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Interviewee: Mrs. Thomas A. Parker  
Interviewer: Charlotte Capers

Title: An interview with Mrs. Thomas A. Parker, July 27, 1973  
/ interviewed by Charlotte Capers

OH 75-16

PARKER, Mrs. Sally A.

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note: transcript not edited by informant

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**MDAH**

OH 75 - 16 PARKER, Mrs. Thomas A.

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OH  
75-16

NARRATOR: Mrs. Thomas A. Parker  
INTERVIEWER: Miss Charlotte Capers, Department of Archives and History  
DATE: July 27, 1973  
PLACE: "Windy Hill", home of Mr. and Mrs. T. A. Parker, Bayou DeLisle,  
Harrison County, Mississippi  
SUBJECT: DeLisle, An Old French Settlement on the Wolfe River,  
Harrison County, Mississippi

Capers: This is Charlotte Capers, at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Olin Clark, on East Second Street, Pass Christian, Mississippi. The date is July 27, 1973. I am testing before interviewing a lady who lives at DeLisle, an old French settlement on the Wolfe River, and her name is Mrs. Thomas A. Parker, P-A-R-K-E-R, and the county is Harrison - Harrison County, Mississippi. Many thanks.

Parker: ...Town was in Morehouse Parish, it's the county seat, Bastrop.

Capers: Now this is Bastrop? Spell that for us.

Parker: B-A-S-T-R-O-P. I was born there. My mother's people were all Democrats, and she happened to fall in love with the only Republican in town. He was the son of a surgeon, and she hated his father, and she often amused all of the children by saying, "I didn't like Dr. Gray," or "I think he was a fine doctor even though he was a Republican." They were Republicans from South Carolina. That was very unusual, you know....

Capers: Well, it certainly was.

Parker: ...Back in 1863, about. So I grew up with the Republicans and the Democrats. The Democrats were better than the Republicans. I still think they are.

Capers: And the Ku Klux Klan....

Parker: ...And the Klan came along later. My father-in-law, John M. Parker, was governor at that time, from 1920 to 1924....

Capers: Governor of Louisiana.

Parker: That's right. So, when he was governor these men in north Louisiana were murdered after a baseball game, and it all seemed to indicate that it was done by Klansmen, and the brutality was something you couldn't describe. So, the facts came out. My father-in-law put up about \$150,000 of his own, and he got the FBI and everybody else to help him. Finally, he had enough to indict a man or two and then, when the court trial was set, the judge - it was found out that the judge was a Klansman - and he wouldn't preside. So they could not - they never brought it to court.

Capers: Isn't that fascinating!

Parker: Even though I know who did it, and he knew who did it - the case was never tried.

(Tape Interference)

Capers: Well, let me get back to your story, because I'm quite interested in getting you here to this place.

Parker: Oh! All right. You see out there? Before the hurricane there was a boat house, and we used to come and anchor at the boat house where the water was deep.

Capers: Well, where did you live then?

Parker: We lived in New Orleans then. See, I married - I've been married fifty-four years, so I married in 1919. So we lived in New Orleans until our children were grown and married, and then we sold our house there and moved over here.

Capers: When was that?

Parker: 1945. But we bought this house in 1932. That was before our son was born - he was our third child. And we anchored our little boat off there and fished a lot. Tom had promised me a country home. I said, "All right, I have found my country home - right up there on the hill." He said, "But, Sally, we can't buy that, we couldn't afford it." This was the year of depression, remember, 1932.

Capers: I do remember.

Parker: So I said, "Well, I'm not going to live in anything else!" Wasn't I a stinker?

Capers: Yes, but you made your point, didn't you!

Parker: So I made my point, and it took us a year and a half to buy this. Unfortunately, the man, the owner, was a retired lawyer from New Orleans by the name of D'Avencourt. And he and his wife were living here - she was from Panama - and they were making payments, as most people buy the property ....

Capers: Excuse me, could you spell his name?

Parker: De Avencourt - I don't believe I can spell it - DeAvencour - I guess.

Capers: Thank you. The transcriber will have difficulty.

Parker: Yes. (Laughs.) That makes me nervous!

