

Interviewees: Stansbury, Judy. , Laura Hund and Lindsey Staudt

Interview Date: July 15, 2008

**UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON**  
**ORAL HISTORY OF HOUSTON PROJECT**

**Judy Stansbury, Laura Hund and Lindsey Staudt**  
**Museums**  
**Clifton Steamboat Museum**

Interviewed by: Anna Burke  
Date: July 15, 2008  
Transcribed by: Michelle Kokes  
Location: Clifton Steamboat Museum, Beaumont, Texas

AB: This is Anna Burke I'm sitting here at the Clifton Steamboat Museum in Beaumont, Texas with Judy Stansbury, the Office Manager and Laura Hund, the Curator and Lindsey Scout, the Museum Complex Director. Thank you very much for taking the time to sit down with me. I'd like to begin with the general outline of the history of steamboats in Texas. Can you tell me a little bit about this and how your exhibit shows us the history of those boats?

JS: They are on the, in the Sabine River and they come up from the Gulf of Mexico. The, mainly we have a tugboat here. We have the steamboat...

AB: The big tug boat outside.

JS: Yeah the tug boat outside. That's what they usually pull all the boats in from the...

AB: How did you get that big thing on land?

JS: Well they cut it in half.

AB: Oh goodness.

JS: And the trucked it through downtown Beaumont out to here and then they put it back together.

AB: Are people allowed on it?

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JS: Yes.

AB: Really?

JS: The tours are allowed to go on the tug boat. It's on... on the inside its got the sleeping quarters and the kitchen and then it's got the big hull in the middle of it where the engine was but the engine is not in there anymore. But yeah it is...

AB: Is it the only one on the property?

JS: Yes it is.

AB: Okay.

JS: And it is a very big draw for the younger patrons.

AB: What particular aspects of Texas steamboat history are represented, what kind of models do you have in the museum?

JS: We have seventeen models and that's what I am trying to get to here. Of course I had it in my hand earlier. I'm going to give you a packet of information that tells you all of the different information about the steamboats and the museum and actually the entire complex here. It has... it tells you about the seventeen models that we have in the museum and who... let me find the history of the steamboat.

AB: And that is the local train. Are all the models donated?

JS: They were all done... yes.

AB: Were they all by the same person?

JS: Seventeen model steamboats on display. All built to scale by Captain Robert Hoss.

AB: And who is he? Is he a resident of Beaumont?

JS: I'm not sure where he is from.

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AB: When did he donate them?

JS: It's been throughout the years. The Steamboat was open in 1984 so it has been throughout the years. As he gets them made he donates them to the museum. Most all of the boats are from the Mississippi, the Missouri and the Ohio Rivers. But some of them spent time in the Sabine River and the Neches River which goes from here to Beaumont. It says the most, the two most prominent types of steamboats were the side wheelers and the stern wheelers. Side wheelers are named for the paddle wheels located on each side of the vessel and the stern wheelers are named for the single large paddle wheel at the stern of the ship. That's the one in the back that you see in the movies all the time.

AB: In what era were those most prominently used?

JS: They were in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

AB: The Civil War era?

JS: Yeah.

AB: Is there any collaboration between the different steam boat museums of the south and this museum?

JS: No there really isn't and this one being named the Steamboat Museum is not dedicated to steamboats. It is dedicated to history, past, present and future. We have a lot of the World War II era artifacts in there. We also have a lot of the Boy Scouts. So it's area history, for this area. We do, like I said, we have the model steamboats in there but we also have some of the different models...

AB: Like battleships and stuff?

JS: Yeah, that were in the World War II, the Navy Days of the Navy is in there a lot and records with that. Pull that brochure of the... that shows what's in the museum.

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AB: I noticed a lot of cotton bales are in the museum. Can you talk about the use of the steamboats for transporting cotton?

JS: Yes that is in there as well. I'm sorry that I'm taking more time for...

AB: That's okay.

JS: That was during the Civil War. During the Civil War the confederate states were often forced to improvise defensive and offensive strategies due to a lack of materials and funding. And they used these cotton bales.

AB: Were they for disguise so they wouldn't be...?

JS: Well no not necessarily they were for protection.

AB: Oh okay.

JS: And river boats used them, yeah.

\_\_\_\_\_ (7.2) They would place them all the way around the boat to keep it, if they were in \_\_\_\_\_ (7.2) to where they couldn't be hit that they would hit their cotton bales instead of them.

