

Interviewer: Okay.

Speaker 2: You from New Orleans or-

Interviewer: I am. I'm from New Orleans. My whole family is pretty much based in Gentilly.

Speaker 2: Really?

Interviewer: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Speaker 2: What's their last name?

Interviewer: [inaudible 00:00:12].

Speaker 2: Oh, okay. That's your uncle?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Speaker 2: [inaudible 00:00:17].

Interviewer: Yeah.

Speaker 2: They had two brothers or something or three?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Speaker 2: And, a sister?

Interviewer: Yeah.

Speaker 2: Yeah. He was in ... '72 he was working with Dutch.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Speaker 2: Yeah.

Interviewer: Yeah, so that's my people. For the most part everybody is maybe five to ten minutes away from each other. We're all located out there in Gentilly. So, I went to New York for college. Than I was in Nashville for a few years for grad school. Now I am back.

Speaker 2: You're getting your doctors in ...

Interviewer: Well, I was going to say I'm getting it in English Lit so that I can be an English professor one day.

Speaker 2: Oh, okay. My friend is an English teacher. She wrote a paper way back in high school. They came up to \$30,084 when she got out of college. They read it and [inaudible 00:01:37]. She is good. She is excellent.

Interviewer: I mean I'm going to be paying for school for a long time. It's alright. It was well worth it.

Speaker 2: Yes. They don't have [inaudible 00:01:52]. Stay home. Save your money. Do like you have an apartment. Take the money you would pay your light bill ... take the money you were going to pay for a water bill, invest. If you lose it, you was going to lose it anyway. But, than you get you a telephone and the rest of the money you save. Save for a down payment an apartment house or something like that ... a double. You don't want to run and get a single right now. You go get the double and invest ... keep investing in all different kind of commodities because you know you can take and lose that money cause your electric bill you lost it anyway. You didn't lose benefit no more than that. Just invest it in some kind of commodities. Take a chance. Build that money up.

Interviewer: Well that's what I plan to do. I have plans for the next couple of years saving hopefully and maybe I can buy something in a few years.

Speaker 2: That's what I told my daughter. She went to get a car and she was working. She was in school. She was working at the rental car place. She could take anyone of them cars home she wanted. Why to buy a car to pay that kind of money? She come home ... good thing I was home. "Mom, look at my car. Look at my car." It's red and stuff like this. [inaudible 00:03:34] your car. Yeah. I said, "Oh, okay." I said, "How much is it?" "Oh, well you see, it's gonna be two-hundred and something dollars" ... This was back there in the '70s. "It's going to be two-hundred and [inaudible 00:03:53] and la, la, la." I said, "Well, what about the insurance?" Than she said ... she went on. I said uh-uh (negative). You can't afford this car. No way.

The dealership was right there [inaudible 00:04:10]. She went one way. I came right on up here and was fussing. Fussed at the man. Told him you ... [inaudible 00:04:23] he was buying this car. You don't know if she going to lose it. She is going to lose her money and all of this stuff here because she won't be able to pay for it. She going to be struggling. Yeah, she going to pay. A lot of them pay for six months. [inaudible 00:04:36]. Something happen, it falls down. No, she can't have this. They say just tell her to come on bring the car back. Just bring it back. I wasn't too sure. I went down there talk to my brother. Oh, I know him. If he say he's going to do it, he's going to do it. I said okay. I did not know my father had signed for her the car ... to get the car. Went there the next morning. Bring [inaudible 00:05:04]. Got in there, here's the car. She said it was the most embarrassing time in her life.

It's alright. So, I told her ... I said, "Well, [inaudible 00:05:22] take this money and invest it. Go and buy a fourplex." She said ... She wiggled all up and down the street this place that place looking. She only could find a double. The double she found was out behind the airport. What it was \$26,000 that she paid for the car ... I mean to say the level. Three bedrooms on side, two on that side, two bathrooms. One bathroom over here. Yes, she got it. But, guess what? Everybody wanted that. They didn't want that house went for that cheap. It was \$60,000 the houses was worth over there. The bank and the attorneys neither one of them caught the bank. If I had another one there, she would have been rich because we could have invested that for the whole week. Cause they was trying to get in contact with her once they find out that the ... It's two weeks I think before they found out what was going on that she had the money ... all the money. It was written up the wrong way. Yes, indeed. But, that's her.

And, than she invested in that house. Than after that she had a got up on [inaudible 00:06:53]. That went through, she was the one that really came with money and it's a little place over there off of ... from [inaudible 00:07:06]. Next to Crazy Johnnies.

Interviewer: Alright.

Speaker 2: On 18th Street.

Interviewer: Well, talk to me about the recipes that you chose for your contribution.

Speaker 2: Oh, okay. I chose mayonnaise, bread pudding ,and cheese ball and chicken salad. Oh, I didn't do chicken salad.

Interviewer: You make your own mayonnaise?

Speaker 2: At times, I do. I have the recipe. Most people back in the day before ... in the early '40s, they didn't have ... It was the early '40s? Yeah, early '40s. They didn't buy [inaudible 00:08:01] mayonnaise until Blue Plate ... it was called Blue Plate ... come along. They were making the mayonnaise. But, most of the people on Friday, they made their own mayonnaise. It's very simple. So, you do the dry ingredients together. You want me to tell you about [inaudible 00:08:27]?

Interviewer: I mean sure. Or, I was going to say, you can just tell me what made you choose those. Or, you can go back a little further and talk about what it was like say growing up in your own house. Who did the cooking? Who taught you to cook, if anybody.

Speaker 2: Oh, my grandmother. We were little and my parents worked 12 hours a day. Most people worked 12 hours a day. You had to be on the job for 12 hours but you had to get there. So, that means that you [inaudible 00:09:02] be 13 or 14

hours away from your children. When we were small, they had to work. They were than working here in New Orleans. My grandmother lived in St. Francisville. She kept us until we were old enough to go to nursery school. But, while I was there, she would be doing the cooking. She cooked for really everybody around there.

She cooked ... She baked cakes, pies, biscuits, and all the cornbread and stuff like that. She also she canned vegetables, fruits, fish, meats. She smoked the meats. Because, when I was [inaudible 00:10:06] there's a house away from the house that there was a big room where they had shelves around the walls. Than they had hanging meat. Than you had meat in a barrel. Think that could have been pickled, the smoked, and all that stuff hanging up and around. Vegetables was in jars. She [inaudible 00:10:40]. She would let us peel the potato with a spoon. Scrap the potato with a spoon. Also, she let us bite piece so you know the taste of the potato. It wasn't bad. I learned to eat turnips ... raw turnips, raw beets, all that stuff that was good for the area. She did most of the canning for the people around. There were white folks, black folks ... mostly white folks would come and sit there and in fact bring the vegetables and stuff so she could cook it. They'd enjoy it and they'd come pick it up.

Interviewer: Had she ever worked as a cook or where did she get her skills?

Speaker 2: No, she just cooked at her house.

Interviewer: Just her house?

Speaker 2: Uh-huh (affirmative), just her house. They brought it to the house. She [inaudible 00:11:48] use ... that big barrel thing outside like you wash clothes in. She cooked in that. Than she had a big pan she cooked on the wood stove and cooked in that until we got gas and oil and stuff. Her husband, he had a store there that sold dry goods and stuff to the community and shoes and all of that stuff. The mail came to the house ... not the house but to the store. They had the mail ... people would come there and get their mail. He act as a distributor for mail after the mail man brings the mail to the store. He was a big time gambler.

Interviewer: My grandfather too.

Speaker 2: He gambled in the woods to the people. The boat captain would come there ... send word that he would be in the neighborhood. So, that particular time that they would go Saturday night and gamble because the stores closed on Sunday. They gambled. He had a still and he made beer and wine. The revenue people they would come ... people would come in the area. But, he would know. Talk to the people and stuff like that. When he talk to them, find out who they were, and send them on their way. But, they had a way of signaling other people like hoo. They call it hooping. He had that hoop. They didn't have no

telephones. They would know and pass the signal. But, some people maybe greedy and I guess [inaudible 00:13:49] or something want more money and didn't want to pay attention. So, they got caught.

But, he had a big still. He had one that once you come ... If you're on the road passing and you turn into his [inaudible 00:14:14] where he's living at, they have a big gate ... a heavy chain. They had something that you could pass through without dropping the chain. So, you know strangers coming. The dog is already moving. He's just whistling [inaudible 00:14:33] letting you know that somebody's coming. Before you know it, folks are at the gate. You drop the chain. That's a stranger and he's really getting wild than ... the dog getting wild [inaudible 00:14:49]. They'd get to the front. There on the front porch ... you go out to the porch, there's a level up there. The door is right behind you. There's a gun each door. You go back inside, there's a gun over the door and over the windows. So, you know you're living out there so this is ... you learn to shoot. You learn to shoot, learn to listen, and all of this stuff.