- Capers: You should see...some...well, you'll get to see it, and throw it away or not, as you see fit ....
- Parker: No, that's all right, Dear ....
- Capers: ... What amuses me is the results we get from the poor little girl trying to make heads and tails out of proper names. You get the funniest spelling in the world.
- Parker: Oh, of course you do.
- Capers: So, I have to interrupt ....
- Parker: So the poor fellow fell off of the L & N train and was killed, and the property came on the market. So Tom said, "Well, I'll go back and see if they want to sell it." And Mrs. Dedeaux, Mrs. Blannie Dedeaux, who was a Thompson, born a ....
- Capers: Could you spell it, Dedeaux?
- Parker: D-e-D-e-a-u-x. DeDeaux....
- Capers: Thank you.
- Parker: And they were a very old family here. She and her family had owned this place for ninety-three years at that time, in 1932. And when Tom bought the place and paid cash for it, she cried. She said she'd sold it three times before, and it had always come back on her hands. We were just slap-happy, just really happy about getting it. We came out here and there was not a screen on the place, I mean, it was just real "country." The inside had to be redone to make it a little bit more livable.
- Capers: Do you know anything about the age of that perfectly gorgeous oak?
- Parker: It has been told to me that that oak is six hundred years old.
- Capers: That's one of the biggest, oldest looking oaks I've ever seen ....
- Parker: All of the oaks in DeLisle are the same. They're beautiful. Did you notice them as you came over - Bayou DeLisle? They are beautiful, they are beautiful!
- Clark: I have always remembered the oaks here as a child.
- Capers: Well, these are things that should be of record somewhere!
- Parker: They should be recorded....
- Capers: They should be recorded.

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- Parker: ... This tree was, we were told, was six hundred years old. And I do believe it. That makes it before Columbus came.
- Capers: Now, we are sitting here on the porch and we are facing, is this the Wolfe River?
- Parker: This is Bayou DeLisle right in front of us ....
- Capers: Bayou DeLisle ....
- Parker: ... And that doesn't look treacherous but it is twenty-three feet deep.
- Capers: Yes, and that's ....
- Parker: And in front of - if you'd follow the lines of the marsh, you'd see green and then more brown. Right in there is another bay ... river. That's the Wolfe River ....
- Capers: Yes.
- Parker: And on the other side of Wolfe River is Bayou Arcadia, and then comes Bayou Portage. In other words, you crossed three big bridges before you got out here.
- Capers: Now, let's spell DeLisle - De ....
- Parker: D-e-L-i-s-l-e. We used to call that "lyle" when we wore the hose.
- Capers: Yes, lisle hose!
- Parker: Lisle hose, but they call it "DeLeel".
- Capers: Well, now, the legend, or the story, or the facts are pretty much on the little historical marker out here. Do you have any information about the earliest settlers here?
- Parker: This is another question I wanted to ask you about. In copying things that are very old and falling to pieces, what is the best method? Is it safe to copy old papers, because I have a number of very old letters I'd like to copy.
- Capers: Well, we would like to talk to you about any letters you have, and we would like to say that ....
- Parker: Oh, and this morning I was looking in my - I have one of these big aluminum trunks which I keep all my papers in, because I have been the family historian, and I've gotten all the family data on both sides of the family, the Parkers and mine - and I was looking in that trunk this morning and suddenly, using only one arm, the whole thing collapsed, and I lost the letters from Harris Dickson to my father-in-law, and I wanted to have those copied.

- Capers: Well, now, let me make a suggestion. You should have them copied. But you should, for their protection, I would like to invite you to place your papers in the Archives and let us supply you, without charge, copies of all of them so that they would be protected from loss by fire, use, and any of your children who wanted to use them could come and use them; but if they just wanted the information from them, we would give you as many copies as you'd need.
- Parker: That's all I want.
- Capers: That's a service of our Department. It's a service to the people of Mississippi to collect manuscript material, because normally if a scholar is doing research and doesn't know exactly where to go, he will come to the Department of Archives and History.
- Parker: Right. I know.
- Capers: It's a reasonable place for him to come. Jean used to work there. Did you know that she was once my helper? Isn't it wonderful!
- Parker: I didn't know that.
- Clark: I had a fascinating ....
- Parker: I know she has a very interesting family.
- Capers: She has an interesting family.
- Clark: I had a fascinating job one summer during the War when Charlotte was Acting Director and Dr. McCain was in Italy. She put me in the "dungeon" as we called it - where all the old newspapers are - and I went through the Natchez papers from 1800 to 1850, compiling dates on births, marriages, deaths, etc., for the ladies who came in to look up "great-great-grandmother."
- Parker: Right.
- Clark: And I had fun doing it.
- Capers: Well, go on and talk about the papers some more, because we are quite interested in collecting manuscripts.
- Parker: Which papers?
- Capers: Any papers - family papers that you have which would be in diaries, account books of a plantation or any kind of business that was run - this would be social history, economic history, agricultural history, land transactions, papers like this ....
- Parker: Yes, I can understand.
- Capers: ... And we would ....

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Parker: Those go back to the Spanish Grant, you see.

Capers: Well, this is exactly what we are for, and I would like to urge you to think about that, because there - I hate to be the voice of doom and gloom - but there are so many losses of papers....

Parker: Oh, I know about that! I know that - my family has lost them.

Capers: ... All the time. And families - there are losses because children are not that interested until they get older, and by then the papers are gone.

