

Speaker 1: So we'll talk about the recipes that you chose to share and why, and then just a little bit of information about growing up ... who was the person who cooked in your household, did anybody teach you how to cook, did you learn moreso by watching or individual instruction, that kind of thing. So yeah! So let's start with some of the recipes that you chose to share!

Speaker 2: D-U-B-U-C-L-E-T. That's three vowels, that means it has three syllables. And it's French. So the L-E-T is like L-A-Y. "Lay," or "clay." So what is it you'd like to go first?

Speaker 1: What recipes did you choose?

Speaker 2: Okay the recipes I chose and the reason how I came up with them was, thinking back on a scenario, any particular Christmas Eve or eve of a major holiday ... and I chose the Christmas time because those were times when all five of the sisters got together. Because I had an aunt in Washington and an Aunt in New York. So they would come down of course, and I kind of chose a time around 11 years old or 12 years old, where you're kind of coming into your own around that junior high school year age. And my story would have been that as we walked into the house, my grandmother's we'd call it by my moves but of course I even wrote it in my account of it that it was really my grandfather's house. It is he and my grandmother's house but it was given to him. That's altogether another different only about that ... his parents and so forth.

So with that being said, as we entered into a light blue living room area, fireplace of course, a mantle as those types of homes in the Southern Ward we call them shotgun doubles ... first room again was the living room. At the time of course we had black and white TV and that was also a gathering point for the family, especially on Sundays to come watch as my grandmother called "The Ed Solomon Show." So Ed Sullivan. Time for Ed Solomon. And of course that was accompanied by episodes of Amos and Andy. So you could see your cousins, drive around til the grownups allowed ... Next room was the dining room. Huge, round table and it must've sat a dozen. Easily. That was the grownup table.

Speaker 1: Yes.

Speaker 2: That was the big table. There was a huge buffet with the drawer that held the linens and serving things of that nature. She had a crystal cabinet that had whatnots and so forth on it. And she also had what they called back then ... It was kind of like a roll away bed couch. That was also for visitors. Next is the guest bedroom. Then the kitchen. Then there was a bathroom. Now when the house was original, that's where the house stopped. At the bathroom. And the kitchen was up front. But then they added on, they had room in the back and the kitchen and a shed where at that time we had free-range chickens for fresh eggs ... And the main staple in the back there was a fig tree. That fig tree lasted almost as long ... If she planted it at 18 and died at 106, that's about as long as that tree last.

Okay so we were going through the house and then past the guest room was the kitchen and of course the kitchen was where the kids' table was. We ate in the kitchen. I don't think I moved to the big table until I was around 15 or 16 ... A freshman in high school. So at any rate, now we had all the sisters arrive, it's Christmas Eve night, everybody's got something to do. So everybody's chopping seasoning. Of course, you're going to have the turkey. You're going to have oyster dressing, as they say. You're going to have stuffed mirliton. You're going to have rice, gravy and green peas. Have potato salad. Some of the delicacies would be ... I've got a crab cake recipe, but we usually did the stuffed crab. That was the way we used our crabs was stuffed crabs. And you know, it started all of with the gumbo, the preparation of the gumbo. That is one of the recipes I shared with you.

Seasoning is chopped up. You just chopping up a bunch of onions, bell pepper, celery ... the trinity ... a bunch of 'um because it's going in every dish. From the gumbo to the stuffed turkey. So there's a lot of seasonings being cut. That's why they doing it there.

And of course, there's a bunch of conversation going on. Course we not privy to hear and back in those days, you hear 'um chop some of broken Creole. And you hear them say "ala bah". That's "you acting a fool". And you might hear "comme ci, comme ça". So forth and so on. And of course, if that year, things went well through the families, there was no worries about marital stress. But there was very little of that then, but you had bills that you need paid and somebody want to spend the money elsewhere. You know you're going to have a rile up.

The menu was prepared, everything was fixed. You definitely can't leave out the ... I would call it sweet potato casserole as opposed to the candied yam thing. That's beating the yams up, buttering them, cream them up, cinnamon them up, sugar them up, vanilla them up, I didn't mention a lot of butter, and you whip that up, put your raisins in it, chop it with the marshmallow. Pop it in the oven for 25 minutes and wait till the marshmallows brown, you good to go.

