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Interviewee: John Couvillon
Interviewer: Steven Wiltz
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[Transcriber's note: The majority of the interviewer's backchanneling has not been transcribed for the purposes of readability. The interviewer had a number of false starts that I have mostly left out; he also periodically dropped words and talked quickly, slurring his words.]

Ethnographic preface:

Mr. Couvillon was born in 1920 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. His father worked for Standard Oil of New Jersey (now Exxon) as a blacksmith. After graduating from LSU in 1942 with a degree in petroleum engineering, he went to work for Stanolind (Standard Oil of Indiana; now Amoco) out of Jennings as a roustabout. A few months later he was drafted into the service during World War Two, where he served in Europe. When he returned from war in 1946, he went back to work for Stanolind on a drilling rig (worked lead tongs); in 1947, he was promoted to engineer and moved to Hackberry, where he married his wife. After moving between Hackberry and Lake Charles a few times, he moved to Lafayette when Stanolind opened their office there in 1957. In 1961 he quit and went to work for Falcon Seaboard Drilling Company; the following year, he was promoted to division engineer and transferred to Houston, where he oversaw production in a number of different states. He was transferred to Lafayette in 1970 to work for a subsidiary company, Oleum Incorporated. After being laid off in 1975, he took a job with DOR Engineering, a consulting firm, in Lafayette, where he would supervise drilling operations. He retired in 1989 at the age of 69. The interview with him covers a range of topics.

TRANSCRIPTION

Interviewer initials: [SW]

Interviewee initials: [JC]

JC: tied to it was a, an old World War Two YF barge with, with all the quarters and stuff like that, and also the mud pumps and the diesel pumpin' equipment. So we, [Inaudible] small platforms, see. And, of course, then, uh, now uh, I say '46, '47, they drill a couple of wells I think. Made a dry hole or two. And uh, they had to be not too far offshore, because uh, I think you could see if from shore. And you could normally see about seven miles uh, over water.

SW: Clear day.

JC: Uh, yeah. High, high, of course, if you got a high structure, you see a little further. But uh, at that time I was workin' for uh, uh, Stanolind, which was Stanolind, Standard Oil… Standard Oil, Standard Oil and Gas of Indiana. Standard Oil of Indiana. And they were, it was, it was [Inaudible] [Stanley?]. S-T-A-N-O-L-I-N-D. I

know in some of these books here they call it Standard Oil, Standard Oil uh, Indiana Standard, but the was the name of it. They later changed it, they went through several name changes, but it's currently Amoco. Amoco, now it's Amoco dash uh, what other company's word was? It wasn't uh, was it Mobil? Was it, it was Texas. It was Exxon-Mobil. [Phone rings] The, the, excuse me, my wife's upstairs.

SW: Oh, no hurry. [Recording breaks off] [Hear JC talking to someone in the background] We're in the home of Mr. John Couvillon, here in Lafayette. Um, interview has started and he is on a break. [Pause]

JC: But I went to work for uh, I graduated LSU in '42 in petroleum engineering and uh, went to work for uh-

SW: Can we back up here for a second?

JC: Yeah.

SW: You were born here in Lafayette?

JC: No, I was born and raised in Baton Rouge.

SW: Baton Rouge.

JC: Uh hm.

SW: And you went to high school there?

JC: Yeah. Baton Rouge High. Then graduated from LSU in '42 in petroleum engineering.

SW: What did your family do? What did your mother or father do?

JC: My daddy was a blacksmith at Standard Oil.

SW: At Standard Oil?

JC: B-

SW: So he was in oil company?

JC: But Standard Oil of New Jersey.

SW: O-

JC: It's altogether different. It's also Ex-, it's Exxon now. That was, you know. But Standard Oil of Indiana was a different company altogether. Now maybe somewhere they had a tie in, but Stanolind was, stood for Standard Oil of Indiana. And they had a, I think Whitey, Indiana was their home off-, uh, where the plant was with the home office. The producing end of it was at uh, in Tulsa. But uh, so anyway, so I finished at Baton Rouge High in, in Baton Rouge, and LSU in '42, and went to work for Standard Oil and Gas Company right after I graduated, in Jennings. And then I went in the service there while I was there for three and a half years. I got out in November of uh, '45. And I went back to work at Jennings.

SW: So you worked, worked a little bit in the oil patch before, before the war-

JC: Yeah, well, a few, a couple a months, yeah. Yeah.

SW: [Inaudible, overlapping speech]

JC: I was [waitin', waitin' to get called/workin' and they called me?].

SW: Did you get into this because your father was in it?

JC: No, uh, I'll tell you, when I finished LS-, when I finished high school uh, uh, I had to go an ex-, a half a, I mean, one semester. And when I got out there in the middle of the year, so to speak, you know, midyear. So uh, I wasn't, I didn't know what I wanted to do. 'Fact, I looked around there to go to work there in Baton Rouge. Then finally uh, they, they had a, at that time drilling wells, uh, just off the LSU campus. South of the LSU campus. Along, along the river. And uh, and I, I saw they were there and I just got interested in that so I [Inaudible]. Get, get a, get a, it was, it was an up-and-coming business so to speak, so uh, if I'da gotten a job [Chuckling] before I started LSU, I wouldn't, I wouldn'tve of gone. But I couldn't get a job, so.

SW: So you had to, you went to LSU.

JC: Yeah.

SW: And studied petroleum-

JC: Yeah, petroleum engineering, huh. And of course at that time there was only about uh, four, four universities, four or five universities that taught petroleum engineering. Texas, A and M, A and M and Texas University, and uh, Oklahoma, and LSU. And there may, and there may be another one. Mostly well that, that's it. I think, well, when I went in finally worked and moved into the office, uh, I was the only petroleum engineer out of about five engineers. All the rest of 'em were, were mechanical engineers, chemical engineers, some like that. But they-

SW: Kind of a new field.

JC: Yeah, it was new. Brand new, you know. The, the, of course the teachers at LSU were uh, 'specially uh, many uh, [Benny Craft?], BC Craft, he's, he was very well-known, but then he was the [key?] of the department. He had been there, we had some graduates that [Inaudible] they worked, they graduated in the late '30s, '36, '38. In fact, you know, I just got, back in May I went to my sixtieth reunion. [Laughs] Sixty! Yeah, when you get to be, when you go 50 you get to be a [golden tiger?], they give you a pin and all kinds of stuff. I got that in '02. This was 60. But anyway, so then uh, when I finished in '42, I went to work right away in Jennings for Stanolind Oil and Gas Company as a roustabout.

SW: Why, why was it uh, Standard Oil and Gas of Indiana they had moved into Louisiana-

JC: [Inaudible], well they were come, they were well-known. Uh, they had, okay, let me go back a little further. Uh, they actually took over, bought, merged, whatever you want to call it, a company that was known as Yount-Lee. Y-O-U-N-T, Y-O-U-N-T dash Lee. L-E-E. Now they had, they had drilled and had production in, in, in Spindletop, in Beaumont. They were very prominent and were in Texas. So, but anyway, apparently somethin', somebody in ho-, uh, in the plant or the, the headquarters of Stanolind Oil and Gas [come decide?] he want, they just bought this company. I think merged with it, bought it, 'cause they had a lot of the old hands still workin' for Stanolind at that time. 'Fact we were, [Ben Yount?], [Chuckling] he was one of the guys, he was work, he worked with us over in Louisiana. So anyway, so but, so that's how they got in the business. But they were all, all over the country, you know. They had, they had wells in, you know, Texas, New Mexico, Louisiana, uh, uh, went up north, too, in Illinois, some of those areas up in there.

SW: How did you get on with them?