Parker: Do you know that my children are not even interested!

Capers: They don't care, but they will care ....

Parker: And I've spent thirty years in collecting data.

Capers: Why couldn't you give your papers to the Department of Archives and History?

Parker: I never thought about it.

Capers: It's a service we offer in a building designed for protection.

Parker: Of course, I'm an amateur. I really didn't know how to do it, but I put all of the records together.

Capers: Are these genealogical family records?

Parker: Yes, that's what I'm talking about.

Capers: Yes, well, now that's interesting. That's not, what I'm saying is, that's not the only thing that's interesting.

Parker: That is not - no, that is not the only interesting thing.

Capers: That is more interesting to you.

Parker: I think this is more what you want - there.

Capers: Right. But the whole thing fills out the story of a family, and ....

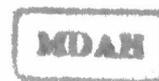
Parker: I read the most ....

Capers: ... And a family fills out the story of a region....

Parker: ... I read the most interesting book. It was written about Richland County in South Carolina, and it told about the boll weevil coming into South Carolina, and from then on they had panic practically, economical panic. And the fathers got together, and they decided to send the most trustworthy young men into Mississippi where all of these

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beautiful stories of the fertile soil existed, and how many bales of cotton they could grow to the acre, and that sort of thing. Oh, they were fabulous tales, but they selected twenty young men to represent them and sent them with a certain amount of money into Mississippi, and they landed in Woodville, Mississippi, in 1800, and that's where they found all these things to be true. And I found that quite an interesting book.

- Capers: I think that's fascinating. Now have you any connections? Jean said you'd just come back from Natchez.
- Parker: I've just gotten back from Natchez.
- Capers: Do you have family there, or friends there?
- Parker: My husband's family came from Natchez. We just love the history of Natchez. We just love it, and right now they are filming ....
- Capers: Oh! On our property ....
- Parker: They are filming "Huckleberry Finn." On your property? Which is that?
- Capers: The state's property - Jefferson College. They're filming this weekend.
- Parker: Oh! Jefferson College.
- Capers: Yes. Of course, they've filmed all over the place, and they've filmed in the - what? - Town Hall, or something.
- Parker: Dunleith Court, and D'Evereux. D'Evereux - that was our home, you know. Auburn. Auburn, not Dunleith, Auburn.
- Capers: Well, we were quite interested - I was down there ....
- Clark: Oh! It was Daddy's friend. O. J. DeDeaux.
- Capers: Yes.
- Parker: O. J. DeDeaux? Yes ....
- Clark: ... And Sylvestre. They were fishing ....
- Parker: He was a lawyer in Gulfport.
- Clark: They were fishing pals.
- Parker: Yes.
- Capers: Well, now, let's go back to your family - your husband's family and - D'Evereux?
- Parker: It's really pronounced D-e-v-e-r-o-o. Most people call it D-e-v-e-r-o.

Capers: D-e-v-e-r-o-o. Well, that's what's good about a tape ....

Parker: But D-e-v-e-r-o-o is Irish, and that is correct because they came from Northern Ireland.

Capers: Could you tell me something about your husband's association with D'Evereux?

Parker: Well, my ... I'll show you the latest picture. Miss Deborah, will you show her the Mary D'Evereux over my mantle? Do you mind looking at the portrait?

Capers: No, I'd love to. O. K. Wait a minute. I've got to stop my machine.

(Tape Interruption)

Parker: ... And her brother lived in Ireland....

Capers: Now, wait a minute. That portrait in the living room of your home here at Windy Hill is Mary D'Evereux.

Parker: Mary D'Evereux. And she's about five generations back from my children.

Capers: And this is the D'Evereux of the Natchez D'Evereux.

Parker: Natchez D'Evereux.

Capers: Now, where did this lady come from?

Parker: From my father-in-law. He had it. He had her portrait. The house burned, and to save her portrait, she was thrown out of the window and the frame broke all to pieces. That's just a little incident.

Capers: Was this D'Evereux that burned?

Parker: No, it was another home, I suppose.

Capers: Another home.

Parker: Yes. Because she was married again. She was married to St. John Elliott, her first marriage, St. John Elliott, and it was about that time ... In Natchez they will tell you that it was her nephew who built D'Evereux for her, but we have it in our history that it was the brother, General D'Evereux built it for her. I really don't know. But General D'Evereux, in the histories I've looked up of North Carolina, was one of the wealthiest men in the whole United States, and he owned more slaves than anybody else in the United States.

Capers: And that's supposed to be the most ....

Parker: I cannot prove that.

Capers: No, we can't ... well, that's ... we're not working now with ...

Parker: That's just tradition.

Capers: We're working with tradition.

Parker: That's right!

Capers: But is it not so that the architectural proportions of D'Evereux are said to be the most perfect in Natchez?