AB: Wouldn't that make the boat more flammable?

\_\_\_\_\_ (7.5) Actually when it is \_\_\_\_\_ (7.5) it is very fire retardant.

AB: Really? Can you tell me about Mr. Clifton and did he start the museum or is the museum just named about him?

JS: The museum is dedicated to the Clifton's by their grandson, David Hearn, Jr., who is the founder of the museum and its H. J. Clifton, Sr. and Effie Phillips Clifton, they are the grandparents of the owner and founder of the museum.

AB: Were they prominent citizens of Beaumont?

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JS: No they were from Louisiana. Mr. Hearn, David Hearn is from Beaumont but his grandparents were from Louisiana.

AB: What was his purpose for building this museum, was it just a love of naval history?

JS: It was just a dream of his and yeah of the history, the area history around here.

AB: When was it started?

JS: In 1984.

AB: Can you tell me about the area and why it is important to have a steamboat museum here or a museum dedicated to naval history?

JS: Yes. We have a lot of the... in the Civil War we had a lot of the battles that were fought down at Sabine Pass. We have the Battle of Sabine Pass, September 8, 1863. We've got a lot of information on that. Of course the Battle of Galveston which is close to here. Then we have the battle of Calcasieu Pass which is in Louisiana but it is close to here. Then we have, also we have the Texas Navy and the Texas heroes in the museum. We have information on the first Texas Navy and the second Texas Navy.

AB: Is there a large Naval presence in Beaumont?

JS: At the Port of Beaumont in this area and they come in once a year and normally we present the Navy Days which is the Navy brings some ships in for tours and we hold different parties for them.

AB: Here at the museum?

JS: Yes.

AB: Do you have any archival holdings for researchers?

JS: Yes.

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AB: Can you describe those?

JS: I'd have to...have y'all gone through the archives?

AB: Is it a history of Beaumont or a history of steamboats, is it specific to steamboats or is it just the history of the area?

JS: The history of the area. And I did find Captain Robert Hoss lives in Lumberton.

AB: Okay. Do you have many researchers come here?

JS: No we don't. So far you are number one.

AB: Thank you. I'm not extremely familiar with this area so I'd love to go through your archives. What purpose do you see this museum filling for the community?

JS: A lot of the historical landmarks that are around Beaumont we have the history of those battles in the museum. We also have just most recently added an oil painting of the Sabine Bank Light House which was originally put in, in 1888. It was started talking about in 1888 it wasn't until 1900 that funding was set aside for it. Then, when was it completed, like 1906.

AB: Who painted it?

JS: The artist Ted Sizemore. He's from... he was born in Seattle, Washington.

AB: Where is that located in the museum?

JS: It's as you walk in the front door, right in front of you.

AB: In the glass case?

JS: Right above the glass case. I have a brochure here for you and it gives you all the history on that, on the lighthouse itself. It also gives you some history on the artist and it also gives you the donation information on there.

AB: Has the museum received any official recognition or awards?

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JS: Area recognition we have received. Naval recognition we have received but as far as any awards, to my knowledge I am not aware of them.

AB: What area awards have you received?

JS: Not any awards, just recognition on news station they have come out and done tours, you know, on the museum and done cover stories on it.

AB: Okay. In what ways do you seek to involve the community in the museum?

JS: We have a Boy Scout exhibit that the Boy Scouts come out and if they are in uniform they get to go through the museum free. We have a test at the front desk that they can pick up and they go through and they answer all the questions and they get a patch for their uniform. So the area Boy Scouts are very involved in putting artifacts in their section of the museum. We also have the "old timers" of the Boy Scouts that come in and maintain all of that history of the Boy Scouts. In fact, they do all of the artifacts, the set up and everything of their section.

AB: Were do you see the Clifton Steamboat Museum fitting in among U.S. History museums and steamboat museums of the south?

JS: I think it would fit in better in the U.S. History. It has got more of the historical then the steamboat information on it.

AB: Where do you see its contribution specifically for the residents of Texas?

JS: It holds a vast knowledge of the history of the different areas around this part of Texas which is invaluable to anybody wanting to learn. We have had a lot of comments from people that have come over from Houston and the area people that have come in that we have a lot of historical information that they were unaware of. We have the Port Arthur Grain Elevator which has been dismantled; we have part of that in the museum.

