

Interviewer: All right. Great. Let's talk about the recipes that you chose and why.

Interviewee: Oh my Lord. I did it to [inaudible 00:00:11]. The recipes ... Why did I chose them? Because this is what I remembered.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- Okay.

Interviewee: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- The recipes that I remembered. I didn't keep up with it through the years. I do it now.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- What else do you want? Name of the recipes? What did I do?

Interviewer: Well sure. Also just, who did the cooking in your household when you were younger?

Interviewee: My grandmother.

Interviewer: Okay. Your grandmother.

Interviewee: Uh-huh. If my mother was coming, she'd cook.

Interviewer: Alright. What kind of things did she make and ...

Interviewee: Okay. We had mud bugs.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: You know what that is?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: Okay. We had a dish of mud bugs.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Mud bugs and potatoes.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: With seasoning. Onions. Green peppers. Bell peppers. I didn't know they had red.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: Orange. We only had green.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: I wasn't ... They had it but we weren't familiar with the colors.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: Only green. We had ... We mixed it up with seasoning. She cooked in the iron skillet.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: We didn't have the foil paper. The foil paper came when I was half grown.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: In the 50's.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: Okay. To cut our seasonings out, put our onions at the bottom. I'd watch her clean out mud bugs, which was ... Mud bugs ... Which was ... Mud bugs ... Not shrimp ... What are they called?

Interviewer: Crawfish?

Interviewee: Crawfish.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: You clean that and season.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: The only time we had ... Occasionally during the season like Thanksgiving, we'd go to town and get shrimp or something. But other than that, we could go get our own-

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: ... mud bugs.

Interviewer: Alright.

Interviewee: So that was the dish-

Interviewer: Alright.

Interviewee: ... for the night.

Interviewer: As kids, did you help in the preparation? Did you have a job that you had to do?

Interviewee: Yes. We had to help clean the-

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: ... mud bugs.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: Which I wasn't too happy with but you know, she's get them. I'd clean them.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: Not by myself but they had others. We all cleaned them and hurry up and get on out of there. She'd put her seasoning at the bottom. The onions. I remember, she had big onions like this.

Interviewer: Oh wow!

Interviewee: We'd buy those onions. She'd cut that up. Put them at the bottom. Put all her seasonings. Celery.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: Bell peppers and parsley. After it was done, she'd put parsley on top.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Interviewee: She'd put it in the oven. Don't tell me what degrees. I don't remember.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: She put it in the iron pot. She put a lid on it-

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: ... and put it in the oven. I see her take a fork maybe later on. I don't know how ... It might have been an hour or two, three hours.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: She'd open it. Lift the lid. Open it and put the fork down. If the fork was [inaudible 00:03:53]. I mean it went through the fork. It was done.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: Went back on the stove-

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: ... and that was our dinner.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Supper. Whatever they call it.

Interviewer: How many people was she feeding? How big was the household?

Interviewee: My grandmother was mostly [inaudible 00:04:14]. After I graduated [inaudible 00:04:16] some of us only.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: Grandfather. My sister. Brother. Two cousins. All the neighbors who came.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Interviewee: Anybody who come by. It was [inaudible 00:04:34]

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: We were going to eat. Everybody who came, they were offered coffee.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Interviewee: It was the nicest coffee that we have today. It was strong coffee.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: It had to be hot.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: As I got a little older and it was hot, wasn't hot enough, she would send you back.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: So I had a little something for her.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: So when I was about maybe 12, big enough to know better, "Oh bring this back. It's not hot enough."

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: I'd boil the water.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Put the cup in the water.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: Put it on a saucer.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: Take a dish towel-

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: ... put it on a saucer.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: Put the cup and move the coffee and drink it and stand up.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Interviewee: And look all innocent.

Was hot enough.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: She was good at sending you back.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: If you didn't do it correctly, you had to go back and do it over.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: I got her. I got her number.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: Okay. What else did we have? Meatloaf. She'd grind her own ... You saw the things that we went to when we went to the museum?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Okay. They had the little grinders. She'd put it on her wooden table-

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: ... and she'd grind her own meat. That's how we had our ground meat.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: She ... Meatloaf ... That's another one that I ... Meatloaf ... She had ... Oh my god. She ... We had chicken-

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: ... ham and salt meat. You know what salt meat is?

Interviewer: Salt meat? No. What is that?

Interviewee: Like ham. Not like ham. Like bacon but-

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Interviewee: ... but thicker pieces of bacon.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Interviewee: Uh-huh. We called it salt meat. I guess because they preserve-

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Interviewee: ... and made it salt meat.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: Okay, she'd take the salt meat, fry it up-

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: ... in the frying pan. In the skillet.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: Really. Put it in the skillet. Fry it. What else did she do? Oh, then she'd do it in the seasoning. She'd grind it up. [inaudible 00:07:18] all day.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: If they had chicken, they had leftover chicken. Skinned it. Whatever and chopped it up small. Had ham. Chopped that up small. All the seasoning, best seasoning [inaudible 00:07:33]-

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: ... that we knew about. She'd take the ground meat and mix it up. Then she'd take the parts, she roll it. Put ... Spread it out on the table.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: Put the flour on the table. Spread it out. Roll it. Then she'd roll the chicken, ham and pieces of salt meat-

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: ... into the meatloaf.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: That was our meat. That was our meal. The meat. She'd make gravy. When she made the gravy, she'd take part of that salt meat-

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: ... she'd put ... I don't know how much flour.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: She'd do it in the skillet and she'd do the seasonings in the skillet. Brown it. Pour it over that. Let it back in the oven for I don't know how long. When she thought it was done, she stick a knife if the middle.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: If it came out clean, it was done.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: We had our either tomato bread or brown bread.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: What else did we have? That's two of them. Oh! Smothered chicken. She'd taken ... You know ... By that time she chopped the chicken.-

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: ... clean him. De-feather him. Take the feathers off.