Speaker 1: That sounds like something my grandmother did.

Speaker 2: I'm sure I mentioned potato salad. If I did, you had to have potato salad at that dinner. And stuffed eggs. Some of those kinds of things to put on ... my mother would have it ... give it a little fashion. She might even do ... Cakes, pies, cookies, things of that nature for dessert. Ice cream possibly. Of you going to have, especially when my grandfather was around, you would have some claret. Claret wine baby.

Speaker 1: Claret wine?

Speaker 2: Claret, yes. C-l-a-r-e-t. It's a red wine. It's a dinner wine, which the Sauvignon has taken its place these days. That is similar to the Claret. Vineyard Gallo. All these different criminals had their labels on the wine bottle.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Speaker 2: So. And the game we would always have. We would always have one thing we had to look forward to was one uncle. He was a big shot. He worked in the Post Office. He thought he was a big shot. Gambled and drank a lot. You know. He was a social guy. The, let me see, is that the Good fellas. Social and pleasure club used to be on Nero between St. Bernard. No, no I'm lyin. It's between [inaudible 00:11:55]. It's the second block off of ... You can see it at night is a band there. A cinder block building there. [inaudible 00:12:22] But he would go there and get his cheer on and when he came to the dinner, he had his cheer on. But he wasn't a very ... he was a mischief maker and he used my father as the target. My dad only had ... stretchin an 8th grade education. That's stretchin it. He had, his Daddy left, he had like fences. He had 14 years old, he's out there tryin to help his Momma with his siblings.

Speaker 1: Right

Speaker 2: So that's his upbringing. So he ran to his ... we tip our hat to him. With a limited education he was able to form his own business, which was refuge. And he worked with the Sears corporation, Baronne Street, Gentilly and eventually he got the warehouse as well collecting the refuge. He used refuge and doing then what they're doing today. He recycled. Corrugated cardboard boxes, big huge boxes. The cardboard boxes the refrigerators came in, they threw that away. Right on my Daddy's truck that we stacked up about 2300 lbs or 4000lbs of cardboard. Bring it on there and let a fellow sell it. That's an extra 300-400 dollars a week.

Same thing when they came in your home and brought you any appliance. They took the old one. Well, guess what? They threw that old one away. Right on my Daddy's truck. Put it in our yard worked at as a junkyard. Dismantling, collecting precious metals like they do today. Houses, the copper out these houses. They ripping the houses off of the copper. But he would take the motors and all that. The motors had copper. Put them in the fire, burns the whatever they had around (insulation is the word I'm looking for). And we pull the wire out man and that would be another 50-60 dollars 'cause you're not gonna collect a whole lotta motors. The motors were cast iron. That sold. Aluminum was always selling. Even til today. Aluminum cans, these cats hustle aluminum cans, big cans, as a living.

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Speaker 2: Its a hustle. To say that is back to Uncle Milton. He came in and of course they're around the big table. And he's picking pot shots at my father. And my father was self-conscious about his education and what have you. But he had nothing to tuck his head over. He was able to, I never lived in a rented home. He built his own home. He brought 4 lots down on Flake street before Crowder road was built and developed. The street west of Crowder is Flake Ave. Terrible street. Flake street is a terrible street, man. But back then it was the new frontier for New Orleans. It was

what they called Gentilly East. Just picked up the east, but Gentilly extended from Franklin ave out East. But across the canal it was Gentilly East. So he built the house, him and his, back in those days everybody was tradesmens.

My Dad owned what turned out to be Joe and Jeans that you would remember on Pria and Lapeyrouse. He sold it, Rudy's tavern to them. See my Dad was (snapping) turning a dollar. He started, actually my Daddy started out as a peddler with a horse and carriage. "Oh Lady. I got tomato, I got potato ... And he sold that to what turned out to be [inaudible 00:17:41] who carried that over. Of course, he bought a truck there, my [inaudible 00:17:53] did. He was a fruit vendor. So he built that house there. But we go back and like I said, we left from there to Pontchartrain Park. He established his own security company, who was the first security guard company in Pontchartrain Park. The first security guard at [inaudible 00:18:34] with just a meager education.

