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AN ORAL HISTORY

with

MR. ROY BAXTER

Interviewer: Mr. Henry Dethloff

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Biography

Mr. Roy Baxter was born on April 2, 1917, at Logtown, Mississippi, to Mr. Roy Baxter Sr. and Mrs. Gladys W. Baxter. He attended school in Logtown through the eighth grade and graduated from Bay High School, Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, in 1935. Afterwards he began working in his father's lumber business.

In 1942 Mr. Baxter was drafted into the Army but was honorably discharged in 1943 due to illness. Returning to Bay St. Louis he worked for automotive and diesel companies in New Orleans and Bay St. Louis before opening a marina in Logtown in 1960. In 1964 he was forced to relocate his business to Pearllington when NASA began buying land for construction of the Mississippi Test Facility. Mr. Baxter still owns and operates his marina.

Mr. Baxter served on the official board of the Logtown Methodist Church for 20 years. He served on the Gulf Regional Planning Commission and the Hancock County Planning Commission. He has been a director of Coast Electric Power Association since 1973. Mr. Baxter has traveled throughout the United States. He became a licensed pilot in 1953 and has logged approximately 1000 hours flying time. His hobbies are "fly fishing and flying - in that order."

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MR. ROY BAXTER

This is an interview for the SSC History Project with Mr. Roy Baxter. The interview is being recorded in Picayune, Mississippi, on July 24, 1991. The interviewer is Henry Dethloff. Also present is Mack Herring.

Mr. Baxter: I was born April 2, 1917, in Logtown, Mississippi. I'm the fifth generation in that area.

Mr. Dethloff: Do you happen to remember the circumstances that you're ancestors came into this part of the country?

Mr. Baxter: The ancestors on the Baxter side, they came from the Carolinas. The fact of the business, I have a second cousin that lives down in Florida, Lionel Baxter, I don't think you ever knew Lionel or not. He and his brother, who lives in California, have written a book on the history of the Baxters.

Mr. Dethloff: We have it.

Mr. Baxter: It's very, very interesting. They were primarily, originally sawmill people, as so much of the South was. Say from the Carolinas, Georgia, all the way down, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida, Texas.

My Grandfather Baxter's people came from the Carolinas, North Carolina. I'm not going to try to quote years because, of course, I can't remember.

Mr. Herring: Yes, I know.

Mr. Baxter: My father's father, Grandfather John Baxter, was born in Santee District, South Carolina. He fought in the Civil War, during that time era you see. Had one eye, but they took him.

Mr. Herring: Is he the one that's buried over there?

Mr. Baxter: He's buried over at Logtown, as well as his brother, Marion Baxter.

Mr. Herring: I saw a Baxter, too, that is buried behind Jeff Davis's house in the cemetery over there.

Mr. Baxter: Okay, that is not a grave, that is a memorial.

Mr. Herring: A memorial.

Mr. Baxter: Yes. That is Lionel's grandfather. That is my Grandpa Baxter's brother, Marion. Do you remember the name Marion?

Mr. Herring: Yes, I remember the name Marion.

Mr. Baxter: Of course, I'm being a little facetious now, but according to his direct relatives, he won the Civil War.

Mr. Dethloff: [Laughter] He did?

Mr. Baxter: [Laughter] Even though we lost it, if we had had two or three more men like him we'd have won it. They think he is great and I'm sure he was. But that was the two brothers, and they are both buried in Logtown, but this memorial was set up over there. Lionel did that.

Grandpa Baxter, of course, went in the Civil War and when he was mustered out he was mustered out in Mobile he walked from Mobile to Handsboro. That's the way the history told it.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: He married a Huddleston, Lou Huddleston from DeLisle. They had a good-sized family, which one of them was my father, Roy Baxter. When my father was seven years old, my Grandfather John decided to move to Logtown. He was a millwright, if that tells you anything. A millwright was the man that maintains the building, maintenance.

Mr. Herring: I never told you, Roy, my daddy was a millwright.

Mr. Baxter: Okay, very good, so you know what I'm talking about. So at seven years old my father moved from Handsboro with his family by schooner to Logtown. He grew up there. When he was fourteen years old he went to work in the Weston Lumber Company's planing mill, marking lumber. He gradually worked himself - am I going too fast?

Mr. Dethloff: No sir. You go right ahead, I've got it all on tape. I'm just making notes on the side.

Mr. Baxter: Okay, he worked himself on up into the office and eventually became sales manager over a period of years. So we were basically sawmill people. That's all we knew was pine trees. That was the economy of this whole area. There was some cypress over in Louisiana. Over in Louisiana that's where your tidewater cypress was. Am I right?

Mr. Dethloff: Some of it, yes. We were getting some cypress from up there.

Mr. Baxter: We were predominately pine. Later years they did cut some hardwood. I might be deviating quite a bit, but I've given you-

Mr. Dethloff: No, that's good.

Mr. Baxter: Okay, in 1928 the Weston Lumber Company ceased operation with the mill. Mills I should say, they had two huge mills. This was primarily due to, there was two things: the timber was being cut out in the Great Depression. In those days they were selling beautiful lumber for fifteen dollars a thousand feet. Of course, the dollar was worth something. My father bought him a small mill and starting cutting sunken logs. Are you familiar with that terminology?

Mr. Dethloff: Yes sir.

Mr. Baxter: In later years he started cutting, going back over the Weston Lumber Company land and cutting some of the stuff they had left.

Mr. Dethloff: Those were logs that they were floating to the mill and ran it on ends. I hear that you can still find those things once in a while.

Mr. Herring: Yes. They still float them in the river.

Mr. Baxter: Okay, I've given you briefly, only briefs on this. Let me touch back on Logtown itself for a minute.

Logtown, the Weston Lumber Company was a complete town. They had their company store, company drugstore; they had a hardware store in it. They had an electric light plant, they had their own telephone system, ice plant, everything.

Mr. Dethloff: It was all company owned?

Mr. Baxter: All company owned.

Mr. Dethloff: Was the post office owned by the company store?

Mr. Baxter: Yes sir.

Mr. Herring: The post office building.

Mr. Baxter: Well, of course, they owned the post office building. I might have wound up with that when I bought what they had left. They also had a bank building there. The Hancock Bank, back in the '20s, started sending a man to Logtown one day a week to do banking. You've probably read this.