So, that when the boat captain man comes in, they go in the woods and sit. They didn't want me to know because I was too young [inaudible 00:15:33].

Interviewer: I was going to say, well how did you find out?

Speaker 2: Well, I knew what he was doing. But, he wouldn't let us see where he was going. So, he would go off in the woods at night time with a lamp and they would gamble \$30,000, \$40,000 in the woods. The captain bought his people ... his children land. As far as you can see in Bethel, Louisiana going further up on the 19 ... I think it's 19 or whatever road that is. Look as far as you can see, that's their land. He bought it for them. No question that was his children. He bought it. This one here good time pa, he didn't ... He hid his money and it died with him.

Interviewer: Oh, really.

Speaker 2: Uh-huh (affirmative), yeah. He hid it in the woods. [inaudible 00:16:45]. But, he loaned money out to the people when they crops didn't come in. They didn't come in, he loaned the money out. He could come [inaudible 00:16:59]. He had a good memory. Could tell you if it was two years ago. He could tell you on that date what you bought there and what you talked about. He had good brains. Mines not that good.

Interviewer: Yeah, that's how my grandmother use to be. She remembered so many details from people that she'd worked with and things that had happen like 50 years ago.

Speaker 2: That's true.

Interviewer: I was going to say and my memory is not that good. So, I was really impressed by how much she could retain.

Speaker 2: Well, that's like my father. My father ... They... Most black ... Well, not most. Many of them. Back than you couldn't write things down. So, you were a witness. You told a story like way back and way before he was born, it was told to him stories of who married who, when, and, where. It was so many people talking and knowing all these things so when it come down to me, it was giving me stuff. But, my other cousin say, "Ya need to get a tape recorder and record all this stuff." I didn't. [inaudible 00:18:23] like last names and who was married to this and when they died. We all are witnesses [inaudible 00:18:32]. When Roots came out, our folks had already been doing that that they go all the way back ... way back and where they came from all this stuff. Just telling a story. So, we had many relatives here that you'd be surprised to know. Can tell some of the story but we are there about my age and can't ... I can back a little bit and tell you last names and where they were living at and all of this other stuff. But, I can't do all that.

Interviewer: How big was the community that y'all lived in with ... I know you had your farmer and than neighbors.

Speaker 2: Well, the way his dad ... my grandpa dad set it up, it was just wherever he wanted to be. He had all the stuff that he needed and the store and stuff. Since that time, maybe 20 years ago, they [inaudible 00:19:53] down to make sure that it was not ... [inaudible 00:19:57] is not there. Now, that was some of the other ... on the other side people. Some of the white folks. But, truly if I look at it, the ones who did that, they don't belong there anyway. Because, when my mother's step-brother got married ... He married somebody from Ohio. She already had a child. From him, he had children. That's who's living there is the step people ... children [inaudible 00:20:38]. They didn't go back really take care of that thing. They just left. After his wife died, he just came to the city and just was here. He died, you know, so [inaudible 00:20:57]. [inaudible 00:20:58] search the woods.

Anyway, my grandmother, she was the best cook [inaudible 00:21:05]. She'd win prizes and stuff. Most people out there especially the ones that come from Mississippi ... they can really bake.

Interviewer: Oh, yeah?

Speaker 2: Yeah, they can really bake.

Interviewer: Alright. Did she teach you how to cook or did you learn just by watching her?

Speaker 2: By watching. By watching because she tells me I use to want to rip the cake up ... beat it. But, she said, "Oh my I started already with my right hand. You

left-handed. You left-handed. You can't bake ... You can't do it," because I would mess up her cake. She had the best tasting cake. [inaudible 00:21:56] cake. [inaudible 00:22:00] cake. You know they've got a big bakery there.

She did that and I was doing ... They have a potato house up there. So, the potato house it's got roof on the side kind of like this. We would climb up on that and slide down on that like the side. But, they had a piece of tin that was turned up a little bit. I came down the wrong way on the edge. I cut my foot right up under the little toe. I didn't tell my grandma. I was walking barefooted and we got ready to go to the rodeo. We were going to walk up to the rodeo, which was about maybe four miles but [inaudible 00:23:04] you could walk that. Grab my shoes. "Put your shoes on." I had a big purple ball under my foot ... under my toe. She didn't know. "What's wrong? Why you can't get the shoe on?" She looked. Oh, I had been walking around in the [inaudible 00:23:27] and all that got in it. Washed my feet. But, didn't tell because she would have taken care of it. Oh, yeah.

She and my great-grandmother and another lady, they sat there and was it Sunday? It was a Sunday. We'd come from church. Now it's like 3 o'clock or 4 o'clock in the evening. My sister, brother, and friends, they're walking to the pond out in the pasture way out there. They gave me something. They're sitting there talking and yah, yah, yah, and all of that. Before you know it, I had gone to sleep. All I know when I woke up the [inaudible 00:24:19] I don't know what they did. I didn't feel nothing. All I know all that stuff was gone. You can't see today where I have cut at. I woke up, I didn't feel nothing. I was walking on my foot. Putting that down walking. I don't hop. Yup.

Interviewer: Nice. Alright, well are the things that you like to cook or liked to cook for yourself or your family?

Speaker 2: Oh, I like to fix my ... I treat myself fine and my family. I love to shop for food. I get fresh food and stuff like to cook. Fresh food and vegetables so for a cheaper price. You get the stuff when its fresh because most vegetables are sweet. If you get it later like corn and it's almost the end of the season, they have made three or four cuts off to get ears off the corn. So, now you look at the corn, it [inaudible 00:25:41] and it's dry. You don't want that corn. It's dry. So, when you're looking it sort of like look at it and see got the [inaudible 00:25:49] in it. White corn is much better than yellow corn [inaudible 00:25:57].

Anyway, I would get up at five in the morning, fix my breakfast, fix the kid's breakfast and stuff, put it on the table in the dinning room with table cloth, set the table, and let them eat. This was every day except Saturday. That was my day off. I'm gone somewhere. Anyway, I would do that. Fix vegetable, meats, salad, and dessert. They ate that every day except Saturday. Sunday I'd cook. That's like family dinner. You drive over and you got the big spread. They have

geese or goose. Goose. Have you eaten a goose? A goose is sweet meat. It a little like a turkey.

Interviewer: I don't think I've every had it.

Speaker 2: It's like a turkey. But, it's expensive. It don't have that much meat on it. It's almost like a duck. I got about [inaudible 00:27:02] but that's okay. You know how to pull the grease off. I pulled grease off [inaudible 00:27:10]. Pull the grease off and than cut it down and season it good and bake it. I do do whatever kind of crab meat, [inaudible 00:27:26]. Normally What I do shrimp with broccoli and my secret ingredients in it. They liked it. They loved that. Than I do my soup with my secret ingredients in it. They come ... [inaudible 00:27:54] put the shrimp in it. The rest of the stuff.

Interviewer: Do your kids ever help ... as they were growing up, did they help in the preparation in the kitchen?

Speaker 2: No. No. No. They don't. My kids like when they were going to school got old enough, "Oh, no. I'm late. I'm late." Go on and eat breakfast. Okay, alright. It took me a while that they're old enough. I can't fuss because they're gone. Finally, I stopped fixing breakfast. Now [inaudible 00:28:38]. Yup.

Interviewer: So, where did you use to shop for your cooking ingredients?

Speaker 2: My meats was Winn-Dixie on Harrison Avenue. Also, [inaudible 00:28:58] on [inaudible 00:29:01]. So, who else? Oh, [inaudible 00:29:11]. My pork loin, I got it from [inaudible 00:29:17]. But, I bought it when it was cheap so like 50 or something cent a pound. Got that. They had long [inaudible 00:29:30] down the road. They can really spoil. I was living out there in the early '60s. Pork chops four pounds for a dollar. Fruits and vegetables [inaudible 00:29:44] 16 ounce pack seven for a dollar. [inaudible 00:29:51], you know. Roast and stuff I got all that [inaudible 00:30:00] steaks and stuff. Got that. But some I just would get the big piece of meat and just slice it [inaudible 00:30:09] steaks and stuff. I didn't spend that much money on that. If I spend ... this cheap. It's cheap [inaudible 00:30:23]. But than I was having something and over at Mr. Hayes on Harrison Avenue, he would keep the stuff like ... I saw that crab meat was cheap. I said, "How am I going keep this stuff?" I said, "Mr. Hayes, could you keep all this stuff for me?" He said, "Yes." I said, "Oh, thank you." [inaudible 00:30:53]. I don't know how I was going to fix all that stuff. I went [inaudible 00:31:00] to have things.

