



**George Barisich**

### **Shrimping and Commercial Fisherman**

Mr. George Barisich is a third-generation commercial fisherman. His parents are Croatian born, but came to Louisiana while still young. George was born in 1956 in New Orleans, and spent much of his childhood in Arabi, Louisiana. He presently lives in Violet in St. Bernard Parish, with his wife and children. From the age of eight, he spent considerable time on his father's boat helping with the shrimping. While working as a fisherman, he attended Southeastern University.

George, like his brother, learned everything about fishing and shrimping from his father. When his father became too ill to work, he sold his half of the business to George. George has five boats, one of which he describes as being thirty-eight years old, which is made of cypress and double planked.

Most of the time he trawls for shrimp, but he has also fished for oysters. George is an active advocate for fishing as a traditional way of life. He says, "it's something that's in the blood." Commercial fishing is far more than just a job to him; it represents an entire traditional way of life. However, he sees it as being seriously threatened by increasing government regulations.

Today, commercial fishing is more high-tech than it was when George started shrimping in the 1960s. The fishing boats now have radar, VHF radio, and telephones on board. It's an entirely different life than it was in the past. The one thing that has not changed is that shrimpers are still out fishing for many days. George comments, "I am usually out six to seven days at a time, and maybe sometimes a little longer." When asked, "what makes a good fisherman?", he answered, "it's in the blood; also, believe it or not, it's the chase for the shrimp, and the adrenaline rush shrimpers feel."

Mr. Barisich is President of the United Commercial Fisherman's Association. For his presentations, he speaks on various commercial fishing operations and he uses tapes showing trawling and fishing operations on shrimp boats. George has attended the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, the New Orleans Work Boat Show, the Isles Festival, and the Bycatch Symposium in Seattle, Washington.

Updated November 15, 2016 by Natchitoches-NSU Louisiana Folklife Center Staff