JC: Well, uh, just uh [Pause] I, I don't really remember. Uh, probably, you know, they, they would come around and maybe uh, [tell?] you people like they do, they do more of it now than they u-, yeah.

SW: Kind of recruit-

JC: And of course, uh, bein' only say one school out of maybe four or five in the whole country, uh, they didn't have a whole lot of pick, you see. And of course, presumably, they were tryin' to get away from havin' just general engineers, or engineers of other, other types of engineers. But all, it didn't really make much difference. The guys in tech-, in mechanical engineering, it didn't take long to fall into, you know, learn the things that was necessary. But, you know, I guess maybe because it wasn't so uh [Slight pause] petroleum engineering was more physical than what the, they went in more for operations than f-, like, for drilling or production rather than reservoir engineering, which [you're?] into now. Which is later what we had to do with. But anyway, so I worked there and called in the service in uh, July of-

SW: You worked there only a couple of months you said?

JC: Yeah, 'couple of months as a roustabout before I got drafted.

SW: What year was that?

JC: Uh, '42.

SW: Forty-two.

JC: Uh, June, July of '42. And just two months.

SW: They started you out at the bottom rung, though you had your degree and everything, but you still a roustabout.

JC: Yeah, oh yeah. Well, that's right. Now a lot of the guys in the engineering there, and some had told me, you know, they went to work uh, for TVA and also because that was, really, that's kind of like a dodgin'. [Both laughing] To keep 'em out of getting drafted. Well I had that in mind, too, if I went to work at, that I would work long enough that maybe they think I was too valuable just to get drafted and maybe I'd do more good here. But it didn't pan out that way. As it turned out, I went uh, I had, I had my uh, uh, registration for the draft moved from Baton Rouge to Jennings, because at that time in Jennings they had never, no one had ever been called. No one had been drafted, they'd all been volunteers. In July they, they ran out. [SW laughs] And I was the first [Chuckling] SOB to get called. The lady chargin', she in charge of the, uh, draft board told me when I got back, I went back to work there, well, I started working on a rig with her two sons and I, and I, so I met her naturally. ["Well, you drafted from here? Well you don't think we'll take somebody from Jefferson Davis."?] [Laughs] So it's, but, I was the first one to get drafted in the whole parish. [Inaudible] Baton Rouge. But anyway, that's, so that's-

SW: They wanted to get rid of you. [Laughs]

JC: Well, no, they didn't want to get any local boys, you know, 'cause they ran out of volunteers. They had so many volunteers there, farm boys, you know, I guess. But so anyway, after I came out the uh, so then after the war I came back and uh, Jennings, working in Jennings again. Uh, but, at that time, they were, the drilling crews during the war were workin' 48 hour weeks. Okay, so-

SW: Forty-eight hours?

JC: Forty-eight hour weeks, uh huh. So uh, there were, what they decide to do, they were gonna go back, go to 40 hour weeks, which was norm, yeah, you know. But in order to do that they had to have an extra crew on each rig. You see, because the, because with, with your crew, that, 'cause 40 hour weeks uh… it adds up to a capacity of the number of another crew. So they had to put another drilling crew on, you know, to make up for that. Which they called a "relief crew." But anyway, so, well I was there and I was talkin' to, to [Inaudible]. ["When I see you back to work?" "Well," he says, "you know, you?] [Inaudible] the experience." Well I went to work there, which was a mistake because while I was workin' there a lot of the other engineers got ahead of me. [Both chuckle] But, but anyway I worked for over a year as a-

SW: [Pack engineer.?]

JC: On a drilling rig out of Jennings, yeah. Steam rig.

SW: Steam rig, alright.

JC: Over there. Then I went to, went to uh, to uh, I went into the office when I, then they, they needed somebody, an engineer in Hackberry, so I, I work, I left the rig and went to work at Hackberry. And uh, that was in forty… forty [Muttering to himself dates] '41, '46, forty-, '47 I guess, yeah. [Pause]

SW: Same company right?

JC: Yes, yes, Stanolind Oil and Gas Company.

SW: Were they movin' you around a lot?

JC: [Chuckling] Oh, lord [Inaudible]. [You actually only have?] 'bout two years in one place. Most cases, oh yeah.

SW: There was no choice. They come and you went.

JC: Well, uh, you had a choice, you could always quit. Or, you, normally, usually it was a promotion of some sort. [You gotta go if you?], yeah, I went, I went to Jennings before the war, came back to Jennings, went to Hackberry, from Hackberry to Lake Charles, from Lake Charles back to Hackberry, from Hackberry back to Lake Charles, from Lake Charles to uh, Lafayette. 'Til I left them in '61. So, but anyway, I went work in the office at Hackberry then. At that time they only had, I believe the head engineer was a civil engineer. But, you know, but, but it was actually, didn't, you were able to do uh, mentally do work, you know, the thinkin' work, can figure out things [Inaudible]. But uh, plus, plus they had a math in it. [Inaudible]

SW: They promoted from uh, when you came back from the war, you were a roustabout again? Or-

JC: No, no ro-, I worked on the rig, drilling rig for over a year.

SW: So you were-

JC: Yeah, see, they were breakin', breakin' towers, you know. During the war they used, the crews worked 48 hour weeks. So they only need three crews to work, you know, for the whole week. But then after the war, they were gonna break it, go back to 40 hour weeks, which was the normal 40 hour week. So but in order to do that, they needed a f-, an extra crew. A total of four crews instead of three, see. So the, they

needed some other people, so I told 'em I wanted to go just for the experience. So I worked for over a year on, on the rig like that.

SW: Then they moved you to Hackberry-

JC: Okay, then, then I got, then they needed somebody at Hackberry, an engineer. You see when I was, when I was roustabouting I was making 80, 'bout 80 cents an hour. When I came back went to, went to workin' on the rig, I was up, it was up to about ninety… maybe 92 cents an hour, 93 cents an hour. And then I went to the wor-, when I went to work in Hackberry, got a big jump to uh, 208 dollars a month.

SW: Good money, huh?

JC: [Chuckling] Well, well in those days was. So uh, but anyway, so I went to work at Hackberry as an engineer. And I stayed down there, I married, my wife came, was from Hackberry, we got married on that '48. Then we had uh, let's see, I think worked about two, forty-, through forty-, what, through '49 and then we got transferred to Hackberry, 'scuse me, to Lake Charles. They opened up a district office. And I went to work at the district office there uh, as an engineer of course. And then I worked there-

SW: Not, not workin' in the field anymore? You-

JC: Oh no, no. No, that's [Inaudible]. But most of 'em didn't have, didn't even have that much experience in the field, 'cause they went directly to the office, 'cause they needed engineers. But that didn't happened, like I said, [Inaudible] uh, right after the war the rig, they needed somebody on the rig, so. So I was at Lake Charles for a couple of years and then they needed a, the uh, field engineer was head engineer in Hackberry, he got moved up to, went to Texas, so, and so I got, they moved me back to take his place. So, so I moved back to Hackberry for another, 'bout another two years. Let's see, '49, '50, '51 about there. Went back Hackberry for '52, '53, 'bout three years I guess. No, no, no, no. For two years I guess. So then I went back to Lake Charles. Uh, they called Lake Charles the district office because it was over, it over the Hackberry office. So, you know, it's all, it's different, each company has it a little different I suppose. And then from Lake Charles moved to uh, uh, that was second time at Lake Charles, and then moved back, moved to Lafayette. They opened up the office here and then uh, Amoco opened up the big office here in Lafayette.

SW: Oh, so that's when they moved you here?

JC: Yeah, uh hm. And that was in uh, fifty… '57.

SW: Fifty-seven.