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AB: Is that the big wooden structure?

JS: Yes it is. The history of that is in there. You know just different things around this area that people weren't aware of and I think it is just invaluable to anybody that wants to further their education.

AB: Could you talk to me about the different flags that you have on display, especially when you walk into the museum?

JS: Well we have the different era flags and I know in the section with the Constitution, the U.S.S. Constitution we have the Confederate Flag and the United States Flag, what others can y'all talk about the flags that she is asking about when you walk into the museum?

\_\_\_\_: (inaudible).

AB: Can you talk about the use of steamboats in oil transportation? You have a big Texaco display I understand.

JS: Yes and the steamboats weren't, now they may have in the past been used, but the barges, the oil barges and the tug boats were more used for that application. Then we have... beyond that we did pipelines, you know, they constructed pipelines but the oil is normally transported in oil tankers and not necessarily with the steamboat.

AB: What kind of... do you have just pictures of those barges in your exhibit or do you have models as well?

JS: I don't know of any models of the oil tankers.

AB: Could you talk about your collection of cartoon drawings that you have of the Texaco publication?

JS: Yeah we've got that in here as well and the cartoons.

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AB: How many are there do you know?

JS: Let me find that.

AB: Well while you are on that on the back page I'd like to talk about the Lamb's Printing Company that you have, can you tell me a little bit about that and its significance in the museum?

JS: Well the Lamb family opened their first print shop in Beaumont in 1895 and they are still open today. They have donated some of their early printing presses. We have had them in the museum but not on display yet. We have some of the different types that, artifacts in there that they used and the different, the Texaco logo that they did and the different logos that they did for the area companies.

AB: Are they still functional? Can they still be used in those workshop demonstrations?

JS: Yes. However we don't have them set up and we would not set them up to be operation it would just be informational.

AB: Okay. The **Machet** (19.7) Perry Cove?

JS: Cove.

AB: Yes the Cove exhibit is that a local artist that you display here?

JS: As you can tell we have just taken this over... so.

AB: Who was here before?

JS: We've had several curators and we have not hired a curator that would be able to run this museum at this point. We are training and hopefully we have put some good people in place, I feel like we have.

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\_\_\_\_: (inaudible).... How wax molds are cast and formed into statues. It was also selected in 1962 (inaudible). (21.0)

AB: Where is that located in the museum?

\_\_\_\_: That is...

AB: Is that in the downstairs collection to the left? Okay.

\_\_\_\_: On the cartoons, Albert Merican.

AB: The Texaco cartoons?

\_\_\_\_: Yes.

JS: Albert Merican.

\_\_\_\_: \_\_\_\_\_ in the Texas Maritime Department and \_\_\_\_\_ until 1995. When Texas sold \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_ in Port Arthur a friend of the owner of the museum talked to the president of Texaco, James \_\_\_\_\_ and asked for the cartoons to be donated to the museum. Albert Merican was the radio officer on the S.S. Texas Oklahoma and the cartoons were published in the maritime publications.

AB: You said you have about 10 of them?

\_\_\_\_: Around ten.

AB: Could you talk about your naval collection? Like you have a bunch of hats and memorabilia and pictures, are those local people?

\_\_\_\_: Some of them are. We have people who come in that say, "Oh my uncle or my grandfather was in that. Would you like this or this?" That is where a lot of our things in our museum come from as far as the military. Often just random people come in and say, "Oh my grandma or grandpa gave me that." That's where a lot of that comes from.

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AB: What is the formal process by which you get those things are they permanently donated?

JS: Yes.

AB: They are?

JS: Yes and we do a donation card for any of the artifacts that are donated and the person doing the donation gets a copy of it for their records.

AB: How do you store things?

JS: Well we have a different, we have some offices in the museum we have the archive rooms that we store some things in before we put them into display. Books are, we have to go through the process of making sure we don't have any silver fish or bugs in them at all before we put them in the museum. That is really, we do that with all the artifacts. The most common way is you put them in the freezer and that eliminates, you keep them in there for at least two weeks. Now we also have had an exhibit of Norman Rockwell's, that was about seven years ago we had some of his paintings or drawings.

AB: Who donated those?

