids or either that was—that was just like when one got married that was one less mouth

to feed, you know. **[Laughs]** Y'all don't understand that or what—but there wasn't many girls in the family—just mostly boys, a lot of them.

0:06:52.2

**AE:** So what did—what did your brothers do to support—help support the family; did they work the [Apalachicola] bay?

0:06:58.6

**JR:** Did they do what?

0:07:00.5

**AE:** Did your brothers—to help your mama—did they work the bay? Did they start working—?

0:07:04.4

**JR:** Yeah, they worked all—mostly all the boys was oystermen or seafood workers until they got up older and one of my brothers, he was working at the paper mill and then mostly pretty well worked on the water and Edward caught the oysters that mama shucked and then I got married and he got married later, so then she just go into shuck for the house or help or whatever and—'til mama's health got bad you know. She moved back to White City and then sold that and

then bought a place over in Apalach and—you know where those steamers are [meaning Steamers Restaurant on Highway 98]?

0:07:45.5

**AE:** Uh-hmm.

0:07:46.0

**JR:** Well there—turn right—left and go up to what they call Oyster Road. And I bought her place. That's where I'm living at—her place; before she passed away she let me buy it where we could pay off some bills and stuff, so I've been there ever since.

0:08:03.8

**AE:** So before you got married to your husband, Johnny what did you learn from your mama about shucking before you—?

0:08:12.6

**JR:** Just to be sure to cut them out good and not tear them and not get in such a big hurry. Of course, mama taught me how to shuck but there was a lot—a lot of—it took me a year or more to really get the hang of it. I don't know why I was slow in learning but there was Wilmer—let's see

Amor Wilson it used to be and let's see—what was the—Anita Newell—all showed me how to pick it up and get a fast move on it. And I said with the rocking situation, said hit—it used to do it—hit it with a hammer and then when you hit one, two, throw that back in on the three; hit—and that's what they taught me, so when I learned—that's the way I used to shuck—real bad. And they—when I'm in a real fast mood I'm pretty much sometimes moving, but they really is the ones that showed me how to—pick up the speed. And I can remember Johnny going out oystering all day long with a wheelbarrow—that would be just like a wheelbarrow all day when things was so bad and we didn't know nothing about no hard times; we didn't pay any attention because we was young you know. We could pop into mama's house or pop into his mama's house and eat and they'd always say I have plenty, so we'd just pop in and out like that you know but—. But his mama said when she shucked down here years ago it was like a stall—seventy-five cents a gallon. When I started shucking at Two Mile for Eddie Amison, it was a dollar thirty-five a gallon and fifty-cents—a dollar fifty for select [oysters], and we'd have had like a bucket like this [gestures to illustrate something about the size of a two-gallon bucket] it was real tall and about that round [gestures to illustrate something about sixteen inches around]. And then you had your regular bucket [which is a one gallon-sized bucket], and it stood out behind the bucket. All day you would take—flip the bigger oysters in there and they had to go like thirty-count for—I believe that's how it goes—for a select, and it had to be a real big oyster to pass as a select.

0:10:26.8

**AE:** A slick you're saying?

0:10:28.6

**JR:** We had to select the oysters, like pick the big ones out from the little ones. Thank God we don't have to do that no more. And they just ship them straight now but we had to pick them and if you had a lot of—[one] dollar thirty-five [cents] for your standard oysters and then fifty-cents more on the gallon—if it was select—whatever gallon of selects you carried. Sometimes like you carried more selects at times than you would standards, and then sometimes you would have more standards than you would selects. So we had to do it a lot like—it was a little aggravating but now we don't have to do that. Now when I worked for Donnie Wilson now we had to select and all; I didn't like that—I didn't care too much for that; it kind of gets a little aggravating from picking them; but—.