JC: Fifty-seven, yeah. [Pause] And left, worked there 'til I quit, 'til I left in '61. But it was during that time that they had drilled, Kerr-McGee had drilled this well, [over here/oh yeah?]. But the second time we was at Hackberry in uh, early '50s, was when they went offshore. Okay, 'course Kerr-McGee had already drilled a well offshore off of Morgan City, somethin' like, you know, it's either '46 or '47. Drilled a couple of 'em [here?]. So uh, and it could be that Stanolind or Amoco drilled maybe they were the same company that drilled offshore, well, I don't know. But uh, we had little, little to do with it. The operation was handled out of uh, out of uh… south of M-, south of [Inaudible] uh… let's see. Sabine, Sabine Pass. They had, we had an office at Sabine Pass, that's where the boat tied up. So, but the op-, physical operation of the well was handled by us at Hackberry. And the crew left out of Cameron. It was about, it was about a 50 mile ride out of Cameron and everybody hated it. [Chuckling] 'Cause you'd get seasick and [Inaudible]. Now they had drilled a well on platform. Uh, and uh, they had the well sittin' on one platf-, on one platform and right

adjacent to it was the other platform. They had production equipment as well. No, no, no. No, the production equipment was on, was on same platform with the wells themselves. We had about three of four, several wells, I don't know how many. And then across from m-, this separate platform built that had your livin' quarters in it and other stuff that were needed. Uh, and tiny, connecting the two was a wooden, was wooden, a walkway about, I guess about 10, 15 feet wide, somethin' like that. They were very close together, there's only about maybe from this wall to that wall. Very close. And uh, so uh, they, they drilled the wells and we handled operations out of, out of Hackberry. And everybody hated it because the crews had drives, long drive, fi-, a long ride out there on boats. And 'course lot of 'em got seasick and uh, uh, and it took a long time to go that far. And of course the boats were mostly the small in those days. So, but uh, anyway, like I was tellin', [when I talked to that guy?], whoever I talked to when I called over here. The thing, the platform caught fire, see. And uh, [Chuckles] it was, and uh, uh, we were all uh, we all went from, went into the office at Hackberry there. We had radio communications with the platform and they also had, uh, the platform had radio communication with Sabine Pass. And it was, the platform was burnin' and everybody was pullin' for the fire. [Laughing] They were hoping it would burn down to the water level. So we wouldn't have to go out there anymore. Uh, but uh, it, it, and, and the platform, the one with the wells was the one that caught fire first. And then when it got to this walkway, it went across to the other platform, it turned out it was built with creosoted pile. [Laughing] And it burned right across go to the other end. [Laughs]

SW: Oh no.

JC: Oh yeah. [SW laughs] It was really good thinking, you know. But uh, anyway, that was uh, but eventually they, they did do a lot of wells out there. Stanolind did. I don't remember how many there were, but uh, then, of course, uh, the [Inaudible] wells, like I said, were, they had, we drilled with small platform with vessels attached to 'em. Like I said, Kerr-McGees, I remember seein' pictures of YF, what they call a YF barge from the Second World War and it was shipshape vessel, vessel shaped like a ship. And all the quarters and everything was on there and they had a walkway, they walked to the rig. It was the same level as the rig. And crews would walk up there, if anybody wanted to go back and forth they, but there was no, no livin' quarters or anything on the main platform. So that uh, and then uh, then of course a ship would, well the vessel was anchored. The-

SW: I've been hearin' a lot about them using uh, the ships, the war ships after the war.

JC: Oh yeah, yeah.

SW: Why was that?

JC: Oh 'cause they were available and they were cheap.

SW: And they were cheap. The companies would buy 'em and use 'em.

JC: [Inaudible, overlapping speech]. Yeah, oh yeah.

SW: And they were sturdy and utilitarian.

JC: Oh yeah, oh yeah. But now, see, uh, most of 'em, of course [Amoco used some?] [Inaudible], they used some, but uh, the mo-, the one they used mostly was the old LSTs. Landing ship tanks. Now there was one that had a, a center was who had a deck, uh, no, it had big doors, they could lo-, let's see, [Speaking softly, as if to himself] I don't know if they opened as well. I really don't [Inaudible], but anyway, they uh, you came down under, I don't know whether they opened up or not, but anyway, but the deck was right there on, on the bottom of the ship and that's where they, and during, during the Second World War they carried tanks,

ships, boats, tanks uh, trucks, and all that kind of stuff. Cannons and all that kind of stuff. That's what they did. They, they was landing, L-S-T, landing ship tanks. Because they carried tanks. And they, they were ro-, they were, didn't have any keels, they were round and, and I, I remember seeing 'em [Inaudible] [see-saw?] trailin' behind us [it was from another company?] and it was goin' just like this. With no bow, with no keel. It just, it just rocked like a rocking chair. [Laughing] And, and I'm sure everybody was sick, well, almost everybody. But anyway, LST was the most common. Well they had another vessel called "LCT," which was landing craft tank. And they carried mostly these Higgins Boats, b-, inside [Inaudible], but they was, it was the same version but smaller. But the LST was the bigger one and, of course, this was in, in the late '40s, you know, and they, little ships had been just built in the early, in the early '40s, '42, '43, '44. So they were relatively new.

SW: Still in good shape.

JC: So they, and they were self-propelled. They used these, 'cause they kept the machinery and everything on board, they were self-propelled. You could drive where you want to. When uh-

SW: Rockin' back and forth. [Inaudible, overlapping speech].

JC: Well, yeah, [when you get there?], when they get level, the anchor, once it's anchored they will be able to [Inaudible]. Well it had to be because uh, they had uh, also they'd have uh, goin' from the vessel to the platform you had to have a water line, you had to have mud line, you had to have electrical line goin' up to the platform. And you had to have, you know, any number of lines. And of course you had this walkway with uh, if, if uh, if the crew change, when crew changes, people will walk from the vessel on to this, to this, ran right there. But uh, like I say, if, if you, now, uh, the uh, I don't know, I'm sure the engineering at UL has a, a library. But they's bound, it's bound to have this book to my knowledge is still exist [Inaudible].

SW: Yeah, we should have that one-

JC: But, but, look, find out, get their [edition?], I don't know if they kept, if they kept archives of old books, but find out if you can about the one called "Offshore." And uh, and then was much smaller magazine, it was usually thinner, but same size, and uh, but it, it, I know if they're still in existence or [Inaudible] we'll have an archive with some of the old books. And you can find, you find, I'm sure, a big slurge on the first offshore well that Kerr-McGee drilled. [Inaudible] see it.

SW: We have that in-

JC: You have that [Inaudible]? You have pictures of it showin' the barges tied up to it? Okay, well, that was YF barge, that was a YF barge. I think it was, it was being used for all the, uh, engines and all that kind of stuff. Pump mud, mixin' mud, cement, and all the rest of it was on that, on that. But they will give you good, very good articles, background. More so than uh, what most people uh, would remember, I supposed.

SW: Well-

JC: But-

SW: We, we like to hear about the experiences, too. [Laughs]

JC: Yeah, well, okay well. Okay then-

SW: When you're telling me all this stuff, you're, the, the well that was burning and everything you described to me, that was all Hackberry?