Mr. Herring: I think I read a little of that in that book that Leo had.

Mr. Baxter: So we even had banking services.

Of course, the Great Depression made a lot of people leave that area. They had to go because there wasn't anything to do.

Mr. Dethloff: Did your dad keep that mill running during the Depression, his own?

Mr. Baxter: Yes, he kept his small mill going. If the lumber business would get too tight and the lumber wasn't selling, he just shut it down. You know, I've often thought about that, and this is not being derogatory but there wasn't any such thing as unemployment compensation or workman's comp or anything in those days. I look back and I wonder how these men made it. Working for a dollar, a dollar and a half a day. Then they would get out of work.

Mr. Dethloff: They survived, yes.

Mr. Baxter: Those were rough times. I saw, I remember that. A very interesting observation was-I'm going to deviate occasionally being born in 1917, I've seen a vast transformation. Not just in Logtown and Pearlinton, but in this whole country. Scientifically, it's been an incredible thing.

I got involved in a lawsuit a few years back. I served on the board of directors at the co-op, electric co-op. The manager had to fire two men, and they turned around and sued the manager and the co-op. They sued the board, because they came before the board, and we upheld the manager's decision.

Mr. Dethloff: Okay.

Mr. Baxter: I had to go give a deposition one day for their lawyer. She was just raking Coastal Electric over, just, "No good, no good." Finally I said, "Now when you get through, lady, I want" she was a lady lawyer. I said, "I want to talk a little bit. I'm old enough to be your father, almost old enough to be your grandfather. I've seen a lot. I know what it is to be in the dark. I studied by lamplight in my lifetime. During that lifetime I saw a man walk on the moon, sitting in my home in Pearlinton, Mississippi. The reason I could see it was because of the REA program." That's true. Of course, that started with Roosevelt, if you remember.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: Now why don't I let you ask me some questions.

Mr. Dethloff: Okay, well let's go ahead and take Logtown up then. You are living in Logtown through the '30s. You went to school in Logtown.

Mr. Baxter: I went through the grammar school there.

Mr. Dethloff: Okay.

Mr. Baxter: I went through high school in Bay St. Louis.

Mr. Dethloff: In Bay St. Louis. How long a commute was that?

Mr. Baxter: A forty mile roundtrip.

Mr. Dethloff: Forty miles. So you had to get up early?

Mr. Baxter: Oh, yes. The first year we went my father had an old Model-A Ford. There was six of us kids went down in that thing everyday. The next year the county put on a school bus. That was 1931. In 1932 they put on a school bus. That's when the school bussing started in this area.

Mr. Dethloff: So when you got out of high school, you finished high school in about '34 or '35?

Mr. Baxter: I finished in '35.

Mr. Dethloff: '35.

Mr. Baxter: I went to work with my father, sawmilling.

Mr. Dethloff: Okay.

Mr. Baxter: In fact, I ran the sawmill part.

Mr. Dethloff: Did you, okay? But you're operating, that's good for the Depression years.

Mr. Baxter: Yes, it kept going.

Mr. Dethloff: Okay, I guess the next step is World War II comes along about that time.

Mr. Baxter: Go ahead, you ask me what you want about this now.

Mr. Dethloff: Well, I was going to ask first a little bit about the attitude and then the characters in the community in the late '30s and '40s. What kind of employment opportunities did people have, other than sawmills?

Mr. Baxter: In the 1930s the mill was shut down. Some of the people moved to Picayune, Mississippi, where there was still sawmills.

Mr. Dethloff: Okay.

Mr. Baxter: Crosby people, you are familiar with that name I'm sure.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: We didn't have anything such as offshore drilling in those days. They went to work on tugboats, towboats, and so forth. A great percentage of the men, the older men in particular, when the mill shut down, they started dying. All they had ever did was work there all their lives. Now this may sound a little emotional, but I can take you to Logtown, the mill shut down in 1928, and show you tombstones all through the cemetery, Jeff Jopes, Frank Mitchell, and all this group, by 1930, '31 they were all dead.

Mr. Dethloff: Is that right?

Mr. Baxter: They couldn't stand being unemployed. They didn't work eight hours.

Mr. Dethloff: Twelve and fifteen, I'm sure. Were many people making their living out of fishing around here?

Mr. Baxter: No, very few.

Mr. Dethloff: How about hunting or trapping or anything like that?

Mr. Baxter: No, very little. There were a few trappers, but they didn't live in Logtown. That was never a big item here. A big industry, so to speak. There were some down in this area but not a whole lot.

Mr. Dethloff: So now World War II is coming along pretty soon; how did that affect you, for example?

Mr. Baxter: Well, I was drafted. I was drafted into the Army. I was inducted at Camp Shelby and then went to Camp Polk. From there I went to Fort Knox. I became very ill at Fort Knox and had to be discharged. I had bronchial pneumonia up there, and it liked to have killed me. They wouldn't even keep me for limited service.

Mr. Dethloff: You were in bad shape then.

Mr. Baxter: Well, they gave me five years to live.

Mr. Dethloff: Is that right?

Mr. Baxter: I fooled them.

Mr. Dethloff: You sure did. So then you came back home.

Mr. Baxter: I came back home.

Mr. Dethloff: About '40

Mr. Baxter: I came home in '43.

Mr. Dethloff: '43, okay. I assume now, what is going on? How would you describe the situation in Logtown in general?

Mr. Baxter: Well, when I came home from service, my folks had moved to Bay St. Louis.

Mr. Dethloff: Okay.

Mr. Baxter: So I went down there and stayed until 1945.

Mr. Dethloff: What was your dad doing there?

Mr. Baxter: My father had retired by then.

Mr. Dethloff: Okay.

Mr. Baxter: He had sold out. Sold out his lumber business and retired.

Mr. Dethloff: Then did you go to work?

Mr. Baxter: I couldn't go to work right away. I took about a year or year and a half, then I went to work in New Orleans for a diesel company.

Mr. Dethloff: Okay.

Mr. Baxter: Worked there for five years, worked there from 1945 to 1950. Then I went to work for the Chevrolet people, and I worked with them from 1950 to 1960. Then I went into business for myself.

Mr. Dethloff: In New Orleans?

Mr. Baxter: No, I went into this marina business in Logtown.

Mr. Dethloff: Oh, okay.

