



J.L. Green

Interviewed by Anne Kimzey

1. Fishing (00:47)

Green: We would take pitchfork, take pitchfork, and we'd [unintelligible [?]] jab it, down in the waster, jab it down in the water and when jab down you pull it up. [And if you got a fish on it [?] pull him off, [slide him to the side] <Kimzey laughs.> Do the same thing again. And we catch more fish than we could use. That's- at that time, we didn't have sieves or nets of this nature.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Green: And when we did get a sieve, we'd make our sieve out of burlap and cotton sheets.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Green: And we'd go down, and we'd stick [unintelligible [?]] to catch the end and one in the middle, [stick a pole in it [?]] and we'd pull it. And we'd catch a ton of fish that way.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Green: [That was [?]] unique to us, you know? Nobody does it now.

2. Catching alligators (01:24)

Green: yeah, we caught alligators. We'd, uh, go in the swamp and- we didn't find the alligator, we'd find the cave. Once we found the cave, we'd sound the ground out, by hitting on the ground around the cave.

Kimzey: Uh-hum.

Green: And we found this cave, this, uh, [area [?]] where the alligator was, this hollow pace in the ground, we'd dig it out. We'd dig it out, get us a forked stick, stick it in the gator, we'd catch him and pull him out. We'd pull him out and take him on home with us. And we'd get in the house, we'd skin it.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Green: And we make hash out of that bad boy. Yeah. <Kimzey laughs>. We'd eat him, yeah.

Kimzey: What did he taste like?

Green: Oh, he taste better than anything you can taste. Oh, he- he taste better than chicken. Oh, it's very good.

Kimzey: Did he-

Green: [unintelligible [?]] You skin it, and you bury it overnight. That's to take the- the wildness out of it.

Kimzey: [unintelligible [?]] bury it in the ground?

Green: Yeah. Put it in a bag and you bury it overnight. [That will [?]] take the wildness out of it and uh, next day you'd cook it.

Kimzey: How- in pots?

Green: Yeah, uh-huh.

Kimzey: Did you cut it up or-

Green: Cut it up in small pieces like stew. Oh, gator tail and rice, that's terrific. Oh, you might have heard of it, but [I doubt [?]] you ever tried it, but gator tail and rice is terrific.

Kimzey: Is that where most of the meat is? In the tail?

3. Finding worms (01:20)

Green: [unintelligible [?]] Where there's moist in these swamps-

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Green: That's where we go and get out worms. Or you go around the stable and get a wiggler or you go in the swamps [unintelligible [?]]. And, uh, we just take out rake, and go out and dig worms. That's how we get them.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Green: Didn't have no shop to buy them from. We got good worms too. We got a lot better worms than we do now. <Kimzey laughs>. [unintelligible [?]] we got a variety.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Green: But uh-

Kimzey: When you said go to the stable-

Green: Yeah.

Kimzey: Where would you- go round there?

Green: Horse stable, horse stable, mule stable.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Green: And [unintelligible (?)] right behind the stable, we'll [stay (?)] relatively here-

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Green: [unintelligible (?)] wigglers.

Kimzey: Are these what, earthworms?

Green: Earthworms, uh-huh. Or go down in the swamps where it was real damp, get plenty of blue worms.

Kimzey: And what are blue worms?

Green: Well, it's a worm fairly bluish in color, and uh, some them be just about the size of that pencil. That pen you have there.

Kimzey: [unintelligible (?)] long?

Green: Uh-huh, very good for fishing. [Excellent (?)] Tough, they were tough as nails.

Kimzey: So you put them on the hook, did they stay alive and wiggle around?

Green: Yeah, uh-huh. [unintelligible (?)]. Hell, a blue one stay alive all day.

[unintelligible (?)]. It'll stay right there. [unintelligible (?)] So no problem there. We had excellent bait to fish with.

4. Types of fish (01:28)

Kimzey: And when you said pike, what does that mean?

Green: That's a pikefish, that's a little fish, little, red, kind of spiky.

Kimzey: Oh.

Green: Grows about yay long <shows with his hands>. [May (?)] weigh a pound.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Green: And, uh, you catch them in this backwater, this blackwater down here below [our (?)] state. It doesn't raise in this area.

Kimzey: So around here people mostly get like catfish and....

Green: Catfish, crappie, brim, shell crappie, bass.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Green: Basically. We got a few [dozen [?]]. Go on upstate, they [catch [?]] trout, things of this nature. But, uh, down [in the [?]] lower state, we mostly catch red=breat brim and uh, pikefish. [unintelligible [?]] bass, [unintelligible [?]] too, but we mostly fish for red-breat, and uh, [well see [?]], brim, because all your flatfish belong to the sunfish family, and uh, pikefish. [unintelligible [?]] belong to the same family so we'll say [the pikefish [?]]. See, different regions carry different types of fish-

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Green: Now, the sunfish- [unintelligible [?]]- sunfish we've found in all regions, but uh, your pikefish we've found in the lower state. You won't find them [unintelligible [?]].

Kimzey: And then catfish you find...

Green: Catfish....you can find them anywhere, catfish, and uh, bass, you find bass most anywhere. Trout will be found more or less upstate, because of the uh, coolness of the water. Down here the water's a little too warm for the likes of the trout.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Green: So we don't have any trout fish in this general area.

5. Fishing with tires (01:29)

Green: Well, what they do, they take a tire and they kinda wire it together. They got a hole in this tire.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Green: Through here, here for the fish to go in. When the fish go in this hole, he stays there because it's dark.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Green: He [first is going along [?]], he dives in the water, or he takes his foot and find this tire, he picks this tire up and finds the hole so the fish can't come out. Then when he finds his hold, he brings the tire up to the surface, then takes the fish out.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Green: Then he puts- puts the tire back down in the water, and goes to another tire. So they have- they have all around this lake now.

Kimzey: How do they find them? They just- they mark them with anything?

Green: No, uh-uh, they don't mark them with anything. If you put them in, you know about where you put them.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Green: So you'll wade the water, or you swim along, and you find it with your foot and you dive down and pick it up. You can't reach the water too deep [then [?]] reach down and pick it up. Pull it up to the surface, take the fish out, and put it back down.

Kimzey: So the fish doesn't, um, try to get out when he- you pull it up?

Green: No, uh-uh. [Goes down [?]]- see like when they find the tire, they find the hole in it.

Kimzey: Um-hum.

Green: And they cover the hole up and pick the tire up.

Kimzey: Can it get out through the middle?

Green: Huh?

Kimzey: Can it get out through the middle?

Green: No, it can't get out- see that's the part you sewed up. See, you close up with some wire.

Kimzey: Ohhhh.

Green: Yeah, you close that part up with the wire and then tie it.

Kimzey: Ok.

Green: And you got a hole cut in the back of the tire. Fish goes in there and he goes around the tire.

Kimzey: I see.