JC: Yeah, that, well, it was off of P-, offshore of Cameron, you see. Offshore of Cameron. Uh. Now uh-

SW: When you, when you moved to Lafayette-

JC: Well that, that, now while we, while we, incidentally, while we was at Hackberry, now, we all, they also drilled some wells offshore in uh, uh, off of Galveston. Now one little side piece that you might uh, find interesting is the fact that when they would locate these wells offshore out there, they would do it with buoys, but uh, the surveying crew that was doing the work was located on top of the Buccaneer Hotel in Galveston. That's what they would use for base. You know, with their instruments, you know, to locate where the well is, you know. And I guess they had had [to go somewhere else/no somewhere else?] for base, but, but you were [kind of high?] right in the middle of town. You got, you got this survey crew. Now I don't know, see now John Chance, an associate here, could have a lot of information in regards to uh, uh, local uh, locating uh, you know, uh, [putting in?] the locations of wells offshore [like that?]. But this, well, they're big now. So we [Chuckles] we had, we had lot of wells in the lake there in Hackberry when we worked there. And uh, we actually did it by using piano wire. [Chuckling] [On the back of the boat, just?] [Inaudible] with the, with the piano wire. But anyway, that was, that was on land, that was only 80 foot of water, somethin' like that.

SW: Yeah, but what did you do? How would you do?

JC: Well we had uh, uh, we had, we already had some wells drilled and we could, we would take the, the top section of the [triave?] valve off and we had our transits, which we used to locate these wells. And we had a base made that would crew in to the top of the [three wood?] and they would, the bolt, like I say, we, we would have, we would triangulate between wells as to where this is gonna hit, see. So they would have this right, and so the bolt would travel, uh, there'd be such and such a distance from some, from one of the wells. And he'd go off with, but we had a big, we had a piano wire up on the back of the [bolts/boats?], sittin' on the rig like that. And we would use it to go down there 'til uh, 'til one of those guys sited us in, you know. And then when we'd drop, we'd drop somethin', kind of somethin' down to mark the place, see. And then we'd do it on the opposite side and they would know, the wells were located like 500 feet from this well, 500 feet from this well. And so [you're direct?]. So when we get out there, well, we dropped, see. And then we had the distance and we'd go back and do the same from the other well. And then uh, there'd be somebody signaling once we're. But that's what we was doin'. We couldn't, you couldn't carry a tape line on, on the water. So it was done with piano wire. We, that's have everyone uh, marked land jobs, marsh jobs that wasn't offshore.

SW: Yeah, it was a marsh before you got offshore.

JC: Right. It's, but anyway, so then uh, in '61, let's see, okay, in '61 uh, I left, I left uh, Amoco. It was, it was still Standard Oil and Gas Company. And uh, they uh, I went, I went to work for Falcon Seaboard Drilling Company. Falcon, F-A-L-C-O-N, Seaboard Drilling Company. And at that time they were uh, uh, they were, their home office was in Tulsa and they was, they had about, about 50, 50 rigs. But they were land and uh, marsh rigs. And shallow water rigs is the marsh. And we had uh, let's see [when was it?]. [Pause] See, we had uh, fifty… two, three, four, five, six, we had five, five marsh rigs. And then uh… and then, then, [so over there?]. I, I moved from there, I went to work for them in '61 and in '62 they moved me to Houston. And I [would do?] the division engineer in Houston. And, and they decided to go in the offshore business with drilling rigs in about uh, oh, I guess '63 or somethin' like that. And uh, but uh, up to that time or about that time, they started drilling platform rigs, what they call "platform rigs." They were oil rigs, they would have uh,

be uh, usually rectangular in shape with either six legs or eight legs, mostly eight legs, eight to 10 legs. And they would built, they would build it about, to about maybe three to four levels high. Lower level, the top level, of course, would be the drilling rig and the, and the uh, uh… derrick. And all the drilling components. And below that would be other things. Probably uh, in somewheres in there you had the quarter. I believe we, they would be b-, it was being built in maybe what, so, 75, eight-, oh, no, not that, maybe 40, 50 feet of water. But they was called platform rigs. And we, and we built uh, we, see sixty, two, three, four, five. We built five of those in Morgan City. [Chuckling] And I, I, I spent summers there when, when they put it together. They put up two years somethin' like that for them platform rigs. And then they went to, after that, we didn't have any, but other, other contractors with the jackup rigs. Where they would actually float the rig out in position where it was, oh, this one was, we, the platform rigs that we had, they had dry piling, uh, through the legs to stabilize, you know. And then set the platform on top of it. And then they had the jackups which would float out into position and then their, the legs were uh, inject-, uh, down below. And then it would raise up above the water level. Some 20, 30 feet, somethin' like that. And uh, so, [Inaudible], then they went to mo-, monopod or somethin', you know, one leg, which scared me. [Chuckles] Oh yeah, [they had 'em in Alaska?], uh, they had uh, several, several of that thing. The, but we talkin' about the legs, the legs were somethin' like maybe 20 feet in diameter, you know. They huge thing, you know. And uh, uh, then it, everything be above that. Of course then [Inaudible] then they started different one, which I wasn't familiar with, cables, there was guy, they would drive uh, anchors in the ground and anchor, and, and put cables to 'em and put, have a float platform above it, it would be tied to the, to the cables to where they were stable.

SW: Yeah.

JC: But I, I'm not that familiar with those.

SW: Keeps changin', huh?

JC: Huh? Yeah. Well we, the only thing, only thing I [Inaudible], see, I worked with Falcon Seaboard 'til '75. And then uh, I went, I went to consultant here in Lafayette. DOR Engineering. We had, I went offshore several times, uh, we, what we did, we consulted, we uh, we handled operations for uh, other companies, smaller companies that didn't have uh, drilling staff or something like that, so we were, they would hire us, we'd go out there supervise the drilling operations offshore, land, wherever it was at. And uh, so, uh, I went offshore several times. [Inaudible]. But uh-

SW: But it wasn't uh, and we can get to that, when you were consulting, you knew when you were going and when you were coming back?

JC: Oh yeah, yeah, oh yeah.

SW: When you, before, when you were working offshore in Hackberry and, what kind of schedule did you work?

JC: Okay, now, now, the, well then, the only schedule were for the people that was workin' out there, [Inaudible] crew. Uh, uh, oh, I don't know what they did at Stanolind [Inaudible]. But when I, when we built those rigs for Falcon Seaboard we, we had uh, we started, we started off with 10 days on and f-, uh, five days off, which I thought was murder, 'cause most of it was seven-and-seven. You, I'm sure you've heard that expression, "seven-and-seven." That means seven days offshore and seven days home, you know. [Chuckling] Well 10 and five, I don't know [how those guys work?]. Ten days out and he go crazy! And uh, and then five days off. And plus the travel, then you travelin' both out there and back on your own time. [Chuckles]

SW: Yeah, that's [Inaudible, overlapping speech]

JC: You lose at least a half a day. And some of these guys were workin' for us off of uh, for Falcon Seaboard, they came far as Alabaman, Georgia. [Inaudible]

SW: Yeah, [10?] whole days off.

JC: Yeah, 'cause it was, it was a good uh, you know, it was good money in those days. And uh-

SW: Why, why do you think they didn't relocate if it was that good?

JC: Whadyou mean? Well, there was nothin' like goin' on in Alabama and Georgia.

SW: But they could've moved.

JC: Oh! Well they could've, they could've moved, but uh, well, I guess, just for different reasons.

SW: Wanted to stay with their families-

JC: Uh, one thing, 'course you know, you never know if, like say, so you, you got a platform rig out there and you drill a well or two or three or somethin' like that. But then after a year's time, uh, well, the contract runs out. And see, so the rig might be idle for. So what they got to do, they have to go out there and take the rig off, piece by piece, like you brought it out there, and store it somewhere until they had another job for you. Well, well, they always try to stay a job ahead, but, but it's conceivable to the guys that get uh, will have, wouldn't be able to uh, the rig, the job ran out. Well then, maybe the next, [maybe best?] to work for somebody else, they might be in Florida or somewheres like that. So they, that's why, I guess, that's why they didn't move. But uh, and of course, what uh, [they moved, they lived?], you know, far away. So you [figure?] a guy, he gets offshore, and when he comes shore takes him maybe three or four hours to get home. Well, with ['90s?] it goes to all helicopters, though, see. So uh, some come inshore in helicopter, be gettin' in his car, and he drives maybe six, eight hours to get home. And then he comes back and he does the same thing. Well he, he shot a whole, maybe a whole day in his traveling, so he really ends up with just four days off. That's why this 10 and five I thought was a killer. But uh, 'course we did it different in uh, when I, the engineers went out there, people like that, well we might be out there two, three days, you don't uh, before we get back. Little longer.