Now I got it. [inaudible 00:31:06]. Like now, you go to [inaudible 00:31:10], he's got this big piece of meat [inaudible 00:31:14]. Go there and cut that stuff up. You know what steaks cost. Come out cheap. You wrap it up and put it in the freezer, stack it up, and you look again, and see something else that you want. But, in the '80s I started taking my little cousin to ... She called me and say that



she was hungry and could I help her out. I said oh yeah. So, I came up there and brought her to Winn-Dixie [inaudible 00:31:50] up around the river. [inaudible 00:31:53] Winn Dixie use to be there. I brought her there and bought her some food and all. I said, "Well look, when your stamps come in, I'm coming. I am going to bring you to the store." I did. She thought she was smart. I'd taken something out. But, I [inaudible 00:32:18]. You think you're sleek on me. Because her husband would take the stamps and sell it.

Most black men did that. Take the stamps, sell them. Take the money and be gone. That's their boyfriend. He got two or three girlfriends. No car. But if you've got one, they'll drive it. Anyway, I even went on her husband's job because he would borrow the money on Wednesday ... borrow some of the money. On Friday you don't have no money. I went and told people uh-uh (negative). Don't give him no money. Let him bring [inaudible 00:33:08]. He can't get drunk early. Told the man who I was and all.

So, those kids are starving. Bought the pork loin. Had the piece of meat, the back and the ribs cut off so she had ribs. She had pork chops. She had a roast and some of the meat on that thing because I got it big enough to grind it up a little bit [inaudible 00:33:36] little piece of pork in there. So, she had those four meals or five. Something like that. I had gotten the sirloin tip big one. Had that cut and diced and all that kind of stuff, stew meat, and ground meat, and all of that cut up. So, she had the meals for that too. So, [inaudible 00:34:01] big freezer. I told her I said [inaudible 00:34:06]. She got little refrigerator [inaudible 00:34:12] stuff for the week. Now, if I'm not here your basket is over here. This is yours. [inaudible 00:34:20]. So, she did that. Wait a minute. Denise is out of food on Wednesday. No, uh-huh (negative). You have enough. Her children running out there playing. They weren't just fighting and stuff like that. They were happy children. Because, I told them go to that playground. Do not pick up a dollar, five dollars, ten dollars. Don't pick it up. It's not yours. Leave it there because, you see, the drunk people be watching. You pick up that ten dollars or five dollars, you'll [inaudible 00:34:59] for the police. [inaudible 00:35:01] know when the police come.

Anyway, Denise, what's happening to all this food up here? You had enough in here. [inaudible 00:35:14] he had too much fruit. He's tired of eating pickles. He tired of eating all this stuff. See when I put it on the ... when I placed it on the table, Denise [inaudible 00:35:29] hurry up and eat. Come back. Place some more stuff. Eat that. Come back. Place it all little goodies and stuff like that in there-

Speaker 1: Your background, where your parents come from, where you were born, do you know why you were given the name you were given, those kind of things.

Josie: No, I don't why I was given that name because my name is Josie, and not Josephine, and a lot of people call Josephine Josie back then.

Speaker 1: Right, okay, so it's not an abbreviation for anything, it's Josie.

Josie: No, it's Josie.

Speaker 1: All right.

Josie: The name was very popular, so everybody is Anne and May was very popular, Bessie May, Audrey May.

Speaker 1: All right, well tell me a little bit about where you grew up, and do you know how your parents met?

Josie: At school.

Speaker 1: At school.

Josie: In Laurel Hill, Louisiana, which is a part of St. Francisville, Louisiana, so they met at school, and then they moved here to New Orleans. In fact, they got married in Woodville, I think it was Woodville, and moved to New Orleans.

Speaker 1: Okay, and y'all grew up in St. Francisville or y'all?

Josie: No-no-no. St. Francisville was like to go visit. Summer, you're there or either you're at church here in the city. Yeah, so, we grew up in several parts of the city. This was on Harmony Street, between Dryades and Danneel. I was there until I was about six, and, but I remember when I was smaller being carried to that house, and they had glass on the top of the alley, so you couldn't jump off the porch into the alley. And we were across the street from a very popular hall, which was the name of the hall now? I got to think about the name of the hall. Which Mary Jane enjoyed, she lived next door to us and she married Willard. I think he was living on Jackson Avenue, and she was living over here on Harmony Street, but they probably met at the school. I'm saying Mary Jane because she took like a lot of interest in me, but let me get back to the house.

My cousin used to get me all the time, and since she used to get me all the time, unless every time I guess she must have thought she was playing with a doll. This particular time they wanted to go to a dance. She had me, so she brought me home. My mother was working 12 hours, my daddy wasn't home. They had 12 hour shifts or longer, you just worked back then. Anyway, I feel myself being carried off

the porch, knocking on the door, and then they're looking down the alley, and I'm still in her arms, and my next door neighbor, she was home. And they brought me in and placed me in the bed and they left.

Now Dolores Henderson, she was Dolores Dennis, Dennis [inaudible 00:04:20], she married, was his second wife or something like that. So anyway, she confirmed what I didn't know, because I told her I could see being carried. She said, "Oh, Josie!" I met her in Addis, and it's been since before this, so she said, "Oh, Jerry and I were very good friends." But they had went to school at Gilberts Academy, and they were at Gilberts Academy, gone to the dance. So that's how I got to be there, and I remember that.

Then another time that I remember being carried over here, Kaufmann's. My mother was going to get curtains in the evening, you see, because black folks got off late like seven o'clock or something like that the stores stayed open til nine. At nighttime Dry Street was called black shopping down there even though it was a white and German owned store, so that's where they were going. My cousin said, "You shouldn't be remembering that." I was being carried. Y'all up there talking about something. But when I got bigger and went to that store, I went to the back. Yeah I remember that. That's what I tell people. Babies remember stuff, but they'll put it together and I know one thing that on our way home.

Speaker 1: All right.

Josie: From Kaufmann's that night I don't know whether it was Bill or my mama's god sister because she was living with us. Or not. All I know is that my father was in the service. He was in the service.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Josie: Gone to the service ... no he wasn't. No. I forgot. But anyway. On the way home there was a bar room on the corner. And this man he dranked a lot, or whatever, got happy or whatever and walked in front of the car and they hit him.

Speaker 1: Oh wow.

Josie: They got out the car and pulled him from under the car. He got up and walked away. Yeah, no they had these old ... the cars were high

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: And big wheels and stuff

Speaker 1: Okay. All right.

Josie: And that's something that nobody, neither one of them told it.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: And so I got old enough. "Oh Josie, you're not supposed to remember that."

Speaker 1: Right. I mean you have a really good memory. Probably, it sounds like better than most people cause I ... do you know what your earliest memory was?

Josie: When I was being carried by a baby ...

Speaker 1: That was the earliest?

Josie: Probably I wasn't walking, I had to be carried and they had to put me in the bed.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: I know that when I went to visit, at least when they brought me to visit my daddy's brother in the country we had to spend a week over there. So my cousin, who used to help me in the bed ... I couldn't move I could just look and see if I'm looking here I could see all of this over here.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: And so I was just looking and she's ironing and they had a fireplace and that's where she was putting the iron in, to iron her clothes. I remember that. Still a baby.

Speaker 1: So after y'all moved from that first house where did you go after that?

Josie: [inaudible 00:08:42] and White

Speaker 1: Okay.

Josie: Its right down the street.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Josie: A block off of Broad Street, going toward Xavier.

Speaker 1: All right. And is that the neighborhood where you went to school?

Josie: I went to school over here [inaudible 00:08:59] on Harmony, down where my father bought a house. And he bought a house and we moved in January 1947 but I continued going to [inaudible 00:09:17] until they put us out because it was over crowded. Then I went to Danneel from Melpomene Street. And then I went to Washington.

Speaker 1: Okay. Do you remember liking school?

Josie: Liking school?

Speaker 1: I mean not a lot of kids do, but some ...

Josie: I finished at 16.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Josie: I was in the fifth grade when they wanted to move me to the 7th grade. My mother stopped that and I followed because I would have been ... My sister was the oldest so I couldn't go no further. So Annabelle's just a busybody and got into everything and when I was at [inaudible 00:10:04] they wanted me to be in this and that and plays ... I played ball at [inaudible 00:10:11] the little kids with Mr. Clark. He was the coach and he was physical education teacher. And so we played against Ricouard. So Ricouard and [inaudible 00:10:30] played. And I met Joyce Taylor. She went to Ricouard and all through our years that I played always against her because when I went to Danneel she was still at Ricouard and I played against her.

They had volleyball, basketball, track, you know, so anyway. I did that and I didn't play ball at Washington. I played at Southern. They was just playing against each other. Then I was taking classes, I dropped out, at least I didn't go back to school after 1960. So I went to Southern and I was on the basketball team there.

And so Joyce is at Xavier and I played against her again. Then I went to Rosenwald too. Rosenwald was here so I went to dancing school and Miss Durbin was at [inaudible 00:11:38] so I had a little dancin lesson at the school over there on her lunch hour.