0:11:19.8

**AE:** It takes time away from shucking?

0:11:21.9

**JR:** Uh-hmm; it does. It takes a lot of time.

0:11:23.8

**AE:** When did y'all start using—well when did you start working out here at Thirteen Mile for starters?

0:11:29.0

**JR:** Well off and on I think it—I'm going to just say ten to fifteen years, because off-and-on we've been down here—one time we worked here and we worked about three years and we left and then I worked for Donnie Wilson for a long time. But I worked for—for—when we married we worked for Eddie Amison for years and we lived in what they call the shotgun houses. The rent—there was no rent; all you had—your light bill and a little bit of water, the—the pump water back in the house or you had to tote the water and—but then we left Eddie's and we worked for Oliver Nash. And God we worked for him for years and then we moved—kind of down Thirteen Mile because sometimes Johnny would bag. I didn't have to shuck all that much and he shrimped a lot, so that's why I stayed around with—with Blake Thomas bought Eddie out and bought the place, and I worked for him and he liked—in-seasons of summer seasons you had the summer off to have a little rest and—and I had my two kids at home and then I had time with them, but any time I went down to that shucking house I could get in the stall—anywhere in it—if there was a stall empty I could get it. But you can't do that no more; if you don't work regularly you kind of lose your stall and that's kind of where I'm afraid of now if I take out am I going to have my stall when I come back you know because they can't stand there and wait on you to come back when they're needing somebody to shuck and that's understandable. But years ago you could pretty well just go back and do whatever you've got to do or I could say look John didn't make anything shrimping that—that week. I'd go down there and he'd call me on the radio

or something and I'd run up to the shucking house and I'd work one or two days and make enough to buy us groceries and feed my children and that's what I did. I made sure they had plenty of food. Down here is the best place to work; it is.

0:13:35.2

**AE:** Why do you say that?

0:13:36.3

**JR:** I don't know; it's just—one thing you just—you know everybody you know and everybody seems to be good and family like and my husband works better here because he—he is not able to go like the other boys to the other places and he's—works mostly in the Bayou. But he—he likes that better because it's easier on him.

0:14:08.9

**AE:** Well can you explain to me a little bit how you were talking about you worked at so many different oyster houses; what makes a couple change them up? Like are you following a price that you can get?

0:14:20.9

**JR:** Prices, yeah; the price is different and one will pay more for the gallons and one will pay more for the bags and too, it—when you get to a place you just hate shifting around. So many—but that's why we worked so many—long—Oliver; we worked with him for a long time and then we worked with—like I said the first few years with Eddie and then Mr. Blake Thomas; he was a wonderful person to work for too. Everybody we've ever worked for we've been well pleased but you know Johnny, you know thanks to the Lord, he was raised here and this is—you know Martha Pearl is his cousin—Miss Martha Pearl Ward and—and Mr. Dewey Millender is his uncle. And so it's home; he was raised down here—him and James used to run up and down these roads and—so it's home to Johnny see. It's nothing new and he knows this place pretty good, so—.

0:15:24.0

**AE:** Well so tell me about a day of shucking and when you get here and what you do and what a day is like.

0:15:32.1

**JR:** Like coming in early in the morning, I'm here sometimes—Oddys [Hicks, another shucker] is here earlier than I am; she's got—always got a gallon before I get here and I got here this morning a little after four. I may have gotten started around four-thirty [in the morning], and I got eight gallons up already. And because I was wanting to get through on count of the weather; I don't—I don't like bad weather and but we—we like to come early and get through early and so

we can go home early and that way we can have the evening you know to do what we got to do at home, you know. And as far as staying down here around four or five o'clock anymore, I cannot do it no more. Like these young people they come in around seven and eight and then they can stay a little longer. I like to come early and get through, you know, and go home. And it's not bad.

0:16:29.7

**AE:** So what time do you usually go home, and how many gallons do you have by the end of the workday?

0:16:34.7

**JR:** Well if I go home around—let's see; I've got another bag or two bags on the floor. I should be going home at least by one today if not before. And I should have let's see—probably ten or eleven gallons when I go home. Oddys gets a better turnout than I do. **[Laughs]** I don't know what she does but she gets a better turnout. And I said, “Johnny, I just don't know what in the world,” I said, “but that girl can get a better turnout than me.” I said, “We’re putting the same amount of oysters in a bucket.” And I said, “Well I just don't get the turnout that she does.” But she will not miss no little piddly on it; she—and I tried that all morning and I said, “I'm going to try to do that.” So I said, “The heck with it; I'm going to shuck just like I've always done.” I get my oysters and go out. I don't cut them up that bad. I said, “I'm going with it; I'm getting out of here.” And that’s all I think about: I want to get out of here today. **[Laughs]** But that's what she

uses. Now this—you have your good days and bad days; you don't feel like working and ready to go home—don't even want to come down here. I have called in you know when I didn't have any—I'm not going to come in. I'm not shucking tomorrow because I haven't got any of my own so I'm thinking I don't have to shuck anyway. I hope Mr. Tommy don't need me. **[Laughs]**

