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Reflections on the Bay:
Oral Accounts of Change in the Galveston Bay System
by
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From Oral Histories
Taken By
Instructor Adelaide Socki, M.A.
and Students at San Jacinto College
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Anita Butler	Robert (Bob) Middleton
Katherine Carroll	Jane Middleton
John B. Cheesman, Jr.	Todd Moore
Donald Cork	Tony Muecke
Patricia Cox	Philip Olasky
Robert L. (Bob) Craig	Alvin Alfred Otter
Maurice Davis	Suzanne Peter
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Jewell Wilcox Key	Jim Wilbarger
R.S. (Buzz) Larrabee	Floyd Williams
Brian Lutz	Pat Worthy
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	Beatrice Wycoff

All tapes and written documents associated with the oral histories taken by Instructor Adelaide Socki, M.A. and students at San Jacinto College, Pasadena, Texas, during the Spring Semester of 1991, are housed at The Galveston Bay Information Center, Texas A&M University, Jack K. Williams Library, Galveston, Texas.

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Chapter 1 Overview of the Research

Introduction. This volume is the result of two independently carried out phases of inquiry into the changes that local people have observed in the Galveston Bay system over the last seventy years. The first phase of research was the collection of 27 oral interviews, also referred to as oral histories, from a number of people residing in the area. Adelaide Socki both organized and directed the collection of the interviews. Joan Few, Adjunct Professor at the University of Houston-Clear Lake and Project Director for the research project "The History of Galveston Bay Natural Resource Utilization" for the Galveston Bay National Estuary Program, and Adelaide Socki, Instructor at San Jacinto College in Pasadena, Texas, formulated the research design for the collection of the interviews. The collection process was guided by a very general wish to compare and contrast changes that people have seen and experienced in the region. As a result the interviews vary greatly and cover a broad range of topics.

Kathleen Sullivan carried out only the second phase of this inquiry, the creation of this volume, and was not involved in the interview collection phase of the research. I analyzed the collection of audio tapes, the oral interviews, and selected those portions of each interview consisting of peoples' observations about changes in the interdependent natural and social environments of the Galveston Bay system. I arranged these recollections into a narrative organized geographically beginning from Galveston Island and moving counterclockwise around the Galveston Bay system. Oral recollections give the reader access to the story of the quotidian, ordinary peoples accounts of everyday lived experiences, observations, memories and perceptions of changes. These *oral* accounts, the anthropological data used herein, were gathered as spoken words not as written texts. A copy of this volume will accompany the tapes of the oral interviews in their archive at The Galveston Bay Information Center, Texas A & M University at Galveston, Jack K. Williams Library Galveston, Texas.

Fieldwork Methodology. The goal directing the fieldwork phase of this project, that is the collection of the oral interviews, was very general in its intent. Joan Few and Adelaide Socki wished to compare and contrast the changes that people have seen and experienced in the region (Few personal communication 1991). A total of 27 oral interviews were collected in the early months of 1991. Adelaide Socki collected three of the interviews and the remaining 24 were collected by students during the Spring 1991 undergraduate anthropology classes at San Jacinto College, Pasadena, Texas. Of those interviews, twenty were used to create this volume (See Appendices One and Two). Training for the oral history collection process was funded in part by a grant from the Texas Committee for the Humanities.

Joan Few received from the Project Advisory Committee of the GBNEP Project "A History of Galveston Bay Natural Resource Utilization," the names of several people who had lived in the Galveston Bay area many years and might be willing to be interviewed. These names were passed to Adelaide Socki. In turn, these people recommended still others, who recommended still others. A list of potential

interviewees was rapidly compiled and soon became too long to complete in either the time or with the available resources. All interviewees were selected by Adelaide Socki and she established the initial contact. In her contact letter, Ms. Socki explained the project's intent to the interviewee "...as your chance to describe human utilization of the Bay and surrounding estuaries as you have seen it over time and tell us what you think needs to be done" (Socki personal communication 1991). She also included the following list of questions in order to acquaint the interviewees with what was expected:

What was the Bay like when you first remember it?
How has it changed?
How has human utilization of the Bay changed the Bay?
What has most affected the Bay?
What would you like to see happen in the Bay?
Does the Bay need to be "saved"?
How can the public help "save" it?

Socki personal communication 1991

Few personal communication 1991

Each student was assigned an interviewee. Each student independently formulated his or her own questionnaire, conducted at least a 45 minute interview, generated a contents list for the interview, and wrote a short summary of impressions and the salient points of the interview. Most interviews lasted about 45 minutes although a few were longer. Three interviews were nearly two hours in length. In the special case of Lyda May Wright, two different students interviewed Mrs. Wright. Although this was not an intentional strategy, the interviews when examined together produced quite interesting material because each student focused on different issues.

The oral interviews vary considerably in content and form because each student formulated his or her own set of questions and structured his or her own interview. It was suggested that students not be too rigid in their approach, however students were encouraged to include certain questions along the lines of those suggested to the interviewees. And indeed certain questions consistently appear in the interviews. Stories and observations about the past and present environmental condition of the Galveston Bay system, growth in the region, changes in the habitat, the marshes, the shoreline and the wildlife populations, reactions to pollution, and experiences of hurricanes, regularly emerge in the course of the interviews. Each student elicits these observations using his or her own set of questions.

Every student recorded the age of the interviewee and at least a short description of the interviewee's residential history in the region. Sometimes the residential history emerged in the discussion of one's childhood and early family life in the area. Most frequently, the discussion of early life arose in response to the question: "What was the bay like when you first remember it?" Gender can be determined in all cases for both the interviewers and interviewees. Students did not systematically collect any other detailed sociological information about the interviewees such as a job history, a description of the person's adult immediate

family, current occupation. Many times a portion of such sociological data about the interviewees is elicited with either direct questions or occurs as the by-product of another discussion topic. On the other hand the interviewees, most of whom are over 60, were often intensively grilled for sociological information about their parents. The common emphasis on parental history arose in part because the students operated under the notion that these interviews were to be a part of a history, that is, about the past. Systematic collection of specific sociological data about the interviewees themselves, would have made it possible to better socially locate the narratives and personal observations that were collected.

An oral interview is the product of an interaction between interviewer and interviewee. The social position, values, and orientation of the interviewer as well as those of the interviewee, and the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee, contribute significantly to meaning in the interview. (Portelli 1981: 103-104; Popular Memory Group 1982: 223, 225). Sociological data about the interviewers is useful in evaluating how interviewees responded and the overall interaction between the speakers. However in this project, students very seldom included any remarks on the tapes or in their papers about their own relationship with the region nor did they provide any sociological data about themselves. Only the approximate ages of the interviewers can be determined from the recorded conversations. A few students filled out a short questionnaire about themselves after the project was completed. This biographical information has been integrated into Appendix One.

While twenty interviews were used in creating this volume, the remarks of twenty-one interviewees appear herein. Both Mr. and Mrs. Middleton participated in the Middleton interview. As mentioned Lyda May Wright was interviewed twice, however Jim Wilbarger was present during her second interview. He was actually the candidate to be interviewed when he insisted that they include Mrs. Wright. All except one of the interviewees (Wilbarger) appearing in this volume have lived near the Galveston Bay system for the majority of their lives or have spent extensive periods of time throughout their lives in contact with the bay. A number of the older interviewees grew up in the City of Houston and spent their childhood summers and vacations at the bay. All of the interviewees currently live in the area. Eight female interviewees and thirteen male interviewees participated in this volume. Of these people, three were younger than 50 years old when they were interviewed in 1991. Ten of them were in their sixties, five of them were in their seventies, and one man and one woman were in their eighties at the time of the interviews. The ages used in the above summary also appear in the text and are based on the following information: fourteen exact ages were recorded, three ages (Carroll, Butler, Larrabee) were estimated from year of birth and these interviewees may be as much as nine months younger than the ages given since no birth month was recorded, three ages (Stamper, Hester, Williams) have been estimated from the personal information embedded in the interview as no birth date was recorded for these people, finally no age could be estimated for Wilbarger. A short sketch of each interviewee's personal history has been abstracted from the interview tape and can be found in Appendix One.

A few students provided a whole or a partial interview transcription with their accompanying materials. Suzanne Peter, J. Kelley Trahan, Beatrice Wycoff, and Hollie Hale provided nearly complete and accurate transcriptions with their taped interviews. David Laird transcribed Adelaide Socki's interview with Alvin Otter and that complete, but uncorrected transcript accompanied the audio tape. Adelaide Socki partially transcribed the interviews conducted by Nisar Fazlani, Todd Moore, Elizabeth Hope Hahn, Zachary Handley, Alfredo Tamayo III, Donald Cork, Clint Thornton, and Liz Vanden Heuvel. These partial transcriptions, which accompany the student papers, range from nearly complete as in the case of the Handley, Fazlani, and Thornton interviews, to just 2.5 pages for the Vanden Heuvel interview. They consist of excerpts and summaries of accounts that struck Ms. Socki as important. Most are about five pages in length and all were uncorrected. In this volume, Kathleen Sullivan made use of the complete transcriptions and a few of the partial transcriptions, but only after listening to each tape and after making her own corrections and additions. I also transcribed in whole or part the remainder of the interviews for inclusion in this volume. This volume does not make use of any of the student papers. It relies solely on the audio tapes, the permission forms, and the name and birth date information on the cover sheet to each interview.

Constructing the Written Text from Oral Recollections. This section describes how I used the interviews to build this volume. The chapter of recollections is an edited story about the changing environment of the Galveston Bay system as the local inhabitants have experienced it over the last seventy years. Extended quotes from the oral accounts were used to construct the narrative in the next chapter.

I began with the idea of emulating a style of presentation where a series of different people's recollections are arranged into a continuous, uninterrupted narrative. This method of presentation is very evocative and creates a strong sense of the lived experience. Studs Terkel (1970), Ronald Fraser (1979), Richard Price (1983), and Marilyn Davis (1990) have created interesting examples of histories using this method. One aspect of the Davis and Terkel texts is however problematic. They paraphrase their informants' recollections to the point of essentially rewriting them but the authors represent these paraphrases as the informants' spoken words. I will discuss the practice of paraphrasing shortly. Fraser and Price, on the other hand, are much more careful with their informants' spoken words and more sensitive about their own intervention in these other peoples' stories. Citing Fraser's *Blood of Spain*, Popular Memory Group asserts that this style of creating a single narrative from many oral recollections is a rich and interesting alternative to the more traditional ways in which histories are constructed (1982:217). In the course of prefacing and introducing their oral histories, most oral historians mention that oral history appeals to them because it allows common people to write their own everyday history, a history from their point of view. The theoretical debate over oral histories in the discipline of History usually centers on what kinds of stories qualify as histories. Stories here refers to both informants' accounts and historians' recreated accounts.

Twentieth century anthropologists, on the other hand, have always done fieldwork, gathered many peoples experiences, and woven them into narratives

that tell the stories of other people from that other point of view. The related concepts of ethnography and relativism are very much grounded in the idea of letting other people speak their own history, especially those people who are not in the main stream of the dominant western culture. These concepts are premised on the idea that there exist many legitimate cultures and social points of view. It is not surprising then that anthropologists with their long experience in creating ethnographies, should eventually come to question their own role in the construction of these narratives about other people from the other's point of view. The edited collection of essays *Writing Culture* (Clifford and Marcus 1986) focuses entirely on critically appraising the anthropologist's role in recording and disseminating other peoples' stories through ethnographies and histories. Portelli (1981) and Popular Memory Group (1982) are among the few oral historians who begin from the anthropological assumption of relativism and proceed to critically reflect on the historian's fundamental role in creating histories and meaning using many informants' oral accounts.

Portelli (1981: 103-104) reminds us that interviews are initiated by the researchers and that the questions asked as well as the answers determine the final product. Popular Memory Group explores this theoretical issue in much further depth. Very obviously, interview questions trigger, guide, and direct the interviewees' responses. More subtly, personal history, gender, and age of both the interviewers and interviewees as well as the social context in which one person tells his or her story to another person all significantly contribute to meaning in an account. The way that a person tells about her or his memories and observations also creates meaning embedded in the story. (Popular Memory Group 1982: 223-225, 233). The way that the writer, the historian, organizes the gathered accounts and contextualizes those accounts in the final product also significantly contributes to the construction of meaning in the final product (Portelli 1981: 105; Popular Memory Group 1982: 223-233; Frisch 1990: 59-80).

The process of collecting the interviews as well as the processes of preparing, editing, framing, and organizing the oral accounts shape meaning in the narrative. Two pivotal junctures can be isolated in the construction of meaning in this particular volume. The first juncture occurred in the creation of the dialogues that constitute the interviews. The fieldwork phase of the inquiry is discussed in the preceding section.

My selection of the theme that organizes the narrative in the chapter of recollections was the second major juncture in the construction of meaning in this volume. Intrinsic to this organizing activity was the actual selection of the specific bits of each transcription for inclusion in the narrative. My organizational goal included bringing these participants' memories and descriptions into a meaningful juxtaposition tightly focusing on observations about the changing natural and social environment of the Galveston Bay system. After transcribing the interviews, I tore them into their composite parts and then reassembled them around this central focus.

From a practical standpoint the lack of conformity among the interviews required a substantial amount of editing to the structures of the interviews. Although

recurrent themes run through the separate interviews, each of the twenty interviews was conceived and structured by its own student researcher. This resulted in great variation in the subjects explored in each of the interviews. It also led to a good deal of looseness in the structure of the individual interviews. Without a standard interview schedule for the project, the interviewers did not always include the same questions or every question in the list of suggested questions sent to the interviewees (see above section for a list of sample questions). Sometimes the interviewers created their own questions along the lines of their own interests or their particular interpretation of what might be important in a history project. A particular subject may be explored in the first five minutes of one interview, tacked on at the end of another interview, and embedded in the middle of another topic in yet another interview. As raw data, the interviews are not readily comparable to each other and their similarities are open only to the most intrepid researchers.

While this volume addresses one category of observations found in the interviews, it is by no means a complete survey of all the questions and issues addressed in the oral interviews. Some of the major areas addressed by a number of the interviewees which are not covered in this volume are the political battles over the resources, the role of local clubs and the role of bureaucratic agencies in resource allocation, access, and user priority. While these are indeed significant themes, not enough systematic information was collected to adequately address these issues using this set of oral accounts alone. However some of the interviews would be useful if incorporated into such projects. Another topic area frequently addressed is the affects of specific storms and hurricanes. Because specific storms are unique, one-time events, I elected to treat this material only very peripherally.

I emphasize that I have edited the interviews in the sense that I have sorted through each transcript, selected those portions relevant to the place being described, and then composed the selections into a long narrative about different places in the bay system. My action both frames and recomposes the individual interviews. The composition of the more encompassing narrative from bits and pieces of the original numerous oral narratives is just one aspect of the editing process. Prior to that the writer transcribes the oral accounts and engages in editing the spoken word into smoothly written text (Frisch 1990: 83-83). While having edited away the intervening discussions and winnowed out the observations pertaining to specific places, I only minimally edited the spoken word. Oral history projects generally use paraphrases of direct quotations particularly where extended passages are used in the text. (See Frisch 1990: 84-146 for an example of how paraphrasing is carried out.) This editing helps the flow of the written text. I however argue that paraphrasing imposes yet another layer of meaning on the data and moves the data further still from its provenance and meaning. Direct transcriptions help retain the flavor and the feeling of the speaker's expression. Paraphrasing alters not only the flavor of the spoken word but interprets the speaker's embedded meanings. I avoided paraphrasing the direct quotations from the interviews. All of the transcriptions used in the next chapter have been taken from the original audio tapes collected for this project and have not been published elsewhere.

The interviews used in this volume were collected as oral interviews not as written texts. The people interviewed were asked to contribute to the larger study of the Galveston Bay estuary system through their orally presented memories and observations. Oral interviews are not, by their very nature, as clean as written texts. People do not usually think and speak in the standard grammatical forms that writers employ. It is important to remember that most people will not write an essay about their feelings in the same way that they will speak their minds. In fact, most people will simply decline the invitation to write. My goal is to retain as much of the flavor and the meaning of the spoken word as is possible. As such, my readers will encounter incomplete sentences, false starts, some word repetition, and patterns of speech that would be considered grammatically incorrect in a written text. If readers encounter difficulty when reading portions of the extended transcriptions because of the mode of presentation, I suggest that they read the passages out loud.

When using oral accounts to construct a narrative, even the most rigorous attempts to accurately transcribe the spoken word must cross the shoals of transition between the spoken and the written word. Meaning in our language is conveyed not only in the actual words used but in the inflections used, in the pauses, and in gestures. These of course cannot be accurately transcribed from an audio recording into a written text.

Bearing in mind the above assertions, I made use of a few editorial devices in order to make the written transcriptions comprehensible. A summary of these editorial devices follows. I edited out both the interviewers' and interviewees' ums and ahs. I also omitted almost all of the positive feedback phrases and noises that listeners make to indicate the the listener is "with" the speaker, is listening and aware. These are phrases and noises such as uh hu, ok right, yea, etc. Speakers do not usually pause in their monologues to acknowledge acknowledgement and therefore I did not break the text of the interviewees' words. My liberal use of commas helped make the written text read the way that the spoken interview sounded. For example, commas indicate a pause or a clarification of thought. A double dash (--) indicates the speaker's insertion of a tangential subject in midsentence or thought. Brackets [] serve two purposes in the transcriptions. They denote my clarifications or they indicate an interruption in the conversation. A bracketed question mark [?] indicates that the spoken words are inaudible or incomprehensible. Some but not all of the repeated phrases have been edited away, for example, "I went, I went to the Bay" became in some instances "I went to the Bay." I exercised this liberty in places where the speaker had a tendency to repeat every phrase, whereas, I did not edit out only the occasionally occurring repeated phrases. Conventional place name spellings found on the U.S.G.S. NH 15-7 Topographic-Bathymetric Map of Houston, Texas, 1975, were used as opposed to the speakers' spellings. For example, most people added a personal possessive marker to the name Morgan Point and pronounced it "Morgan's Point." The map spelling is Morgan Point. All of the contractions used by the speakers, including those which are not standard in written English, were retained. My only criteria was that the contraction be understood in context. In the same vein, when a speaker used a common usage but nonstandard English word form, I transcribed that nonstandard spelling of the word. For example, going spoken as

gonna or goin was transcribed in the vernacular spelling. Some people create quotes as they speak, that is some people format their point into a dialogue which they then quote to the interviewer. These quotes are often attributed to the anonymous "they." This feature was retained in the transcriptions. The standard (...) indicates a break in the text of the transcription.

As the reader progresses through the recollections, remember that these remarks are made by people who are in contact with the bay in their everyday lives, and who have been in contact with the bay system for the majority of their lives. The interviewees are talking about the present and reminiscing about the past. Interview questions often evoke layered responses. An observation about change very often includes both a theory or an opinion as to why the change came about as well as a reaction to that change. While their ideas about causes for the changes which they have observed are not necessarily accurate and are almost always incomplete, their descriptions of the changes, their impressions, and their observations are indeed valid. These people are not speaking in a scientific, didactic forum. They are describing the effects of numerous, often complex and interrelated causes that they have observed in the Galveston Bay system over the last sixty or seventy years. When assessing a speaker's understanding of causes and effects, it should also be taken into account that a speaker, in particular an interviewee, has no way to review and then revise an idea. Writers and public speakers, on the other hand, draft and rewrite their written text before presenting their material. Finally I emphasize that people see things differently, have different opinions and understandings of issues and changes depending on their particular social nexus.

Many of the interviewers' framing questions remain in the extended transcriptions in order to contextualize the interviewees' responses and to illuminate intended meanings for the reader. The interviewees' responses to queries are further contextualized by the inclusion of a summary of the speech preceding the quotation when that discussion is relevant to the subject being explored. A short synopsis of the social data available about each interviewee introduces each interviewee's account about a place.

The next chapter employs a format of a presentation that varies from the standardized format. The introductions and analyses employ the standard formatting procedure but the extended transcriptions do not. The transcriptions are purposely set apart by a nonstandard format. They are formatted to read like the dialogue of a play. The actual transcriptions are left-justified in order to make them stand apart as spoken word rather than written text. Each interview selection begins with the interviewee's name and a short note about that person. Names and biographies are italicized to set them apart from the spoken word. All of an interviewee's remarks about any one specific place are presented as a single clump in order to retain the rhythm of that speaker's thoughts and ideas. All of a particular interviewee's remarks about a single place have been kept in the same chronological order in which those remarks appear on the audio tape, but all intervening topics have been edited away. Asterisks denote the end of an individual interviewee's presentation, thereby setting off that portion of the narrative as a separate interview.

Contents of Volume. This volume is divided between two main chapters. The first chapter includes, after a general descriptive introduction to this volume, descriptions of both the fieldwork and the process of writing-up the collected materials. The first of these two sections describes the fieldwork goals, the collection process, and the pool of interviewees. The next section concentrates on the methodology of the write-up phase and comments on my use of the interviews.