JS: Well it was a tour that they were doing a Norman Rockwell tour and they brought them to different museums across the country and let them stay in the museum for a specific amount of time and then they pick them up and take them to the next museum. It was very interesting when those were here. I thoroughly enjoyed those.

AB: Do you have a lot of rotating exhibits?

JS: Not a lot. We have an exhibit that we have on display now of the Ronnie exhibits of Antarctica. The Jackie Ronnie was the first woman that ever went to Antarctica and they discovered different and named different places in Antarctica and we have that

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exhibit in our museum, artifacts that she brought back. We have books available on her travels with that excursion. She was here when we opened that exhibit about five years ago she was here to autograph the books and talk to the people about the exhibit.

AB: What kind of artifacts do you have in there?

JS: We have some of the, I'm trying to think of what all is in there. I don't think that is in there. I think that turned in before the Jackie Robins exhibit came in. I think there is a camera in there; there are some photographs, some of the markers that they used to mark the different area.

AB: The only thing I remember is the necklace. I didn't know quite what it was. Was it made of bone?

JS: I don't know for sure, no.

AB: How long has that been on display here?

JS: About five years.

AB: Is it a permanent exhibit?

JS: Yes it is.

AB: What about the exhibit behind it, the Remember Goliad, Remember the Alamo, can you talk a little bit about that?

JS: I'm going to have to defer this one to them. You're on.

AB: What is the picture of the big dollar bill that's up there?

JS: Good question.

AB: Is it confederate money... is it specifically Texas money or early U.S. money?

JS: We're up on that as well aren't we? I don't know I haven't seen it so I'm at a loss there.

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AB: Why do you think it is important to have something like that, that kind of exhibit in the museum?

JS: It would have to be some of the historical value to it. I'm going to find the section in here for the Alamo.

AB: Mostly pictures right?

JS: Yeah.

AB: Okay. Will all this be available for the file?

JS: Yes this is yours and it gives you all of the information on all the different artifacts that we have got in there. It gives you the history on the Port Arthur Grain Elevator and on the City of Beaumont and Hering Cove.

AB: Well why don't you go just go through that and talk about each exhibit that you have here?

JS: Okay well we have already discussed Hering Cove and Albert Merican the cartoonist. One of the, some of the history on him is he was enrolled in the Norman Rockwell correspondence course in 1949 and started submitting drawings in 1955. Now he was a radio officer aboard the S.S. Texas Oklahoma and the ship broke up 150 miles northeast of Cape [REDACTED] near North Carolina in 1971 and he was lost, assumed he went down with the ship. So that's his drawings being hung in the Texaco Corporation Building and then they donated them to the museum. We have the information on the Battle of Sabine Pass. We have an exhibit on that.

AB: What kind of things are in that exhibit?

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JS: We have the model of the U.S. S. Clifton and it lead a Naval assault upon the confederate strong hold at Fort Griffin overlooking Sabine Pass. The U.S.S. Clifton and the U.S.S. **Saclin** (29.3) attacked Fort Griffin seeking to subdue the confederate guns. However, the Davis Guard lead by Lieutenant Dick Dowling repelled the Union attack. We have a lot of the Dick Dowling information. He was a very prominent in this Battle of Sabine Pass.

AB: What else is in that exhibit area? I noticed several steamboat pieces, big metal pieces in that area, what were those?

\_\_\_\_: Which area?

AB: The Battle of Sabine Pass exhibit.

JS: That would be the walking beam of the U.S. S. Clifton.

AB: Oh okay.

JS: That's what that is. And it is in the hull of the ship. We also have one in the front of the museum. It's in a diamond shape and that's what keeps the shape of the ship and that's I guess what you are, goes around the engine structure. There's the train going back. The museum has some of the only known models of several of the ships of the first and second Texas Navy. Few people are even aware that Texas had a navy during the republic period or that the organization still exists as an active division of the civil defense forces of Texas. We have seven models exhibited in the museum and they were all built by Captain Robert Hoss at the request of David W. Hearn, Jr. for the museum.

AB: And Mr. Hearn is the owner?

JS: Owner and founder.

AB: Founder, okay.

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JS: The museum features a gallery of portraits and paintings depicting some of the important people and events in the early Texas history. It is the Battle of the Alamo, The Battle of San Jacinto; the surrender of Santa Ana to Sam Houston. Famous heroes of the battles and prominent presidents and governors are also represented in portrait reproductions. The museum also have several examples of both printed money used by the Republic of Texas and Mexican silver on display as well as weapons and ammunition of the day. Also on display are some of the early flags of Texas. That answers about four of your questions. And I'm sorry that we have to get to it this way.