Interviewer: Y'all raised chickens?

Interviewee: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- Oh yeah.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Yeah. Yes, we had a regular farm. The only thing we brought was sugar. About sugar, maybe some ... What else? Very few things we bought.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewer: How ... You said y'all sometimes went into town to buy stuff. How far away was that?

Interviewee: Well really, we didn't in the line. Louisiana, Mississippi ... Woodville, Mississippi, Wilkerson County line. If I was facing north, I'd put one foot in Louisiana and the right, left foot in Louisiana-

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: ... and the right foot in Mississippi.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: So to order to get to town, it was about maybe two or three miles.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: To get to the center of town.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: With the other was open fields.

You ...

Interviewer: Y'all walked to town? Or you drove?

Interviewee: No. No. We had neighbors or something who had trucks.

Interviewer: Oh, okay.

Interviewee: Uh-huh. That's how we got ... Or we could walk. We weren't supposed to but we could if we wanted to. Then that was at the lines. We'll call it the line.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: We lived at the line.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Right here. Left and right foot.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- What else did I miss? Did I say the smothered chicken?

Interviewer: Yeah. We were talking about how y'all raised chickens.

Interviewee: Okay.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: And then do everything for the chicken. Clean him and everything.

Interviewer: Right. Did you ever have to catch one? Or-

Interviewee: Yeah.

Interviewer: ... butcher it?

Interviewee: That's what she did. You run away. You run and catch it unless you put them in a cage. Whatever. Then she'll open the cage. He'll get out. Got to run behind him and catch him.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: I mean when it was time to cook.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- They sold that in the city too. Right over here on Broad St. They used to have live chickens.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- Okay.

Interviewee: Back in my day.

Interviewer: So sounds like you watched your grandmother cook a lot. Was that something you enjoyed?

Interviewee: I didn't enjoy it.

Interviewer: You didn't?

Interviewee: No. [inaudible 00:11:30]. When she cooked, looked like she used everything in the kitchen.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: Then you have to clean it up.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: If not, you had to help clean it up.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: Uh-huh. She tried to run away as much as possible.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: No indeed.

Interviewer: Did you start ... At what point did you start cooking for yourself? Or did you?

Interviewee: Down here when we start going to school.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: My mother would cook in the morning before she start. She said the first one home turn the pots on and turn it on low.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: We had something you called a lid. You know that prevent it-

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: ... burning. Scorching.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: So that's when I started really cooking.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Uh-huh. We used to help her lift the lids. She'd tell us how to do it.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: And turn it around and stir it.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: And by the time she got home, it would be done.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- She'd get up early in the morning, start cooking.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: She didn't finish it. That was the days before refrigeration. That was ice box then back in the day. When we got our first refrigerator, we thought we were living.

Interviewer: Yeah?

Interviewee: We had to clean them out every week. Put the little thing in the box. In the top. You couldn't put too much ... We didn't ... I don't know how we made it.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: Because you couldn't put anything in there but some ice cream up in there. A little ice cream. We had an ice cubes tray.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: Two ice cream ... I got one of the trays now.

Interviewer: Oh.

Interviewee: Two of the old trays. Well that was about it.

Interviewer: Okay. On special occasions, like holidays; is there anything special that you guys like to have?

Interviewee: Well, not really. We didn't really want for food or nothing like that. We wanted for things like clothes and shoes or something like that.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: Other than that, not ... For food line, no.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- Okay.

Interviewee: We always had enough to share with the others-

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: ... in the country.

Interviewer: Alright.

Interviewee: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- Nope, we didn't have any of that.

Interviewer: Okay. Is there anything you really enjoy cooking? Or having someone make for you?

Interviewee: Anything.

Interviewer: Anything?

Interviewee: Yeah. I do not enjoy cooking.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: I rather do it in the oven.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: That's my cooking.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Interviewee: Other than standing up and doing this and that, throw it in the oven. If I get a chicken, throw it in the oven.

Interviewer: Right.

Interviewee: If I get any meat, it's oven cooking.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Potatoes in the oven. I do not like to cook. I did plenty of that when I was coming up.

Interviewer: Do you like ... Do you have a sweet tooth at all? Do you like desserts?

Interviewee: I like desserts. Nothing special.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: It's occasionally.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Uh-huh. That I want something sweet. Might be about one or two o'clock in the morning.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: I have a taste for something sweet. So I might have peanut butter and jelly toast.

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative)-

Interviewee: That's if I feel like getting out the bed.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Nothing special anymore.

Interviewer: Okay.

Interviewee: Mm-hmm (affirmative)- What's that for?

Interviewer: It was ... Let's see. Mud bugs and potatoes. The meatloaf. The smothered chicken.