The second chapter consists of detailed descriptions of the Galveston Bay system as it is remembered and as it is currently observed. The chapter is organized geographically, progressing counterclockwise around the bay beginning at Galveston Island. The material primarily focuses on the bay itself, not on the cities. Several books on the history of the area's cities are readily available and thoroughly researched. This volume focuses primarily on the bay, the marshes, the shore, the animals, the marine life, the plant communities, etc. This chapter is comprised of long, extended quotes presented as dialogues with minimal editing of the spoken word but maximal editing of the interview structure. The reader need note that the quotations began as oral interviews as opposed to being written texts. What is now text is best read aloud to achieve the flavor and the feel of the spoken word. This is a very descriptive chapter focusing on observed and remembered changes in habitat, quality of physical environment, the flora and fauna.

Appendix One provides a context for the transcription segments quoted in the main text. It includes a summary paragraph about each interviewee, pertinent information about the interview and, where possible, about the interviewer. This material was abstracted from each audio tape.

Appendix Two summarizes the interviews that were collected but were not used in this volume. It explains why each interview was excluded. All of the original tapes and student papers are currently housed at The Galveston Bay Research Center, Texas A&M University at Galveston Library, Galveston, Texas.

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Chapter 2

Oral Recollections

About the Galveston Bay System

Introduction. I have selected and arranged portions of the transcribed oral interviews into an extended narrative about specific changes in specific places in the Galveston Bay system. Some of the interviewees' memories span as much as seven decades. My goal is to bring their memories and descriptions into a meaningful juxtaposition which will specifically highlight changes in the bay system. Taken separately the interviews are very disparate and not easily comparable. However, when many peoples' observations and memories are pieced together, their remarks create a composite picture of complex and vastly altered ecosystem.

I have arranged the material so that the reader travels in a geographic progression that starts on Galveston Island and travels north along the western edge of Galveston Bay. The latter part of the chapter picks up this trajectory and travels back southeast along Trinity Bay. This arrangement will emphasize the contrast between the more heavily populated west and the less developed eastern area of the region. It also illuminates the differences between various industrial, commercial, and residential usages of the bay system.

Changes observed by local inhabitants in the Galveston Bay system including changes in the shoreline, water quality, water depth, natural habitat especially the marshes, the animal and plant populations especially the marine life, the sea grasses, and the water fowl. The interviewees stress the amount of natural habitat lost to development and to vastly improved efficiency in usage. They speak of noticeably depleted populations of birds, fish, crustaceans, mollusks and marsh grasses as well as increased numbers of people.

Much of the material used in this chapter is drawn from responses to a question that is usually phrased something like: How do you first remember the bay? In addition to simply eliciting description, this question does two things: 1) it evokes memories and encourages people describe their relationship with the bay and, 2) it establishes the speaker's authority to speak about changes and the issues. The interviewees' answers demonstrate close personal relationships with the bay system either through work or recreation. Additionally, the question usually evokes a short personal history of one's residence in the area and that is extended, in almost all cases, to include a summary of one's parents' history. Establishing one's relationship to the bay through a residential history serves to legitimate one's observations. Establishing inter-generational links through parents or earlier generations further reinforces one's claim to legitimacy.

This very descriptive chapter is about peoples' perceptions of change and the flavor or the feel of their perceptions is extremely important. I use extended quotes from the oral accounts presented as dialogues between the interviewers and interviewees. I have only minimally edited the spoken word but have greatly edited the interview structure. I again emphasize that these are oral accounts that have

been transcribed and now appear as written text. If the reader is uncomfortable with the lack of editing into a formal grammatical presentation, I suggest that he or she reads the interview quotes aloud to achieve the flavor, the feel if you will, of the spoken word. As previously noted, the transcriptions are formatted to read as dialogue and are left-justified. I have abstracted those portions of each interview that consist of observations about the bay from the larger context of the full interviews. I then arranged them in a geographical progression. When necessary for fully understanding the quoted portion, I have added a summary note about the context of the abstracted portion. Each section is preceded by my summary highlighting the key observations and memories found in each section.

Overview of the Bay System. We begin with some remarks about the whole of the Galveston Bay system, the waters away from shore, and the oyster reefs. The general impression throughout this chapter is that many more people live and work in the area now, that the marsh habitat has been greatly reduced and consequently the marine life and birds have decreased dramatically. People evince a strong sense that great social and environmental changes have accompanied the area's development, but not all of the changes are seen as necessarily bad. Some people note the degradation and subsequent improvement especially in water quality. The older people generally feel that a pristine environment has been altered, but they also see alterations as an inevitable part of progress over the past 150 years.

Nisar Fazlani to Tony Muecke, who is 61 years old businessman from Seabrook:
...What was the bay like when you first remembered it?

Tony Muecke: Paradise! Have you been south as far as Rockport? Corpus Christie?

Nisar Fazlani: Uh hu, yea I have.

Tony Muecke: You know how clear the water is there? That's the way it used to be here. My dad gave me my first airplane ride when I was about eight, nine, ten years old. The water was so clear the, it looked like a grassy lawn almost. You could see the seaweed growing in the water. The Ship Channel looked like a ribbon of blue where it was cut, nothing was growing.

Nisar Fazlani: How long ago was that?

Tony Muecke: Back in the thirties. World War II promoted a lot of industry on the Ship Channel. And that was probably the death knell for the bay because it went nothing but downhill for the next twenty some odd years...

Buzz Larrabee, a 60 year old commercial shrimper from Clear Lake, to Clint Thornton: ...When I was a kid here growing up, we had the whole Galveston Bay system was real, real shallow at the base of the land. And you had to walk out sometimes maybe a half a mile before you got water that was three foot deep. And

it's not like that anymore. We had a natural grass that grew out there that was very similar to what Spanish Moss is, only a little finer and it actually clung to the bottom. And this was a real sandy area. It wasn't muddy, it wasn't boggy. It was just real, not like beach sand, but finer sand than that. And this was a natural habitat for crabs and shrimp. And we don't have this anymore. And there's certain areas of Texas that still have it. Down on Laguna Madre but they don't have a Houston Ship Channel either... [Speaking about oyster reefs in Galveston Bay] ... We used to have quite a few live and dead oyster reefs in Galveston Bay. And the shell dredges that dredged the shell that built the basis of a lot of our county roads and our roads and used as an aggregate in our concrete was produced in Galveston Bay. And it was harvested off of what was dead reefs, where there was no live oysters. And then as the dead reefs became depleted, some of the oyster dredges got on areas that were live. And I think it was just a product that was, that maybe was overharvested. And maybe it took generations to build these reefs and they were depleted quite rapidly...

Maurice Davis to Bill Sarvis who is 36 years old and who has sport fished in the bay complex for over 25 years: ...In the Galveston Bay area, you were telling me before the interview, that this is mainly an estuary.

Bill Sarvis: Yea, the bay system, a lot of people think the water is real deep. This is a shallow bay, it is primarily a spawning area...

Maurice Davis: ...Kind of back tracking just a little, when, when would you say you first remember seeing the bay?

Bill Sarvis: Oh I was probably about ten to twelve years old [In the sixties] when I first really started fishing in the bay, in the saltwater area. It used to be a lot better back then. You could catch a more of variety of fish. I'm not gonna say you caught more fish, it depend on, of course, fishing is the right day at the right time. But there was a lot more variety of fish. It wasn't near, near the people fishing back then either. Now you go down there on a weekend, it is to the point there are so many people down there fishing, they stand shoulder to shoulder at places to fish. There's that many people...

Galveston Island. Galveston Island has changed dramatically in the last fifty years. Many more people live and work there. Many, many more people use the island and its shore and waters for recreation. Roads have been built to the western tip of the island and condominiums, vacation homes, and vacation beaches dot the shoreline south of the city. The amount of raw sewage dumped into the bay off of Galveston Island increased as the population increased. The effluent noticeably changed the quality of the bay waters in the urban vicinities especially in Offatt Bayou. The quantity of effluent and its effects appear to have reached a climax in the sixties and early seventies. Since that time people observe a noticeable improvement in water quality. People remark on the extensive loss of grass flats particularly in the San Luis Pass area. They also comment on the fewer numbers of fish in the waters off of the island.

Katherine Carroll, a politically active 78 year old who has lived or vacationed in the Galveston Bay area for her entire life, to Pamela Matula: [Mrs. Carroll spent one month of every childhood summer camping, swimming, and floundering in the bay or Gulf off of Galveston Island. Her father regularly took Mrs. Carroll and her other Houston neighborhood kids camping on Galveston Island beyond 63rd Street. She was a child between sixty and seventy-five years ago. Mrs. Carroll remembers the area beyond 63rd Street as being undeveloped cattle ranch land. Her family also went to San Leon, Morgan Point, and Clifton-by-the-Sea where they camped and rented houses. She describes her memories.] ...But it was all pretty much open and, and nobody restricted you as far as the use of it was concerned. As it is now there's houses built right down to water's edge and if you set foot on somebody's property, they're liable to send you to jail. Same thing is true on Galveston Island except we have the Open Beaches Law now which is better than nothing but it has some flaws in it.

Pamela Matula: What do you remember the water being like, the, in the?

Katherine Carroll: Oh the water was fine. There was no odor, no trash on the beaches. And I guess it was partly because there wasn't as many people usin' it. As well as people like us, my dad taught us that when you go some place you leave it in better shape than when you arrive there, and we just always done that. There wasn't a lot of debris. We seldom saw any seaweed or anything like that. Once in a while but it, it was not dirty and full of oil. It was clean seaweed. And oh you could, could see fish jumping up out there in the Gulf and in the bay... And Galveston Bay itself was clear. The only thing that you ever saw in Galveston Bay that looked ugly was some of the stuff around the edge of the, I guess it's the east end of Galveston Island, as they were beginning to develop industries and things like that along there. And without proper controls on the effluent, all sorts of pollution, it just dumped out into the bay. And you could see the water old gray, ugly color, around those places. It was primarily along, primarily along what's the Galveston Ship Channel vicinity...

Robert Craig, who is 60 and spent many childhood weekends fishing in the bay. He currently lives in High Island. He is speaking to Donald Cork: [Mr. Craig describes his memories of being a ten year old in 1942 and 1943, and fishing off of Galveston Island. He used to go with his father and Uncle Ogle "Chilie" Craig a locally famous sport fisherman. They lived in Baytown and worked at Humble. As gasoline became more available in the forties, they traveled to Galveston Island to fish and camp. Mr. Craig describes their sport fishing trips to West Bay off of Galveston Island. They launched from Anderson Ways. They'd go out to Carancahua Reef, Bird Island, and camp for the weekends. They fished for speckled trout, redfish and flounders. He describes the fish.]Oh yea, yea they were very plentiful. We hardly ever made a trip in those days that we didn't come back with a box of fish... [They did not keep all the fish that they caught and they usually fished with

artificial lures instead of bate. They made their own lures which Mr. Craig describes.]

Lanier Ripple was a resident of Galveston in the late sixties. As early as 1949, he began sport fishing with his father at least seven times a year at San Luis Pass. They fished for trout, redfish and gigged flounder. He still fishes in the area. He describes his memories to Todd Moore: ...In the early fifties, a trip down to San Luis Pass was a, was like a trip to the end of the world. You'd go into Galveston and take the, I guess it was the farm to market road on out towards, west and going out Galveston, and I think at the time that the paved road only went to, it was either Twelve Mile Road or Eighteen Mile Road. I'm not really sure which. Galveston is 26 miles long, so if you got to Eighteen Mile Road, the last eight miles was, had to be traveled along the beach. There wasn't a bridge from Galveston Island to the Freeport shore across San Luis Pass at the time. And there wasn't a paved road, as I said, for at least the last eight to ten miles. The water as I remember it, of course this is through the memory of a child, is that it seemed to be clearer. I'm not really sure if clearer was the word because the Gulf in this area is not, is not traditionally and always a clear body of water. We've got the Trinity River that empties into Galveston Bay and come through the Bolivar Roads out through the jetties and that pumps dirty water in whenever there is a flood. And about forty miles to the south there's the Brazos River and that's a very muddy river and that continually has some silt in the surf. So this isn't a clear part of the coast... There's just more turbidity in here. But the, I do remember that at San Luis Pass in the early fifties on the bay side, it was just, had miles and miles of grass flats out there, sea grass of some type. And in the sixties when I fished it the grass began to disappear. And by, I'd say, the late sixties most of the grass that used to be on the bottom in Galveston Bay that was bordered on Galveston Island, seemed to have disappeared. And in my opinion this is a, to the detriment of fishing because it's a, this grass harbored all kinds of marine life... But I just know there's been a definite change in that in particular. In the early fifties, and when I was going down with my dad, you could go out at night, of course it was like I said it was a long way to go-- You could go out at night and you might see another lantern or two out there of people out floundering. And you could walk for miles without running into anybody else. There were a lot of fish there. You can still go and walk that same area but the number of flounder is down and the number of crabs and everything in the water. Course you've got to remember that was forty years ago and there was a lot less pressure on them then, than there is now. I don't know if it's the numbers of people or whether there's some change in quality of water. I just know that there is a decided difference. The bay that I remember in the sixties-- And by this time I was no longer going with my father that much but going with friends. The water seemed to have taken on a, in Galveston and around the Galveston Channel jetties and Galveston Bay by the causeway, seemed to have taken on a, a frothy type appearance. There is many times when you'd find particles, little bitty hazes. I don't know if it was algae, I don't know if it was oil sheens, a combination of all of these. And Galveston, really seeing Galveston Bay and the surf in the Galveston itself, not so much at San Luis Pass, but the surf in the City of Galveston and along the jetties, would have patches of oil sheen and

maybe like sewage sludge or different types of garbage floating on top of the water that formed a sheen or a haze across the top of the water. And when I moved to Galveston in late '69 with my family, by this time I had kids of my own that were about ready to start fishing, I'd asked some locals down there that'd been there a while: "What is that on the water?" And they'd say: "Oh, that's just sewage from Galveston or pollution coming out through the Ship Channel." In the late, I guess, '70 or '71, Offatt Bayou was one of the prettiest spots around. But they had a sewer plant on Offatt Bayou that, actually it came off the Shoals Field, the edge of Shoals Field and it was out of the Lake Madeline Channel, and they were-- They had a lot of unprocessed sewage that was going into that place. For some reason or other they just couldn't handle the, the population. I don't know if it was broken down or what. But Offatt Bayou would have just foam around the edge of it where you could, it was almost like watching one of the water waste treatment plants that we have in Houston now with the foam on top. It didn't smell. It still had a saltwater smell to it. But this foam was really spectacular. And in, I'm not really sure why, some people say the water quality control folks got after them. Perhaps they just did it on their own initiative which I can't imagine the City of Galveston doing anything unless they were forced to. But they began, they treated both of their water waste plants. One emptied off almost into the Galveston Ship Channel and the other one, as I say, emptied into Offatt Bayou. And by 1972 when I left, the water had really, really taken a change for, I guess you could say, the better. It was, the water was perhaps a little clearer but there was none of the foam around the edge of all the, all the Galveston shoreline. And that was really a remarkable change. The, I'm sure of the dates because that was the time that I lived there and I saw it happen. The, the change was really remarkable. And I do believe that Galveston's made some real big progress in those last twenty years in making sure that they're controlling sewage and water waste since then. That helps the immediate water, I don't know what it does for anything else.

Todd Moore: So you've seen a, it go from a, just almost virgin state to a pretty bad state. And you see it as improving right now as compared to what it was twenty years ago?

Lanier Ripple: From what it was twenty years ago, yes I'd say there has been some improvement. However, the a, there's all kinds of chemical plants that have been built in the last twenty years. Now there were chemical plants back, oh even back when I was first there especially at Texas City. But I never fished exactly in the Texas City area. So I don't know exactly what the water looked like there. But I do know that around Galveston itself it, the fifties was a very clean type environment. The sixties began to cloud up, and by 1969 or '70 it was, the water in Offatt Bayou and the Galveston Ship Channel in particular were, and actually out along the south jetties and the Galveston beach front was, you could literally see pollution on there. And I can't say that all the improvement was attributable to the Galveston sewer plants because ships that were coming in were constantly dumping garbage out there. And so you had that to consider too. But I did see an improvement in the water quality in that time. Since then the water quality does seem to be, as least it's stayed as good as it was in 1972 after they did something with the water waste plants there. I don't know about the chemicals in the water or anything like that...

Todd Moore: ...Just out of interest, could you notice a difference back in 1950 and it is now when you go out there fishing, do you notice a difference in the fish you catch, the amount you catch?

Lanier Ripple: Well yea, but actually now I probably catch more redfish than I caught back then, because I'm more proficient at it. But the trout population has decreased as far as I can tell. An the flounder population has decreased substantially too, more in size than in numbers. But I am convinced that there is, there is a definite difference. The size of the redfish now may not be as large, but the numbers seem to have held up. I don't know if that's because they are more of a protected resource or what. I would suspect that's the case. They've got more restrictive laws on it. But you have to remember, in 1950 there was no limit by either size or quantity. Anything you caught you could keep if you choose to, and there would be times that we would go down to San Luis Pass with two ice chests and fill them up with trout in two days and come back. And that would have been 50 or 60 trout. It's not like you'd do it a lot, but I mean, a lot of people did it a lot. You could go down and see people in the surf fill up an ice chest and go home. And now the limit is ten on trout. So, and you very seldom see people getting their limits. It's not done as much unless it's from a professional guide going out with a boat and networking with other guides to find the fish. And periodically they are able to get limits for their customers...

San Leon and Eagle Point. This area is located just north of Texas City. In this section, one long time resident remarks on the subsidence which has affected his area. He indicates that both floundering and swimming have ceased to be attractions now that the beaches are gone and the water is deeper. He also observes that Eagle Point has shifted from being an area composed of full time residences to one of part-time summer homes. This shift contrasts sharply to the shift experienced in most other areas along Galveston Bay where the residents are now more likely to live year round as opposed to maintaining summer homes.

David Grizzle to A. E. (Bubba) Valentino, a 60 year old, life long bait camp operator in the Eagle Point area : ...Describe a little bit about how it was living around the bay as a, you know growing up around the bay. Not so much involved with the fishing but just living around the bay.

A. E. (Bubba) Valentino: Oh it was great then being a kid when I grew up. I've lived here all my life since I was nine years old. And I went to school, it was a small school system we had. We always had to play in the water, all the things in the summertime, rent boats, row boats and sail boats, and played and fished. Did a lot of fishing, just played. When I was growing up, it was a great time. You didn't know you was in bad shape or anything, didn't know anything about it. So you just had fun being a kid, was great.

David Grizzle: How much different was it from when, the time when you grew up, you know, as a child on the bay, and what you'd think it's like now for kids around now?

A. E. (Bubba) Valentino: Well don't see kids in the bay no more like we'd see, nobody does the water thing in bays round here. Basically I'm more isolated now, where I live now, then I grew up. Because we roamed around these prairies, there wasn't much housing around here in them years. And San Leon has grown up about three times. Before '15 hurricane [?], big hurricane, it was a much larger place than San Leon is right now. They had a train came into it. They had two or three factories. They had some big fig orchards and a lot of agriculture grown in that part of the country at that point in time. It's basically now just summer homes nowadays and just a recreation place.

David Grizzle: What was? How do you remember the bay, like how do you first remember the bay or what was it like?

A. E. (Bubba) Valentino: Well. Number one, there wasn't a bunch of piers around here. There was only about two piers, Port and Dickinson Bay. And when summertime showed up you would see a bunch of people floundering. You'd also see a bunch of lights, maybe 15 or 20 lanterns, catching a lot of flounders on the shoreline. Which we know along the beach in this area, the subsidence got so bad we no longer have no beaches out there! No kids, no piers, and I haven't seen a person in the last 15 years floundering in there on San Leon like they used to in there.

David Grizzle: So was it, they had more beaches and stuff when you were?

A. E. (Bubba) Valentino: More beaches, lot more beaches.

David Grizzle: What do you think's reason for that?

A. E. (Bubba) Valentino: Subsidence basically. Now there's supposed to be no more subsidence right now. We also had a lot of grass on the shorelines. All the grass is gone basically. We still have some grass in isolated spots but basically marsh is about gone and seagrass is gone...

David Grizzle: ...Well this is kind of, you've already kind of answered some of this but-- Like compare and contrast the fishing from the time when you began, or maybe like from when you remember of it when your father was fishing to the present time now. Like the amount you brought in, definitely a decrease?

A. E. (Bubba) Valentino: Yea. Well yea I can go back to where, previous to World War I, World War II. From 1939 to 1941, we had a small fishing camp in 12th Street, Dickinson Bay. And we had about twelve rent boats, and we had bunch of bait, dead bait there. And basically they were good for business to Labor Day. And after Labor Day you pulled skiffs and put 'em on the bank, because in them years people only had one car, one income and only so much money could spend for it. And kids go back to school after Labor Day, so people not going much. And that was the way you did it then. After World War II, in about 1947, my father went to service and came out of service and came back to San Leon again. And then her [?] father-in-law, guy from Minnesota, in the late forties, in 1952, 1953, he bought

Eagle Point, good businessman. And had twenty cabins and built a big fishing pier and before, between 1952 and '53, to before 1963 Carla, he had 85 rent boats. He also had two big long concrete ramps and we would launch on Saturdays, Sundays, launch 200, 300 cars, trailers and rented them boats every Saturday and every Sunday all through the summertime.

David Grizzle: Was that for going out sport fishing?