0:17:59.8

**AE:** Can you explain how that works too; how you're shucking your husband's oysters but then like Oddys—James works uptown [as an opener at Papa Joe's Oyster Bar], so she's not shucking his oysters because he's not bringing any in.

0:18:10.5

**JR:** Well no she's shucking for Mr. Hoyt Thompson, and Hoyt and my husband works together. And so she's really Hoyt's shucker, and I'm my husband's shucker. Now that's—that's the way it is I reckon. And James used to oyster and she used to work with him, too but—.

0:18:36.6

**AE:** So what is that relationship? Is it just—you know—you know the person who is bringing the oysters and—?

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**JR:** Well I've always shucked for my husband. That's always been the number one; I've always worked you know shucking his oysters—brought them in and I—when I get through with his oysters I shuck for the house and not there—you know not all the time because usually I'm pretty late getting mine out at times, but Oddys will; when she gets through she will shuck more for the house than I—when I get through I'm going home. [*Laughs*] But she's a worker though; but—

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**AE:** And do y'all over here use the opening machines now. How has that changed the industry?

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**JR:** Much better; you don't— I mean we don't get as muddy and I have a sister-in-law that still uses the machine—I mean a knife and a hammer and a block and the reason she went back to that is—well she used to use the machine; she got her thumb in it, so she's afraid of them now. And if you look at the blades, you'll see why. They're blades like saw blades; it will and have took women's fingers off. And but you can't do a lot of talking and it—when I'm talking to somebody like you if they're on this side, because I'm hard of hearing in this ear anyway. I have to stop and look and I'm going to take my hands and put it down to talk because if you're not careful and do this you go—[*Gestures*] and you can stick it in there. You have to really be careful when you're talking. And but the knife and hammer is cheaper; you don't have the expense of the—because you have to put out—I just spent over—let's see \$260-some dollars on

a new machine I had just bought because they had the last motors come in. And I grabbed that motor because it's like the one I got and them little old bitty like Black and Decker motors they just don't hold up and they're just not built for shucking. And you can—you can put bearings in it sometimes twice the—every two weeks or something like that; it takes that many bearings.

0:20:55.5

**AE:** So the shuckers buy their own machines?

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**JR:** Uh-hmm, I have my own machine and Oddys is using that some that Tommy bought but she keeps the—keeps the motor up and the blades and stuff like that and she—but you have to buy your own machine. It's—it's really expensive especially when you go to take them and have them sharpened and the blades built up and sharpened is—I think it's thirty dollars now to have the blades sharpened and then forty to build them up. Sometimes it may run a little bit more, you know. And it's—it's kind of expensive—just like that man with them oyster tongs. Johnny just spent 200-some on oyster tongs, getting them tongs, you know, and keeping his rig, you know, up to date and all.

0:21:48.6

**AE:** Are there other things as a shucker that you have to provide, like the aprons or the—?

0:21:52.7

**JR:** Yeah; you have to buy your own aprons, your gloves, and that's about it I think you have to pay for and just keep your machines up and really we're supposed to keep our own machines up where they won't make so much racket. But they're—they're doing it today; that's why I have to wear them plugs. My head rings you know from it. I can't—sometimes there's just so much racket in there from hearing the blades clang you know and they didn't use to do that. But I reckon somebody needs to—you know getting a little older with it.