They were, I guess, fascinated over me. I don't remember. They were fascinated and everything so. From there I was in a play at ... Rosenwald used to put on plays and stuff so they had the dane school and stuff over there. So I was in that. I remember being in Coleman Jones. But I didn't do too much a Booker Washington.

[inaudible 00:12:27] I was with the big kids.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: And so I was telling them what to do. Oh, when those people found out. In the eighties, middle eighties, that I wasn't as old as them they were mad. I always ... At 13 when I got to Booker Washington I chartered my uncle bus to go to Southern University games. Thirteen. Busy, busy, busy.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: I had some pictures of something that I had. I took a lot of pictures, I don't know what I did with them all.

That's where I keep my little stuff.

That's my sister, that's me. Come on y'all.

Speaker 1: Do you mind if I take pictures?

Josie: Sure. Go ahead.

My dad.

Speaker 1: Wow.

Josie: That's me.

Speaker 1: So how many kids total was there in your family?

Josie: Three and two cousins.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Josie: That after my mother brother died, his son didn't want to go back home so she accepted him at the house. So he lived with us until he graduated from high school. And my other little cousin he got into trouble [inaudible 00:14:41] and can't prove that he paid for it.

Speaker 1: So you said your mom worked 12 hours, what was she doing?

Josie: She was working at Tulane University as a cook. Yeah. At the sports stuff. And she cooked up there.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Josie: And my dad, when he came home from the service, he was working at Coleman Dairy.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Josie: [inaudible 00:15:16] Dairy was over on Melpomene and Washington Avenue. And so, one day I was playing down that way, an ice cream truck came. And Mr. Ike lived across the street, across the canal. And he come over and take the stuff out, dump it and clean up around there. So its just he's back and forth across it. And I said, "Oh, Mr. Ike, could I have that ice cream?" And he said, "Well let me check." And he checked. The next day, I got the ice cream. A big tray of ice cream.

Speaker 1: Oh wow.

Josie: Well it, the truck, they never brought it back in. They emptied everything into the garbage. So everybody, I got that. And so we ate that in about 10 minutes or so.

Then that evening, oh yeah, we ate that. Truck went out two times.

So next day, okay. It took us a little longer. And the next day it took us a longer time, almost lunch time. To eat all the ice cream. Because, you know, we haven't had ice cream before so you go through it real fast.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: Well we did, so eventually we had to give it away to other people around there so. Anyway, in the evening they had the big thing so my daddy called different people to come over and get ice cream.

The bakery over here where roads is now. They had a bakery to the side where the parking lot is. Barque used to be in a restaurant but that was a bakery. And after five they gave away all the stuff. All the baked goods. They gave it away. So people were giving stuff.

Speaker 1: Yeah. More stores should do that now.

Josie: They don't do that.

Speaker 1: I know but they should cause they just throw it away and its wasteful, you know?

Josie: They'd rather do that because of a lawsuit. I think Layola was giving food to, he on Lafayette where they had homeless people years ago. And it happened that they told him they couldn't do it because the school crowd, they may get sick or something like that and that was a school. Cause a lot of hotels and stuff like that would give a lot of food.

But then too, we didn't have all these homeless people here. We had a lot of factories here.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: Factories and clothing. Famous suits were made here on Broad. On Washington, Broad. Saint Bernard hats was world famous. All over. They bought it from here.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Josie: The best suits in town. In the world, is made here. And we had a lot of factories we had Dean Gates. We had Davis. We had ... Now where did I work down there? We had [inaudible 00:18:47] was the suits and stuff but it still was being sewing and stuff like that.

But anyway ... I can't even think the one I worked at when I was, coulda been about 17, 18 by then.

The summer that I came was the summer I came from Souther, I worked down there. At the [inaudible 00:19:17] they hired 2,000 people in there. Dean Gates they had about 200, 300 [inaudible 00:19:30] Highman suits and stuff like that. They had a lot of seamstress and stuff like that. You had two [inaudible 00:19:35] making shirts. you know, and so you had Coca-Cola was over there. [inaudible 00:19:43] Falstaff over here off of Tulane. Perdido Street. You have Falstaff. You have Jack's Beer. You had a lot of companies.

You had Dixie Beer. Black people didn't drink Dixie because they call it the white race's beer. So they didn't buy it.

So then when they were going out of business. Then they wanted the black people to patronize, but it was too late. They were gone. So a lot of the jobs and stuff like that. We had like 500 and some thousand people living here. All buses ran every 10 minutes. We had the [inaudible 00:20:34] bus ran about every half hour. The Palmer Park bus ran. [inaudible 00:20:40] is down by Godette was a private black school.

Ill say where Baptist College is. Godette was across the street. It went out in the 50's. Like '54, '53, '54. Something like that and that bus ran from that area all the way down Monroe. It turned around and come back. Palmer Park ran from Tulane and Allied Highway and ran around and it was like half and hour wait. But most of our buses were every 5 minutes or less.

Speaker 1: So was is necessary to have a car?

Josie: It wasn't too many cars. We had a car. But people didn't take no car to work.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: They walk or caught the bus. The bus was 7 cents. Also pigtails were like 15 cents a pound or less. No it wasn't 15 cents it was less than that cause red beans is no more than 25, 30 cents a pound. A bread was like 10 cents. Six drinks cost 26 cents.

Speaker 1: You did the grocery shopping in the house?

Josie: I did but I paid attention. My mother would send me to H. G. Hill's store. Hill's store came out. And Hill's store was right down the street. Where [inaudible 00:22:23] used to be. On the corner and then you had the Hill's store.



Speaker 1: Okay.

Josie: And then you had the post office, which was this little building look like a Chinese [inaudible 00:22:34] building. And then you had the fruit stand that stayed open 24 hours. Friday you could get anything. Not anything. There wasn't too much of meat. It was just vegetables and fruits. And canned goods. Like a few canned goods. Salt, pepper and different seasoning and stuff.

But my mother would send me to the store and so this was different other than the little corner grocery store. So we started going to the H. G. Hill's store. She sent me around there and I'd go and get a bag. And I'd start picking out the good ones. "Little girl, you're not supposed to be doing that." You know they want you to pick a handful. No. My momma can't eat this. It looks bad.

They attend to leave me alone because I had an answer for them.

Speaker 1: All right.

Josie: So anyway, from that we still living over here. I was still little. I was about 10. And going to the store and getting this and that. All right.

Then still 10, my grandfather would come into the city. And since my grandfather would come I would bring him down to the hospital and ... This is my dad. And that my cousin Georgia Grant and Carolina Grant. Over there.

I haven't given her her picture.

So but anyway I would bring my grandfather and my grandmother down to Charity Hospital. I knew how to catch the bus and walk them though. At the Charity Hospital would have to get off the Tulane bus, walk down to the corner and go in because she had an appointment. Because going up the ramp that was emergency so we had to go in and as you go around the corner. You registered. Went with my grandmother, showed her. She put her card up there and ... We sat down and wait til they get checked out. You know, you get it and go on the second floor.

I said they had people come in and they leave, come in and leave. Id go up there and talk to them. Tell them we've been sitting here a long time.

Speaker 1: Right

Josie: And my grandmother came here and she was in here a long time before all these other people are coming through.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: And so "Well little girl, where's your grandmother?"

"She's sitting over there."

"Where is she from?"

"Connella, Louisiana."

Knew all of that. Talk to ... Well I look out. Okay.

"What's her name?"

Told them the name. Louise Harris. So they got her file and gave it to me and we went to the second floor. That was fine.

Now when it comes to me going down there. My momma had gone with me and I'm always having a cold or something. Catch everything coming my way. But I didn't stop moving.

So anyway, my mother couldn't go to downtown with me. She went to work.

I went to the hospital. Put my card up there. They called my name. Got my folder. Brought it to the second floor. Gave it to the desk person and sat down. And then they called me to go get to see the doctor. Got my folder, passed the nurse and went down the hall. I sat on the floor and start opening the thing and I sit down and try to read but I couldn't read because it was cursive writing.

And I said I couldn't understand it because it was just all funny writing.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: And the doctor came out. He said, "You're not supposed to be looking at that folder."

"Yes it is, its about me. I need to know."

Anyway, that's when I got to know Dr. Mary.

Later on he was over Charity Hospital. So anyway I went there and I had a pin on the back of my hair because when I braided it, it would come loose.

Every time you go to Charity Hospital you have to take an x-ray cause they got a new x-ray machine. X-rays had come out. So anyway, the doctor told me, "I got to operate on you cause you got a suave little pin. Lookie here."

Cause I had the pin like this, to hold it.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Josie: The hair pin. You know the bobby pin. Like they can sit a little tight, then the hair pin. All right. Then he's telling me, "No, no little girl. I'm gonna have to operate."

"No, no that's on my head."

Anyway, after that he started teaching me how to read the x-ray. Every time I come there okay. He told me how to look for the little things where its hurting at. And stuff and you could see the little fog and stuff on it. And I started pointed out what I had to do.

