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Transcript of DARE Interview (1966): Heber Springs, Arkansas; Primary Informant AR036 (Tape 0053-S1)

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INTRODUCTION: The following was recorded from Dictionary of American Regional English, tape zero zero five three, side one.

5 FIELDWORKER: This is a tape recording of Mr. Jay Rome [beep] made May the nineteenth, nineteen sixty-six, in Heber Springs, Arkansas, by [beep]. Mr. [beep] is almost deaf, so it's necessary to shout at him when one talks. You told me you've done a lot of fishing around here, so I want you to tell me about where you go fishing around here.

INFORMANT: Well I used, the most places that I caught fish were in the river before, before the, they uh, built the lake.

FIELDWORKER: What river is that?

10 INFORMANT: The Little Red. Little Red River.

FIELDWORKER: Little Red River. All right, and what kind of fish did you catch around here?

INFORMANT: Well, all kinds mostly. Caught uh, cat, more cats than anything else. And bass. Crappy. Red Horse. And jack salmon.

FIELDWORKER: Now the jack salmon is not the same as just a regular salmon, is he?

15 INFORMANT: Well no. No.

FIELDWORKER: Well what's a jack salmon?

INFORMANT: Well it's a, it's built, they're built just like a salmon. But they have teeth here in front, sharp teeth. And they get up to weighing ten, twelve pounds.

20 FIELDWORKER: I see. Uh, did you find that any special time of the day was best for fishing, or did it matter?

INFORMANT: Well I did most of my fishing at night, for catfish, a trot line. I'd sometimes put out three or four lines. Bait with live bait. Perch. Minnows.

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm. About what size were these catfish you'd catch?

25 INFORMANT: Well all the way from a pound and a half up to fifty-eight pounds, the largest one I ever caught.

FIELDWORKER: That's a big fish. [laughter] I've heard that catfish are, if they stick their fins in you, it'll hurt. Is this true {that they have a special—

INFORMANT: Absolutely.} You bet. It is true.

FIELDWORKER: It is true. You ever have that happen?

30 INFORMANT: Yes, I been finned. Yeah.

FIELDWORKER: I've heard about that and I never have, just wondered if that was really true.

INFORMANT: I'll tell you a freach, a freak catch I made.

FIELDWORKER: What was that?

35 INFORMANT: I uh, put a line out above Winkley Bridge, and uh, went and, I ran it the next morning and there wasn't very many baits gone, just a few. And I came back to town, and at noon, I decided I'd go back and run it again. And uh, they was a fellow by the name of [beep] says, "Oh, I'd like to go with you," and I says, "Well come ahead." Well he was a, he was, he fished quite a bit. When we got down there he says, "Let me run the line," and I say, "OK." And he started to run the line. And I saw he had a good fish. And uh, I saw he wasn't handling it like I
40 did. So I got right up in the front end of the boat where he was, right at him. And uh, he uh, kept going up there and (directly) he pulled that fish up and let the line loose a little bit, and the fish, the hook dropped out, it'd torn a whole, you know, in the mouth. And he just dropped out and he had his mouth open and he just falled down. I says, "Well grab my feet," and he grabbed my feet and I run down there and I got that gentleman in my hand, pulled him in. [laughter].
45 Thirty-eight pounds.

FIELDWORKER: Boy that's some way to catch fish, I'll tell you. [laughter]

INFORMANT: The only time I ever had that kind of luck, (xx), just one time.

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm. Well you have a picture here that was made, now what kind, how many fish did y'all catch then in that picture?

50 INFORMANT: I just, I caught them myself. Wasn't anybody with me.

FIELDWORKER: How many did you catch?

INFORMANT: That's about seven.

FIELDWORKER: Seven. And how much did you tell me those weighed?

INFORMANT: A hundred and thirty-one pounds.