SW: Back then you didn't, you didn't know?

JC: No, you didn't, no, no, no.

SW: Just when you finished the job-

JC: If you had somethin' to be done, then you went out there and did it. That's right. Uh, but uh, I, I always told S-, the guy I was talkin' to the other day, well, [Inaudible] back to Hackberry where they had these rigs uh, this was another thing [Chuckles] was killer. Uh, to get on from the crewboats to the platforms like we had, the one that, off, off of Cameron for, for, for Stanolind back in the, in uh, early '50s, say. Maybe, you know, maybe even '50. Okay, you had a rope ladder hangin', hangin' on the side. And that's the way you got on and off the b-, the platforms. Okay. So this was a regular marine ladder. It, you came down with rope and you had a heavy, uh, a heavy board or somethin' that you, you step on, see. But uh, uh, the boat was goin' up and down, maybe four or five feet at a time, see. [Chuckling] So you had to catch the j-, on the up, and then get a couple of rungs up before the [next came up?] and slapped you in the back head or legs or

somethin'. And, and that was miserable, man. And then uh, besides, besides that, if, if you, if you, well of course I experienced the same thing when I was overseas in Normandy, gettin' off a ship, you know. The ship's bow uh, comes like this. Well we get off these ladders, you know, these rope ladders, you know, side on. You've seen pictures of it in the service or in movies. When you start climbin' down these ladders, well that ladder had a tendency to go, to go, with your feet, your feet here, your feet go that way, you know. And you might be hangin' up there. [If you're not somebody that know how to [Inaudible] hold/hole?], you see. So when they had these, these ladders, you climb up, up and down like that. Somebody had to be down there holdin' the ladder to keep you from swingin' away from 'em, you know, like that. Because if they didn't, you'd be sittin' there just like him, holdin' on like this with your feet [Inaudible]. [Laughing] And, and so uh, and that was always miserable, to get off that damn [Inaudible] ladder. Pooh. [Laughing] And we had one guy, I remember I was over there one time and I was wondering why he, he [didn't, anyway,?] he used to, he used to bring his, he'd bring his lunch. He'd bring lunch for the first day for some reason or another. Anyway, he carried, he put his lunch bu-, in his teeth, ba-, his [Inaudible, seems to be saying the man would put his lunch bag in his teeth]. And he was gonna climb. By the time he got about six or eight foot off [Chuckling] he was getting so much trouble, he take the bag, he throw it out in the water. [Laughing] I, I asked him what he do that for. He said, he, he does it every time. He said, you get, bring a lunch, you climb up there with it [in your teeth?], and get part of the way up and he's fightin' that ladder all the time, so he finally gets mad, takes, [throws in the water?]. But, but uh, somebody had to hold that ladder. And that was the way they really did, you see. Uh, in uh, in fact, uh, I tried, I, I tried to figure a way to, to have a crewboat come into a, a [Sighing] a, a room with one door open and, and, and they close the door behind it and keep the water level [while the boat was still out?]. But I, I never could come up with a solution how to, [Both laughing] how to do that. So, but, but then, thank goodness, about, see, this was in '50, by the early, well, first time I knew about this, '64 [Inaudible] for Falcon Seaboard, they came up with these uh, uh, transfer net. I've forgotten what they called them. They were car-, cargo, cargo [Inaudible]. But anyway, it's a big rubber ring about uh, maybe uh… uh, eight feet, 10 feet in diameter, you know. And then they had ropes goin' to the top and they'd be tied up to a cable and, and a lot of 'em had, uh, rubberized material so that it had a movement to it. The, the cable could stay like this, move 'em down. And then, 'course they came in, so everybody would jump on this rope and, and lean forward, hold the rope, because the rope would, [was goin' this way/in?]. And that, and course they had a guy up on top deck with uh, with the uh, uh… [Slapping sound] dra-, dra-, dragline, pullin' it up. And so that, that was a lot better. You know, [engineer?], first time, too, you got, you were kind of nervous about, you know, gettin' on that thing, but, but if you went out there on a big enough boat where he could drop it down on the, on the deck, there wasn't any problem usually. 'Bout six guys in and hold the thing, you know, and he would, then 'course like I said, it had kind of a rubber, a spring kind of deal in there that would kind of take the slack off, without jerkin' them up and stuff like that. I never worried about fallin' off one of them things, but-

SW: Some of it sounds kind of dangerous, though.

JC: Oh, it is. Man, if you get out there somewhere and lose your, lose your footing or something happens, maybe. You might get up there and somethin' and uh, you horsin' around or something like that, and maybe or stop the motion all of sudden, well he could [bump?] somebody off it. And you, you talkin' about platforms, you may be going up maybe 100 feet up to the top of the platform where he would drop you off of it. But it was a lot, see, simpler than climbing the damn ladder. [Both laugh] Well-

SW: You ever see anybody get hurt?

JC: No.

SW: On a platform?

JC: No. Oh, on the platform?

SW: Anytime, anytime you were working anywhere for-

JC: Well, yeah, but it, it, it was uh, I, I saw one one time. Guy got cut in two, but uh, but he, he wasn't, it [wasn't offshore?]. It just, uh, it was uh… when you, when you goin' in and out with your drill pipe, you got two sets of tongs and you got back-up and lead tongs. When I was workin' a rig, I worked lead tongs. But anyway, and normally then they, they used the tongs to tighten the pipe up, drill pipe. And uh, one time the guy was workin' uh, this, this was over in Galveston. One time this guy was workin' uh, uh, the back-ups. And of course, and when you use the back-ups, you got a cable that comes here that uh, that dead ends somewhere here on the rig. Well, for some reason or other, we never did figure out what happened, when I got out there [it had already/actually?] happened. They send me out, Houston, [want to?] find out what happened, you know. And the guy that, the, the toolpusher had already cut the cable with a torch, so I couldn't tell how long it was. But what happened is, here's the pipe and so you got this cable hold this, so this guy over here's tyin' the pipe, 'course that's making the [teeth just want to go that way?], but the cable keeps doin' it. But for some reason or another, the cable was loose enough it went completely around the pipe and it pulled him in just into the pipe. It cut him right in two. [Chuckling] Before I got out there they'd already picked him up, but there was a lot of blood and guts and pieces out there, you know. And I s-, I still don't know. That had to be what happened. 'Cause the cable should not have stretched. But, you know, it's, it's dangerous job, you know.

SW: Yeah, [Inaudible, overlapping speech]-

JC: It's always dangerous, so we uh, only thing got was busted nose. One time we had, uh, you, when you move your pipe goin' in the hole [particularly?] you got to, you, you do it with a chain with a little, with a rope on the end of it. You, you flip the chain and it moves up to the top joint. And then a guy pulls it over the cathead over there and it turns the pipe, makes it up. And then you put your tongs on it to tighten it up real good. Well this guy was, we got on the floor and it's muddy, he let the string go and it, the [Chuckling] the second time it came around it hit right there and busted my nose. And uh, but uh, that's the only time I got hurt. But I, I remember one guy who was pickin' up [Inaudible] [lumber?] one time and he, and he couldn't pick it up, too heavy, he dropped it. It landed foot, drove, he drove nail all through his foot. [Laughing] He nailed himself to the board, you know. Things like that [Inaudible]. And had one guy, oh, oh yeah, one guy got caught up on top of the derrick in Jennings there one time. And he had, he got his hand caught under a cable up there. [When he came down?], we, we w-, we had to climb up there try to gi-, gi-, give him help. It was about 130 feet derrick, it was way up there. And while we was climbin' up, he had gotten loose, so when he came down he had a handful of fingers with uh, he had a glove on. He had fingers goin' all kind of ways. Look like he had [Chuckles] he had, and he lost, he lost uh, he lost, you know, this and I think it was this and two fingers left. But uh, I don't know. I mean it's dangerous, it's a dangerous job.