Parker: An architect in New Orleans, a very fine architect in New Orleans, was up in that vicinity, and he went to Afton Villa and he said it was a mess. He said it was just a conglomeration of all of the old Victorian horrors. And it was. Of course it was lovely to look at, but as for perfection, they say D'Evereux was the most perfect from an architectural standpoint. And his wife was so angry with him, because he went to settle the estate of Stephen Duncan in Natchez, and they told him he could have anything he wanted in the mansion, and he took the statue of Robert E. Lee, and a hat-tree - what do you call those things you hang hats on? That was a bear climbing up a tree, you know....

Capers: Is it an etagere, or something wierd like that?

Parker: No. It isn't even that fancy, it isn't even that nice.

Capers: Hat rack ....

Parker: It's a tree, with a bear and two little cubs going up the tree.

Clark: Hall rack ....

Capers: Yes....

Parker: ... And to me, it's a nightmare. And he took that, and his wife said to me, "Sally, he could have gotten two hundred fifty thousand dollars for these two pieces. Instead, he took these two pieces from the Steve Duncan estate, which was turned over to the city of Natchez. That was Auburn.

Capers: That was Auburn, the Stephen Duncan place. Now that, too, was associated with the people I interviewed down there.

Parker: That's right. Well, Stephen Duncan was the son of the man whose portrait hangs in Auburn.

Capers: Yes. And the Minors are all kin to the same people. Stephen Minor - they're kin to the McKittrick ladies - MacNeil ....

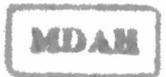
Parker: I have Robert E. Lee here on the table. I put him there because he keeps the table top from falling down ....

Capers: That's very good. Now, I want to go back to the portrait that I like in here. Now do you ... it's not signed ....

- Parker: She's lovely. She's lovely. No, it's not signed. I took that to ....
- Capers: Do you know anything about it? It's primitive, but it's a good one.
- Parker: ... To the best ... can't think of her name right now, but I took it to this artist that was head of the Art Association of America at that time, in New Orleans, she lived in New Orleans, and I said, "Do you think this is worth restoring (because it did have a hole in it and needed a little work done on it)?" And she said, "There's not but one lady in New Orleans who could restore this for you, has sense enough to restore it without ruining it." So she told me who it was - Miss Wood - and I took it to Miss Wood and she restored it for me. She told me, she said, "That is priceless." And I said, "Have you any idea of who, of what age it is or who did it?" I told her the history of it, that it was from Natchez. She said, "No, a hundred fifty years ago they did not sign portraits." That's what she told me.
- Capers: Jean, you know my portraits. I have some beautiful portraits, and they are about that, well they're not that old, well, they're 1840, but they are unsigned, but they are quite stunning.
- Parker: Well I figured this was 1813, or maybe 1812, because I have the date of the baby's birth - you can see the baby in her arms.
- Capers: Yes. And who is the baby?
- Parker: The baby is - she married - she was Mary Jane Millican. The mother married first St. John Elliott, Mary D'Evereux married St. John Elliott, and she had Elliott children. Then it came down to a second marriage by John Millican, who was from North Carolina, and she had ... that little baby who was Mary Jane, Mary Jane Millican. Mary Jane married Robert Parker, so that's where the name starts.
- Capers: Yes. Among the many things that we should do, and we don't have the people and the time to do it, but we should visit homes in Mississippi and make some sort of catalog of these portraits.
- Parker: That would be great.
- Capers: Because there're some ... I don't know ....
- Parker: Now, I think she's perfectly beautiful....
- Capers: She is, and in my opinion, she's valuable. But we don't have anything to prove anything by, and that's the same way with mine....
- Parker: No, not a thing....
- Capers: Well, we had a man named Mr. Hoffer come down to the State Historical Museum and restore the portraits in the Museum. Now, how good Mr. Hoffer is, I don't know. He's from New York and he's third generation

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restorationist of paintings. His qualifications include the fact that he had done some restoration work for some of the museums in New York that are good museums. So anyway, he came down, and I sent one of my personal portraits back to New York with him, and he said anytime I wanted to sell them, he was sure that he could. But they're just pretty. They're not signed, and they're not of historical personages ....

Parker: Well, I'd rather have a pretty one. I don't ... regardless of signing it.

Capers: Well, I don't care either, except I was thinking about the value. As long as I'm sitting there looking at it, it's fine, but if anybody wanted to do anything ....

Parker: To prove it ....

Capers: They just can't ....

Parker: You can't do a thing. And we can't do a thing about that. It's just what we were told.

Capers: Well, that is kind of the ... excuse me, but that is kind of the interesting thing about this oral history program. It is all heresay, and you know it's heresay, and you don't claim it's anything but heresay, but you get some interesting information that makes, gives a personality to a place.