Mr. Baxter: That's what I just got started

Mr. Dethloff: So you just happened to be there when the government came along-

Mr. Baxter: Yes, I was living there then. We had moved back.

Mr. Dethloff: Married or family?

Mr. Baxter: I never did marry. I have no reasons for it, I just didn't. Some of it's good, some bad.

Would you like me to touch on the reaction of the people with the announcement?

Mr. Dethloff: Yes sir. That's what I'm working to, yes.

Mr. Baxter: It was chaos initially, you might say. Nobody knew what it all meant. It came on the five o'clock news, the afternoon of-correct me now, Mack.

Mr. Herring: We just went over that figure this morning.

Mr. Baxter: October the 25th, am I right?

Mr. Herring: That's right. That sounds just about right.

Mr. Dethloff: That was your press release, wasn't it? [laughter]

Mr. Herring: I think I told you I wrote that.

Mr. Baxter: Best kept secret that has ever been kept.

Mr. Herring: I was telling Henry, I didn't know it until late in the morning of the 25th, and my boss called me from Washington. He was up there on business, and he told me to get the information from his secretary out of the safe and write the press release for two o'clock that evening. So I did. Of course, when I saw it and saw the maps, "My God, I know right where this is." [laughter] But I didn't know. It was like Roy said, it was a good secret.

Mr. Dethloff: Well, you remembered it, because that was the right date.

Mr. Baxter: Well, let me tell you a little interesting story of how I heard it that afternoon. I was part owner of a Cessna 180 seaplane, and I had a trip for the next day to take some people out to Chandeleur Island. So about late that afternoon I flew into Lakefront Airport to gas up. Lakefront Airport is in New Orleans on Lake Pontchartrain. I was coming back and I just happened to turn on the AM radio, which we could also use as a directional finder, and I said, "Well, it's time for the five o'clock news-" the fellow that was with me, none of ya'll know him. I said, "Let's listen to the news." So we were circling around over Honey Island Swamp just listening to the news, and here comes this press release, on WWL is the way I heard it. I said, "My God, what does this mean?" And I landed and we came on and my mother was there and she said, "We've got some bad news." [laughing] I said, "I think we just heard it." That's when we realized that-

Mr. Dethloff: And that was her statement, "We've got some bad news."

Mr. Baxter: "We've got some bad news." We didn't know what this encompassed. It said eminent domain, well, I thought I knew what an eminent domain was. So I got out my dictionary to be sure. The town was in chaos. We were at the very end of the road. The people started coming down there, "What do you know about it? What do you know about it?" Everybody was upset, naturally.

So the next day Channel 6 came out, Channel 6 television, Alec Gifford, and he came out there and he spent a day. They shut the school down that next day. People gathered out at the school, this was the grammar school. He interviewed people out there and told them what he thought he knew about it. He spent a lot of time with me and Henry Otis and all of us down at the marina. One of my friends, Lefty Brown, he said, "Well, I'm gonna go to New Orleans and see what I can find out." So he went over to New Orleans and came back and said, "Well, it's real." And he said, "Logtown is in it." So we knew then.

Now I'm going to say something, and I'm not trying to take full credit for this. People were upset. They didn't know what they would get for their property, or get enough to move on, or anything else. Before I got any further, one of the things that the Corps of Engineers, the Real Estate Division of the Corps of Engineers handled this for NASA. I might be repeating stuff you already know.

Mr. Dethloff: No, you go ahead.

Mr. Baxter: The problems they ran into was that there were no comparables on real estate, because nobody in the buffer zone of the test site area had their property up for sale, Mack. You remember this.

Mr. Herring: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: They had a time establishing-

Mr. Dethloff: The values, okay.

Mr. Baxter: Yes, establishing values. So I went down and talked to Leo Seal Sr., and I said, "Something needs to be done. The people are upset, they don't know what it's all about. Is there any way to get John Stennis down here?"

He said, "I'll call him." He called John Stennis and that's when they set up that big meeting.

Mr. Dethloff: Is that right? Well, that's good.

Mr. Baxter: I'm not taking full credit for it.

Mr. Dethloff: No, but that's a good lead.

Mr. Baxter: He took the ball and ran. That's what it amounts to. They met out there at the schoolhouse, and they set up a flatbed trailer. There was a podium set up. Hundreds and hundreds, I guess there were thousands of people you weren't there, were you?

Mr. Herring: No, that was before my time.

Mr. Dethloff: That was before Mack.

Mr. Baxter: Oh, okay. John Stennis was there and local politicians, the Corps of Engineers, NASA people. They would take questions and answers. The way they handled that, they designated various ones of us-some of them volunteered to take written questions up to the stand. If everybody started hollering, "Why this? Why that?" There was no way they could handle that.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes, pandemonium, yes.

Mr. Baxter: I'll never forget, and I don't remember who the lady was, but for some reason she said, "Mr. Baxter, take this up to Mr. Stennis." I looked at the question and the question was this: "Why do we have to go to the moon?" See, they had already talked about the moon race.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: His answer was, he said, "Here's a question, 'Why do we have to go to the moon?' The answer is for international prestige." Do you remember this, Mack? Did you ever hear that before?

Mr. Herring: I remember you telling me that.

Mr. Baxter: I remember it like it was yesterday. That was all taped too.

Mr. Herring: That is an important thing.

Mr. Baxter: That was all taped by the WRJW, they got that whole tape.

Mr. Herring: Boy, that would be something if we could get that.

Mr. Baxter: We are talking about 1961, All Saints Day, 1961, was when they had that meeting.

So the meeting, I think, was pretty successful.

Mr. Dethloff: That was my next question, yes.

Mr. Baxter: John Stennis did a terrific selling job. I felt sorry for the man because he put his neck on the line that day. That's a crude observation, but politically and every other way, but he did a marvelous job. One of the Corps of Engineer men, somebody asked him, "Well, you are worrying about the dishes rattling. `Will the dishes rattle in my kitchen?' " He said, "There won't be any dishes or homes to rattle." That was rather blunt, you know.

Mr. Herring: That was a blunt statement. [laughter]

Mr. Baxter: That didn't go over too well. Of course, it had to be. It's funny how little things like that stick in your mind.

Mr. Herring: That was an awful statement.