A. E. (Bubba) Valentino: Sport fishing, yea, major sport fishing. And in one year, and after I took the Fishing Camp over-- And he got tired of it and I took over the fishing camp. And in the years between '63, '64, I would catch and sell between 50 to 60,000 pounds of dead bait. We don't catch nowhere near as much bait. We don't normally freeze bait in five pound frozen bags, and three pound, one pound bags. And then people could catch enough fish. And had some little party boats that they would pick up in Houston and bring four or five people with 'em. And they would catch 2 or 300 pounds of fish that they could go ahead and pay for their trip and sell the fish in Houston. Them days are gone! Now we've got fishing camp that my nephews are operating right now. I still got investment in the Eagle Point Fishing Camp, but now we don't handle rent boats at all, none of 'em. And we still service needs of fishermen through lifts and through ramps, and got a guide service over there that catches basically most of the fishes. They catching best speckled trout, redfish and they can, they know where they are at, not a long, long distance, but go out to jetties and Gulf of Mexico and get...

Anita Butler a 37 year old, life long resident of the area, to Suzanne Peter, 25 year old from Deer Park: ...I must have been about four or five years old and my dad used to take me out to Eagle Point in San Leon and also to Kemah... [As a child Anita spent much more time in Kemah where she remembers the presence of alligator gars that are now gone.] ...I live on the bay now in San Leon and I have seen an alligator gar under our pier but I've never seen anything like that in Kemah at this point in time... So as far as wildlife goes, that's changed quite a bit. For a period of time there we did not have um much, uh the pelicans left. I don't know, it was about fifteen years ago and I don't remember why or what happened, but we had very, very few pelicans. And I know, like I said I live on the bay in San Leon now and I see 'em all the time...

Bacliff. This area now encompasses what is left of Clifton-by-the-Sea.

Katherine Carroll, a politically active 78 year old who has lived or vacationed in the Galveston Bay area for her entire life, to Pamela Matula: [Mrs. Carroll spent one month of every childhood summer camping, swimming, and floundering in the bay or Gulf off of Galveston Island. Her family also went to San Leon, Morgan Point, and Clifton-by-the-Sea where they camped and rented houses. She describes her memories.] ...We went in later years, went to Clifton-by-the-Sea. My mother and dad's friends had a house down there. And that whole area along the bay side, just

an awful lot of it's washed out into the ocean, erosion and storms and everything else. The house that my mother and dad's friends had at Clifton-by-the-Sea was three blocks from the water and it ended up in the bay. Just eaten', eaten', eaten' until it was finally gone. And of course I think sometimes all this oil and water we pump out of the ground has a lot to do with the subsidence. And then storms do have a way of cuttin' into the earth. I think humans, Corp of Engineers primarily [Laughter] build all kinds of, of a jetties and things that are going to protect this area, but they forget what they're doing to the area downstream, because it doesn't get any sand to fill in. So it just gets eaten out. It's all the whole Texas coast not even, not just Galveston Bay vicinity...

Kemah, Seabrook, Clear Creek and La Porte. This section pertains to the area of Kemah and Seabrook and north through La Porte. This area, and the Clear Lake area which lies west and upstream from Kemah and Seabrook, has experienced some of the most profound change in the region over the last sixty years. People remember that the bay used to be shallower and clearer. They emphasize the loss of the rich and full beds of sea grasses that once covered the bay bottom in this area. They recall that the bottom was sandy and they caught many, many flounders and crabs. They also remember swimming here and observe that no one swims here any longer. Both the 83 year old and the 72 year old clearly remember great numbers of porpoises just off the shore. People recall rafts of thousands of ducks and numerous other waterfowl and water birds. The interviewees over the age of 50 remember the habitat as being in this less disturbed state as recently as the late fifties, while the youngest interviewee, a 37 year old born in 1954 and raised in the area, never remembers the bay being clear. Everyone remarks on the affects of subsidence, how much deeper this area of the bay has become and on the remarkable amount of erosion that they have observed.

Urbanization in this area has significantly changed the environment. People have moved in and settled. Roads were paved first with shell and later with concrete and blacktop as the sheer number of roads increased dramatically. The strawberry and rice farms near La Porte disappeared. One apparent consequence of urbanization is the recent appearance of squirrels. The two eldest interviewees remark that these are a recent addition to their local fauna. The fishing villages of Kemah and Seabrook still depend on outdoor recreation activities but they are no longer isolated.

Elizabeth Hope Hahn, 20 years old, to her 83 year old grandmother, Lyda May Wright. Ms. Hahn is from Seabrook and Mrs. Wright spent her childhood summers at Bay Ridge: ...You live in Seabrook now, could you tell me about the development of the area of Seabrook since you first moved here?

Lyda May Wright: Seabrook was a one gas station and two grocery store village. But as anyone in this area knows it has grown phenomenally. And the Bay Area Boulevard has cut through what was once forest that was inhabited by all types of wildlife, mostly deer. I can remember when we were first came in this area about 50 years ago, there was bears in the woods surrounding the area. And there was a

pack of wolves that was over in Seroosa [?] pasture. All of these are gone, as well as the little brown foxes that used to live there in the woods.

Elizabeth Hahn: How would you say Kemah has changed over the years? And what was it like when you first remember Kemah?

Lyda May Wright: Well the only way to get to Kemah when we first, when I was a child, was to cross over on a ferry. Then they had a small low wooden bridge. And Kemah was just a little fishing village, and really that's all it is now. But they had a fish and gun club there and people used to come from Houston on the train and cross over on the ferry. And they would hunt for wild ducks that inhabited Clear Lake. And they would fish for large redfish and all other types of game fish. It was located in the place now where the yacht club there is.

Elizabeth Hahn: How about the islands between Seabrook and Kemah?

Lyda May Wright: Well there was one island. It was called Shell Island, and it was just a huge mounds of clam shells had been thrown up and it built up. And in the, when they went to dig to get the shells to haul away on flat boats for road construction, they found the cemetery of the Carancahua Indians. The people that had inherited [inhabited] the shores of El Jardin and the surrounding areas...

Elizabeth Hahn: What types of fish could you catch between the Seabrook and Kemah area out here in the bay?

Lyda May Wright: Well you caught everything from the large redfish, speckled trout, sand trout, croakers and catfish. There used to be thousands of mullet in the bay. Now I don't think they are there anymore. And the mullet would attract the dolphins, or as we used to call them the porpoise. And you used to see them playing out there in the clear crystal waters and we'd go out to fishing in our skiffs and the porpoise would play around the boats. I have asked fishermen and they say they never see a porpoise out there anymore. And they attribute it to the fact that the mullets have disappeared...

Elizabeth Hahn: ...Is there any fond stories that you remember of the bay?

Lyda May Wright: Oh there are too many to even talk about. I remember when the bay was clear. And it hadn't been so many years ago that all of the children played in the waters of the bay and everyone went swimming. When Sylvan Beach down there, they had a pier and the bathhouses and everybody would go swimming in the clear waters. And you really can't do that anymore. The water is too polluted. You never see people swimming in the bay anymore. I can remember when we'd go floundering. And flounder is a flat fish, they'd bury themselves in the sand, and we would take a gasoline lantern and we'd walk along with a gig, and you could see the flounder buried in the sand and we would gig him. But the ship waves and the pollution, it's too muddy to try to catch any flounder anymore... [A question about how to gig flounder and the ensuing description appear here in the interview] ...My husband and I've caught as many as forty flounder in one night in that way [Ruben Wright died in 1978]...

Elizabeth Hahn: ...I know you talked a lot about night fishing, but you don't see people night fishing anymore or going out and gigging flounder at night or anything like that anymore.

Lyda May Wright: Oh no! You couldn't possibly flounder now. The water is entirely too muddy. It has to be clear...

Lyda May Wright was also interviewed by Philip Alaska, a 20 year old from Clear Lake City. She discusses various changes in the bay with Mr. Olasky: ...And another thing that has, that has had a great affect on it [The bay]: All along the shoreline from say Sylvan Beach all the way to Seabrook, there was a marsh out in front of the shores, oh, half a mile of marsh. And in that the crabs, the shrimp, and the fish would spawn. And it was a cycle of life that way because they would spawn and send the small fish and all into the bay. And there was an abundance of redfish, small trout, and crabs, and shrimp. And we did not have any large trout in the bay until they opened Rollover Pass. That's between, they cut across from the Gulf, cut across Bolivar Peninsula into Galveston Bay and that gave a passage way for big Gulf trout that would come in...

Jim Wilbarger is a friend of Mrs. Lyda May Wright. He was also present during the Olasky interview. Mr. Wilbarger describes the changes in flounder populations to Philip Olasky: ...I came in, first time I fished flounder down here was in '57 and like she [Lyda May Wright] said the marsh grass went all the way out into the bay and there was fantastic places to flounder fish out here. And we would get our gasoline lanterns and our tow sacks and just walk along and we could see flounders all over the place. And it wouldn't take long to get a tow sack full of flounders, but now all the marsh grass is gone and the waves wash right up on the beach... [Lyda May Wright and her husband moved to El Jardin in the 1940s. Wilbarger describes the construction of Mrs. Wright's 1897 house where the interview takes place. The discussion leads to observations about the erosion of the yard.] ...But this house here was sitting out here in front and the land went way out lots, further than this. And the old house over here on the corner on River Bluff was built, it's about 150 years old. And at one time the land went out so far that it had an orchard out in front of it but the erosion has put the water line real close now...

Lyda May Wright to Philip Olasky: ...I can remember when the road between Pasadena and La Porte was a dirt road and there were strawberry farms and rice fields on either side. And I can remember how everybody was talking how they'd shelled that road all the way from La Porte to Pasadena because that was our only access to Houston. Well course now, you know, that's now 225., And big old farm house called Farmer Brown and he had rice fields, acres and acres of rice fields. But his house was up on the road. And he had an artesian well in front of his house and he put the water into the big stone concrete trough out in front and the people from, would bring their wagons and their horses and buggies from Houston. And you'd stop there. And you could water your horses and have a breakfast at Farmer Brown's. There was a regular road that went from Houston and came to La Porte and went along Toddville Road, and crossed the railroad bridge and went to Galveston. And when they paved that road, well, it was something to else again.

The people that would come down for the summer always came in the train. And then they'd bring their horses and buggies down, someone would bring a horse and buggy down. And they always come at night because it'd be cooler and easier on the horses. And that's how, when you were here for the summer you had to have some type of transportation to go from Bay Ridge [at Morgan Point] into La Porte to get your groceries and supplies. And some people even brought, from Houston, even brought their cows in the baggage truck. And they'd move down for the summer and well, it was just such a, you can't imagine, you can't conceive of the difference in the bay now and what it used to be... And you'd cross Clear Creek on a ferry. There was an old man that had a rope, a rope drawn ferry. It would go across Clear Creek between Seabrook and Kemah. And of course it was an entirely different way of life. Sand road between La Porte and Seabrook...

Philip Olasky: ...When did most the people start coming to here? Was it spread out over a long period of time or did they all come at once?

Lyda May Wright: It spread out. You'd go, my husband had the first freight line between La Porte and Houston... [Mrs. Wright tells the story of her husband transporting his first freight load, butter, past Farmer Brown's slough. She further tells of the development of their trucking company and how changes in laws and competition eventually made the business unprofitable.] When I think of the freeways and the, well, it didn't take, you know, 83 years, 84 because I'll be 84 in May, that isn't a long time in history. And all of this has happened and I think it's happened gradually, as the roads made better and as the access to the different places. Well, and the population has grown. It's inevitable I guess. I don't guess there's anything in the world we can do to, well, we started talking about saving the bay...

Jim Wilbarger: [They make additional observations about the loss of shoreline their area.] ...We'll go down here to the ferry after while and I'll show you over here Red Bluff, how much erosion has happened over there. At one time, when I came down here in '64, we were 21 feet above sea level, and now we are only about 17 feet above sea level. And this comes from pumping water out of the ground. And it's caused it to settle down in this area... It's the water table down there that we are sucking out and not putting enough water back into it in order to keep the land up. In certain areas [?] and along the shoreline it has sunk. On down to Toddville, I don't know how many times they've raised Toddville up, down close to Seabrook because it would go under water. And people down there have built their houses up higher and higher...

Philip Olasky to Lyda May Wright: ...Let's go back to dolphins, we never finished that. We were talking dolphins.

Lyda May Wright: Oh yea, tell 'em Jim.

Jim Wilbarger: Well we used to sit on the porch here and see lots of dolphins out in the bay jumping around and having a ball. When you'd be out there fishing, you'd be seeing them too.

Lyda May Wright: Yea and they'd follow your boat.

Jim Wilbarger: Yes.

Lyda May Wright: And the water was so clear you could see them under the water swimming and then they'd jump. They were really friendly. They loved to follow your boat and, oh Lord, I don't know how long since we've seen one of those. Do you?

Jim Wilbarger: It's been quite a while, probably at least 15 years. But they used to come up in here because the water was fresh and clear and everything. But you never see anything out there anymore like that...

Philip Olasky: ...What about the bird population around here, was it, were there a lot more birds back then or is it about the same now?

Lyda May Wright: Well I think the birds as a whole, don't you think they're about the same?

Jim Wilbarger: I think they're about the same, yes.

Lyda May Wright: But the water birds now.

Jim Wilbarger: The water birds are different.

Lyda May Wright: They are gone. The squirrels have taken over here though I tell you... The whole, just the whole face of things has changed so and it will continue to change. I can, when we moved down here, had this summer house before we moved down here, Toddville Road wasn't even, it was just a dirt road, just a plain dirt road. Of course Bay Area Boulevard wasn't even thought of. It was just, do you remember when they built the first little old houses in Clear Lake City. Nasa Boulevard was a shell road that went to Webster. And Clear Lake City was, well they had a ranch on the right hand side. But Webster, from Webster to the freeway and all there were Japanese truck farmers. Just acres and acres of truck farms. And they'd ship those, they'd sell those in Houston. And they had an interurban. You know what that is? Well they called it the fastest thing on wheels. It was an electric train that went between Galveston and Houston. And it went right along what is now the Gulf Freeway...

Brian Lutz to Joe Hester who is at least 72 years old. Mr. Hester owns and operates a nursery on Pine Gully: What was the bay like when you first remember it?

Joe Hester: It was shallower, quite a bit. Quite a bit shallower, we've subsided probably six feet in the time that I've lived here. And the shoreline was some further out, not too far but perhaps another 100 feet. There was a lot of eel grass in the bay and it sheltered grass shrimp and small fish, that sort of thing. And so this was good for both for crabbing and fishing because the fish, the game fish come in to

eat small fish and shrimp. Flounder came in to do the same at night. And of course, there was a lot more reeds along the shore, native reeds and grasses which tended to stop erosion along Galveston Bay. And of course this has disappeared over the years, a good bit because people feel that native reeds and native water grasses are untidy, so they [?] rip rap and bulk heads, doesn't do the job as well. [?] there was a lot more fish and there was a lot more birds. You'd see swarms of birds on a good fishing morning, when it was still and the tide was coming in. And so rather than go to the reefs sometimes, which we did of course, you'd go right out under a swarm of birds. And the birds'd be there because the game fish were chasing small fish to the top of the surface and then the gulls would get the small fish. So sneak right under the flocked gulls and you could pull out the trout about as fast as you could throw your hook in.

Brian Lutz: Did you used to do a lot of fishing?

Joe Hester: A lot of fishing. No, we fished for food rather than sport. And so when we had nothing else to do or we're short of seafood, or we were hungry for seafood, we went fishing. Fishing is a great deal of sport these days, but of course, it was sport to us too. Fishing is a diversion and a fun thing to do, but also, was good for food. And food wasn't as plentiful in those days. There wasn't welfare and this other thing. You got hungry, you went out got something to eat. Seafood was a good thing to eat. Really enjoyed it. So--

Brian Lutz: Did you notice a great variety of fish then as opposed to now?

Joe Hester: A great variety of fish. Well the bay has changed some over the years. It's a, the cities are using a lot more freshwater these days. And so the bay is saltier than it was at one point in time. And so I suspect that there was more variety of fish in those days, we had more of a mixture of freshwater and saltwater in some parts of the bay, and so that allowed more than one type of fish to exist.

Brian Lutz: How do you feel the bay has changed?

Joe Hester: How do I feel the bay has changed? Well as I say the shores have been mutilated to my way of thinking, by using as much rip rap and bulkheads as they have, which they should have left it, and protected with reeds and water grasses which they are doing nowadays. And so the edge of the bay is not as good a place to find seafood, like soft shell crabs which sheltered up in shallow water in the grasses. And the eel grass itself which formed borders along the high part of the bay disappeared about the time of hurricane Carla, because, I think, of pollution in the Ship Channel. So that was a change I guess. The bay is of course deeper, it's several feet deeper than it was...

Brian Lutz: ...You used to swim in the bay?

Joe Hester: Yes. We, us children spent a lot of time out in the bay. We'd roll logs, and fishing, and crabbing, and various activities. And the adults would have swimming parties and they would wade out to where it's about up to the neck or better and just enjoy the bay swimming. There would be jellyfish that cloudied up

the water. And they just, in general people I suppose, had a lot less money and so they used their bay more for recreation in those days. Perhaps that could come back. Perhaps you could introduce this, coming to the bay more...

Brian Lutz: ...What do you remember as a child? What is your fondest memory of the bay?

Joe Hester: Well I like-- I'm not really one for selecting things, I like the philosophy that came with the generation just before you, kind of an inbetween generation, which says things aren't better than other things, they are different. Many good things I remember about the bay--

Brian Lutz: Would you like to tell me about some of them?

Joe Hester: Yes of course. I enjoyed floundering even after we were married and many years later I floundered quite a lot. I'd catch, go out with a Coleman Lantern and gig and bring home perhaps five or six flounders if it was a good night. And all the crabs we needed to have both fish and crabs to stuff the flounders. I remember doing that. in those days we did some hunting. Doris asked me to tell you that when I was a small boy, I guess probably 10 or 12 years old, I got my first shotgun. There were rafts of ducks on the bay, perhaps a thousand or two would come in right close to shore. So we could crawl down through the marsh grasses and shoot the ducks, and so that was fun... And had ducks for dinner...

Brian Lutz: ...Did you go fishing for gars?

Joe Hester: For gars? I gassed gars with a single pointed gig and I caught gars to keep them from destroying the redfish on a trot line. [After Mr. Hester explains that gar is also edible, Lutz inquires about other species that Mr. Hester fished in the past.] In the bay? Well croakers is a staple in here of course, the croaker, sand trout, something called whiting, speckled trout, redfish, and catfish of course...

Brian Lutz: ...Have you noticed a resurgence of the ducks in the area? Are the ducks starting to come back, the waterfowl?

Joe Hester: No! We've noticed a resurgence of a good many other seabirds, the pelicans for instance, which almost got wiped out, you know.

Brian Lutz: Brown or white pelicans?

Joe Hester: Both, and the Great Blue Heron has come back. I remember it with affection and they almost disappeared for a while. Becoming more common now. The ducks now to an extent. For a long time you could sit on shore and see rafts of ducks, just thousands of them, you know feeding out there. Then it came to a point where you might get your glasses and see a raft way out in the middle of the bay. And I don't recall seeing a raft of ducks there any time recently.

Brian Lutz: I've seen a few herons here recently too, also a few eagles, one of those great water loons [?].

Joe Hester: Well it's high time to start preserving animals of the earth before they're all gone, that's for sure!...

Brian Lutz: ...Did you used to hunt for anything besides waterfowl?

Joe Hester: Yes of course, rabbits, nice big swamp rabbits, six, seven pounds, pretty good chunk of meat. So we hunted rabbits. We didn't have no squirrels here at the time. But we hunted all kinds of birds. I used to have a pillow made from the feathers of various birds. So--

Brian Lutz: Did you ever have any predatory animals in the area?

Joe Hester: Well you could here wolves howling mostly at night up toward Pine Gully where the cemetery is. Predatory animals? Ah--

Brian Lutz: Any bobcats?

Joe Hester: I saw a bobcat the other day...in the nursery over there. Bobcats and foxes but those are pretty shy animals... [Mr. Hester talks about bobcats and an old rumor about a black panther in Seabrook. Then the conversation turns to alligators and porpoises.] I go back to when there were lots of gators around, lots of them were up at Clear Lake. Armand Bayou has lots of gators these days... They are quite a peaceful animal... There used to be lots of turtles here. There are still some. I haven't seen many lately. We have a large freshwater pond, you might could find a turtle over there... None of the [sea turtles] turtles with flippers, I've never seen in Galveston Bay swimming or anything... The bay was quite shallow there, that's one thing perhaps people don't realize... Porpoises were quite common in the bay. I don't know if they still now, probably are but I haven't seen any near shore in quite a long time... [Mr. Hester offers one final summary remark about Seabrook.] Seabrook's been here a long time. Bay's been here a long time. One of the interesting things about Seabrook itself, as you probably know, is it was a little fishing village, and farming and ranching village, originally. And that's where a lot of the color comes from. Although along the Toddville Road, has always been a place where wealthy folks from Houston had summer resorts. So between this fishing village and the little farmers and ranchers and fishermen, that's what Seabrook is or was in those days...

Beatrice Wycoff, a 75 year old from the area, interviewing Pokie Stamper who is approximately 66 years old. Mrs. Stamper is a lifetime resident of the Clear Creek area and owns a boating supply store in Glen Cove Park Subdivision: [Mrs. Wycoff began by encouraging Mrs. Stamper to share some pictures taken in the early 1900s. Mrs. Stamper's memories of the bay as it was, and her observations about the current condition of the bay emerged.] I believe you have some pictures... "Clear Creek Lake from Public Boat Landing, Seabrook" and that is the area, well I guess, when it first come into being, isn't it? It has?