And so he was just waiting for me to come. Every time I would come back to him and stuff like that. Yeah. Sure did. He'd be surprised I didn't get to be a doctor.

Speaker 1: Did you think you wanted to be for a little while?

Josie: I thought so and I thought I wanted to be an international lawyer. And then Ebony, I don't know if it was a '55 book of Ebony. '54, '55, or '56 where they had schools, colleges all around the world. and I wanted to go to one of those schools away. You know, I wasn't going away.

I wasn't going anywhere cause my momma wasn't gonna let me go. So that's where I wanted to go, outside the United States, to go to school. But that didn't happen. Then they wanted me to go to Xavier. I should have gone to Xavier. My Aunt T finished from Xavier.

And all the cousins and stuff like that finished from Xavier way back in the day. Went to Southern. Mixed with the [inaudible 00:30:14] doing fine. Got there, got sick. Had the Asian flu going around. Okay. Now I know how to take the temperature.

I'm a cheerleader at Southern.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Josie: We come down to play at Xavier. Oh, I was bad off. Now I didn't tell anybody that I was sick, but they know. I took my own temperature and told them its 96 or whatever. Which it wasn't but I was going to take other people temperature and read the temperature and stuff like that cause I could do it.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: Yeah so I knew because of Dr. Mary. I got here, I was sick.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: I got out the car. I'm still moving around now. My momma say, "You going to the hospital in the morning."

"No momma, we got a game."

I went to the hospital, stayed all day. Rode the bus around Xavier. The game was over with. Now I'm going to the dance. Get there. I'm in the bed. I am sick. But my cousin came over. She sat by my bed. "I'm going, we going to the dance."

I went to the bathroom, threw up. Run the temperature and stuff. She stayed there and sat with me until the dance is over with then she went home.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Josie: I did not. The next morning, I was checking into the hospital. From then on. Yep, ever since I checked in to the hospital, I had pneumonia.

Speaker 1: Oh wow. Yeah.

Josie: So they all love me to death. They ... Interns and stuff when they go to lunch they bring me something, a bag back of lunch and stuff like that. Yep. I was their little pride and joy.

I had to withdraw from school though. Because they thought I had TB.

Speaker 1: Oh, okay.

Josie: Somebody brought something back and ate it. It was red. [inaudible 00:32:45] or what I had that was ... It was good going down.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: It was nothing bad but they took a test and the test showed that it was red. And they pulled me over and then that's when I went to ... what you call it? A [inaudible 00:33:08] building. Going to the [inaudible 00:33:08] building I stayed in isolation for two weeks. And I guess since they had to run the stuff down and test it.

The only test that they had that they thought was TB was the one that a spit test. And that was all but they had to do it because they didn't know.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: And so I stayed two weeks. My momma had to put the gowns on and stuff in isolation. Then I had to spend 3 weeks on the other side where people didn't have to be isolated and stuff.

So the doctor told me just when I get ready to use the phone take and wipe it off and stuff and don't put it close to my mouth.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Josie: And I had to do that for another 3 weeks. So I had to withdraw from school.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Josie: Now I miss [inaudible 00:34:06] I could do what I want. Make my own decisions and stuff. Wrong, wrong, wrong.

I volunteered at a deaf school in the evening. I went to the blind school. I'm not even opening my books. Relying on my brain and all. So anyway, that's what happened on that. So I did okay.

Here now my other group of people come in and I'm with the '58 class coming through. I know a lot of them. So I'm having fun. Oh yeah. [inaudible 00:34:51] was having some fun. Just going out to campus and doing what I want to do and not in the books.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: Now if I had stayed with my other people, I said "Imma get out of school in 3 years cause I'm going summer and winter."

Did I go?

No.

Messed up big time. Messed up. So anyway, when the demonstration came, I left. And then that picture that they took, they all ... Southern University was prejudice against people from New Orleans. So they didn't let the people back into the university. And the 7 students that sat at the counter, they didn't let them back at all.

Graduating seniors. This is march. April, you know you're walking. So they didn't let them back but other schools picked them up quietly. So I didn't know that until 1976 when I went to Washington DC and I saw Janice Halston.

And I said, "Janice, what happened?"

She said Temple University picked her up quietly. My cousin he went to Tennessee A&I. They picked him up quietly. Because they told him he couldn't get into school. He wasn't a graduated senior, but he's from New Orleans. That he could not

register. They didn't want him. His children, not his grandchildren, they at the university.

Speaker 1: Wow.

Josie: Most of the boys were told that. So tambourine and fan club guy, he wind up going on the bus. Where they burned the bus.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Josie: He wind up going there. Went along with Harry Belefonte and all of them. So that's why he didn't get a degree. Cause he dint know at the time cause I think he would have been a sophomore, junior. He should have been a junior and they didn't pick him up. So they, he went around.

What was his name? Smitt, I think ... Oh, I forgot his name. But anyway, they had most of the boys they told them that. Before, after ... I'm dyslexic. Cause I jump ... I do 5 things at one time. Go from here, here, here, and there.

So its getting worse as I get older because I'm not talking as fast and if I talk most of the main idea is in my head.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Josie: Its already, I said it and then it come out in the middle of the sentence. You say, "What are you talking about?"

I have to go back and then re say what I have to say on it.

But anyway, we had meetings and we decided that all 4,000 and some kids withdraw from the university. And that's what we did. So there, we were going over to the registrar's office and they locked the doors. They wouldn't let them in.

So Miss Cuey go walk because they said, "I'm not from New Orleans." You know, act like people from New Orleans. "I'm not from New Orleans cause I'm too pushy."

The other ones they just was wild and stuff like that. They called wild people and all that. I went and pulled on the door. They locked the door. "Hey y'all. Come on."

They were mad they stayed there all night long withdrawing people from the university.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Josie: That's my famous picture. I'm standing in the back, back there with the long hair and they had another girl at the counter. That's the picture the [inaudible 00:39:29].

Speaker 1: Nice.

Josie: So when you go ahead and look at Southern, look in the back, back there.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Josie: I opened the door.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Josie: Yeah they were angry. Cause when we used to travel. We went to Florida. Dean Johns would say, "Oh hey." "Oh hey, Dean Johns how yeah doin?" I said, "What you got in your hand? [inaudible 00:39:53]"

He said "Oh these are lunch cards."

I said, "Really?" I say, "Can I have one?"

[inaudible 00:40:00]

He gave me some. Guess what he told me? "Don't give them to the people from New Orleans."

Speaker 1: Really?

Josie: Now we in Florida. Florida A&M. They had fixed up that basement good with the beds and stuff for us to stay overnight. Then they catch the train to go back to Southern. Really. You know who I gave them to huh?

Speaker 1: The people from New Orleans.

Josie: Anywhere I go. "You're not from New Orleans." Oh yeah, I'm from New Orleans. They know I'm gonna say it.

So but anyway, getting back to where I was then. Come back to New Orleans. Yeah. Here I am. We demonstrating in New Orleans. [inaudible 00:40:57] we had Ellis Hall and Avery Alexander. My daddy. You know, I was little. This was about 12 years old. Voting. And to get the people to vote you had to say, you know how old you are to like compute your age to the exact date on thing. So then you had to dot your I. Cross your t's. We didn't know.

So I was helping them to make sure that they know how to do this. And we recommended that they go at least they recommended for them to go down on the day of their birthday and that way they can remember to do everything correctly. And so that's what they did. And the key word for "are you a voter? Oh, did you

vote for such and such a thing? Oh I was going to do that." See then they're not registered. Or they have a key word when we be talking. And I was or whatever. They wasn't mad.

So like in 1963 that's when you had a large number of people voting. At the time we registering a lot of folks. Cause it was much easier even though you had to take a test.

They had like 20 questions to answer. Then they dropped the age down from 21 to 18.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: So anyway, it was easier to just make sure you go down there and register when you have to be 18 you have to sign up. "Oh no I was going to do this and I was with this." And all that. You weren't there.

Some people like I could tell you. "Okay [inaudible 00:42:59] you voted down." Already know. Once you open your mouth already know. That was me.

Now look at me.

This my father. We would go to on the lake. This is one the lake. This is on the lake with his cousins and friends.

They would play cards out there. They have us ... at least we up there we'd be running up and down with our [inaudible 00:43:38] and stuff.

...

Speaker 1: So how often did you guys go to ...

Josie: The lake?

Speaker 1: Not just the lake but ...

Josie: We went to the park.

Speaker 1: The house in Saint Francisville? Was your grandmother's house?

Josie: Yeah we went every time we had a day off from school. If its just one day then we went out there cause they were working.

These are my cousins.

And that ... yeah that them.



Speaker 1: Was that your parents wedding photo?

Josie: No, that was ... People took pictures there at Magnolia and Washington Avenue. And every event or something like that. Every so often they would ... You'd see people taking their pictures. And you'd see almost the same background.