Mr. Dethloff: I read, too, that Stennis not only got put on the point on that whole meeting, but he accepted that responsibility, I think, for the rest of his life. He felt responsible for this place.

Mr. Baxter: He did. I'm running way ahead.

Mr. Dethloff: Go ahead.

Mr. Baxter: I think you had something to do with it, ya'll asked me to come up there and ride with him that day. Were you in the car?

Mr. Herring: No, I wasn't in the car with you. You were in the car with-

Mr. Baxter: Me and Leo and two or three more, and your manager.

Mr. Herring: Yes, Roy.

Mr. Baxter: Roy Estess. Mr. Stennis, he wanted to go back to the spot where we had that big meeting. Of course, nature had taken over, there were pine trees forty feet tall, thirty or forty feet tall. So we stopped at the crossroads, and I said, "This was here you were the day you made that speech and told us what was going to happen." I said to myself, "I'm going to try to make the old man feel good." And I meant this, I said, "Senator, this is one of the best things that ever happened to us." Now this is true, I don't go out and say this in public, I'd get my neck chopped off or something. Some people are still angry about this. I wouldn't say angry but resentful about it. He laughed when I told him that. He still feels a deep responsibility.

Mr. Herring: Oh, yes, he does.

Mr. Baxter: He worried about the people being displaced.

Mr. Dethloff: I think he did too.

Mr. Baxter: I know he did. As an example, I was having a rough time dealing with the Corps. They had a job to do, and I had a job to do. There was no animosity, we got along. I picked up the phone one day and I called him. You know, Mack and Henry, the first offer that was made to me was so ridiculous I won't even repeat what it was, but it was less than half what I finally got. They said though that was it, so I called him. He said, "Well, I'll get in touch with them." And he did. Then we were able to get the price up. Took me two years to settle.

Mr. Dethloff: Is that right?

Mr. Baxter: I didn't go to court.

Mr. Dethloff: Well, the Corps has that reputation. I know even at the Johnson Space Center they kind of tangled with a lot of people over there when they set up-they did the construction and everything. They tangled with NASA too. There was some friction between the NASA administrators and the Corps construction types.

Mr. Baxter: Well, I'm going to say something that I shouldn't say, but I'll say it anyhow. The Corps brought some men in here that were not the most desirable people to deal with. You strike this out of the tape before you-

Mr. Dethloff: I will. [laughter]

Mr. Baxter: The head man of the office was a bad alcoholic.

Mr. Herring: Yes. He really was.

Mr. Baxter: He was bad. The day he settled with us right after lunch-and I had two lawyers there with me-he was so drunk he couldn't talk.

Mr. Dethloff: I'll be darned.

Mr. Baxter: It was pitiful.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes, that is pitiful.

Mr. Herring: He was a sad case.

Mr. Baxter: Very unfortunate.

Mr. Dethloff: But overall, would you say that the acquisition basically worked out in a fair and equitable basis, after it was all said and done?

Mr. Baxter: In some respects yes, and some no.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: I'm not bragging when I say this, but I had a certain amount of country knowledge. Enough to stay in

this battle with them.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes, that's right.

Mr. Baxter: Successfully.

Mr. Dethloff: And most people have a disadvantage. They didn't know how to deal with them.

Mr. Baxter: I just would say, "Now, look fellows" obviously we got along. We didn't have any words. Nobody was angry with anybody. They had a job to do, and I had a job to do.

Mr. Dethloff: You realized that.

Mr. Baxter: But some people, initially, in the test site, they almost took their property. I tell you one of the things that happened: some of those people, they might have a home that if they went out somewhere to replace it, it might cost twelve, fifteen or twenty thousand dollars, and they were coming along offering them, say, six thousand dollars. That's the most money they had ever seen in their life.

Mr. Dethloff: So they just grabbed at it, without realizing it.

Mr. Baxter: I'm not being critical, Mack. I'm being realistic. This happened.

Mr. Dethloff: Sure.

Mr. Baxter: So some came out good, some did not so good. Some of the people didn't take care of their money good. Instead of going and putting it right back into a home right away, they probably went and bought a new car and wound up with nothing.

Mr. Dethloff: With nothing.

Mr. Baxter: And this is inevitable.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes. Now once construction begins here and so forth, did you begin to see a surge in economic activity and business? Were you seeing a pretty positive impact?

Mr. Baxter: Very positive. And an influx of people from Seal Beach, California, for example. General Electric people out of New York. God knows, way off. We had people from everywhere.

Mr. Dethloff: How did that go over, when those people came in?

Mr. Baxter: Some of the people that came in were a little critical. Some of the people were upset about the South and the integration problems.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes, it was some tough times.

Mr. Baxter: Yes, tough times. I can't remember the man's name, but there was one man that came in here with the Corps of Engineers. He would just bitch and gripe all the time. [laughter Finally one day, this was after I moved down here, I said, "Well, I'm going to try to be nice to the man." So I got him one day and I knew he liked beer, and I got a couple of six packs and I said, "Come on, I'm going to take you for a ride." I took him all up Waste House Bayou, all through Honey Island Swamp, gave him the beer. He got back here and I said, "What do you think about it?" He said, "I don't like it worth a damn." I said, "Well, I'll tell you what you do, that gate out there, the gate you came in, just leave and don't come back. I've tried every way to be nice to you, and you are just a horse's ass. I'd just as soon you didn't come back." And he didn't. I found out, just a day or two before, Glen Dorrherty put him out of his barber shop. Now this is the exception, not the rule.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: You asked me a question.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes. I appreciate that, yes, some general comments. Was there any added hostility, you might say, not so much to people, but to the idea that the federal government was coming into Mississippi, because of the tensions that were going on at the time?

Mr. Baxter: I don't think hostility is the right word. There was resentment. I think there is a difference between hostility and resentment.

Mr. Dethloff: There is, that was a bad word.

Mr. Baxter: I'm not trying to correct you, but there was a certain amount of resentment. But people grew up. Initially, some of the old people died, this was within six months to a year. They couldn't stand the stress. Maybe they had been living on twenty, thirty or forty acres, and they were going to have to live on a sixty-foot lot somewhere. It didn't set too well physically on them.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes, the trauma of moving is pretty tough for anybody. What about jobs now? I mean in terms of job opportunities for local people.

Mr. Baxter: It helped, definitely.

Mr. Dethloff: You are here now. When did you come to this place?