Speaker 1: Okay

Speaker 2: So he really had no reason to feel inferior but I guess it was the fact of the matter was he was more man than my uncle was cause he took the insults and then whip his ass. That couldn't happen in my generation.

Speaker 1: Right

Speaker 2: Understand. You opened your mouth, I'm gonna pop you in it at the dinner table. Dinner's over.

Speaker 1: Right

Speaker 2: But my Dad never came at him. My Dad wasn't a pushover especially when he had that tavern. He had to bust. My Dad, Rudy, used to bust them in the head with that .38. If they get rambunctious at the club, he had to protect his place. He wouldn't shoot nobody, he'd bust em in the head with that .38, pistol whip em good. So with that said, Uncle got off, he got a pass.

Speaker 1: I was gonna say, weren't we talking about gumbo at some point? Gallo wine

Speaker 2: Yes, that's what transpired. So the gumbo, I looked on this and I have to check. I thought I wrote that gumbo recipe down.

Speaker 1: Well if not, that's what you need to do today.

Speaker 2: I know I did. I will find it.

Speaker 1: Cause I have the recipe that I copied and its supposed to be four, total.

Speaker 2: I think as we speak: Crab cakes, stuffed crab

Speaker 1: Mm-hmm (affirmative)

Speaker 2: That's two

Speaker 1: Right

Speaker 2: And you should have two on there. You should have four. Let me see if I can.

Interviewer: All right, so the first thing I've been starting with is just a little bit about your background, where your parents come from, if you knew how they met, or why you were given the name you have.

Theodore: Stop. I mean am I recording, yeah, right?

Interviewer: Yeah. You're recording.

Theodore: Oh. My name is Theodore Dubuclet. I was named after Theodore Roosevelt, who was an adventurer, and I just assume that my parents thought that I would become an adventurer or possibly even President of the United States. Well, half of that did come true. I do consider myself to have had quite a few adventures in my life. And my parents came from the [inaudible 00:01:13] area, the Corpus Christi Parish.

Interviewer: Okay.

Theodore: My mother's [inaudible 00:01:25] Saint, married and Joseph Dubuclet. My father was a self-made man, as most African-Americans had to coming the 40s, 50s, and 60s. As I understood, as a younger man, in his mid-30s in that era, he was a chauffeur for a well-to-do family from New Orleans who had property here and in Slidell, and initially, I'm understanding that that's kind of where my dad's younger, young adult days, he lived in the Slidell area where he married his first wife, and they had two sons, Joseph Dubuclet, Junior and Calvin Dubuclet, both deceased.

Interviewer: Okay.

Theodore: Okay. My mother, Olga [inaudible 00:02:51] Saint, met my dad at the [inaudible 00:03:03] Club. There was a dance and they met there and began dating and they got married. At that time, my dad entered in his own entrepreneurial adventures, and he had a horse and drawn carriage that was the tools for the peddler, fruit peddling was how he started out. He parlayed that business into ownership of Rudy's Tavern, located, again, in the 7th Ward, and it was a just beer parlor, beer and wine parlor, no hard liquor there, and he parlayed that and sold that what was eventually known as Joe & Jean's. Are you familiar?

Interviewer: Uh-uh.

Theodore: Which, again, is on the corner of [inaudible 00:04:42]. He then purchased with the help of my grandfather, Alfred [inaudible 00:04:57] Saint, four lots, it was now East New Orleans, or New Orleans East, off of Crowder, [inaudible 00:05:08], and he and his friendly associates, who were carpenters, plumbers, electricians, simple craftsmen built the house on the East, and that's where I was born. I was born in Gentilly. I was an active youngster. We were brought up

in the Catholic Church. We had my first communion at seven at St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church.

Interviewer: How many brothers and sisters?

Theodore: Okay. Joseph and Olga had two sons, Anthony Dubuclet and myself, so I have one brother.

Interviewer: Okay.

Theodore: And I attended Corpus Christi Catholic School. Here comes the adventure. In those days they requested that you lived in the parish in which you attended school. My grandparents and aunts lived in the Corpus Christi area, and my mother was then working now in the New Orleans Parish.

Interviewer: So you went to school in the district. [inaudible 00:07:13].

