

Things that could only happen to Peck.



First Louisiana Duck Hunt

Around 1974 we moved to Lafayette, Louisiana and I worked as a marketing manager in the Oilfield. I was taking a Dale Carnegie sales course when I met a local guy who invited me to go duck hunting. I had never hunted in Louisiana and was looking forward to the experience. His family had a hunting camp in Pecan Island, about 50 miles from Lafayette. I was astounded and excited while driving down there because of the large numbers of Mallard ducks that were in the ditches on the side of the road.

When I got to the camp, his family was already there and an old guy they called Uncle Tony was cooking dinner. I had noticed that he was using this jar of spices on everything that he cooked.

Early the next morning, they put me with another guy who was older than dirt, and who exclaimed that he had been hunting for 50-plus years. It was before daylight and we were walking in the swamp to get to the duck blinds. After a long, tiring walk in the swamp, we came to the duck blinds, which were two 55-gallon oil drums sunk into the marsh. I got in one of the barrels with my gun and the old man told me, "Son, if five ducks come over, I'm going to get three and you get the other two." Of course, I said, "No problem." It was barely daylight now and I could see some shadows flying over me, so I asked the old man "What is that flying over me now?" He said, "If it's flying shoot it!"

The next time something flew over I shot it and proudly walked through marsh to retrieve the bird. When I got

there I held the bird up and hollered back to the old man, "What's this"? He said excitedly, "It's a pelican, you killed a pelican. Hide it, stomp it in the mud, stomp it in the mud!" I proceeded to stomp the first bird that I ever killed in Louisiana in the mud. It was the Louisiana State Bird, which carried a very hefty fine for killing one.

While I am stomping the pelican, the old man started hollering, "Ducks, ducks, shoot the ducks!" I replied, "I left my gun in the blind." He proceeded to cuss loudly and profusely, and then I heard him mutter something that sounded like, "Stupid redneck." When I got back in my barrel blind, I redeemed myself by shooting as many ducks as the old man, somewhat relieved after the embarrassment of shooting down the State Bird.

When we get back to the camp, Uncle Tony was cooking breakfast. He had an iron skillet that had a white meringue covering the top of something. I asked what he was cooking, and he said, "Heavenly eggs." Then he took that jar and started shaking what looked like spices on the heavenly eggs. I asked what was in the jar and Uncle Tony said, "Son, this jar of magic is going to make me One Million Dollars!" I smiled and nodded at him, all the while thinking, "This guy is nuts."

I found out later that Uncle Tony was Tony Chachere of Tony's Famous Cajun Spices, who built an empire from the contents of that jar.