AB: That's fine.

JS: The Texas Navy was created during the first stages of the Texas Revolution against Mexico. The Texas Provisional Government passed a bill calling for the creation of the Texas Navy.

AB: How did you acquire the artifacts from that early of period, a donation?

JS: Donations, yeah. And then reproductions of the different ships and through the artists in our area like Robert Hoss.

AB: Can you tell me about him?

JS: Yes. He has been building boat models for over 20 years. He has built over 110 models. Mr. David Hearn, Jr., who is the founder of the museum, owns 40 of these models. It says here 35 are on display in the various history areas of the museum. They range from early pioneer steamboats to famous battleships of the Texas Revolutionary Navy and both Union and Confederate vessels from the Civil War as well as several current Navy vessels. Mr. Hoss lives in Lumberton. He moved there in 1982 and continues to build models. He was asked why he builds models. He says, "Someday

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somebody is going to wonder what these ships looked like. You can only get half an idea from reading and looking at pictures and books. A three dimensional model is a far better source.” The murals that we have in the museum on the Civil War from the Battle of Sabine Pass and the Battle of Galveston are done by a well known Texas illustrator, Jack **Bagen** (33.7). He’s been an illustrator for over 36 years, served as a cartoonist with Peterson Publishers and as an art director in Hawaii. He is now an independent contractor in custom art.

AB: Did he donate the murals to the museum?

JS: Yes he did. Mr. **Bagen** is best known for his murals at Sea World, Fiesta Texas and numerous airline terminals throughout the state.

AB: Okay. Was he commissioned to paint these murals?

JS: Yes.

AB: By the museum?

JS: Yes.

AB: When was that?

JS: I don’t think it shows when that was but it had to have been when it was built and he did the custom art in 1985 so it would be around 1985.

AB: Okay.

JS: Then the 20<sup>th</sup> century gallery’s continue the museum’s overall theme of “Heroes: Past, Present and Future.” It’s got the U.S. Armed forces exhibit, intended to provide a meaningful message of courage, honor and sacrifice.

AB: I like how you have different exhibits for Korea and Vietnam. Are you still building up some of those exhibits?

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JS: As we, you know as people donate items that would pertain to that, yes we will put them in there or we will set aside a new area for any new, like we did for the Jackie Ronnie exhibit.

AB: Have you ever run out of room in any particular exhibit or had to expand or store some stuff away?

JS: Yes we have. We've got... as a matter of fact we've got a lot of the World War II veterans from this area. They are a very active group, the ones that are left. They have the Pearl Harbor Day in December every year and try and do something on that day. We had, probably about seven years ago we had a large demonstration where the Pearl Harbor survivors and they have a little motion picture clip of Pearl Harbor and the different things there and interviews with some of the survivors and we do, we have a little cannon that we set off. So we had a big "to do" that year on Pearl Harbor. Of course, you know, we are losing so many of them that the history is dying because if we don't get it all down on paper and in a museum now we're not going to have it. So we try to get as much as we can. We still have, in fact this week I got an email from a lady that her father was a Pearl Harbor survivor and she wanted to donate his uniform. So we get calls like that quite often. Some of them, you know if they are duplicates, we are not going to put the duplicates in there we'll store those away. But yeah we take all of them.

End of Side 1

AB: Have they done any oral interviews with the Pearl Harbor survivors?

JS: Yes they have and we have one gentleman from Port Arthur who is very active and very knowledgeable and willing to give any information he can.

AB: Where are those stored?

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JS: They would be in the archives in the museum.

AB: Okay so you would have those. That's good to know. What other exhibits do you have on display?

JS: Well you mentioned the Vietnam Conflict. We have the World War II Pacific and European Theatres which has the history on the World War, as well as the models of the aircraft.

AB: How often are videos shown in there whenever there is large crowd of visitors?

JS: No it is on very special occasions.

AB: Okay, like what?

JS: The Pearl Harbor Day and I think we've done some on the Navy Days and some of the U.S. Navy Days.

AB: What goes on during the Navy days can you give me some examples of the atmosphere?

JS: Yeah the, we use the mine hunters.

AB: What are those?