This is my great-great grandmother ... She was from Virginia. So from her mother and brother, Lorinda Byrd ... She died at a hundred and sixteen.

Speaker 1: Wow.

Josie: She was still threading the needle without eyeglasses. She could walk. She's about [inaudible 00:45:33].

Speaker 1: Wow.

Josie: So she can walk. She took care of babies and stuff until her children, that were still living came out and brought her to Baton Rouge. She no longer could walk where she pleased to go. She had to wait and let people bring her. She didn't know her way around in Baton Rouge. So that's why she just sat and sat.

Now I was young and these were some more friends. A cousin and a friend. Two friends. Two pictures of them. That's in Woodville, Mississippi. You know who this is ...

You know these people?

Speaker 1: Well I know you.

Josie: And who else? You should know. The one kissing me.

Speaker 1: Who is the one kissing you?

Josie: Don Hubbard. You don't know Don Hubbard?

Speaker 1: No.

Josie: Oh he got the bed and breakfast on Saint Charles Avenue.

Speaker 1: Oh, okay.

Josie: And this is Lloyd Prakkus. This is him leaning on the door that's at my house ...

This is at my grandfather's store and that is his step-mother.

Her husband was his father.

Speaker 1: Your grandfather owned a store?

Josie: That was given to him from his father.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Josie: He didn't leave the area.

He was a big time gambler. This is him.

Speaker 1: Oh I think you talked about him. Was he a ...

Josie: A gambler.

Speaker 1: A bootlegging?

Josie: Yeah a gambler. But this is some pictures that of Xavier. My cousin ... I wish I had taken more pictures of him. Not of them, but pick them up. This is at our house.

At least these pictures was left at our house because she passed away at a early age.

So that was taken around Gilberts Academy and also at ... Xavier.

Recognize the canal?

Speaker 1: So ...

Josie: I wanted to know who they were because ... if I see Dr. Francis he may know. But I never had my pictures with me. Id lost some and I found em back.

Speaker 1: So how were these spared from Katrina? Did you bring them with you or?

Josie: They were at my house.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Josie: I'm upstairs.

Speaker 1: Oh, okay.

Josie: So I don't know the names of the people. I wanted to ... When I had them before Katrina I keep misplacing them and all so. I want to know where they were. Cause I

know somewhere along the line they did have a reunion of people from Gilberts Academy. Then I wanted to bring it with me. But that didn't happen. The reunion.

Speaker 1: So what did you end up doing professionally after college? You know, what were ...

Josie: Oh, when I was in high school my auntie ... Not my auntie, my cousin. My mother's first cousin. They moved to California. And they were working ... She was working at ... Not at Antwine's ... back even think of the name it's a popular restaurant down by the court house in the French Quarter.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Josie: I went to work in her place. And I didn't even get a paycheck. It was ... She got the paycheck, I got the tips. But I didn't worry about the tips. At least I didn't worry about the paycheck. I got the tips. I could walk to [inaudible 00:51:30] street and went to the fabric store and had four yards for a dollar of this fabric. Two yards for a dollar. Fabric was a lot. It was really nice fabric, see.

So I learned how to sew when I was 8 years old. How I know that? Because my mother friend saved the stuff that I made. And before she died, she showed me the kitchen curtains that I made for her. I don't even remember making them. I don't. And it was on a Trellis machine. You work with your feet. I did that.

Speaker 1: Wow.

Josie: Anything you can do, I can do better. Or faster. But I was gonna say it or do whatever. But no. In the country I got sick. And this was about [inaudible 00:52:34] I could have been about 11 or something like that. I was sick because I got up late, breakfast had been served a long time ago. And here it is 10 o'clock. I'm just waking up. My grandmother wouldn't let them, the other cousins, wake me up. You see. And somebody tiptoed over there and woke me up. And all so she was fussin, "Let that child sleep." Because I was so skinny.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: "Let that child sleep." So but anyway, I got up, got my self together, went in the garden. As I go in the garden I got the cherry tomatoes and then they have the regular tomatoes. Then you had some other ... What we had figs and all this stuff. I eat all of that.

And then I did the cucumbers and come back and maybe put some vinegar on there then ate that. Then I ate some pears that was ripe. Went over to the pear tree and got some pears and ate that.

Talk about somebody's sick.

Speaker 1: Yeah

Josie: That was me. My grandfather had to bring be to Woodville because we were livin' in Louisiana. That corner of Louisiana, which is a part of Saint Francisville. And so that really next to Woodville like the line. And so he brought be there and all the white people sitting around the wall. He walked in there, walked in the place. Walked carrying me and brought me into the doctor's office and placed me on the table.

All of the white sittin all around there. That's Jacque's granddaughter, and she's sick and he ... My momma, my mother was in New Orleans and didn't want nothing to happen and all that kind of stuff. So I saw the doctor.

That happened.

Then when I got to be about 16, 17. That wisdom tooth back there. That bothered me. I happened to be out there in the country out there. And it bothered me, but my grandfather brought me to the dentist. He didn't go with the other people.

We went to the dentist office, and the man looked in my mouth, and he pulled my wisdom tooth. In Woodville, Mississippi like that picture. This was some ... Where those girls were. But anyway ... This. This is Woodville, Mississippi. This is around the court house over there.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Josie: I used to love to take pictures of them. So. [inaudible 00:55:33] picture of my [inaudible 00:55:33] there.

My dad said that when we were little my sister wanted to go get ... We went to [inaudible 00:55:43] park they would you take out, but you can't sit, you can't ... You had to keep moving. But he always would take us out to different places.

And so he said that my sister wanted to go swing and he didn't let her swing. This is ... I was volunteering for that. That was when they had the flirts parade for the veterans.

That's called Gammon [inaudible 00:56:20] its called Gammon.

That's ... Which one is that? That's Issac Davis. Yeah.

So but anyway, getting back to me ...

Speaker 1: After college.

Josie: After college, what I did. I was ... This is ... I'm getting back to high school. Where I went and worked at this restaurant. And I got good tips. It wasn't quarters. They

used to put a nickel and a dime. Cause coffee was like 15 cents a cup. And its not Antwine's ... Is it Antwine's?

Speaker 1: It might be Arnaud's? Is it Arnaud's?

Josie: I don't know that very well, but anyway. That's where I worked for the summer. Cousin never came back to New Orleans. Summer was over, and we were out a person. And so I was gone cause I was going to school. She's buried in California. They came to visit, but they didn't come back here at all.

So anyway, now after college what did I do? When I was about 21 then. Being 21 I was working. What I was doin? I was still going to school. I was still taking part-time. And wait a minute. Started applying for jobs. Volunteering at Reverend Johnson's old church. That's Lloyd [inaudible 00:58:30] father's church. That I was volunteering at to apply for jobs at [inaudible 00:58:38] telephone company.

Too much education. It wasn't hiring black people at that time. And not public service. We was just going everywhere applying for jobs and stuff like that. And so I had waited so long to ... for Maison Blanche. So they hired me at Maison Blanche as gift wrapper. That wasn't well minimum wage.

And they felt like they should hire me because I had waited so long to and they just wind up giving me the job there. But what I wanted to say? Something about hiring.

My class, we were the first of the baby boom. Because they boomed in and like we had like three classes of kindergarten people. The next year they had almost like 6 classes. That's the baby boom to me but these news reporters I don't know how they say the baby boom. But boom here and that was like in the middle. Okay you boom right here in 1940 now you're coming up and you're going straight up. And the peak was like in '45 not then. In '45 because you had to get all the way to here and the university starts building more dormitories to accommodate the crowd that was coming in behind me.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: They were graduating nearly like 600 kids. Black kids. Coming out the university. So in 1960 what did they do? White kids they didn't ... Wait, go back to '50. They didn't ... White kids didn't go to college as much as the black because were training. Everybody tell you "Go to college."

So they were going to college and getting educated and stuff. So the white folks they got jobs. So now, here we coming out 4 years later. We coming out. So, hey, they're not qualified.

The bar is they used to go on trips and trip around the world and this stuff and all them feel [inaudible 01:01:20] where they're going and stuff like that.

But anyway, we took those jobs. Then this is how we were applying to the jobs. And they called us window dressing because now we got money and stuff and we needed jobs and stuff like that. Because before they didn't hire you at that point of high school ... No college.

Cause a guy at Dillard, he was sweeping the floor in a janitor. And he finished from Dillard and had more education and stuff. But that's the kind of jobs they had to get.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: Because of that so now since we went all the way through from the 50s to the ... From the 40s to the 60s they created something that was like are we gonna give the kids reading and new math?

New math today. Nobody knew how to do new math. They told you, "Oh, you don't have to help your child at home." And stuff like that.

So they broke that up. Of we teaching the kids what we know. And teaching them that what they know. Because we had more inventors than what they did. Everything we did, they took it because they had the ability to express and talk and tell it and then some people they just stole it. And say it's their own. But they didn't invent that.