Pokie Stamper: They had little skiffs there that they rented and they just pulled them up on the bank at night. And they worked, there was plenty of land that hadn't subsided in those days and you could walk on all the, there was hardly any mud anywhere, it was all hard sand.

Beatrice Wycoff: And not even any streets it looks like.

Pokie Stamper: Well they did have little shell streets but this was right on the waterfront... Then there's another picture of a sailboat, the "IRMA" That they used to race down here with several of the other famous boats in their day.

Beatrice Wycoff: And it has an unusual structure or type?

Pokie Stamper: Well, it's wasn't for that day. They had what they called "sandbaggers" and way before they had much, well the bay was so shallow. They had to have shallow draft boats because before the Ship Channel was dug in the early 1900s, the Red Fish area was real shallow. You couldn't get deep draft boats through there. They had to have shallow draft boats to get to Galveston or anywhere else.

Beatrice Wycoff: Well that pretty well covers what the bay was like as you first remember it, doesn't it?

Pokie Stamper: It had nice beaches all along the shoreline. Clams were way out there. We never did eat them because they were always gritty and tough, but the Indians seemed to. The bottom was nice and sandy and there wasn't any sediment on it, like there is now-- Mud and whatever comes down the watershed, and from the [industrial] plants. It was really nice.

Beatrice Wycoff: I think it would be. It is such an active place now. When we look at these little pictures, to see how quiet it was in those days, it's amazing.

Pokie Stamper: Yes, you could go out on the water and probably be the only boat out there, that you could see anywhere... Of course, subsidence has had a big affect on the area and it is a mixed blessing because it's deepened the bay and deepened the [Clear] Lake which helps to bring bigger sport boats in, bigger sailboats, deeper draft. But yet it has caused the shoreline to erode... Our area keeps growing... Just look across the street at South Shore Harbor and see all those homes they are building and people are just coming to the area... There's just more people coming down here now. The Space Center has grown and whatever is going on down here...

Beatrice Wycoff: ...And how about the other wildlife here? Has it been affected?

Pokie Stamper: Oh, I am sure the wildlife, the fowl, the waterfowl. Gosh they used to across the bay and get ducks and geese and, you know, plenty of them. It's just the influx of people, it's just using up the resources...

Tony Muecke, is 61 years old businessman from Seabrook: ...But getting back to what the bay was like, it was clear. You could always see a minimum of two feet. And I've, I've seen the bottom in eight feet of water at my fuel dock.

Nisar Fazlani: That was about what, 40 years ago you'd say?

Tony Muecke: Yes this was back in the thirties, forties, late thirties or early forties.

Nisar Fazlani: When was the time when you first remembered it where you couldn't see the bottom, when you first started to see pollution?

Tony Muecke: It's strange, I don't really remember. It's just, we got up one morning and it was like this. It was just a slowly evolving thing.

Nisar Fazlani: It just like hit you all at once?

Tony Muecke: And all of the sudden you woke up! What happened?! What happened? It was just sort of like creeping paralysis.

Nisar Fazlani: That's too bad. Yea I've heard that the bay was at one time a very pretty place.

Tony Muecke: Oh it was. You know, between here and Seabrook, we call it the Toddville Flats, you could wade out, gosh, half a mile and never get the bottom of your swimming suit wet. And the bottom was hard packed, sand, seaweed all over the place. We'd get a washtub and tie it to one of our belt loops and just tow it behind us. And we'd take a crab net and you'd shove the seaweed off to one side, and you'd see the crab you liked the best, and you'd dip him up and put him in your washtub. And have you ever seen a crab with barnacles as big as a quarter growing on it?

Nisar Fazlani: No!

Tony Muecke: We had 'em, we had 'em! And we could fill a washtub in between an hour, two hours.

Nisar Fazlani: How long would it take today if you could do that?

Tony Muecke: I don't even want to guess, I wouldn't even guess. The first place the bottom isn't there. You don't have the crabs like we used to. Some of that I'd deal off to pollution. Another thing, when I was growing up, people weren't eating seafood like they do now. Shrimp, for example, was quite [Tape pauses] suspicious [?], you didn't eat shrimp. And it was only in about the last 30 to 35 years that people really started eating shrimp.

Nisar Fazlani: That's interesting.

Tony Muecke: They ate fish, they ate flounder, they ate crabs, but nobody ate fish bait...

Nisar Fazlani: ...What kind of changes in the bay that are very prevalent to you, that you really think about? Like when you think about how the bay has changed?

Tony Muecke: It's just dirty, it's just dirty. You've had so much industrial waste coming down the Ship Channel for so long... [Mr. Muecke describes another major change in his area.] We used to catch, catch. You could get oysters, you could knock 'em off your pier pilings and they were fit to eat. Now, probably I'm gonna say, probably 30% of the bay is all you can oyster in. And if you have rains like this, like we had rains last Friday, the Health Department's going to shut the bay down to oystering because of all the freshwater coming in. If you have a heavy rain in Sugarland or at the Trinity River, it can screw things up here in the bay because of all your flood controls...

Nisar Fazlani: ...This is your hometown. You were born and raised here, so you have a lot of feeling towards the bay.

Tony Muecke: Yes I do. It's supported me all my life in one way or the other...

Suzanne Peter, 25 year old from Deer Park, interviews 37 year old Anita Butler, a life long resident of the Galveston Bay area: ...Anita what was the bay like when you first remembered it?

Anita Butler: I must have been about four or five years old and my dad used to take me out to Eagle Point in San Leon and also to Kemah, the waterfront in Kemah. And it, it was as muddy as it is now, I don't remember the bay ever being clean or clear but it was, there was more land than there is now. You've had a couple hurricanes and it's washed away quite a bit of area, Kemah especially, Bacliff, Bayview. One whole street is gone in Bayview...

Suzanne Peter: ...So other than the, the amount of land that there is around here, you don't think it's changed any?

Anita Butler: Uh not, remember I was a small child seeing the bay and I remember it as being pretty dirty back then, I mean not dirty but muddy and cloudy. It wasn't clean, clear water. It wasn't, we went swimming in it, but it wasn't your favorite place to go swimming [In another part of the interview Ms. Butler states that as a kid she used to swim where 646 dead ends into Galveston Bay, off of what is now Bacliff]...

Suzanne Peter: ...What about animals, animal life either in the water or on the land?

Anita Butler: Yes, I have to admit I can remember seeing more animal life in further. Now my experience with the bay is more in the Kemah area and that is now heavily inhabited. They've built a, a shipyard there and several marinas that were never there before. So you have a lot more coming and going, and coming and

going, to scare away the wildlife, than were before. I distinctly remember going to the pier in Kemah right next to Jimmy Walker's every Saturday. And we would watch this man wrestle the alligator gar that lived under the pier. And it was always there. And he wrestled it every Saturday and all the kids would go out and sit on the pier and watch the man wrestle it. I live on the bay now in San Leon and I have seen an alligator gar under our pier but I've never seen anything like that in Kemah at this point in time. Not within the last ten years or so when they started building that up. I remember a lot of jelly fish there in the channel in Kemah. I can't really say there's much of anything in there now, you know that comes up to the surface anyway. Like I said there's a lot of boats coming in and out, in and out, and it tends to scare everything away. There were a lot of alligators when I was a kid... Yes, and they would come up quite often on the side, the banks of the creek. And a lot of times the police would have to go capture 'em and take 'em, I don't know where they took 'em, but took 'em further out somewhere. And they'd bring 'em to the school to show the kids before they would take 'em and get rid of them. Not kill 'em mind you, but replace them, put 'em in a new place to live. So as far as wildlife goes, that's changed quite a bit...

Suzanne Peter: ...Do you remember growing up, where all the oyster beds were and where the real populous area of the water was, and how it's changed?

Anita Butler: Yeah, it's moved towards San Leon, like I said. It used to be right outside of the Kemah Channel where Clear Creek, or Clear Lake, comes into the channel. And the boats would just go out there and shrimp and fish, and then off of a Baccliff and into Dickinson Bayou. And it seems to me that it's moved a lot further down, out, and over to the other side of, of the bay... [In order to clearly understand the following remarks, please note that Ms. Butler frames her answers to the idea that growth was because of many factors including, but not exclusively, the development of the Houston Ship Channel.] ...Well they built Bayport, that's in La Porte. That's a, a refinery over there and it's a docking facility. That's where they had one of the spills right after the one they had in the bay in San Leon Point. They had one there in Bayport. They were, what do they call it? Lightening or something. They were transferring chemicals from one, or oil, or whatever, from one barge to another barge and they, something must have come loose and they spilled it all in there. That [Bayport] wasn't there before. I don't know that that was to accommodate the Port [of Houston] as much as it was enterprise shooting up because of the Port and because of the Ship Channel being there people could get in. And that, all that before was a marsh and so they've done away with marshlands and put up a refinery and a docking area.

Suzanne Peter: Don't they use like, aren't marshlands a natural recycler or something?

Anita Butler: Yeah they sure are. And the, the fish come in and they lay their eggs and things, and breed in there. And it's like a nursery, a marine nursery. So you've got to have those. Now something that they did, they built the Kemah bridge, that huge big bridge that replaced the drawbridge. When they built that, just to the north on the Seabrook side of the bridge, there was a little inlet of water. And when they built that the deal was, and I don't know what agency made the

deal, is that if they built the bridge they had to remarsh that area... So what they did is they brought in dirt and they filled in that waterway and planted marsh grass... And that's the one time that they, they have done that in this area. I haven't seen that anywhere else. When they built the marinas there in Kemah there was no compromise...

Clear Lake and Clear Creek. Bearing in mind that the bay system in an interconnected system of rivers, streams, marshes, bayous, bays and shorelines, we turn to the Clear Lake area. It lies just upstream on Clear Creek from Kemah and Seabrook. One 60 year old interviewee, whose family homesteaded on Clear Lake, recalls that in his youth the area was used for cattle ranching by large ranches. They practiced open range ranching and his description of the style of ranching corresponds with that of another ranch family descendent living north of Trinity Bay in Shiloh. Older participants remember the area as very marshy, wooded, and full of ducks that they and their families hunted. The area was also prime fishing water. Most of the marshes have since been drained and houses have been built along the shores of the lake. Through the fifties it was a popular outdoor recreation destination and that popularity has dramatically increased since then. While the area has always been a recreation destination for wealthier Houstonians, now it also attracts the middle class. Large marina complexes have been developed on the Lake. The areas north of Clear Lake, that is La Porte and Bayport, have long been important to the petrochemical industry and this has affected the residential area of Clear Lake. The long time resident observes that petrochemical industry growth accelerated at the beginning of the Second World War. In the sixties the Johnson Space Center was developed. It too stimulated more growth in the area. The older interviewees, those over 50 years, unanimously and most vividly recall that Clear Lake clear, pristine and wild.

Sarah Emmott is a 78 year old from Houston to J. Kelley Trahan, 20 years old, from Seabrook: ...That was Middle Bayou and they changed the name to Armand Bayou for Armand [Yramalgui] and it is on the bayou which runs down into Clear Lake which runs on into Galveston Bay...

Buzz Larrabee, who is a 60 year old commercial shrimper and bait camp owner from Clear Lake, to Clint Thornton: [Mr. Larrabee describes the earliest utilization of the land parcel his great [?] grandfather acquired in the 1850s. That parcel is located from the north bank of Clear Lake north to Bay Area Boulevard and a portion of it is currently part of the LBJ Space Center.] ...The land that we are speaking of was used basically for open cattle range and very few fences were built at that time. And cattle was run by several large ranches. And different ranches participated in the, you know, the round-ups and the surveillance of cattle and such as that. They were sort of a commune type set up without any fences... [Mr. Larrabee describes the size and growth of the area as he remembers it.] During my childhood I watched a little bit of growth. Growth actually didn't really happen until the sixties when the Space Center came in here. And then it, it seemed like

the whole, the whole area began to mushroom into development... [Speaking again of his father's family land and the events set in his father's time.] Directly where the Lakeside Marina sits now and that was my father's originally inherited property. And it was in a total of about five or six acres, I don't really recall exactly. It was a natural peninsula that faces Clear Lake. And it was real marshy and swampy around there but the portion of the peninsula it rose up above, was real fine, sandy and loamy. And our house was located right in the center of this peninsula. And that, when NASA One was gonna come in. It cut right through our property... [Mr. Larrabee further describes how his father had doubled his original holding and how his father moved the family home out of the intended roadway. The interviewer then asks about the socioeconomic make up of the area when Mr. Larrabee was young.] I would think that the most of the, most of the people that lived in the area at that particular time, most of it was petrochemical industry. It was in its infancy at the time. And it was very popular to work for one of the plants because it was, people really made, made the most money by working for the plants. They far exceeded anybody in agriculture or in the fishing business. They were--

Clint Thornton: Now what year are we talking about, before get off, a rough time, five years.

Buzz Larrabee: Well I'm gonna say that right at the beginning of the, possibly at the beginning of the Second World War, well industry started to move quite well and there was a lot of construction work in the area. However the petrochemical industry was in it's growth period at the time and more than likely it grew substantially in the area from the forties. Refining, and petrochemical industry that's related to refining portion of it, grew substantially from the forties to the sixties. And became the-- Houston Ship Channel and surrounding areas became a truly, a petrochemical complex... [Mr. Larrabee is answers a question about how he got started in the fishing business, an answer that also entails a good description of the Clear Lake area about 1951.] In 1951, I started a fishing camp and picnic grounds at the twenty six hundred block of NASA One which is now Lakeside Marina... And I had a some rental skiffs, and I sold bait, and I had a picnic grounds there. And people'd come down on weekends and fish and go out and harvest the oysters, and enjoy themselves and picnic and such as that. But it was basically a fishing camp.

Clint Thornton: It sounds like at this time that the resources were quite abundant in the area, that people could come down to do this, and have access to it. Could you expound on what the marine life was like at that time? How plentiful were the shrimps and the oysters?

Buzz Larrabee: At that particular time it was the beginning of our growth period down here in the area. And it wasn't, I'm going to say this: I would say that it wasn't-- it was popular. At the time it looked like it was very popular, but compared to now, it was just the first grain of sand through the hourglass. And when we thought we had a big crowd, we had three or four hundred people in the area. Now there's three to four thousand people in the area! And it was, I think that it was abundant because it was just the lack of people down here to harvest

them. And maybe the serenity of our fish and shrimp that could live in an area where there wasn't ten thousand boat propellers. And possibly the pollution that we have now. It was a serene place for fish and it was a serene place for people. And which, now we have our cigarette boats racing out there, certainly the serenity is more than likely less... [Mr. Larrabee describes the quality of his childhood in the area.] I would think that growing up in the area was a real treasured memory. It was a time that a kid could do anything. We had plenty of woods around here to hunt in, we had plenty of areas to fish in. We had jobs, we could work on, we could make money down at the fish houses heading shrimp. And we could, we had a lot of things, a lot of activities and we didn't have all the restrictions placed on kids now. And it really was a wonderful place to grow up as a kid. And I look back on it with a lot of fond memories of having unrestricted atmosphere to grow up in. And it was really what I consider next to wonderful... [Mr. Larrabee describes of the number of houses in his subdivision, Clear Lake Shores, 15 years ago when he built his house.] 350 houses.

Clint Thornton: Is that about the present amount of houses too?

Buzz Larrabee: There's about 420 now.

Clint Thornton: About 420 now, all right. Can you remember how this area was developed?

Buzz Larrabee: Yes. In 1927 this island, it's actually an island community, 160 acres. And it was developed, joint by the Houston Post Dispatch and a developer surveyed it, and they sold lots down here for \$69.00 a lot plus a subscription to the-- If you bought a subscription plus you, a lot would cost you \$69...

Clint Thornton: ...About the economic business-oriented issues of the area during the time, let's say when you first started to get into business here in the area?

Buzz Larrabee: In the early fifties when I was associated with the Lakeside, well what's now the Lakeside Marina, there were just for all practical purposes, wasn't but a couple of marinas here that possibly housed 150 to 200 power boats. And since that time, everyone knows this area has blossomed into a marina complex, mostly catering to sailboats, and changing from power boats to sailboats. The whole entire complex has been changed to house more boats and I think it is considered the third largest in the world. And it certainly has changed the whole area having the additional boat related businesses in the area but in the fifties there were only just a very small portion of it was boats. And it was kind of like living in a rural area in a certain sense that we had horses, and we had cows, and we had pigs, and we had a big garden that we used to produce some of our natural food stuffs. But the actual starting of the business complex that we have now, started there in the fifties. Prior to that time it was a playground for the people in Houston that were the very rich people that had larger power boats. They housed them down here. And they'd come down on the weekends. And it was a, I'm gonna say that more than likely half the homes down here were summertime homes. We did have the Houston business. We had a few restaurants businesses. One time over in the Kemah area we had a lot of gambling up to 1960, sort of Las Vegas type gambling

there, and the restaurants and things associated with gambling. But the growth of our area in all probability didn't grow all that much more in the petrochemical industry except for the addition of the Bayport area which is due north of Clear Lake about four miles. It developed in that area. I can't say that, I can't say that there hasn't been any! that much development because there has been quite a bit of petrochemical development, but we did have a lot of it back even in the forties here along the Houston Ship Channel and the area...

Clint Thornton: ...Going hand in hand with the fishing, could you tell us what you've observed over the years the wildlife and regards to-- Let's start off with birds and then maybe with just shoreline animals. And tell me what the affect you've seen on birds has been.

Buzz Larrabee: Well I think, you know, we're aided with the television. You see a lot of birds that are, that associated with oil spills and such as that. I feel like in most cases-- Now Clear Lake is an exception to it in certain sense because, God only knows, Clear Lake has been developed to the, to such a degree that we've got it all walled up with creosote or penetrated piling-- But if you look at the other areas. You take areas like Galveston, like Moses Lake, you take areas like Jones Lake or Swans Lake or areas further down towards Galveston. These lakes have nice marshes around them and they are full of birds and certainly we still have a lot of our wetland here. Course, I say Clear Lake is an exception to it, but there's portions of Clear Lake up around Nassau Bay and up in Clear Creek that is still virtually untouched. But Clear Lake itself is so walled up that certainly we've lost a lot of our wetlands there. But there's other areas that virtually have been untouched here.

Clint Thornton: What impact would you say has happened to the Armand Bayou area? In particular do you have any, any information about that?

Buzz Larrabee: Well Armand Bayou area, which used to be called the Middle Bayou, the name of it was Middle Bayou, then some people called it, later on nicknamed it Mud Bayou, but the real, it was originally called Middle Bayou. It had a meandering creek that went up there and it was almost mudded in there. There was just one little small cut that you could get in there. It is more than likely a lot deeper and a lot more accessible now than what it was when I was familiar with it 12, 14 years ago. But it has changed a lot. It has changed a lot because, simply because I think that more water is allowed to go in, saltwater. And more than likely freshwater is allowed to move out of it quicker. And that's not a scientific statement, that's what my belief is...

Lyda May Wright is an 83 year old woman who spent her childhood summers at Bay Ridge and now lives in El Jardin. She speaks to Philip Olasky, a 20 year old from Clear Lake City: ...Course, Clear Lake City was a forest, the wooded part. They'd go deer hunting back up there... [Remarks that the interviewer, Olasky, grew up in Clear Lake evoke the following observations about development and Clear Lake City.] Run all the animals out of the woods and building those houses and all. Of

course that's progress and I realize that and all. And you can't keep things just like they were unless you live in the middle of a desert...

Jim Wilbarger to Philip Olasky: ...Like Clear Lake down here, at one time it was clear.

Lyda May Wright: And that Clear Creek was a spring fed creek and that Clear Lake, everyone had a summer homes along Clear Lake.

Jim Wilbarger: Now if you fall off in the water, you sink up past your knees in nothing but black muck, stinking black muck. And that's caused from silt and pollution coming on in and nowhere to go.

Lyda May Wright: People moved to the bay and lakes in the summer because of the breeze, you know? It was cool, much cooler, the wind off the bay. And there wasn't anything to stop the wind. That was the days before air conditioning. There was no electricity. There was no sewage, no gas lines in any place around here...

Jane Middleton from Bay Ridge at Morgan Point to Cynthia Thomas: ...Well, it [Pleasure boating on the bay] has certainly affected the commerce, the people liking to use boats has certainly increased commerce around here in the restaurant businesses and marinas, and so far up in Clear Lake it's just, it's astonishingly different from what it used to be.

Cynthia Thomas: What did Clear Lake used to be like?

Jane Middleton: Well, you'd never see a high rise building, you always. The north side of it or rather you'd say the west, southwest side of Clear Lake was just mostly completely wooded. The homes were in there were very low profile. You could just barely see them through the trees, and there weren't very many because the other side of the bay was considered more desirable, because you had the, did not have evening sun in your eyes in the summertime. Course it doesn't make much difference now with the air conditioning...

Pokie Stamper, who is approximately 66 years old and is from Seabrook, to Beatrice Wycoff, a 75 year old from the area: ...One of our most important estuaries is the Clear Lake and some of the other areas around it, our shrimp nurseries...Everybody can't understand why this is called Clear Lake and Clear Creek, but it was because it was clear, very clear !...