JS: They detected and removed mines from the coastal waters. And the U.S.S. Pelican is one of the mine hunters. We have the U.S. S. Falcon that was commissioned in Port Arthur on February 8, 1997. The U.S. S. Falcon has returned to Port Arthur many times for Mardi Gras and for part of the Beaumont Navy Days and they are stationed at the port of Beaumont. As I said it is open to the public they can tour through the mine hunters. So... and it's really a party atmosphere whenever they come in because the Navy men on the ship come out here, it's usually during football season and we have big screen TVs they can watch the football on. We have a pub here and they all go to the pub

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and have some beers. It's more of a friendly party atmosphere whenever they come into town. They all enjoy it.

AB: You mentioned the pub, I noticed there are several different buildings around this area can you tell me what they are?

JS: Sure we have Moresi's Foundry which is a replica of the original namesake, built in Jeanerette, Louisiana built in 1980. We have this foundry, or this building is equipped with a stage, dance floor, state of the art sound system and the area's only 108 inch video wall. This building will seat up to 300 people and can accommodate any special event.

We use it for wedding receptions, it is available for rent.

AB: Okay so a foundry is an entertainment hall?

JS: Yes. Well this on is. Moresi's Foundry is actually a working I'm not exactly sure what a foundry is.

AB: I'm not either that's why I was asking but I will have to look it up.

JS: Yeah I will too.

AB: Okay.

JS: We also have the Clifton Restaurant and Deli and the restaurant being the top floor of the two story building and it seats 130 people for private events and has a rap around [REDACTED] (8.6) on it. We also have the deli which is the informal dining for up to 60 people. We have not had these two facilities in operation since the Hurricane but they are, they have been repaired and, you know, subject to open at any time so I don't... we still do the catering on the Moresi's events that happen and we do that through the Deli. We also have the Hercules Club which is a building here, it's like a movie room and it will accommodate 75 guests. We have the C-Max Theatre which has

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the state of the art system and audio-visual equipment. It can be used for seminars or training classes, it has a large video screen and it will seat up to 72 people in a theatre style arrangement. We also in that building have more of the cotton bales and more of the murals. The O'Hearn's Pub is an Irish Pub and it will also, it is also available for rent and it has a small dance floor in that. We also have a gift shop on site with different artifacts or different things. I'm going to give you this brochure that tells you all about... we have a fish pond we have coy and we have just now recently in the last two months started restocking the pond because we had some probably 24 to 30 inch coy and the hurricane came along and we lost power and we lost all the fish. So we are now gearing up to restock the pond and we have about 32 small fish, 8 to 10 inches. So we are going to get that going again. It also tells you about some of the statues that are out around the museum.

AB: Back to the museum itself, I noticed a very large safe in the middle of your museum, can you tell me a little bit about that?

JS: That's just an area, I'm not sure when that safe was built but it is just an area history, historical safe.

AB: Of whom?

JS: I'll have to look that one up and I'm not sure.

AB: It's the only one on site that you have?

JS: Yes. Can I get back to you on that?

AB: Sure. I'd also like to know, I'm not sure what it is when you walk in it's to your right it's called the Hercules is that an engine?

JS: That's the engine out of the tug boat.

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AB: Oh my goodness, okay. That's enormous!

JS: Yeah that's the engine out of the tugboat that is located outside the museum.

AB: Okay. Would you like to continue telling me about the different exhibits that we have?

JS: Yeah we have several artists that Mr. Hearn has acquired some of their paintings and different things. We've got some from John James **Autobon** and his sons John Woodhouse **Autobon**...

AB: Who are they?

JS: John James **Autobon** was born in Haiti in 1785 and educated in France. He has done paintings of birds.

AB: Okay he was the bird exhibit.

JS: The **Autobon**.

#2: And he always did the painting in the actual \_\_\_\_\_ (12.9).

AB: Oh okay. Those were beautiful.

JS: Yeah he died in 1851.

AB: Who painted the ship pictures that are on the opposite side of the **Autobon** paintings?

JS: I think that was the... I think was the \_\_\_\_\_ (inaudible). (13.1)

AB: I think we can go ahead and move on. Can you tell me about some of your personal favorites in the museum?