Look what bleach is doing, you know?

So that was black people on a cell phone, black. Robot, black. McCoy, black. I always thought they were white, but they were black.

But anyway, getting back to this stuff here. So now you let me run in the 60s. Now coming up to the 70s. You know most people they couldn't get this math and stuff but we was still teaching the old math. Well by the time these other kids got up to in the 70s, late 70s and the 80s. Now you gonna enter a test. And what you gonna test them on? Math.

When you go to the 4th grade you get tested. So if you didn't pass the test in math, you were kept back.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: Okay that was mostly boys because they were dyslexic. They had eyesight that was not really. They had memory, but the eyesight seeing the Ds, Ps, and Qs. They got confused and stuff like that.

So anyway for that they come out reading fine but here they still you had to read the directions on the test.

8th grade testing. So now you're about 13 years old. Some of them may be 16 now but they still can't get the math.

Okay you flunked again. Now you're out in the street because you don't want to go to school with these younger kids.

So then the next time you tested is in the 12th grade or either you took it early in the 11th grade. Now you have time, if you didn't know, to take it in the 11th grade. You get to 12th grade, you can't graduate because you didn't pass the test.

And so that's the way they saw the light blocking everything else out. And to mess up the neighborhood had ... You're changing the school districts.

Leslie Jacobs got this thing through so the people did have to no longer go to the private schools and the Catholic schools, which hurt the Catholic schools because they no longer had all the money that the people were ... the white folks ... so called "white people" were paying for their children to go to school and passing. Because to get around the tests and all that stuff they put them in the Catholic school. And they graduated from high school.

So now you got those people. You gonna mess up the neighborhood now.

[inaudible 01:05:52] Leslie got these schools here. No longer on the school board. In the past they said they couldn't do it. All this work and stuff like that and now they got control of the money. Taking it for the school board, you no longer gave all this money to these white carpenters so they could do the work and all this stuff in school.

They had to come to the school board. So they had to block that off. When they blocked that off, Leslie got this through so now you have your own school. And you have your own school so you have ... What you call it school ... Its not private schools, its ... What are they doing now these schools?

Speaker 1: Charter?

Josie: Charter schools. They have the charter schools now. And they're not doing well.

Speaker 1: No.

Josie: But, they got the money and they can control the stuff unless we can vote. And we don't vote. Now you messed up that I live next door. I got 3 children here. My children can't go to that school because they don't qualify.

One qualify for this school across the river. The other one qualify for another one area in the school district and another. Three different things where you used ... All

you kids went to the same school. And you didn't have to worry about days off and stuff like that. School zones and all that.

All that stuff changed. You don't know. And the kids are not as close as they used to be.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: So, that's broke up the buying power. And also the voting power. Cause you know they can't read at all and nobody's going to help you do it. Whereas your neighbors help you to do these because ... Hey I went to music lessons, dance classes, and all this other things. But what they do?

When they get up in the morning. 5 something in the morning. No breakfast. They're waiting on the street til the bus pick em up at 6:30 and then after the 6:30 in the morning they eat at school. So you don't know what they're eating.

And you're not gonna make your child do this stuff at all and you have 5 generations of people since the 70s of having kids between the ages of 11 and 16. And how much knowledge do they know? Nothing. Because what they seek is television. And television don't show all the things. Its just been racist.

And in America, its America. Not divided America because your skin color is light and mine is dark.

This is what we need to do is bring people together because we are Americans.

When you go overseas do they say your black friends, a Frenchman? They don't. Go to another place. Are you a black German? No. You're just a German. But you get here in America. These people wanna continue making money. So the difference of these people when they bring them together is that you ask Italian, Irish, German, [inaudible 01:09:43] and most of the time if they're talking they don't like each other.

But they're banding together. To get what they want. And do this is that what we have to do is try to bring the races more together like putting a law down where if you misrepresent a person and of their color. And said, "Oh you black American." You gonna be fined.

You could be fined form \$500 all the way to \$10,000 or more. And be jailed. And so this type of law need to be in place because people come in here and we are still divided.

Our jobs are gone because the older people that's in the Senate and ... The national people. And so these national people, you go in there poor but yet still you rich.



Because you get money from out the back door and lift the tariffs up and let everybody bring their stuff in and you get money from here and also had.

We are down. Everybody else we done brought them all up. All other countries are up. [inaudible 01:11:13] national looked in and like America was great. Everybody want to come to American because it was free.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: Now we beginning to lose America because its beginning to be not free. And as I say not free, you cannot walk in some of these buildings at all, whereas you used to can walk everywhere. Go this place and that.

See overseas you can ... You better make sure where you can't bring cameras and none of that stuff sometimes in some of these buildings, you know? So you can't do that.

So I think that we should bring ... Push for legislation to write these bills up. I had talked to Cedric and Edwin and they didn't do nothing. So maybe I can just be a group of something that could write these laws up right.

I don't know how to write. Like why I say I don't know how to write? Because if I'd right stop I may leave out a letter and I put S-P-T or either S-T on it and when they come back, "What is this? I don't know what it is." And also. But when I did this ... I got married and then I traveled different places and stuff like that and volunteered with the [inaudible 01:12:56] doing their gala for 20 some odd years. Volunteer with sickle cell. Make table cloths for them for their fundraiser. Made like 100 and that.

And for sickle cell the last I did was to make the drapes for old Maison Blanche's building because they had the telethon there.

I would go and select the material, the furniture and stuff from D. H. Holmes back then at the time it was D. H. Holmes. And set up the two rooms for interviews and serve food. Make sure he got food there form different people pop by churches. All the sick, they used to send food for the people because we used to from Friday, Saturday, Sunday. And its 24 hours steady going. And all I did was to go home, take a bath and come back to go back out there.

But up front I did the curtains. And I got the curtains form where [inaudible 01:14:18] office is now. It used to have a church there and a fabric place. And I went to the fabric place and picked out what I want and the man sold it to [inaudible 01:14:29] for a dollar a yard, which was nice. Not [inaudible 01:14:34].

Well anyway, they sold it to sickle cell. And so I went there. The man delivered the fabric to my house. I moved the stuff. I do 50 feet this way and cut it and sew it. They brought it that evening. The next day they was picking it up. Because I did 150

feet this way, 100 ... At least 50 feet the other way to make the back drop behind their telephones. Did that. Then I had to do the curtains that's in front.

And then I went over around the corner to the foods cause I finished that job.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: Go around the corner.

So when Essence first came here, I worked two weeks. Volunteered two weeks at Essence.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Josie: They had white folks in charge. And so they wanted to put who they want volunteer at the Super Dome. You had the corners around, behind, and then you had the stage downstairs so you've got big trucks can pass behind, around the dome, behind the windows and stuff. You got way space and stuff like that.

So they set up in the corners of each area. The small size, whatever you call it. The local people could sing and stuff. So you need volunteers to monitor everything, you know.

So we were getting volunteers.

Well, my people, my good folks, they were gonna put the so called "white people" where they wanna put them at and they're going to put Gale [inaudible 01:16:42] somewhere in a dark corner and she was on the school board. You know that didn't happen.

They got mad. I told them about it. They got mad and pulled the whole thing down. Tore it up. Cause I told them they were racist.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Josie: That you gonna put people in this place and that place and stuff like that. I did that for like two years.

The first year, people out there was in charge of table cloths. They didn't get the table cloths back. They had to put me out. "Just go."

I went downstairs, I'm gonna paint these signs and stuff like that. Paint the signs. Then I went around the corner over there they had the power machine. I turned it on and start sewing on the power ... Curtains, drapes for the folk at the Super Dome. You know, to put up.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Josie: The folks come in there, "Oh, its late, its getting late." [inaudible 01:17:44] table cloths we can't get in the table cloths.

Go to the fabric store and buy as much fabric as you can. And come and make these things.

I got out of there and at that time you had Hancock's right here by Broadmoor ... Not Broadmoor ... Yeah that's Broadmoor. No it's not Broadmoor. That's Saint Anthony's Street down there.

You had Hancock Fabric. And they went there to buy all the fabric that they could to try to fix up stuff. So anyway, no I didn't stay to watch anything.

People were practicing there ... Well they weren't practicing, but we were just prepping. But the day before the thing that's when they went and got, was trying to get the table cloths. And I told them to go around and get that from there.

You had two weeks! You had all this time, and you couldn't find none of that stuff, but you got books.

White folks is bad. They'll tell you anything but they ... [inaudible 01:19:00] young boy painting and going ... Paint all over him. I got my jean skirt on, my heels on. I'm painting. Hazel said, "I didn't know you could paint like that." I said, "Yes, I can." I'm just painting ... Jimi Hendrix first time went up in the Dome. I painted that.

I had it drawn out on there, and you had to paint. Then you know put the little colors and stuff like that too. So you can see it. The background. I did that too.

