A photographic essay depicting the life of the people of the wetlands, prairies and chenieres of the Gulf Coast of Southwest Louisiana; recording the personal experiences and struggles of a people to survive in the unique geographical area of the Gulf of Mexico known as the chenieres; recording facts about a people whose descendants survived the Civil War, severe hurricanes and tidal waves, the great depression of 1920's and 30's and who are making the best of today's slow economy; a people of many different cultures and educational background.

The word cheniere derived its meaning from chene meaning oak. The oldest chenieres date back 3,000 years. The first written reference of people traveling this area was found in the journals of the Spanish explorer Don Josi de Evia in 1785 whose ship, the Constante, was wrecked in 1766 by a hurricane, a land that had been home for the Indians in the history of North America.

The chenieres were formed by the physical forces of nature by eruption, wind and sea taking hundreds of years to mature. These Chenieres can be classified as jewels of the Gulf of Mexico with the growth of giant oak trees draped in Spanish moss, Spanish daggers (yucca), wild grape vines making a canopy from tree to tree, prickly pears in profusion, palmettoes among the many other unusual plants and wildlife habitat.

Photographers:
Dallas D. Hanks
Amanda Sagrera Hanks

Designer:
Donna Schisler