Parker: Yes, but you can't imagine how frustrating that is. For thirty years, I've worked on lies my family told me were truths, only to reach the end of the road and decide there was not a word of truth.

Capers: Well, that is something that I hate to be disillusioning to people, but my work has taught me that most of what we all hear from our families is not true.

Parker: It isn't true.

Capers: And if you have any regard for the record, which, of course, we have to have - that's the only thing we have regard for - you're going to make people perfectly furious because they have these marvelous things that have been handed down to them that aren't true at all. They just grow with each generation.

Parker: I know.

(Tape Interference)

Parker: Well, I have that little bit right over there. All I have to do is ask my husband if it's all right to let my deeds go out of the house, you know.

Capers: Yes. Well, I don't blame you.

Parker: Because, I think - I think they belong to the Archives of Mississippi.

Capers: I do, but I also ....

Parker: I have that feeling.

Capers: I appreciate that. I also feel that your other papers would be of interest to us if you have a trunk full of papers that the children might want at some time. You'd better put them somewhere they can come get them.

Parker: I don't think they're valuable enough for the Archives.

Capers: Well, we ....

Parker: My father-in-law gave all of his things - I mean, not father-in-law, but after his death, the boys gave to Dr. Hamilton, who was head of the Archives at the University of North Carolina ....

Capers: Yes. J. G. deRoulhac Hamilton. We used to call him "Ransack" Hamilton.

Parker: Hamilton ... well, maybe he is, but ....

Capers: He was fine.

Parker: They're supposed to be very safe there.

Capers: They are.

Parker: ... And he gave many papers on Huey Long.

Capers: Right. They are very safe there. I ... we ... Mississippians were simply jealous that they didn't have anyone going out and getting them.

Parker: Well, I'm so sorry. I'm awfully sorry the boys didn't give them to Mississippi instead. I'm very sorry, but at that moment, we'd read how safe they had this room which was free of insects, free of decay, free of everything, you know, mildew and all. So I told Tom, I said, "Dr. Hamilton is coming to McGehee's School," (where our girls went to school) "and he's going to review to the student body." And after I heard him, I was convinced he was wonderful, so I said, "Tom, I think we ought to send the papers, all of the Judge's papers, up to North Carolina." So he and John talked it over and they sent them there to Dr. Hamilton.

Capers: Well, I certainly am glad they're there and safe. It would be better if they were in Mississippi or Louisiana.

Parker: Well, he was born in Mississippi ....

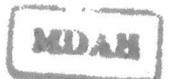
Capers: Some libraries will give you copies, and some will not. But we can write up there and see.

Parker: If the family consented for it, I think they should be in Mississippi.

Capers: I think that at least copies should ....

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Parker: You really should have copies in Mississippi.

Capers: Would you give me, please, your husband's connection with Mississippi? Tell me some biographical information on his family.

Parker: His father was born at Church Point....

Capers: ... Hill ....

Parker: Church Point, not Church Hill, Church ....

Capers: Where is Church Point?

Parker: It doesn't exist any more. The river took it. I think it might be near Rodney.

Capers: Yes.

Parker: You know, Rodney went into the river. I think it was there. And his family ....

Capers: Now his father was born there?

Parker: His father was born there.

Capers: And what was his father's name?

Parker: His father was John M. Parker.

Capers: John M.

Parker: And he was born there, he was born at Church Point. And then, they moved, when he was ten years old, they moved to New Orleans, and they stayed there, ever after that, they were there.

Capers: Yes. This would be Claiborne County or Jefferson County?

Parker: Church Point ... wait, let me think, Honey. I'm not sure, because ....

Capers: We have tax records, and we could ....

Parker: I know where Church Hill is, because there's a lovely little church there.

Capers: Yes. Well that's in Adams County, but this Church Point would be more likely to be in Claiborne County ....

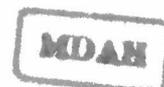
Parker: Claiborne, I'm sure.

Capers: And we have land records, and we have tax records, and we have census records that we could probably find ....

Parker: And his father was John M., John M. Parker.

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Capers: ... Parker. Well, this is the John M. who became governor of Louisiana?

Parker: Well, yes ....

Capers: All right. You don't know who his father was?

Parker: Yes I do ... 1920-1924 ....

Capers: Tell me who John M.'s father was.

Parker: His father was John M. Parker, too.

Capers: That's quite interesting to me that - this may be known, it wasn't known by me - that we had a governor of Louisiana who was born in Church Point.

Parker: In Mississippi ....

Capers: In Claiborne County, Mississippi.

Parker: Well, he was, he was.

Capers: I didn't know that.

Clark: I knew you had some connection with the state, I told Charlotte ....

Parker: That's right. And he loved Mississippi, oh, he loved it.