JS: As you walk in the door in the case right in front of you is the Freedoms Warrior painting and that was done by... Mr. Hearn the founder of the museum commissioned David, not David, Charles Banks Wilson to do that in full sized color and it was unveiled

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in the museum in late 1996. The man in the painting is Charles [REDACTED], (14.7) who was a code talker and of Native American descent. I've got some more information on him...

AB: All of this can be found in your archives, this information?

JS: Yes.

AB: Lindsey did you have a favorite exhibit?

LS: I like everything in the museum but I like more the Pearl Harbor just because of course you see the movie and things like that and you understand the little bit and it is so cool to watch kids come in because you know they are hearing about it in school and everything but you can read a book and have the teacher talk to you about it but actually seeing things that people that people have given to someone it gives you more of an understanding and a lot of the military things. Like we have a letter that someone wrote to his parents. For kids to be able to read that and actually see what happens. Because even I, you know you can listen to people talk, but actually being able to read a letter that someone wrote to his parents and you really start to understand, "Okay how much they went through." So that was more of the learning for me, to actually learn more about that."

AB: Laura do you have any favorite exhibits?

LH: I like the painting [REDACTED] (inaudible) (16.2).

AB: What would you consider to be the strongest collection that you have had on display here?

LH: I kind of think Pearl Harbor what do you think?

JS: Pearl Harbor or the Boy Scouts. Those are very strong.

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AB: Do you find the Boy Scouts is frequented more by younger visitors and the Pearl Harbor by the older visitors?

JS: Yeah. Both young and old are interested in all.

AB: Earlier you said you had some stuff in storage; do you rotate things in the exhibit?

JS: No if it is duplicates we really just leave the one on the exhibit but we do accept other donations we just hold them in storage.

AB: What kind of marketing techniques do you use besides the web site?

JS: We have used the television advertisement when the news comes out and does a story on the museum, word of mouth.

LS: I did a Myspace on it.

LH: What she said that the Boy Scouts could get a patch if they come through in their uniforms so that kind of encouraged them to come and see everything [redacted]  
(inaudible).

AB: Okay do you mail out any brochures?

JS: Yeah we mail out brochures to the different schools. We have a lot of schools that come on tour.

LS: A lot of nursing homes, we have had several because it's more there. A lot of them were either in that war or have parents that were so they are always real interested in it. So we mailed out, I don't even know how many have had them come out?

AB: Do you ever mail outside of Beaumont or do you rely on your website to reach other places?

JS: No we do mail outside of Beaumont. I don't think we've gotten very far outside of Beaumont yet. We are in the process of doing that.

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AB: Could you all briefly describe your duties, like your everyday activities to run this museum?

LS: Laura and I do the... we have the dehumidifiers so we check the temperature and the humidity to make sure that all the paintings are going to be okay and things like that. We make sure that the museum is always clean. I mean we check everything in that museum just so the artifacts will, you know, in 50 years still look like they do now. So it a lot of work keeping the museum up and running and for everything to look good in 20 or 30 years.

JS: And you have to maintain a certain humidity level for the paintings to stay in their pristine condition and I think during the hurricane had some problems because part of the roof was blown off. So we are very conscious of trying to keep it specifically at the temperatures and the humidity levels that we need.

AB: What responsibilities will you be taking on as curator?

LH: I'm not quite sure yet.

JS: Tours.

LH: Maintaining the museum.

JS: Learning different aspects of the museum, but that is both of their jobs because they are both going to be doing roughly the same job. We also have them available for the events that we have out here, the receptions and different things when people rent the facilities. Of course that is handled through the management and we have a personnel staff that does all the events, catering and set up and everything. We just we set up the rooms as to how they want the tables set, any decorations that we have available, we can put out for them. That's what we do during an event coordination and all of that is

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coordinated through me so I'm a little bit over this section but not too terribly knowledgeable about it yet.

AB: What would you say is the most difficult aspect of running this museum?

JS: I would say making sure that all of the priceless things that are in the museum are taken care of and are at the, where they need to be temperature wise, humidity wise. You know if anything happens we need to know immediately so we can react and take care of it.

AB: How many people are involved besides you three in running this museum?

JS: No.

AB: This is it? Cool. How many of the collections are permanent, are they all permanent?

JS: They are all permanent.

AB: Are any of the exhibits hands on for the little kiddies?

JS: Possibly the cotton bales but...

AB: Do you have trouble with them pulling out the cotton or something?