Theodore: Exactly. And I had no problem spinning the yarn that I lived in that parish. However, my brother, who found it difficult to be deceptive when they asked him, and he was in second grade, no, no, no, no, no, I was going through my second grade year, he was in the fourth, going to the fifth grade, and, of course, he blurted out our correct address, 240 Flake Street. That's in New Orleans East. So from that experience my mother got scolded because they [inaudible 00:08:04] that she was less than [inaudible 00:08:10] and also contributing our deceptiveness, and then still for the same reasons she worked in the area, and my relatives in case of an emergency were nearby. I went to Valena C. Jones Public School. I spent time at Valena C. Jones. It was very, very wonderful growing up in that area with the people. We are still friends today after some 57 years, plus years actually, but we all keep in touch, we all run into each other.

It's like if we had seen each other just a day or so before and everyone from that era, no matter where you lived, associated. There was no boundaries coming up in New Orleans through the 50s and the 60s. So, with that said, I went from Valena C. Jones School, where I began ... Actually, not. I was introduced to the piano at a very young age, at five, and in that Xavier University, their music students provided you with tutorial services teaching you piano and what have you, along with the nuns, it was called Xavier Junior School of Music, and they not only provided us with open windows to the classics, Back, Beethoven, Tchaikovsky, the university also taught drama and they had a drama club, and every year they would have a performance, a Broadway type performance, Faust was one of them, and the reason why I recall Faust is because my brother and I were selected as performers, nonspeaking, but nonetheless performers in the play of Faust.

The piano was interesting to a point, because as I grew older, to the sixth-grader I was introduced to music our locals like Fats Domino, so Ray Charles, Lloyd Price, these local musicians, and, of course, I was interested in playing that type of music, but the nuns at Xavier would have nothing of it. So I kind of lost interest in the piano, and Jones, Valena C. Jones School, elementary school, they asked us in the fifth grade if we wanted to play in the band, so I said I would, and I selected the alto saxophone. Now, I'd taken the alto saxophone from the beginnings. I was trained in junior high at River Frederick's, and Miss Butler, who eventually went to, she was the first music teachers at Culver Senior High once it was constructed, and she created quite a rabble then throughout the city. I took that instrument and I went to St. Augustine High School. I played in the Marching 100 my freshman year.

I did my finish from SUNO, so I finished high school from Walter Cohen Senior High School, public school, and I also played in their band. I graduated in June of 1965, and the fall of 1965 I entered into the Southern University, Baton Rouge. I did not join their band, much to my chagrin, but it was not my call, and my interests waned at Southern and I resigned from Southern. The following semester I enrolled at Southern University, New Orleans, 1966. These were tumultuous times, the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War, the war on drugs, which was directed directly to black and what they were calling then "hippies". So it wasn't a time one would consider being in an academic state of mind. It was more like in a draft deferment state of mind. However, due to certain protests on my part, I was asked to leave Southern University, and in doing so, I then joined the United States Army, June 1968.

That journey took me through Fort Polk, Louisiana, Fort Benning, Georgia, Fort Jackson, South Carolina, these were times I was going through training, and my first duty station, as it's called, was Fort Jackson, North Carolina, home of the 82nd Airborne. There I was utilized as a clerk typist at the John F. Kennedy Center for Psychological Warfare. There we disseminated pamphlets written both in English and Vietnamese that were being shipped to Vietnam inviting the citizens of South Vietnam to aid the Americans who were aiding them. That's basically what those propaganda pamphlets were about. From there, I returned to Fort Polk, Louisiana. Spending time there, I became eligible for what's called the levy or orders for Vietnam, and I received the orders from Vietnam to go to Vietnam, and fortunately for me, when it was discovered that the job that was requested on the orders was not my job description, so therefore, I was sent to Fort Bliss, Texas in El Paso, Texas.