Mr. Baxter: Moved here in June of '84. I mean '64, I'm sorry.

Mr. Dethloff: '64, yes. Then you started a marina here?

Mr. Baxter: Well, I was already in the marina business down there.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: Then I moved here and opened it. I had forty acres of land there. I lost some very valuable land. I had forty-five hundred feet of water frontage that I was getting ready to develop. I was running this little marina and

everything was real rosey.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: Till this hit. I've got to say something; I think Mack will verify this. I think I handled it pretty good, because I lost a fortune in that.

Mr. Herring: He sure did.

Mr. Baxter: See, here I owed fifty thousand dollars I borrowed to buy this land here. That's a pretty good strain.

Mr. Dethloff: Big money. [laughter

Mr. Baxter: That was big money in '61.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes sir.

Mr. Herring: It was beautiful, there wasn't any prettier property anywhere.

Mr. Baxter: It faced on the river and the bayou. The bayou went up in there. It was an opportunity, and it was home.

Mr. Dethloff: Sure, yes.

Mr. Baxter: You see, I moved out of the house in which I was born when I moved down here. So again, I had a certain amount of resentment initially, but I just said, "Look, you can't whip them, let's join them." We've bent over backwards to be nice to people like that. Not trying to get anything out of anybody, but just said, "Look, they've got a job to do, let's be nice to them." It worked. I bet you never had a cross word said to you at the marina.

Mr. Herring: No, we had a lot of good times though. Back in the early days, Roy would tell you we got into a period where it got really, really busy, but I used to actually have the time where I could ride around somewhere, and if I was in this vicinity, I could plop down and have a cup of coffee with Roy and his mother. It was just really delightful.

Mr. Dethloff: Did sort of a speculative fever develop as the center began to be constructed? In other words an oil boom, are you getting into any kind of oil boom psychology here or anything?

Mr. Baxter: Well, the surrounding areas. Now, of course, you have to realize this, Logtown was over with. Napoleon, Gainesville, all that was gone. Santa Rosa and all that. Other areas, Picayune and so forth, Picayune went into it quite heavy. If I remember right, didn't they start quite a few subdivisions?

Mr. Herring: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: Bay St. Louis is an example, they jumped in and put in sewage, a real sewage system. They were on septic tanks before.

Mr. Dethloff: Water and purification.

Mr. Baxter: Yes. The governmental agency, they four-laned the road from Bay St. Louis to the test site. That was all improvements right away. Other businesses came in, some of them came in and failed, some succeeded.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: Naturally, it's just like a magnet.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes, it draws people.

Mr. Baxter: Now go ahead with your questions.

Mr. Dethloff: Well, I'm still trying to chase down, I guess, the impact on the community and the way people are living in this area compared to the way they were living before.

Mr. Baxter: Some are living better, some worse.

Mr. Dethloff: Okay, that's a fair answer.

Mr. Baxter: That's as near as I know how to be accurate with you. Now some people never really recovered from it. Chance of being repetitious, but some of the same people that had acreage and they wind up somewhere on a sixty-foot lot. They didn't even have room enough to grow a garden.

Mr. Dethloff: Kind of hard to cope.

Mr. Baxter: Yes.

Mr. Dethloff: Now did it ever come to your attention that this center, this Mississippi Test Facility, might not be here very long? Did that worry begin to leak out before too long or do you remember that?

Mr. Baxter: Well, it was generally talked about at the end of the Apollo program.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: I'll have to insert this, we people who kept our land, we didn't sell to the government in fee simple. Mine is on perpetual, restricted easement. And of course rumors were flying when NASA was phasing down after the Apollo program, "Oh, we are going to get our land back." There goes NASA right now. [looking out at the river.]

Mr. Herring: Yes, that's a hydrogen barge, Henry. You want to see what it looks like?

Mr. Dethloff: It's huge.

Mr. Baxter: We will make Rocky, the captain, wave at us. [laughter]

Mr. Dethloff: So you say that if they weren't at first friendly or well-disposed towards the Stennis Space Center,

over time the center became a part of the community.

Mr. Baxter: Correct, very true. Now there are a few, and I won't go into personalities, that are still very resentful. This phone call that I got a while ago, and I won't say who it was, but those people are still very resentful about it. That's their prerogative, they can't stop it.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes, sure.

Mr. Baxter: We have to be realistic and realize that, and not just with NASA but the Allied Industries and other stuff that's up there that is pumping four or five hundred million a year into the economy around here. Where else could you find-

Mr. Dethloff: That kind of money coming into-

Mr. Baxter: And a clean industry.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes. That's right.

Mr. Baxter: We're talking about 19-let's see we are coming up on

Mr. Dethloff: '69, '70, '71, when they are talking about finishing the Apollo program, and the test center is about to close down.

Mr. Baxter: That's right.

Mr. Dethloff: The reaction you are saying was kind of mixed. Some people said, "Good." [laughter]

Mr. Baxter: Some people said, "Good." I didn't think so, because I thought, "My God, the economy around this area is built on this payroll." And it was, Mack.

Mr. Herring: Oh, yes.

Mr. Baxter: It revolved around the test site. It was going to create havoc here economically. I'll tell you why. It would have been worse than when we all had to move for this reason: a lot of people had obligated themselves for many, many years of notes, homes, automobiles and everything. If that thing would have shut down suddenly, it wouldn't have just shut down NASA, it would have shut down other things around. You talk about a depressed area. That's one thing that you and Jackson Balch did, you saved that thing up there, with the other stuff you brought in.

Mr. Dethloff: What about that other mix of stuff that came in to the facility? Did that sort of change the way that people looked at it or dealt with it?

Mr. Baxter: I think so. I think when the moon program was finished or terminated, or whatever you want to call it, initially a lot of people said, "Good, we get our land back." Very candidly, I wouldn't have moved back if they had said, "Look, Roy, here is your land."

Mr. Dethloff: Yes, "You can go back."

Mr. Baxter: Hell, I was too tired. I had a nice home here, I was happy with what I got. I didn't want to go through it all. A complete move is awfully, awfully hard. You're moving historically and everything.

Mr. Dethloff: I know my wife and I moved around the block about eight or ten years ago, and it took years to get over that.

Mr. Baxter: Well, it's not easy. I don't know whether I'm answering the questions like you want or not.