SW: Dangerous work. How did the company respond when, when somebody got hurt-

JC: Well, well they, they take, they took care of you, you know what I'm saying. In fact, this particular guy was an idiot because he, he worked ano-, you know, when he got, when he got alright where he could work again, he came back to work. And they put him to firing, firing boilers. He was uh, uh, not that complicated a job, but, but the idiot, 'bout two, three months later he quits. He was a fisher, he gonna go onto the shrimpin'. You could've had job for life, you know what I mean. They, they weren't gonna let him go, because he could've filed suit [Inaudible], you know. Although it wasn't, it was nobody's fault.

SW: Were they afraid of them? Were companies afraid of hurt workers suing?

JC: Well uh, well they took of them, now. Whether, it wasn't, I don't know if they were afraid of 'em, but they just, and of course in those days, people didn't sue as much as they do nowadays. But uh, you took your lumps. It was just like, you know, when I left uh, Falcon Seaboard there, they laid me off because of, uh, and [Inaudible] replace me. That's in '75, I was 55 years old then. And uh, you know, nowadays, man, that'd be, I'd have a lawyer, trial lawyer [would want to?] take my case. [Laughs] Sue for, you know, for, for firing for age, you know. 'Cause they, they turn around and hire a guy just out of college to take my place and they moved, and they moved him back to the home office.

SW: They can pay him less money than you.

JC: Oh yeah, that's right. So but there things like that, but in those days, you kind of took your lumps, you know, more or less. But uh-

SW: [Inaudible] [Pause, hear papers shuffling] let's see, they transferred you to Houston. When'd, when did you come back to Lafayette?

JC: Okay, now, we been here since 1970. I left here, we left here in August of 1962 with Falcon Seaboard. And I moved from here. They, they decided they wanted a division drilling engineer. So uh, in fact, that's when I wrote this article here. And he uh, so they moved me in '62. Then in August of '70, we merged, we had another company had a production call-, uh, it was called uh… it was the old [Price?] production company here in Lafayette. But uh… what was the name of it? Huh. [Chuckling] I worked for 'em about five years, but uh, but anyways, so they needed somebody to take care of production. So this, well of course in Houston I was doin' that anyway. I had, I was takin' care of production all the way from Illinois to Colorado to Alabama. You know, all these in between. But uh, they needed somebody here, closer. So uh, they moved. In 1975 they asked me, said, "Well, we're [Inaudible] go back to Lafayette." I said, "Well," I told them, said, "I can't leave [four?] in the mornin'." [Both laugh] They, they in Houston, Houston. And uh, so, and so in August of '70, we were back here. Exactly, exactly eight years in Houston.

SW: And in '75 they laid you off and-

JC: Yeah, then the uh, yeah, came over here in '70 and then when uh, and then… [Inaudible, muttering]. But anyway, uh, uh, they sent me back here and I opened up an office in the Oil Center. And uh, so that was in 1970, and in '75 that's when they decided they gonna move the office back to Longview, Texas. And they, so they let me go. So.

SW: DOR-

JC: And then I went to work for DOR Engineering, which is, which was owned by [Evi McDonald?]. He was the individual [here?].

SW: That's in the Oil Center?

JC: Yeah, Oil Center.

SW: That's, that's the place right there?

JC: Yeah. Well he, well he uh, he sold it. You see, I was gonna work 'til I was 70, but uh, he sold it in 1986. He sold it to uh, uh, Mac-… [Inaudible]. The guy he sold it to though in '86. And so by [the?] first of '89 I was, I was [Inaudible], so I retired. I took, retired the first, January first of 1989. I was 69, uh, 69 years old then. But uh [Slight pause] but it [Inaudible] did a lot of reservoir work and also did uh, well, I took care of oil

production. And went on drilling wells [if they had any trouble?]. Sometimes I'd go from one to the others. Sometimes I do all [three at once?].

SW: But your schedule was better, though, as a consultant, 'cause you more-

JC: Well, well I make a lot more money, for sure. Yeah. But uh, it was uh, uh… it, actually, worse. [Chuckles] Well we couldn't, you never knew when somebody got in trouble somewhere you had to go.

SW: You had to go and help them, I see.

JC: Uh, I got, I got a good [Inaudible]. One day, let's see, I came home, okay, I got instances I'll tell you, [they're really ripe in my memory?]. When I was with Falcon Seaboard Drilling Company, we were gettin' ready to drill a well in Lake Charl-, uh, Lake, south of Lake Charles. I went over there in the wintertime. And uh, so uh, I went over there gonna put the location in. I was an engineer, [I was the engineer supposed to, supposed to be there. Somebody pulled me there with a stake to locate?]. [Inaudible] So then uh, and it was nasty cold, boy. Whoo. It was me-, miserable. So on the way back, I'm drivin' home, uh, let's see, that was in… they didn't have I-10 then, I was drivin' on Highway [Nine?], but man I was just thinkin' about gettin' home, relaxin', warm, all that stuff you. Well on the way, on the way there, they called me on the radio. Well, [Chuckles] no, I wasn't, [when I got home, found out?]. When I got home in, in Lafayette, [well they done killed driver left side of the road?]. And uh, the guy I was workin' for, drillin' superintendent, was, had been tryin' to get ahold of me. So I had, he lived just down the street there, so I had to call him. Well, they were getting ready to run some casing in a well uh, in Na-, uh, south Napoleonville. And, and our, our uh, our [Slight pause] when we did a thing, we always had two men on the job. The toolpusher was there, naturally on the job. He's the one in charge of the rig, the toolpusher. So he was already there, but then they liked to have somebody else there in case somethin' happened to him, see. So when they were running casing. So I said, okay, well I had to go down there to Napoleonville. So here I go, just got in the house, get back out again. Go down, go down to Napoleonville. And it's cold, man. The, the, the hoses, they layin' on the floor, were frozen to the floor. [Laughing] And so, they, we were running pipe casing all night long, you know. Got, we finally, we got through next morning and, and all the water in, in the town, little town I was in, was uh, water well had froze up in the city, there was no drinking water. [Laughing] [So we had drink?]. But anyway, so here I'm all, get all through [Inaudible], [I finally?] [Inaudible] I left home about five o'clock the day before and here I was about seven o'clock the next day. So I said, "I'm ready, I'm, be good to get home, you know." So I get to, I call the rig to tell 'em, "I'm all through, ready to go." He said, "Well uh, the guy out there, the, the rig at Bell Chasse is having trouble keeping the wa-," no, the, the rig was sinking. The rig was sinking, that's what, this was a steel rig there. And so he want me to go down look at that, see. So uh, 'course it wasn't too far from where I was at, I just had to go down to, down [by?] Lafourche. Uh, and then [Inaudible] [go the west?], but if you goin' Bell Chasse just on this side, on this side of the river from New Orleans. So I get down there and sure enough the, the rig was sinkin'. They had, they were drilling a well just, just uh, 'course this is la-, I'm not sure whether you're interested in all this or not, but anyway.

SW: Yes.