There I ran into an old neighborhood school chum who happened to have been stationed at Fort Bliss, Texas, Robert [inaudible 00:18:15], and it was a blessing to have someone that I knew personally who had been in El Paso for some time to show me around. There, again, another adventure. We were on the border of Juarez, Mexico, so I had many opportunities to go into Mexico. Of course, having a young mind, I was not there sightseeing, so therefore, I didn't



see as much of it as I should have. Shortly after I received orders to go to Korea. I traveled from Fort Bliss, Texas, to Fort Washington, I'm sorry, yeah, to Tacoma, Washington, let me think of the fort there, oh, Fort Lewis, Fort Lewis, Tacoma, Washington. There was as we approached on the plane one of my visions and memories was I often on the beginning of Paramount Pictures a plane, a small plane seemingly flying around this huge mountain, and as we approached Fort Lewis, we had to travel around Mount Rainier, and we were in 747, and the 747 was just like that little plane flying around this huge mountain.

This was just awesome, something that today I still feel thrilled about having witnessed so awesome, so powerful, such a remembrance of what God is about in his greatness. So I left Fort Lewis, flew a 22-hour flight to Korea, stopping once at Osaka, Japan to refuel, and I arrived in Korea in the summer of 1970. My initial orders were to go ... Korea is a peninsula, so I liken it similar to the peninsula Florida, and you would look at the northern tip of the peninsula, which is the Pensacola, that's similar to 38th parallel that separates South Korea and North Korea. As you go further down into the peninsula, maybe around where Disney is in Florida, which is near the center, is Seoul, which is the capital of Korea. Further down between, say, midway between the halfway mark of the peninsula and the southern tip, which is Busan, you have Taegu, which my original orders were to go to Taegu at the battalion headquarters.

However, since they're still, and as you know today, there's confrontation at the 38th parallel between North and South Korea, it is and it has been since the conflict a quarantined area, meaning that you went on restriction after midnight. This is because these are still the laws that prevailed during the conflict. So you're considered to be in a war area. I spent, just to speed it up, time there, and those experiences are more shared and very political, so I'll move on from there. I returned back to the United States on the 12th of January, 1971, and then two weeks later I enrolled at Southern University and in college, university, for the spring semester of '71. As the spring semester of '72 came about, there was a demonstration on campus, which escalated into the loss of two lives, Brothers Smith and Brown, if I'm not mistaken, and forgive me if I'm speaking their names, but that didn't set well with myself nor my other Vietnam returning veterans, and rather than be involved in a conflict, we resigned from the university.

I spent the next six months reinstated as a postal letter carrier, and after six months I returned to Southern. I was successful in the next three years, completed my bachelor of science degree in sociology. I left Southern and returned to New Orleans. I couldn't find a job. Well, I did find a job. I'm sorry. My brother, Anthony, went into the Air Force, he spent eight years in the Air Force, and he was discharged out of the Air Force the same year I was discharged from the Army. He went to Xavier. I went to Southern. He and I both

finished in 1975, I in May, he in June, and in August my dad passed. So it was in hindsight that was his mission, once he had seen his dream come true, that both of his sons completed college. He first, in my opinion, that his task was done and he moved on, and I'm very grateful that he was grateful. I'd be pleased with my father whom, as I said, was a self-made person with less than an eighth grade education. And that catapulted me into the business world.

I began working for at that time Bill Watson Ford, "I'm wild!" Wild Bill. His used car manager was Ronnie Lamarque of now Lamarque Ford. So I met Ronnie and his brothers, Tommy and Timmy, at Bill Watson, and in hindsight, I could say, well, that that family was very successful in that business, and had I rode their coattails, I probably would've been as successful. Okay. Now, to add a side note to that, though, Ronnie Lamarque Ford is very successful, however, he was fortunate with he and his partner to win the Louisiana Derby with his horse Risen Star, which elevated his financial status, which made him eligible to create his own business, but, of course, he learned from the Bill Watson formula. So that was my first job. Things didn't quite work out. It wasn't what I aspired to do. So I said I was going to leave New Orleans.

Some friends that summer, once again in the summer, the summer of '76, which was the year of the Bicentennial of the United States of America, I hitched a ride from New Orleans to Atlanta with friends who were going to what then was the Budweiser Superfest, similar to what we see at Essence now. The lineup was awesome. The Spinners, oh, man, which that was the group at the time that I was happy to see, but there was Chaka Khan and quite a few new artists that performed at the Budweiser Superfest. After spending the weekend in Atlanta and attending the festival, I took a bus to Washington DC, where my mother's second to youngest sister resided. She was already housing two of my first cousins who were employed and working in the area and she was kind enough to let me come and stay with her to seek employment. Ha! Employment, really? The summer of '76, the Bicentennial celebrations and what have you in Washington DC, there was job hunting for me.