Mr. Dethloff: No, that's good.

Mr. Baxter: I'm giving you my candid opinion. But, of course, NASA made a comeback with the Navy and everything else. The ammunition plant. Most of us will never understand the ammunition plant deal. That was Stennis's baby too. But why they built it and spent five, six, seven hundred million dollars, then shut it down. I was told-and all you have to do is listen and you can hear anything you want to hear and don't want to hear.

Mr. Dethloff: That's right.

Mr. Baxter: That the thing never was successful. Mack, is there anything to that?

Mr. Herring: I think towards the end, Roy, they were pretty successful.

Mr. Baxter: I hope so.

Mr. Herring: I think, you know, they had a lot of problems getting it going. But I think at the end they were up to production. It is unbelievable, Henry, what we are talking about. Senator Stennis really wanted that Army ammunition plant.

Mr. Baxter: He sure did.

Mr. Herring: He felt like it filled a gap between the engineers and scientists.

Mr. Dethloff: He was looking for a different kind of labor.

Mr. Herring: Blue collar labor, people that could operate machines. He wanted that badly and he fought hard to get it. At the time, he was chairman of the Armed Services Committee, I think, and the Appropriations Committee. He got it here, and you know who resisted that? He did not want to see it, but he fought for it as a good soldier, was Jackson Balch. He told me several times, "God, I don't want to do that, but Senator Stennis wants to do it." The reason Balch didn't want it, it didn't fit with his environmental concept, you know.

Mr. Dethloff: That's an interesting character.

Mr. Herring: But Stennis wanted it.

Mr. Dethloff: Naturally Balch did.

Mr. Herring: Stennis was looking at a broader thing, "Hey, this is going to provide jobs." It came in, and like Roy said, it was strange, it operated for it wasn't fully operational but for maybe four or five years at the most. But you know what, Roy, here is something you can trace, that Stennis was on the plane from Washington coming back to Mississippi when he retired, when they made the announcement. They just waited till he got out.

Mr. Dethloff: That was Stennis's baby, huh?

Mr. Herring: All the way. I happened to remember that day that the announcement was made that they were going to close it, the day he left Washington after he retired.

Mr. Dethloff: You mentioned Jackson Balch. What were your recollections of Mr. Balch?

Mr. Baxter: He was a go-getter, he was a driver, he was the right man for the test site at the right time. That's a good description.

Mr. Herring: That is a good description.

Mr. Baxter: He was needed and nothing got in his way.

Mr. Dethloff: That's what I got.

Mr. Baxter: Let me cite you an example: one time we were having a lot of trouble in the buffer zone, where Logtown was and everything. Vandalism, camping, stealing your trees. One day I finally got through to him, and Mack I had talked to you about that.

Mr. Herring: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: One day I called him, and he was kind of feeling bad or something that morning [laughing], I guess. I went through this spill about what was going on, and he said, "Look, Baxter," I hate to use the language he did, "if you don't want people on your goddamn land put them off yourself. Don't worry me about it." He said, "I'm busy, I'm busy running a test site." I said, "I thank you, if I can ever do anything for you let me know." Well, sure enough he had to call me one time and I said, "You were an ugly son of a bitch to me, but I'm not going to be that way with you."

Mr. Dethloff: That's good.

Mr. Baxter: I said, "I'm going to be nice to you." I was serving on a regional planning commission at that time, and he wanted to get in on that deal. And I helped him get in.

Mr. Herring: Well, I'll be damned.

Mr. Baxter: I've never told another soul that. But we were good friends when he died.

Mr. Herring: I know he spoke well of you. I didn't know about that other incident. Of course, now, he's done some terrible things to me, Roy.

Mr. Baxter: But that was his-

Mr. Dethloff: Way, his style, I guess.

Mr. Baxter: I was worrying him and he was tired of it. He wanted me out of the way. So I got out of his way.

Mr. Dethloff: He was a fighter, there was no question about that. He was fighting the world there.

Mr. Baxter: Well, he had been a general in the Army, armed forces, I don't know what division. He had to be pretty good to get that far.

Mr. Dethloff: That's right.

Mr. Baxter: If he wanted to get something done, he'd get it done, wouldn't he, Mack? That's observation. I liked the man because of his ability.

Mr. Dethloff: That's right, people that stick to what they believe in. Now, when the center begins to change into a multi-type facility with all these other operations there, do you see a different kind of people coming into the community or does it register at all? Or is it just a continuation?

Mr. Baxter: I think your last observation, a continuation. We got blue collar, we got white collar, we got some that were not too desirable. This is inevitable, something of that scope.

Mr. Dethloff: Sure. Has the center basically helped keep people at home who otherwise wouldn't be here? In other words, it has preserved the economic base of the community.

Mr. Baxter: Correct.

Mr. Dethloff: Which would not have been here.

Mr. Baxter: That's very true.

Mr. Dethloff: And what about the physical growth of the region, in terms of numbers, economic values and so forth? Any sense of that?

Mr. Baxter: As far as growth, we had two subdivisions that went up here pretty much as a direct result of NASA. One is right across from Belle Isle and Oak Harbor. Remember Charlie Hill started Oak Harbor.

Mr. Herring: Yes, yes.

Mr. Baxter: They were fairly successful. The people directly or indirectly related to NASA I keep using the word NASA because there were other things in connection with them that would come and go.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: Would come in here, then maybe go back to California or somewhere. The subdivisions eventually filled up, primarily because of the New Orleans people getting out of the big city.

Mr. Dethloff: Coming back over here.

Mr. Baxter: Getting over here. Everybody that possibly can is getting out of New Orleans.

Mr. Dethloff: That's right. That was in the paper yesterday, there was a big article about that. Moving out to Mandeville and all over the place.

Mr. Baxter: Northshore, Mandeville.

Mr. Herring: Oh man, that's turning into a city over there.

Mr. Baxter: Yes. Slidell jumped from a little village in 1961 to at one time during the growth, it was the fastest-growing small city in the nation. Am I right?

Mr. Dethloff: I believe that's right.

Mr. Herring: You can quote that, Henry, because there was a lot of press on that. You can look at the records, they went from six thousand to over twenty thousand just at one time. We stayed in that motel, what was the name of it?

Mr. Baxter: I don't remember.

Mr. Herring: You remember right there on that curve. It's gone now, it's fallen in. They've got the Ramada and all those others.