JC: They had the, they were drillin' a well at the end of the ju-, runway. Bell Chasse had a Navel base there. And [planes goin'?]. So the rig, it was [sat in dirt/[Inaudible] derrick?] and 136 foot high, but it was sittin' on about a 20 foot uh, platform, so it made a hundred-, 156 with that. And it was too high, so, for the planes. Because the danger to the planes comin' land, you know. So they had to dig a hole [Chuckling] had to dig a 10 foot hole and set, set the pl-, set the base in, in the hole. Well when they did that they broke the crust, they broke the crust of the earth somehow. Well, so, after they've been in location about 10 days the whole rig was sinkin'. [Laughs] And [the drilling foreman?], the guy, the guy, he was real smart. He said he knew what to do. So he went up there and he, uh, this was a company man so they could do anything they

wanted. So they went down and built some [Inaudible] to put a steel plate all the way across the bottom so they wouldn't go down, you know. And first thing they know the steel plate's comin'. [Chuckling] So he drills a hole and hooks up Halliburton pumps cement down the hole. But anyway, that, that was one of the things [Inaudible] time. And the other times when uh, we had to leave, go down and check some wells at uh, Bayou Sale and I told my wife, I said, "I [won't be?], go from there and go down to the rig at uh, uh," well, that rig at Bell Chasse. I said, "I'll call you from there, let you know I made it alright." But, I go there and me and the gauger went out to check, adjusted the well like we [Inaudible] stuck out there overnight, he ran out of gas. So we stuck [Chuckling] [in the water?] all night. And, and everybody, everybody lookin' for the wife, wonderin' where the hell he's at, he didn't call back. And my boss didn't, she called him and he started, he started worry. And I got stuck at Marsh Island all night long [Inaudible]. So you never knew when you'd come back when you went to a. But uh, well that wasn't offshore.

SW: That's an interesting question. Yeah, but still. Living, living conditions in the field.

JC: Oh yeah, well you, you had to go. If that was your job, you know. If uh, uh [Pause] it's, you know, it was, you had trouble, but just like [production?] was, you know. I remember one night I was home, we were livin' in Lafayette here, and the guy, they called me. The, the gauger had forgot to open up a valve somewhere and he blew a line up. [Chuckling] And he was blowin' out out there. [In Vashon, little town Vas?]. Well, out there, was out there for seven days [Chuckling] to, to try, 'til, 'til we kill it, get this thing killed.

SW: You-

JC: Yeah, we didn't know-

SW: [Inaudible, overlapping speech]-

JC: [You did?] things like that. That's the way the oil business used to be. I guess it probably still is.

SW: They had living quarters some times on-

JC: Well, no, no, that was di-, uh, that, that seven days I was sleepin' in the car whenever I had a chance. Oh yeah.

SW: What about offshore when they had-

JC: Well on offshore they had, always had good quarters. Good livin' quarters. And they had, and good food, they had, they, they would cook at least, at least three meals a day and then anytime day or night you could go in and find something to eat, because they, they put sandwiches aside overnight, somethin' like that. And it was good food, too. They, they had good cooks. And showers and all that kind, so it was good living. Yeah, accept you were there [Inaudible], and 'course they had TV in those days, too, which helped out, helped to break the monotony. But uh, [they didn't?], back in the '40s, I guess, before they had TV, I bet they got pretty bored after about six, five, six days.

SW: Play cards or-

JC: Oh yeah.

SW: Listen to the radio, or somethin'.

JC: Oh yeah, yeah. They uh, but uh [Pause] uh, [go on, Steve, now what?], you got, what questions uh.

SW: I was, I've been askin' them as we go, as you keep, you keep talking, that's good.

JC: Well, now really, really, see now, I didn't spend a whole lot of time offshore, it's just that I knew about it, 'cause I happened to be in a position to, you know, hear about these things. But, but do that, be sure, now there were three magazines in those days. Okay, the Oil and Gas Journal, which I, I'm sure it's still in existence. Okay, and the other one was Offshore Magazine, which was strictly offshore. And if they've got, if they've got uh, history, got a, what you call it? [Pause] Archives. And I'm sure they do, most of these pe-, they put this on microf-, uh, microfiche or somethin' micro.

SW: Microfilm.

JC: Microfilm, somethin' like that. Anyway, they got. And if uh, if somebody, and I saw, the other day, I saw somethin', I got somethin' in the mail and they were showin' one of the pictures they were showin' somebody's office and it had, I happened to notice that there were two or three magazines on, on this guy's desk [it's oil?]. And I, I noticed the word "offshore." So apparently this, well, if you go to the, even the public library may have some. But uh, with your, uh, with the department, the engineering department, if they've got a library, they should have some of the Offshore. Now there was another one called the Petroleum Engineer. That was the third one. Okay, now, see I, I had a couple of articles in there, too. But I used to get my articles stole. [Chuckling] When I, when I worked for Falcon Seaboard I was an engineer, but we always worked for some major company. We drilled some wells for 'em, you see. Well, twice it happened to me that I wrote an article and uh, but to get it published you had to go through the companies, be sure you wasn't gonna say anything wrong with it. Well, every time I do that, some son of a gun that we worked for, he want put his name on it. [Laughing] So I, he then put his name, I [Inaudible]. But, and the same thing happened to me here, too, 'cept this was my boss, he got his name on that thing and one of the geologist got his name on that thing, but I wrote the article. [Chuckling] But they, but they got, uh. Yeah, they got uh, [Howard Huff?], yeah, and then uh, [Inaudible, name of person] he got his name on there, too. But then when uh, but I got some work in Petroleum Engineer, too. But that, that-

SW: I, I wanna write down, I wanna write down everything and I'll go research 'em [Inaudible]-

JC: Well, well, uh, uh, somebody in the petroleum engineer department, I don't the name of the guy, the head of it, but he's a-

SW: [Ali Goldenbar?]. [Inaudible, overlapping speech]

JC: It's a strange name.

SW: Ali Goldenbar.

JC: What, what, what nationality is that?

SW: He's, he's uh, Arab of s-, Arabic, yeah.

JC: [Inaudible, overlapping speech]. But uh, but you know, they should know about these. 'Course you [Inaudible] ['cause we talked?]. Uh, but, but, but the Offshore Magazine, it's Offshore Magazine, was the one that I know I saw several articles on that, pictures and all, but you say you saw it, too, though, on that Kerr-McGee well. And uh, but uh, they should have all kinds of information, though. Uh, [Inaudible]-

SW: What about uh, you said, you mentioned you got laid off in 1975.

JC: Oh yeah.

SW: What about from the beginning, job security, did you, did you always feel you had job security or was it this was-

JC: That's when I thought w-, when I was workin' for Stanolind Oil and Gas Company. It's a major company; I figured I'd always be, you know, no problem there. [Chuckling] And they let me go, too. Uh, oh, they had some, some, some story about why they did that. Uh, they, their attitude was that uh, okay, they had certain people uh, selected that they were gonna move up. For some reason, I was able, these guys were selected. 'Fact one of the guys that eventually ended up as the president of the company, well he was an engineer when I was. He worked at Lake Charles with me. He's uh, he was a genius. Unless he got some awful lot of brains all of a sudden, you know, got smart all of a sudden. But, well that's what, that was the story they gave me. See I worked 19 years with, see from '42 to '61, that's 19 years uh, that's with the Stanolind or Amoco. And then I had 15 years with, from '61 to uh, '75, 14 years with Falcon Seaboard. Well with this other company I was trying to think of was Oleum, O-L-E-U-M. It was a subsidiary of Falcon Seaboard drilling company. Oleum. O-L-E-U-M Incorporated. They were out there, their home office was in Texas. And uh, so with those two companies I worked 14 years there. And then I went to work for DOR, worked from uh, '75 to '88, which was uh, oh eighty-, oh '89. We moved here in eighty-, '89. So 14 years. So that's 14, 14, and 19. [Adding aloud] Fourteen and 14 is 28, 38, f-, forty-, 47, 47 years, yeah. Well, from '42 to, if you count the service in there, bein' in the Army, but uh, yeah, forty-somethin', 46 years I worked. But uh, uh [Pause] yeah, it uh, I would, everybody had to put, I guess, figured they, they were pretty secure in jobs, I suppose, I never. [Inaudible, chuckling]-

SW: Were people in the oil industry because there was more money involved there? They were willing to take that chance of getting laid off?