Once again, on the 4th of the July when all of the celebration was gearing up for it, we participated in watching the fireworks and the celebration and what have you, and it was quite exciting. Okay. Well, time kind of closing in on me now. I mean that's July. In August, no job. So here it is, we're getting into the fall, I figured with September it looked like it's about time for me to start looking for a job. "Wake up, Maggie!" So Maggie woke up. Once again, I used my military credentials as a veteran to enter into the federal government. I took the typing test for clerical and, of course, passed and was placed on the register. I was called in for an interview as a clerk typist for the United States Department of Education Contracts & Grants division.

Now, this Department of Education, Contracts & Grants, they at that time PhDs who had programs that they wanted to implement in the school system had to go through that department to be scrutinized to see whether or not they would be granted a grant. That's what charter schools have circumvented today. The PhD now goes and he opens up his school on whatever his specialty is and that's why they call that school Einstein, science, and what have you, or you go over here and you have whatever their program is, they have to go through the government to get into the school system, but with the implementation of charter schools that's been circumvented.

Interviewer: Right.

Theodore: So, at any rate, I basically was responsible for just typing correspondence between the grantee and the grantors. So I spent a year, almost two years there, and then I decided to return to New Orleans. And, at that time, New Orleans had implemented the Total Community Action, see, the job training program. This was I think the program lasted from '75 to '78, three years, so I came in on the tail end, but I was employed with them. And then I returned to SUNO in 1981 to work on secondary education certification in social studies since my background was sociology. I was successful in completing the classwork and in taking the National Teacher's Exam, which that was its name then. I only passed two parts of the four-part process, so I couldn't really get employed, but I did a lot of substitute work there, so I spent three years.

Interviewer: Three years?

Theodore: Why am I at three years? Oh, okay. Oh, yeah, because I'm working on a certification.

Interviewer: Right.

Theodore: But did you turn it back on?

Interviewer: Yeah, it's on.

Theodore: Okay. I completed the classwork and again stumbled on the National Teacher's Exam. I began to then work for the State of Louisiana. I took the State Exam, clerk and others, but you take a general exam and you qualify on many different levels of different things. So the first position that I accepted was immunization with the state, and that immunization position required me to go to five parishes, surrounding parishes checking shot records at schools and clinics to see that all the kids in the area shot records were up to the standard, and if not, they had to call out and get them to come in and get their shots, the measles, rubella, what have you, the general polio vaccines, and so forth, things you require for school. So that job was temporary. I was able to land another position with the state with the same state civil service process as a

job service specialist, which was working and helping the unemployed. By being a veteran, I was assigned to the department that handled veterans only.

So I worked out of the federal building here on [Loyola 00:37:54] that, again, wound up being temporary due to lack of knowledge on my part as to keep my score active. So once my school fell off and I was still only eligible for the position, I'm going to have to retest and get back on there on the register. However, being privy to all the jobs that were coming into the city, I saw a position that asked for a consular at the St. Mark's Street Academy on Rampart, which their objective was to help at-risk teens. They provided school for at-risk teens who were either banned from the public school system or were pending court proceedings. Well, I spent two years there. I returned, this is in '91, I returned back to SUNO, Southern University, New Orleans, with certification in elementary education.

I didn't give up. I was successful in the class activities, and in the process, passed another portion, so now I have three-quarters or three portions of a four-portion process. Now, with the three portions, I'm eligible to work as a temporary teacher, but receiving salary and benefits of a teacher. You just had to renew that certificate each year. So after doing that from '93 to 2004, temporary teaching, I took the specialty area, which that's what I was lacking, and your specialty area, which in my case was elementary education, I took that part, which was now the Praxis exam, and, praise God, passed it. So now I became a certified teacher in 2004, 2005 school year.

Interviewer: Okay.