0:22:29.1

**AE:** Have you always tried to wear earplugs or is it just kind of as you've gotten older?

0:22:32.2

**JR:** I started using earplugs when I was working for Donnie Wilson because a lot of the people wouldn't fix the machines that had bearings and my hearing was started out ringing and so I've been wearing the earplugs now for a while. Not every day; it's just according to how many is in there, but you got one on the end her and her blades is dull, Miss Oddys' is dull, and mine wants to make a [*Roaring Noise*] and this one here—the lady—she's not here today, hers wants to and it just—it really—Tammy said she had a headache yesterday from the racket of the machines and she's a young girl; and—.

0:23:18.6

**AE:** Are there many younger people that you know of that are shucking because it seems like most of the houses I've been to they're—?

0:23:25.6

**JR:** Tammy is the youngest one in there and they're not many young people doing it now and once us older ones are out it's going to be bad for the—for the oystermen—I mean for the dealers unless they—like Mexicans comes in and do it and a lot of—I think that's what Grady [Leavins] has done. But now I want to tell you now, the quality of the oysters is not good when you cut them up. And I've watched them shuck them and they are just mocked up. I wouldn't buy that gallon of oysters. And I wouldn't pay you 60-bucks for something that's made to look like chewed up. And I've just been always taught that you—you shuck an oyster—and Tommy sells good oysters here because he's got good shuckers. Most of them are really good shuckers. And if you come in and bought a gallon, you will really want to ask for one, Oddys or mine—let me see who else. Let's see, Tina's, I know.

0:24:29.6

**AE:** So people come in and they ask for a gallon of oysters from a particular shucker?

0:24:32.7

**JR:** Yeah, they have—they have come in and asked for Oddys' oysters—not so much about mine but they have always requested Oddys' oysters—yes, ma'am.

0:24:40.4

**AE:** And so in the back when they package them they keep them separated according to—?

0:24:45.4

**JR:** No. No, they don't do all that. But they have—will call in and I know they—they called in and they said they wanted certain—Especially Mr. Ward. If he's got one gallon of Oddys' oysters. Well they—they make sure that he gets her oysters you know. And but like I told him—different people that's asked me, I said [that] this is a good place to shuck for oystering—getting oysters and gallons of oysters because they're shucked fresh. You got—not got to worry about somebody sneaking you a Louisiana oyster in on you and when you go into other places—I have stopped at one—one time when I was working for these people—and I ain't going to say who they were—and they was buying—fixing to buy a gallon of Louisiana oysters, and I shucked a few for these people—didn't stay there long. And they were bad oysters—I mean bad oysters and it—that's what hurt a lot of us at times because they would put them in that gallon bucket, I don't care what they said—they did mix them. And I stopped, I said—she asked me, “Did you want a specific bay oyster?” And I said, “They're not [Apalachicola] bay oysters; they're Louisiana

oysters. And don't tell them that I told you this," I said, "but don't buy them." She says—I said "I'm the shucker," I said, "don't buy them." And she says, "Thank you." And she turned—I wouldn't—I wouldn't have fed them to a dog that day. They were terrible. I mean they pure stunk. But you know what they do? They put them in bleach(y) water, and then they put them in and set them out. And they go on out for Franklin County and who does it hurt? It hurts us. Now, I pretty well always liked shucking bay oysters; I'm a bay shucker. I don't like no Louisiana oysters. And I have shucked them and I have shucked them when they'll be fresh and they're okay. But now, just like I told them down there, the place I worked down there, I'm a bay shucker. I'm not no Louisiana shucker. **[Laughs]** I'm not a Louisiana oyster shucker or Texas or [whatever] I'm a bay shucker. I want the type of oysters that are easy to shuck, too and they're not like the Texas oysters that are like brrrrr **[Gestures]**. It is hard.

0:27:11.1

**AE:** So who shucks the—the oysters that are brought in from the cultivator that Tommy has out here?

0:27:15.7

**JR:** All the shuckers. All his shuckers and yeah, they—they shuck them and—. Pretty much every one in there has shucked the oysters there. And they—they do pretty good shucking—catching, you know. You get some that don't. I made a mistake here the other day with Reggie [who works at Thirteen Mile]. I—I don't want to let that—put that on there [on the recording,]

but I went and looked to get the name off the bag and get who it was and he got upset with me.