Then what's up next? Katrina? I'm going up the steps, in Baton Rouge, to do my ... Go get my stuff together. Fred, "Josie, you should volunteer." Get up there, I go and volunteer. They put me in the kitchen.

Okay I'm black you put me over here. That's all right with me, I love to cook. Go in, I want to see the man in charge. This guy named Robert Brown. Oh, he act like he was in charge. Then tell me different things and stuff like this. [inaudible 01:20:19] And then I found out who was in charge. And I talked to the man.

So now he ... I'm trying to get ... acclimated of doing what to do. So here we get ready to have lunch ... Dinner. Come there, wash my hands and all that stuff.

Now I'm working. I'm working. Feeling the place. You on the in. You can't put a slice of bread in there and close up right quick. Come on y'all, come on she right there. They moved me. Okay that's fine. Go check the lines.

Okay I go out there to check the lines there's another girl. She's over on this side with the line. This is not going to work. So anyway, I was out there.

So now the next morning I go there for like 5:30, 6 o'clock in the morning. For the breakfast line. Okay we lining up and they just go up to where they have a window this long up here. So you go in here and get your plate. That's not going to work.

I asked them, after that day I asked them, "Do y'all have the ropes to rope this thing up?" "Oh no we don't have any ropes." I said, "Look when they taking our tickets they have ropes that people come through."

So I got three. Set that bar. Now I'm [inaudible 01:21:58] organize the line. We got a line. Everybody get in this line. Little girl come with her whatever and her pick stuck up in her head. Popping her gum. "Sister, where you goin?" No. "Get to the end of the line." I'm telling the police man and the state trooper, "Watch my door. This door is going to come to this and you go out this door, so I need that clear. I don't want you standing in line. Anything happen you got to try to get the people out in this chaos." I want it like this.

And so they monitored that stuff. For me. So now I got this line going and I got the old folks, people with babies in this line. I got this line for something else. So I wind up getting fired. So you can just walk up if you're old, just walk up and go. I can just continue sending you because you're not going to get more than one plate.

So but some people get 3 plates. So I don't want you at the window getting 3 plates and somebody's standing behind you waiting. So that's why I had the lines so to make sure that once you get your plates and this line is open I'll send you in this line and that line. And that way I keep watching the lines so I can send the people to whatever line. Line number 5, 4, 3 into those lines, 2 and 1. And you keep going. So Reverend Alexander told me, he said, "I'm so glad that you're here. I'm so happy cause we'd be way up in the night trying to get food and sometimes we don't get enough." Because the young people that took it over, they got all these plates of food and just set em down in there and that was like 3,000 people. I finished in 40 minutes because I had them going.

And like I said, this little girl she ... I told her, "You can't do this." She got away the first time. Second time I say, "Sister, come on back and get to the end of the line." Pop, pop, pop, pop. The sister got loud with me. Get to the end of the line. I said now, "You want me to drop you in two minutes or two seconds?" She got to the end of the line.

Now the policemen and stuff, they wondering, "Who in the devil is this woman?" [inaudible 01:24:47]

Now here come a white one now. She got a big thing of stuff with hand sanitizer. Cleaning her hands. Okay. She gonna act like she was there. I said, "Sister, baby, you

weren't here yesterday." I said, "The only person was here was black people and are you black?" Looked in her eye. "Don't mess up my line."

And she left. I don't mind you doing that.

Then this guy who called his self the head guy. Now I got all this stuff moving good, right?

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: He gonna drag an ice chest here with cold drinks on this side.

What in the devil? Who put this here? Because you don't want to go and get your food with this in your ... A cold drink in your hand. You wanna balance your food so you get your food first and you can balance the drink in your hand.

Move this. Come get it. Move it and put it somewhere else on the other side, after they get their food. Because I don't want this stuff wasted on the floor and we gotta take time to clean this up and somebody else is hungry.

You're gonna block my line.

Got it there to the end.

And then take care of my stuff.

Another thing I watched, they had a black group come in and [inaudible 01:26:34] enough food. They had little purple and black but I didn't know what restaurant it was. You know those people sent those people back? And they couldn't serve the food. Because they were getting what they want. And white groups to fix the food.

But they had enough food there. But they let them go.

Then some whites come in and say they volunteers. They walk all over the area where they have the clothing and stuff. Picked out what they want and they can put it in the bag. Put it under the chair or something. Or put it in the corner. They got what they want. Size isn't everything.

More than what they want. But, here, black people couldn't do that and they leave out, the white ones leave out after they get their ... Walk around so you can see them like they volunteer. They get their bag and walk on out. That's why you didn't have to stand in line, you went in and say, "I'm a volunteer." But you couldn't do that for blacks. They couldn't do that.

Once they had this guy, hunter from Nebraska. He was a military man and a young man. And they had the guy ... I'd left out the door and I was coming back through

the same door I left out, the exit door. So now I could come through there. I said, "Would you let this cameraman come through here?" "Yeah but he's a cameraman." I say, "Well how you know he's a cameraman? You don't know what he has."

"But he was takin ... " "I don't care, he had to go and register and let him know who's coming in his place."

I said, "Okay I can't come through here?" I went and passed the line up and walked right on in and went upstairs and complained about it. A hunter from Nebraska. I know he was mad. But he had no business letting the people in because you don't know who it is and what? I don't care if they were carrying a camera because that's always could be a fake. And you get too many people in there and you have 5,000 people in there already. 2,000 on that side. 3,000 on this side in the centraplex.

Yeah they got him, but I guess they say now "Who is she?"

Speaker 1: So how long were y'all in Baton Rouge?

Josie: I was there until they closed down because I don't come down here sometimes in the evening.

They had ... When they started moving people out. And they moved them. Some people cried because they didn't wanna go all the way to Minnesota because it was gonna be cold. The Dakota, North Dakota, South Dakota. And they were placing them all out.

Now here you got mattresses that people have used and stuff. And now you have a few people coming in still coming in. And then you wanna give them that bed. No. You can't do that. You can't. I told them about it too. So they got some mattress in.

Them people been sleeping on there for like 6 weeks.

Speaker 1: Right

Josie: And then you gonna come in and you gotta clean those things up.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: They ain't have no plastic or get some plastic or something and put over. And you know, just give them that.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: Girl, them people didn't wanna really see me.

And here me still volunteering.

Speaker 1: All right, well just to wrap up I do want to ask a few questions about what some of the elders in general. What was it that made you interested in taking the course?

Josie: Its something different and something is very interesting for me to do and always liked to look things up and see. But now my eyes feel in need just about if anything small print ...

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: It will ... I could read it. Just read it and if it don't have a tape recorder there I don't even remember what I read. Then it have to be a bigger size print. Like this a little.

You know like they put on these cameras and thee different little gadgets that you buy and its just small writing down there. Its tiny stuff. How do you expect them people to read that?

But its very interesting. I'm waitiNg and lookiNg forward to doing this again. Genealogy. The cookbook was really great.

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Josie: And all I really enjoYed doing that, but we didn't do experiments.

Speaker 1: Right.

Josie: If we could have done the little experiments [inaudible 01:31:52] as I just told my granddaughter, I was gonna teach her how to make a crust, a pie crust.

Speaker 1: Okay.

Josie: So anyway. I told her I was gonna teach her how to do that. She knows how to make the gravy. She knows how to make a cake like my mother. My mother's cake you would die for. Yeah. Ask some of them judges because she used to send those cakes down there. So them.

Speaker 1: Okay well that answers the other question I was gonna ask is would you want to participate in another semester?

Josie: Yeah what do we got? When do we start?

Speaker 1: It would probably be in the spring again.

Josie: Okay for the cookbook.

Speaker 1: For the whole, like so I'm gonna do another wisdom of the elders semester but I won't be able to do it until next spring.

Josie: [inaudible 01:32:50] genealogy?

Speaker 1: Yeah but it will be genealogy and a couple of other things. And anybody who's taken it before it welcome to do it again so let Orpha know cause I know that was something she was curious about.

Josie: Yeah cause I just started my stuff.

Speaker 1: Yeah we can get back into it definitely. It was this first year of doing it here was mostly about figuring out, you know, what worked, what didn't, what we could do better. We definitely want to partner with the library again. They've been great and they've given us so much without really requiring us to pay for it so that's ...

Josie: Yeah that was really nice ...

Speaker 1: So that's fantastic.

Josie: Why we can have it in September?

Speaker 1: Oh, only because I am ... This sort of doesn't happen without me. And what happens in the fall is that I'm going to be finishing my dissertation and finishing up my degree so I have to take moment to finish my book and defend that and then once that's done then I can devote myself to this next semester. So ...

Josie: Well we can't have a little small person that's under you to ...

Speaker 1: I mean if I had it ... If I had that person to send to you guys I would. Unfortunately, or fortunately, I and maybe the handful of people that I worked with this semester are all overextended this fall. So it just so happens that we would have to wait until the spring. But we wanna do it again.