Mr. Baxter: Well, I'd rather get on the Airline Highway rather than get on Gause.

Mr. Herring: Gause Boulevard. Well, I'll tell you what, Roy, you've made an observation. I've been nearly killed about three or four times since I've moved to Bay St. Louis. That Highway 90 in Bay St. Louis, that last few, you know from Waveland to the bridge, is become, it's about like Gause Boulevard. I went along there yesterday morning, and there was a little car going forty or fifty miles an hour passed me on the safety lane. I was in the middle lane, I mean I was on the slow lane. He couldn't get around me on the left, so he just passed me on the safety lane.

Mr. Baxter: I talked to one of the officials here at Bay St. Louis here a while back, and I asked him was there anything they could do to go ahead and slow the traffic down in exactly the area you are talking about, Waveland and on in, slow it down good because it's going to be some tragic accidents there. We've got these super shopping centers that have gone up out there, and they are coming out and I almost-well, I had to leave the road just a few days back, right there by Wal-Mart. Not just on the safety but over on the shoulder. Some woman came out, I don't think she ever saw me, and I'm not blaming her, she just wasn't a good driver, that's all. But that's kind of getting off what we were talking about.

Mr. Dethloff: We were talking about growth and everything. Did you sense that there were many people who came in from outside to work here, stay here. Were you aware of that happening much?

Mr. Baxter: That's an interesting question and I'd like to elaborate on that a little bit. Initially, now what I'm getting ready to say, I'm not being facetious, but a lot of the people back, you know, that came in here, they belittled the area, they didn't want to live here. We were a bunch of red-necked white trash. That was the terms they used.

Mr. Dethloff: Sure.

Mr. Baxter: And I'm proud I'm a redneck, I'm very happy. Those people, after they stayed here a year or two, didn't want to leave here. Some of them had to leave. They just didn't realize what it was.

Mr. Dethloff: The good life.

Mr. Baxter: Some of them had the good life, came out at Seal Beach.

Editor's Note: At this point there was a brief interruption. The interview continues on Tape one, Side two.

Mr. Baxter: Now, I saw an apology come on last night.

Mr. Herring: Yes, now there is an undisclosed amount of money.

Mr. Baxter: Well, Mack, they were hard on him. They tried him and convicted him on the airwaves.

Mr. Herring: Yes, and you know what, they are doing the same thing to Pete Halat.

Mr. Baxter: They are trying to crucify him.

Mr. Herring: I don't know what it is that they-

Mr. Baxter: Well, they better back off. I think this might make them think. We're talking about this lawsuit. This man he was an official in Biloxi. The Feds accused him of something, then tried him and everything, and he went clear. But the networks, ABC and their affiliate in Biloxi, they ruined him.

Mr. Dethloff: Had already gotten to him.

Mr. Herring: Awful reckless.

Mr. Baxter: They were very reckless what they wrote about him.

Mr. Dethloff: And the guy didn't have any recourse, you really can't do

Mr. Baxter: His only recourse was that he was in court, he was freed, so then he sued. And he won.

Mr. Dethloff: He did win.

Mr. Baxter: That's what we are talking about.

Mr. Dethloff: Oh, okay.

Mr. Baxter: Right after the eight o'clock Peter Jennings special program, ABC is going to come on and give a national apology.

Mr. Dethloff: That's good, because there is a lot of reckless-

Mr. Baxter: It's pretty reckless. I'm scared of the news media.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes, you'd have to be.

Mr. Baxter: If they get after you.

Mr. Dethloff: You really have not had any recourse before. That's a good question. They can nail you.

Mr. Herring: This is really getting off the course, but the changes in the media from the time I worked with them, Roy, and of course, it's been thirty-two years since I've worked with them. But now the paper I worked for, you didn't go out here and get a story, like on Blessey, unless you went to the other side. I mean if I went and got the story from the Feds about what Blessey had done, then I had to go, according to my editor-

Mr. Baxter: The code of ethics.

Mr. Herring: Then I went and talked to Blessey, and said, "Now look, the Feds may have said these things about you and this Point Cadet, et cetera. Now what is your say about that?" Now if I went back to the paper and did not have both sides of the story, they didn't run it. I mean it was just absolutely not done.

Mr. Dethloff: That's right.

Mr. Herring: Now days, it doesn't matter. You can call one side and get that or do whatever you want to.

Mr. Baxter: He won it fair and square, and he had the most prominent lawyer in the South, Boyce Holleman. I'd venture to say that Boyce Holleman's bill was three or four hundred thousand dollars even.

Mr. Herring: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: He demands it and he gets it, but he's good.

Mr. Herring: They were glad to get out of it, too, by the way. [laughter The statements that WLOX had were very, very mild. They said that it was a good agreement, et cetera.

Mr. Baxter: No telling what it cost them. Anyhow, let's get on with what you

Mr. Dethloff: You've watched this whole thing develop from the beginning now to the present. I guess that if I could get some sort of a concluding statement or comments from you. Where do you see things going from now? I don't see much, in person, in growth there at the facility, but I do see a continuation. How is this going to continue to affect the development of this region? What do you think is going to continue to unfold as a result of this Stennis Space Center?

Mr. Baxter: It will be very affirmative. I hate to use this word, but if tomorrow they would come along and the Feds say, "We are closing down everything at the test site," we all still refer to it as the test site.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: It would be devastation to the economy here. I go back to what is coming out of there now. It will continue to grow. Well, the tugboat captain is an example that just passed here. There's a man who was working on a boat somewhere, and then he finally worked himself on up and got to be captain on this boat. He's got a hundred thousand dollar home. It didn't cost him that, but that's what it would bring him now. If you could find anybody with the money to buy it.

Mr. Dethloff: Buy it, yes.

Mr. Baxter: It's helped an awful lot of people. And people are programmed now to this money coming out of the test site-is that the proper word?

Mr. Dethloff: Yes sir.

Mr. Baxter: Personally I hope-hell, I haven't got that much longer to live, which don't make any difference! For the future of the area, I hope it stays. Have you ever thought what would happen if that system was closed down?

Mr. Herring: It would be like you said. I can remember what it was like in '70. For instance, that very place, you know, I showed you where I lived at Bay St. Louis, did you know that the occupancy rate had dropped till that place was 20 percent and went completely bankrupt.