Capers: Can you tell me anything, or is it in these records, about the history of this house, the building of this house?

Parker: No, I don't think there's anything in that.

Capers: There's no record?

Parker: No, I don't think there is.

Capers: Do you know who built it?

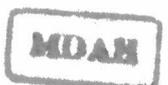
Parker: The first house on this property was a log cabin, and I think it sat right here, or maybe right over there where that boxwood hedge is. Because we found many Indian relics, I mean there was an Indian mound. Now, Mr. Amos Gordon, who was president of Standard Oil in Baton Rouge, came here once, and he said, "I tell you right now, that is an oil mound that you are sitting on. I know it. I know the topography. I know it." But of course, that didn't mean anything to us, because I wouldn't destroy that oak tree for all the oil in America!

Capers: I wouldn't either. Of course, I guess I would. Excuse me!

Parker: But as we put in our sewerage - I used to say I'd dig a well right through the living room, but now I've mellowed, I've mellowed! But

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anyway, right out there we found when we were making the rose garden in 1932, we found Indian arrowheads, and we found one tomahawk when we were digging sewerage, so of course, the plumbers took those things immediately, immediately!

Capers: Well, there are a lot of Indian sites down here on the Coast ....

Parker: Well, this was an Indian - I'm sure this was an Indian mound - burial ground, because you see it's raised higher than the others, the rest of it. And when Bienville sent his men up in this part of the world, he sent them to explore this territory and establish trading posts with the Indians.

Capers: Yes.

(End of Side One)

Parker: ... And they established a fur trade.

Capers: The Indians - all right.

Parker: And there's a clam pile right down here on this corner, where evidently Indians shelled the clams, because that's not in our day.

Capers: No. Well, are there any clams out here anywhere?

Parker: Just the shells, no, not now.

Capers: No clams?

Parker: Not now, not now. But I'm sure that this was occupied by the Indians.

Capers: You know, I'm very foggy - as long as I've worked in the Archives, I've learned enough to know that I don't make a statement to the effect that anything is historical unless I look it up with documentation, and I cannot document any of my information about the history of the Coast, because Iberville and Bienville came over to where Ocean Springs now is in 1699 and they didn't last long over there. Is that your understanding?

Parker: That's right.

Capers: And then they went to Mobile and then they went to New Orleans, so when they sent people here and up the river to Natchez was to explore.

Parker: Well, look in that little pamphlet by Father Soren. He has compiled a very interesting history.

Clark: That was interesting. I enjoyed it.

Parker: I think it is. He gives you the dates.

Capers: All right, let's see. "The first land record of a white inhabitant on Bayou DeLisle was John B. Saucier (S-A-U-C-I-E-R) in the year 1712, while Marshall Joseph Nicaise settled on the French Saucier grant in 1781."

Parker: That's right to our left.

Capers: Right to our left, left of Windy Hill. "A grant of 800 arpents, or acres, with a title from the United States in 1781-1798." Well, that was still Spanish territory. I don't know what the title from the United States meant.

Parker: Yes, it was.

Capers: It's possible that the Father might be a little "mixed." You know, we all are.

Parker: Yes, that's right.

Capers: "Thirteen years later, Philip Saucier was owner of the same land - 1794. On the east side of Wolfe River," - is that where we are, the east side?

Parker: Wolfe is right over there. I would say we are on the south side - north side. We are north of Wolfe River.

Capers: "We find Charles Ladner, 1811; Chevalier DeDeaux, 1810; and on the north side, Pierre Moran, 1796; and on Bayou DeLisle, Raymond Lizzano, 1807." Well, that's interesting. It still doesn't get them here for me. I don't know where they were in the meanwhile. I don't know where the first French people that came here to DeLisle came from.

Parker: Well, the man who lived right on our left here, was named Napoleon Nicaise, and he told us his ancestors had been here two hundred years.

Capers: Do you know any of the descendants of those people that are around here that I could talk to?

Parker: No, I don't think I do.

Clark: There are none of the DeDeaux clan left.

Parker: I told you about Ethel Jones, but I don't think Ethel knows anything.

Clark: Well, I know - I doubt if Mr. O. J. DeDeaux has any ....

Parker: Now, the lawyer in Gulfport might know.

Clark: He's dead. He died a number of years ago and there was Mr. Sylvestre ....

Parker: He died....

Clark: ... Who was the older brother. Those were the sons, I guess, of the Mrs. DeDeaux who lived in this house ....

Parker: Well, Sylvestre was the husband of the lady who lived here. The husband ....

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MDAH

Clark: Oh, but he was much older than the attorney in Gulfport, I think.

Parker: I don't know, but that was a brother. They're gone ... who lived here.

Clark: Well, they were, as I've said, my father fished with those men for fifty years ...