LS: Not at all. I think a lot of our groups when they come in a lot of parents aren't going to let kids just pull cotton. A lot of it is very more... kids can be hyper but you never realize how much they like to learn. I've been here, whenever I first started and they said, "Oh yeah we have a tour of five year old kids." I was like, "Oh God!" But they come in and they are so interested and everything and you see how well behaved most kids are. So they are actually very good when it comes to things like that because they say, "Okay what is this now?" instead of wanting to touch and see. They are more

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interested in what it is. I thought that was very interesting for “little kids” to be that well behaved around so many things.

AB: Do you host any workshops for your visitors?

JS: The only workshops that we have are the Boy Scout exhibits where they come in and upgrade their exhibit, that type of thing.

AB: How do you measure public reaction to your exhibits, is there a card they fill out or is it just word of mouth?

JS: The comments are written down by the girls after the museum tour. They write down comments and they send that all over to me so that's how they measure what a group felt, what they thought, what was the most interesting, ideas on it?

AB: Would that information be available to the public or is that personal information?

JS: No that's personal information.

AB: Okay. Can you tell me about any sponsors that you may have and any fundraising activities that you do?

JS: There are none. It is all funded by David W. Hearn, Jr.

AB: Wow. How often is the museum visited, a weekly estimate?

LS: Last week we had three. It varies some week you may have one, one week you may have one every day.

JS: Now she's talking tours not just one person.

LS: We have one today at 2:00 plus the nursing homes, the schools, the YMCA's it does vary. We have one tour come in one week and then have two tours the next week. It never, really... no one knows just how many we have. We have quite a few each month.

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AB: And it is by appointment only?

JS: At this point yes.

AB: Do you have any volunteers?

JS: At this time we don't. We used to have some [REDACTED] (23.9) that would come in and assist with museum because we were a lot more active prior to the hurricane.

It was just an open gate every day and people would come in and as they came by and since the hurricane and we had to do so much work we've never really opened back up like that other than by appointment. So at this point there is really no need for anybody coming in and helping.

AB: What do you think the future holds for the museum?

JS: I'm not sure I would love to see it open and it's got so many things in it and people would absolutely love it. So we are kind of working toward that goal, marketing. As a matter of fact we are advertising for a marketing representative now.

AB: What is the most important thing that you want people who have never this visited this museum to know?

JS: The vast information that it has got. Because it's got things you would not normally see in a smaller museum. It's more on the order of the larger museums.

AB: Are there any changes that you want to make to the museum or expansions?

JS: Maybe down the road expansion, larger.

AB: So it is pretty much based on the amount of donations that you get and then seeing if you can build a facility to house those?

JS: Yes.

AB: What do you find most rewarding about working here?

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JS: The comments that are made about the museum and how people enjoy it and had no idea that it was here. That's always been the... what I have enjoyed the most.

AB: I know you have only been here for a week Laura but do you find anything most rewarding about being the new curator?

LH: I like the art and the history and I like knowing that I'm helping keep our history to teach other people. A lot of it I didn't know about it until I came here so I find that very interesting.

AB: And you Lindsey?

LS: I'm real big on kids. So seeing them get all excited around things and just awesome here! So that is one of the big things to me, whenever they say... whenever you hear a kid go, "Did you see that, I never knew that!" It's great... you know that you either taught them something or they are learning. So I think it is awesome.

AB: Can you tell me something about your personal backgrounds and maybe what sparked your interest in the museum field?

LH: I've always been big into art.

JS: Well my background has been in maintenance and so that's why I'm over the maintenance in the museum and the maintenance of the museum.

AB: What about you Lindsey?

LS: I was actually working more with her in the maintenance building. I was put over here and you actually learn a lot and I'm very excited about that, being able to see so much now. I was always in the museum but now that I'm in it more it is very interesting.

AB: What were some of the first projects you oversaw when you took over this museum?

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JS: My first one would be the addition of the Jackie Ronnie exhibit and all the aspects that went along with that. We had the [REDACTED] (27.3) we had the exhibits set up. We had the opening of it. We had her coming into town and we had to coordinate all of that.

AB: Is there anything else you'd like to add to this interview?

JS: You know more about, I wish we were more familiar with it. Maybe the next time we will be.

AB: We'll encourage people to come here and explore your archives. Thank you so much this was really rewarding.

JS: We appreciate you coming.

AB: Thank you.