Anita Butler, a 37 year old who grew up in the Kemah area and now resides in San Leon, to Suzanne Peter, 25 year old from Deer Park: ...I remember Clear Creek which fed into the bay, feeds into Clear Lake which feeds into Galveston Bay, and

that's always been real muddy. It's more of a bayou than a creek. I don't know where it got its name, maybe way upstream somewhere it was clear at one time, but it's not clear now. [Laughter] ...And they still say there's alligators now on Clear Creek, but I've never seen any, but they say in the wooded areas towards the back part over between Webster and League City on the other side of the park there's some sort of refinery owns property... [Later in the interview Ms. Butler discusses another development project in her area] ...Another development that I can think of is South Shore Harbor. That's on basically Clear Creek which feeds into Clear Lake which feeds into the bay. And they, it was a cow pasture, and gullies, and the creek, and they turned that into now a marina, a subdivision, and a really big development...

Morgan Point and Sylvan Beach. This particular area was well developed by the time any of the interviewees were born. Three of the people who were interviewed for this project spent their childhood summers at Bay Ridge or Sylvan Beach. They remember floundering in extensive flounder beds, very clear water, lots of fish, crabs, birds and porpoises. They recall marshes and beaches. Swimming, floundering, and crabbing were among the most common outdoor activities. All of them recall the water as being much, much shallower and the bottom as sandy. They unanimously remark on the great subsidence which has occurred, giving examples in excess of six feet. Perhaps one of the most vivid of these examples is that of a 78 year old woman who has watched the hill under her house flatten out over the years. The eldest of the participants is 83 years and she remembers the dredging of the Houston Ship Channel to accommodate ocean vessels.

This area around Morgan Point was summer home destination for wealthier Houstonians in the period before air-conditioning was available. They came to take advantage of the breezes as the summer heat soared. There were homes and restaurants in the area and entire families moved down for the summer. When talking about the Morgan Point area and the changes that they have experienced, people often focus on a loss of a community lifestyle that centered on using the bay for recreation. They frame their recollections in memories of a more community-oriented time. The bay here was a destination for activities such as boating, hunting, and fishing. It was also destination for community gatherings informal and formal. In particular Sylvan Beach was a popular social center especially with its famous dance pavilion, bands and carnival. All of the people interviewed from Bay Ridge mention Sylvan Beach. They speak of picnics and swimming off the piers as well as dancing and parties. One of interviewees whose dialogue was not used in this piece, Erna B. Foxworth (see Appendix Two), has written an account of the glory days of Sylvan Beach. Please note that all of the interviewees pronounce Morgan Point as "Morgan's Point." However for clarity, all place names have been standardized in the text to correspond to the conventional spellings found on the U.S.G.S. NH 15-7 Topographic-Bathymetric Map of Houston, Texas, 1975.

Elizabeth Hope Hahn to Lyda May Wright, her 83 year old grandmother. Ms. Hahn, the interviewer, is 20 years old and grew up in Seabrook. Mrs. Wright spent her childhood summers at Bay Ridge, Morgan Point: ...What was the bay like when you

first remember it?

Lyda May Wright: The bay was crystal clear, the waters were blue and you could see as deep as ten feet to the bottom. It was surrounded by some sandy beaches, but a great deal of marsh land habitat, of crabs, and shrimp, and they nested. There were many species of fish and crabs. On a clear day, you could see porpoise playing in the bay and all types of birds...

Elizabeth Hahn: ...You first grew up around Morgan Point. Could you tell me a little bit of the history of that area and how it has changed?

Lyda May Wright: Well our summer home was on Bay Ridge, which is east of the Morgan point area. There were beautiful homes on the channel side that is now called Barber's Cut, where ocean going ships load and unload at the docks. There were trees in the flats of Morgan Point, had much vegetation. And there was restaurants down on the flats and summer homes on the Point. The origin of the Ship Channel came in the late 1800s when Morgan, a man that lived in that area, hired some convicts to deepen the channel between Galveston Bay and Buffalo Bayou. Buffalo Bayou was a beautiful, clear, spring fed creek that had vegetation on either side of the. on the banks. But as time went on and they widened and deepened the channel, the tree shaded banks were denuded and industry gradually took over. As I said the waste products from these industries has greatly affected the Galveston Bay. There used to be great flocks of birds that inhabited the banks and the marshes. The Roseate spoonbills, the herons the cranes, the white and brown pelicans, the sand dabblers, they are all gone. The only thing that are left, we occasionally see some sea gulls. But there is no food no nesting place for the birds any longer. The ship waves have eaten at the shores and have destroyed all of the marshes. There really isn't any way that I can think of that the bay can be reclaimed...

Philip Olasky, a 20 year old from Clear Lake City, speaks to 83 year old Lyda May Wright: ...Ok, let's start off talking about Buffalo Bayou.

Lyda May Wright: Buffalo Bayou was a spring fed stream that originated in the western part of Harris County. During the early part of the century, sailboats used to come as far as Morgan Point, across the bay from Galveston bringing supplies and lumber and all types of building things, because at that time Galveston was the only port anywhere along the coast. Oh, I should say the coast of Texas. But knowing, when the Allen Brothers founded Houston, and there was no port and everything had to be carried by rail from Morgan Point, and the ports that they had along Galveston Bay into Houston. Well there was a man named Morgan and he hired some convict laborers to dig a channel from the mouth of Buffalo Bayou into Galveston Bay so that the sailboats could go through Morgan Point. And that's how the name derived from old man Morgan that had had those convicts dig the channel. Of course at that time Galveston Bay was of pristine purity. My first real memory of how clear the water was: I remember one morning I walked out on the pier, at that time we had a house on Bay Ridge and we walked out on the pier. And

he said "Sister look down there at the flounder beds... [Mrs. Wright describes the flounder and their beds.] I can remember how clearly I could see all the flounder beds in the bay. Well time went on and they dug the deep channel so that ocean going ships could come from Galveston to Houston. That must have been when I was five years old, cause I remember the first ship that was brought into Houston down the Ship Channel... It must have been about 1912. And they ran a special street car from downtown to the ship channel so people could see the ships. Well time went on and that did cause, the digging of the ship channel did cause, some pollution but it wasn't pollution. It was just a muddy condition and it almost destroyed the beaches along Morgan Point... Wouldn't old man Morgan be surprised at what's happened when you think of that new port there at Morgan Point. That used to be just a, oh that was, we called that Red Fish Bay. We used to go back up in there and get the biggest redfish, down where that port is at Morgan Point, that container port. And that top of that bluff and all was beautiful woods. They had restaurants down on the flats, down at Morgan Point...

Genevieve Filson, a 77 year old. She also spent summers at Bay Ridge, Morgan Point and lives there now. She speaks to Patricia Cox: [Miss Filson speaks about her family's second home in the community of Bay Ridge at Morgan Point at the time of the 1915 hurricane. She was born in 1913.] ...We bought the land in 1911 and we started building a house, it was finished by 1912... I remember that the hill was very high at that time and it gradually got lower as the years passed by because of the subsidence. We had all those waves coming in from big boats finally, but. It was just simply subsidence that caused the hill to sink some, never did sink completely, we're still on a hill. But we had a seawall that must have been at least 25 feet out from the land, you know, and it was six feet high. We used to climb over it to get to, to the water. And it gradually began to sink until you can't even see where the seawall was.

Patricia Cox: Well there's a, I noticed there's a little bit of line across there--

Genevieve Filson: Well, that's the second seawall. We had two seawalls... [She speaks of her childhood.] You can see it once in a while, when the tide's way out and there was a second seawall. But we had a tennis court down there it was a-- All that washed out to the second seawall. So finally we had that much land wash down there. So the whole, over the course of the years, the whole hill changed. And I can remember, we used to roll down the hill when we were children. And the hill is just flat, almost flat now... We sold the house but the house is still there... The man that bought it... He's gonna have to build a seawall if he wants to save that land now... The Corps of Engineers have puzzled over it, and you know the Corps of Engineers they have all kinds of ideas [Laughter], and uh-- First they suggested that they build a wall in front of everybody's house. And everybody hooted about that because you can just think of the water sloshing over the seawall and making a pond behind the seawall [Laughter]. So then they were going to build a road down there. Well everybody objected to that because nobody wanted a road in front of their house, you know. So they abandoned it, so it's just left to us. That's how much the water has changed but the quality of the water has changed too. We've

had nice clear water that we used to flounder in. You know flounders have to have good mud to bury in. And so we would flounder at night and gig a lot of flounders. Well the thought of gigging a flounder in that mud that you have now [Laughter] make you sick. It's so contaminated you know, full of lead and all kinds of stuff. So everybody flounders somewhere way out here now. They don't-- They fish with hook and line. They don't gig anymore. And then they warn you about eating the flounder because of the metal content, the lead content. So that's a pretty good idea of how things have changed. And we used to go swimming, we had a long long pier [A community pier.]... And it used to be over our head at the very end of that pier. Now it would probably be, and it would be shallow at the halfway house. Well we could stand up down there at that time, now it's way over our head at the halfway house. The water--

Patricia Cox: Is so much deeper?

Genevieve Filson: So much subsidence... [Miss Filson discusses her family photographs and childhood with Patricia Cox. A description of the Bay Ridge community pier and a community life focused on the bay emerges.] You know people used to use the piers, you know people just go down and swim now, they don't really-- We used to live on the pier, we'd go swimming twice a day. We had parties down there. We'd float watermelons down there, have a watermelon party. We'd play baseball in the water. We did all kinds of things that kids don't do anymore. They just go down and swim and sun themselves and come right back. So it's a whole different world... We used to catch a lot of fish... We caught lots and lots of fish... We used to have a bathhouse. Everybody had their own had their own room on the bathhouse... We had a lot of fun when we were children. We really enjoyed the bay, you know it was a part of our lives, spent a lot of time on it... And this is part of the, the bathhouse had a room for everybody. It was a long bathhouse. This is the very end of the pier, way out there. Had a room for everybody with their name on it... at the very end of this long, long, long pier. Well you had to go that deep to find water deep enough to swim in... It was a little gazebo we had at the head of the pier where everybody sat and had parties. We were a very sociable people. Everybody along the ridge knew each other... And it [The gazebo] had benches around it.... It was for the community... The front of our house was further down and we walked along the ridge everyday to go swimming, we'd walk along the ridge and speak to everybody. It was a nice kind of a-- People are not like that anymore. People live their own lives now. It's not the same thing. Well anyway you can just imagine how long that pier was. It went way, way out. And that's it...

Jane Middleton is a 69 year old woman who lives in Bay Ridge. Prior to moving here, she often visited the area (with her husband): Cynthia Thomas: ...Do you think that the bay has changed a lot since when you first started coming down or?

Jane Middleton: Well yes, particularly in the areas of subsidence and water quality. We never used to worry about whether there were toxic elements in the water, and uh, they say many years ago the beach even at high tide in front of our house went,

oh I guess a hundred yards out in front. Out to about where the pier ends now, it's about, about where the water begins I believe.

Cynthia Thomas: Ok and so you are saying then that the water table has come up that high or the land has sunk that much?

Jane Middleton: Yes, uh hu, sunk a little, uh hu.

Cynthia Thomas: So, did you, you said you fished then? Did you?

Jane Middleton: Yes, when we had the little outboard motor boat, that's what we usually did, went out somewhere and fished. But you can't use our ability to fish as a criteria. We crabbed too, we used to catch crabs. I remember when we were first married, that's been 42 years ago, we came down to a beach house that my husband's sister's in-laws had. And uh, we'd go out at night and crab. The water was shallow. You'd put on some old shoes. You'd drag a big bucket behind you, one of these great big wash basins and tie it to your waist. And uh, then they took these spears, or no nets, no not spears cause that was for flounder. Took the nets and lantern. You'd carry the lantern low to the water and out front of you. The men would usually to do this and then scoop up the crabs as you came upon 'em, because they're kind of sluggish at night. And put them in the big tub, cause the idea with that was to take some beers out in the tub and then put, replace them with the crabs as you went on... [They speak about cooking crab.]

Cynthia Thomas: ...Have you been out gathering crabs in the last few years?

Jane Middleton: No we haven't but our neighbors up the north of us, up closer to the where the Ship Channel, where the river comes down or Morgan Point rather, have caught a lot of crabs... But there used to be not nearly so many boats on the bay either.

Cynthia Thomas: You mean pleasure, pleasure?

Jane Middleton: Pleasure boats, uh hu. My husband's sister's in-laws had a yacht in those days. And we'd go out and we'd be the only yacht around you know, you know for maybe the upper end of the bay, you wouldn't see another one out at that particular time, maybe another one or two later on. But now, and on Sunday the traffic at the Channel wasn't nearly as great as it is now, the boat traffic... [Speaking about the times before air-conditioning.] ...In those days it [Sun] was quite a factor. And actually Morgan Point was, the reason it was inhabited by very wealthy summer people is that this was the most desirable area because the southeast breeze comes straight in and you just open up your windows and it just flow right through the house. And that's of course what they came down to enjoy in those days... [They discuss the founding of Morgan Point in about 1820. They also discuss the houses, the pier, and the incorporation of Bay Ridge.]

Cynthia Thomas: [Ms. Thomas introduces Mr. Bob Middleton who joins the conversation, and the topic shifts to fishing in the area.] ...We were just talking about the fishing and how he thinks it's changed.

Bob Middleton is a 68 year old resident of Bay Ridge who spent much of his childhood visiting the area: Well I think in an early time there was a lot more fishing. My thoughts go back mainly to the thirties and the early forties... [Mr. Middleton grew up in Houston but spent a lot of time as a child at the bay. He tells of staying with a family friends, the Jacobys, who had a summer home at Sylvan Beach and a Garwood motor boat. He remembers the time as about 1935 and the place as Red Fish Island.] ...And we'd fish out there off those islands. I can remember just as clear as anything, him with a long cane pole out there, bringing in big redfish. Standing out there in what we would consider the surf at that time. And he kept his boat out on a pier that was a thousand foot and it was the second longest pier at that time on the bay. Sylvan Beach had a pier that was 1,200 foot. And we could walk all the way out to the end of his pier and jump off. And we'd be in roughly waist deep to chest deep water. That's all changed now as you can see now. This we have over here is 800 foot and it averages seven or eight foot out there. But you can see where that went out further in early time. We've lost all that to subsidence. I suppose anything would, in those days people had homes in Houston and used the bay as summer homes. So much of that has changed now. The lure of the bay in those days of course for everybody, was the cool and the swimming. And I think every high school in the City of Houston for a number of years had their annual senior picnic at Sylvan Beach... [Mr. Middleton describes the facilities at Sylvan Beach in the late thirties, including carnival, the dance floor, arcade games, and the bands he heard there.] ...But people used to flock down there in the summers for that sort of thing. Morgan Point in those days used to have, they didn't have a bridge at that time and these underground tunnels going between La Port, Morgan Point, and Baytown. They had in those days a ferry across and we used to ride that ferry up there. And it didn't take but two or three minutes, but it was fun. And there was always some, sort of a honky tonk on that point up there with interesting characters around it. It's still a point up there, still a honky tonk up there... [In the thirties, Sylvan Beach was a popular social gathering spot. The Houston High Schools held their annual Graduation Picnics at Sylvan Beach. Mr. Middleton had friends at all of the various high schools and he attended these picnics for about three years. He describes the social scene in the area.] ...And I also might add that the San Jacinto Battle Ground which was going in those days, also was a place for a lot of hay rides and that sort of things. The big thing was a picnic. They'd come down here and they'd start early in the day. In those days Sylvan beach was like a carnival. It had a ferry, what do you call 'em, ferris wheel and all sorts of rides and games and that sort of thing. They had this big pavilion over there that was under a roof... [He describes the ballroom] ...They had this huge pier for fishing in those days, go out there and swim... [He describes his experiences at the picnics.] ...A lot of people still come down here that may live in the heights, they may live in, no telling where they may live, but they still come down into these areas and they remember those times... [The conversation again turns to Mr. Middleton's earlier memories.] But I can remember, as a very small boy, my guess is around maybe eight or nine, coming down here with a family who was friends with our family. And they used to come down and we would go up on the Point up here. You went down to there, and if you turned right and get up and it's a little rough but on the bay side there is a beach area up there. And I can

remember going down there and going swimming and then fixing our supper there on the beach and everything, and it's just, it's still. We call it the flats now cause it flats out down there. If you notice along here you're on a ridge. Probably one of the highest points in the Houston area, I think anyway. But it flats out down there and that's still an interesting area. There's a lot of birds down there and people still go down there and swim. And ah, at some point I can remember going down there, course you know when you're young and you're a kid and the water, if you like the water at all which we did, and I do, that's a big attraction. So anywhere you can get to water. So I can remember just as clear going down there, I can remember going across on the ferry.

Middleton, Jane: Well it's still an attraction. People go down there on Fridays. It's popular for people who live right here, like us for people like us, to go down there on a Friday night maybe and take your binoculars and sit there and birdwatch or watch the ships go by...

The Houston Ship Channel and Buffalo Bayou. The Houston Ship Channel traverses the whole of Galveston Bay and terminates up Buffalo Bayou in the City of Houston. It is a heavily traveled shipping lane. Near Houston, the Channel is also the site of numerous industries located along its banks, feeder streams and inlets. Interviewees most frequently remark upon the quantity of sewage that has been dumped into the Channel over the years and on the growth of the industrial complex along it.

Katherine Carroll, a 78 year, old politically active member of the Houston Sportsman's Club who has lived her whole life in the area to Pamela Matula: [She speaks about her Club's work to preserve Buffalo Bayou and in doing so she includes a description of her recollections about the changing Bayou.] ...We've [Sportsman's Club] also been involved in preservation Buffalo Bayou. That again is something that dumps into the bay. And there was apartment complexes and townhouses on Buffalo Bayou that had no connection to the sewer system at all because there was no city sewer system up there. They dumped their raw effluent into Buffalo Bayou.

Pamela Matula: So what action came about of all this?

Katherine Carroll: The City had to put some sewer lines in plus they had to stop, or put a moratorium on any future development up there until there were sewer lines.

Pamela Matula: So you feel like in the Bayou it's been mostly raw sewage has been the problem and the, as opposed to the Channel where it's more industry waste?

Katherine Carroll: Yea, yea, the Channel is largely industry I suppose. But when you take a place as big as the City of Houston that was dumping raw sewage--

Pamela Matula: It's quite a bit.

Katherine Carroll: It sure is! And any old time we have a heavy rain all you gotta do is sniff one of these bayous around here, you can tell what's happening. They just open the gates and let the raw sewage out.

Pamela Matula: So do you feel like there's been any improvement in the way that they handle that situation in the bayou? I know a lot of effort has been made to clean up the bayou.

Katherine Carroll: I think there is improvement. It has a long way yet to go and it's a constant battle, you can't sit down and, and fold your hands. Somebody has to pick up the bat and run with it... [She describes the current condition of the Houston Sportsman's Club which is folding.]

Pamela Matula: ...What was the Channel like in your earliest memories of it? You lived in Houston your whole life correct?

Katherine Carroll: Uh hu, born here in 1913.

Pamela Matula: So you've seen the, the, you've been around through the whole growth of the channel then, of the Ship Channel?

Katherine Carroll: Not quite because it was opened, I think in 1914 and I was born in '13. So I don't [Laughter] remember the parts of it!

Pamela Matula: The very early years, but during the major push like after the, after the Second, I believe, wasn't it?

Katherine Carroll: Well, it began after World War One actually, but the concentration of industry was not like it is today. The big concentration came along, as you said in World War Two. A little of it before and then awful lot afterward. We used to go down to San Jacinto Battle Ground and there was a, a concrete pier that went out into the water like that, and then went out like that. And you could fish or crab or whatever, you could catch fish, crabs. And course we were not fishers in the usual sense of the word, so we didn't do great deal of fishing. But there's always people down there fishing. the water was clean. Now this was back in the twenties. And uh, I guess by, before World War II, it began to show the strain of the growth of the City of Houston, was what happened, the stuff getting dumped into it. And--

Pamela Matula: How, how did you see the change? I mean how did it manifest itself? What was obvious that started happening, just by looking at it?

Katherine Carroll: Odor. Odor and color. See it used to be a, a clean stream of water and there were boats went up and down it, not great big ones like we have today. But see the Ship Channel was not as big then as it is now, and I mean the turning basin. And well you, you could even go down there to 75th, the foot of 75th Street when I was a good, big kid and fish off the docks down there and crab... I don't think you can go in there anymore... But I guess odor and color was the first things that began to be noticeable. And when Navigation Boulevard was built, that

would have been in the late twenties, or yea late twenties. It was built before my dad died and he died in '31. That was what began the abuse of the, serious abuse, of the bayou. And Parker Brothers, and Horton and Horton, W.D. Hayden, all those shell companies put their plants right along on the bayou. And all that stuff from shells was going in there.

Pamela Matula: Shells meaning the--

Katherine Carroll: The dust and the debris from the shell. And well gosh years ago you go down, there was a cloud of that white stuff in the air all the time. I don't know how much that affected the water but it as far as quality was concerned, but it sure affected the appearance...

Tony Muecke, who is 61 years old businessman from Seabrook, to Nisar Fazlani: ...World War II promoted a lot of industry on the Ship Channel. And that was probably the death knell for the Bay because it went nothing but downhill for the next twenty some odd years. We had a bad hurricane in 1961, Carla. The water was so bad, all the barnacles we had growing on the pilings died. The EPA finally got some of the Channel industries to clean up, and finally we had barnacles growing again. The ah-- a lot of boats took refuge up the Ship Channel by the San Jacinto Monument during the hurricane, the water was so bad it ate the bottom paint off. They came back bare wood even the propellers and rudders were etched...