Parker: And they were real nice people, they really were.

Clark: ... And I do remember this house, coming here. I knew that it had been somewhere and this is the first time I've realized it and this was when ... two generations ago of DeDeaux, I guess. Mr. O. J. had - there was one daughter ....

Parker: Two daughters. One died of cancer.

Clark: ... And I don't know of any ....

Parker: There are no other heirs.

Clark: ... Only, the only DeDeaux, as I told Charlotte, are the black DeDeaux.

Parker: That's right.

Capers: Well, the black DeDeaux could be descendants. I guess they are.

Parker: They are. They are, no doubt, but they don't know any history.

(Tape Interruption)

Parker: John Fahnestock.

Capers: Could you spell that?

Parker: F-a-h-n-e-s-t-o-c-k.

Capers: All right. Does he live here in DeLisle?

Parker: Right here in DeLisle. Right up here, near me.

Capers: What does he do?

Parker: He's retired.

Capers: He's retired, and he's always lived here?

Parker: Right. Oh, Panama. He lived in Panama.

Capers: He was born here.

Parker: He is living in his father's home. His father was Dr. Fahnestock. They're a Philadelphia family.

Capers: Yes.

Parker: ... And they are bankers in Washington, D. C. - a very fine family.

Capers: Well, that's quite interesting. You know, I could make my career on the Coast, because it's such an interesting area. I have ....

Parker: Well, I think you'll find any place interesting. I think that's your type of mind.

Capers: Well, I do love people.

Parker: I know it.

Capers: I just get the biggest kick, but I can hardly tear myself away, that's my trouble. I love their stories.

Parker: Yes, I know it. Particularly Natchez. I'll have to tell you ....

Capers: Well, yes, it's wilder but it's all fascinating.

Parker: I'll have to tell you about one of my first evenings in Natchez. I wasn't quite a bride, I was a bit older than that, but we were invited to the home of Mrs. Balfour Miller ....

Capers: Oh, Katherine ....

Parker: She's the one who started the garden club, and it was decided after dinner when things were a little bit dull, that they'd start telling me about the skeletons in the closets. I was highly amused. I never heard of anything like it in my life. We were all sitting on the floor, and on pillows, and listening. Finally, a judge said, "This seems to be alphabetical. I'm going home." (Much laughter) He was Judge Butts, and I just died, I thought it was so funny! Natchez always interests me.

Capers: Did you ever meet Mrs. Byrne - Roanne - Byrne, that had so much to do - that's not the full name - with the Natchez Trace?

Parker: I don't think so.

Capers: Well, she was a delightful lady, and she told wonderful tales of Natchez. We used to, I - for years, I was invited to go to the annual meeting of the Natchez Trace Association, and I wouldn't go. Because I thought I would be bored to death, and I had so much to do, I just wouldn't go.

Parker: You wouldn't have been, you wouldn't have been bored.

Capers: No! I finally went and was so thrilled with it I just cleared my calendar for the whole year so I could go ....

Parker: I can imagine.

- Capers: ... And she was the most delightful person. She presided in an absolutely hysterical manner, but she was smart as a whip - she knew what she was doing. You know, she played the "old Sou-the-ren lady"....
- Parker: Oh! Oh, yes!
- Capers: ... And she was just as smart as a steel trap.
- Parker: I know it. I'm sure she was!
- Capers: But she was just great. And when she died, I just quit going to those meetings. I didn't want to go anymore.
- Parker: No. Well, you have your favorites. There's a Mrs. McLaurin, who is in her eighties, and she's a guide, in Natchez ....
- Capers: Now, the guides in Natchez are pretty funny ....
- Parker: ... And whenever I go to Natchez, I always take Mrs. McLaurin. She is absolutely priceless. In between visits to the houses, she'll give you a little gossip, you know. My daughter said, "Oh, Mother. Oh, Moth-er! She sounds like a Victrola wound up. She's rehearsed that so many times." I said, "If you're that good at eighty, I'll congratulate you."
- Capers: Yes. Well I think so!
- Parker: She's just as smart as a steel trap. She has her headquarters at Stanton Hall, you know where you have lunch with the ladies and all ....
- Capers: Well, it's a really interesting place, and it's just full of papers that we still could get. Now, Dr. Hamilton ....
- Parker: But aren't most of them done in Spanish, because that's what threw me when I got to looking at the family papers - they were all done in Spanish.
- Capers: Well, we can get them translated.
- Parker: 1790.
- Capers: Yes.
- Parker: Yes, but will a ... I mean are they just there for the moment and to heck with getting a ....
- Capers: Well, I'm talking about family manuscripts, things you would possibly think we weren't interested in, we are because it tells the story of a period....
- Parker: It tells the whole story. That is why I have liked my genealogy. In looking up the family history, I have learned so much about the history of Mississippi ....

