



Mervin Barras

Alligator Skinner and Trapper

Mervin Barras of Catahoula was born in 1954 and grew up in a family that made its living crawfishing and catfishing in the Atchafalaya Basin. The son of Charles Barras and Angelle Latiolais Barras has done all sorts of fishing and hunting since childhood learning from his father, brothers, and friends. As an expert on Atchafalaya Basin swamp culture, he maintains many of these Cajun traditions. He also speaks French and English fluently.

Like his father, Mr. Barras fishes for catfish and crawfish in the Basin. He traps during the off-season, including trapping alligators. He is very familiar with skinning and tanning alligator hides and also makes his own nets and traps. He has demonstrated alligator trapping and skinning at Festivals Acadians in Lafayette.

He is also skilled at camp-style cooking and preparing the game and fish that he catches. He makes an excellent crawfish etouffee which he has prepared at the Breaux Bridge Crawfish Festival.

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