Maurice Davis to Bill Sarvis, a 36 year old tug boat operator from Houston: [Mr. Sarvis worked on tug boats both in the Houston Ship Channel and other places on the Gulf coast. Mr. Davis inquires as to his experiences with water quality, and Mr. Sarvis describes the Houston Ship Channel in his experience.] ...Definitely [the pollution is observably worse closer to ports and cities.] From time to time you would get materials hung in the rudder of your tug boat. Well instead of taking it to a dry dock where they lift it completely out of the water to repair it, which is too costly, there's people that worked on the boat would go under the water and cut the rope out of the rudder, do it themselves. This is a moderate task, nothing hard about it. We would always go further down towards Galveston then what we would up, do up in the Houston Ship Channel. You got to remember the City of Houston treatment, sewer treatment center pumps its waste into the Houston Ship Channel up at the upper end of the Ship Channel. There the only thing that you can get back up in that far is small tug boats and there's no big ships can come back up that far, more or less like a bayou more than it is a ship channel up in there. But they dump, which is legal now even by state law they're allowed to dump a certain amount. But you'd be surprised what all you could see just floating in the water up in that upper area of the bay, of the Houston Ship Channel. The water is, you can smell the water. The water even has an aroma to it. Just like pollutants, not necessarily strong as if it was raw sewage but it does have an, a most definite odor to it. [Mr. Sarvis contrasts this to the very clear, clean, blue water at the end of the jetties marking the entrance to the Ship Channel. Mr. Sarvis likes to fish off of

those jetties. Mr. Davis comments that he is surprised by the numerous industrial plants lining the Ship Channel.] The industries are just, they all get as close to the water as they can it seems like. When you go from one plant, one industry to another, to another, they're just lined up...

Cedar Bayou, Lynchburg, Cedar Point and Baytown. This section pertains to the area north and east across the Houston Ship Channel from Morgan Point and the Baytown area in general. The area includes Crystal Bay, Scott Bay, Tabbs Bay, Cedar Bayou, and numerous islands, some naturally occurring and some built of dredge spoil. Until the Baytown Tunnel was built people relied on the Lynchburg ferry to cross the Channel. Lynchburg is now a shadow of its former self. Baytown is an industrial center although some of the industry is past its heyday including the now defunct steel mill. Exxon, once Humble Oil, has been located in Baytown for a long time. The interviewees recall much better fishing, even the presence of tarpon in the area about sixty, seventy years ago. And they describe camping and picnicking at places such as Cedar Point.

Katherine Carroll, a 78 year old politically active member of the Houston Sportsman's Club who has lived her whole life in the area: ...We used to go over on the opposite side of the Ship Channel, be the north side I suppose and, where the steel mill later built in over there, U.S. Steel?

Pamela Matula: Yes.

Katherine Carroll: There's a lot of historical property over there, stuff and we used to go over there. There was was an old three story red brick house that nobody had lived in for years and it was on the property that had been owned by de Zavala, one of the Texas heroes. And they tried to make a park out of it. I don't they ever succeeded. They got a little marker and that's about all over there. But we used to go over there and take a picnic lunch and sit there and just look at the water and watch the boats go by... It [the steel mill] was toward Baytown, off of Market Street Road but it wasn't in Baytown...

Alfredo Tamayo to Floyd Williams who is approximately 74 years old. Mr. Williams is a retired judge who has lived his entire life on the north side of the bay in Chambers County. He speaks to Alfredo Tamayo: ...What was the bay like when you first remember it, when you first came in contact with the bay, how do you remember it?

Floyd Williams: Well my first remembrance of the bay was when I was small we would go down toward Reds Bayou or Cedar Point and camp, fish for flounder, crabs, and so forth. I mean no commercial just.

Alfredo Tamayo: Just sport fishing?

Floyd Williams: Well yea, family outing.

Alfredo Tamayo: And how has it changed?

Floyd Williams: Well, all the places now that we camped, there's people, industry, all that kind of stuff.

Alfredo Tamayo: Like what kind of industry?

Floyd Williams: Well it, there's oil installations. Not a whole lot but it a, on Cedar Point. The whole area where Cedar Bayou goes into the bay... There's erosion on the steep banks... [He talks about his mother's memories of groceries coming by boat from Galveston to the Trinity Bay area. He tells of his father remembering running his own freight boat from Houston to the general store at the place where 146 crosses Cedar Bayou. They lived at the store. His father also ran merchandise and freight to Barber's Cut in those days. He speaks of changing uses and changing priorities in the management of resources in the bay system. He turns to oil production in the bay.] ...One of the oldest, greatest oil fields was the Barbers Hill Oil Field... It was on a salt dome and it's still flowing oil. But it's not like it was when they brought it in cause they've used it up... The oil is not there anymore. You took it out and used it up. Now in my opinion that's what people are doing with the bay. The things that was, that it was built to supply, we're using up and killing by pollution the two together. Follow me? That's a change in the bay...

Donald Cork to Robert Craig, who is 60 and spent many childhood weekends fishing on the bay: ...Bob about the bay, what was the bay like when you first remembered it? You know if you?

Robert Craig currently lives in High Island: Well my, my first memories of Galveston Bay are as a really a child, probably my earliest memories of it, the most clear early memory I should say because I grew up right here in the Baytown area and the bay has always been part of my life. But one of my earliest memories is of a trip that my dad and I made out in the bay when I was probably no more than five years old.

Donald Cork: Excuse me Bob. Did you take a big boat or did you all take a little skiff or?

Robert Craig: Well we took a, it was a rowboat small skiff, and from somewhere in the area at the north end of the bay in the vicinity of what they call Evergreen Point. We, it was a row boat was in [Garble]. In those days there weren't very many small out board motors around and not many people had them. This was the depth of the depression and there weren't very many people had outboard motors. And we went out to fish for speckled trout on a reef that's called Tin Can Reef. Now whether it is still identifiable or not as Tin Can Reef, I'm not sure because it is in the. When I look on a chart and see Tin Can Reef, it is in the area that is now part of the Cedar Bayou Channel between the Houston Ship Channel at Morgan Point

and the mouth of Cedar Bayou... [He relates a family anecdote about that fishing trip and his speckled trout that got away.] ...That and playing in the sand at the Hogg Island side of the Morgan Point ferry. The road that we drove along to go across the Morgan Point ferry and go on down towards Seabrook and that area.

Donald Cork: Do you remember the name of that road Bob?

Robert Craig: I don't remember, no. There's a, part of the old causeway pilings and things are still standing out there in the bay. And it's being used now as a pipeline crossing. But I can't, I can't remember the name of the road. The road is still there and leads down into one of the subdivisions out of what was old Pelly [?] and you can drive down to the end of the causeway, or the northern end of the causeway, you can still drive to that. But the causeway's been gone long since. When they put in the Baytown Tunnel they did away with the ferry and a. But, but Hogg Island which is still there was a very popular place for people to go and play in the water, for people from Baytown. Because it was one of the closest places you could get to some fairly clean and sandy beach. Now I'm sure that most of the beach that we played on was probably sand that had been put up there by the dredges when the Ship Channel was dredged through Morgan Point. There was an awful lot of material removed and had to be pumped somewhere. I'm not absolutely positive. I've tried recently to find out and I haven't, I haven't been successful yet in determining whether what now exists as Hogg Island was originally a natural island or whether it was built with the dredge material that was taken out of the Houston Ship Channel. At that, when the Ship Channel was constructed, when it was cut through Morgan Point. And that was a long, long time ago. Some of the other islands that exist in that area right now especially Alexander Island, extends on down -- Yea, always get those two mixed up even though I work with the maps. Alexander Island and Atkinson Island, and the one that extends south of Morgan Point is purely dredge material except for the part that was the old Morgan Point. When it, when the Channel was cut through there why, they used, they built on south in the bay from Morgan Point and turned that into a dredge material holding area, supposedly a holding area. That's a, those are my very earliest memories of the bay... [Mr. Craig remarks that most of the people in Baytown worked for Humble oil when he was a kid. He describes his Uncle Ogle "Chilie" Craig as a well known and accomplished sports angler. Mr. Cork asks Mr. Craig about any other fish species that he might recall having caught.] ...Well I don't, I don't really have specific personal memories of those. But I do know that in 1929, which is a year or so before I was born, '28, '29, '30, '31, along in there, that my Uncle Chilie caught tarpon in the mouth of the San Jacinto River at Lynchburg. Caught 'em right in the ferry slip. He told me about this not very long ago and I have some, a picture or two around somewhere that I'll try to dig up for you of tarpon. But tarpon in those days did come up the San Jacinto River to, at least to the mouth of Buffalo Bayou. Now I don't know if they went up any further than that. I don't have any personal knowledge of that. But we, I do know that they did fish for them. [Mr. Craig describes his uncle fishing by boat in the ferry slip in the wake of the ferry. Ogle went with a Lynchburg local who kept live mullet for bait. Ogle Craig told Bob Craig about once having a six foot tarpon on his line that stopped the ferry. Later in the interview, a question from Mr. Cork about the causes of degradation in the bay elicits this description of the catches the Craigs made in the past.] ...I think

there have always been times when you could go to the bay and not catch something depending on the state of the tide, and the winds, and the, how much freshwater was flowing down because of floods and things like that. But in general, I think in the past it was much easier to hit an occasional weekend when you could go out there, and we know for a fact that people went out and brought back hundreds of pounds of trout. They would literally go out and fill up an ice chest with fish, not with ice but with fish... [Mr. Craig attributes the dwindling fish populations to pollution and to subsidence. He describes the loss of submerged grasses that have been killed off as the bay sank. Mr. Craig uses an old aerial map of Crystal Bay to demonstrate this loss.]

Trinity Bay. Trinity Bay and Galveston Bay are contiguous bodies of water and hence share many of the same features. The most noticeable difference as one travels east along the north edge of the bay system is that the Trinity Bay region is remarkably less urban. However industry has located here and upstream on the watersheds. Although not identical to the changes along the western shore of Galveston Bay, Trinity Bays also evinces dramatic changes during the last 50 years. Trinity Bay is very shallow. People describe northers blowing the water out of the bay and then freshwater replacing it for a period. Catfish would then enter the bay where they were harvested. In the early fifties, the region experienced a severe seven year drought. During this drought, catfish disappeared from the bay system and they never returned. People recall a greater variety of fish prior to the drought as well as bigger specimens. Oysters were also plentiful. This drought is also discussed in the section on Lake Anahuac. Vast quantities of oysters and fish were harvested from Trinity Bay. People especially recall the purity of the water and one interviewee clearly remembers drinking river water directly from the bay. Another interviewee makes a similar claim in the section on the Trinity River. Neither man would dare such a deed now.

People notice less subsidence in this area and Trinity Bay remains shallow. On the other hand, they remark on the very different flows of freshwater into the bay. One interviewee recalls the rises in the rivers that carried silt to the estuaries. He notes that while the seasonal flooding still occurs, the silt now settles out before reaching the bay.

Included in this section are several recollections about the extensive shell dredging that took place in the bay system especially in the forties and fifties. Although these remarks are located in this section on Trinity Bay, the dredging was in no way limited to Trinity Bay. One interviewee, whose specific remarks are not cited herein, commented that the battle to stop the shell dredging companies was the greatest political battle over resources that he ever witnessed in the region.

Zachary Handley to Pat Worthy who is 82 years old and his lived his entire life in the area around north Trinity Bay: [Although Mr. Handley specifically asks about Galveston Bay, it appears from the interview that Mr. Worthy is actually describing his memories of Trinity Bay.] ...What was the bay like, the Galveston Bay when you remember it?

Pat Worthy: What was the bay like?

Zachary Handley: Yea like a long time ago?

Pat Worthy: Well it, there used to be more fish in it. [Laughter] That's about all I can tell you.

Zachary Handley: Easier to make a livin'?

Pat Worthy: I never, yea the fishermen did. I never did. I went there you know, just pay a guy to rent a boat and go out and fish. Used to you could fill a boat down there everywhere. You didn't there was lots a fish.

Zachary Handley: Right not like that anymore huh?

Pat Worthy: Not at all.

Zachary Handley: Not at all.

Pat Worthy: Darn right. Oysters, you could pick up all the oysters you want from the bay.

Zachary Handley: Oysters, were there a lot of them out there?

Pat Worthy: Yea there was a lot of 'em out there. They quite a few yet but they don't allow 'em to catch 'em. They afraid there something [?], something that's on the loose up the river I guess...

Zachary Handley: ...So what kind of, when you went fishing on the bay or in Anahuac, what kind of fish did you catch?

Pat Worthy: Oh I catch a few, most the time we was tryin' to catch speckled trout.

Zachary Handley: Speckled trout. And they're pretty big out there or they were?

Pat Worthy: Yea, they were, you know a cow or a sow a couple a three pounds, it wasn't nothin' to get one that big. But I don't think you can catch any at all now.

Zachary Handley: Not at all huh? They don't even bite.

Pat Worthy: They don't be out there to bite. See they let fishermen stay in that place, you know put out nets. So they catch 'em in boat loads... We'd eat lots of 'em of it. We'd go down on that bay and catch 'em in a cast net. You know what a cast net is? You throw it, yea we'd catch 'em in that. Somebody'd be castin, somebody cleaned 'em, and somebody fry 'em.

Zachary Handley: Gettin' ready for dinner already?

Pat Worthy: But they eat good.

Zachary Handley: Mullet? You haven't seen any of those around either? Or have you seen any of those around the bay lately?

Pat Worthy: Oh there's a few. They use mostly for fish bate now, but the best fish for me was a freshwater catfish...

Alvin Otter, a 61 year old commercial shrimper, to Adelaide Socki: [Mr. Otter explains that he began his career as an owner/boat captain in bay commercial harvesting in 1946 at 16 years old.] ...I was a bay fisherman, worked in the bay, raised in the bay. I mean we, startin' out in the thirties, we trot lined in the bay in the wintertime. We were, different type of fishing back those days. There wasn't all the oil wells and everything scattered over the bay like it is now. It was, the bay was clean and there was no dams on the river back in those times.

Adelaide Socki: On the Trinity?

Alvin Otter: And we had a big rise usually in the wintertime and one in June. [Cyclical freshwater flooding in a river system which silts the estuaries at the mouth of the river system.] We always got a June rise and we fished for catfish, that's back in the thirties and the forties. In the forties we started instead of trot lining, we started to a using hoop nets in the bay and in the rivers. I'll never forget the year we married the year, my wife and I married in 1949, and we put hoop nets in Trinity Bay on the first of January and from the first of January till the latter part, about the middle part of March, we had over 50,000 pounds of dressed catfish. That's what we caught. Dressed fish in your hoop nets, that's back in the early '50. And after '50, '51 it started a drought and we never fished commercially anymore for fish after '51. We went strictly to oystering. We started oystering in '51 and we oystered for 24 years running straight in a row, in the wintertime. And we shrimped in the summer. Like I say, I been shrimping, I been running a boat, being the captain since 1946, but I started running a boat in the bay when I was 12 years old...

Adelaide Socki: [Ms. Socki returns the conversation to the subject of Trinity Bay.] ...So what was the bay like when you first remember it, when you were a kid?

Alvin Otter: You could drink the water. That sounds unusual, but you could drink the water. I mean in the wintertime when it was fresh.

Adelaide Socki: So they had freshwater in the winter?

Alvin Otter: I've never been sick in my life and I've drank a many a gallon of bay water, but I wouldn't put a gallon of that stuff in my mouth now buddy! I mean we'd be out there working, you'd get thirsty and we'd just take a drink out of the bay or out of the river. You never thought nothing of it. But it's just, it's not that a way anymore. And another thing the bay was, silt was building more back whenever

you had the river went all the way through. Same as the Mississippi. The Mississippi used to be way back up there. It just, the mouth of it wasn't far from New Orleans, and now it is 100 miles out in the Gulf. I mean you know cause all the silt comes down. Same way with our river. It just hasn't built up any since the dam went in. It don't fill up like it did. So our water ought to stay approximately the same depth. It will not fill in like it was filling in years ago...

[Mr. Otter explains that the silt carries nutrients which no longer find their way into the bay because of the upstream dams and lakes. The shrimp and fish populations depend on the replenishment of these nutrients in order to maintain themselves. He also discusses the effect of shrimping techniques and overharvesting on dwindling stocks. Mr. Otter describes shell dredging in the forties and fifties. Mr. Otter tells about commercial shell dredging in the period immediately after the first laws were enacted to protect live reefs. These laws prohibited dredging on and in the vicinity of live reefs. After the companies were prohibited from dredging on a live reef or right next to one, he observed that the dredges would work on the side of the reefs where the tide would subsequently push the silt, which results from dredging, back onto the live reef. The silt then smothered those reefs. The dredge companies would come back the following year and exploit the then "dead reef." He uses Bird Island as an example. He sees pollution as the current threat to the harvesting of oysters. The Health Department's boundaries demarcating unsafe oyster harvesting enveloped his leases and helped put him out of that business.]

Adelaide Socki: ...What kind of um, talking about the bay when you were young, when you were a young person, how was a, you said you could drink the water when it was in the wintertime, right?

Alvin Otter: Well a lot of people wouldn't drink it but I mean, you can take a settlers years ago, they didn't have purification plants. You drank water out of the river. Same with me! But I mean that's to show you the change in the times.

Adelaide Socki: Could you, what about the kinds of birds and other kinds of fish that you saw then that you don't see now or?

Alvin Otter: I tell you a fish I never see anymore is spoonbill catfish. Now I don't know why they left here years ago but spoonbill or paddlefish they call it. They're catfish but they paddle. They got a paddle instead of a, they got a paddle on the end of their nose... We also lost all of the pelicans during the Carla, Carla that storm got the pelicans. But they are coming back now. But that's one fish that's completely extinct in Texas as far as I know. I don't ever see one anymore, never catch one. Where we used to get, there'd be thousands of pounds of fish in the bays, they never, you'd hardly ever catch fish in the bays anymore. I mean I'm talking about catfish, freshwater fish that usually migrates in the river. When the saltwater starts well they come back in the river. But in the wintertime they stay in the bay. But they just don't have 'em like that anymore. And the laws is real strict now. You can't fish 'em. So it's not because of overproduction, not because people's catching 'em. They're just not there. Not there like they used to be. Like I said we caught 50,000 pounds of dressed fish there in just a little over two months, which in that day and time back, that was a lot of fish. That was a lots of work...

[Mr. Otter describes how hard he worked to catch those fish. Likewise he worked hard for his oyster harvest.] ...Some of my last oystering was back in the late sixties, early seventies. Most of the time was just about the end of the sixties and the starting of the seventies. I was catchin' around a hundred sacks a day of oysters. In the bay and I was fishing in Trinity and Galveston Bay, most of it in Galveston Bay... The buffalo never goes in the bay like it, buffalo fish. That's something else that's very, very, they don't fish 'em nothing like they used to. It's just-- If they would've, we hadn't fished our fish like we did back in the forties and the fifties, well in the thirties and the forties, I believe you could've walked on 'em. I mean if you didn't fish 'em! I mean there was fish! But now the laws is all got it all stopped. You cannot hoop net no more, and you cannot trammel net, there's no kind a fishing. And yet there's no fish... [Mr. Otter describes the invasion of trash fish into the bays. He argues that commercial netting keeps these trash populations under control as well as harvesting the edible species. He believes the bays have to be cultivated in order to stay productive.]

Floyd Williams is approximately 74 years old. He is a retired judge who has lived his entire life on the north side of the bay in Chambers County. He speaks to Alfredo Tamayo: ...I got in a big hassle one time with the shell dredgers when I was County Judge in the county. And they had dredged almost all the reefs down to where it wasn't of any use in 'em just keeping on. See I mean, they had to quit which they had. And they could've quit I thought and left at least a few reefs so people could go fishing. Not that they can't go but I mean it's a different kind of a thing... [He continues describing his action which was not very successful in stopping the dredgers and the underlying economics and politics of the situation as he recalls them.]

Katherine Carroll, a politically active 78 year old who has lived or vacationed in the Galveston Bay area for her entire life, to Pamela Matula: ...Are you concerned with Trinity Bay which is an arm of Galveston Bay?

Pamela Matula: Yes ma'am.

Katherine Carroll: Well we also spent time when I was 15, 16 [between 1929 and 1930], somewhere at about that age along there. And one of my friends in Baytown had a, a, I don't know whether they owned it or a friend owned it, a house long the edge of Trinity Bay. And we'd go down there and spend three or four days at a time. And you could fish the water. You mention what was the condition of the water. The water in Trinity Bay was clear, just absolutely beautiful... But gettin' back to Trinity Bay that, that was absolutely beautiful. We sometimes went over in Chambers County on the other side, down to Anahuac and all the way down to Smith Point. And, and just beautiful is the only word you can put for it. Course now it isn't that way, and I think most of us know some of the reasons. When we don't have controls, or whatever the word is, for dumping stuff in the water and misuse of it, that's what we get. We've lost our shrimp and oyster and a lot of crabs,

scads of fish, through all this dumpin' of stuff into the bays...