Capers: History - of course!

Parker: ... Of everywhere!

Capers: Exactly. Because you can take an individual and follow him in his wanderings to where he came, and you've got the whole history of the United States.

Parker: You know. You know exactly why he went there and what for.

Capers: I know. I love that, but I did want you to think about the importance of family papers that you might not think are important. They are important to us, if they are about Mississippi.

Parker: Are they really?

Capers: Yes. Because you've got the whole social history.

Parker: Do you know Mrs. Hendricks in Jackson?

Capers: Mary Hendricks? Surely. She's a genealogist. She's a good one. She's a good friend of mine. I haven't seen her in a long time.

Parker: I know it. She says it the way I do ....

Capers: That's correct.

Parker: You know, I had a cousin who was a professional genealogist, and he said, "Sally, the first thing I have to teach you is," (he was helping me do a little family work) "is, you do not say gene-o-logist." And I said, "Tommy, are you sure?" I had to look it up, you know.

Capers: Well, everyone else does!

Parker: And when I say it, people bat their eyes at me, and I think, you know, I ought to go along with the rest of them.

Capers: Well, we can't win that way.

Parker: I don't know, sometimes it's easier.

Capers: It's a lot easier. Oh, feel that heavenly breeze!

Clark: Isn't it delightful?

Parker: Are you getting any breeze?

Capers: I'm getting a marvelous breeze.

Parker: Sometimes we get a wonderful one. Just so you're not suffering. I'm sorry, we had a man come up from New Orleans to see if we could aircondition this whole house. He said, "Are you crazy? You couldn't possibly do it - not possibly!"

Capers: Well, you would lose a lot if you did.

Parker: Well, I'd lose this porch and I couldn't stand it. I couldn't stand it!

Capers: I just adore this.

Parker: I couldn't stand it. Because I feel like a mole in my bedroom.

Clark: That's the trouble with the airconditioned world, Sally.

Parker: But not if you have it central airconditioned, because you're all over, you know.

Clark: Well - but I sometimes wish that we didn't have it. I know we have to where we live ....

Parker: But you have a lovely little, small house, Jean.

Clark: It's easier to do this with, and it does shut out the traffic, but if I lived in the country as you do, there's one thing that I'd miss.

(Tape Interference)

Parker: ... It's even gotten as far as Natchez.

Capers: Really? Well I hope it doesn't get to our Aaron Burr Oaks at Jefferson College.

Parker: Tell me a little bit about Aaron Burr. That is what just absolutely stymies me.

Capers: I'm not dependable about Aaron Burr without looking it up, and you can hardly look it up.

Parker: I have a book on it which was given to me by Mr. Gordon, who was president of Standard Oil in Baton Rouge. I can't find it anywhere, and one of my grandchildren might have appropriated it.

Capers: Well, I don't think anyone will ever know the true story of why Aaron Burr was barging around down there in that part of the country. Of course, it was said that he was going to plan ....

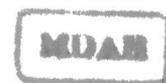
Parker: He was in Natchez-under-the-Hill.

Capers: Yes. He was going to ... well, he was tried under the oaks at Jefferson College, and then he - the records are inconclusive about what happened, but he was not convicted. His case went to a higher court, and then he was tried again in Kentucky. He was tried for treason. That was the charge.

Parker: Yes, that's right.

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PARKER, SALLY A.

Capers: And he was not convicted, and it's just a vague episode in American History. The thought was that he and Blennerhasset were conspiring to form a new empire.

Parker: Yes.

Capers: ... To carve a new country.

Parker: Yes, they concocted that idea in Natchez, some tell it.

Capers: Yes. He was in Natchez, and he supposedly fell in love with a Natchez girl - now that's legendary, not supported by anything, you know, that you can count on - but it is of record that he was actually tried for treason there on the Jefferson College property, in Natchez - Washington, Mississippi - same thing. So we are quite - we've got quite something to work with at Jefferson College. We're trying to restore it - I mean architecturally ....

Clark: Is it still a college?

Capers: No.

Clark: It hasn't been for years, has it?

Capers: Well, it has been not too long ago. It's been out of commission about ten years, but it was established by the Mississippi Territorial Legislature of 1802, which makes it the oldest educational institution in that part of the country. And people like Audubon, and Burr, and Lafayette, and B. L. C. Wailes were associated with it - on its faculty, or as visitors ... Andrew Jackson. You know, it was quite ....

Parker: That was really our cultural center right there.

Capers: Yes. Right. Certainly is. Would you like to hear what marvelous sounds we've made? It's quite possible that nothing recorded at all. I often have that happen. You know, we just carry on and try to speak so correctly, and then we punch the button and not a sound!

Parker: I don't know that I want to, but let's hear it!

(End of Tape)

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