**[Laughs]** He said, "God, I didn't know whose these was! It was another person's oysters." I

helped shuck for the house that day.

0:28:09.1

**AE:** And you didn't know it is that what you're saying?

0:28:11.2

**JR:** I knew who he was.

0:28:11.9

**AE:** Okay. **[Laughs]**

0:28:13.6

**[Laughs]**

0:28:13.7

**AE:** So when you stay here all—you know a good six—eight hours early in the day do y'all stop to have—take a meal or you just work straight through?

0:28:22.2

**JR:** Yeah; I do—I sometimes stop quite a bit, you know, like snacking or when you eat so early in the morning, just eat something light and then come on down here. And then you go have a piece of toast or some coffee and then you carry your—or a banana. I'm supposed to eat a banana a day, so I eat my banana along with that and—and go on—on back to work and work 'til 11 o'clock [in the morning], my dinner break—my lunch break and then I'll eat and pretty much—I'm pretty well getting through. And when I get done I just go home and then I won't worry about lunch. Or if I see I'm about through I'll just wait until I go home and—and eat my lunch. But yeah, we break. I do the most breaking, though. **[Laughs]**

0:29:05.5

**AE:** Do you like to eat oysters?

0:29:07.9

**JR:** Fried, yeah bay oysters fried and I like the little—I like to take me a little pint or a little cup and pick out the little bitty ones like that for myself. And now, my husband don't like—he'll eat—the bigger they are the better they are for him. But I like the little spat and I like to cook

them up first, fry them first and eat them while they're still crunchy. I'll eat me about six—seven right then and the rest of them are his. **[Laughs]** The oyster stew or fry them or whatever—but.

0:29:44.1

**AE:** So I have—I just have a couple more questions about the shucking stalls and the tools that you use. Because I didn't know that the shuckers got their—bought their own machines. So you go—you obviously then shuck at the same stall every day?

0:29:57.4

**JR:** Uh-hmm; the same one—pretty much that same stall.

0:30:00.5

**AE:** Was there a reason you picked that certain stall or how—just what's available?

0:30:03.6

**JR:** Well it's just where we started out at. And if somebody that's come in and something or another—we just don't move. You know they just give them a stall and that's where they'll stay at until they get ready to quit or whatever. It's just—I don't know—not particularly that we' all got to stay there but it's just where we started out and sometimes you just used to shucking and your

stand gets to that stall—it's just right, see. And if you move sometimes you'll have a time adjusting your stand and you may have to get a pad and put on it or something or other to make it just right again or get one of them bigger, higher stands. But those are original stalls.

0:30:48.9

**AE:** Yeah; they're that pretty plaster(y) kind of—

0:30:52.7

**JR:** Uh-hm; yeah those are back the way they used to be. Now when I worked down Donnie's he—he had some in there like that too but he has what we call stainless steel stalls and they were easy to clean but the only thing is you stand on a stainless steel stand, you're shucking in a stainless steel stall—lightning is going to come, you're really ready to get electrocuted now. I don't want to—they're easy clean but now he took—Mr. Donnie did, he took and put some kind of stuff in the stall like that's in there in the washroom—where they wash the oysters; it's blue; it's on the floor. I don't know—anyway that stuff was put in the stalls and I don't know how they did it but they did it and it was a lot easier to clean. It didn't break up like this cement is; so.

0:31:46.4

**AE:** Well then how about the height of the stalls; is that—just and the—the stands that you stand on—where does that come from do you think?

0:31:55.6

**JR:** That's just always been high like that so the people can get up off the floor while they're—because they have to wash the floor so much during the day. And if you'll notice that they will take the water hose and wash all this or they'll sweep and the water will go up on this thing and so you're not standing in the water and to stand in that water that will make you sick.

0:32:21.2

**AE:** Have the oyster houses always had these chutes that take the—the oysters outside?

0:32:24.9

**JR:** Yeah, uh-hm, they always use a tractor to move them, yeah. It's always done this that I can recall. And then they used to take the shells and replant them. And which Mr. Tommy probably will, take a barge, and he'll take that and put it up in the Bayou and replant the Bayou, you know with the shells here; so.