Shiloh. This town lies north of Anahuac. The observations are made by a man who spent his life in this area north of Lake Anahuac and on the Trinity River. The predominant industry in this region was cattle ranching.

Pat Worthy is 82 years old and has lived his entire life in the area around north Trinity Bay. He speaks to Zachary Handley: [They discuss Mr. Worthy's early life.] ...We lived pretty good. There wasn't no stores out here. There wasn't no road even here. I can remember when there was very little road here. Most the groceries we got from boats. Go to Galveston and get groceries. This road was bad.

Zachary Handley: Something you didn't trust, huh?

Pat Worthy: Oh it was bad. You, back, way back in Model-T days, you couldn't go up it when the weather's down. It was, it was too rough on anything.

Zachary Handley: So 563 was just a trail back then?

Pat Worthy: Yea that's all just a wagon road... [Mr. Worthy describes the open ranges and the large cattle gathering procedure involving several ranches when he was a kid. Mr. Handley asks about changes in the area and Mr. Worthy describes his observations.] ...Oh gosh yes, yea lot, lot a change. You wouldn't believe it. You know used to they had, oh, country dances. Boys didn't go to a girl's house or another [?]. But you had to act right. You didn't do nothin', and fight and drink whiskey and stuff like that. You act civilized.

Zachary Handley: No drinkin' allowed?

Pat Worthy: No. [Chuckles] There'd be some old picker, guitar picker and they play all night long. They didn't play half of the night, they played all night long.

Zachary Handley: Played 'til the morning, huh?

Pat Worthy: Yea. Most of 'em would come in wagons, and it'd be daylight when they traveled... Go to church on Sunday in a wagon now... That church [About two miles away, Shiloh Church] over there, that's where I walked from down here to school, what schooling I got... [Mr. Worthy describes his childhood on the ranch and the long full work week.]

Trinity River, Lake Anahuac, Anahuac and Anahuac Park. Observations about the changing shoreline constitute a recurrent theme throughout this section. Interviewees have watched the open bayshore silt in and form into a delta. And they note that now that delta formation has ceased to grow. The drought in the fifties is further discussed with the added observation that during the drought oysters even occurred upstream in the Trinity River. One of the men who helped dredge Lake Anahuac tells about the project. And he still remembers it as Turtle Bayou. They all agree that there are fewer ducks now and fewer fish.

Pat Worthy is 82 years old and has lived his entire life in the area around north Trinity Bay. He speaks to Zachary Handley: ...but the best fish for me was a freshwater catfish. I like them better than I do any kind. And we could catch a lot of them in the river.

Zachary Handley: But not anymore or you can you still?

Pat Worthy: No you starve to death on the river now... [Mr. Worthy describes the local Easter picnic on the river and the quantities of fish that they'd catch.]

Zachary Handley: ...Do you remember when the bay used to be clear, when it used to be blue water?

Pat Worthy: Yea, I'll tell you, used to when we had them picnics on the river, we drank water out of the river but it'd--

Zachary Handley: You drank water straight from the river?

Pat Worthy: It'd kill you now...

Alvin Otter, a 61 year old commercial shrimper, to Adelaide Socki: [Mr. Otter describes his life as a child growing up in the country and during the Depression. They discuss the effects of pollution and overfishing which Mr. Otter believes have hurt the shrimp and fish stocks in the bay and rivers. He also emphasizes the effects of altering freshwater inflows into the bay system. He uses his experiences with Lake Anahuac to illustrate his observations and conclusions.] ...But the bay's, like this Lake Anahuac, we'll use that for an example. When I was just a small youngster with my Daddy, we could still run a small boat from Galveston all the way up into Lake Anahuac, into the bayou, Turtle Bayou. There was a big ship yard up there. We, they used to haul the boats out. That's this bayou that you crossed coming down here, that bridge. We used to run boats up it. Then they built the bridge, you couldn't run a boat under the bridge. But the shipyard was, that's where we they overhaul the boats, I know you know what a shipyard is. But that's where they, was right up the bayou. We used to come through gates. They had a gates on the levy. See that was a freshwater reservoir they made back in the thirties, out of Lake Anahuac. It used to be called Turtle Bay. It's still Turtle Bay to us, but we call it Lake Anahuac because everybody else has called it that now. But it was called Turtle Bay at one time. It was an open bay and uh, they built a levy. And when they built the levy and then all the silt filled in and it made a big marsh out in front of Anahuac. Anahuac used to be an open bayshore. Now I don't remember it but my father does. He was born in 1894... [They discuss Mr. Otter's family history.] ...But like I said the bays used to have water. We'd have big rises in June and we had lots of food value coming down. I mean it might not sound like it but there wasn't all that pollution up round Dallas and all the way up the river. You know and that's where we got factories all up there, paper mills, or something

that's always you know putting something in the water. But we used to have big rises and then it would flush out all the old water and it would give us some good, and it would, nutrients would come down. And we'd have lots of shrimp in the spring of the year and in the fall too. And that's another thing we don't have big rises anymore. I mean the rivers will come up and it floods people, but you getting the water now actually settles out in the lake before it ever starts running through the-- You see, instead of having say three hundred miles or whatever the length the river is from here to Dallas. Instead of having the long rivers where your water flushed all the way down, now you, the water just flushes from Lake Livingston which is just fifty or sixty miles up here. You understand it's just like a big settling pond, the lake. And all we get is the silt and stuff from Livingston down this a way. We've never had the shrimp since the dam went in.

Adelaide Socki: Really?

Alvin Otter: But I know progress has got to be made, we gotta have water. But to one fellow's gain is to another fellow's loss... [They discuss how the upstream construction of dams changed the silting and reduced fish stocks by restructuring the river system. He explains that his family has always commercially harvested in the area.] ...I don't know what to tell you about the bays. When oil fields started that, that knocked all of our-- Well I can tell you, we had a drought too. From '51 to '57 was a drought. You probably read about it but anyway Lake Anahuac went dry. I mean there was trees grew up in the middle of the Lake out there four inches in diameter, in the Lake. They were fast growing like tallow trees or something, somethin' that grew fast. But the Lake just went dry. They used it for to water rice. You see that's where they would pump the water out of the bay, that's the reason it went dry. And it took in '50, well they started building the levy in '52 around the lake. I put the first dredge in the bay. I towed it in there with a tow [?] boat and made the lake into a reservoir, a bigger reservoir.

Adelaide Socki: So you were dredging then too?

Alvin Otter: I ran a tug boat for Brown Root for eight months, other than that I been fishing all my life. But they talked me into running a boat.

Adelaide Socki: And so you dredged out at the Lake?

Alvin Otter: Yes ma'am, they dredged it. Went all the way around and throwed a levy, all the way around the bank. Made a, instead a having just a shallow water, it made it deeper.

Adelaide Socki: And that is Lake Anahuac?

Alvin Otter: That's Lake Anahuac. And we put the dredge in there '52, '53. In '52 and '53 is when we dredged it.

Adelaide Socki: What kind of stuff, was it all dirt?

Alvin Otter: Most of it was sand. We had trouble holding the levy on the back side

cause it was a soft, moist mud, you know I mean, it didn't want to hold up. But they dredged down and got into good clay, and then put it on top of the other. And it worked real good. At one time daddy and I had hoop nets back in the forties and in the early 1950. We had a 150 nets. We run nets twice the day. I mean everyday, we run nets everyday, but we run one set one day and one set the next. And we'd leave 'em in the water two days at a time. We would come in with a boat load of fish and my wife and my mother helps us clean 'em.

Adelaide Socki: So this was when you were still fishing?

Alvin Otter: Yes ma'am like I say I quit fishing for fish in 1950.

Adelaide Socki: What made you stop fishing for fish?

Alvin Otter: Well it, the drought started and we couldn't find any fish profitable. And so we started oystering. Cause oysters, we had oysters all the way to Anahuac in the fifties, until the river started running again in '57. See whenever you have a real dry year oysters, freshwater kills oysters. So we had seven years of drought and we had oysters up, all the way up to Anahuac.

Adelaide Socki: Cause the saltwater was coming on up?

Alvin Otter: The saltwater was right there. I mean the only water they were getting, the gates was closed out at the Lake. That's the reason they pumped the Lake dry because there was no rain. It got, it was so bad that they even built a dam across the Trinity River at Moss Bluff. They built a dam across the river there to keep the saltwater from going up to the other pumping station.

Adelaide Socki: Holy cow!!

Alvin Otter: They drove pilings and built a dam across the river. Sealed it off. That, only they did that for just to keep the saltwater from going any farther... [Mr. Otter gives his opinion of the building of Wallisville Dam. His opposition to the dam is based on his personal experiences with other such restructurings of the area's river systems.]

Floyd Williams is approximately 74 years old. He is a retired judge who has lived his entire life on the north side of the bay in Chambers County. He speaks to Alfredo Tamayo: ...Well you wouldn't, I don't think you'd, the species of fish in the bay I don't think has changed. There's just not many of 'em. The uh, now on this side, the last time I was in the bay fishing, been about, oh it was in the fall. We went down Trinity River out into the bay and there was crab traps continuously. Some years ago, I'd say oh I don't know, thirty years ago, forty years ago, we could go down right down toward Anahuac Park, fish on the pier, catch crabs, find anything there.

Alfredo Tamayo: And there's nothing there now?

Floyd Williams: [Laughter] No, well I mean sure you might catch a crab once in awhile but you're not going to catch many and they're not large enough to save really. It's just a changed environment... Well when my kids were small, we could go down to the Anahuac channel. But you had a, you had a situation that's different. In the fifties we had a, I believe it was in the fifties, we had about a seven year drought where there wasn't a lot of rain on Trinity River. And saltwater came in, brackish water partly salt part fresh. Well it's the kind of water you need for oysters so to speak. And it stayed dry long enough that the oyster made it up the channel to where you could go down and pick them up. And we'd fish a lot on just, on the bank, not in the boat or anything. And catch mostly, well some flounder and some croakers, a few hard heads. But far as a change, well course there wasn't any real oil development in the bay, it back there. It's been there a long time now. In fact there's a lot of pipelines out there that well one of them started leaking the other day. I don't know if you saw it in the paper. My grandson ran into [found] it fishing where the gas was escaping... [Mr. Williams explains that some of the pipeline is very old and deteriorating. He explained that he is just making casual observations about the bay in this interview that he did not actually work on the bay or in the marshes. He then describes the Trinity River out of the Chambers County Courthouse window in Anahuac in 1937.] ...Looking toward the river to the west out of the courthouse window, all that area that's now grown up marsh and delta and so forth was water. That's a I guess just a normal thing. The sediment and trash and that set [?] washing down Trinity River see. And when it gets to the bay it settles down. It on this side of the bay there hadn't been the subsidence like it has been in the Baytown area in that we haven't had that much. I used to go out there with my daddy when I was twelve or fourteen maybe, and shoot geese. There was lots of geese. I mean they'd come out of the marsh and land on the sandbars to eat sand for their craw. I mean they need that, way they feed you know, to have that grinding of the gizzard. All those things far as the natural habitat I mean is going, practically gone. You don't have a lot of ducks in the country anymore. I think it's mostly civilization which not that I'm complaining about it, it's different. And you asked me what's, what's different about it... The marshes change. Down south of town, oh about twelve or fifteen miles, there's a little old marsh that was owned by some black folks. He had a, they were good friends of mine so they gave me a key to the pasture so I could go duck hunting. Best huntin' in the country. Well what happened to the bay? Houston Light and Power bought a, some marshland to build a cooling pond, right? When they bought the marsh land to build a cooling pond, they took up a hunting spot. So a hunting club that was over here on the bank had to find another place to go. And they went over here and got property across the creek from where I was huntin'. Well there was too many guns for the area then. See we killed all the ducks I guess. [Laughter] They don't come in anymore. But that happened to the bay over there at the cooling pond. Changed it up some and I'm not bad mouthing that. They are not hurting anything I'm sure. I mean, apparently, I've never been over there to fish, they claim that's one of the best places to catch fish in the country...

Hollie Hale, a 20 year old from Pasadena to John Cheesman: ...What how do you first remember the bay?

John Cheesman is 61 years old and grew up in the area. He now lives in Anahuac: Well I remember it as a child, I suppose around from six to ten when my father and I used to go fishing and duck hunting here on east bay or the east side of Galveston Bay. [This area is Trinity Bay] And we would come into what is now the Anahuac Wildlife Refuge, which was then the Barrow Ranch and open to public hunting, and hunt ducks. And then we would also fish in east bay, east Galveston Bay

Hollie Hale: Was there, do you think there was like more wildlife then than now, there is now?

John Cheesman: Oh good heavens yes. Right on up through the fifties, I would suppose that the amount of, in certainly bird life and generally wildlife was much, much more prevalent than it is now. There has been a tremendous loss of wildlife in this area...

Hollie Hale: ...How else has the bay changed like since your first?

John Cheesman: Oh the water quality I think has changed tremendously. I can remember, and the vegetation that you see, especially the sub-aquatic or vegetation under the water. I can remember as a, in my early how impressed I was with the clarity of the water, vegetation growing on the bottom. You could see fish, turtles by the thousands in the east bay. All gone, all of it... [Mr. Cheesman discusses what he thinks has most affected the bay.] ...But to me the main thing has been urbanization, land use. What I mean by that is draining especially the freshwater marshes. The bay is a system that is supported by a number of other systems, now, like rivers and freshwater marshes and floods. And when you start destroying or altering these things, you start altering the entire dynamics of the bay, you get nature all out of balance. And that's what man has done and I think that has been the major factor of the bay not pollution in and of itself.... [Mr. Cheesman describes the complexity of the bay as a system. He believes that human intervention is constantly altering the bay system and describes the Trinity River as an example.] ...Right out here on this porch when I was born didn't even exist.

Hollie Hale: Oh really.

John Cheesman: That was all open bay and now it is a beautiful wetland river delta. And yet it was caused by poor land use on the part of farmers around Dallas and Fort Worth. But now that the delta has been built we've gone in and built Lake Livingston. We've stopped the growth of this delta out here because we've cut all the sediment movement down the river behind the dam. So what we started we've now stopped and all of that's human impact... [He relates this example to the need to take a long term perspective.]

Round Point. Round point is located south of Anahuac Park and was devoted to cattle ranching.

Jewell Wilcox Key, the 63 year old owner of Round Point, to Liz Vanden Heuvel, a 23 year old from Indiana and Wisconsin: [Mrs. Key is describing her memories of Round Point near Anahuac. She was born here in 1927.] ...I remember a very, very wonderful childhood at Round Point.

Liz Vanden Heuvel: Can you tell me some memories?

Jewell Wilcox Key: We were always urged to stay away from the water. We were close to the bay however not as closely as we are today, but we were, we were still close... But anyway the bay was very, very pretty. Basically like it looks now except for the channel that has been dredged on this east bank of Trinity Bay. Approximately in the late forties or early fifties this channel was dredged. It has helped the subsidence on the east side of the bank considerably. Had it been there when the greater storms came, it would have issued a greater protection for this side of the bay. However it was not there when the last, when the last bad storm that I can remember was Carla, it was not there and had it been there I would have had probably about twenty or twenty-five more feet of bank toward the bay... [They talk about past hurricanes and storms including one exceptional freeze that Mrs. Key remembers as a child.]

Liz Vanden Heuvel: ...And the channel's about forty feet from the front of your house?

Jewell Wilcox Key: Well, yea I suspect. No it's farther than that, yea. Because it's not where the granary is, it's on about fifty feet farther than the granary. So I'd say, I'd say a couple of hundred feet, just and I'm not a, I'm not a whiz on footage but. But in the wintertime especially there's many times when there's not very much water in the bay. The geese and the ducks in the winter time of course flock out here between this channel and the other one. And um, there's not always a lot of water farther on up in there. There will be some, but the tide has taken it you know, and the north wind has taken it, has blown away. And there are many drilling platforms out there, and I, I personally do not feel that the drilling of oil, for oil has any, any bearing on the ecological affect of anything... Well, Texas has always lived under the conception that if you had cows and Christmas trees, you could make it. And the Christmas trees are what they call the tops of the wells. And so I have no, I have no problem with the oil companies however my husband is retired from an oil company. But we never had any dislike for the oil companies drilling. And so there are many, many, many platforms out here in the bay... [Mrs. Key describes her father's cattle ranch at Round Point. In addition to this acreage her father leased about 8500 acres in the area. The conversation turns again to the channel out in front of her home.] ...Because this channel only goes to the park. It has no connection with the main channel, it has no connection through to the Trinity River. And everyone says it was more of a political move. And I assume, looking back through the years, I assume it possibly was. Guy Jackson was a friend of the Corps of Engineers, he was a, he was County Judge of Chambers County, he was a very influential person. Therefore he manipulated the Corps of Engineers to dredge this channel, which they did. And if it were, if it is never used for anything

else except protection for this east bank of the bay and for the fishermen that want to come directly from Anahuac Park to Double Bayou through here, as opposed to going out in the main bay, it will have served that purpose. Also you can go down the bank at Anahuac Park and you can drive, you can drive out on this spalls bank, and you can drive just a little ways past my house on down... [Ms. Vanden Heuvel asks about the ranching, fencing etc. The pens were here at Round Point and the grazing areas were located a little farther east. The Round Point fences are located in nearly the same places today, however there are fewer buildings today. This acreage was a plantation at one point in the past. She describes the coming of electricity and the cisterns. Mrs. Key has researched the literature and concludes from the evidence that the main house was built between 1840 and 1850.]

Liz Vanden Heuvel: ...Are there any other ways that you can think that the bay has change, has it developed, a lot of development around here?

Jewell Wilcox Key: Well used to be. No, there used to be a lot of fishermen that came. There used to be a lot of local fishermen, there used to be a lot of fishermen in Anahuac, lot of commercial fishermen that made their living bringing things in from the bay. There are a lot of oystermen at Smith Point and Double Bayou who still make their living... [Mrs. Key recalls the fifties when the Louisiana oyster harvesters hauled tons of oysters out of Trinity and Galveston Bay in a totally uncontrolled fashion. She believes this depleted the oyster population.] ...As far as the dredging of the shell, I grew up when shell came out of the bay and that was just a simple fact of life. The shell, the dredging, the shell for the roads came out of the bay... [Mrs. Key describes her impressions of changes in the bay. She does not see very many changes except those wrought by storms, erosion, subsidence and the fact that the channel protects her property. She describes the bird population.] ...There are many, many birds. There are many birds. I've not seen very many here this morning, but when you come and sit quietly like this and there's no, they don't hear any talking or anything like that. Certain times of the year you see different kinds of course. And I always watch for the pelicans. For so many years there were not terribly many pelicans. And I remember as a child, pelicans everywhere. Well the last, for about the last year, every time I come down here I see the pelican. And to me that's a good thing. And I know that the brown ones are basically on the endangered species list but these are the, I don't know what they call them the American Pelican or what, they are white with black and gray on the tips of their wings. But I see as many as eight or ten of those, many times when I come down. And many times I see the spoonbill roseate. They fly by and they're pink. So we have an estuary and a bird sanctuary, and just a really neat thing that we should preserve. We should not, we should not let it be destroyed. Course I'm a nostalgic and sentimental because this is where I was born and this is home to me...

Liz Vanden Heuvel: ...Did you ever go to Sylvan Beach?

Jewell Wilcox Key: Yes, when I was a child I went to Sylvan Beach. I was a small child, but I remember goin' over there. We had dance hall up this way about six or eight miles up the way. And course back in those days Saturday night, everybody went to the dance. All of our people did. And the little children that were too small to dance, why you just wandered around and piddled around and when you went to

sleep they just maybe pushed you under the seat and let you sleep, you know. [Laughter] While mom and daddy danced. But yes I remember going to Sylvan Beach, I really do... [Tells about her family's trips to Galveston to see her brother and she recalls the many jelly fish she saw from the ferry.]

Jewell Wilcox Key: ...I know that the boats used to go by here a lot when I was little. And they all came from, the smaller boats especially came in the bay right out here. That was before the channel was there...

Liz Vanden Heuvel: ...So you don't see as many boaters go out in front anymore?

Jewell Wilcox Key: I don't see as many avid fishermen go out from here. Now they go, a lot of them go the other channel, the other farther out. But I don't believe there's as many go from this area...

Red Fish Bar, Red Fish Island, Red Fish Reef. In the past, Red Fish Reef crossed the bay from Smith Point to Eagle Point and these stories bring our narrative full circle as well. Two interviewees used this colorful memory to demonstrate the degree of change that they have experienced in the bay system. And indeed such profound change in the environment has been the typical rather than the exceptional change during the last seventy years. These recollections conclude the description of the bay system as the interviewees remember it.

Robert Craig is 60 and spent many childhood weekends fishing on the bay. He currently lives in High Island and speaks to Donald Cork: [Mr. Craig discusses the effects of the Houston Ship Channel since the initial dredging.] ...I don't know whether you are aware of it or not, but prior to the dredging of the Houston Ship Channel, it was possible and was, was often done. Cattle and wagons were driven from Smith Point across the bay to Eagle, what is now called Eagle Point on Red Fish Reef.

Donald Cork: I wasn't aware of that.

Robert Craig: Yea before, before the Channel was dredged through there and dredged thirty feet deep, a norther would come along and blow the water out of the bay and there were places where you might have to take your wagon across shallow areas but it was possible to drive a wagon all the way across from Smith Point. And they, the settlers over there in the Chambers County side took advantage of that to come across [Tape blanks then continues.]...