55 FIELDWORKER: A hundred and thirty-one pounds {of seven—
INFORMANT: You want to,} I can tell you what each one weighed.
FIELDWORKER: Oh you know it straight down, eh?
INFORMANT: Yeah I know what, what each one {weighed.
FIELDWORKER: What's that?}

60 INFORMANT: The largest one weighed thirty-si-, thirty-five. The next one weighed twenty-five.
The next one weighed nineteen. And I had two that weighed fourteen, and two that weighed
seven.
FIELDWORKER: That was some, some fishing, I'll tell you. Uh, on these trot lines, now how
many hooks do these trot lines have?

65 INFORMANT: I generally put out about fifty-five, fifty to fifty-five, sometimes sixty if there's a
wide place in the river. Generally around fifty hooks.
FIELDWORKER: I see. Well now, I understand that you used to run a store around here, is that
right?
INFORMANT: Yes, yes.

70 FIELDWORKER: What kind of store was that?
INFORMANT: Grocery.
FIELDWORKER: Grocery store. And you sold that store?
INFORMANT: Oh yeah, I sold that uh, about ten years ago. A little more. Eleven years ago.
FIELDWORKER: I see.

75 INFORMANT: It's uh, the store that I sold (up there's) right on the corner, you know where the
courthouse is, don't you? That uh, Start Grocery right down there on the corner, I s-, I sold that
to him. He's a, a son to my present wife.
FIELDWORKER: Oh I see, I see, uh-huh. Um...
INFORMANT: A friend of mine went with me one night to gigging.

80 FIELDWORKER: When you were gigging fish?
INFORMANT: Yeah, or spearing, either one you might want to call it. And I got a small sucker, it
was a redhorse, uh, on my gig, and it's hard to get, get it off. It's, I'd stuck it in so deep, and
couldn't, I was trying to get it off and just as I got it off I saw a catfish lying on the bottom right
in front of me. The water was about three and a half, four feet deep, is on a, would you say
85 *shoal or rapid?*

FIELDWORKER: Either one.

INFORMANT: (All right). And uh, so I got to it just quick as I could and ran my gig in and jumped out on top of it. And uh, I wrestled him around there a little while and he got away from me and I never could. I was out in the water and uh, this uh, party that was with me didn't know how to
90 handle the boat to get around there, so I couldn't get to him, and he got away. And you want tell what he said about it?

FIELDWORKER: Yes.

INFORMANT: The fish I think weighed between thirty-five and forty pounds, but he told it weighed over a hundred. [laughter]

95 FIELDWORKER: That's a little bit of an exaggeration {probably.

INFORMANT: Yeah I} think so. He uh, he moved here, he uh, born out here at (xx), and he moved here about two years after I did. And uh, they, we had a young, young lady here at one time, course she's dead now, she's, she was uh, has been dead about a year, but she was here at every reunion, and there was uh, seventy-eight reunions. I missed one. We had the las-, last
100 one was seventy-eight, I missed one, I've been to seventy-seven. And so when she died, well he went to the, he went to the Brittain office and told them that he had been to every one of those reunions. [laughter] And I know that he came here two years after I did. [laughter]

FIELDWORKER: And so you know he hadn't been to all of them.

INFORMANT: [laughter] But he wanted to get e—

105 FIELDWORKER: He wanted to get in there {(xx). Oh, me.

INFORMANT: I had the fish from that guy here in town, laid them out on the floor and I sold them. I, I went with Ed [beep] up to Chur-, Chilo and we put out four trot lines and we caught two hundred and twenty pounds of fish. And I brought those down here and, and I had license to sell fish.

110 FIELDWORKER: Uh-huh.

INFORMANT: And, and I sold them. And I, I don't, I don't know the sizes of them 'cause I didn't weigh them and I didn't remember the sizes, but the largest one weighed about twenty-five pound.

FIELDWORKER: Boy, {and you had—

115 INFORMANT: And I had} another one about, 'bout eighteen pound. And then the rest of them run, would go from six to eight and four and five and all along there. I ha-, we had several, I had a boatload of them.

FIELDWORKER: Two hundred and twenty pounds.

INFORMANT: Yeah. Two hundred and twenty pound.