0:32:50.0

**AE:** Well so you say you like oystering—I mean, not oystering, shucking because it gives you some—some freedom, and you're kind of your own boss. Did you think you'd be shucking all these years?

0:33:02.9

**JR:** Until I die. Until I have to retire or something or other. Because I just don't see anything else I know to do. See, I don't have much education. I didn't get all that much. I'm—I can read and write and I can do my math. Now I'm not that dumb but I'm just saying I didn't go long enough in school; I didn't go to the seventh. And what I learned I learned a lot from my children, too.

0:33:27.0

**AE:** And you say your children were doing a lot of research on the history or your daughter and her husband on the—on the area?

0:33:31.6

**JR:** My—my niece and nephew were—Vincent Earl Raffield and then Linda Raffield and they're on the internet and getting—want to get further into this; they have really got history on stuff.

0:33:44.8

**AE:** Yeah; I'll definitely check that out. And you were telling me, when I visited with you a couple months ago when I was here, about women crocheting cast nets and that kind of thing.

0:33:56.3

**JR:** Uh-hmm; yeah they used to do that, and they have done it. Helped put them together and even helped do that; I—I—I've heard of it being done. As far as seeing that now, I didn't but I forgot who told me that made—made them one time. That's about all I know. **[Laughs]**

0:34:30.9

**AE:** Well is there anything that I haven't asked you that you think would be good for me to know or something that I've left out?

0:34:38.6

**JR:** I know that there's a lot of history in this and if—if the people come in and take it like the way it's happening in—in town what is going to happen to the people here because there are a lot of people that's on this bay a working and it—it employs a lot of people and if they come in and shove us away like they did the Indians well they—they're just shipping us out and there's still a lot of people—young people that's—you know works on this bay that loves it that has college

degrees and that—and they may could find another job but their heart won't never be in it because my son was brought up—I made him get his education and Denise did hers. I mean it's just she chooses the work she does because her husband is an oysterman. My son is the oysterman but I made him—I told him, I said, “Whatever you do, I want you to further—go further and get something that you can rely on because there is no insurance in this bay.” You cannot like—like if I get hurt or get sick I've got to lay up and let him work or something like that; we just don't have the benefits that you would in another job. I love my—. **[Interruption]** And he's mean. **[Laughs]** But no it's—it's all good work and I love it. And if you want to learn how I shuck, I'll teach you how.

0:36:33.7

**AE:** All right. Well, I'll come in and—and watch you for a little while, definitely. It's—it's a very interesting area here with lots of history, I've learned a lot these past few visits down here, that's for sure.

0:36:47.3

**JR:** It's a lot of it down here; if you want to just—like Johnny told me one time, they—I know Johnny has probably told you; they laid logs in the road here and what—the shucks, that used to be nothing but marsh there, and what the shells that they shucked was put in here and the—the shucking house was built down here. I don't know if this is the original foundation or not. And the shells, they had loads of shells and they would just back down until they got it all—the road

built and until they got—they got the shells and then built the shucking house on further back in the back. And I think they did that so that it would be a dock to the water, see, so that oystermen could come in, but—and now he—he loves it. He loves Thirteen Mile now; this is his place.

**[Laughs]**

0:37:38.2

**AE:** Well it's a neat place and it's a beautiful location too.

0:37:39.9

**JR:** It is—it is.

0:37:40.7

**AE:** I mean it's so pretty out here. Do y'all take days off and you know go on the bay for recreation or go fishing?

0:37:52.2

**JR:** Go fishing, well we used to a lot. I mean we really used to go all the time and we just haven't done it in a long time. We need to do it again. We're always just so tired lately; you know when we used to go fishing and he'd take time out for hunting and stuff like that and now we

just—our age now we just really are wanting to recline back and rest more but we really need to get out and do more. But I've got two more bags of oysters to do.

0:38:28.6

**AE:** Yeah; well I—thank you so much for letting me pull you away from your stall for this.

0:38:31.0

**JR:** Uh-huh.

0:38:31.7

**AE:** I appreciate it.

0:38:32.7

**JR:** Yes, ma'am.

0:38:32.8

**[End Janice Richards]**