Floyd Williams is approximately 74 years old. He is a retired judge who has lived his entire life on the north side of the bay in Chambers County. He speaks to Alfredo Tamayo: ...I do know this that, not in my recollection but see I'm, my folks have been in Chambers County since oh 1820's. And from Smith Point across there was a oyster reef that you could normally, well not normally but on occasions when the

water was low, if you had a norther or something, well you could walk across or drive a team across, all the way across the bay. Well that material was ideal because it's cheap to build roads, cement, all that kind of stuff. It's all dredged out...

Nisar Fazlani to Tony Muecke, who is 61 years old businessman from Seabrook: ...I hear that you used to be able to go across like towards Santa Fe, you'd be able to go across to, to Red Fish Island at one time.

Tony Muecke: Oh you're talking about San Leon over to Smith Point. Yea. Before they cut the Ship Channel over there, people used to drive their cattle from that side of the bay. They'd wade 'em across. It was that shallow. And Red Fish was really a reef. However, Red Fish Reef now is under the runways at Ellington Air Force Base. They dredged it up in World War II!...

Appendix One

This appendix indexes all of the interviewees whose quotations appear in the main text. It provides a short biographical sketch about each of these people. The summaries were abstracted directly from the oral interview tapes and did not rely on the student papers. The spelling of each name was taken from the permission form signed by the individual participant. In cases where the correct spelling was unclear, I called the interviewee and confirmed the correct spelling. Several students actually misspelled their interviewee's name. I took the birth dates from the oral interviews and the name and address form accompanying each interview.

Each interviewee sketch also includes that participant's interviewer's name and any biographical material available about the interviewer. Unfortunately little or no information was collected about most of interviewers. The date and place of each interview is also recorded in the sketch. I have included my own observations about any unusual, usually troublesome, features of the audio tapes. These summaries are arranged alphabetically by interviewee name.

Butler, Anita, was born in 1954 and has lived most of her life in the Kemah area. Her family has been in the Galveston Bay area for almost 150 years. In the late seventies, she worked toward a degree in Marine Biology at Texas A & M, Fort Crockett in Galveston. In the course of her studies, she participated in field research on Pelican Island and Moses Lake. She was interviewed by Suzanne Peter. The interview was conducted in two sessions. The first was recorded on March 28, 1991, and the second was recorded on April 6, 1991. Both sessions were conducted in Dickinson, Texas. Ms. Peter provided a full and accurate transcript of her interview. It was used in creating this volume. Ms. Peter, 25 years old, is working toward a nursing degree. She grew up in the Deer Park area.

Carroll, Katherine, was born in 1913. She grew up in Houston. As a child she camped and swam with her family on Galveston Island past the end of 63rd Street and floundered near San Luis Pass. She and her family also camped or rented houses at San Leon, Morgan Point, and Clifton-by-the-Sea during the summers. Mrs. Carroll is married to Hugh H. Carroll. (Her husband has the same last name as Mrs. Carroll's maiden name). She and her husband joined the Houston Sportsman Club in 1959 and she has been very active in the organization for many years. Through their Club, they actively lobbied for more restrictive commercial fishing and shrimping regulations including the ban on commercial redfish harvesting, gun safety education in the schools, against the dredging of live oyster reefs, for the EPA, against the Wallisville Dam project, and for hunting regulations. She also worked closely with Armand Yramalgui opposing the Texas Water Plan in the sixties. She worked with Sarah Emmott on the Texas Open Beaches Act. She was interviewed in her Houston home by Pamela Matula on March 15, 1991. Mrs. Carroll frames most of her interview in a history of her activities with the Houston Sportsman's Club because Ms. Matula used this frame to elicit Mrs. Carroll's personal views and history. Ms. Matula's audio tape index indicates that the interview continues on a second tape but that second tape was never received by this author. Furthermore, a check in the archives indicates that the student did not

submit the second tape.

Cheesman, John B., Jr., was born in 1929. He is 61 years old. He grew up in the area and spent many childhood days hunting and fishing on Trinity Bay and in its marshes. He has lived here all of his life except for a few years spent in south Louisiana, Seattle, and California as a Park Ranger. He has also been a schoolteacher and an insurance underwriter. His association with the Galveston Bay system has been purely recreational and as a conservation volunteer. Mr. Cheesman is very, very active on several conservation projects in the Galveston Bay system. He is currently the Executive Vice-President of the Galveston Bay Conservation Committee. He was interviewed in his Anahuac home on April 8, 1991, by Hollie Hale. Ms. Hale provided a full and complete interview transcript which was used in creating this volume. She is 20 years old and is a psychology major. She grew up in Pasadena.

Craig, Robert "Bob" L., was born in Houston in 1930. He is 60 years old. He grew up in Baytown. His father and uncle, Ogle Craig, were avid bay fisherman when Robert was a child. Although they held commercial harvesting licenses, they considered themselves to be sports fishermen because they fished with rods, reels and lures. They did occasionally catch and sell pounds of fish to the meat markets especially in the lean period right after the war. His dad and uncle most often fished Hanna's Reef and Red Fish Reef for these catches. Robert Craig often went fishing with his father and he remembers fishing in many places especially the Cedar Bayou area and West Bay off of Galveston Island. Mr. Craig remains an avid and frequent sports fisherman. He currently lives on Bluff Gully in High Island. He works avidly for sport fishing and soil conservation. He writes a weekly column about the bay for the Bluff Gully Journal. He is also a member of Saltwater Anglers League of Texas, Trinity Bay Incorporated. He was interviewed in his home by Donald Cork on March 6, 1991.

Emmott, Sarah, was born in 1912 and is 78 years old. She grew up in Bellaire and the Houston area. Although she did not make her first trip to Galveston Bay until her teens, Mrs. Emmott has devoted much of her later adult life to politically promoting the Texas Open Beaches Act. She has also worked for other protective, environmental measures for the Texas coastline. She and her husband often took their children fishing near Galveston. Mrs. Emmott was interviewed in her home on March 22, 1991 by J. Kelley Trahan. Ms. Trahan provided a full and complete transcript of her interview with her tape which was used in the creation of this volume. Ms. Trahan, 20 years old, is majoring in medical science. She has lived most of her life in Seabrook.

Filson, Genevieve, was born in 1913 and is 77 years old. Before she was born, her parents built a second home in the Bay Ridge community at Morgan Point. Miss Filson spent all of her childhood summers and holidays in this home. She and her sisters continued their lifelong tradition of spending summers at Bay Ridge even as adults. After retiring from her teaching career in Houston she moved into the home full time. This family home was only recently sold, in 1988, and Miss Filson moved to the Clear Lake area. Genevieve Filson was interviewed in her Clear Lake home by Patricia Cox on April 10, 1991. Patricia Cox indicates during the session that she

is not from the Galveston Bay area and has little or no experience in the region.

Hester, Joe, Jr., has lived in Seabrook since 1919. Although he was actually born in San Antonio, Mr. Hester has lived almost all of his life in the Seabrook area. At his birth, his mother was staying with her parents while his father was stationed overseas. Mr. Hester is a little older than 72 years. He currently lives in a home just yards away from his childhood home. His wife was born in Seabrook to the Bennett family. Bennett is an old Seabrook family. Mr. Hester's father started the family nursery business in 1925 in Seabrook. Mr. Hester Jr. owns and operates the same nursery business today. Mr. Hester Jr. worked with his father until 1939 when he took over the business completely. Mr. Hester Jr. has extensively studied native marsh grasses and reeds. He stocks them in his nursery and does consultations about their habitat and needs. Mr. Hester Jr. was interviewed by Brian Lutz on April 19, 1991 at Mr. Hester's home. Brian Lutz lives near Sylvan Beach and also spends time at the bay.

Key, Jewell Wilcox, was born at Round Point near Anahuac in 1927. She is 63 years old and grew up in this home at Round Point. Her parents were cattle ranchers. They had about 500 head of cattle here and on leased lands to the east of Round Point. When her mother passed away, Mrs. Key inherited the 22.8 acre property which she uses as a second home. Her daughter and son-in-law currently keep about 15 head of Brahmin cattle on the property. Mrs. Key has been married for 22 years. She and her husband "cowboy" out at Round Point and she has a particular love of horseback riding. Mrs. Key has thoroughly researched the literature about Round Point. After study, she has concluded that her house was originally built between 1840 and 1850. She particularly enjoys sharing her serene Round Point with her granddaughter Christie George. Mrs. Key was interviewed by Liz Vanden Heuvel on April 11, 1991, at Round Point on Trinity Bay. Ms. Vanden Heuvel, a 23 year old, has a B.S in Biology. She grew up in Indiana and Wisconsin.

Larrabee, R. S. (Buzz), was born in 1930 in Seabrook. He has lived in the Clear Lake and Seabrook areas all but the two years he served with the U.S. Army. Mr. Larrabee has owned and operated a bait camp and commercially shrimped in Galveston Bay, West Bay and the Clear Lake area. His great grandfather acquired one of the original parcels cut out of the Spanish Land Grants. That parcel, just north of Clear Lake, is located on what is now LBJ Space Center. Mr. Larrabee recalls living, as a young child, about four city blocks north of the north bank of Clear Lake at the end of Larrabee Street. For the past 15 years, he has lived in the house he built in the Clear Lake Shores Subdivision. Mr. Larrabee was interviewed in his home by Clint Thornton on April 7, 1991.

Middleton, Robert (Bob), a 68 year old man, was born in 1922 and was raised in Houston. As a child he frequently visited the bay to swim and fish with friends and family. As a teen he enjoyed the Sylvan Beach social scene, the carnival and dance pavilion. He has lived at Morgan Point with his wife of 42 years for the last eight years. He and his wife are active in efforts to preserve the community at Morgan Point. Mr. Middleton and his wife were interviewed in their home on March 2, 1991, by Cynthia Thomas.

Middleton, Jane, has been visiting the bay for over 40 years and has lived in Morgan Point for the last eight years with her husband Bob Middleton. Mrs. Middleton was born in 1922 in Washington D.C and is 69 years old. She is very interested in the area's history and is very active in the Bay Ridge Association's historic preservation activities. Mrs. Middleton and her husband were interviewed in their home on March 2, 1991, by Cynthia Thomas.

Muecke, Tony, was born in 1930. He is 61 years old and has spent his life on Galveston Bay. Mr. Muecke was born in the flats of Seabrook. He grew up in the flats and later, his family moved to the old higher portion of Seabrook. His father was a professional fishing and hunting guide with his own bait camp and a complement of 72 rent skiffs. A refueling dock and restaurants are among the many businesses Mr. Muecke himself has owned and operated in the Seabrook area. He has served on the Seabrook City Planning and Zoning Commission. Mr. Muecke was interviewed in his Seabrook home on April 9, 1991 by Nisar Fazlani.

Otter, Alvin Alfred, was born at Smith Point in 1929. He is 61 years old and grew up in the Trinity Bay area. He is the grandson of John Henry Blume. Mr. Blume homesteaded the area in the 1800s. The Otter side of the family arrived in 1884. Mr. Otter's grandfather and father were commercial fishermen and he has followed the family tradition. Mr. Otter has been a commercial harvester all of his life. He captained his first boat in 1946. He owned that boat. Mr. Otter has fished, shrimped, and oystered in the course of his career. He married Lydia Miller Otter in 1949 and they have two children. Adelaide Socki interviewed Mr. Otter January 29, 1991, at his home on Otter Road in Anahuac. Mrs. Otter was also present and occasionally contributed to the interview but she is not quoted herein. David Laird transcribed this interview for Ms. Socki. It was submitted in full, but uncorrected form with the audio tape. It was used in creating this volume.

Ripple, Lanier J., was born in 1942 at Eagle Lake, Texas. He is 48 years old. For more than fifty years he has been a sport fisherman in the Galveston Bay Complex. As early as 1949, Mr. Ripple sport fished with his father at least seven times a year at San Luis Pass and at Galveston Island. They fished for trout, redfish and gilled flounder. Mr. Ripple was a resident of the City of Galveston between 1969 and 1972, during which he fished these waters more frequently. He was interviewed on March 13, 1991, by Todd Moore at the Ripple residence. Mr. Moore provided a nearly complete transcript of the interview which was used in creating this volume.

Sarvis, Bill, was born in 1954. He is 36 years old. He grew up in Houston. He has fished for sport on the bay since he was a ten year old child. He is not a commercial harvester. Mr. Sarvis has worked on both dredges and tug boats in the Galveston Bay system as well as other Gulf coast ports. In the course of this work, Mr. Sarvis spent time in the upper most reaches of the Houston Ship Channel and Buffalo Bayou. He was originally interviewed in February by Maurice Davis. Mr. Davis transcribed this first interview but the tape was subsequently lost. Mr. Davis reinterviewed Mr. Sarvis at work on March 21, 1991. This second interview is the tape which is now in the archives and was used in this volume.

Stamper, Eugenia, is called by the nickname Pokie. She was born in Kemah in

about 1925, at what is now the location of Portofino Harbor. She grew up on Clear Creek in the Clear Lake area. Her grandfather started Platzer Ship Yard in Kemah in the late 1800s. Her father continued in the ship yard business as did her paternal uncle. Each man had his own yard which they located on either side of Clear Creek. Mrs. Stamper's extended family continues to do business in the Kemah and Seabrook area. Mrs. Stamper is the owner of the P.S. Yacht and Boat Stuff's store in the Glen Cove Park Subdivision. Mrs. Stamper was interviewed in Kemah at her shop by Beatrice Wycoff, an older student, on March 9, 1991. Mrs. Wycoff provided a nearly complete, uncorrected, interview transcript which was used in the creation of this volume. Mrs. Wycoff is 75 years old. She grew up in Oklahoma, has lived in Houston, and currently resides in Deer Park. She has a degree in Business Administration and has been an office manager.

Valentino, A. E., is called Bubba for short and is 60 years old. He was born in 1930 in Houston. His family relocated to San Leon when he was about nine years old. Since then, except for two years that he was in the Service, 1951 to 1953, Mr. Valentino has lived in the San Leon area. Like his father, Mr. Valentino developed lifetime career in the commercial harvesting and sport fishing industries in Galveston Bay. He bought his first shrimping boat in about 1956 and still owns a 55 foot, working shrimping boat. Between 1959 and 1963, he also worked for the largest mud shell producers removing the oysters that lay in the front of the dredgers. At that time he helped build fifteen oyster reefs in the bay. Mr. Valentino ran the Eagle Point Fishing Camp in San Leon from 1963 to 1975. Although his nephews now run Eagle Point Fishing Camp, Mr. Valentino is still actively invested in it. He was interviewed in his Dickinson home by David Grizzle on March 10, 1991. Unfortunately the quality of the recording of this interview is very poor. A previously recorded session filters through the Valentino interview making it difficult at best to understand Mr. Valentino. In addition, a radio or television plays in the background during the Valentino recording session. The second half of the interview, supposedly located on side two of the tape, is lost. No sound can be heard from side two.

Wilbarger, Jim, moved to the Galveston Bay area in 1964 but commercially harvested in the bay as early as 1957. He currently runs a shrimp farming business in Costa Rica. No other biographical information was collected by the interviewer. Philip Olasky interviewed Mr. Wilbarger in conjunction with Lyda May Wright on April 7, 1991. Mr. Olasky grew up in Clear Lake City and he currently resides there.

Williams, Floyd, is a retired County Judge from Chambers County who presided in Anahuac. He grew up in Chambers County and spent part of his young life on Cedar Bayou. Mr. Williams' parents are both from the Galveston Bay area. He has fished for fun in the bay system since he was a child. He also enjoys hunting geese and ducks. The interviewer did not collect Mr. Williams' age or much of any biographical information. Abstracting from Mr. Williams' remarks, he is probably about 74 years old. Mr. Williams was interviewed in his home in Anahuac on March 16, 1991 by Alfredo Tamayo III.

Worthy, Pat, is 82 years old. He was born July 1, 1908, right off of what is now 563

in his parents house near Shiloh, Texas. His family has lived many generations in Texas. Mr. Worthy's parents and nine siblings had a cattle ranch of about 500 acres near Anahuac. The family raised cattle, highland farmed, and raised hogs in the winter. He remembers the hard long hours, the yearly cattle drives, the local dances, and fishing for fun on the bay and in the rivers. In 1945 or 1946, Mr. Worthy moved to his current house which is located just down the road from his childhood home. He has been married for 60 years, has two grown children, grandchildren and a great grandchild. He owned and operated two grocery stores, one near his home and one in Liberty. He also worked for the Devil's Canal Company for 12 years. Mr. Worthy was interviewed April 2, 1991, at his home on 563, seven miles north of I-10 by Zachary Handley.

Wright, Lyda May, was born in 1907. She is an 83 year old woman who grew up in Houston. Her parents had a summer home in Bay Ridge at Morgan Point. She moved to the Kemah-Seabrook area from River Oaks, Houston, in the early 1940's and since then has lived in the El Jardin neighborhood. Her husband, Ruben Wright, died in 1978. She was interviewed twice by her granddaughter Elizabeth Hope Hahn. Ms. Hahn's first interview was inaudible. She reinterviewed her grandmother on February 23, 1991, at her El Jardin home. Ms. Hahn appears to have used the same tape for the second interview as remnants of the first interview can be heard after the conclusion of the second interview. Excerpts from the second interview appear in this volume. Elizabeth Hope Hahn grew up in the Clear Lake and Seabrook area. She is a 20 year old majoring in Behavioral Science.

Lyda May Wright was subsequently interviewed by Philip Olasky. Mr. Olasky originally set out to interview Mr. Jim Wilbarger but soon discovered that Mr. Wilbarger, a relative new comer to the area, had obtained most of his information from Mrs. Wright. Mr. Wilbarger then introduced Mr. Olasky to Mrs. Wright and they proceeded with a three way interview on April 7, 1991, at Mrs. Wright's home in El Jardin. I have juxtaposed excerpts from the two Lyda May Wright interviews in the text. Philip Olasky grew up in Clear Lake City and he currently resides there. He is a 20 year old working toward his degree in Management Information Systems.

Appendix Two

A total of 27 oral interviews were recorded by Adelaide Socki and her students enrolled in Spring 1991 Anthropology courses at San Jacinto College in Pasadena, Texas. All of the collected interviews were reviewed and evaluated by this author. However some of the oral interviews were not included in the construction of this volume.

The following interviews were omitted for the described reasons. I remind the reader that all of the taped interviews in their raw form, as well as the students' summaries, are available in the archives at The Galveston Bay Research Center, Texas A & M University at Galveston, Galveston, Texas.

The interviews between Bill McCambridge and Thomas Bayliss, and between Sheryl Shockey and Lynn Benefield were omitted because the tapes were not audible. The tape of the interview between Priscilla Shannon and George Paulissen was lost and Ms. Shannon never reconducted her interview.

I have omitted the interview with Erna Foxworth conducted by Adelaide Socki. More than half of the tape is not audible. The remaining portion consists of reminiscences about Mrs. Foxworth's family. According to Ms. Socki's summary, Mrs. Foxworth has penned a local history, *The Romance of Old Sylvan Beach*, and is in the process of writing a family history focusing on her father. In her oral interview Mrs. Foxworth declines to comment on the way she remembers the Galveston Bay region, or to compare conditions in the past with present conditions. Although her family always maintained a home in La Porte, Mrs. Foxworth spent her childhood living in many places along the Texas coast as her family followed her father's engineering projects. It is unfortunate that so much of this interview is inaudible because her father was one of the earliest engineers involved in building the Houston Ship Channel.

I omit Sandy Cheny's interview with Robert Schaadt, historian at the Sam Houston Regional Library and Research Center in Liberty Texas. This interview consists solely of a summary of Mr. Schaadt's historical research about European utilization of the Trinity Bay region and the Trinity River in the early 1800s. Mr. Schaadt offered no observations on the past or present conditions the bay. The contents of his interview are not relevant to this particular volume.

I exclude Adelaide Socki's interview with Hugh Zinnecker because the interview focused almost solely on the Zinnecker family's work in the recreational boat building industry. For two generations, his family has been very active locally in the design and construction of boats and they have owned several boat building businesses as well as a ship yard. However Mr. Zinnecker offered very few remarks about the changes he has observed in the bay. He did make a few very general observations comparing the entire Texas coast to the coast of Florida. He also related a few anecdotes about hunting and fishing at Bastrop Bay and Chocolate Bay as a child. Unfortunately it is impossible to distinguish whether his few observations about the environment refer to Bastrop Bay or to Chocolate Bay. This

interview would be most useful to someone studying the development of the boating industry in the region.

I omit Stephanie Hart's interview with Frederick B. LeBlanc. According to Ms. Hart's summary, Mr. LeBlanc is a four year employee of Parks and Wildlife whose job consists of assessing environmental problems in the bay system. His childhood was spent in Port Arthur and in Louisiana as were the majority of his years prior to his current appointment. Mr. LeBlanc's personal experiences indicate that his hands-on historical experience with the Galveston Bay system has been rather short term. However there is another consideration. Ms. Hart conducted her interview in Mr. LeBlanc's Parks and Wildlife office. This venue alone suggests that Mr. LeBlanc is speaking in his capacity as a Parks and Wildlife employee. His rather didactic tone further supports this evaluation of the interview. This interview would be very useful in a study of the agency and its relationship with the bay.