

**T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History Collection**

**ABSTRACT**

**INTERVIEWEE NAME:** Alvin Lee Bertrand

**COLLECTION:** 4700.0524

**IDENTIFICATION:** LSU graduate, 1940 B.S. and 1948 Ph.D.; Boyd Professor of Sociology / Rural Sociology

**INTERVIEWER:** Everett Besch

**SERIES:** University History – Distinguished Faculty & Administrators

**INTERVIEW DATES:** March 22, 1995; November 1, 1995

**FOCUS DATES:** 1918 - 1995

**ABSTRACT:**

**Tape 758**

Bertrand named for Alvin York and Robert E. Lee; Acadian history of Bertrand family; Bertrand born in Elton, Louisiana; Claude Pepper; New Llano Colony; Lafayette; family lived in Cajun cabin; mosquitoes; summer weather; water pump; Bertrand's parents; rice fields; DeQuincy; schools in Elton; Codofil; discipline in schools; French language; Spanish ancestry; cattle; parents' education; Roosevelt's social programs; pine stumps, digging up; Calcasieu Parish; barns built of pine; Bertrand graduated from high school in DeQuincy; Cajun culture; Louisiana Purchase; Devil's Pocket; food; World War II; oil industry; offshore workers; origin of term "coon-ass"; Oklahoma; Southwestern Louisiana Institute; Townsend program; W.P.A.; Howard Hanchey; horse and buggy; whooping cough; Cajun folk tales; boucherie; Mardi Gras; Catholic background; family wound up Baptist; Jewish neighbors; revival meetings; singing conventions; songs; high school athletics; community movie houses; advent of television; coffee.

**Tape 804**

Life in DeQuincy; coffee; Elton; boucherie; rancherie; Piney woods; cattle; lumber companies; brands; sheep; folkways; Mardi Gras; bousiller; Seaman Knapp of Iowa; Knapp Hall; prairie French; Opelousas Atakapas; study: "The Many Louisianas"; Cajun bilingualism; caricatures of Cajun speech; Codofil; Southwestern; Calcasieu Parish; agriculture; Kinder; Bertrand worked to get rid of Cajun accent; graduates college at LSU in 1940, majoring in agricultural economics; earns Masters in rural sociology at Kentucky in 1941; Bertrand returns to LSU; Tony Mumphrey; Bertrand enlists in Air Force in 1942; Harling Field; flight school; Midland, Texas; radar; atomic bomb; Okinawa; Fort Dix; returns to LSU after service; decisions about graduate school; Thomas Lynn Smith; Fred Frey; Jessee Bankston; LSU makes a deal with Bertrand in order to keep him; works on Ph.D. at LSU; health research; experiment station publications; works for USDA in Washington; stays on

LSU faculty after finishing Ph.D.; Boyd professorship; Nate Caffey; Grover Murray; Doyle Chambers; Bertrand named Boyd professor in early 1970s; almost left for Tulane; difference between sociology and rural sociology; land grant; Chancellor Taylor; American Sociological Association; Bertrand's pride in his students' successes; elder hostel; fishing with Fred Frey; teaching.

### **Tape 981**

Bertrand's age; types of French, Prairie, Gumbo and patois; the loss of the sociological aspect of the small farm culture; agricultural mores, Bertrand's female graduate students, US Department of Agriculture levels of living studies; recollections regarding the beginnings of LSU, layout of LSU in 1936; how Bertrand came to be at LSU; father losing the family farm due to rain destroyed rice crop; moving to the Piney Woods area of Louisiana; Federal program to eradicate ticks that caused Texas Fever from open range animals; the far reaching impact of the loss of rural lifeways; folkways, codes and mores; study of deliberate fires set in the timberlands in the sixties for the Federal government; Tom Hansbrough's [his graduate student] dissertation on forest fires in Louisiana; studying farm accidents involving toxic chemicals for the National Safety Council; impact of mechanization on rural life in Louisiana; lists great mentors that he knew at LSU; T. Lynn Smith [past head of LSU Sociology department national leader in rural sociology]; views of Sociology department during his time at LSU.

### **Tape 982**

The general layout of the campus in 1936 including streets and location of popular places such as the Cotton Club; strategies Bertrand used to survive on low income; the layout and creation of the LSU lakes; making a donation to buy the first LSU mascot, the French House; the power and influence of college deans during Bertrand's time at LSU; the building of roads in the thirties; the founding of the Campus Federal Credit Union by Dr. Roscoe Seville former head of the Agricultural Economics department; the College of Agriculture during the thirties and forties; Bertrand's relationship with J. Norman Efferson former professor in the LSU Agricultural Economics department and later dean of the College of Agriculture; available recreation for students during the late thirties; fraternity dances; building the stadium.

### **Tape 983**

Major F. C. Frey and his involvement with sociology at LSU; the development of rural sociology at LSU; T. Lynn Smith and F. C. Frey starting the first journal of rural sociology in the United States; Bertrand working for both the College of Arts and Sciences and the experimental research station; Bertrand's international work as a rural sociologist; working for the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations; organizing and planning the International Sociological Society's 1975 meeting held at LSU; Bertrand's dissertation research on why people did not immediately see a dentist for dental problems; research on the role of practical nurses which led to licensing procedures; study on unmet health care needs; study of health components including food habits in Louisiana and midwifery; changes that Bertrand saw in his long association with LSU; memories of Fred Fry; impressions of Max Goodrich former professor of physics and dean of the graduate school.

**TAPES:** 5 (T758, T804, T981, T982, T983)

**TOTAL PLAYING TIME:** 7 hours, 30 minutes

**# PAGES TRANSCRIPT:** 242 pages

**RESTRICTIONS:** None