120 FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm. And you sold these at the grocery store.

INFORMANT: And put out, put out four trot lines.

FIELDWORKER: Uh-huh. If I order fish in the, in the s-, downtown here now, what kind of fish would they serve me normally here?

INFORMANT: Uh—

125 FIELDWORKER: Is it catfish {mainly?

INFORMANT: Yeah,} yeah they serve catfish.

FIELDWORKER: {Do they serve anything else? They're not allow-, they're not} allowed to ser-, to serve game fish. They can't serve game fish. Do they serve anything else?

INFORMANT: No, I don't—they also serve buffalo.

130 FIELDWORKER: But mainly they sells catfish.

INFORMANT: They ser-, serve buffalo, but they don't buy any buffalo, they just buy catfish to ser-, serve, to sell. Did I tell you about that four-pound bass I caught? Now that's a freak catch, I just caught that with just my pole, rod and reel. I was fishing in a little lake, a small lake up here, and I caught a, I caught a bass way, I just guessed at it, about a pound. And I hooked him
135 through the side of the mouth and the hook stuck out like that. And there's a four-pound bass come up and tried swallow it and he got hooked on there and I pulled both of them in.
[laughter]

FIELDWORKER: Is that a true story?

INFORMANT: I, I can prove (that's all true), I-I can prove that because a man was with me. He's,
140 he's right here in town. I can prove that to you.

FIELDWORKER: Now that's some story, {I'll tell you.

INFORMANT: (xx) [beep]'s got a telephone and if you want to call him on it we just call him and—

FIELDWORKER: That's all right. [laughter] Two on one hook.

145 INFORMANT: Yeah, two fish on one hook.

FIELDWORKER: That's unusual, you wouldn't do that often, {(I tell you).

INFORMANT: No, I never} did that but one time in my life. And I've fished ever since I was twelve years old, well, ten years old. I used to catch fish in Kansas on the little, little river that we had there.

150 FIELDWORKER: Tell me the different ways that you can catch fish.

INFORMANT: Well y-, a trot line.

FIELDWORKER: That's just a whole series of {hooks.

INFORMANT: Bank} hooks.

FIELDWORKER: Now what's a back hook?

155 INFORMANT: Blank, bank, B-A-N-K, bank, tied to limbs.

FIELDWORKER: Oh, I see, tie them to a tree.

INFORMANT: Tie them to a little, uh, a little small limb that goes out in the water, and then let it down to proper depth you want and then just tie it to the limb, put a, put a perch on it or minner or live bait sometimes, (xx) fish that way. Then uh, we'd have a throw line that have
160 maybe four, five hooks on it. You'd tie it to a limb at the bank, and uh, bait it up and then, uh, weight on it and just throw it out in the, in the shoal, generally where we fish with that.

FIELDWORKER: Mm-hmm.

INFORMANT: (xx). I caught a ten-pound jack salmon in Cedar Creek shoal, where the water was swift and about three and a half feet deep.

165 FIELDWORKER: A ten-pound salmon.

INFORMANT: Yeah. Jack salmon.

FIELDWORKER: Jack salmon, yeah.

INFORMANT: And uh, I was up on a ledge of rock and I, he, he just pulled me so hard, I had a
170 twenty-foot pole, cane pole, see, and I had a, for bait I had a, a big red perch as big as your hand, I used that for the bait. Hooked the perch right through the front of the eyes, throw it in there and just let it float down. And uh, when I got him to the water's edge, I-I was played out and I had to call on somebody else to go down there and get him.

FIELDWORKER: (xx)

INFORMANT: But the man's dead that, that uh, went down there help me—

175 FIELDWORKER: Well then these jack salmon you say, they really put up a good fight.

INFORMANT: Oh boy, they do, they put up a fight. They really put up a fight.

FIELDWORKER: But that's a lot of fun when you're fishing.

INFORMANT: Yeah.

FIELDWORKER: It'll wear you out, like you say, but it is a lot of fun.

