

T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection

ABSTRACT

INTERVIEWEE NAME: Belonie Scioneaux

COLLECTION: 4700.2090

IDENTIFICATION: Vacherie, Louisiana native [b. circa 1931]; Chackbay resident [d. 2011]; former shipyard employee; former plantation worker; Catholic

INTERVIEWER: Allie Philips

SERIES: Bayou Lafourche

INTERVIEW DATE: October 17, 2010

FOCUS DATES: 1930s-1950s [childhood and early career]; 2010

ABSTRACT:

Tape 3936

Interview conducted at Nocko's Deli [Houma?], Lafourche Parish, Louisiana; Scioneaux grew up in St. James Parish [Vacherie, Louisiana]; nothing but sugarcane [?] there; he grew up with colored people, white people, together on big plantation [name?]; started working in field at thirteen; made \$1.40 a day; work day was 5 am until nightfall; worked "like a slave" and stayed on plantation twenty-four years; moved to Edgard Plantation [Evergreen?]; stayed one month and came back; said "gotta try to get something better than that" and so got married; marriage was a mistake, and "that's a big mistake to make"; Scioneaux moved back to Luling, Louisiana [?], got a job at Avondale shipyard; worked eleven years and quit; had to because of stomach ailments, "couldn't eat because my stomach always hurt"; "I knew what had gone on," it was that [asbestos ?], and it was bad; but they pay you money; then went to Edgard with wife; she started messing around; moved back to Lutch, got offered job in Luling and moved to Luling; [almost inaudible to 3:48] [she started have men come; went to work one day, got idea to go back home; pusher said you can't go home; left I never came back, which was lucky ?]; Scioneaux goes to church "about every Sunday"; drinks too [laugh]; hunter, prefers deer and rabbit; has automatic 10-gauge [?]; twenty-gauge double barrel, and a rife that holds eighteen bullets; shotgun single shot, 20-gauge; went to church but not religious school; married a woman [second wife?] from Baker, Louisiana [Audrey Kraemer Scioneaux ?], who used to be religious, asked him to go to church with her; after she died he stayed home for a while, then started going to church on his own; she died in his arms [?]; takes it hard; [almost inaudible to 7:26] [Scioneaux recalls one time going to [?], we brought six big bottle of coke and full bag of potato chips; he told wife "we aren't going on no picnic we're going fishing!" she ate the food and then fell asleep on boat; she work up with two guys coming with [granavalle – some regional food?]; buy a sack/got it for free; started eating it "lord have mercy"; she was a good woman]; interviewer asks Scioneaux what is his idea of home; he replies it's [time off?]; "my [?], she's there with me", gets everything ready for me; but she don't cook because she's going to burn in; when Scioneaux cooks he uses a crock pot; has meat in his freezer; Scioneaux tells story about

shooting a rabbit outside his back door the previous night, putting it in the freezer; Scioneaux's favorite thing to do is hunt; "that was my best"; interviewer asks Scioneaux if he has any important songs or prayers; "I don't know"; "I hear them singing, but I'm not man of English"; [speaks in French]; [Scioneaux says what he did yesterday in French]; to summarize: yesterday he worked here [Nocko's, daughter's restaurant], got a [barroom ?] on other side of his house, called [kenique ?], went home, "pow, I killed my rabbit"; [teaching interviewers French, from here to end of interview is intermittent conversation]; "I love to fish, I love to hunt"; Scioneaux learned "a little bit of English [in school], that's it"; Scioneaux still speaks French with a lot of people; most people over here [in Lafourche Parish] know how to speak French; "they got to, that's all they got"; on Cajun French: "ya aren't going to understand nothing"; Scioneaux has two surviving kids [Judy Cortez, Linda Authement]; had four, Debra [Sanders] died, boy [Chris Paul Scioneaux] got killed; [when you get old take care of yourself ?]; loves the people black or white, smiles every morning; says "thank you lord, you got me up this morning!"; Scioneaux discusses best dishes on menu, recommends chicken wings and peas; no siblings left; two kids, and step daughters left; Scioneaux's church is not too big, Victory [Assembly] of God Church [Vacherie, Louisiana]; going there since he has a kid "most every Sunday"; to miss a Sunday means something is going on; not in choir; Scioneaux no fan of Elvis; doesn't have "Sunday best"; just puts on a coat for church; interviewer asks about changes to bayou; Scioneaux says, "I don't know"; in morning, "I look which way the sun comes up, I turn and run the other way"; growing up one brother wasn't like us [?], but "I love everybody"; as kids would play in bayou and plantation's two big ponds, go swimming but never thought about alligators; acted as water boy on plantation; get up at 5 am, hook up mule to wagon, go get barrel of water every day; about fifty people working; Scioneaux would bring water and breakfast to people in field; also at dinnertime; momma and daddy both worked; two brothers; one got killed [working there ?]; mother [died ?] of heart attack; never served in wars; took down house where he was born.

TAPES: 1 (T3936)

TOTAL PLAYING TIME: 24 minutes

PAGES INDEX: 3 pages

OTHER MATERIALS: Interviewer synopsis and index; Biographical information sheet; Obituary

RESTRICTIONS: None