Theodore: Of course, that school year was Katrina. So, of course, like everyone else, with flip-flops, shorts, and a t-shirt or so and a small change of clothes, my brother and I ventured through a call from my first wife, Easter Dubuclet, inviting my brother and I to come spend the hurricane in Jackson, Mississippi, which we did. Of course, that was an odyssey in itself. That was the weekend up through the Thursday. We left Jackson and we went to Baton Rouge. No. We didn't go to Baton Rouge. We went to Texas. We went to Houston. I had a friend in Houston that took us in in Houston, because after calling around and finding out where the rest of the family went, they were in Houston. So many people went to Atlanta, east, and my family went west to Houston. So there my brother Anthony set up an apartment and what have you along with other cousins and my aunt, two aunts. Unfortunately, we lost one of our aunts two weeks later after Katrina. So we had a funeral and what have you out there.

And then we were chased out of Houston. And, I'm sorry, this is before we got the apartments. I forgot. We were chased out of Houston by Rita, which was another week or so after, which shot us back down to Baton Rouge. And so after spending a week in Baton Rouge, I have a cousin who worked at the Southern University, Baton Rouge, and lived in Baton Rouge, I was able to in

Southern resumed campus activities that Thursday after Rita. I was able to locate my cousin, fortunately for me and she. One of her apartments was vacant. I fell right into that. My brother went back to Texas. I got a job with the Baton Rouge parish Baton Rouge School District, and I taught the spring semester of 2006 I returned to New Orleans, no, I returned to teach in New Orleans in 2007, but I was commuting from Baton Rouge. Then I was able to finally find a place to stay here in New Orleans. I began teaching in the recovery school district, and not being satisfied with what I was observing in the recovery school districts and what was happening in charter schools that were invading our area.

I saw that the charter schools, their propaganda was college, and the recovery school district was getting individuals who weren't college material, but they were not addressing their needs, such as skills and trades and what have you, so being dissatisfied with that, I resigned from them, from the recovery school district, and I was fortunate enough to be employed at the Bogalusa School District, so I commuted from New Orleans to Bogalusa each day, and fortunate enough for me, at the end of 2012 I was eligible for retirement and I retired. In my retirement, my special time, I cook, part-time work at the Louisiana Superdome in the Smoothie King arena for events, and that brings me up to date today. I didn't speak of my family, my children, or anything personal like that. So right now I'm residing at St. Martin Manor. And, as of today, I'm working with Jen on the Wisdom of the Elders, so that's about where we are.

Interviewer: Okay. Well, let me ask you just one or two questions about Wisdom of the Elders. I've been asking everybody sort of what made them want to take the class, would they want to participate in another semester, and any positive or negative feedback that you could give me so that next time around when we do it we do it even better.

Theodore: Well, the interest was the idea of tracing my family tree. That was the catchall for me. Also, the idea of a possible publishing of ideas and experiences also interested me, and I have enjoyed the experience because I have a brighter look on my ancestors and where I came from, and also, I enjoy meeting the other participants in the program to share their experiences. Side note. Miss Josie, when we were talking about this traveling to the neighborhoods, it appears to me the country part of it would've been the most interesting experience because I'm feeling that even till today you have some of that plantation atmosphere out there that one could really visualize even to today the residual I will say of slavery and plantation life and how that is not as evolved as one would think in those rural areas. So that would've been the trip that I would've been interested in taking because I know what's going on around the city. I've lived that there something everybody felt for her, but I'm sure she would've enjoyed introducing us to the folks and explaining to us, "Well, when I was a little girls this is what we did and this is where we went, this is where Raymond's farm was, and this is the hanging tree."

Interviewer: Yeah. She's got quite a memory.

Theodore: Exactly. Positive, the lunches were off the chain. We certainly appreciated that. And for me, as I said, I would've had a little hands-on whereas we would have been able to type this information out, do the picture thing, do the art thing, you touched on it a little, but to actually have that compiled place, because just like you, we want to see in our soul Miss Josie had a nice one, but I wanted to see my finished product.

Interviewer: Yeah.

Theodore: [inaudible 00:52:03]. That's why I said this is a little story that I kind of came up with to introduce each sister and give them a dish. But, other than that, I hope we've been helpful to your program and you've been able to gain some knowledge that we shared that you picked up some knowledge from us as well, so ...

Interviewer: Definitely.