JC: [Referring to industry magazines] Well uh, I, I, I hadn't read these things here 'bout 10 years, but these, man, they got some stuff in here. But, [Inaudible] drilling. This was what, what kickbacks and, and, you know, the [oil?], the oil people they really got after, after the oil industry in Louisiana. Plus, really, uh, pollutin' water, stuff like that. That was common, that wasn't, well it's, it's amazing. But uh, they mentioned somethin' about, you know, 'bout all, all the poor Cajuns. 'Course, you know, everybody in Louisiana is a Cajun. Uh, if your name is White or, or Jones, they're still a Cajun, but anyway. And the Cajun is some blumberin' idiot that don't, he chews tobacco and he drinks beer and he parties all the time, you know, that's what everybody pictures. Well, in one of the articles they talk about all these poor Cajuns down here when the oil industry started up in the early, in the '40s, '30s and '40s really. They all left trappin' and fishin' and shrimpin', all that stuff, to go work for big money in, in the oil. 'Course then in '84 the balloon popped. Sprung a leak anyway. And uh, 'course uh, but, you know, there still a lot of people uh, any, now, got a fella lives behind us here, he, he, he works, he's one of the service companies and he's still workin'. 'Course I had a son worked for Halliburton, too, 'til last year. But uh, they uh [Slight pause] it was, it was a good business. But, but they, they did, [Chuckling] they ruined a lot of stuff, you know. And that pollution, God, that was a, that was terrible. [Phone ringing] But uh-

[Unknown person in background]: I'll get it.

JC: Okay. Uh. I know for a fact that I, I was exposed to it, and I know for a fact that they weren't, some of 'em didn't do right, you know, some companies. We polluted poor guy up in Texas. We polluted guy's water well. Man, I'll tell you, I felt sick, 'cause I couldn't do nothin'. [Inaudible, chuckling]. But uh-

SW: When the, the government regulations came in-

JC: Well uh, now that uh, they will, they will raise the [Inaudible]. This guy, this particular case, well, well, uh, uh, we had a well that we didn't know about it 'til uh, later on that we had a leak in the casing that we were getting some saltwater out of the well that was goin' to his water well. And uh, the water was terrible. In fact, uh, his daughter, [Inaudible] daughter said, "Come over here and drink this, see, you don't think we got problems, you come over here." [Chuckling] She got some water out of her faucet, said, "Drink this." [Inaudible, laughing] it was yellow, stuff like that. But uh, 'course it's not, it's not just the oil industry. You know, we got a problem, we don't, we got a problem with water, I don't know if you're aware. Well this, just like these plant, they wanted to plant south [Inaudible]. [Inaudible, overlapping speech] aquifer's comin' up all the time. My boy, that, that's somethin' to look into, 'cause eventually can you imagine we gonna be without water. What the hell we gonna drink without it, you know? We'll have to start uh, treatin' all the water or gettin' maybe saltwater, start treating water drinking. And it's gonna happen because we knew that and everybody's ignoring it-

[Unknown woman]: You want something to drink?

JC: Oh, I forgot to ask you.

[Unknown woman]: Do you want a coke or something? Or coffee or?

SW: We're talkin' about water, how 'bout some water?

JC: [Inaudible]? [Inaudible]. Got uh, but man, I'm ba-, that's gonna be bad, you know. 'Cause uh, you know, with, with rice farmers, I remember, I remember uh, when, when we did some work, we, the wife and I volunteered about three years ago uh, the department for the state came through and they were uh, checkin' uh, they were havin' trouble with the water in Lafayette. You know. Uh, they, well, what they wanted, well we had [knew?], bunch of guys did this work. We had to go around and find, pin-, pinpoint oil filling stations so that the s-, so that the state could check and see if they'd ever dug up the tanks. And what was happening, you know, the old oil, the oil tanks that the gasoline was in used to be metal and they would rust, you know. It don't been 10 years, 20 years, 50 years. [Inaudible]. And uh, uh, so one thing we did, we, they give us each a section of town and you worked, had go around to the pump, you know, around uh, uh, [Inaudible, phone ringing and noise in background]. And then, then they took it on themselves to see whether they had ever been dug up. Because, you know, if they hadn't, then chances are they were rusted and leaky. And pollutin' the water, goin' down to the water, see. [Inaudible] And this, this is a department in the state, you know. I, I got, we all, we all got [Inaudible] for workin', but uh, and [Chuckles] but the bad thing about it, uh, if you'll uh, uh, when you drivin' down a highway if you see, if you, you'll see a sign that says somethin' about uh, water uh, district water somethin' or other. Uh, that's supposedly is [the limit?] of uh, of the water that can be p-, uh, that's city uh, city water that might, might be polluted to that point. But you see, but I know, know for a fact in uh, work I did that that pollution right there will travel for miles. It won't, it won't, half a mile is nothin'. [Chuckling] You know. In this, in this one aquifer, what do they call it? Uh, Chico, Chico Aquifer. You know, it's down about 500 or eight, seven or eight hundred feet, somethin' like that. And uh, and I [called the city one time 'bout this?]. I asked 'em somethin' about, there was somethin' in the paper about it. But uh, the city didn't know squat. But uh, but that, see those go into riv-, the rice farmers were, they were raisin' uh, lowerin' uh, lowerin' the water, the fresh water level, you know, by maybe two feet a year, you see. And what's happened is that the salt water is comin' in from, from, from the ocean, the Gulf. And, and it feels in that place. And pretty soon, we gonna, the water's gonna be all salty. We, the salt, [Inaudible] in a drink. And it's gonna happen. See and this, so these people gonna go there south between uh, Crawley and [Young?], they gonna make electricity and sell it out of state.

SW: Out of state, yeah.

JC: So, what, what is the state gettin' out of it? A few employees will be workin', that's it. [Chuckling] But they gonna use our water to cool their plants off to sell, by makin' electricity to sell to other states, you see. So [Laughing] I, I couldn't, I couldn't understand why they would, you would give 'em a permit to do that. But things like that. So see we still doin' it to ourselves. And if you been through Lake Charles, 'specially if you been over that new bridge whenever you go through the middle [plain?], you see all those pits out there. Those pits haven't got fresh water out there. [Laughing] No telling what's out there. [You got some water [Inaudible] that stuff there?]. But uh.

SW: I just had a couple more questions for you. Then we can wrap it up. Uh. And, and some stories, too. What about the unions?

JC: Well, we, we never had unions.

SW: You didn't have any?

JC: No, no. [Inaudible, overlapping speech]-

SW: They had tried to come out there-

JC: Uh, let's see, I'm tryin' to think. [Pause] Every once in awhile somebody would say somethin' about the union. But we uh, it never did form up. No, we never had elections or never had, they just uh [Pause] But uh, of course uh, yeah, but I, I don't know that they were [Inaudible] try to get in. 'Course now in the plants, plants might be different, you know. Plants you got a whole group of men, maybe three or four hundred men workin' together, you got a good, good base there for, to get a uh, maybe form a union. And I'm sure they got it.

SW: Yeah.

[END OF RECORDING]