Mr. Dethloff: Is that right?

Mr. Herring: And there was another apartment complex in Bay St. Louis, the same thing happened to them. In fact, I did surveys for apartment complexes, and they dropped to where the occupancy rate was down to around 20 percent, which is just total loss.

Mr. Dethloff: Oh, yes.

Mr. Herring: You know, Roy will tell you, this whole Bay St. Louis, Picayune, Gulfport, they were hurt, seriously hurt in the '70s when they were dropped down to about eight hundred people up here.

Mr. Dethloff: What do you think, I don't know, this is purely reflective I guess, if this hadn't come in here, what kind of world would this be now?

Mr. Baxter: That is a little bit hard to answer, but I will give you my honest opinion. I think possibly the Logtown area, the Gainesville area and all that, would be huge subdivisions.

Mr. Dethloff: For New Orleans?

Mr. Baxter: Yes.

Mr. Dethloff: Is that right?

Mr. Baxter: Honey Island Swamp would probably be a subdivision. I want to tell you a little something about Honey Island Swamp. Mack, I may have mentioned this to you when I was talking with you last time. He was always bringing people to me [laughing], which is all right. I met a lot of nice people. You brought one time a man from the Department of the Interior, and I believe his name was North.

Mr. Herring: I remember him.

Mr. Baxter: Mack brought him down there, and the man wanted to go up in a seaplane and wanted to see the area. I took him up and we flew all around the test site area and then coming back I flew all over the swamp. I'm a country boy and I love nature and I love the swamp. It's a beautiful thing. Ecologically, you can't beat it. I said, "You see that down there?" He said, "Yes." I said, "That's Honey Island Swamp, I hope to God nothing ever happens to that. Why don't ya'll go in there and take that swamp and preserve it for the future?" Well, he said, "I'll put that in my book and I'll take it home with me." Well, it wasn't long after that that they got together with the Wildlife and Fishery of Louisiana and bought up thousands of acres in there, didn't they Mack?

Mr. Herring: Yes, they sure did.

Mr. Baxter: So they preserved it.

Mr. Dethloff: Is that right?

Mr. Baxter: I planted a seed.

Mr. Dethloff: You probably did.

Mr. Baxter: I think it helped.

Mr. Herring: Well, you know, that old boy, I remember him. He definitely was concerned. He said if the government didn't get out here and do something about the land, that it was all going to be gobbled up. It was all going to be gone. So he was out looking-

Mr. Baxter: To finish my statement on the subdivisions, we would have been in trouble in this area with an overgrowth of people and without the proper facilities to take care of them. Because in those particular times, we didn't have subdivision regulations. You could go in and buy a sixty-foot lot, or two, three, four lots and put a septic tank on it that wasn't working. It would have been bad. That's my opinion. If you don't have regulations on it-I served on a county planning commission for a long time. We had a time with these subdivision developers. They didn't

want to comply, they didn't want to put it that's one thing about Diamondhead. We met with them numerous times, and they put in the proper sewage, they put in the proper water system, proper streets. We're taking some credit for that, the county planning commission, because we had regulations by that time.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: We said, "Here's what we want you to do." Paul Montjoy-

Mr. Herring: Yes, I met him.

Mr. Baxter: They all met with us. They did a good job, but they came in here to build something nice that they could make money out of, and they did.

Mr. Herring: I lived out there for a couple of years in a little condo. But I'm going to move out there, Roy, I'm going to settle out there.

Mr. Baxter: But going back to your question, that's about what would have happened. It would have been people, people, people. Too many people for the services.

Mr. Dethloff: Has there been more community cooperation between the Gulf Coast region because of the center or the facility being here?

Mr. Baxter: I don't think there is any question about that.

Mr. Dethloff: I would think so, it would almost have to.

Mr. Baxter: There was even talk one time when I served on the regional planning and Jack Different, you remember Jack?

Mr. Herring: Yes, I remember Jack.

Mr. Baxter: Jack had an idea, and I don't think really that Jack was really wrong. He was talking about a metropolitan area for the whole Coast.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: Bay St. Louis, Ocean Springs, Long Beach, Pass Christian, Gulfport and all. I don't know with the politicians as they are whether it would have ever succeeded or not. They had their individual bailiwicks.

Mr. Dethloff: Territorial?

Mr. Baxter: Territorial. That's the proper way to look at it. I think you are right, this is all cemented still better.

Mr. Dethloff: I kind of sensed that, like the Hurricane Camille thing, you've got to work together, and then the

regional planning boards and so forth.

Mr. Herring: It's needed to control things.

Mr. Baxter: Now regional planning was organized because of NASA.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: B.U. Jones [the regional planning committee.

Mr. Herring: B.U. Jones, yes.

Mr. Baxter: I was one of the first charter members of that.

Mr. Herring: Remember we used to meet like over in Slidell and meet at a different place at a different time.

Mr. Baxter: Regional planning did a lot of good.

Mr. Herring: That was not easy to bring about. Roy is bringing up a good point. See, this regional planning commission, we had to get special, from the state of Louisiana, had to get special legislation in order that St. Tammany Parish could become part of an organization that was predominately in Mississippi. But to create a planning commission that crossed the state's boundaries was difficult.

Mr. Dethloff: When was that, '74?

Mr. Baxter: I think it started about '63 or '64. It started about the time we moved Mack, which was '64.

Mr. Herring: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: We first met up there at NASA a few times.

Mr. Herring: Yes, I remember that.

Mr. Dethloff: That's good.

Mr. Baxter: It did some good. What they did, they had Jackson County in it, Harrison County, Hancock County, Pearl River County, and St. Tammany Parish. That was the list, wasn't it?

Mr. Herring: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: I think it did some good.

Mr. Herring: Well, Henry, it did this too. It had people from all of those entities planning and working together. A lot of it would have been rivalry.

Mr. Baxter: I think you are right. It brought the parishes and counties together and the people. They had a common goal.

Mr. Dethloff: Yes.

Mr. Baxter: To build up a control bill.

Mr. Dethloff: That's good. Well, that's given me a lot of good ideas, I think, that I can use. I sure appreciate your help and comments. I'm glad the tugboat captain passed by.

Mr. Baxter: Well, we can ride to Annie's in my car.

Editor's Note: At this point the interview was concluded.